2014

The Charleston "School of Slavery": Race, Religion, and Community in the Capital of Southern Civilization

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THE CHARLESTON "SCHOOL OF SLAVERY":
Race, Religion, and Community in the Capital of Southern Civilization

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Bachelor of Arts
College of Charleston, 1999

Master of Arts
George Mason University, 2004

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in

History

College of Arts and Sciences

University of South Carolina

2014

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to my Mom, Margaret Saville Rose, whose spirited support made this, and everything else, possible.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation is a partial repayment for debts owed at archives all over the southeast. I am particularly indebted to the staff at the South Caroliniana Library, the South Carolina Historical Society, Avery Research Center, and the College of Charleston. Special thanks also go to R. Philip Stone at Wofford College Library, Erskine Clarke, and the archivists at Columbia Theological Seminary.

Insightful guidance and feedback from mentors, colleagues, and friends enriched the dissertation at each stage of its ten-year development. First credits go to the enduring support of the History Department at the University of South Carolina, particularly Lacy Ford, Don Doyle, Michael Scardaville, Carol Harrison, and Mark Smith. Jane Turner Censer and Mike O'Malley, my mentors at George Mason, deserve special credit for igniting the spark that became this great conflagration. Special thanks go to the gracious readers who helped to refine earlier drafts and related projects, particularly G. Thomas Sheffer, Shevaun Watson, Jay Richardson, Edward Blum, Bob Elder, Christine Ames, David Prior, and Simons Tate.

Behind every good dissertation are a number of good women. Whether or not this is a good dissertation, the women behind its author are great. I drew from a reservoir of inspiration filled by my grandmother Louise Pugh Saville, and her daughters Margaret Saville Rose, Mary Louise (Saville) DeSarran, and Elizabeth Saville Burns. My mother-

in-law, Roberta Sheffer, provided care, compassion, and cookies. The love, spice, and sacrifice contributed by my wife, Meredith Sheffer, make this dissertation hers as much as my own.

ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the interracial religious communities of antebellum South Carolina to highlight patterns of racial consciousness and nation-building and demonstrate that the southern path to modernity was much closer to that of their northern contemporaries than previously recognized. The ready-made system of human classification inherent in racial slavery did not insulate southerners from the modern impulses that transfigured northern racial relations; instead, this dissertation argues that Carolinians white and black, free and slave, participated in a discourse of religious modernization that redirected the potentially destabilizing social implications of evangelicalism and progress into an idealized community structure that served the spiritual needs of black Carolinians, yet also reinforced white supremacy and strengthened the institution of slavery. In response to the external challenge of antislavery and the internal challenge of African-American religious autonomy, white Carolinians invented a tradition of black dependence and parlayed this myth into a modern ethos of community: the bi-racial southern nation.

By focusing this study of race and community formation on South Carolina, the vanguard of proslavery argument and separatism, this dissertation demonstrates striking parallels of racial consciousness common to both northern and southern societies, but also that the racial dynamics of community formation played a formative role in the

development of sectional consciousness. Charleston was not the most typical of southern scenes, but the processes of racial modernization that unfolded in the churches of the "Holy City" were common to many American cities, and the idealized social order modeled and reflected in the sacred spaces of her bi-racial churches provided the quintessential cultural validation for southern nationalism. The strong localized sense of community, modernized through the churches of Charleston over the course of a century, ultimately assumed a position of priority over the more distant imagined community of the United States and convinced most white Charlestonians to volunteer their lives, fortunes, and slaves to the cause of Civil War.

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CHAPTER ONE

Civilization and Conversion:

Americanization in the Churches of Charleston

> Finding a young Negro there, who seemed more sensible than the rest, I asked her how long she had been in Carolina. She said two or three years; but that she was born in Barbados, and had lived there in a minister's family from a child. I asked whether she went to church there. She said, "Yes, every Sunday – to carry the mistress's children." I asked what she had learned at church. She said, "Nothing: I heard a deal, but did not understand it." "But what did your master teach you at home?" "Nothing." "Nor your mistress?" "No."
>
> - John Wesley, Journaling from Charleston, April 23, 1737

> The surface of American society is covered with a layer of democratic paint, but from time to time one can see the old aristocratic colours breaking through.
>
> - Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Vol. 1

In 1808, David Ramsay distilled a century of religious history in South Carolina into a synthetic narrative of tradition and adaptation. Though the essence of "real religion" in South Carolina had (always) been constant, "fashions" and "modes" of religious expression varied according to "times and circumstances." First transplanted to a frontier society, then "Awakened" during the mid-eighteenth century and transfigured through the formative struggles of independence and disestablishment, Carolina's religious institutions were continuously enriched by the social and political challenges of their time. When the dynamic energy of modernization ran up against the cumulative weight of religious tradition, the result was a divergent array of religious experiences "worthy of historical notice." In the same spirit as Ramsay's evaluation, this chapter

tracks the balance of new and old through the variable "modes" of the revolutionary era to assemble the elements, influences, and experiences that framed religious consciousness for post-colonial Charlestonians. This chapter also augments Ramsay's contemporary vantage by demonstrating the formative role that racial relations and racial discourse played in developing this framework.[1]

Ramsay's religious attentions were disproportionately skewed to the tendencies of white Carolinians. He documented the spiritual patterns of Carolina Negroes as merely peripheral data, but in so doing reflected larger social trends at work in post-Revolutionary Charleston. In his denominational summary of the city's religious activity, most congregational figures did not merit racial breakdown, but the overwhelming black majority of the Methodist Church – 170 white members, 1520 black – earned special notice. Ramsay's statistics attest to the dramatic extension of black involvement in local Christian institutions, a shift from an earlier period during which white individuals and white-run institutions generally neglected the spiritual needs of Carolina slaves. Ramsay noted the agitations of missionaries like John Wesley but did not conduct any more conclusive survey of slave Christianization. Wesley's account in the epigraph documents his attempt to redress the Carolinian tradition of racial separation and spiritual neglect. The contrast between this "before" picture of neglected black souls and the "after" picture of majority-black denominations indicates a measure of racial and religious dynamism that warrants examination. More recent historical work has filled in some of the gaps. As summarized by Robert Olwell, the findings of these historians

> describe a sequence in which the seeds of Christianity sown by Anglican missionaries and Methodist evangelicals in the first 'Great Awakening' of

[1] David Ramsay, *History of South Carolina* (Newberry, SC: W.J. Duffie, 1858), 20.

> the mid-eighteenth century fell upon stony ground, only to bear fruit in the conversion of the slave and the creation of a unique African Christianity in the second 'awakening' of the nineteenth century.[2]

Olwell's summary presents a valid insight into the evolution of "African Christianity" in South Carolina: the punctuated increase in black church membership during the nineteenth century was in fact part of a longer, gradual, and continuous process of Christian sedimentation among African-American communities in South Carolina. Olwell's synthesis is the product of a series of articulated observations, drawn from two tracks of historical perspective – the black experience and the white experience. The following chapter adopts a similar interpretive framework, with two important distinctions. First, instead of organizing the narrative as a synthetic integration of two (a priori) separate stories, what follows is first and foremost an interracial and relational history, "an attempt to tell these two histories in a single narrative." The second alteration provides the means to this end. This is not primarily a history of slave or slaveholder religion, but instead an institutional history, specifically a history of the interracial relationships, real and imagined, that emerged to dominate the course of institutional development in lowcountry South Carolina by the early decades of the nineteenth century. This is not an attempt to bring together two separate histories, but rather to centralize one common history of interaction, and in so doing demonstrate how

[2] Ibid., 19; Ramsay devoted a good deal of interpretive energy to the classist dimensions of Methodist appeal, and shifted his subjective weight on the controversy surrounding evangelical methods to suggest that Methodists did more good than evil, but did so in race-less terms. W. Reginald Ward, ed., *The Works of John Wesley* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 18: 180; Robert Olwell, "The Long History of a Low Place: Slavery on the South Carolina Coast, 1670 – 1870," in *Slavery and the American South*, ed. Winthrop D. Jordan (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2008), 126; Olwell's assessment borrows most directly from Sylvia Frey and Betty Wood, *Come Shouting to Zion: African American Protestantism in the American South and British Caribbean to 1830* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

these two histories – interracial and institutional – were inextricably linked. "Institutional" history here refers primarily to the development of religious institutions, but the impact of these interracial dynamics also extended to social and political institutions.[3]

The most dynamic religious factor of institutional development in revolutionary era South Carolina was revivalism, a trend initiated during the mid-eighteenth century, and renewed to more substantial effect around the turn of the century. According to Ramsay, "some ascribed it to the real efficacy of the doctrines of Christ…others to the influence of the devil." Those of the latter opinion represented another powerful factor of religious development – the established social and spiritual power of institutional tradition and orthodoxy. The consistent tension between tradition and progress generated a dynamic energy that flowed through the spiritual consciousness of most Carolinians to reconfigure not only their understanding of religious practice, but also of the modern political, social, and racial order. [4]

The ripples of social destabilization created by the splash of the "Great Awakening" in other colonies did not register as prominently in the South Carolina lowcountry. Revivalism stirred in various corners of the rural lowcountry, and large crowds attended the preachings of celebrity evangelists like George Whitefield, but these events did not significantly affect lowcountry denominational alignment or liturgical practices in the short-term. Whitefield's most immediate effect was the storm of publicity that surrounded his southern tour and irritated the Anglican establishment. In the press and from the pulpit, Whitefield criticized the doctrinal and institutional rigidity of

[3] Erskine Clarke, *Dwelling Place: A Plantation Epic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), ix.
[4] Ramsay, *History of South Carolina,* 20.

orthodox colonial clerics, as well as the moral shortcomings of their slave-holding parishioners. Commissary Alexander Garden confronted Whitefield on these issues and his insubordination, but got little satisfaction, so barred him from formal preaching in the Anglican Church. Their conflict exposed the multiplicity of doctrinal and ritual inclinations present within the transatlantic church establishment, but at a more local level, also revealed deeper social tensions lurking beneath the surface of colonial Charleston. The Garden-Whitefield conflict represented the germinal stages of a multivalent social dialectic; Whitefield's brief Carolina agitation was a progressive antithesis to Garden's conservative thesis. Through his excess of doctrinal and institutional limitations, Whitefield represented the destabilizing force of grassroots evangelicalism; in his critique of slavery, Whitefield represented the threatening winds of moral progress. Garden's initial censure of Whitefield thus represented the reactive posture of ecclesiastical tradition and social orthodoxy; but Garden, and the institutional establishment more generally, ultimately proved willing to engage and digest elements of the new wave, filtered through the appropriate channels, into synthetic processes of religious modernization.[5]

Through a dialectical approach to institutional history, this chapter diagrams the process of *Americanization* through which Carolinians negotiated old hierarchical structures and new democratic impulses to reconfigure and redefine their social and religious traditions. The anti-authoritarian evangelical impulses of the late colonial

[5] Even those who refute the historiographic deconstruction of the Great Awakening into an "interpretive fiction" recognize the relative lack of a punctuated revivalist impact in colonial South Carolina. See Thomas Kidd, *The Great Awakening: The Roots of Evangelical Christianity in Colonial America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 74-85; James Underwood and William L. Burke, ed.s *The Dawn of Religious Freedom in South Carolina* (Columbia, S.C: University of South Carolina Press, 2006); Jeffrey Young, *Domesticating Slavery: The Master Class in Georgia and South Carolina, 1670-1837* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 17-56.

period initiated a dynamic stage of community formation, perpetuated by the demographic and ideological challenges that attended the growth of slavery and a growing slave population, and accelerated by the rhetorical energy of revolution and religious freedom. This long process of institutional development yielded what appeared to be a range of more inclusive interracial spiritual communities, but the reality was much more complicated. The revolutionary era was certainly one of institutional dynamism, but the structural transformation of religious communities also belied the continuity of central discursive themes. The most persistent of these was an old social question about the function of religion. During the mid-eighteenth century, a transatlantic evangelical network challenged religious institutions "to convert, not to civilize." As evangelists like Whitefield and Wesley spread this message on their missionary jaunts through South Carolina, they imported a dialectic that continued to define religious practice in and around Charleston into the post-colonial era. By inserting a new liturgical style into the religious climate of colonial Charleston, evangelicals not only challenged the staid cultural traditions of the established church, but also the basic function of religious institutions. Liturgical divergence was the lens through which most Charlestonians experienced a multivalent religious dialectic between the traditional social function of civilization and the individualized spiritual function of conversion.

Through the synthetic process of Americanization, the churches of Charleston transfigured the Old World religious dynamic of class into New World religious dynamics of race and status. Contained within Ramsay's survey of post-colonial attitudes towards religious trends and traditions are indicators of an evolving status-consciousness, increasingly tied to perceptions of racial difference. Between the colonial

slaveholder's confident neglect of slave spirituality and the post-colonial explosion of interracial religious institutions lurks a long and unfinished process of community formation.[6] The hidden dynamics of this process comprise the narrative focus of this chapter. The chapter begins with a narrative breakdown of community formation into overlapping discursive threads of race and status, then connects the dots between representative nodes of religious association to distill some general patterns of institutional development and nation-building. The chapter concludes with a suggestive argument about the short-term and long-term products of these revolutionary-era dialectics. This process of Americanization, initiated by colonial evangelists and negotiated by the interracial spiritual communities of revolutionary Charleston, generated an expansive and fluid sense of post-colonial unity – an exceptional and momentary coalition of disparate social impulses – that defined the national consciousness of lowcountry Carolinians for generations to come.

From Class to Race: The Religious Dialectic of Inclusion and Exclusion

Though largely contained within the institutional structure of colonial churches, emergent from the doctrinal fracture pattern exposed by the Garden-Whitefield conflict were two distinct perspectives on the proper relationship between doctrines of soteriological equality and practices of social inequality. The first, modeled by

[6] Florencia Mallon, "Reflections on the Ruins: Everyday Forms of State Formation in Nineteenth Century Mexico," in *Everyday Forms of State Formation*, eds. Gilbert Joseph and Daniel Nugent (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), p 69-106.

Whitefield and his revivalist colleague John Wesley, represented a critique of slavery and slaveowners as viewed from the outside, ambiguously indicting both the inherent immorality of slavery in the abstract and the more personalized shortcomings of slaveholders who neglected the spiritual welfare of their human property. The second, modeled by institutionalist paragons like Alexander Garden, represented a defensive program of improvement designed to accommodate the spiritual needs of parish slaves within the boundaries of institutional and social orthodoxy.

Whitefield's critique of slavery in the *abstract* was incoherent (or at best ambiguous), and ultimately transposed into proslavery advocacy. However, he clearly and consistently condemned *particular* aspects of the master-slave relationship, namely the neglect and mistreatment that degraded both master and slave. To colonial slaveholders he wrote, "your dogs are carres'd and fondled at your tables, but your slaves, who are frequently stiled dogs or beasts, have not equal privilege." Relegating slaves to sub-human status debilitated not only the soul of the slave, but also that of the master who failed to meet his spiritual obligations. "Most of the Comforts you enjoy were solely owing to their labors," which entitled slaves to a measure of reciprocity. Whitefield hoped to jar slaveowners from their insidious apathy and close the gap between perceptions of white and black humanity, but this was a message most South Carolinians were not yet ready to hear.[7]

Whitefield's American experiences with slavery in the particular ultimately transformed his position on slavery in the abstract. In 1741, Whitefield appeared before

[7] George Whitefield, *A Letter to the Inhabitants of Maryland, Virginia, and North and South Carolina concerning their Negroes*, originally published in Benjamin Franklin's *Pennsylvania Gazette*, April 17, 1740.

Parliament to argue in favor of the introduction of slavery to Georgia, and in 1749 became a slaveowner himself through his Bethesda orphanage, also in Georgia. Such developments did not substantially alter the tone of his address to American slaveholders. Whitefield consistently directed his most damning condemnations of slave mistreatment to the unconverted, but also levied a charge of spiritual neglect against Christian slaveholders that echoed the message contained in Wesley's epigraph. Even some of the most well-intentioned Christian masters misunderstood their spiritual responsibilities, conflating the work of "civilizing" slaves with the "Christianizing" mission that was their true obligation. No matter how much nuance Whitefield packed around his commentaries to soften the blow, conventional Anglicans like Alexander Garden read the inflammatory upshot of his writings with gritted teeth.

Garden objected to Whitefield's doctrines in equal parts social and spiritual; most basically, he rejected Whitefield's self-styled prophecies as engines of disorder. The social institutions and Anglican operations Whitefield slandered were the product of colonial and ecclesiastical tradition, sanctioned by the fathers of the Anglican Church, and ultimately approved by Christ himself via the holy channels of Apostolic Succession. By straying from the given formula, Whitefield spoke as if for God, circumventing the appropriate channels of His ordained earthly conduits. In Garden's estimation, this was tantamount to blasphemy: "Had god sent you charged with this special *Message*, you might well say, that you must inform them of it; but as 'tis only a matter of your own thoughts, the necessity of it does not so well appear." Such was the theological key to ecclesiastical or social conservatism: to condemn new doctrines, like Whitefieldian or

Wesleyan antislavery, as delusional or diabolical. The forces of change, in the conservative mold, flowed down from the mind of God, not up from the mind of men.[8]

As the established religion of the South Carolina colony, the Anglican Church was a public institution and its agents public servants. Outsiders like Wesley and Whitefield were less beholden to the social and economic interests of the colony and freer to prioritize spiritual ideals above everyday realities. Those operating within the restraints of the colonial church worked to fulfill the objectives of an established church, a ministry structured to accommodate English colonists and their families. Early church leaders adopted a laissez-faire attitude towards the spiritual lives of slaves in the parish, and stood by as most white Charlestonians relegated slaves to the periphery of their imagined religious communities. Early colonial laws and traditional interpretations of Old Testament slavery that defined slaves according to religious identification (non-Christian) had been amended to allow for Christian slaves, but these traditions continued to confuse Carolinians about the implications of a slave's conversion to Christianity.[9]

Early colonists proved more familiar with laws regarding the classification of white Dissenters. From the outset, Carolina's Fundamental Constitutions stated the colony's intention to maintain the "national religion" by establishing the Church of England, but also to guarantee some freedom of worship to non-Anglicans. The Constitution established a protocol for Dissenters to establish their own churches, and colonists put this into practice right away. The first Anglican Church in the Carolinas

[8] Alexander Garden, *Six Letters to George Whitefield* (Boston: T. Fleet, 1740), 50.
[9] In 1712, the colonial Assembly passed a law to clear up any lingering confusion about "the propriety of instructing slaves in the Christian Religion." Included in the "Act for the better ordering and governing of Negroes and Slaves," was a provision that "religion may not be made a pretence, to alter any man's property and right…and no persons may neglect to baptize their negroes or slaves or suffer them to be baptized, for fear that thereby they should be manumitted." Frederick Dalcho, *Historical Account of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: E. Thayer, 1820), 94.

was St. Philip's, organized in Charleston during the 1680s. By the time the Anglicans had completed construction in 1690, two other churches had sprung up in their midst - the French Huguenots built a church east of the Cooper River and an amalgamated group of Dissenters built their own "white meeting house" a few blocks north of St. Philip's. By the end of the century, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Quakers, and Baptists were each conducting their own separate worship services in the white meetinghouse or in private quarters around Charleston. [10]

The ecumenical tapestry of religious life in Carolina continued to grow richer throughout the eighteenth century. Charleston Baptists established their own separate church in 1701, and the various other sects that occupied the white meetinghouse were able to follow suit soon after. By mid-century, Carolinians had cultivated one of the most tolerant religious climates in the British colonies, second only to Roger Williams' collection of radicals and rogues in Rhode Island. The Anglicans enjoyed a narrow plurality among churchgoers through most of the century; a survey from 1740 documents 45% of white South Carolinians affiliated with the Church of England, 42.5% "other Protestants" (primarily Presbyterians and "French Protestants"), 10% Baptist, and 2.5% Quaker. Charleston was also home to a sizable community of Sephardic Jews and German Lutherans, who established prominent houses of worship in 1750 and 1759, respectively. Still, Carolina's early economic growth outpaced the growth of its religious institutions, and brought with it an influx of slave laborers that widened the gap between the number of resident souls and the institutional capacity to serve them. The transatlantic revivalism of mid-century raised awareness of the colony's relative dearth of religious

[10] Robert Mills, *Statistics of South Carolina* (Charleston: Hurlbut and Lloyd, 1826), 454-56.

resources, but to little immediate effect. As suggested by Wesley's epigraph, early evangelists who took an interest in slave souls found themselves isolated by wider patterns of disinterest and resistance. Wesley's account implied a charge of spiritual neglect against the slaveholders and parish priests who left their slave dependents ignorant of the Gospel. Anglican authorities were aware of their perceived shortcomings, but assured themselves that God's message would reach the ears of His intended recipients according to His schedule. From the superficial perspective of church attendance, slaves were present at worship in consistent and significant numbers. Those careful enough to observe from a more intimate perspective, however, recognized that slaves who participated in interracial worship did so as second class citizens. Like the woman Wesley interviewed in 1737, many slaves experienced Sunday service as work, fulfilling an obligation to their master, not their maker.[11]

The image of the slave attendant, sitting on the floor in the aisle outside the master's pew, depicts the semi-permeable racial boundary of colonial religious community. The pew door that separated master from slave on the sanctuary floor was an accepted and unexamined representation of the social barrier that barred slaves from

[11] Dalcho, *Episcopal History*, 100-101, 147, citing Wynne's *History of the British Empire in America;* The population of the colony had reached a black majority by 1708. Peter Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in South Carolina from 1670 to the Stono Rebellion* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996), 36. See census data in Appendix A. The mainstream Protestant denominational histories that inform the bulk of this chapter's narrative and analysis exclude several of the religious groups present in eighteenth and/or nineteenth century Charleston, most notably Jews, Quakers, and Catholics. The Quaker Church in South Carolina dwindled during the colonial period and did not figure prominently into the dialectical subject of this chapter. Chapter Three discusses the final purge of Quaker remnants during the nineteenth century; though Catholics were present during this period, their extent of formal organization was minimal until the 1820s. Charleston Catholics established a church in 1789 and worshiped at the Methodist meeting house on Hassell St until 1821, when scattered pockets of Catholics in South Carolina and Georgia united under the purview of the new Diocese of Charleston. See *The Year Book of Charleston,* 1897; Richard Madden, *Catholics in South Carolina: A Record* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1985).

full communion in the Christian communities of Charleston. On a wider scale, Alexander Garden described this barrier as an impediment fortified by *both* white *and* black Carolinians to separate black Carolinians from the accommodations of "national religion." He wrote that the slave community existed as a "Nation within a Nation," in which they "live…labour together and converse almost wholly among themselves." While outsiders like Wesley and Whitefield called Carolinians to break down these walls, they offered no practical means of demolition. Nonetheless, their agitations compelled insiders like Garden to reconsider the social and spiritual dimensions of racial difference and ultimately motivated his Anglican superiors to demand more active incorporation of slaves into the church.[12]

The substantial economic and political clout of the dissenters notwithstanding, Garden and his superiors clung to the hegemonic responsibilities of establishment: to solidify the moral compass of the colony around the "national religion" of its Anglican foundations. The colonial state developed a public religious institution in South Carolina that assumed a position of compromised responsibility for the moral health of the colony. Garden's tenure as commissary (1720-54) greatly expanded the ancillary attentions of the Anglican Church in South Carolina, first to the "inferior sort" of colonists who could not bear the financial burden of church membership and ultimately to the unchurched slaves that comprised the colony's black majority. Garden observed the social isolation of lowcountry slaves and the extent to which this translated into religious isolation. Slaves who attended his preaching at St. Philip's experienced Anglican worship not as

[12] Dalcho, *Episcopal History,* 104-14, 149. Garden's superiors encouraged religious education for slaves on several occasions, including two "pastoral letters" from the 1720s and 30s. See. More significant here is a 1742 letter from the Bishop of London encouraging the same, but more urgently, in response to the "slander" and "charges of negligence" levied against the Anglican Church in Charleston by Whitefield's agents in the Society for Propagation of the Gospel (SPG).

participants, but as visitors – An African nation within an English nation. In order to better orient slaves to the Anglican religious community, Garden proposed a system of indoctrination that would gradually transcend the micronational boundaries that isolated the slave family. The primary targets of Garden's plan were the minds of slave children. As the most available and most manipulable point of access to the slave population, children too young to work represented the most viable vector of religious instruction. Through a two-decade program geared towards "instructing the young Slaves" to "read the Bible to [their families], and other Tracts of Instruction of Evenings and other spare Times," Garden hoped to cultivate a new generation of Christianized and Anglicized slaves. Ideally, the product of Garden's pedagogical campaigns would be a bi-racial strata of workers united by the Anglican church, in which "the Knowledge of the Gospel 'mong the Slaves…would not be much inferior to that of the lower sort of white People, Servants and day Labourers."[13]

Garden pitched his educational program to colonial authorities and the private citizens of his parish, and in 1740 began to align the resources necessary to open a school in Charleston. Generous donations from the congregants at St. Philip's enabled Garden to construct a school building and purchase two "intelligent slave boys" to train as teachers. By 1743, the school was open for business, teaching colored children, and eventually adults, to read and write. Scripture was the focus of Garden's curriculum, but the general textbooks enlisted as tools to Biblical literacy also endowed Garden's students with skills of secular application. Through the leadership of his slave

[13] Walter Fraser, *Charleston! Charleston!: The History of a Southern City* (Columbia: USC Press, 1991), 39; Alexander Garden, letter (1740) quoted in John Duncan, "Servitude and Slavery in Colonial South Carolina," (Ph.D. Dsst: Emory University, 1972), 358.

pedagogues, Harry and Andrew, Garden's project became a moderate success. Garden was so encouraged by the "very general and earnest Desire among Negroe Parents of having their Children instructed, and also Emulation among many of them that are capable of Instruction," that he proposed an expansive implementation of the Charleston/St. Philip's template throughout the lowcountry. [14]

Outside of Charleston, Garden's plan fell on deaf ears. When the new Rector of St. John's Parish (Colleton) accepted his post in 1763 and moved to implement a program of slave evangelization comparable to Garden's, he encountered immediate resistance and was consequently transferred from the parish. The general attitudes of eighteenth century planters towards slave Christianization in St. John's and throughout the lowcountry ranged from indifference to militant opposition. Antiquated legal and scriptural traditions continued to confuse Carolinians about the implications of a slave's conversion to Christianity. Many slaveowners were apathetic or defensive. Some perceived evangelical intervention as an encroach upon their paternalist responsibilities and authority, and harbored suspicions about the radical social doctrines of "foreign" evangelizers. Many Carolinians, especially in the lowcountry south of Charleston, associated slave missions with the extremist tinge of the First Great Awakening – George Whitfield's assault on tradition and class-consciousness and Hugh Bryan's messianic prediction of violent reprisals against slaveowners. Garden strove consistently to distance himself from the more radical faces of evangelicalism but found the perceived

[14] Dalcho, *Episcopal History*, 64. Some reports indicate the slaves were purchased as part of an earlier initiative to train slaves as Indian missionaries. See George Howe, *History of the Presbyterian Church in South Carolina* (Columbia, SC: McDuffie, 1965), 1:247. Andrew was a tentative and problematic teacher from the start – trained like Harry, but a little slower to develop; when the Rector of St. Andrew's parish requested a Negro teacher, Garden insisted that Andrew was not ready to teach a stand-alone class, and even requested permission to purchase or train a replacement. Andrew was ultimately sold at Charleston slave market, but Garden never procured replacement.

social threat of the movement too powerful to shake. Given the "prejudices to be overcome, objections removed, advantages pointed out," Garden's successes seem all the more remarkable. [15]

Garden's consistent moderation and the exceptional environment in which he cultivated his initial program seemed to be the only factors he had working in his favor. Only in St. Philip's Parish, where Anglican institutional resources and Garden's personal connections were the strongest, could a school like Garden's openly succeed. Even there, the life of Garden's school was limited. The St. Philip's school grew to accommodate 70 students by the 1750s, but soon after Garden retired in 1754, internal crises, external pressures, and an increasingly distracted base of local support sent it into decline. Garden's successors proved less moderate, one of whom even adopted an apocalyptic rhetoric in the loathsome tradition of Hugh Bryan, preaching that a violent earthly judgment would come to Carolinians for their neglect of slave spirituality. Local disapproval slowly descended upon Harry, the enslaved dean of the St. Philip's School, whom the Vestry eventually removed from his duties and consigned to live out the rest of his days in the Charleston Work House. Void of backing or leadership, the school finally closed its doors in 1764 or 1768.[16]

Both the limited success and ultimate failure of Garden's educational program established important precedents for the post-colonial course of interracial relations in Charleston and the South Carolina lowcountry. As an indirect response to the outsiders who demanded more universal and less compromised paths to slave salvation, Garden

[15] On the "remonstrance" of Rev. Isaac Amory (Colleton), see Dalcho, *Episcopal History*, 361-62; on the radical career of Hugh Bryan and his relationship with George Whitefield, see Young, *Domesticating Slavery*, 33-35; Dalcho, *Episcopal History,* 103; Howe, *Presbyterian History*, 240-41.
[16] Dalcho, *Episcopal History*, 64. According to John Duncan, the final closure of the school did not come until Harry's relocation to workhouse in 1768.

worked within the social and legal framework of his colony and community to forge an uncritical, institutional path of improvement. But even if Garden's noble program had survived, it would not have passed Whitefield's ultimate test of spiritual value. Garden may have innovated a deft strategy of indoctrinating the slave family, but his inadequate and conservative doctrine rendered the whole project a useless exercise. "There is a vast difference between **civilizing and Christianizing** a negro. A black man…may be civilized by outward restraints and afterwards break thru those restraints again," Whitefield wrote, but making a negro a "thorough Christian" was a project of endless effect and infinite value.[17]

Within its ambiguities and contradictions, the central thread of Whitefield's message on slavery in the American colonies was roughly congruent with the objective of Garden's plan. The transatlantic slave trade created an opportunity for the spiritual progress of African heathen, contingent upon the support of clergy and masters. Garden and Whitefield seemed to have agreed more than they differed. They differed on seemingly minor details of doctrine and liturgy, but both men contended that the Devil lurked in the details. Whitefield harbored damning grievances against some of the fundamental doctrines of Anglican theology, but the official accusations against him amounted to liturgical mismanagement. Garden brought him before an ecclesiastical court for omitting the *Book of Common Prayer* from worship services he conducted in and around Charleston. As a violation of Whitefield's priestly vows, such an omission was cause for ecclesiastical discipline, but most of these violations occurred in dissenting churches, and would not likely have been noticed by most of those in attendance.

[17] George Whitefield, *Three Letters from the Reverend Mr. G. Whitefield.* (Philadelphia: B. Franklin, 1740).

The foregoing analysis is not meant to minimize the role that liturgy played within in the larger context of racial and social dynamics. In fact, liturgical apparence assumed a position of priority or immediacy for contemporary participants and/or observers that preceded other dimensions of contrast. When later generations of Carolinians reflected upon Whitefield's legacy, they saw in his liturgical misdemeanors the germs of a more fundamental and imposing challenge to the Anglican Church and ecclesiastical authority in general. Looking back on the colonial roots of post-colonial religious life, Ramsay wrote: "both were good and useful men, but in different ways." Whitfield "soared above" the liturgical forms that constrained Garden's considerable energies. Garden's piety "ran in the channel of a particular sect of Christians; but [Whitefield's], confined neither to sect nor party, flowed in the broad and wide-spreading stream of Christianity." The Garden-Whitefield conflict signified a modern fracture in the conventional Anglican religious experience - the emergence of two competing definitions of religious association that would weave their way through the spiritual and social fabric of revolutionary and post-colonial experience. In different forms and under different names, the religious dispositions modeled by Garden and Whitefield exchanged and adapted new meanings according to the "times and circumstances" of the next century. [18]

[18] Dalcho, *Episcopal History*, 128. Whitefield did directly challenge the Anglican establishment through his sermons from dissenting pulpits, "as the gospel was not being preached in the church, to go and hear it in the meeting-house." Howe, *Presbyterian History*, 238.

From Class to Status: Traditional and Prescriptive Models of Association

Though he operated under the auspices of Anglican authority, Whitefield proceeded from the belief that his own experiences and relationship with God licensed him to preach whenever, wherever, and however he wanted.

> Since it has pleased God to give me a true knowledge of the Doctrines of Grace, I have frequently thought, that next to the falling away of the Clergy from the Principles of the Reformation, the Books, which are in our Church founded on the *Arminian* Scheme, have been the Chief Cause why so many of our own Communion in particular have built their Hopes of Salvation on a false Bottom… I confess, that the Devotions…were once of Service to me. And I believe have been useful to many others. The Book [of Anglican catechism] in general is calculated to *civilize*, but I am persuaded it never was the means of *converting* one single Soul.[19]

To reach the hearts and convert the souls of a worldly people, Whitefield employed a worldly, emotive, populist style of preaching that probed beneath the "false Bottom" of cold Anglican tradition. Whitefield's famously effective preaching style guaranteed that his engagements in South Carolina were sensational and well-attended events, but did not immediately and overtly alter the course of religious practice in the colony. Whitefield lauded the "dress and deportment" of his audiences in Charleston, but also sensed that they failed to fully accept his messages of Christocentrism and damnation. For the short run of the colonial era at least, religious tradition weathered the passing storm of evangelical challenge. Whitefield's dynamic impact in the rest of the British colonies cast a shadow over American history that ultimately relegated Alexander Garden to the

[19] Whitefield, "A Letter from the Rev. George Whitefield, from Georgia, to a friend in London, Showing the Errors of a Book, entitled the *Whole Duty of Man* (1740)," quoted in Dalcho, *Episcopal History*, 136. Whitefield strayed from what he considered to be the conventional Anglican (Arminian) doctrine of universal redemption to a Calvinist doctrine of election. Though this deeply inflected his evangelical approach, it remained subtext to his conflict with Anglican authorities in South Carolina.

less glamorous role of local sparring partner, but both contributed equally to the headwaters of religious modernization in South Carolina. [20]

Atop the foundation of Garden and Whitefield, successive generations of black and white Carolinians layered the sediments of religious institution. The Methodist church was the most dynamic of post-colonial religious organizations, but it was also the product of a long and latent history of organic affiliation, catalyzed by the formative events of independence and disestablishment. The "Methodist" label originated perjoratively to describe Wesley and his agitations at Cambridge, became an unacknowledged title for Wesleyan influence, and migrated to South Carolina with the visitations of Wesley and Whitefield. In order to address the issues that surrounded the Whitefield controversy, Garden delivered two sermons "Occasioned by some erroneous Notions of certain Men who call themselves *Methodists*." The presence of a "Methodist" sub-sect of radical Anglicans in Charleston became the pretext for Garden's response to Whitefield, but also represents a synthetic layer of the social dialectic, between two competing patterns of association – one determined by the inherited bonds of tradition and the other by the voluntary pattern of a modern, contractual model. By the 1740s, a group of self-identified "Methodists" had organized themselves privately and informally into a worship community supplementary to the Anglican Communion. These informal gatherings of colonial Methodists were an early product of the productive tension between ecclesiastical tradition and evangelical progress. Through a local dialectic of top-down and bottom-up associative models, followers of Whitefield and

[20] Whitefield journal entry of Jan. 6 1740 in Luke Tyerman, *The Life of Rev. George Whitefield* (Azle, TX: Need of the Times Publishers, 1995).

Wesley synthesized a hybrid religious community inspired by the modern impetus of voluntary association but still beholden to the structural norms of Anglican tradition. [21]

The relatively wide berth of religious tolerance in the Carolina colony endowed colonists with the power of religious choice, but the primary factors that informed decisions of religious affiliation reflected a more traditional pattern of religious association, inculcated through inherited familial, ethnic, or national dispositions. The fact that Methodists remained within the structural fold of the Anglican Church reflects the relative balance of tradition and novelty during the colonial period – traditional norms of community (gemeinschaft) resonated more deeply than burgeoning currents of society (gesellschaft). Disestablishment was an important breach in the wall of tradition, which opened the gates for the formal organization of a Methodist church, and signified the ascendance of a new operative framework for institutional development in South Carolina. During the late eighteenth century, a confluence of social, religious, and political trends loosened the cultural viscosity of tradition and amplified the resonance of the modern associative form to tip the balance towards voluntarism. [22]

The Anglican Church was the largest and most distinguished denomination of the colonial era. As a general rule, Charleston's Anglican contingent was wealthier, more prominent, and less pious than its dissenting counterparts. Those who held pews or

[21] Alexander Garden, *Regeneration, and the Testimony of the Spirit: Being the Substance of Two Sermons Lately Preached in the Parish Church of St. Philip, Charles-Town, in South-Carolina. Occasioned by Some Erroneous Notions of Certain Men Who Call Themselves Methodists* (Boston: Peter Timothy, 1741).
[22] Ferdinand Tönnies, *Community and Civil Society* (Cambridge University Press, 2001). The sociological typology of gemeinschaft and gesellschaft developed by Ferdinand Tonnies provides a useful framework for understanding the modernization of religious community in eighteenth century South Carolina. "Gemeinschaft" and "gesellschaft" refer to normal types of pre-modern and modern human association. Gemeinschaft is an association regulated by shared, or assumed common mores, in which individuals subordinate or equate the value their own self interest to the unified value of the community; Gesellschaft refers to a type of association based upon the subjective and voluntary articulation of shared interests, in which the larger association is never valued more than the individual's self interest.

attended services at St. Philip's or St. Michael's participated in worship as a public affair, a state-sponsored religious production of social capital. As a public institution, affiliation with the Anglican Church represented not only an essential signal of elevated social status, but also the primary religious venue to political capital. Anglicanism served the hegemonic functions of an established church, which included the regular co-optation of dissenting interests. High-ranking colonial officials, regardless of religious affiliation, were expected to attend services in their reserved pews in Charleston's Anglican Churches. The performative social ritual of Anglican Church attendance also engaged much of the "mechanic" class of Charlestonians, who "created an identity of place" in the church galleries that "mirrored that of the elite in the box pews on the floor."[23]

Still, there were others disenchanted by the elitist and restrictive climate of Anglican fellowship. Emigrants from northern colonies and Charlestonians marginalized by the religious traditions of high society cultivated alternative spiritual forums. As the most self-consciously democratic denomination active in colonial South Carolina, the Baptist church represented the most radical departure from the traditional mode of community formation. As documented by Rhys Isaac in his study of colonial Virginia, the contractual model of Baptist congregation presented a challenge to the Anglican

[23] The Carolinian elite regularly brought the historically disfranchised to the polls – "Jews, servants, common sailors and Negroes" – whenever it suited their ends. When the Bishop of London visited the city in 1707, he was predictably disgusted by the wanton recklessness of the city's unchurched majority, but also taken aback by the laissez-faire operations of ecclesiastical authorities. He characterized the nominally Anglican community of early Charleston as "one of the vilest races of man upon earth,…bankrupt pirates and libertines who go openly with the Dissenters." Petition from House of Lords, 1703, quoted in Dalcho, *Episcopal History*, 65; Bishop of London quoted in George Walton Williams, *St. Michael's Charleston, 1751-1951* (Charleston: College of Charleston Library, 2001), 4; Louis Nelson, *The Beauty of Holiness: Anglicanism & Architecture in Colonial South Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008) , 329.

establishment that consternated colonial authorities. [24] In South Carolina, elite attitudes towards Baptists were occasionally aggravated by the threat of evangelical infiltrators. The most intense Baptist agitation of the colonial period stemmed from a growing sect of "Separate" Baptists recently migrated from the north, whose primitive liturgy and enthusiastic emotionalism earned them the fear and scorn of colonial authorities. Some New England Congregationalists were so taken with Whitefield's influence that they were cast out of their congregations for consistently and excessively enthusiastic displays. This group of "Separate" cast-offs found a new home in the Baptist Church, first in New England and then in the Carolinas. In Charleston, the "Regular" Baptists resented association with the "disorderly set" of Separates, who "permitting every ignorant man to preach that chose…encourage[d] noise and confusion in their meetings." But in the High Hills of Santee, along the frontier of upcountry evangelicalism and lowcountry formalism, the two Baptists sects joined into a common body. This fortuitous union yielded a faith stronger than the sum of its parts; it energized the Regulars, stabilized the Separates, and gave rise to the career of South Carolina's most important Baptist leader, Richard Furman.[25]

Furman split his formative years between a conventional aristocratic Anglican upbringing in Charleston and time spent along the frontier at the family home in High Hills. It was in the High Hills, at age 16, that he converted to Separate Baptism. The Spirit compelled Furman to exhort spontaneously at Baptist meetings, and local Baptists recognized his potential. A capable and rational orator of pure spirit and high pedigree,

[24] Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1988), 289-93, 310-11; Andrew Levy, *The First Emancipator: The Forgotten Story of Robert Carter, the Founding Father Who Freed His Slaves* (New York: Random House, 2005).
[25] James Rogers, *Richard Furman: A Life and Legacy* (Macon, GA: Mercer Univ. Pres, 1985), 16

Furman was ordained to preach two years after his conversion. Oliver Hart, then a leading South Carolina Baptist, realized that Furman's sober and rational style of preaching was well suited to the high-church tastes of the Charleston Baptist Association. Hart styled Furman as his successor and the two men forged a friendship that would define Baptist leadership in South Carolina for two generations. Furman preached in an animated style, but also exuded qualities of dignity and reason that enabled him to represent the best face of both primitive spiritual energy and civilized religious tradition. He periodically served the Baptist community of Charleston, but deferred the call to a permanent post until 1787, when he accepted a job at the First Baptist Church, the highest Baptist pulpit in the south.[26]

Furman entered a ministerial climate ripe with agitations of revolution and religious freedom. Alongside the Congregationalist rector William Tennent, Furman became South Carolina's most recognizable leader in the fight for disestablishment. It was Tennent who sponsored the Act of Disestablishment that first made its way before the General Assembly in 1778, but it was Furman and his Baptist denomination that were most readily associated the "triumph of civil and religious freedom" in South Carolina. The anti-authoritarian bent of their denominational structure made Baptists thorns in the side of colonial rule, and General Cornwallis considered Furman to be the most painful of Baptist thorns. Cornwallis made his disdain (and fear) public in 1780, offering 1000 pounds for the capture of Richard Furman. Furman's association with the Patriot cause left a distinctive stamp on his early career. The notice of Cornwallis's reward soon

[26] "Minutes of the Charleston Baptist Association, 1788-91," SCL. The meaning of 'high' in this context is roughly equivalent to "ritualist." The semantic distinctions of high and low will be defined fully below in the context of post-colonial Episcopalian usage. As for Baptists in colonial South Carolina, "high" church practices refer to a greater valuation of liturgical formality and accordance with "Regular" Baptist ritual.

blossomed into the stuff of legend. Baptists especially took pride in an apocryphal quote from Cornwallis on his enemies in Carolina: the Patriot Armies of Francis Marion and Thomas Sumter may have given Cornwallis cause for concern, but Richard Furman's power of prayer left him positively terrified. [27]

The Cornwallis story documented Furman's legendary status in the Patriot imagination, but a more substantial feat was his role in the rapid accession of the Baptist Church into the post-colonial mainstream. Aided by a confluence of historical trends, Furman successfully translated the egalitarian spirit of Baptist faith into the hierarchical reality of southern society. Though brought to the faith through the experience of Separate revivalism, Furman's traditional upbringing and intellectual reserve left him predisposed to reject the more radical edges of Separate Baptist practice. Furman trimmed the "evils which attend Separate revivals," but maintained the zeal of his formative experiences in a stolid and energetic ministry. When ministering in the High Hills, Furman dressed as his fellow frontiersmen and led worship in an informal style suited to the frontier culture; when serving in Charleston, Furman dressed in the cosmopolitan style of the Charlestonians and presided over a liturgy that conformed to the expectations of respectable society. Once informed that the leather-and-fur set back in High Hills had taken "considerable offence…at my dress and appearance in Charleston," Furman explained his stylistic evolution as part of a general rule of cultural accommodation. "It is a principle I have long acted upon that it is proper to conform in a moderate degree to the prevailing customs of the place where we live…as it is the means

[27]Basil Manly, *Mercy and Judgment: Containing some fragments of the history of the Baptist Church in Charleston* (Providence: R.I.: Knowles, Vose, and co., 1837), 35; Rogers, *Richard Furman*, 39.

of avoiding an odious singularity, and of conciliating the minds of associates to a free and familiar intercourse."[28]

As rector at First Baptist, Furman's policy of moderate accommodation generated abundant personal and denominational returns. Charlestonians venerated Furman as "a faithful servant of God and the Republic" and Carolinians flocked to the doors of Baptist churches and revival meetings of Baptist preachers. The merger of Separate and Regular organizations combined with the booming reputation of Baptist patriots like Furman and Hart and turn-of-the-century camp-meeting revivalism to yield a period of unprecedented denominational growth. The number of Baptist communicants statewide doubled during the five years that spanned the turn of the century (1799-1804) and doubled again during the decade that followed.[29]

Baptist attitudes towards slavery and spiritual egalitarianism facilitated the denomination's numerical increase in South Carolina as much as Furman's spirit of accommodation facilitated their cultural assimilation. In accordance with the decentralized pattern of Baptist organization, antislavery doctrines originating from Baptist institutional centers in the north filtered unevenly into southern Baptist circles. During the colonial era, most South Carolina Baptists, including Richard Furman, proceeded from the assumption that slavery was "undoubtedly an evil," but also that slavery was a worldly concern secondary to the immediate spiritual concerns of the church. Baptism's ambiguous judgment on slavery, in concert with an unambiguous

[28] Rogers, *Richard Furman*, 64, 84.
[29] Alexander Garden, *Anecdotes of the Revolutionary War* (Charleston: R.E. Miller, 1822), 225; Rogers, *Richard Furman*, 43. From the first year of Furman's tenure at First Baptist (1787) to his last (1825), membership grew from 152 to 780. By 1825, the membership at First Baptist more than doubled the membership at the second largest Baptist Church in South Carolina. Minutes of the Charleston Baptist Association, SCL, 1787, 1825; Joe King, *A History of South Carolina Baptists* (Columbia: General Board of the South Carolina Baptist Convention, 1964), 305.

statement on the full spiritual equality of African souls, enhanced the denomination's appeal to black Carolinians. African-American converts were most responsible for the post-Revolutionary boom of the Baptist church. When Furman became rector of First Baptist, 170 of the church's 240 confirmed members were black; the dramatic growth of the church over the next twenty years roughly conformed to the same ratio. [30]

The formal emergence of a Methodist Episcopalian denomination in South Carolina during the late 1780s likely smoothed the Baptist transition to the cultural mainstream. At some point during the revolutionary era, the radicalism and efficacy of Methodist itinerants outflanked those of the Separate Baptists to earn Methodism the fear and ire of more traditional Protestants. Methodism became the denomination and style most intimately associated with the "evils" of revivalism. Reinforcing the social stigma generated by the denomination's novelty and heterodoxy were layers of racial anxiety generated by the hard-line antislavery doctrine of its founders and its disproportionate local success among slaves and free people of color. In both respects, Methodists exceeded the social liabilities of Carolina Baptists: the more centralized structure of Methodist authority meant southern churches could not mute denominational antislavery as easily as Baptist congregations, and Methodist evangelical success among black Carolinians in the lowcountry soon outpaced that of their Baptist counterparts. Similar numbers of African-Americans joined Baptist and Methodist congregations during the post-Revolutionary decade, but after the turn of the century, black Baptist growth plateaued while black membership in the Methodist Church continued to rise.[31]

[30] Minutes of Charleston Baptist Association, SCL, 1795; Richard Furman, letter to unknown addressee, in Richard Furman Papers, Baptist Historical Collection, Furman University.

[31] Historical statistics of early Baptist membership in South Carolina range widely. The Baptist Association in South Carolina did not include racial statistics in their yearly records until 1827, but other

By the 1780s, Methodist itinerant preachers had established a sizable following around the state, and the leaders of the young Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States, including Francis Asbury and Thomas Coke, spent a good deal of time in Charleston. Asbury initiated weekly Methodist worship services at Charleston's Baptist Meeting-House in 1784, and by 1787 the Methodists had established their own house of worship on Cumberland Street. All of Charleston's denominational histories involve a formative experience of persecution in some form, but Methodist narratives of persecution are the most vivid, the most compelling, and ultimately the least exaggerated. From the embryonic stages of the colonial period, Methodists capitalized upon the democratic spirit of the revolutionary era to organize themselves formally. While they were working to build a church of their own, the Methodist Society of Charleston met in private residences or in the ambiguous welcome of the Baptist Church. As they were about to begin services at the Baptist Meeting-house one Sunday around the turn of the century, "they found their seats flung out into the streets, and the doors and windows barred against them.… They regarded this as a mild intimation that they were not wanted." While this passage suggests their antagonists were members of (or at least abetted by) the Baptist Church, persecutors appear more often in Methodist chronicles as

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records suggest a likely statistical pattern for the preceding decades. The Charleston Baptist Association grew from a membership of 1970 in 1800 to 4159 by 1827. The latter number included 2005 black Baptists, and growth in the interim likely accorded to the same even racial proportion. In the city of Charleston, the racial breakdown of Baptist growth suggested a black majority. From an account of 70 white and 170 black congregants in 1795, to the official record of 175 white and 697 black members in 1827, the black majority at Furman's First Baptist Church ranged between 71% and 81%. Methodist membership figures are more precise. The Methodist Conference in Charleston reported 65 white and 280 colored members in 1793 (before the Hammet Schism) and 283 white and 3790 black members in 1815; David Benedict, *A General history of the Baptist Denomination in America* (Boston, 1813); Minutes of the Charleston Baptist Association, SCL, 1827; Francis A. F. A. Mood, *Methodism in Charleston: a narrative of the chief events relating to the rise and progress of the Methodist Episcopal church in Charleston, S.C., with brief notices of the early ministers who labored in that city.* (Nashville, Tenn.: Published by E. Stevenson and J.E. Evans, for the Methodist Episcopal church, South, 1856)., (Nashville: ME Church, South, 1856), 95, 123.

faceless aggressors. Vigilante mobs conducted regular harassments of Methodist clergy and burnings of Methodist tracts. On one such occasion they targeted George Dougherty, a sickly Methodist Preacher reportedly in possession of antislavery literature; Dougherty was forcibly removed from a Methodist meeting, cast out into the winter night, and doused under a fountain of cold water.[32]

The firm antislavery posture of the transatlantic Methodist leadership bred anxiety among white Carolinians and fueled assaults on local Methodist clergy and congregants. George Dougherty's preoccupation with spiritual concerns left him ill-prepared to protect himself or his church against the social anxieties of his community. Dougherty's family owned slaves, and he cooperated fully when the Intendant of Charleston asked his church to destroy any denominational literature critical of slavery, but these facts did not appease his agitators. It was an 1803 visit from Bishop Asbury that stirred the issue of Methodist antislavery in Charleston, and newspaper notices of antislavery pamphlets received by Methodist ministers in southern locales that brought the angry mob to the doors of Dougherty's Church.[33]

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[32] A.M. Chreitzberg, *Early Methodism in the Carolinas* (Nashville: Pub. House of the ME Church, 1877), 79. By some accounts, this dousing left Dougherty in a coma-like state and ultimately caused his demise; see Mood, *Methodism in Charleston*.

[33] Date of visit and assault from Albert Betts, *History of South Carolina Methodism* (Columbia: Advocate Press, 1952); The historiography of Dougherty's relationship with slavery is contradictory and revealing. Whereas white chroniclers depicted Dougherty as the most educated Methodist minister of his time, whose intellectualism may have distracted him from the art of public relations, black histories remembered Dougherty as a defiant protector of black liberties and secret abolitionist. In the Betts and Chreitzberg accounts, Dougherty was a persecuted innocent; Mood suggested Dougherty's ineffective public response to the abolitionist-press episode was partially responsible for his dousing. African-American oral tradition, on the other hand, reveals a different side of Dougherty's legacy. In the scrapbook collected by the descendants of Richard Holloway, one of Dougherty's African-American Methodist contemporaries, Dougherty is singled out as a devoted educator, who "taught Negro children in defiance of the law." In Septima Clark's history of black Methodism in Charleston, she leagued Dougherty with a number of contemporary antislavery Methodist preachers in Charleston and cited an unidentified letter from Dougherty to Asbury as evidence of his abolitionist tendencies. See Septima Clark, *Symbol of Faith* (Charleston: The Church, 1975).

Some of the same transatlantic currents that provoked the Dougherty assault, and thus threatened the viability of a Methodist church in Charleston from the outside, also threatened to destabilize the church from within. Thomas Coke revisited South Carolina in 1791, accompanied by his British protégé William Hammet. The provincial character of Methodist worship in the former colonies bothered Hammet, and his sermons in Charleston consistently appealed to the original "method" of Wesley while rebuking the heretic liberties taken by American Methodism. The primary antagonist of Hammet's invective was Bishop Asbury, the false "American Wesley," who "abandoned gown or powder" and conspired to take the American church for himself. Hammet's charismatic preaching won a sect of Charleston Methodists away from the authority of Asbury, who seceded to organize their own church under the label of "Primitive Methodism." Hammet's old world appeal exerted considerable influence among both wealthier Methodists and the more common audiences he reached through public sermons in the City Market. By 1793, he was sufficiently endowed to construct his own Trinity Methodist Church.

Hammet's church enjoyed an extraordinary period of early expansion. He organized the finance and construction of the "largest and neatest looking" Methodist church in Charleston, and soon established other satellite branches of Primitive Methodism around the British Atlantic. Primitive Methodism in Charleston did not survive Hammet's death in 1803, but it wrought a dramatic reconfiguration during the 1790s that had lasting effects for the structural patterns of Methodist community formation over the next several generations. [34]

[34] Mills, *Statistics of South Carolina*, 418.

The original machinations and early success of William Hammet's schism reflect some of the multiple and diverse resonances of modern trends in post-colonial Charleston. At its most basic level, the germ of the Hammet Schism was ambition – Charleston Methodists wanted Hammet to serve them in a long-term capacity, and Hammet petitioned his superiors to fulfill their request. As a "man of ingratiating personality and a preacher of considerable ability," Hammet quickly won the hearts and minds of Charleston Methodists. The South Carolina Conference had already made its appointments for the Charleston circuit, but Hammet "clamored for the appointment" and "most of the Methodists in Charleston" signed a petition to have Hammet replace the appointed Preacher in Charge. Asbury refused to make the change out of order (post-conference) and noted the event as signal of a more disturbing trend: "I am somewhat distressed at the uneasiness of our peoples, who claim the right to choose their own preachers, a thing quite new among Methodists." Hammet interpreted Asbury's decision as a personal affront, and turned against not only Asbury, but also his mentor Thomas Coke; he accused Asbury of abandoning Wesleyan Methodism and condemned Coke as "a sacrilegious tyrant."[35]

Hammet's ambitious strategy was informed by Coke's transatlantic critique of Asbury and American Methodism, but also by the complicated social and political dynamics of post-colonial Charleston. Hammet rejected the stereotype of Methodism as a faith "peculiarly suited to the poor" and recognized that this was a message of rhetorical power for a community made anxious by the status-conscious religious marketplace of

[35] John Wesley envisioned a four-year schedule of Methodist itinerancy, which was reduced to three years to accommodate the exigencies of American circuits. William Hammet, *An Impartial Statement of the Known Inconsistencies of the Reverend Dr. Coke, in His Official Station, As Superintendent of the Methodist Missionaries in the West-Indies: With a Brief Description of One of His Tours Through the United States* (Charleston, S.C.: W. Young, 1792).

republican Charleston. By distinguishing himself from the low-church tendencies of contemporary Methodists, Hammet schemed to remove the cultural markers of their ostracism and (in effect) do for Methodism what Furman was doing for Baptism.

Hammet's upstart rhetoric of spiritual democracy and high-church Wesleyan redemption fueled a retrograde schism, as he led half of Charleston's white Methodists away from the American Methodist church (he considered to be a schismatic rejection of Wesley) and back into the fold of "Primitive Methodism." Additionally complicating, and likely augmenting, Hammet's rhetorical strategy was his turnabout on the issue of Methodist slaveholding. Early in his career, Hammet espoused an antislavery doctrine generally consistent with that of the transatlantic Methodist establishment and especially consistent with that of his mentor Thomas Coke. By 1794, Hammet had become a slaveholder and adopted a more defensive attitude towards the institution of slavery. He soon realized that his turn away from the antislavery tenets of his former faith provided ammunition to his opponents in the Methodist establishment. In a diary entry of 1795, Hammet recorded charges levied against him by a former ally in the Primitive Methodist movement: "[John] Phillips…said he could hold no communion or fellowship with me because I was a member of the Ancient and honorable society of freemasons; and on account of my having a slave in my possession." Hammet went on to document his newly apologetic stance on the issue:

> My thoughts on Slavery, as to its lawfulness or unlawfulness, are few on this occasion – I cannot think the trade justifiable on general principles, but in a country where the custom has been handed down from generation to generation, and where free people cannot be hired as servants, and servants are necessary, it is as innocent to hold as to hire slaves, and rather more so, as a good man may tender his slaves every opportunity of improvement, and may free them if he please, whereas if hired, the money

> goes to extravagance, and to purchase more slaves so as to encourage their importation.[36]

Upon a return visit to Charleston in 1796, Thomas Coke observed that Hammet "has indeed a sufficiency of money to procure a plantation and stock it with slaves." Coke offered a more cynical interpretation of his former protégé's turnabout on slavery. "Tho no one was more strenuously against slavery than he while destitute of the power of enslaving," the theological and economic license that came along with the leadership of a new denomination had Hammet singing a different tune on the morality of slaveholding. Enhancing the proslavery and reactionary dimensions of Hammet's appeal was a bottom-up current of democratic resonance that violated the fundamental tenets of Methodist itinerancy. When a group of Charleston Methodists expressed their desire to have Hammet serve the church permanently, Hammet moved to give the people what they wanted. Hammet requested a permanent post in Charleston, which he knew to be anathema to the Methodist schematic of ministerial rotation enacted by the Wesleyan connection he admired, and upheld by the Asburyan connection he disdained. Once refused, Hammet created his own permanent post at Trinity, the church he served until his death twelve years later.[37]

In so doing, Hammet intentionally redacted the most exceptional feature of Methodist ministry in South Carolina. Methodism grew rapidly during the post-revolutionary decades in large part due to the energy and choreography of its itinerant ministry. Methodist preachers were constantly on the move, "indefatigable in their

[36] William Hammet, Journal Entry of Jan. 15, 1795, Hammet Papers, Duke University Libraries.
[37] Thomas Coke, *A Letter Addressed to the Preachers Lately in Connexion with the Rev. John Wesley: Containing Strictures on a Pamphlet Published by Mr. William Hammet…"* (London: n.p., 1793).

labors, preaching abundantly in the most remote settlements." Even those assigned to well-established urban posts, like the Methodist Association in Charleston, served temporary (three-year) terms. Ramsay observed that "New preachers successively addressing new congregations are roused to new and extraordinary exertions." The constant rotation of religious leadership imbued Methodism with a perpetual dynamism and sense of novelty that was a key ingredient of its appeal in a new nation, but also had its detractors. For some in attendance, the "circulating mode of preaching" prevented "that apathy and languor which is apt to result from long habits," but to others the tremendous dynamic energy generated by such a rootless institution seemed unstable and dangerous. In Charleston, the novelty of Methodist approach won many followers, but the lack of tradition and the criticism that went along with it made some Methodists self-conscious. By rejecting the new American style of "Mr. Asbury's connection" in favor of the old English style of "Mr. Wesley's connection," Hammet appealed to the more traditionalist and self-conscious of Charleston Methodists. [38]

Among the flock of Charleston Methodists drawn to Hammet's promise of traditional affirmation was William Capers. A wealthy slaveholding patriot, Capers converted to Methodism during the first year of its formal organization in South Carolina. Capers was taken with Hammet from his first appearance in Charleston. He was an original trustee of Trinity Methodist Church, and his devotion to Primitive Methodism carried on even after Hammet died and he relocated to Georgetown. Capers raised his children in accordance with the tenets of Hammet's church, but also allowed them to seek

[38] Ramsay, *History of South Carolina*, 32; Hammet Papers, DUL. Wesley also advocated the itinerant institution that Hammet rejected – further complicating the picture of Hammet's schism as a hodgepodge of traditionalism and modern license. Ramsay's assessment of anti-evangelical sentiment (the so-called "work of the devil") referred most specifically to local attitudes towards religious styles associated with Methodist camp-meetings.

out their own spiritual path. The early life of his son, William Capers, Jr. exemplifies the ways in which some elite South Carolinians encountered evangelicalism and Methodism during the post-Revolutionary era.[39]

William Capers, Jr. first experienced grassroots evangelism as a privileged and self-absorbed teenager. Drawn by the novelty and excitement, he went with along with his siblings to a number of lowcountry camp-meetings during the first years of the nineteenth century. By his own admission, his interest in these events was primarily social, and ultimately political. Young "Billy" hoped to be a part of the action, and while entertaining notions of a career in politics, hoped to meet some of his potential constituents. He was captivated by the violent physical affectations that struck some of his fellow congregants; though not affected physically himself, he was no less aware of the presence of God at these meetings. By the summer of 1806, these experiences led him in search of clearer indications of his own spiritual nature. He devoted himself to scriptural contemplation and prayer, but remained skeptical about his own spirituality.

Capers' eventual calling was both spiritual and professional. He proved uniquely suited to all the responsibilities of religious leadership; endowed with a perpetual sense of spiritual curiosity, Capers was a charismatic speaker and eloquent writer, who quickly won the affections of saint and sinner alike. According the contemporary standards of Carolina gentlemen, he received an adequate education – private tutoring, parochial school, three years of college, and brief periods of apprenticeship under a respected attorney and itinerant preacher. For men of the cloth, however, Charlestonians had higher expectations. Capers was well familiar with the esteemed Doctors of Theology

[39] William Wightman, *Life of William Capers, D.D., including an Autobiography* (Nashville: Pub. House of the M.E. Church, South, 1902), 24-25.

that held forth in the great pulpits of Charleston and London, and hesitated to preach before acquiring a higher level of scriptural education. His mentor assured him of the efficacy of the "brief Methodistic course" – to preach and study, study and preach, to cultivate many ministerial skills at once.

> In this argument he insisted much on the practical character of preaching: that to reach its end, it must be more than a well-composed sermon, or an eloquent discourse, or able dissertation. It must have to do with men as a shot at a mark; in which not only the ammunition should be good, but the aim true. The preacher must be familiar with man to reach him with effect.[40]

In almost every respect, the maturation of the Methodistic course in post-colonial South Carolina represented the belated culmination of Whitefield's colonial agitations. Whitefield credited his rhetorical success to his worldly experience and adaptability, "in that I have experimentally tried all things, and having suffered every sort of Temptation, can suit my advice to the different states and conditions of other People's Souls." Whereas the dogmatic clerics of the traditional mold lectured from above to "civilize" the flock, Whitefield stooped to "convert" the individual. Though disdained as a symptom of his hubris during the colonial era, Whitefield's unorthodox homiletic style eventually popularized a democratic and individualized approach to ministry. The Whitefield approach thus generated one of the most prominent currents of modern evangelicalism, a worldly preaching style employed to great effect by post-colonial Methodist itinerants like William Capers, Jr. [41]

Prolonged exposure to the Methodistic course during the post-colonial era was much more effective than Whitefield's brief colonial visits. Even more so than Baptist

[40] *Life of Capers*, 85.
[41] Whitefield, interview in *The Scots Magazine*, vol. 1 (1739), 209.

evangelists, Methodists capitalized upon the evangelical trends of the post-colonial era to grow their denomination. Methodists considered the decade between 1804 and 1815 to be the "most prosperous era of the Charleston churches" and Baptist Associations reported comparable gains during the same period. Nonetheless, colonial legacies of class-consciousness and persecution persisted to redirect the successes of revivalism in South Carolina. Capers noted that Methodist preaching was well esteemed and well attended, but that it remained "vastly more respectable to join some other Church, and still attend the preaching of the Methodists." This general flow of worshipers from informal evangelical outreach to formalized church membership "was thought to answer all purposes": Methodist preaching bettered one's soul, and membership in a more established Episcopal or Presbyterian Church bettered one's status.[42]

The spiritual-social arc of Capers' career, much like that of Richard Furman, reflected a wider trend of religious development in South Carolina. Both men fused the centripetal energy of grassroots evangelicalism to the centrifugal force of institutional and cultural restraint to forge careers that maximized the dynamic potential of their circumstance. Their professional ascendance paralleled those of their denominations - personal and institutional trajectories made possible by the special political and social conditions of the revolutionary era. The cognitive transformation that came along with independence offered a promising environment in which to institutionalize the modern impulse of voluntary association, but did not erase traditional norms from communal memory. Patriarchal patterns of community formation survived in a variety of forms,

[42] Mood, *Methodists in Charleston*; Minutes of the Charleston Baptist Association, SCL, 1828; *Life of Capers*, 145; see also membership statistics in note 31.

none more prominent than the regenerative traditions of Charleston's high-church denominations.[43]

During the colonial era, the Reformed churches of Charleston achieved a level of social prestige rivaled only by the established Anglican Church, and both Reformed and Anglican communities intended to preserve this tradition of social prominence. Over the course of the revolutionary era, the modern associative model of low-church evangelicals filtered into even these most stalwartly traditionalist religious communities. Through permeable accommodation of modern impulses, the elite Presbyterian and Congregationalist congregations expanded their share of social capital in Charleston without lowering their ecclesiastical or liturgical standards, and the former Anglican Church weathered substantial political and economic deficits incurred by disestablishment without lasting cultural consequences. According to Capers' account of status-conscious Methodists, this productive tension between modern and traditional patterns of religious association also brought new members to the doors of Charleston's more conservative Episcopalian and Presbyterian churches. More than just numerical increase, these new members and the winds of change that revived their spiritual curiosity had deep and lasting effects on the post-colonial evolution of the high-church traditions. The Presbyterian Church in South Carolina was essential to the success of early nineteenth-century revivalism in South Carolina. Presbyterian evangelicals actually ignited the conflagration of the "second Great Awakening" in South Carolina from the

[43] The term "patriarchal" here is borrowed from Rhys Isaac's juxtaposition of the patriarchal model of old English religious association against the "modern" or "contractual" model of evangelical Virginia Baptists; more generally, "patriarchy" can be considered equivalent to "gemeinschaft," and the upstart voluntaristic model of organization can be considered equivalent to "gesellschaft."

western frontier, but once their movement was appropriated by less formal Baptist or Methodist practitioners, they began to withdraw institutional support.

Within a few years of initiating the backcountry camp-meeting, Presbyterians discontinued their participation in revivalism because their leaders feared the "the false exercises,…the strange doctrines of the revivals," and the "fervor, noise, and disorder which an amalgamation with the Methodists was likely to produce." The higher educational standards required for Presbyterian ordination meant that licensed Presbyterian clergy would perpetually be outnumbered by Methodist or Baptist exhorters. Additionally, the trademark conservatism of Scots Presbyterians in Charleston drew denominational energy away from backcountry evangelism. In 1808, Ramsay observed that "much of the extraordinary fervor which produced camp meetings has abated…they are still kept up by the Methodists, but are deserted by most other denominations." From Ramsay's early modern Presbyterian perspective, this was an appropriate stage of religious evolution, as "more correct and rational ideas of religion are daily taking place," shifting the object of evangelical impact from the body to the mind. Presbyterian withdrawal from the camp-meeting phenomenon cost the denomination some of its mass appeal, but did not purge the denomination of modern and evangelical impulses. By the 1810s, Presbyterian ambivalence over the relative merits and dangers of evangelical campaigns evolved into an intergenerational conflict layered in ethnic and liturgical dimensions. A.W. Leland, a Pastor at First Scots, altered the worship service to involve a less formal liturgy, and moved to relax or "Americanize" the strictures of Presbyterian government. Defenders of Old World church traditions initiated proceedings to remove the upstart Leland from their distinguished pulpit. Leland had many younger allies

within the congregation, who defended him against these "enemies of evangelical religion." Leland and his progressive advocates ultimately yielded to the power of Scots traditionalists, who issued Leland a congregational release to "go where people are more congenial to your opinions." [44]

Some of Leland's younger and more progressive supporters found their way to a new congregation at Charleston's Second Presbyterian Church in the northern suburbs, and brought with them their twofold admiration of evangelical religion and church tradition. By the 1820s, the influence of the new wave compelled the congregation at Second Presbyterian to author an official policy on the degree to which they were willing to modernize the traditional liturgy. In 1827, a congregational committee issued the following statement of church policy:

> We are not of those who undervalue these ornaments of style and manner, and affect to despise the application of rhetorical rules to pulpit oratory. We would not confine our preachers to a mode of writing uniformly grave, solid, simple and austere. This would…suit well the taste of the elder and graver part of the community. But we would prefer the varied employment of the several species of composition, and the cultivation of agreeable location and delivery, so as to apply the various tastes and degrees of refinement of the whole of the audiences that fill our churches. The imagination and the affection of the young and ardent, must be aimed at, the feelings must be influenced, and even the passions occasionally aroused by judicious addresses, that by the terrors of the Law and by the bright promises of the Gospel, we may persuade them.[45]

The institutional accommodation of modern impulses even filtered into the new Protestant Episcopal denomination. The loss of colonial patronage, separation from

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[44] James Smith, *History of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church drawn from authentic documents* (Nashville: Cumberland Presbyterian Church, 1835), 571, 580; Loveland, Anne C. *Southern Evangelicals and the Social Order, 1800-1860.* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1980); Raphael Bell, *The Veil Withdrawn; or Presbyterianism Vindicated* (Charleston: Office of the Patriot, 1817); Second Presbyterian Church Minutes, SCL.

[45] Second Presbyterian Church Minutes, SCL.

ecclesiastical authority, and the stain of association with English oppression, rendered the Episcopalian church stagnant for several years after the revolution. It took the dissociated Anglican Church in Charleston two decades to re-establish the machinations of Apostolic Succession in the new republic and resume a position of prominence on the religious scene. All the while, the clerical and lay leaders of the Episcopalian community remained the strongest post-colonial exemplars of the traditional, hierarchical pattern of religious association. The new Protestant Episcopalian church proved willing to adapt to the new realities of a republican society, but looked to history for guidance, and found it in a series of early Episcopal bishops who would come to label themselves "Protestant Catholics." In their appeal to a seventeenth century tradition of Anglican moderation in a time of political and theological trial, Charleston's Episcopal leadership thus exemplified the underlying threads of continuity that survived the rupture of war and disestablishment.[46]

As demonstrated by Alexander Garden's temperate accommodation of activist impulses, the Anglican tradition did not unconditionally reject currents of change. The political trials of the revolutionary era proved this point, as 18 of the 23 Anglican clergy active in South Carolina subverted their vows of allegiance to the King to affirm the patriot cause. Augmenting this pattern to resuscitate the active status of the post-colonial church, a succession of Episcopal leaders – Theodore Dehon, Frederick Dalcho, Nathaniel Bowen, and Christopher Gadsen – layered Garden's groundwork of conservative reform with accommodationist sediments. By the 1810s and 20s, the

[46] Dalcho, *Episcopalian History*, 227; Ramsay, *History of South Carolina*, 21-23; Albert Thomas, *A historical account of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina,* (Columbia : R.L. Bryan, 1957), 41. The explicit referents of revolutionary-era Anglicans were Anglican divines of the 17th Century – Hooker, Andrews, and Thorndyke.

bottom-up escalation of grassroots evangelicalism made its way into even the most formal and established Episcopalian circles. Bishop Bowen observed "our Ministry commingled" in the religious services of "protracted or revival meetings…where canonical obligations have, I fear, been somewhat overlooked by our Clergy." Bowen feared the radical and negligent edge of revivalism, but did not deny the "potential good that might come from it." By the 1830s, Bowen's temperate moderation, and that of the Episcopal Church in the United States, was also confronted with a challenge from the other side of the social dialectic – a neo-conservative "Oxford Movement" of high-church Anglicans towards reinstatement of the lost traditions of Roman Catholic orthodoxy.[47]

While the Diocese of South Carolina was not formally affected by the separatist thrust of the Oxford Movement, there were some Carolinians who sympathized with the reformist objectives of the movement and became defensive, under suspicion of Romanizing the church. Their influence compelled local church leaders to categorize and accommodate a range of Episcopal affiliates, encompassing believers who held both "high" and "low" views as regards the ministry and the sacraments. In theory, the Episcopalian church ministered equally to both those who clung to traditional or "high" precepts (of ecclesiastical government sanction by apostolic succession, the regenerative power of baptism, and the Lord's presence in the sacrament of Communion), and those who questioned or denied these standards. "Low" church Episcopalians fell into the latter category, not because of any salient theological divergence, but because they placed these doctrinal priorities second to "preaching and living," as in the Methodist tradition. In practice, Episcopalian authorities incorporated low-church methods, like the Methodist

[47] George Williams, *History of St. Michael's*¸ (Charleston: College of Charleston Library, 2007), 37.

plan of districting and itinerant missions, but also sought to preserve a rightful sense of ecclesiastical hierarchy suited to the new American reality. Looking back from the 1840s on the early Bishops of the South Carolina Diocese, Christopher Gadsen described his predecessors as protectors of the "Protestant Catholic" tradition, awash in an "age of insubordination." "There is too little deference to the authority of experience and intelligence – of character and station," Gadsen wrote, "the right of private judgement is ultraized."[48]

Analysis: Race and the Structuration of Religious Institutions

Like it or not, the ultraized right of private judgment was a permanent outgrowth of the modern social consciousness. Lessons learned from two decades of post-colonial stagnation taught "Protestant Catholics" that they could adapt and grow or remain defiant and dwindle. By the 1820s, Episcopalians had established a new church for Charlestonians who could not afford to rent pews and initiated programs to incorporate black Carolinians into the Episcopal fold. As latecomers to the project of inclusive Christianity, Episcopalian efforts were hindered not only by their relative naivete, but also by a long history of racial and social structuration of religious association. The elitist connotations of Anglican-Episcopalian worship repelled more potential congregants than they attracted. While their rituals appealed to those longing for the affirming spirit of tradition and the ritualized performance of status, they seemed foreign and repulsive to others forced to observe the ritual from the periphery. White families that could not afford pew rents in the Episcopal Church or slaves who had previously

[48] Christopher Gadsen, "Bishop's Report," *Journal of the Proceedings of annual convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston, the Diocese, 1844), 37.

attended Episcopal worship as second-class congregants migrated to more welcoming religious forums. The same qualities of exclusivity that appealed to one set of Charlestonians compelled other sets to seek more inclusive spiritual homes, places in which the "inferior sort" could enjoy a greater sense of spiritual ownership. [49]

Thus, the social and racial balance of South Carolina's different spiritual communities was structured from both sides, as denominational leaders varied the level of attention they directed at indigent white or black souls and individuals from the inter-racial underclass varied their level of engagement with the offerings wrought by the attentions of denominational agents. Very often, these two variables were linked into a reflexive feedback loop. The Methodist Church in Charleston, for example, was a bi-racial venture from the very start.[50] Welcomed by the darker complexion of Methodism, African-Americans in the lowcountry joined the church in droves, generating an overwhelming black majority which in turn diminished the appeal of the denomination for many lowcountry whites. Episcopalian Churches, on the other hand, long associated with white elitism, continued to attract the elite and aspiring minorities of both white and colored society, but were less appealing to the rest of the lowcountry rabble. For African-Americans in the South Carolina lowcountry, it was easier to identify the Methodist experience as representative of the religion of "me and my people" and Episcopal religious practices as those of "the white folk." Thus the feedback loop of structuration worked both ways for both segments of the population, as black and white

[49] Thomas, *Historical Account*, 20, 27; Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of a Theory of Structuration* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1984), 25-6, 376; Nelson, *Beauty of Holiness*, 314-317; Ramsay, *History of South Carolina*, 19. Though Ramsay did not qualify his sociological breakdown of the Methodist community in racial terms, membership statistics from the Charleston churches suggest that slaves and free people of color were the "poor" to whom Methodism was most "peculiarly suited."

[50] Cumberland Church title, dated 1786, lists the proprietors as "the society consisting of whites and colored;" "Charleston Methodist Materials," South Carolina United Methodist Collection, Wofford Library.

Carolinians identified with or othered religious communities according to the extant makeup of their congregations.

The patterns of social and racial structuration that determined the parameters of religious choice between denominations also came to define patterns of religious affiliation within individual denominations. The overwhelming black majorities of Methodist and Baptist churches in the lowcountry made it plain that slaves preferred to join churches other than those of their owners; the same pattern generally held true for Charleston slaves who maintained the same denominational affiliation as their masters. The Presbyterian slaves of Presbyterian masters, for example, seldom attended the same church as their master. Erskine Clarke noted that during the early to mid-nineteenth century, despite the ascendant Presbyterian rhetoric of paternalism, "slaves of Presbyterian and Congregationalist masters chose not to join their white 'families' in church." Some joined the Methodist or Baptist Church; many remained unaffiliated; and many simply joined another within the reformed community. Slaves whose masters attended First Scots Presbyterian Church, for example, often joined Second Presbyterian.[51]

Patterns of religious association in post-colonial Charleston were the product of both immediate and long-term factors. The immediate factor of religious affinity – the attraction of a church filled with welcoming faces and a service full of meaningful rituals – was itself the effect of a long process of institutional development. Though perhaps not immediately apparent to the nineteenth century Charleston slave who followed his/her peers into the city's Methodist or Baptist churches, the Africanized congregation

[51] Erskine Clarke, *Our Southern Zion: A History of Calvinism in the South Carolina Lowcountry: 1670 – 1990* (Tuscaloosa: Univ. of Alabama Press, 1996), 160.

and liturgy that welcomed his/her entry were the products of a long series of communal dialectics. Though the "Great Awakening" did not leave the social stamp on South Carolina that it did on other colonies, it left an indelible impact beneath the surface of the institutional register that only manifested under the nurturing climate of the Second Great Awakening. Robert Olwell described this delayed catalysis as an emblem of social development and plantation slavery in South Carolina. Extending the established periodization of his predecessors, Olwell paralleled the plantation-building period of the early eighteenth century with the nation-building period of the early nineteenth century to describe two cycles of exceptional cultural dynamism in lowcountry South Carolina. Among lowcountry slaves, the eighteenth century (1720 – 40) stage of plantation building yielded a new Creole culture (Gullah), and the post-revolutionary stage of plantation-building yielded a new faith (Afro-Christianity). As discussed above, Olwell cited the work of Sylvia Frey and Betty Wood to suggest that religious history provided the best means to link the developments of the former period to those of the latter. The course of African-American religious development provided Olwell with the strongest indicator for his delayed catalysis or cyclical maturation thesis of plantation history. Change belied continuity as Christian seeds sown during the colonial era by isolated evangelists like John Wesley were harvested during the post-colonial and harnessed into majority-black institutions like the Methodist Church. [52]

This chapter extends Olwell's observation into a paradigm for the history of social and institutional development in early South Carolina, applying techniques borrowed from scholars of state formation to demonstrate how latent trends of the colonial period

[52] Olwell, "Long History," 126.

actualized during the revolutionary era to create the unique religious climate of post-colonial Charleston. The burgeoning religious institutions of republican Charleston were "the products of previous conflicts and confrontations," and as such were built upon the "sediments of earlier struggles." Through the long analytical windows of sociological analysis, it is possible to trace the old social questions of the English establishment through the social and political dialectics of the revolutionary era into the religious dynamics of early national Charleston. When Whitefield questioned the hegemonic function of the Anglican Church among South Carolina slaves, he imported the ideological challenges of the early modern era to the colonies. In South Carolina, these challenges evolved, as doctrines of spiritual equality interpenetrated traditions of social inequality and impulses of voluntary association merged with inherited communal dispositions to yield a wide post-colonial menu of interracial religious communities.[53]

The Hammet Schism of Charleston Methodists demonstrates not only the variety of factors that determined patterns of post-colonial religious affiliation, but also the complex social dialectic that made this field of religious options possible. Methodism appealed to many different Carolinians for many different reasons. The latent antislavery doctrines of the denomination, in league with the manifest spiritual equality of all races proclaimed by Methodist itinerants, won thousands of black souls; The "interior economy" of itinerancy was "well calculated to secure the performance of much clerical duty at very little expense," and as such was "peculiarly suited to the poor;" "The Methodists had much of the form, some of the ministers, and none of the stigma of the Church of England," which appealed to those patriots "oriented towards Anglicanism,"

[53] Mallon, "Reflections on the Ruins," 69-70.

but also repulsed by the "national religion" of their English oppressors. This last group, familiar with the high-church liturgy of their Anglican antecedents and Episcopalian contemporaries, found some of their experiences in the Methodist church to be lacking. In many ways the constant novelty of the Methodist approach was the antithesis of the self-conscious attachment to tradition embodied in Anglican ritual and liturgy. Some Methodists longed for the holiness of tradition – the affirmation that could only come from sacred spaces with a tangible history. These were the Methodists most responsive to the charismatic traditionalism of Hammet's appeal - the formalized liturgy, ritual, and aesthetic grandiosity he brought to Charleston.[54]

On the other hand, those repulsed by the exclusivity of high-church pretension into the open arms of low-church Methodism enjoyed a sense of spiritual ownership in the Methodist community that they would not soon abandon. Both those drawn away by Hammet and those who remained left a distinctive stamp upon their respective congregations. Hammet's Trinity Methodist staked a claim on a certain segment of Methodist society that continued to influence the congregational demography at Trinity even after it had been re-incorporated into the mainstream Methodist Episcopal Church in 1813. The racial balance of attendance at Trinity tended to be more even than that of the other two overwhelmingly black congregations. Moreover, those black Methodists who did attend services at Trinity were more likely to be members of the colored elite or slaves attached to Methodist masters. By the 1820s, Trinity had become the whitest and most elite Methodist church in Charleston. This was a transmuted and structurated consequence of Hammet's turnabout on slavery, which attracted slaveholding Methodists

[54] Ramsay, *History of South Carolina,* 19.

(like William Capers, Sr.), repulsed slaves and antislavery Methodists (like John Phillips), and lurked beneath the surface of public perception even after overt intradenominational distinctions on the issue of slavery had been erased. After the doctrinal contours of the Hammet divide had faded from memory, its legacy of racial and social division continued to inform the associative patterns of Charleston Methodists.[55]

Just as much as the Presbyterian compromise on "the several species of composition" or the "Protestant Catholic" redefinition of Episcopalian liturgy, the Hammet Schism signified a new birth of religious tradition in post-colonial Charleston. Hammet and his fellow neo-traditionalists redirected the productive tensions that manifested in the Garden-Whitefield conflict and intensified through the multivalent social dialectics of the revolutionary era. Hardened by the struggles of the previous generation, the Revolution opened a window for modernists to articulate impulses of spiritual equality and voluntary association with republican ideals as prominent fixtures of the post-colonial social consciousness. Charlestonians were eager to carve out cultural spaces of their own within the new republican society, but these spaces were largely circumscribed by the dispositions of the colonial habitus. The revolutionary experience catalyzed modern and traditional religious substrates into a heterogeneous solution of egalitarian and proslavery doctrines, high and low liturgies, traditional and modern patterns of association.[56]

Disestablishment opened the way for the formal incorporation of Methodist societies, and the experience of denominational genesis amplified the voluntary impulse

[55] In a journal entry of December 12, 1813, Francis Asbury wrote "I preached at Trinity Church; we have it now in quiet possession." Betts, *South Carolina Methodism*, 67; Quarterly Minutes of the Methodist Episcopal Conference of Charleston, MSS collection, SCHS; Holloway Scrapbook, Avery Research Center MSS, College of Charleston.

[56] Pierre Bourdieu, *Logic of Practice* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1990).

of community formation to new extremes. Traditional religious commitments no longer trumped an individual's will to pursue the most perfect venue of worship. According to Mark Noll, the post-colonial religious scene was a "great welter of energetic diversity," in which myriad aspiring theologians worked to Americanize religious communities through a dynamic process of reconfigurative institutionalization. The Methodist society of Charleston was a variegated community, increasingly ultraized by the power of modern voluntarism, and thus ripe for fracture in the post-colonial age of schism. Two decades after high-church Methodists broke off to follow Hammet into the ranks of Primitive Methodism, thousands of black Methodists seceded to form their own "African Church." The same cultural impetus that compelled some Anglicans to pursue a faith other than the "national religion" of their colonial oppressors, compelled black Charlestonians to pursue religious communities more in line with their own proto-national sensibilities. This African Schism will be the focus of the next chapter, but it is important to note its place in the context of post-colonial ultraism; the churches of Charleston were thoroughly enmeshed in national patterns of realignment and black Charlestonians were actively engaged in these patterns. [57]

During the colonial period, South Carolina slaves staked out their own spiritual space between the Christian dogma of the master class and the inherited beliefs of their ancestors. Very often, the extent to which Christian doctrine infiltrated Afro-Carolinian belief systems was determined by the energy and appeal of the doctrinaire. In 1737, John Wesley took the time to interview a random slave he encountered during his travels

[57] Mark Noll, *America's God*: F*rom Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) 228, 364, 179; see also Nathan Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

through South Carolina. He discovered her to be ignorant of the Gospel, but shared the essence of God's message with her, and was pleased to learn that she took that message to heart when he questioned her again the next day. Such exchanges were not common during the colonial period, and the prospect of spiritual equality, raised by the voluntary interracial associations created under the auspices of grassroots evangelism, troubled white Carolinians. These questions had a formative impact upon the minds of revolutionary Carolinians. In Carolina and throughout the southern colonies, slavery and evangelicalism figured prominently into the revolutionary discourse. Historians like Edmund Morgan have already wrestled the productive ideological tension between slavery and liberty into convincing accounts of American republicanism. Religious historians like Rhys Isaac have also documented the extent to which the radical language of the revolution was fueled by the anti-authoritarian impulses of grassroots evangelism. These are teleological questions, secondary to the larger questions at the heart of this chapter, but also relevant insofar as they help to explain the transformative social dynamics that framed post-colonial religious consciousness.[58]

Congruent with Edmund Morgan's assessment of slavery and freedom in an aspiring democracy, Jack Greene localized the American paradox to South Carolina. The experience of slaveholding, and especially the legal precedents set by a century of human classification, informed the post-colonial definition of citizenship in South Carolina. This was the socio-intellectual framework within which white male Patriots classified themselves as citizens against slaves, free people of color, women, children, and a wide range of dependent residents unfit for citizenship. As for the religious angle, Rhys Isaac

[58] *Works of John Wesley*, 18: 180.

documented the rise of evangelicalism, and especially the influence of Separate Baptists, as an essential impetus for the cultural transformation of Virginia. Insurgent patriot rhetoricians borrowed steadily from the well of anti-authoritarian evangelical sentiment and even integrated the associative model of the evangelical movement into their own utopian paradigms. Isaac used Thomas Jefferson's Statute of Religious Freedom to exemplify this ideological marriage of plain folk and gentry. Jefferson's Statute was a new expression of privatization and individualism, reflected in the tax provisions of the post-colonial state. No longer would the people involuntarily bear the financial burden of an established church, but instead volunteer their support for the religious institution of their choice.[59]

The extent to which evangelicalism figured into revolutionary sentiment in Virginia is not a topic for debate here, but the social implications of disestablishment and the political discourse of slavery and freedom are themes that carried over into the everyday life of post-colonial Carolinians. By importing the well-traveled political-racial-religious triangulation of revolutionary historiography to the thematic territory of post-colonial South Carolina, it is possible to extend the analytic contours of this chapter into a set of conclusions about the ways in which late colonial and revolutionary dynamics framed the communal and cultural ideals of Charleston's republican society. Through the veil of the colonial church, Charlestonians considered questions of race and spiritual equality that ultimately informed their approach to revolution and the pursuit of political equality. As Edmund Burke noted of slaveholders in Virginia and Carolina, "the

[59] Jack Greene, "'Slavery or Independence:' Some Reflections on the Relationship among Liberty, Black Bondage, and Equality in Revolutionary South Carolina," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 80.3 (1979); Isaac, *Transformation of Virginia,* 271.

haughtiness of dominance combines with it the spirit of freedom, fortifies it, and renders it invincible." Patriot slaveholders parsed the issues of religious and civil equality, expanding the former privilege almost universally, while restricting the latter to carefully defined independent (white) citizens. The revolutionary experience in turn elevated issues of race and status to the fore of religious identity. The voluntary or contractual model of religious association, launched through disestablishment into a new republican culture, amplified freedom of choice to unprecedented dimensions. Thus empowered to pursue the most perfect spiritual community, Charlestonians germinated the varieties of religious experience, layered by race and status, formerly contained within the colonial church establishment into separate species of religious community.[60]

Conclusion

Just as the structural trend of religious institution ran toward denominational fragmentation and ultraism, the general trend of religious culture in post-colonial Charleston seemed to run in the opposite direction, toward a sense of local spiritual unity. As contemporaries of the post-colonial moment, Charlestonians shared in the license of **self-determination**. The same license that separated Charlestonians on Sunday morning unified them as part of a common democratic evangelical society the rest of the week.

[60] Burke, "Speech on Civilization," quoted in Greene, "'Slavery or Independence,'" 25, 30. Section VIII of the of the South Carolina Constitution of 1778 defined "the qualification of electors" as "every free white man, and no other person, who acknowledges the being of a God, and believes in a future state of rewards and punishments, and who has attained to the age of one and twenty years, and hath been a resident and an inhabitant in this State for the space of one whole year before the day appointed for the election he offers to give his vote at, and hath a freehold at least of fifty acres of land, or a town lot, and hath been legally seized and possessed of the same at least six months previous to such election, or hath paid a tax the preceding year, or was taxable the present year, at least six months previous to the said election, in a sum equal to the tax on fifty acres of land, to the support of this government, shall be deemed a person qualified to vote for, and shall be capable of electing, a representative or representatives to serve as a member or members in the senate and house of representatives, for the parish or district where he actually is a resident, or in any other parish or district in this State where he hath the like freehold."

By the early nineteenth century, all of the major Protestant denominations in Charleston leagued themselves together in a common rhetorical community inspired by recent patterns of modernization and evangelicalization. If not absolutely in doctrine, then generally in practice, the religious communities of Charleston shared in a spirit of Americanization, directly attributable (but not equivalent) to the wider transatlantic spirit of evangelicalism. Americanization in the South Carolina lowcountry was a product of the evangelical trend, or more specifically, of the productive tension between evangelical activism and institutional orthodoxy, but not all of the individuals enmeshed in the process of Americanization would consider themselves to be evangelicals. The process of Americanization that joined Carolinians in a post-colonial moment of spiritual unity was a cultural product of evangelicalism, negotiated and refined through the preceding decades. The remainder of this chapter will discuss the meanings of these terms (evangelicalism and Americanization) and recapitulate nodes of the dialectical process outlined above to explain the special character of this post-colonial moment.[61]

Evangelicalism is a dynamic and nebulous concept, defined just as often through practice as belief. In theological terms, the "most serviceable definition of modern evangelicalism" comes from David Bebbington's *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*. Bebbington built his definition around four central principles: conversionism, activism, crucicentrism, and Biblicism. Of these, only one, activism, refers primarily to a behavioral indicator of religious practice. The rest refer to intellectual or rhetorical indicators – the belief that lives need to be changed through conversion, and central

[61] Mark Noll, for example, classified most of the Protestant communities of Charleston as evangelical, including Lutherans and "low-church" Episcopalians, but excluding Unitarians and "high-church" Episcopalians. Noll, *America's God*, 5.

emphases on God's word and Christ's sacrifice on the Cross. Doctrine and theology are essential to the processes of community and identity formation, as in the imagined community of the converted, but the focus here is on social behaviors and identities revealed through patterns of association. The "evangelical" community in the Carolina lowcountry was too variegated and fluid to be defined by rigid doctrinal determinants. In the religious marketplace of republican Charleston, consumers did not make their selection according to a simple theological checklist, but instead according to a variety of factors that included familial traditions, status considerations, and perhaps most immediately, their emotional response to the experience of church rituals and fellowship.[62]

The sense of spiritual unity in religious diversity that grew out of the revolutionary era was both more and less than the growing popularity of evangelical ideals. Evangelicalism was but one essential part of a long and complicated social dialectic of Americanization. Both terms are best defined through example. Just as Bebbington's definition of evangelicalism originated with Wesleyan fundamentals at the moment of "Methodist" divergence from Anglican orthodoxy, the "Methodist" challenge to Anglican convention in South Carolina represents a point of origin for the American dialectic of social modernization. Bebbington distilled the distinctive aspects of Wesleyanism to two fundamental doctrines: "New Birth" and activism. Like-minded missionaries of the SPG further simplified these tenets to build a community of believers in the regenerative spirit of Christ who redefined their lives according to the activist behavioral expectations of the converted. This was the real meaning of George

[62] Ibid.; David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 2-3.

Whitefield's contribution to the "to convert or to civilize" discourse. Whitefield's exchange with Garden thus represented a formative moment in the dialectical process of Americanization. Whereas Alexander Garden devoted his life's work to advancing a style of Anglican indoctrination traditionally implemented in the service of God via society, Whitefield channeled his energies into the soul of the individual. Whitefield "stooped to convert;" he disregarded the ceremonial obligations of his imperial church to implement and advocate a worldly style of preaching that consciously blurred the line between minister and ministered to set the souls of his listeners on their own individual paths to redemption and rebirth. Though formal patterns of religious organization indicate that Whitefield was less successful than Garden in the short term, the nationalist reflections of American chroniclers like David Ramsay evince the grander dimensions of his long term impact. Garden's "civilizing project" of negro education was a short-lived, but relatively successful and innovative strategy continuous with the expectations of both the transatlantic Anglican and local slaveholder establishments. Whether through short-term or long-term resonance, Garden and Whitefield framed the dialectic of Americanization, between the thesis of social preservation (hierarchy) and the antithesis of individual liberty (democracy).

Negotiated by the likes of Garden and Whitefield, negro exhorters and unchurched slaves, Anglican loyalists and Baptist patriots, a dialectical process of community formation flowed through the channels of religious association to yield an exceptional post-colonial moment of social fluidity and inclusion. Among the specific products of this dialectical process of Americanization were a modern, voluntary, prescriptive model of association, a liturgical trend toward low-churching or

informalization, and the rhetorical strength of bottom-up (democratic and inclusive) organizational impulses. The tolerant climate of this post-colonial moment also provided ample room for the reconfigured hegemonic traditions of the old world, fortified via the process of Americanization to answer the racialized, hierarchical challenges of the new world.

Among the revolutionary generation of Carolinians, no individual navigated the social dialectic of Americanization more effectively than Richard Furman. Furman's career along the frontier of high society, and his resonant appeal to archetypes of both high and low united the domains of traditional hierarchy and modern individualism into a common Baptist culture. Christian agency flowed in two directions: from the ground-up, through organic gatherings of believers to the glory of God, and from God-down, through the apostolic organs of Christ to the subsidiary units of humanity. In his iteration of the proper relationship between these two organizational directives – "it is proper to conform in a moderate degree to the prevailing customs of the place where we live" – Furman conveyed the adaptive spirit of Americanization. Furman was initially criticized from both sides for donning a suit and tie in Charleston and leather and fur in the High Hills, but he eventually overwhelmed his critics with the near-universal appeal of his "American" persona, novel in its synthesis. Furman successfully translated the egalitarian spirit of Baptist faith into the hierarchical reality of southern society, and hoped to translate this into the infant forum of American democracy. Furman, like many Carolinians of his day, proceeded from the belief that the groundswell of support for the contractual model of religious association legitimated religious leaders to be (political) representatives of American democracy. Though eventually rebuffed by the new state

assembly, Furman's vision of the post-colonial relationship between church and state – not disestablishment, but a wider, more inclusive Christian re-establishment – resonated deeply with many Carolinians.[63]

Furman's popularity also transcended the boundaries between colonial Baptist antislavery and post-colonial pro-slavery apologism. The network of Baptist evangelists that assisted Furman into the post-colonial mainstream included a significant number of African-American "exhorters," who spread a message of universal salvation and won thousands of African-American converts before and after local Baptist leaders began to contradict church authorities on the rectitude of slavery.[64] Other facets of Baptist experience, like the race-neutral doctrine of universal equality and the ritual of full immersion resonated more directly with black Carolinians than the twists and turns of the church's official position on slavery. Black membership in the Baptist Church proved a general rule of institutional development in the South Carolina lowcountry: the key to the popular success of any religious venture was its appeal to the African-American majority. Church membership was the most prominent arena of individual choice allowed Charleston slaves, and the choices they made were telling. Black engagement was crucial to the success of Garden's educational program, and proved to be a primary factor in the delayed success of Wesley's "Methodist" church in Charleston. Black parents lined up to send their children to Garden's school, likely for reasons other than

[63] Furman served as a delegate to the state constitutional convention of 1790 and argued against an article that would bar ministers from holding a seat in the new state legislature. Despite the sizable contingent of ministers who participated in the convention, the measure passed. Article 1, Section 23, South Carolina Constitution 1790; Robert Andrew., Craven, Paul J., Baker, *Adventure in faith : the first 300 years of First Baptist Church, Charleston, South Carolina* (Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman Press, 1982)., 184; Rogers, *Richard Furman*, 70.

[64] Manly attributed Baptist success among African-Americans generally to Furman, and specifically to Peter Wood, "a worthy, faithful exhorter, who was exceedingly useful among his own color." Manly, *Mercy and Judgment*, 35.

those intended by its local sponsors; those familiar with the Wesleyan message that "God had made all men free and equal," pursued Methodism through its formal incorporation in 1785 into the upsurge of post-colonial black membership. [65]

By the turn of the century, all of Charleston's denominational leaders advocated doctrines of interracial spiritual equality, but the degree to which each religious community actually expressed this doctrine in **practice** determined their level of African-American engagement. The formal and exclusive rituals of some high-church traditions appealed to a special set of the free colored elite in Charleston, but most black Carolinians felt more comfortable in the inclusive low-church settings of the Baptist and Methodist churches. Spatial representations of spiritual equality – the integration or segregation of the worship experience – corresponded directly to the degree of black affinity and the extent of black membership. These spatial resonances will be explained in the next chapter, but here it is important to note the impact that exploding black memberships had on the liturgical operations of Baptist, and especially Methodist, churches. The racial dimensions of community formation in the South Carolina lowcountry exerted a powerful influence on post-colonial religious practice. Most notably in the post-colonial Methodist churches of Charleston, Sunday worship incorporated black participation into the general flow of liturgical development. Sonically, the persistent call-and-response of black Methodists made the experience of Sunday service at Cumberland or Bethel unlike any other in town. The statistical boon of

[65] Benjamin Drew, *The Refugee: A North-Side of Slavery* (Boston, 1856), 108.

African-American membership was a tremendous accomplishment for big-picture activists, but also presented more immediate problems to local congregations.[66]

African-American contributions to post-colonial religious practice provoked resistance among white Charlestonians against the blackening (or low-churching associated with African-American influence) of "real religion." The most obvious examples of racialized resistance were the regular public assaults on Methodist congregants and leaders around the turn of the century. Another less direct, but equally significant, example of Charlestonian pushback against the low-church egalitarian direction of Methodist worship was the schismatic movement of William Hammet. By separating themselves from the interracial inclusivity of the Cumberland start-up in pursuit of an Old English "gown and powder" ideal, Hammet's followers articulated the social, racial, and liturgical dimensions of the traditional model of religious association. In its own incidental fashion, the Hammet Schism represented an important stage in the development of a more distinctly American religious community. When Hammetites demanded the "right to choose their own preachers," they set an important precedent for the bottom-up strategy of religious organization. At the same time however, they also created a new model of top-down authoritarianism; William Hammet alone dictated the terms of Primitive Methodism and maintained sole proprietorship of the Trinity Church grounds.

[66] After thousands of black Methodists left the church in the African Schism of 1817, white leaders noted that the sonic impact of black participation was conspicuous in their absence : "the galleries, hitherto crowded, were almost completely deserted, and it was a vacancy that could be *felt* (sic). The absence of their responses and hearty songs was really felt to be a loss to this so long accustomed to hear them." Mood, *Methodism in Charleston,* 132; see also Hatch, *Democratization*, 147-158 on African-American contributions to the "invention" of Gospel music; on the free colored elite membership at St. Philip's, see Margaret Gillikin, "Free People of Color and St. Philip's Protestant Episcopal Church, Charleston, South Carolina: 1790-1822," (unpublished paper, February 26, 2010).

As William Hammet and his followers reconfigured the modern pattern of voluntary association to achieve traditional ends, they modeled the *neo-traditional* potential of Americanization. The most common neo-traditionalist application of the prescriptive model in early national Charleston was pursuit of social status through religious association. As observed by William Capers, Jr., the exit of colonial aristocracy opened a new space of social elevation, and nowhere was this priority shift from class to status more apparent than in the post-colonial church. Distancing themselves from the archaic and oppressive traditions of their forebears, men-on-the-make pursued the evangelical trend as a new market of social capital. Cotton factors converted to Methodism to endear themselves to potential clients; city merchants brought their wives to Presbyterian services to access the masculine sphere of inside information shared in the church "horselot;" pragmatic evangelicals split their Sundays between low-church forums of spiritual edification and high church stages of status-performance.[67]

The countervailing social and spiritual impulses of religious affiliation that troubled individuals also presented dilemmas to denominations. For the Presbyterian Church, Old World precedents of intellectual rigor instilled a tradition of sober, rational sermonizing that resonated with an older set of Charlestonians while alienating some of the younger set. The Second Presbyterian Church of Charleston endeavored to bridge this generational divide by employing "several species of composition…so as to apply the various tastes and degrees of refinement of the whole of the audiences that fill our

[67] On secular applications of evangelicalism, or conversion as social capital see Max Weber ,, *The Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism.* (New York: Scribner, 1958).; Beth Barton Schweiger, "Max Weber in Mount Airy, Or, Revivals and Social Theory in the Early South," in *Religion in the American South,* ed. Schweiger and Donald Mathews (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2004), 31-66; Paul E. Johnson, *Shopkeeper's Millenium*: *Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2004).

churches." To grow an Old World institution in a new republic, the counsel at Second Presbyterian recognized the need to adapt, to court "the imagination and the affection of the young and ardent" through emotive preaching, yet maintain the dignity and refinement characteristic of Presbyterian tradition. This adaptive separation from European traditions, as indicated by Rev. Leland's efforts "to Americanize" the Presbyterian Church gives the process of Americanization its name. Leland proposed an innovative American church structure, which would have granted congregations a greater degree of independence from the authoritarian model of Scottish tradition, but it was his liturgical innovation that brought the ire of more traditionally-minded Presbyterians.[68]

Leland's emotive style divided audiences according to the liturgical thesis and antithesis of high and low. By the nineteenth century, the "worldly preaching style" of Whitefield and his ilk had made its way, however unevenly, into the mainstream. The low-church style exemplified by Methodist itinerants – to live and preach, preach and live – invigorated the refined homiletics of most Charleston ministers during the early decades of the nineteenth century. The hybrid style of Richard Furman provided an American template for A.W. Leland, William Capers, and others to follow. Thus the religious leaders of the revolutionary era broadened their ministry to appeal to young and old, black and white, to maximize their service to Christ and the young nation. They cultivated a bold and dynamic religious climate, a salient register of the activist mentality bred by this process of Americanization.

The post-Revolutionary generation translated the activism of the evangelical zeitgeist and the perpetual dynamism of their historical moment into a myriad possible

[68] Second Presbyterian Church Minutes, SCL; Phrasing extrapolated from Lacy K. Ford, *Origins of Southern Radicalism* (New York: Oxford, 1988), 336.

futures for the American nation. The revolution seemed to explode the American imagination into an innumerable range of destinies, but on a larger scale, patterns of post-colonial identity formation cohered around one of several emerging narratives. As former colonists struggled to organize their past into a coherent narrative that would establish a new sense of self-understanding for present and future citizens of the American republic, a handful of aspiring nation-builders emerged to weave a thread of national identity. The most influential early national narrative builders were New Englanders, who deftly intertwined history and religion into a providential account of the American Revolution as an exceptional event and the American people as an exceptional brand of humanity. In South Carolina, the most prominent contemporary architect of the American narrative was David Ramsay. Unlike his famous northern counterparts, Ramsay did not build his interpretation of the Revolution around themes of providence, continuity, and American exceptionalism. Instead, his was a contingent account of the Revolution as a jarring and violent period of change, analogous to previous episodes of European history.

Like Mercy Otis Warren and other early American historians, Ramsay predicted that the new nation would realize and eradicate the colonial error of slavery. Whereas Warren's prediction was in fact an assumption based upon a moral metanarrative of providential progress, Ramsay's was a pragmatic strategy grounded in the scientific principles of his own Eurocentric brand of historical sociology. Ramsay's narrative struck a balance between declension and redemption, warning of the individualist "evils" that grew out of independence, but also celebrating the civilizing and unifying influence of the Constitution. Ramsay recognized that a contingent articulation of interests was the key to national cohesion, but also that these interests could just as easily be trumped or

disarticulated by the new factionalism and individualism of a republican society. With an eye towards European precedents of state formation and social progress, Ramsay predicted the ascendance of a free-labor economy, but feared that American geographic distinctions had embedded the imagined necessity of slavery into the southern consciousness. [69]

Ramsay presciently diagnosed slavery and its political proxy of sectionalism as the most viable threat to national unity, but underestimated the local impact of slavery in two ways. First, Ramsay failed to recognize (or at least document) the extent to which African-American engagement determined the course of colonial and revolutionary-era community formation in South Carolina. With the advantage of retrospect, it is apparent that interracial relations played a formative role in the dialectical process of Americanization that defined the parameters of community in early national Charleston. The success of Garden's Negro School was contingent upon both white support and the participation of black families. The Baptist articulation of spiritual interests transcended divergent social interests to join white patriarchs like Richard Furman and black itinerants like Peter Wood together in campaigns of evangelical activism. The unparalleled growth of Methodism owed as much to the sense of spiritual ownership it afforded thousands of South Carolina slaves as it did to the unique spiritual and professional opportunities it offered to hungry white Carolinians like William Capers, Jr.

Secondly, Ramsay failed to recognize the latent and looming power that slavery and racial relations exerted on the designs of white institution-builders in South Carolina.

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[69] Mercy Otis Warren, *History of the Rise, Progress, and Termination of the American Revolution: Interspersed with Biographical, Political, and Moral Observations : in Three Volumes*; (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Pub, 2008); Karen O'Brien, "David Ramsay and the Delayed Americanization of American History." *Early American Literature*. 29.1 (1994): 1-18.

Ramsay understood the colonies to be western branches of European culture, and that colonists imported the same set of social questions that drove the course of history in the old world, but he did not understand the extent to which slavery complicated these social questions in the south. The discontinuities of the revolutionary era did not disconnect slaveholders from inherited traditions of unfreedom, but instead made these traditions more resilient and sophisticated. Alexander Garden's Negro School was in many ways continuous with the hegemonic function of the state church in England. Garden's objective was to "civilize" slaves up to an externally recognized standard, equivalent to that of the white working class. Whether or not he reached the final goal of civilizing mission, his program set an important precedent for the incorporation of slaves into the hegemonic process. Hammet's schism represents another note of continuity – another set of colonial traditions adapted to the interracial circumstances of American society – the preservation or performance of social status through religious association. During the colonial era, the pew door was a boundary that separated white religious experience in the pews from slave attendants on the floor. As the process of Americanization collapsed this boundary and flooded the churches of Charleston with people of color, it awakened slaveholders to their spiritual neglect, but did not mean that slaveholders would be sharing their vaulted pews with slaves. The Hammet schism was thus emblematic of larger post-colonial trends. Charlestonians made use of the modern contractual model of the evangelical church to recreate traditional ideals like peripheralization and segregation. White Charlestonians joined churches that reflected their social aspirations; slaves joined churches that provided a sense of community and identity separate from that of slavery;

free people of color staked out their own hybrid space of aspirational and/or African community.

In a return to Tocqueville's metaphor from the epigraph, the post-Revolutionary sense of spiritual unity enclosed Charlestonians in a thick layer of democratic paint. Americans of disparate lineage and disposition shared in the tenuous optimism of the early modern moment, while Hammetites and lawmakers exemplified the aristocratic colors of a race and status-conscious society breaking through. The next two generations of Carolina nation-builders selectively applied and ignored the principles of eighteenth century community formation outlined above. While democratic paint glistened in the interracial Methodist churches, anxious observers colored their attitudes towards Charleston Methodists with a seamless blend of aristocratic tradition. Methodism was the contemporary church most readily associated with the "evils" of enthusiastic religion; it was Presbyterian anxiety over the prospect of "amalgamation with Methodists" that compelled their retreat from revivalism. Somewhere during the revolutionary era, this aristocratic tinge of condemnation was blackened by a modern impulse of racialization. It was Methodist association with antislavery and the preponderant black majority of its churches that instigated the violent persecution of Methodist leaders and congregants.

De Tocqueville issued his appraisal of American duality in the 1830s, and in so doing documented the persistent dynamism of the American dialectic. Though the post-colonial moment of spiritual unity represents a significant yield of institutional development during the colonial era, it is more representative of the continuing process of Americanization than its outcome. Contained within, and amplified by, this sense of spiritual unity, was an inborn inclination among Charlestonians to re-establish, clarify,

and reinforce institutional expressions of social and racial difference. This reactionary trend, and its bearing upon the interracial dynamics of the Methodist community in Charleston, are the subjects of the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

"The Tyranny of (Black) Majority":

Race, Space, and Ownership in the Churches of Charleston

In March 1787, while the newly-constituted Episcopalian Diocese of South Carolina prepared to send four pew-holding Charlestonians to the Constitutional Convention, the Methodist Society of Charleston began construction on a second-floor gallery at its Cumberland Street Church, explicitly designed to seat enslaved worshipers. Just as the Constitutional Convention signified the temporal emergence of an inclusive national identity, the galleries at Cumberland Street Methodist signified the spatial emergence of an exclusive racial system. Though seemingly unrelated, the trajectories of **race and nation** initiated by this particular moment interpenetrated one another repeatedly over the course of the next two generations. This chapter tracks the history of this interconnection through the particular arena of sacred space in the churches of post-colonial Charleston. As the most conscious indicator of the ideal social order and the most regular influence on experiential interpretations of reality, sacred space presents a window of exposure into a set of beliefs so common and accepted that they appear only implicitly in the written record of historical experience.[1]

[1] The South Carolina delegates to the 1787 Convention were Pierce Butler, Charles Pinckney, Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, and John Rutledge. All of these lived most of their lives in Charleston except for Butler. Butler married into a Charleston family in 1771 and maintained a home there for the rest of his life. Multiple sources claim that Cumberland Street Methodist Church built the first separate black gallery in North America; see Trevor Bowen, *Divine White Right; a Study of Race Segregation and Interracial Cooperation in Religious Organizations and Institutions in the United States* (New York and London: Pub.

The process of Americanization, initiated during the colonial era and accelerated around the turn of the century, joined South Carolina with the rest of the United States in a process of cultural reconfiguration. The Second Great Awakening rode the wake of the American Revolution to displace traditions of hierarchy and colonialism and expose a new horizon of spiritual equality and human potential. But during the first decades of the new republic, this horizon began to lose its color – the inclusive American ideal fractured into an array of exclusive American spaces as national consciousness converged with racial consciousness to yield a "modern" democratic culture built upon white supremacy. The peculiar racial demography of the South Carolina lowcountry intensified interracial relations, particularly in the churches of Charleston, to produce a potent and punctuated incidence of social modernization and racialization during the early nineteenth century.[2]

For most of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Charleston was the most racially integrated city in British North America. Black men and women shared streets, houses, grog shops, and workplaces with their white neighbors. More than any of these,

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for the Institute of Social and Religious Research by Harper & Bros., 1934); and James M. Burgess, *Chronicles of St. Marks Parish, Santee Circuit, and Williamsburg Township, South Carolina, 1731-1885* (Columbia, S.C.: C.A. Calvo, Jr., 1888).

[2] James Brewer Stewart, "The Emergence of Racial Modernity and the Rise of the White North, 1790-1840," *Journal of the Early Republic* 18 (Summer 1998): 185-217; Lois E. Horton, "From Class to Race in Early America: Northern Post-Emancipation Racial Reconstruction," *Journal of the Early Republic* 19, No. 4, (Winter, 1999), 629-649; Lacy K. Ford, Jr, "Making the 'White Man's Country' White: Race, Slavery, and State-Building in the Jacksonian South," *Journal of the Early Republic* 19, No. 4, (Winter, 1999), 713-737; and James Brewer Stewart, "Modernizing Difference: The Political Meanings of Color in the Free States, 1776-1840," *JER* 19, 691-712. In his seminal essay on the "emergence of racial modernity," James Brewer Stewart narrated a saga of racial modernization in two acts. American independence dissolved the colonial hierarchy into a "premodern" stage of fluid and mutable racial boundaries, before the "rise of the white north" during the 1820s and 30s reconfigured social and political boundaries according to a more essentialist understanding of racial difference. Stewart's essay inspired a Special Issue of the *Journal of the Early Republic* (Winter 1999) that layered the history of "Racial Consciousness and Nation-Building in the Early Republic" with a number of thematic twists and analytical turns. The essays collected in this issue focused on the interplay between race and politics, broadly understood to include both political culture and institutions, and most of the contributions centered on a common geographic arena: northern cities. The issue included an essay by Lacy Ford that deftly incorporated many of the various southern political responses to questions of racial definition, but no contributor extended beyond Ford's institutional focus to probe the contested racial boundaries that manifested in other realms of southern culture.

the most prominent and conscious zones of interracial contact were the city's churches. Through the crucible of shared worship space, black and white Charlestonians informed one another about the meanings of racial difference. The church served as a microcosm of the ideal community, a contested, but nonetheless powerful metaphor for understanding Charleston's place in larger imagined communities. The interracial contest over the ownership of sacred space developed synergistically with an intergenerational debate over the terms of local engagement with broader social and political trends. Sacred space is inherently contested, liminal, and subjective; the sacred spaces of Charleston were additionally contested by the complicated social and racial power-relations of a dynamic slave society.[3]

As historically-specific cultural constructions, sacred spaces reveal essential and hidden features of cultural and institutional history. For example, the dialectical synthesis of high and low liturgical traditions described in the previous chapter as part of the process of Americanization had a spatial counterpart in the architectural principles of post-colonial church-builders. Around the turn of the century, while most of Charleston's churches were building open-stage pulpits, Episcopalians consciously distinguished themselves by erecting raised pulpits of classical design. Episcopalians were reluctant to follow the trend away from formalism towards more functional designs better-suited to the energetic and emotive preaching style associated with evangelicalism. Though they would never compromise the more symbolic elements of architectural tradition, Charleston's Episcopalian churches adapted other functional elements of modern design,

[3] The racial demography of antebellum Charleston is summarized below and in Appendix A. According to Richard Wade, *Slavery in the Cities The South, 1820-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), the early national period up to 1835 was a time of relative racial integration and fluid spatial boundaries, followed by a transformational decade of more rigid spatial and institutional regulation.

like the enhanced comfort and accessibility of modern pews and pulpits into their aesthetic schemes. Thus, architectural discourse documents one theatre of spatial and aesthetic negotiation between the internal dynamics of spiritual communities and the external dynamics of their cultural habitus, but its explanatory potential is still limited to the decisions made by church leaders and architects. This chapter broadens the scope of spatial analysis to refocus the cause and effect of architectural decision-making onto the social factors that influenced aesthetic trends and the fragmented community that shared these spaces and participated in their reconfiguration. This chapter fleshes out the experiential dimensions that informed the processes of racial and institutional structuration described in the previous chapter, and extends the contours of these spatial dynamics to argue that Charlestonians used sacred spaces to negotiate individualized parameters of power and spirituality and to initiate new models of social organization.[4]

The driving principle of social dynamism during this period was the "republican spatial imagination." Especially in urban environments, the unlimited potential of a new national reality inspired a habit of "thinking about social relationships physically" – imagining new groupings and boundaries of social units. As in many other early republican cities, race troubled the spatial imaginations of white Charlestonians. The interracial fellowship of most revolutionary-era churches contradicted their idealized notions of the racial order. Though some remained content with the hodge-podge of spiritual equality and social inequality that ordered their growing congregations, others extended the activist bent of Americanization to programs of racial reconfiguration. In 1773, "a number of poor white people…applied to the Clerk" of St. Michael's Episcopal

[4] Louis Nelson, *The Beauty of Holiness: Anglicanism & Architecture in Colonial South Carolina* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2008), 345-47.

Church, "to obtain leave to carry chairs, etc. to the Church to be placed in the aile (sic) for seats." The Vestry complied by displacing the "benches of the Negroes, now placed in those places…into the gallerys, or under the Bellfry," so that new benches might be fixed and "solely appropriated to the use of the poor white people who may want seats." [5]

This two-stroke process of white privilege and black restriction fired the engine of racial modernization in Charleston. This incident from the 1770s sounded a refrain that would be repeated many times over in the churches of post-Revolutionary Charleston. As poor whites demanded inclusion and religious institutions responded by reclaiming black space to expand that occupied by the white underclass, they innovated a technology of racialization that grew increasingly agile and sophisticated over the course of the early national period. In Charleston, the first popular indicators of racial modernity emerged through the church. Over time, the boundaries of racial separation negotiated through the church framed other conceptions of the body politic to exert a lasting effect on local trajectories of identity formation for both white and black Charlestonians. Sacred spaces functioned as a critical medium for the construction and interpretation of identities, and as such can only be understood as unstable and contested constructions of social context.

Through the filter of sacred space, interpersonal experience reacted with the cultural and intellectual currents of modernity to redefine local standards of racial difference and community formation. At the national level, the first decades of the nineteenth century were a transitional period for the "political meanings of color" in northern states. The system of human classification inherent in racial slavery did not

[5] Dell Upton, "Lancasterian Schools, Republican Citizenship, and the Spatial Imagination In Early Nineteenth-Century America," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 55.3 (1996): 238; Nelson, *Beauty of Holiness*, 361; *The minutes of St. Michael's Church of Charleston, S.C., from 1758-1797* (Charleston: Colonial Dames of America, 1950).

insulate Charleston from the modern impulses that transfigured northern cities. In fact, the drawn-out contestation of worship space in Charleston fits comfortably with the tropes of egalitarianism and status-consciousness that customarily accompany the American narrative of racial modernity. However, a micro-historical focus upon congregational dynamics refreshes the perspective to distinguish the scene in Charleston and expose some of the more immediate (bottom-up) ways in which black and white Charlestonians defined the meanings of race in their own terms. This chapter isolates race from the many discursive currents associated with the general arc of "modernization" to enrich and complicate the picture of this transitional period in Charleston. The narrative centers on an intergenerational conflict, between the "revolutionary generation" of Charlestonians who defined race according to tradition and experience and a younger generation of modernists who defined race according to idealist preconceptions of the nation and expected their experience to meet with these ideals.

By situating the social contours of these intergenerational and interracial divides within the immediate context of shared worship experience, this chapter re-embodies the disembodied discourses of race and nation. The social order in Charleston did not operate from the top-down, according to the abstract dictates of economic or political imperatives; in fact, the opposite was true, the quotidian experience of interracial relations informed the social consciousness and political objectives of Charlestonian power-brokers at many levels. This chapter argues that the conventional macro-historical forces of market revolution, hegemony, nation-building, and state-formation figured prominently, but secondarily to the interracial dialectic that organically and unevenly ordered society in post-colonial South Carolina.

African-Americans outnumbered whites in and around Charleston throughout the antebellum period. The slave-rich rice plantations that dotted the district's coastal periphery guaranteed that blacks greatly outnumbered whites in Charleston County, as they did in the state as a whole. In the City of Charleston, the racial balance was more even. Within city limits, African-Americans never comprised more than 57% of the city's aggregate population, and though the black majority subsided during the 1850s (when many slaves were removed from the city and white workers immigrated to fill their place), it did so gently, falling only to 42% by 1860.[6]

The roughly even racial divide meant that Charleston was the most integrated city in the United States during the antebellum period. Over time, the integrated spaces of Charleston's houses, neighborhoods, and stores were segmented into a complicated and conflicting amalgam of segregated sub-spaces. The most punctuated, dynamic, and potent cell through which Charlestonians participated in this process of racialization was the church. During the post-Revolutionary decades, the spatial boundaries of race were fluid and permeable, as slaves slept below the beds of their mistresses, black and white artisans shared the same workshops, and black evangelicals shared pews with their white brethren. These boundaries hardened over the course of the early national period, and this hardening was readily evident in the church. Interracial religious contact intensified throughout the early nineteenth century for a number of reasons. Among the abstract factors were demography and social trends: the city's slow but steady population growth

[6] U.S. Census Bureau., "Population PDF publications," http://purl.access.gpo.gov/GPO/LPS6200. See also Appendix A.

converged with evangelicalism to dramatically increase levels of church membership and attendance.[7] Among the more immediate cultural factors were a series of events during the 1810s and early 1820s that brought matters of race and religion to the forefront of local attentions. The development of autonomous colored religious communities and news of a conspiracy against the city's white slavocracy forced many Charlestonians to reconsider the accepted norms of interracial relations throughout the city, especially in its houses of worship.

As described in the previous chapter, interracial dynamics of Christian fellowship and worship had been a target of sporadic attention in Charleston, at different moments among different denominations. A new generation of immigrant clerics called to serve in Charleston during the 1810s and 20s renewed attention to the peculiar racial dynamics of local churches. They brought with them an energetic wave of bureaucracy, including the impetus to identify, categorize, and quantify the souls of their new communion. Other than periodic entries in Anglican and Episcopalian records, the governing bodies of

[7] Church membership spiked dramatically during the first three decades of independence, then slowed, but continued to grow in proportion with the overall population. Most denominations did not comprehensively record membership statistics by race until the 1820s and 30s, but other data seems to support the ratios put forth by Mark Noll. Noll estimated national church membership at 60% by 1860, up from 10% circa 1776. African-American church membership seems to have plateaued during the 1820s. Around the time of the Vesey insurrection, between 6700 and 7000 African-Americans were full members or communicants at one of Charleston's Protestant Churches, not including children and non-member affiliates. This figure represents 50% of the city's black population of 14,000 ca. 1820. By 1845, the number of black members (ca. 8300) had grown in proportion to the population (ca. 17,000) to maintain the 50% membership ratio [See Appendix B]. Mark Noll, *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 6; Paul Trapier, *The Religious instruction of the Black population ... A sermon preached in several of the Protestant Episcopal Churches in Charleston on Sundays in July 1847,* (N.p., 1847).

Charleston's churches made no systematic effort to document the racial identity of their attendants until the first decades of the nineteenth century.[8]

As lowcountry Baptist and Methodist membership exploded into black majorities around the turn of the century, ecclesiastical authorities struggled to accommodate. Both denominations integrated black congregants into the worship experience while also diverting new congregants into a semi-organic process of catechetical segregation. White converts joined extant Sunday School classes with white leaders, while black converts organized themselves into new classes under the tutelage of licensed black teachers. Due in large part to its less authoritarian ecclesiastical structure, the Baptist Church was slower to codify and regulate the racial identities of their congregations than the Methodist Conference. Spatial and temporal segregation developed informally – black Baptist exhorters gathered mostly black audiences and separate church services accommodated the slave work schedule – but First Baptist Church did not officially racialize its ministry until 1819. By the time Baptists decided to issue special regulations for their "Coloured Ministers, Elders, and Members," the ready-made class and conference systems of American Methodism had already structured individual churches to evolve alongside the racial demography of their congregations. In so doing, the Methodist church also afforded its black members a considerable degree of autonomy. Racially segregated breakout "classes" of fellowship and instruction provided an exceptional forum for unsupervised assembly, as well as a path to recognized leadership for members of the black community. Methodists of color also managed the affairs of an

[8] John Bachman, for example, racialized membership statistics at St. John's Lutheran Church shortly after he arrived from New York in 1816. Samuel Gilman initiated a similar policy after he was called to the Archdale Street Unitarian Church from Massachusetts in 1819. *Minutes of St. John's Lutheran Church, Charleston, SC*, MSS SCL.

even larger collective, the independent black "Quarterly Conference," with minimal white molestation. [9]

By the second decade of the century, black autonomy had become a source of tension for the Methodists of Charleston. Complaints of improprieties in the black Quarterly Conference's finances prompted Anthony Senter, the Methodist Preacher in Charge, to launch an investigation. According to some institutional histories, black Methodists diverted their Conference funds from Church business to emancipate enslaved members of the congregation. There is no record of such a charge in surviving contemporary sources, but it is easy to understand how this story could work its way into post-bellum histories. The prospect of slaves freeing themselves legally, through reliance upon "black" resources, was a logical extension of the black class system. The cross-class racial solidarity of slaves and free people of color joined together in a financially autonomous unit compromised the boundary between slave and free and performed an aspirational function in the mold of other contemporary ethnic interest groups.[10]

Without deeper explanation, Senter concluded that the "improper workings of this system," compelled the South Carolina Conference not only to integrate black collections and finances under the charge of the white Methodist Trustees, but also to dissolve the formerly independent black conference and require white supervisors for certain operations of the Churches' black classes, most significantly trial and discipline. This

[9] "Rules and regulations of Coloured Ministers, Elders and Members of the Baptist Church in Charleston, S.C," (Charleston: First Baptist Church, 1819); Most of Charleston's leading people of color passed through the Methodist class system, including future A.M.E. Bishops Morris Brown and Daniel Payne, builder and real estate magnate Richard Holloway, and carpenter Denmark Vesey, who was tried and executed for leading an aborted insurrection in 1822.

[10] Albert Deems Betts suggested that the Black Methodist Conference used its funds to purchase the freedom of some of its enslaved members. The source or interpretative basis for this claim is unclear. Albert D. Betts, *History of South Carolina Methodism* (Columbia, S.C: Advocate Press, 1952), 237.

diminished the luster of Methodism's unique appeal for black Charlestonians. The response of most colored Methodists, at least initially, was patient optimism. Unknown to most white Methodists, two of the Church's most beloved black class leaders (Morris Brown and Henry Drayton) traveled north in 1816 to integrate themselves into the national vanguard of black religious leadership and join the movement for independent churches. Brown and Drayton were the only southerners among the first crop of ministers licensed by Philadelphia's nascent African Methodist Episcopal Church.[11] Their ordination provided the first germs of an "African Schism;" once integrated into the national network of "African" advocacy, black Methodists in Charleston moved to assert their legal claim to the property of Bethel Church. The Bethel congregation was overwhelmingly black, and the black leaders of the Church charged that it was preponderantly their money that had purchased the grounds and financed the construction of the Church. These claims were summarily deferred, but the schismatic spirit of Brown and Drayton continued to mature.[12]

Amid these escalating tensions, the Methodist Board of Trustees went on conducting church business on behalf of both white and black congregants. In 1816, despite the protestations of the black membership, the Trustees pursued an offer to augment white funereal rites through the construction of a "hearse house" on a lot owned by the church. The grounds allotted for this project had become a segregated burial plot, reserved for black Methodists. The plan went forward without regard to either black opposition or any white impulse towards racial segregation of (sacred) burial space. This

[11] Daniel Alexander Payne, *History of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* (New York: Arno Press, 1969), 26.
[12] Mood, *Methodism in Charleston*, 130-32; "Minutes of the Charleston District Conference," Charleston Methodist Materials, Wofford University Library (hereafter cited as Wofford MSS).

launched the African Schism into adulthood: in dramatic parallel to the 1787 exit of black congregants from the interracial Methodist Church in Philadelphia "nearly every (black) leader delivered up his class papers, and 4367 of the members withdrew."[13]

In 1817, under the leadership of Brown and Drayton, the black schismatics were able to purchase a lot up the neck of the Charleston Peninsula and plan for the operations of an independent "African" church. For the next five years, the members of the new church met in four different locations while periodically combatting a series of financial and legal obstacles that effectively closed the church for weeks at a time. Anxious portions of the white community routinely harassed members of the African Church throughout its existence. On several occasions during the late 1810s, large numbers of black Methodists were arrested under various charges related to unsupervised assembly. Many suffered corporal punishment or even banishment, but most were released back into the community. A number of freeman sought legal redress for this harassment – petitioning local and state authorities to protect their religious services – but a powerful contingent of Charlestonian legislators blocked their appeal. Each successive event tightened the focus of local attention on the racial dynamics of religious community in the city of Charleston.[14]

Class meetings of the independent African Church became prominent (and thereby threatening) cells of independent worship and community organization. It was also in these meetings that Denmark Vesey and his followers purportedly cultivated much of the insurrectionist conspiracy that infamously bore his name. In 1822, as a result of

[13] Mood, *Methodism in Charleston*, 132.
[14] South Carolina, *Petitions to the General Assembly*, SCDAH; Richard C. Wade, "The Vesey Plot: a Reconsideration." *The Journal of Southern History*. 30.2 (1964): 143-161.

the alleged conspiracy and the African Church's role in its development, the church was closed by public order and its central edifice in Hampstead demolished. The actual events of the conspiracy, and the extent of African Church involvement are a matter of regular historical speculation. The mystery of the Vesey Insurrection will not be solved here.[15] Instead, the immediate focus is upon the more significant, and perhaps equally intriguing consequences that the conventional Vesey narratives had for social dynamics in and around the city of Charleston. The Vesey incident signified Charleston's preoccupation with race. It catalyzed the city's ambiguous treatment of racial questions into a multivalent array of responses, from the most immediate, private, and familial resolutions to the most public state and institutional mechanisms of control. These responses emerged interactively, as interpersonal relations met with institutional prescriptions to forge several layers of public and private racial constructions. As Charleston's most prominent and regular arbiter of public and private spheres, the church played a formative role in this process. [16]

[15]Charged with organizing an insurrectionist conspiracy against the slaveholders of South Carolina, Vesey and his accessories were brought to trial during the summer of 1822. The trial record, though "incomplete and confusing," documented many of the real and imagined threats posed by black independence to the social order. The Vesey trial intensified white preoccupation with the counterhegemonic potential of black literacy and autonomous religious instruction. Too many black Charlestonians enjoyed freedom of thought, a freedom too-easily corrupted by demagogues like Vesey, whose literacy and familiarity with scripture and worldly events armed him with the rhetorical tools of conspiracy. As recorded by their white examiners, witnesses recounted the heterodox interpretations of scripture and international events that Vesey used to win followers. Through these same transcripts, it became public knowledge that Vesey cultivated his conspiracy through the class he led at the African Church. Though there was no documentation other than the trial record to corroborate Vesey's involvement in the African Church and there was record of his membership in Charleston's Second Presbyterian Church from 1817-22, the possibility that Vesey, or any other dark-skinned firebrand, could have used the African Church to foment insurgency was evidence enough. In 1822, white authorities officially closed the Church and executed or banished dozens of its members. The conclusion of this chapter argues that the Vesey allegory was both a cause and effect of racialization in Charleston, and Vesey's legacy is a subject of Chapter Three.

[16] Mood, *Methodism in Charleston*, 133; Douglas Edgerton, *He Shall Go Out Free*, 109; *Charleston Courier*, June 11-13, 1818; Lewis Walker and Susan Silverman, ed.s, *A Documented History of Gullah Jack Pritchard and the Denmark Vesey Slave Insurrection of 1822* (Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 2000).

Though not to the overwhelming scale of the Methodist or Baptist Churches, worshipers of color were a common feature of religious experience for each and every Charleston congregation. The city's Episcopal Churches, long-established as the most elite of religious organizations, were no exception to this rule. Free people of color and slave attendants had been a part of Episcopal worship in Charleston since its inception. The status-consciousness of white Episcopalians had its parallel in the colored Episcopal community. During the Eighteenth Century, most of Charleston's leading people of color were members of St. Philip's or St. Michael's Episcopal Churches. Colored Episcopalians took pride in their denominational status, as those who could afford the rent occupied pews behind and alongside their elite white counterparts. Slave attendants and those who could not afford the rent filled the aisles or took part in services from the belfry. Until the churches constructed second-level galleries during the late eighteenth century, there was no formal policy of racial segregation. Even then, the church intended the new seating to accommodate individuals according to socioeconomic, not racial, standards. Both St. Philip's and St. Michael's allotted gallery and other non-pew seating for those who "had no pews," and public demand for these seats exposed an important dimension of race and class dynamics in Charleston. [17]

People of color flocked to gallery seating, while whites who could not afford ground-floor pew rents stayed away. The colored demand for seating eventually exceeded the supply of seats available in the galleries. Worshipers of color, both slave and free, filled any space available. Though theoretically reserved for the attendants of

[17] Margaret Gillikin, "Free People of Color and St. Philip's Protestant Episcopal Church, Charleston, South Carolina: 1790-1822," (unpublished paper, February 26, 2010); Edmund L. Drago, *Initiative, Paternalism & Race Relations : Charleston's Avery Normal Institute* (Athens: University of Georgia, 1990), 8-36.

white Episcopal masters, African-Americans of all social stripes gradually crowded the aisles of Charleston's Episcopal Churches. By the 1810s and 20s, enough white congregants had complained about the disorderly rabble of black Episcopalians that gathered alongside the rented pews to elicit a formal response from the church. Both St. Philip's and St. Michael's dealt with these issues repeatedly. A 1798 ruling at St. Michael's repeated the colonial-era directive described above and turned the pews reserved for colored (non-paying) congregants into benches, which expanded the seating capacity for this segment of the congregation, but also reduced the status (and comfort) of colored seating in the church. St. Michael's repeated this process several times in subsequent decades, renovating pews into benches to accommodate both practical (seating capacity) and cultural (status-differentiation) demands.[18]

The colored membership at St. Philip's was larger, wealthier, more "respectable," and had a longer history of Episcopal affiliation than that of St. Michael's. All of these factors helped to make questions of race and space in St. Philips's much more complicated. When questions of spatial reorganization came to the Vestry of St. Philip's, they yielded a long and arduous process of deliberation. A series of complaints about the inconvenience presented by colored persons thronging the aisles of St. Philip's coupled with "a due regard to the Christian privileges usually allowed to persons of color in the other Episcopal churches of the city" to addle the minds of the St. Philip's Vestry. After a long series of renovation proposals and counterproposals, the church reached a

[18] St. Philip's and St. Michael's originally established galleries and other non-pew seating for those who "had no pews," but by the mid-eighteenth century, these had been "appropriated to People of Colour." What was originally constructed as a class distinction became a racial one, most likely due to the greater demand for seating from non-pew-holding people of color; Dalcho, *Episcopal History*, 338; Vestry Minutes in *St. Michael's Episcopal Church, Charleston: [records, 1751-1981]* (Charleston, S.C: South Carolina Historical Society, 1982); Minutes and Proceedings of the Vestry, St. Philip's Protestant Episcopal Church, Charleston, SC, 1823-31, SCL.

resolution. The prospective costs of renovation seemed to dominate much of debate over seating reform, but the foremost concern of the most vocal church leaders was preservation of Episcopal tradition. Members of St. Philip's cherished the high esteem in which their colonial forebears were held, and hoped to preserve these traditions into the post-colonial era. "The permission granted to colored persons to occupy the aisles of the church has been of immemorial usage," and Episcopal authorities appealed to this legacy in their deliberations. Colored Episcopalians had extended this "permission" beyond the anticipated boundaries of orderly worship. The problematic nineteenth century reality that confronted Episcopal authorities made it "proper to adopt some permanent regulation for accommodating these people," but pride in denominational commitment to the spiritual needs of Charleston's colored elite warranted compromise. The Vestry accordingly granted present occupants permission to hold their seats, but also ruled that the "right of occupancy shall not be extended to any successor and shall cease with the lives of the present incumbents."[19]

Upon the incident of generational exchange (when traditional occupants died off), the Vestry endowed itself with the power to designate which colored worshipers may sit on the ground floor, and which should be relegated to the balconies. It should be noted that though this dispute began during the 1810s, resolution was not reached until 1828, after the Vesey Insurrection had reinvigorated the city's racial consciousness. News of Vesey's religious propagandizing struck at the heart of Charleston's interracial religious communities, and St. Philip's was no exception. As they deliberated the issue of racialized seating, St. Philip's secretaries documented local preoccupation with the

[19] Minutes, St. Philip's, Aug. 22, 1828, SCL.

religious dimensions of Vesey's conspiracy, but also Episcopalian confidence in the efficacy of their African-American ministry. In the course of reconsidering black worship space, the Vestry council noted not only the absence of any Episcopalian slaves in Vesey's treason, but also the denominational affiliation (Episcopalian) of the slaves responsible for reporting Vesey's plot to the authorities. The faithful service of the colored Episcopalian community had earned them the respect of their fellow congregants, and both white and black Episcopalians understood that this would this would translate into status recognition among the larger community of Charlestonians. The seating committee reported that "they are at least as well instructed (sic) in their moral and religious duties in our Episcopal churches as in those of any other denomination of Christians and (we) believe them to have been found on all occasions among the most orderly and well behaved in this Community." In their confluence of sentiment and regimentation, the seating committee signified a gradual and individualized set of racial boundaries, subject to determinist pigmentary guidelines, but also permeable to the dispensations of tradition.[20]

The colored membership at St. Philip's represented a slim but significant portion of black Charlestonians. A little more than half of Charleston's African-American population was affiliated with one of the city's churches, and most of these black churchgoers did not go to Episcopal Churches. A number of factors drew black Charlestonians to different churches, but these can be divided into two imperfect categories of African-American worship practices: exclusive and inclusive.[21] The

[20] Ibid.

[21] African-Americans attended the white-controlled churches of Charleston for a number of reasons: some domestic slaves accompanied their masters to Sunday services as personal attendants; many other slaves took advantage of the Sabbath as a unique opportunity of voluntary association; for field slaves, it

'exclusive' pole of the black religious spectrum was exemplified by men like Thomas Bonneau or Thomas Eggart, who identified themselves leaders of Charleston's "brown" elite, more comparable to the assimilating ethnic mutual aid societies than the darker-skinned free or enslaved blacks excluded from membership in a number of religious and voluntary associations. Other well-known black Charlestonians, like Daniel Alexander Payne or the Holloway Family exemplify the inclusive pole of African-American parochial affiliation. Richard Holloway arrived in Charleston in 1797 as a thoroughly evangelized Methodist, unconscious of the social and racial significations of church affiliation. But Holloway was a quick study of Charleston culture; within twelve months, Holloway had mastered the balance between evangelical and practical mandates of association: licensed by the Methodist Conference to preach among the peripheral slave communities and established as a pew-renting member of several city churches.[22]

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represented a 24-hour respite from daily labors; Sunday also presented a special opportunity for voluntary congregation with friends and family members from other homes and plantations**;** free people of color also crafted "elite" (exclusive) and "everyman" (inclusive) identities through church membership; ultimately; the church became the center of African-American social life, the lone institutional bulwark of family life, source of communal attachments, and an effective means to challenge, subvert, or mitigate the circumstances of enslavement and white supremacy. See Bernard Powers, *Black Charlestonians*, 34.

[22] James H. Holloway, "Holloway Family Scrapbook," Avery Research Center; Drago, *Initiative, Paternalism, Race Relations*, 8-9; Friendly Moralist Society Records, 1841-1856, Avery Research Center. "Inclusivists" recognized free and slave people of color as part of a common community; exclusivists erected cultural and institutional stratifiers – free above slave, rich above poor, "brown" above black, etc. Thomas Bonneau was perhaps Charleston's most notable black educator of the antebellum period, distinguished by his successor (and primary rival to the "most notable" title), Daniel A. Payne, by the exclusivity of his student body. Bonneau's students were children from the free colored elite. The school did occasionally admit promising less fortunate scholars (like the orphan Payne), but as a general rule did not teach slaves or children from families that could not afford the monthly tuition. Payne, on the other hand, adopted a much more inclusive admission policy that welcomed even adult slaves into the student body. Whereas Bonneau based his educational philosophy around a drive to close the status gap between whites and free people of color that also entailed dissociation from the enslaved underclass, Payne advocated education as a universal ameliorative for the condition of all people, regardless of pigmentation or legal status (slave or free). Marriage into one of Charleston's wealthiest black families opened a new window of opportunity for Michael Eggart, who then moved to close this window to others who might hope to follow. Raised in the Methodist church, Eggart became a pew-holding member of his wife's St. Philips' Episcopal Church after their marriage. Through membership in a number of benevolent societies for free people of color, Eggart fought for more stringent safeguards against enslaved members, or those of darker skin. On the other side of this conflict were the Holloways – Richard and his sons, leading members

In many respects, African-American religious affiliation paralleled the duplicity of local whites; William Capers referred to white membership patterns when he reported that it was "more respectable to join some other Church, and still attend the preaching of the Methodists," but the same could be said of Charleston's elite colored community. Richard Holloway, patriarch of Charleston's most notable nineteenth century colored family, was a stalwart leader of the local Methodist Church, but had his marriage, and those of his children, officiated in the Episcopal Church. Holloway witnessed the racial turbulence of the 1810s, when his colored brethren in the Methodist Churches struck out on their brief autonomous course under the auspices of the African Church. Holloway mentored many of the African Church's class leaders, and maintained intimate contact with their rector Morris Brown, but all the while continued to attend services at his "white" home church, Trinity Methodist.[23]

When the events surrounding Vesey's trial put an end to the African Church, and its leaders fled from the state, Holloway and the Methodist Churches of Charleston welcomed many of the 'African' parishioners back into the fold. The re-integration process gradually enlarged the black membership in Charleston's Methodist congregations. Throughout the 1820's, Methodists of color returned to the bi-racial churches, belatedly engaging a worship experience now modified by a wave of post-Vesey legislation that mandated constant surveillance. Among other provisions,

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of the Methodist Church, as well as free colored society. When a nominal slave with sufficient revenues to pay the dues applied to join the Friendly Moralist Society, the Holloways convinced the membership to admit him over the objections of Eggart and his allies.

[23] "Holloway Family Scrapbook," Avery.

Charleston churches now observed state and local laws that required two white supervisors present at all gatherings of colored peoples and prohibited black preaching.[24]

White surveillance brought with it an attention to physical proximity, a bi-racial familiarity that had long been an unacknowledged feature of worship in Charleston, but was never formalized into law. White Methodists responded to the new intimacy in different ways – church records from this period demonstrate white attentiveness to social dynamics in the black Methodist community, but also a tendency to self-consciously exaggerate or conflate certain dimensions of black personality for effect. Those most familiar with black parishioners, usually Methodist preachers, evince both awareness of and sensitivity to the wants of colored congregants. The Rev. William Capers documented an array of sentiments from the black community in his own writings, like the mutual disdain that developed between the enslaved black and free colored segments of the church. As for the distorted perceptions wrought by the new intimacy, the most evident was a caricatured depiction of "mulatto" congregants, a defensive response to the social threat posed by free blacks. During this early stage of social modernization, wealth provided Charleston's free persons of color with an avenue to status that registered in several tangible aspects of Methodist culture, most notably Sunday dress and financial contribution.[25]

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[24] Mood, *Methodism in Charleston*, 144-45; George Eckhard, *A Digest of the Ordinances of the City of Charleston* (1844).

[25] Two distinctive patterns of racial terminology emerge from contemporary Methodist documents. In the documents surrounding the schismatic controversy analyzed below, the younger, more "modern" commentators repeatedly invoked charges against "mulatto" transgressors of the racial order. As products of the original transgressive act of miscegenation, Charlestonians of mixed race emerged as the most prominent targets of racial modernists. On the other hand, the elder, more traditional generation responded to these charges with reference to these same "mulatto" transgressors as "colored," or "free colored." This contrast in terminology seems an accurate reflection of the contrast in racial definitions that propagated the schism.

Economic power was not the only thing about colored Methodists that worried their white brethren. Socioeconomic status could also be read spatially in the church. Black Methodists, sitting side by side with whites, signified their relative standing, real or imagined. One of the most prominent examples of social rivalry from the black community was Richard Holloway. Holloway was a respected class leader at Trinity Methodist and also one of the wealthiest men in Charleston. Church records mention Holloway and his sons frequently. Richard Holloway was "conspicuous for his intelligence and zeal," but it is also noted that "his zeal…was sometimes intemperate and ill-judged." Holloway's "zeal" became apparent, and perhaps "ill-judged" through his regular seating among the affluent whites on the ground floor. As the Methodist congregations continued to grow, more and more colored members followed Holloway to seats in the regular pews.[26]

By the 1830s, there were as many as 4000 black members in Charleston's Methodist churches. The limited space afforded to blacks in the galleries of all three churches accommodated a maximum of 1500 bodies. In keeping with the spirit of Bishop Asbury's edict that churches provide sufficient space to seat the bodily vessels of all willing souls, separate "Boxes" were erected on the ground floor near the doors of each church. It was initially understood that these boxes would seat elderly and infirm slaves, incapable of climbing into the galleries, and the remaining seats eventually became the province of free persons of color. Thus seating custom evolved week by week, until

[26] *An Exposition of the Causes and Character of the Difficulties in the Church in Charleston in the Year 1833* (n.p. 1834), 35; Mood, *Methodism in Charleston*, 189; Abel M. Chreitzberg, *Early Methodism in the Carolinas* (Spartanburg, S.C: Reprint Co), 197, 259; Jonathan Poston, *The Buildings of Charleston* (Columbia: USC Press, 1997), 507-08, 630-31.

> a few of the older free persons of color were accustomed to take their seats beyond the boxes in the body of the church; and what was conceded as a privilege was finally claimed by them as a right. Gradually others among the colored people began also to pass the barrier of the boxes, and their boundaries were finally so much enlarged as to encroach seriously upon the comfort of the whites.[27]

Those most discomforted by black encroachment were members of a younger generation, more sensitive to (modern) racial trends than their older fellows. They were men devoted to the pursuit of white egalitarianism, but also status-conscious church-hoppers like those described by Capers - who joined other churches while also attending Methodist services. These young white men on the make, attuned to both the emergence of race in national politics and the racial restrictions enacted by their social superiors at St. Philip's in 1828, made the first complaints about colored Methodists taking seats beyond their place in 1829. Their initial complaints fell on deaf or distracted ears. Little changed within the church, but the fevered political climate that surrounded the Nullification Crisis of 1832-33 radiated into the church to energize and politicize the objections of the younger complainants. For two Sundays in a row, during the June swelter of 1833, a set of young radicals frustrated at their church's refusal to correct the "mulattoes, or a certain set of them, (who) had encroached on the privileges of the white members," took matters into their own hands. In what they considered a necessarily violent expression of the popular will, the "arrogance of the mulatto offenders (Richard Holloway among them) was rebuked by thrusting them from the seats they occupied." The ejectors believed that their actions represented the interests of the white Methodist minority, so followed the spontaneous aggression of that Sunday with an appeal to higher church authorities. Once their protestations reached South Carolina's Quarterly Conference, the supervisory body

[27] *Causes and Character*, 16; Mood, *Methodism in Charleston*, 144-146.

of Charleston Methodists resolved that all the plaintiff churches should make arrangements to officially segregate the worship service. The resolutions read as follows:

> (1) That the Gallery is the only proper place for the slaves in our Churches; and that the Trustees be requested to remove the boxes on the lower floor, and place benches there with a railing up the center aisle, for the use of the free persons of color.
>
> (2) That it is expedient that a small gate should be cut on each side of the large gate leading into Bethel yard, on a line with the gallery doors, for the use of colored persons entering the church; and also that a paling fence be erected in all our yards, leading from each side-gate to the Church.[28]
>
> (3) That a Committee be appointed to communicate the foregoing resolutions to the Board of Trustees, and request their immediate action upon them; and in case the Trustees are unable to do so for the want of funds, the Committee be instructed to raise a subscription for that purpose.[29]

[28] The second resolution provides ample fodder for analysis, but not within the bounds of this paper. Subsequent commentary from Methodist records on this point suggests that the fences were in fact designed to shield colored entrants to the church from the gaze of white entrants. Many complained that this would result in untrammeled harassment of black Methodists by other Charlestonians.
[29] *Cause and Character*, 4.

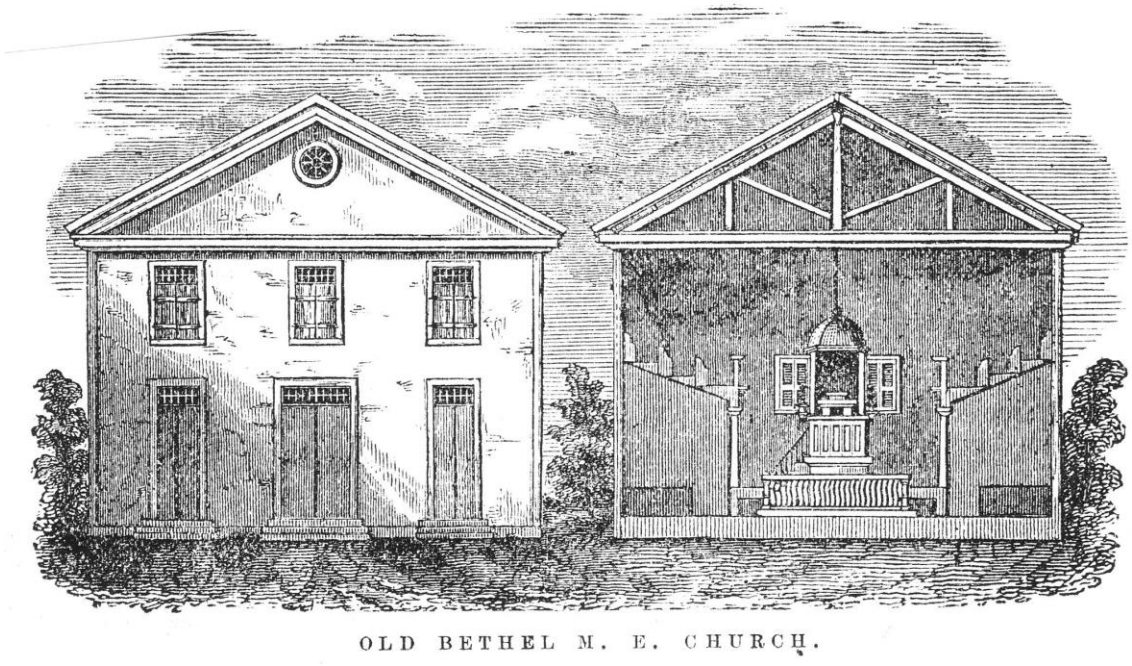

Figure 2.1: Sketch of Bethel Methodist Church, exterior and interior of pulpit and slave gallery.[30]

The first two resolutions reflect the Conference's reform initiative – improvements to the spatial orientation and structure of Charleston's Churches, designed to "clean up" the mess of racial integration. The third resolution may seem the most mundane, the least likely to stir controversy, but in fact it was the launch point for the "greatest" of Charleston's Methodist schisms. The Committee entrusted to carry this communication to the Charleston Trustees consisted of three men, volunteers from the same contingent of upstart Charlestonians who initially brought the matter of racially integrated seating to the Quarterly Conference.[31] Divergent interpretations of the third resolution proved to be an insuperable bone of contention for white Methodists. The

[30] John O. Wilson, *Sketch of the Methodist Church in Charleston* (Charleston: Lucas, Richardson and Co., 1888), 9.

[31] Signatories on letters from the Committee are listed as "F.D. Poyas, John Honour, William Mood;" Honour appears to have been the most vocal and active of the three, thus the Committee sometimes bears his name.

Committee proceeded from a "thy will be done" understanding of the Conference edict, and assumed the power to push the necessary changes through the individual church bureaucracies. Those among Charleston's Methodist authorities who were informed of the orders interpreted the third resolution more literally. The preachers and active Trustees acknowledged the three-man Committee "appointed to communicate" the resolutions to the churches, but understood that communication was where their office ended. For initially unstated reasons, William Capers and the participating Trustees deferred the Conference request for "immediate action," refusing to take up an initiative that they felt ultimately did more harm than good.

After a series of rebuffs from the Rev. Capers, the committee headed by Honour, Poyas, and Mood devised a strategy that would potentially remove Capers and the Trustees from the process altogether. Appealing to the Act of Incorporation, a municipal law of 1787, the Committee of three and a cohort of six or seven sympathetic others called a meeting to express the collective will of the Church as a corporate body. Thereafter known as the "corporation party," this group had their actions censured by the Church elders, and their meeting boycotted by the Presiding Elder whose presence was required to sanction any formal church assembly. This armed each side with argument for disciplinary action against the other: the "Old Trustees" charged the young insurgents with defying church discipline, holding unauthorized meetings of the congregation, and slandering church elders; the corporate party not only sought removal of the Old

Trustees for failure to acknowledge the legitimate corporate will of the Church, but also charged these same with several counts of misappropriating church funds.[32]

From these two opposing bodies of Charlestonians, an escalating series of factious maneuvers and counter-maneuvers grew to impossible dimensions, culminating in the secession of over 160 younger white Methodists. Seeking redress for the non-compliance of the Trustees, the communicant committee and its sympathizers initiated a series of power-plays to implement their will upon the Church. As evident in the inflammatory language of their public appeal, the corporate party strategy was in many ways analogous to the state's rights doctrine authored by South Carolina's favorite son, John C. Calhoun, and parlayed into the Nullification Crisis of the previous year.

More than just two sides of an intra-denominational conflict for control of local churches, the divergent strategies and sensibilities present on each side of the conflict suggest fundamentally different ways of understanding contemporary society. As the corporate committee sought to reform the traditional fluidity and gradualism that characterized eighteenth century racial relations into a more rigidly codified system of racial boundaries, they signified the maturity of Charleston's first distinctly and self-consciously *modern* generation. Despite Honour's claims to the contrary, his committee's prescriptive agenda contradicted its traditionalist counterpart less in its ends that in its means. Elder Methodists did not explicitly oppose objectives like white supremacism or (white) egalitarianism, but did balk at the rigidity and immediatism with which these were pursued by their younger brethren.

[32] *Causes and Character*, 18-27; William Capers and William Kennedy, *Exposition of the Late Schism that Occurred in the Methodist Episcopal Church* (Charleston: J.S. Burges, 1834), 31 ff.

From one level of the schismatic dispute, it is clear that the "corporation party" perceived their opponents as beholden to the material interests of the church, and more specifically the fiscal clout of their free colored donors. According to the Committee of Three, the Treasurer of the Board of Trustees opposed the segregation order because he feared that "many of the colored persons would leave the church; and thereby one of the great sources of revenue be cut off." Similar charges were levied against the Methodist clergy; the Preachers in Charge were also diagnosed with the disease of materialism-induced color blindness. The Rev. Capers sought to defend himself against charges that he was "leagued with the coloured people, to encourage their intrusions among the whites, in the Churches, '*on account of their money*.'" The basis for this misunderstanding, according to Capers, was a statement he made early in the dispute "intended to inculcate Christian charity and kindness towards the people of color, especially those who give evidence of sincere piety, and are otherwise respectable in their station."[33]

By replacing "money" with "respectability" or "piety" as the qualities of black Methodists that dignified their concerns, Capers hoped to deflect the charges as he understood them. To the upstart corporate party, however, all measurable qualities of black humanity, apart from their race, were equally threatening. The standards of respectability or piety, judged by behavior or disposition, were thus manipulable by all Charlestonians – a playing field upon which Methodists of color could compete with their racial superiors. These transgressions of hierarchical boundaries developed over decades and assumed the weight of self-evidence among the early modern generation, but ran

[33] *Causes and Character*, 25; Capers and Kennedy, *Exposition*, 35.

counter to the sensibilities of younger Charlestonians. Translated through the filter of modernity, the conventional habits of Charleston Methodists fundamentally violated the racial order.

These divergent perceptions of race and the worship community delineated one aspect of the generational rift, but when it came to questions of race, Charleston's white Methodists still agreed more than they differed. Capers conceded the propriety of segregated seating, but objected to the alacrity with which the younger members would have it implemented. He was concerned about the consequences of such forcible changes and sought control over a more deliberate, conservative path. Capers rightly perceived that the treatment of respectable colored congregants was just one point of contestation amid a larger struggle for control of the Church. As the conflict escalated to schismatic dimensions, the issue of integrated Sabbath seating drifted into the background. The great majority of the corporate party's argument over the course of the 1833-34 hullabaloo was based upon principles other than race. Capers noted superficial nature of their charges of race-mixing, and framed his response accordingly:

> you raised a cry against the colored peoples only as a pretext, (such as the facts do prove), to form a party in the Church for quite another purpose. And when under the pretext of maintaining order in the Churches, you had stirred up strife, and were driving the colored members away from the Church, I only did my duty as a pastor, by reproving a rash act of some hasty young men, and endeavoring to interpose with Christian exhortation to prevent an evil.[34]

The corporate party's "other purpose" was to wrest control of the Methodist Church from the fathers who had presided over its former era, who shepherded the Charleston congregations through storms of persecution, but still bore the stains of

[34] Capers and Kennedy, *Exposition*, 25.

Methodism's antislavery impulse. Each year, the governing body of Methodists in the United States issued regulations in response to the question: "What shall be done for the extirpation of the evil of slavery?" And each year, the answers to that question involved more and more concessions to Methodist evangelists in the slave states, those who labored under the weight of an increasingly trenchant southern orthodoxy. William Capers was an essential part of this process – a recognized leader of the denomination at the national level and a stalwart proponent of the slave interest. The gradual progression of compromises on issues of slaveowning and emancipation (most frequently, the insertion of clauses that circumvented ecclesiastical antislavery regulations in states where they violated the civil laws) reflected Capers' ideals in two important ways: first, the gradual layering of improvements to the cause of Methodist evangelism in the South followed an appropriately conservative path – a moderate blend of compromise and adaptation; second, Methodist regulations persistently acknowledged the limitations of religious authority – the General Conference "rendered unto Caesar" legitimate control over worldly matters like regulating slavery and manumission.[35]

Gradualism and "render unto Caesar" were mottos of Capers' traditionalist generation, and both of these ran counter to the pervasively modern stance of his junior opponents in the Charleston squabble. Neither Capers nor his successor, William Kennedy, were entirely consistent in their efforts to avoid secular argumentation, but they were nonetheless accurate in noting that the corporate party's contentions were infected with worldly concerns. Referring to the Nullification zeitgeist of 1832-33, Capers argued:

[35] Donald Matthews, *Slavery and Methodism*, (Princeton University Press, 1965), 293-303.

> there is no room here for the introduction of such questions and opinions as have divided our people in civil affairs, between the nationality of the Government on the one hand, and States Rights on the other.[36]

Capers fought the state's rights parallel on both spiritual and secular grounds, affirming that questions of civil policy had no place in the Church, but also enclosing a letter from Charleston's most prominent attorneys that disqualified the Methodist Church from corporate status.[37]

Democratization of the church was an important bone of contention among the dueling parties of the second schism. The corporation party insisted that power in the church flowed from the bottom-up; they insisted upon electing their own leaders for congregational meetings instead of acknowledging the time-honored leadership of the Trustees; they circulated petitions among women and younger men, those traditionally barred from transacting church business. Church elders denied the legitimacy of incorporation on the grounds that Methodist authority historically flowed from one man (Wesley) down to the churches; they declared that such politicization had no place in a spiritual community; they accused the corporation party of turning prayer meetings into "caucuses, where revolutionary measures were agitated."[38]

More than a generation removed from the personal experiences of interracial cooperation that generated a Methodist denomination in Charleston, the architects of the second schism proceeded from a fresh, modern interpretation of Methodist history and ritual. In their "entire subversion of Methodist discipline," the corporate party re-scripted

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[36] *Causes and Character*, 26.
[37] Legal opinion from Attorney General R. Barnwell Smith, co-signed by Charleston Attorney T.S. Grimke in *Causes and Character*, 33-34; also James L.Petigru letter in *Exposition.*
[38] "Report of the Committee of the South Carolina Committee of the Methodist Episcopal Church on the Subject of the Schism in Charleston with the Accompanying Documents (1835)," Wofford MSS, 25.

the drama of the previous generation. While traditionalists considered their agitations to be **anomic extremes of individualism** gone awry, the youth movement understood their demands and rhetoric as normative expressions of social progress. Though the bonds that united white traditionalists and radicals proved more durable in the long term, the particular political and cultural context of the moment magnified the issues that divided them in the short term to expose a latent generational contrast of special significance to Charleston Methodists.

The politicized language of the 1833-34 Methodist dialogue proved Nullification to be the most immediate point of reference for both sides of the generational conflict. Capers and the Methodist elders charged that the insurgency was a misguided attempt of young Methodists to involve themselves in the fad of radical politics. The legalist strategy of the corporate party resembled the constitutionalist legalist innovations of Calhoun and his local supporters. The corporate party accredited some of their correspondence to the authorship of William Laval, a prominent member of Charleston's Nullification Party. The Trustees ultimately shared the burden of guilt for their church's failure to compromise, as Capers admitted that the church's fate was wrought when "***we*** had corrupted ourselves by imbibing the spirit of party political strife." The radical zeitgeist of the early 1830s accelerated the terms of the conflict, but if both parties imbibed the intoxicating aroma of nullification equally, the root of their difference lay elsewhere.

One of the factors that triggered the second Methodist schism was a local climate of status-consciousness. The exit of colonial institutions and British aristocracy left a social void soon filled by the "republican spatial imagination." In order to "renegotiate

their place in the new landscape of religious equality," most denominations adopted strategies from the Anglican catalogue of status performance. When an early nineteenth century export boom inspired a wave of church construction in Charleston, six new churches "appropriated the architectural language formerly employed by Anglicans" to demonstrate their level of aesthetic refinement. When non pew-holding white Episcopalians asked for seating concessions and pew-holders complained of racial transgressions and disorder, their Episcopalian Vestry responded. By peripheralizing the spatial requirements of black congregants to secure the status of lesser whites, the Episcopalian churches set another standard for replication in the competitive religious marketplace of early republican Charleston.[39]

White Methodist men grouped themselves together with their Episcopalian counterparts in an imagined civic community and sought to close the apparent status gap that led others to group them differently. Methodist men-on-the-make, aspiring to the heights of social and political status enjoyed by pew-holders in more established denominations, worked to purge earlier stains on their denomination from public memory: Methodists chastised by Presbyterian authorities as agents of disorder; Methodism labeled "a denomination peculiarly suited to the poor;" the local perception that Methodism "is successful among the Negroes, because it is *only* suited to them."[40] They pursued social representations of herrenvolk democracy through initiatives already

[39] Nelson, *Beauty of Holiness*, 361. This is a twist on the architectural trend summarized in the introduction – whereas Episcopalians distinguished themselves from evangelicals via more traditional pulpits in the interior, evangelical churches continued to emulate Anglican and Episcopalian aesthetics on the exterior.
[40] James Smith, *History of Cumberland Presbyterian Church* (Nashville: the Church, 1835), 571; Ramsay, *History of South Carolina*, 19; Mood, *Methodism in Charleston*, 184. The violent harassments of the turn-of the century troubled Methodist memory and identity most particularly. The dousing of Rev. Dougherty described in Chapter One and other incidents to be described in the next chapter were at least partially motivated by racial anxieties and targeted the church's black majority. Such events may have also motivated the proposal for a new "paling fence" to shield the black church entrance from public line of sight (and harassment); see note 28.

enacted by their (traditional) social superiors. The precedent racialization of other Protestant churches and the infectious charisma of nullifier pride emboldened them to adopt radical measures, which included their secession to form an all-white church.

When William Capers asserted that the corporate party's demand for more rigid racialization of worship space in Methodist Churches was a "pretext for…another purpose," he was only partially accurate. The purpose of "those hasty young men" was much closer to the racial pretext than he was able or willing to recognize. The purpose of corporate party agitation was modernization of the Methodist Church. Modernization in this sense represents a confluence of a new generation of trends, both local and national. At the local level, racial anxieties had pervaded the Methodist consciousness for generations. Methodist modernizers sought to purge this element from their worship experience, to prove that theirs was not a religion "suited only to Negroes." At the national level, abolitionists and nullifiers accelerated the pace of reform discourse, beyond gradualism and compromise to immediatism and brinksmanship. These two currents converged in the minds of younger Charlestonians to make "driving colored members away from the churches" an acceptable, and perhaps intended, consequence of Methodist modernization.

More than the republican rhetoric or political theory that characterized the corporate party's modernist offensive, what most troubled Church Elders was their pace of reform and secularization of spiritual affairs. Many of the Trustees recognized the legitimacy of Nullification in a federal context, but bucked at the radical extent to which these "hasty young men" felt it could be applied to other dimensions of the traditional order. The corporate party belonged to the City of Man first and the City of God second.

They held the "Church's book of Discipline only as secondary to (their) by-laws" and thus began "nullifying all rules or modes of management which were of authority in the Church contrary to this new-fangled by-law Constitution."[41]

As this post-Nullification controversy unfolded, the corporate party traversed the permeable boundary between *reformer* and *radical*. To paraphrase Ronald Walters' usage of these terms, the pro-segregation Committee initially defined their movement as effort to "improve existing social…arrangements," but soon moved to overturn the contemporary church order. As it became evident that Capers and the Trustees were reluctant to accept the proposed changes, the corporate party adopted an oppositional rhetoric that was nothing short of revolutionary. The younger men fought to preserve their "inalienable rights" as individual churchgoers against the "arbitrary and despotic proceedings" of the Trustees, "worthy of a Russian Autocrat, or the Cham of Tartary." They appealed to their "enlightened" peers to enlist fellow soldiers in this fight against the tyranny of the Old Guard, but instead of liberation, they found discipline. Unwilling to submit to the "aristocratic power of the ministry," nine leaders of the corporate party were expelled from Methodist Episcopal communion, and some 160 of their sympathizers seceded from the church in protest.[42]

Though all of the city's interracial churches gradually incorporated some version of the two-stroke process of spatial reconfiguration and racialization modeled by the Episcopalian churches, the Methodist path to modernization was exceptional for its

[41] *Exposition*, 28.
[42] Ronald Walters, *American Reformers: 1815-1860* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), xii-xiv; *Exposition*, 28.

radicalism. The competitive religious marketplace of early national Charleston compelled younger white Methodists to emulate the effect of Episcopalian seating reform, but a number of factors distinguished their motives and means. The Episcopalian plan of spatial reform, especially in St. Philip's, proceeded from a respect of interracial tradition and black elitism. In order to preserve the dignity of Episcopalian class of negroes, "among the most well-instructed…orderly and well-behaved in this community," who occupied seats of "immemorial usage," the Vestry adopted a delicate and gradual (generational) program of re-seating. Younger white Methodists, on the other hand, demanded an immediate re-structuring of sanctuary seating and ultimately proved their demands to be motivated by an outright rejection of interracial tradition and black elitism. There are several points of distinction that explain this contrast: the Methodist initiative manifested five years later, after the Nullification Crisis; it was orchestrated by younger, more ambitious, less patient men, more willing to engage conflict; it took place within a church of starkly different history and demography than the city's Episcopalian churches.[43]

During the 1820s and 30s, most of Charleston's Protestant Churches acted to regulate race and space in their congregations. White modernists pushed to restore racial order to the church, and their churches responded with an innovative racialized architecture of spiritual power.[44] Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Lutherans had already

[43] St. Philip's Minutes, August 22, 1828, SCL.

[44] The Episcopal Churches of Charleston were the first to issue resolutions on the racial segregation of ground floor seating. The Presbyterian and Lutheran Churches followed, around the same time as the Methodists raised the issue. Another dimension of racial division in the church was aesthetic, particularly the discourse of seating style – not where whites or blacks should sit, but what type of seat they should have. Most Protestant Churches resolved that people of color should sit in "boxes," "benches," or "benches with backs," and white parishioners of course sat in pews. All Protestant and Catholic Churches eventually

crafted racialized arrangements of spatial segregation by the time Methodists raised the issue. Many churches, most notably the Baptist, also resolved racial transgressions through temporal segregation - a racialized worship schedule. Though both spatial and temporal patterns of racial segregation had long histories of practice in Charleston, the conscious intimacy wrought by post-Vesey preoccupations with race agitated these practices into a purer form of racial construction. Beginning in 1822, and intensifying during the 1830s, the racializing trend extended into secular space, and the racial order of public space and time became a central theme of legal discourse for rest of the antebellum period. These patterns signified the emergence of racial modernity in Charleston, and their origins in the discourse of sacred space demonstrates the formative role that religious dynamics had on local trajectories of racial consciousness and community formation.[45]

Racial contestations of sacred space tested all of Charleston's religious communities, but the Methodist Church was the only one in Charleston to split over the issue. The exceptional characteristics of Charleston's Methodist congregations, including their overwhelming black majority, bred exceptional expressions of racial modernity. In Charleston, Methodists represented the "inclusive" extreme of religious affiliation, and the rising tide of social exclusivity wrought by the city's expanding racial consciousness during the 1820s and 30s meant that something had to give. Ultimately, Honour's

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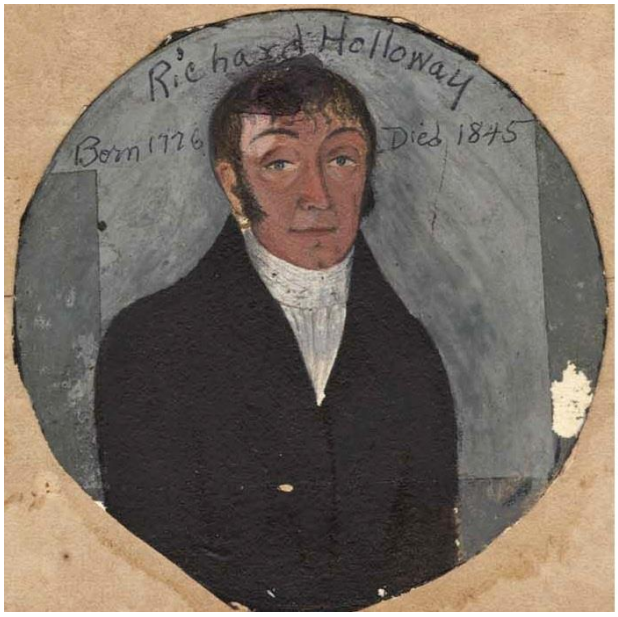
resolved to practice some form of temporal segregation, usually in the form of a separate communion rite for colored worshipers.

[45] Throughout the 1830s and 40s, reports of racially-tinged disorder filled the Charleston press. Most of these incidents took place in the "Neck" of the Charleston peninsula, a lower-income suburb north of town which was eventually incorporated into the city proper in 1845. Incorporation, along with a general wave of spatial reform during the 1840s and 1850s targeted these reported violations of the racial order – slaves sharing apartments or tenements with white workers, African-American crowds singing and dancing in the streets late into the night, etc. – to enact programs of more rigid segregation; Jane H. Pease and William H. Pease Collection (1970), Avery Research Center; see also Wade, *Slavery in the Cities*, 37, 243-81.

charges against Capers and his generation of church Elders were valid. White Methodists were beholden to the spiritual and social interests of their darker-skinned brethren. While Honour's coterie of secessionists chartered a short-lived all-white Church that reflected his modern sense of the "republican spatial imagination," the interracial churches he left behind gradually implemented the racialized seating directives that he wrought through the Methodist Conference. Though the corporate party and their supporters were no longer there to see it, the Trustees enacted the requested spatial reforms shortly after the separation of 1834, according to their own schedule of moderation. Even after the exit of 164 members, the church consistently fell short of the demand for seating. Mother Nature was the ultimate impetus for a complete overhaul of pew organization in 1838, when a fire destroyed both Trinity and Cumberland Methodist Churches. The reconstructed churches adopted a strict gallery-and-box seating policy for African-American congregants.



Figures 2.2 and 2.3: Portraits of Richard Holloway and John H. Honour

Epilogues and Conclusions

The corporate party incorporated spiritual community formation into their pursuit of an ideal social order, and thereby modernized the class-status-race tensions that fired the engine of white identity formation. The spatial and temporal ordering of a spiritual community according to social and racial categories, incorporated to varying degrees into all Charleston churches, signified the emergence of racial modernity in Charleston, and thereby represented an essential step towards the development of (southern) nationalism.

Consider for example the life of John Honour, Jr. Honour was a leading member of the corporate party whose personal narrative reflects that of his generation, and on an even grander scale, personifies the maturation of southern identity. Honour's father was impoverished by the Revolution, and drifted through a number of professions, including the Methodist itinerancy. He served as one of the first Methodist missionaries to slaves on lowcountry plantations, but contracted malaria and died a year into his post. He could not afford to provide his children any extensive education, but John Jr. acquired training as a clerk at a Charleston commission house. It was as an ambitious young clerk, one year after his father's death and the rearrangement of pews at St. Philip's, that Honour began to complain about people of color occupying "white" seats on the ground floor of Methodist churches. By virtue of his race, Honour assumed he was more entitled to the privilege of respectable seating than old men of color like Richard Holloway. This was a sentiment that resonated widely with the white community, in and out of the Methodist churches, as demonstrated by the support for Honour's campaign and his personal ascendancy thereafter. Honour's leading role in the 1834 schism launched him into local

prominence. The secessionist church anointed him their leader and even petitioned the Protestant Methodist Conference in Augusta for his licensure. Honour served only sporadically as pastor, but parlayed the prominence gained from spiritual leadership into a secular path to professional advancement. Within a year of his ordination, Honour was elected chief accountant for the Charleston Insurance and Trust Company, and became president of the company nine years later. During the 1840s and 50s, Honour served several terms as alderman, and even served as provisional mayor on two separate occasions. Honour served as an honor guard at Calhoun's funeral march, and participated in the culminating moment of his radical generation, as delegate to the Secession convention in 1860.[46]

Honour's fight for more rigid racial segregation of sacred space made it possible for him to realize his personal and professional ambitions. In many ways, the maturation of Charleston's radical generation of southern nation-builders is Honour's story writ large. Both the "before" and "after" pictures of the 1834 schism suggest that Honour's contingent were on the side of "progress." The balance of history had already tipped against the Trustees on the issue of racialization. Even the most objectionable act of the conflict – the violent ejection of pious mulattos from their seats – was sanctioned by church policy and the acknowledged obligations of the church wardens. The Reverend Capers was local, but itinerant. Capers roamed the Carolinas and Georgia for most of his early career, and only returned to Charleston from Columbia in the winter of 1832, meaning that he was less familiar with the congregational dynamics of the preceding years. African-American Methodists had a profound impact on his spiritual and

[46] Edward T. Horn, *In Memory of Rev. John H. Honour, D.d: Born 20th December, 1802. Died 26th November, 1885* (Charleston, S.C: News and Courier Book Presses, 1885).

professional formation, but he likely would have been less attached to the worldly interests of colored members than the Trustees and other permanent residents.[47] Capers resigned his seat on the Board, in order to separate himself from the worldly concerns of the church, but only after his intransigence brought the objections of the young radicals. The Trustees were also beholden to the overwhelming financial strains of operating a church. Though they would never admit it, the economic value of colored membership, especially that of wealthy stalwarts like Holloway, influenced their impression and treatment of the colored families who attended and contributed more regularly than most of their white brethren.

One of the attendant charges of mismanagement levied by the corporate party against the Trustees was that they sold land to Charles Clark. In need of revenue, with a spare lot to divest, the church accepted market value from one of its colored members. In so doing, they also violated the racial sensibilities of a more modern generation. This transaction provoked suspicions of interracial collusion between wealthy people of color and corrupt white managers, but from a different angle revealed a fundamental truth of racial dynamics among post-Revolutionary Carolinians. Though most of the Trustees likely subscribed to the same notions of white supremacy expressed by their opponents, they assumed the boundaries between black and white to be fluid and transgressible. When they used their (contested) authority to sell "white" property to a black man without consulting the white membership, they operated within the framework of an

[47] *Life of Capers*, 303-315; One of Capers' early mentors was Henry Evans, an African-American Methodist preacher in Fayetteville, North Carolina. The Evans-Capers relationship is discussed in the next chapter.

Early Republican racial system, in which wealth and respectability variably transcended racial boundaries.[48]

Aspiring leaders of the next generation blamed the present conflict on the short-sighted and traditionalist thinking of the Trustees. A member of the corporate party reported that the Trustee Samuel Wagner said "he 'would spill the last drop of his blood' before he would suffer Holloway to be removed from the seat which he was occupying in the Church." Wagner's defensive quote was likely exaggerated or taken out of context, but nonetheless indicative of the meanings drawn from this conflict – the vehement posturing and its essential root in racial dynamics. Members of the corporation party were anxious to be a part of contemporary trends, and frustrated by the misguided traditionalists who stood in their way. After the white agitators left the church, Methodist Trustees moved at their own deliberate speed to segregate their sanctuaries in accordance with the expectations established by other local churches (and the Resolutions adopted by their own Conference in 1833).[49]

In addition to the eventual implementation of the corporate party's initial demands, Methodist memories of "The Great Schism" attest to the greater generational victory of racial modernization. As soon as the 1850s, Methodist chroniclers praised the promise and talent of the corporate party and their followers, and lamented their departure as "the heaviest blow Methodism ever received in Charleston." Considering the grander demographic scale of the African Schism, the historical revisionism of antebellum Methodists reflected the racial valuation inherent in the emerging narrative of

[48] "Conference Papers, 1834," Wofford MSS.
[49] According to William Laval's "Rejoinder" to the *Exposition* authored by Capers and Kennedy, Samuel Wagner registered his objection to the proposed renovations by refusing to attend the meeting during which the matter was discussed. Wagner wrote a letter to explain his actions, in which he claimed he did so to prevent "the loss of peace, which the church would sustain, if the mulattoes were offended."

southern institutions. The new calculus of white supremacy valued the loss of a few dozen "intelligent, active, progressive young [white] men" in 1834 more than the secession of 4300 black congregants and class leaders in 1817.[50]

The "Great Schism of 1834" and its outcomes situate race at the forefront of social modernization in Charleston, and posit the 1830s as a tipping point between early and late republican stages of American social and political discourse. The narrative of democratization downplayed the racial pretext and African-American casualties inherent in the process and replaced the peripheralization of black spiritual and social value with a memory more consistent with the conventions of Jacksonian democracy. Just as Methodist historians described the Great Schism as a conflict between old authoritarians and young egalitarians, the grander narrative of white republicanism elided the racist foundations of white unity to isolate a singular arc of democratic progress.

Within the context of contemporary public discourse, issues of race and sacred space resembled cultural correlates of Jacksonian political hobbyism. White Methodists demanded that the church protect their seats from the assault of black usurpers, but once rebuffed, the racial precipitant of their cause disappeared beneath a narrative cloud of democratization. In this particular case, the hobbyist pretext was of equal social significance to the political struggle for control of the church. The Trustees were not the antidemocratic bogeymen their opponents made them out to be, but proceeded from a more traditional set of assumptions about the divide between spiritual and social dimensions of ecclesiastical order. They were established white men of property, occupants of a social station to which members of the corporate party aspired.

[50] Mood, *Methodism in Charleston*, 149-51; John O. Wilson, "Sketch of the Methodist Church in Charleston" (1887), Wofford MSS.

More than age, social station, or attitudes towards ecclesiastical democracy, the factor that divided Trustees from insurgents was their approach to the interests of black Methodists. To borrow from the title of Manisha Sinha's controversial assessment of generational conflict in antebellum South Carolina, the Great Schism of 1834, and the modernist trend it represented, comprised a *counterrevolution of race*. The radical democratic program of the corporate party excluded black voices, but included those of women and younger white men to demand an extension of white egalitarianism into all facets of life – spatial, ecclesiastical, and otherwise.[51]

In so doing, they staged a counterrevolution against the ideals, or more directly, the practices of the post-Revolutionary generation. The fluid opportunist culture of post-colonial Charleston engendered a comfortable articulation of interracial personal and spiritual interests, cemented through the first generations of Methodist persecution and proliferation. But the seamless transition from class- to status-consciousness also initiated a process of social reconfiguration, as post-colonial Charlestonians used whatever virtues inherent in their heritage, character, or accomplishments to distinguish themselves on the even playing field of republican society. When ambitious white men like John Honour contested the personal and spiritual interests of colored Charlestonians as impediments to their rightful pursuit of opportunity and social elevation, they staged a counterrevolution of race – to reform the racial transgressions of the previous generation and reclaim their domain over the "white men's republic."[52]

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[51] Manisha Sinha, *The Counterrevolution of Slavery: Politics and Ideology in Antebellum South Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

[52] This counterrevolutionary trope resembles the generational dynamic of nation-building and some of the abstract discursive patterns of Manisha Sinha's "Counterrevolution of Slavery," but enriches and contradicts her titular argument in a number of important ways. First of all, this chapter operates on much more contingent and particular scale. This is a cultural history of a transitional period in Charleston, a

Advocates of herrenvolk democracy defined their national subjectivity via the objectification of black Americans. In Charleston, the cause and effect of racial and national dialectics flowed through the give and take of race and space to yield comparable, if divergent, patterns of black identity formation. Black Charlestonians variably internalized the degradation of black sacred space, but most conformed to an emergent pattern of racial separation. This transition was perhaps most evident in the national consciousness of the free colored elite. When Richard Holloway arrived in Charleston during the 1790s, he identified himself according to a letter that named him a "full citizen of the United States," and carried that imagined community with him for most, if not all, of his life. By the 1840s, the imagined community of the free colored elite had become so restricted that Michael Eggart defined their "nationality" as "confided to the narrow limits of our neighborhood." The best explanation of what happened in the interim to transform Holloway's full citizenship into Eggart's neighborhood-nationality lies within the realm of sacred space.[53]

For those who considered them sacred, the sanctuaries and holy places of early national Charleston conscripted "memory in the construction and reconstruction of identities," and thus hold the key to understanding historical expressions of identity otherwise hidden from the known record. Sacred experience organized subjective predispositions into new patterns of remembrance which in turn transcribed "sacred

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place and time with tremendous implications for political history. Though most of the characters involved in the foregoing narrative endorsed the doctrine of nullification, this is not an argument for political consensus, but rather an attempt to reveal some of the cultural complexities absent from contemporary political discourse. In fact, this is actually an argument for disunity, a catalogue of the contested and diverse elements that comprised the political and social consciousness of white Charlestonians during the early national period. The late republican "counterrevolution" against the post-Revolutionary climate of racial inclusivity accelerated institutional expressions of racial exclusion, but never aspired or amounted to an "anti-democratic" movement. All of the evidence presented here suggests a continual enlargement of white democratic privilege, into spaces beyond the immediate purview of political discourse.

[53] Holloway Scrapbook, Avery MSS; Friendly Moralist Society Records, Avery MSS.

images into part of the self-writing of identity." Thus, different vantage points within the shared space of the sanctuary yielded different meanings taken from common ritual which in turn generated different totems of identity. It is no surprise that religion was integral to African-American identity, but this formulation makes it possible to arrive at some more precise estimations of black, and slave, self-identification around the time of the African Schism.[54]

Religious community was the most viable cell of voluntary association for those bound into involuntary servitude. Most city slaves had the freedom to choose which church to attend, or not to attend at all. The sacred spaces of Charleston's churches thus provided an important forum through which Charleston slaves built identities outside of those superimposed by slavery. The early national patterns of racial and spatial negotiation outlined above, particularly those connected to the African Schism, offer a number of insights into the ways in which Charleston's slaves and free people of color identified themselves during the early national period. By enriching the social profile of those who seceded into the African Church and those who did not, the events described above expose a wide range of black perspectives on the relationship between religious experience and imagined community. By situating these localized scenarios within the context of the "early Black Atlantic," it is also possible to establish the extent to which black Charlestonians engaged wider national and transatlantic patterns of "African" and African-American identity formation.[55]

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[54] Louis Nelson, ed. *American Sanctuary: Understanding Sacred Spaces* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 9.

[55] As used here, the parameters of the "early Black Atlantic" are congruent with those of James Sidbury – those who participated in a transatlantic Anglophone discourse of African-ness during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century; Sidbury, *Becoming African in America: Race and Nation in the Early Black Atlantic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

The African Schism made the subjectivity of interracial worship apparent to Charlestonians, but the varieties of religious experience in Charleston did not break down neatly into a (simple) black-white binary. A range of social and spiritual dispositions within the black Methodist community yielded varying levels of commitment to the notion of black separation. Whereas Morris Brown and most of the black class leaders pursued the spiritual betterment of their people outside the established interracial church, other black Methodist leaders like Richard Holloway opted to maintain shared space with their white brethren.

For black Carolinians, the "republican spatial imagination" entailed dimensions of social and spiritual ambition comparable to those of white status-seekers. Black class leadership in the white-run church afforded black Methodists an ambiguous opportunity for social distinction – a position of prominence in the black spaces of the class session, peripheralized to second- or third- class status in shared spaces of worship and church business. The vast majority of black class leaders opted to join the more perfect union of the African Church, where there would be no such spatial discrepancies. For a select few, like Morris Brown and Henry Drayton, it was a higher calling to ministerial service that drew them out of a church that stifled their calling. For others, the African Church issued another calling, to fulfill a set of aspirations and nurture a cycle of black identity suggested by the allegory of Denmark Vesey and his conspirators. The meeting spaces of Emanuel Church were cells through which slaves and free people of color cultivated a sense of black community free from the oppressive eyes of the master class. An autonomous black church also provided space for the organization of potentially counterhegemonic activities. The public record of the Vesey trial documents 71 arrests in

investigation of the Vesey conspiracy.[56] The record indicates that 36 of these detainees were members of the AME Church. All 36 were men, three were "free negroes," and six, including Vesey, were reportedly class leaders. Most of the implicated Emanuel Church members were slaves who enjoyed a relative degree of mobility: artisans, those who worked independently or hired out their own time. Though there is scant supplementary evidence to corroborate the extent of their involvement in the church or the insurrection, there is additional evidence to verify this mobile-artisanal stratum of black society as representative of African Church leadership.[57]

Most of the Church's class leaders were free people of color, but some were slaves, as were most of its members. As such, the African Church represented only the most salient institutional expression of a long tradition of spiritual independence among South Carolina slaves. Since the dawn of slavery in Carolina, most slaves lived outside the boundaries of the white religious establishment and participated in spiritual communities of their own making, "separate from the control, but not the influence of the slave society." Articulation of interests with white evangelicals through interracial fellowship did not diminish the general preference for spiritual autonomy among black Carolinians. Charleston-area slaves followed the fiery preaching of itinerant evangelists like Richard Holloway into the black class and conference system of the Methodist Church. These black cells were institutional analogues of the plantation, suburban, or backlot prayer circle, separate from the immediate control of masters, but ultimately

[56] There were a total of 131 detained and question in connection with the Vesey conspiracy, but only accounts were only published for 71 of these. It is therefore impossible to determine how many of the remaining 60 may have been affiliated with Emanuel Church; Lewis Walker, *Documented History*.
[57] Peter Hinks, *To Awaken My Afflicted Brethren: David Walker and the Problem of Antebellum Slave Resistance* (University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), 27-29; "Free Persons of Color to House of Representatives," General Assembly Petitions (1818), SCDAH.

within the confines of slaveowner influence. When the South Carolina Conference moved to further constrict these circumscribed spaces of black autonomy, it not only diminished the special and recent appeal of the Methodist Church, but also affronted a longer (and broader) tradition of black spiritual independence.

As a black preacher sanctioned by white authorities, some aspects of Richard Holloway's religious life reflect the staggered control-influence paradigm of black spirituality in a white society. Considered through a wider lens, however, Holloway's career path resembles a trajectory of post-colonial identity closer to that of his white contemporaries. In fact, Holloway's life in Charleston embodied the idealist American trope of the self-made man more fully than most of his white contemporaries. Holloway assembled the instruments of his self-making – marriage into the free colored elite, his skill as a carpenter and businessman, and an active leadership role in the Methodist church – from the dynamic, interracial boomtown culture of post-colonial Charleston. Arriving in Charleston as an illiterate teenage sailor, he boarded and apprenticed with John Mitchell, a "Portuguese" carpenter.[58] Holloway married Mitchell's daughter and acquired his first property on Beaufain Street as a result. By the 1810s, Holloway was serving as an itinerant evangelist, licensed by the Methodist Conference to preach to outlying slave communities. Holloway also became a slaveowner, who, according to family tradition, allowed some of his slaves to live as free men and women and earn the price of their freedom. As a proponent and facilitator of slave status-transgression to freedom, Holloway would not have objected to the (purported) plan of emancipation developed by the black Methodist Conference on ideological grounds. Though his style

[58] On James Mitchell's racial classification, see Harlan Greene "The Holloway Scrapbook: The Legacy of a Charleston Family," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 111 (Jan.–April 2010), 7-8.

of slaveholding resembled that of Morris Brown and his social profile resembled that of the artisan stratum of African Church leaders, Holloway preferred interracial solidarity to black spiritual independence. Race-less spiritual equality was the message Holloway internalized from his seat alongside white Methodist brethren. This was the tradition he sought to preserve amid contrary winds of black separation.

Holloway's sense of interracial tradition reflects a generational divide along the same lines as those which separated the corporate party from their white elders. Richard Holloway was a product of the Old School; his story was a testament to the (opportunities for social mobility inherent in the) early modern climate of social and racial fluidity. Even more so than his white counterparts, Holloway sustained the race-neutral fellowship of Methodist space as a totem of his evangelical identity. This distinguished him not only from the vast majority of black Methodists who left the church in 1817, but also from members of the next generation of his own family. The Holloways remained devout members and active leaders in the Methodist Church through the next two decades, but the racialized tensions that generated the "Great Schism of 1834" eventually compelled Holloway's children to modernize their own racial consciousness – to identify themselves against, rather than with their white neighbors and brethren. A few years after the schism, Holloway's son-in-law, Richard Clark departed from his father-in-law's nostalgic faith in the tolerance of a former era and migrated north in search of more hospitable climes. Clark and Holloway sat next to one another on the ground floor of the Methodist sanctuary until they were ousted together and targeted by Methodist modernizers. Though they shared all of these moments, Holloway's memory of interracial tolerance

ran deeper than Clark's and refracted these moments into a distinctly early national trope of self-writing.

Holloway's son Edward followed Clark north and immersed himself in the social and intellectual trends that flowed through his circle of African-American contacts in New York. Two trends that captivated his attentions and dominated his letters back home were emigration and colonization. By the 1840s, both Richard Clark and Edward Holloway had come to the realization that the opportunities they left South Carolina to pursue were not available anywhere in the United States. Clark emigrated to Canada, while Ed Holloway evaluated the various emigration and colonization movements to arrive at Jamaica as the most favorable destination for African-Americans. In 1857, Edward wrote to his brother in Charleston that "(this country) is not our abiding home." Edward Holloway wrote that his black brethren could only "enjoy the full fruition of Political Intellectual and Physical Manhood" in free spaces beyond the borders of their restrictive homeland. Richard Holloway had raised his children to abide the spirit of Americanization and maximize the potential of black opportunity, but by the time his sons came of age, he had already overextended the boundaries of interracial competition imagined by many of his white contemporaries. A new generation of white rivals developed the resource of racial modernism to circumvent black competitors like Holloway. The 1830s were a tipping point for the emergence of racial modernity in the United States. Postcolonial policy-makers bent to the will of the white common folk to preserve the whiteness of the republic, and left non-white Americans with a limited field of options. The United States was a white man's country – take it or leave it. While

Richard Holloway and most African-Americans opted to take it, others like his son and son-in-law made the pragmatic decision to leave it.

In these letters to his brother, Edward Holloway echoed the sentiments of a letter written to his father two decades earlier. Samuel Benedict, a representative of the Liberian colony, wrote Richard Holloway to curry support for his cause among free southern negroes. In contrast to the increasingly restricted American spaces of black independence, Liberia was a land of opportunity, "a country which we may settle…and call our own…and there praise God according to the dictates of our own consciences under our own Vine and Fig Tree and none to molest us or make us afraid." Benedict's letter offers three important insights for incorporation into the following conclusions about black identity in early national Charleston: it demonstrated that the Holloways – and Charleston's black community more generally – were tied into larger national and transatlantic currents of discourse; it also included a resonant expression of black nationalism, which thus threw into contrast Richard Holloway's more traditional sense of American nationalism.

Though Holloway identified himself primarily according to local signifiers, he understood most of these within a national context.[59] Holloway came to Charleston from Maryland, and traveled the Atlantic extensively aboard a British ship before settling. Holloway's correspondence evinces a broad and steady connection with African-

[59] According to his grandson, Richard Holloway identified primarily with the Methodist Church as a national unit, The Holloways held firm to American Methodism not only against the tide of black secession in 1816, but also amid the regionalized tensions that wrought a national schism in 1844. Though this latter schism did not occur until the last year of Richard Holloway's life, this revisionist reading of the family's denominational loyalties suggests a relative balance of national over local that dated back to the origins of sectional divergence; James H. Holloway, *Why I am a Methodist : a historical sketch of what the church has done for the colored children educationally as early as 1790 at Charleston, S.C.,* (n.p.: H. Wainwright), 1909.

American contacts up and down the east coast, most notably with his wife's family in New York and a widening range of black Charlestonians who emigrated during the '20s and '30s. The leaders of the African Schism represented another dimension of Charleston's integration into the wider trends of the Black Atlantic. As soon as black Methodists in Baltimore and Philadelphia moved to institutionalize a separate "African" denomination, cosmopolitan Charlestonians involved themselves in the movement, and eventually organized the largest AME congregation in the United States. According to Sylvia Frey and Betty Wood, the formation of Emanuel Church in Charleston was part of a transatlantic phenomenon of African-American religious transformation and separation. Frey and Wood described the religious history of early nineteenth century British and America slaves as "a massive and continuous process of cultural interaction that involved on the one hand adaptation and integration into the dominant white religious culture and on the other the assertion of separate Afro-cultural identities."[60]

In its general terms, this interpretation demonstrates contemporary patterns of racialization parallel to several features of the racializing trend isolated here. The impulse towards racial separation was present throughout the religious communities of the early republic, and manifested most clearly in urban settings with a population sufficient to sustain independent African-American congregations. The black separatist vanguard of Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Charleston was soon joined by a slew of northeastern and mid-Atlantic AME churches, black Baptist churches in Virginia and Georgia, and a separate "colored" Presbyterian Church along the Georgia-South Carolina

[60] Holloway Scrapbook; Sylvia Frey and Betty Wood, *Come Shouting to Zion: African American Protestantism in the American South and British Caribbean to 1830* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 150.

border, among others.[61] In variant terms, Frey and Wood also extend some of the more particular features of racial modernization, like the special significance of sanctuary seating and the status-consciousness that fueled both sides of the racial dialectic, into the British Caribbean. In 1814, on the isle of Barbados, Methodist missionaries felt compelled to correct slaves who interpreted their spiritual equality spatially. In response to slaves who made a habit of embracing or otherwise touching white missionaries, their church inserted a two-pew divider between white and black seating, and the preacher delivered a sermon to make sure slaves understood their place. He instructed the congregation that "there is a distinction between a White person and a Black that when the Black and coloured people comes into the Chapel they should bury their heads." The sacred space of the missionary church thus profaned by the intrusion of worldly hierarchies, many slaves stopped attending Sunday service.

Slave engagement with the evangelical churches of Barbados fluctuated according to the same interracial dialectic of spiritual equality and social inequality that determined patterns of racialization in early national Charleston. Just as Barbadian slaves developed a sense of ownership in the sacred spaces of the Methodist church, slaves and free people of color assumed a spiritual ownership stake in the evangelical communities of post-colonial Charleston. Though the white corrective to black spiritual ownership was more complicated in republican Charleston than it was in colonial Barbados, the withdrawal of black Charlestonians that followed resembled that of Barbadian slaves. The momentary unity and ascendant rhetoric of voluntary association that characterized the spirit of

[61] Payne, *A.M.E. History*, 25; Robert Quarterman, *Ninth Annual Report of the Association for the Religious Instruction of the Negroes, in Liberty County, Georgia*, (Savannah: Thomas Purse, 1844); Charles Irons, *The Origins of Proslavery Christianity: White and Black Evangelicals in Colonial and Antebellum Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 97-132.

Americanization catalyzed the ambitions of mobile urban slaves and propertied free people of color to generate a more expansive contest over racial boundaries than that which transpired on the plantation colony (of Barbados). Amid the egalitarian ideals and rootless limbo of a revolutionary society, black preachers, entrepreneurs, and artisans posed a more viable threat to white supremacy than an interracial hug.

Post-colonial flux opened a window of black opportunity in Charleston that white modernists labored to close. Conceptions of o*wnership* and *property* were lynchpins of racial modernization, and thus equally significant to developing modes of "white" and "black" identity. Black Charlestonians developed ownership of their evangelical faith – an intangible sense of self-identification associated with the spaces of worship – only to find their claims contested by rigidifying white institutions. This convinced many, like Edward Holloway, to reclaim other spaces "to call *our own*," where "we can worship God according to *our own* consciences, under *our own* Vine and Fig Tree."[62]

The discursive trick of racial modernization was to collapse the two meanings of "real property" and "essential property" into one racialized category, to equate the "property of whiteness" with "whiteness as property." The political transition from colony to republic and social transition from class to status had a legal correlation in the constitutional emergence of racial modernity. As Lacy K. Ford observed of the Jacksonian America, "proof of personal independence and public virtue deemed essential to republican citizenship no longer rested in the ownership of productive property, but instead hinged simply on 'whiteness.'" The constitution of South Carolina codified

[62] Samuel Benedict to Richard Holloway, 1833, Holloway Scrapbook, Avery (italics mine). The spatial connotations of "property" in a historical or discursive sense are valuable and intentional. As explained below, the notion of "property" as an essential characteristic of an object overlaps the definition of property as an idea, associated with a spatial or physical dimension of domination / "ownership."

citizenship according to race, but this was not enough to establish any absolute (practical) hierarchy of social or cultural value. Laws of the nascent state were slow to materialize in the popular habitus, and the inherent instability of an essentialist category like race involved a constant flow of slippage and reinforcement. Richard Holloway, for example, arrived in Charleston with a certificate that named him a citizen. Moreover, his "personal independence,…public virtue," and "ownership of productive property" proved his citizenship according to colonial traditions of status-performance that persisted in the republican imagination.[63]

Even more than real property, Holloway derived his identity from spiritual properties - ownership of his faith and place in the evangelical community. These properties were also contested, as worshipers of all social and racial stripes asserted rival ownership claims over sacred space. One's place inside the church served as a metaphor for understanding one's place in the world outside the church, and the ascendant prescriptive model of voluntary association encouraged modernists to carve out a sacred space for themselves that resembled the communal ideal as closely as possible. For many slaveowners, this meant asserting ownership over slave religion; for many non-slaveholding whites, this meant asserting their equal ownership stake in the "white man's country," and they would not settle for a spiritual community that did not reflect these values spatially.

[63] Cheryl Harris, "Whiteness As Property," *Harvard Law Review* 106.8 (1993): 1707-1791; Ford, "White Man's Country," 736. Ford's assessment describes a consensus reached by the 1830s, but it is part of a larger argument confluent with that made here. A sweep of constitutional revision in southern states during the 1820s and 30s yielded a variety of racist legal constructions, but all of these were motivated by the impulse to confirm constitutionally the extant cultural equation between whiteness and citizenship. The state Constitution of 1778 also defined citizenship according to gender, age, property, and religion. A new state constitution in 1790 altered only the religious requirement, to widen the franchise from Protestants to all theists. See Chapter One, note 60.

As these currents of paternalism and white nationalism filtered through their spiritual harbor, slaves and free people of color responded variably. The violent challenges of 1833 threatened, but could not overcome, Richard Holloway's attachment to the church he had helped build. Holloway maintained a sense of ownership in the Vine and Fig Tree of American Methodism which compelled him to eschew the reactionary separatism of Benedict's black nationalism. Holloway and Benedict occupied opposite sides of a black identity spectrum that ranged from conservative cells of white cultural mimesis to the Africanist extreme of witch-doctor reactionaries like Vesey's co-conspirator Gullah Jack. Over time, events crowded the middle range of hybrid identities by discrediting the traditional American nationalism and emigrationist African nationalism at either end of the spectrum.[64]

Richard Holloway's sense of identity paralleled that of the Methodist Church in Charleston: a career made possible by the birth of republicanism and carried forward by the limitless potential of a post-revolutionary society. Holloway's seat in the Methodist Church was the vantage point from which he assembled a rather conventional early American identity. From the same seats, his son and son-in-law confronted a different reality, an American society of formidable racial limitations. The vibrant notes of American identity that resonated against the tabula rasa of post-colonial racial limbo were stifled by the bulky racialized earthworks of Jacksonian Democracy. The next generation of African-Americans found it more difficult to buy into the inclusive ideal of American identity embraced by their fathers. As racial modernists reclaimed American

[64] According to the corporation party "Rejoinder," Holloway met with Capers, "remonstrated against the acts of the Conference and threatened to leave the church if the alterations were made." Even if this report is accurate, Holloway's devotion to the Methodist Church proved stronger than any personal affront caused by sanctuary alterations. Holloway and most of his family continued to attend services at the Methodist Church even after they were reduced to "colored" seating behind whites on the ground floor in 1838.

identity as the property of whiteness, black identities drifted into the de-territorialized space of a "protonational racial consciousness."[65]

On the other side of the spectrum, two discursive developments (further) diminished the appeal of colonization. From its inception, the American Colonization Society represented a tacit concession to racism; it was a program built upon the assumption that the United States was a white man's country and the best solution to racial antagonism was the departure of black Americans. The burgeoning black press of the nineteenth century circulated this interpretation alongside reports of the tremendous difficulties encountered by early colonists to debilitate black support for colonization. As with most imagined communities, the socio-political reality of the Liberian colony could never live up to the ideal.[66]

Even before events discredited more conservative and radical alternatives, the most prevalent expressions of African-American identity came from the moderate range of the spectrum – micro-national impulses of black separation with mitigated rhetorical or actual linkage to Africa. Richard Allen and other leaders of the separate churches movement often invoked the call to "worship under (our) own vine and fig tree," to build a spiritual nation of "African" souls within the political nation of white citizenry. For many Americans, both black and white, racial separation became the mutually-agreed upon default arrangement of their modernizing society. Outright geographic separation through colonization, however, was a solution embraced by relatively few black Americans. Instead, black communities developed a number of other separatist strategies

[65] Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), 168.
[66] Sidbury, *Africans in America*, 192, 186-88; Chapter Four will return to the Africanist dimensions of identity among South Carolina slaves and free people of color, test the viability of a "diasporic nationalism" among black Carolinians, and expand the survey to outlying plantations.

in-country. In and around the cities of the Atlantic seaboard, slaves and free people of color developed subcultures and structures of community that transformed circumscribed space into separate but unequal spaces of black independence.

Through their increasingly restricted relationship with local white authorities and their engagement with a national network of black discourse, Black Charlestonians refined a succession of communal strategies, ranging from mutual aid societies to black classes to an autonomous "African" congregation. Though varied and often contradictory, all of these strategies were linked by a consistent pursuit of self-hood and centered in the church. As the most tangible zone of contact between rival spiritual and social geographies, the sacred spaces of Charleston were natural points of intersection for transitional moments in the discursive development of race and nation. Charlestonians conceived the nation in both spatial and social terms and germinated this idea through the spatial-social surrogate of the church. The heart of this argument, and the fulcrum of the chapter, is the narrative of racialization and seating reform that transpired in the city's Protestant churches, punctuated by the Methodist Schism of 1834. Contests over race and space were a consistent theme of church records from the 1770s through the 1830s, but the summer of 1833 was a moment especially charged with the energy of radical politics and the Methodist Church was a community of exceptional interracial tradition. These factors magnified the intergenerational antagonisms that surrounded the "Great Schism" to signify a transitional moment in the history of antebellum Charleston.

As reflected locally by white Methodists in a black church and nationally by anti-tariff Carolinians in a pro-tariff economy, republican arguments of minority rights became the rallying cry of Charleston's first distinctly modern generation. The radical

extension of voluntarism theorized by Calhoun and modeled by the corporation party also worked its way into black strategies of social organization, most directly in a debate over the membership of enslaved and darker-skinned Negroes that divided the Friendly Moralist Society during the 1840's. The free colored elite who fought to exclude lesser and darker Charlestonians found themselves in the minority, but argued passionately argued for "equal right with the majority," and threatened that "if the minority are to bee ruled by the Majority in all cases he might as well take his portion of stock and leave the society." This exclusivist sect of Charleston's free colored elite was not representative of the city's African-American population, but their actions nonetheless demonstrate the race-neutral appeal of the modern model of voluntary association as a means to communal autonomy.[67]

The sacred spaces of Charleston, internally contested as they were, represented local constructions of the communal ideal, and as such provided a powerful metaphor for understanding Charleston's place in larger imagined communities. The productive tension generated by intergenerational and interracial conflict within immediate religious communities informed local patterns of engagement with wider social and political communities. The key to integrating these disparate realms – local and national, spiritual and political – is the historicization of spatial consciousness. To paraphrase Pierre Bourdieu, human actors exist through space in the social world as the social world exists through space in the human actor.[68] Racialization was a tragic historical process, observed through the legal and institutional trends of the social world, but also a

[67] Friendly Moralist Society Records, Avery MSS.
[68] Pierre Bourdieu, *In Other Words, Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology* (Stanford, California: Stanford University, 1990), 39.

discursive process of knowledge-production initiated by interested individuals negotiating localized landscapes of power. By operating at a more visceral level than that of intellectual discourse, the analytical framework of spatial history exposes the elements and dynamics that prefigure the development and resonance of ideas like "race."

The spatial contestation of racial boundaries in the churches of Charleston not only prefigured local conceptions of racial difference, but also informed constructions of national identity and generated local answers to the "social questions" of a slave society. Embedded within the superficial unity of post-Revolutionary Charleston was a tension between social exclusivity and inclusivity that evolved from status- to racial-consciousness during the early national period. The rhetorical imperatives of evangelical Christianity compelled black and white Charlestonians to look upon one another as spiritual peers, while the rhetorical imperatives of racial slavery compelled blacks and whites to view one another as different. In addition to the city's variable arrangements of interracial fellowship, two of the institutional products of this tension were the all-black Emanuel AME Church and the all-white Primitive Methodist Church. Both of these churches challenged another ascendant product of these ideological tensions – the theory and rhetoric of paternalism.

The "African Church" of the pre-Vesey era was part of an early American trend towards black spiritual and social separation, described by James Sidbury as an effort "to provide a religious foundation for 'Africans' as a distinct people in America."[69] The African church, and the trend it represented, challenged the paternalist construct of a Christian nuclear family writ large and the paternalist rhetoric of a nation erected upon

[69] Sidbury, *Africans in America*, 12.

the foundations of a natural racial hierarchy for the good of all. John Honour's Primitive Methodist Church represented a variant, but equally formidable challenge to the grander design of the paternalist agenda. The contest over race and space that acted as a springboard for Honour's social and political prominence was a formative experience for many members of the "modern" generation. By working to "drive colored Methodists away from the congregation" and form their own mono-racial church, the corporation party exemplified a trend towards white spiritual and social separation. In so doing, they launched an idealist strategy of social organization into southern discourse around the same time that southern advocates of the paternalist model of slavery and society were consolidating their rhetoric into a full-fledged ideology.

Both paternalism and Honour's racial separatism were spiritually-charged efforts to forge a more perfect, modern replacement for the patriarchal structures of colonialism. Paternalism was a gendered and racialized modern social order reconfigured from the organic traces of social tradition via Biblical precepts of familial responsibility and authority. Honour's preference for rigid exclusion contradicted and challenged the familial interracial inclusivity of the paternalist model in important ways. The productive tension between these two modernist currents of racist ideology generated a politicized dialectic of state formation and institutionalization that will be the subject of the next chapter. The point here is that paternalism, despite all its historiographic weight, was but one of many modernist currents to emerge in response to the social questions of early national and antebellum Charleston.

In sum, the most significant observation that can be gleaned from this chapter is the **chronological contingency of religious culture and national consciousness**. Post-

colonial southern history was not a constant defense of slavery and march towards secession. The generational conflicts described in this chapter contained myriad possible outcomes, and myriad potential futures for the course of national identity formation in Charleston circa 1834. Charlestonians were thoroughly engaged in a nation-building project comparable to that of Sinha's counterrevolutionaries, but the "proslavery argument" did not figure directly into these early stages and never provided "the ideological coherence and unity" that she imagined. No intellectual or political argument, proslavery or otherwise, ever completed or perfected the standards of southern nationalism. This chapter describes the genesis of a perpetual work in progress.

CHAPTER THREE

The Invented Tradition of Black Dependence

> …that philanthropy, which has now become the groundwork of all the boasted improvements of the age, teaches us, that the greatest amount of happiness can only be secured to these people [slaves], by the exercise, on the part of those having their control, of an enlightened experience, in selecting for them the condition best adapted to their character and necessities.
>
> - Whitemarsh Seabrook, 1834

> Do you know what makes the difference between the master and the slave? *Nothing but superior knowledge*."
>
> - Daniel Alexander Payne, ca. 1881

In 1827, the Reverend James Andrew commissioned free colored members of Cumberland Street Methodist Church to establish a Sabbath School for "the instruction of colored children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord our God." Men and women from the appointed families gathered at the home of Richard Holloway to outline the curriculum, draft a school charter, and appoint teachers. They developed a course of learning in equal parts basic literacy and Methodist catechism. Though nominally an autonomous endeavor, set forth by no authority other than Christian dogma, school organizers also operated within the multivalent confines of a racist social order. While the school built a mission statement upon the solid ground of biblical inspiration[1] and

[1] Prov. 1:5: A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels (King James Version).

"compliance with the will of our beloved Pastor," it was also clear that the school and its teachers would follow the habitual rhythms of racial restriction. The second administrative meeting of the Cumberland Sabbath School was cut short, before the attendees were able to elect their leadership committee, by the sounding of the bell that signified the Negro curfew in Charleston.[1]

The ring of the curfew bell sounded differently in the ears of black and white Charlestonians, and signified the terms of racialization in post-Vesey South Carolina. The state authorities that compelled the elite cluster of black Methodists to disperse from their meeting also legislated the limits of their educational outreach. State and local laws forbade teaching slaves to write, restricted the assembly of any people of color without white supervision, and required colored preachers like Richard Holloway to carry proper documentation as they evangelized around the state.[2] Though the Cumberland St. School "subscribed to these regulations for our guide in said calling," many other African American spiritual communities did not. Slaves learned to write, black classes and prayer circles met regularly without the white mandate, and unlicensed black preachers convened slave worship without any form of written permission. From the careful conformity of the Cumberland School to the spontaneity and subversion of midnight ring-shouts, Afro-Carolinians participated in a wide range of autonomous religious communities.[3]

Many of the early national restrictions of black religious freedom were but weakly enforced, in part to preserve one of the traditional functions of laissez-faire slave

[1] James H. Holloway, *Why I am a Methodist : a historical sketch of what the church has done for the colored children educationally as early as 1790 at Charleston, S.C.* (n.p.: H. Wainwright, 1909).
[2] *The Statutes at Large of South Carolina* (Columbia, SC: A.H. Pemberton, 1840), 7:385 – 466.
[3] J. Holloway, *Why I am a Methodist.*

management. If slaves Christianized themselves, slaveowners could avoid the charge of spiritual neglect, but if slaveowners restricted slave access to these informal evangelical networks in accordance with state law, the burden of salvation would fall upon white proxies. During the 1820s and 30s, white Carolinians pushed for a restrictive turn of racialization, and directed state policy towards more rigid enforcement and consolidation of laws to restrict the religious freedoms of Afro-Carolinians. This restrictive turn was in part an expression of the same current of racial modernity that reconfigured sacred space in the previous chapter, but also developed in tandem with an evolving humanitarian approach to slavery, propelled by white evangelicals who described the institution in terms of Christian stewardship. Racial modernists and humanitarians perpetually interpreted and reinterpreted the various products of black religious *independence* into an invented tradition of black *dependence* upon the "enlightened experience…of those having their control." The discursive tensions between the reality and rhetoric of independent and dependent black religious practice comprise the central thread of this chapter.[4]

Just as people of color organized at the Holloways for the instruction of "colored children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," white Carolinians were organizing their own institutions of slave salvation. In 1829, the Missionary Board of the South Carolina Conference of the Methodist Church answered a call from its constituents to organize circuits of plantation service, and assigned two itinerants to serve the spiritual needs of lowcountry slaves. The pedagogy of these professional itinerants differed from that of the Holloway school most notably in the race of the instructors (white) and the

[4] Whitemarsh Seabrook, "Essay on the Management of Slaves and especially, on their religious instruction: read before the Agricultucal [sic] Society of St. John's Colleton," (Charleston: A.E. Miller, 1834), 15.

method of instruction (oral catechism). The Methodist mission immediately earned the interest and praise of reform-minded planters. One of these, Charles C. Pinckney, learned of the "happy results which had followed the pious endeavors" of Methodist evangelists among Georgia slaves, so asked the Rev. Capers to help him devise a similar program for his own plantation. Capers referred him to the Methodist Board of Missions, and they included his slaves in their missionary circuit. Pinckney was sufficiently impressed by the immediate results to lobby statewide for planters to implement similar programs of religious instruction. Through slaveholder associations like the South Carolina Agricultural Society, Pinckney advertised the benefits of plantation missions, and obliged planters to support his cause for the good of their plantations, their souls, and the state. [5]

Performances of black independence, like those exhibited in the Cumberland School, and the "happy results" of black dependence reported by C.C. Pinckney informed the racial consciousness of South Carolinians in equal measure. Through social prescriptions like Whitemarsh Seabrook's translation of "philanthropy" in the epigraph, this discourse of black (in)dependence triggered a pivotal moment of community formation in South Carolina. This chapter argues that these elements not only effected a fundamental change in white attitudes towards black religious freedom, but also defined the parameters of social ethos in South Carolina. Race-making, nation-building, and institutionalization are all processes that operate at both discursive and personal levels. There is a certain level of abstraction necessary to conceive any doctrine or determinant

[5] Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, *An Address Delivered in Charleston: Before the Agricultural Society of South Carolina, at Its Anniversary Meeting, on Tuesday, the 18th August, 1829* (Charleston: A.E. Miller, 1829); William Capers and William Wightman, *Life of William Capers, D.D: One of the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South; Including an Autobiography* (Nashville, Tenn: Southern Methodist Pub. house, 1858); see Pinckney's biographical summary below, 177-78.

of social orthodoxy, but also an interpersonal level of relations and experience that informs the abstract consciousness in a reciprocal fashion. For Carolinians negotiating the terms of racialization and community formation, firsthand interracial experience perpetually confounded ideological development not only at the general level of public discourse, but also at the particular level of individual subjectivity. These patterns were continuous with the processes of Americanization and segregation described in the previous chapters, but when isolated from the contested terrain of black religious freedom, it is also clear that they gave rise to a new way of thinking about the racial order that pushed towards statewide consensus during the 1830s.

Though historians vary on timing and etiology, most describe the early nineteenth century as a transitional period in slaveholder ideology and practice, and by extension, of the social and racial order in the Deep South. Beginning some time before the Revolution and culminating amid the sectional tensions of the mid-nineteenth century, slaveowners moved away from the *patriarchal* model of classical and colonial tradition towards a *paternalist* model of modern slave discipline and social rhetoric. In general terms, colonial patriarchs ruled over plantation "kingdoms" through brute force, hated and/or feared members of the African race, and did not really involve themselves in the private lives of their slaves; paternalists protected and provided for the plantation family, manipulating the private interests of slaves to cultivate slave affection, happiness, and productivity. The shift from the early "conflict" archetype to the later "compromise" archetype has been variably attributed to the dynamic forces of market integration, evangelicalism, rationalization, republican ideology, and the demographic exigencies that attended the end of the slave trade. The bi-focal approach of this chapter relegates all of

these explanatory devices to the role of co-star, only emerging to center stage insofar as they relate to the interpersonal observations and habitual patterns that delineated the bounds of racialization for most Carolinians.[6]

The analytical path of this chapter is perhaps a continuation of that charted by Joyce Chaplin. Chaplin describes the "discovery" of black humanity as part of the process through which late colonial Carolina planters anxiously pursued modernization. Stimulated by external critiques of American slavery and the creation of a creole American slave culture, white Carolinians humanized African slaves. Foreign and savage "Africans" were much easier to abstract into sub-human categories than the increasingly familiar and creolized African-Americans who spoke, behaved, and worshiped like Anglo-American colonists. The humanization of African slaves was the most basic cultural challenge to the patriarchal model, but evolved erratically over the revolutionary period to accommodate a variety of intermediate racial classifications. According to Lacy Ford, the consensus in post-colonial South Carolina was that slaves were human beings, "regardless of the degree of their alleged inferiority." In an effort to ascertain the degree of alleged black inferiority, this chapter measures white attitudes towards black religious freedom over the first three decades of the nineteenth century. In so doing, the narrative unearths an intersection of currents that demonstrates as much

[6] Philip D. Morgan, *Three Planters and Their Slaves: Perspectives on Slavery in Virginia, South Carolina and Jamaica, 1750-1790* (Williamsburg, VA: Institutute of Early American Culture, 1986); Lacy K. Ford, *Deliver Us From Evil: The Slavery Question in the Old South* (England: Oxford University Press, 2009); Robert Olwell, *Masters, Slaves & Subjects: The Culture of Power in the South Carolina Low Country, 1740-1790* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998); Jeffrey Robert Young, *Domesticating Slavery: The Master Class in Georgia and South Carolina, 1670-1837* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Christopher Morris, "The Articulation of Two Worlds: the Master-Slave Relationship Reconsidered," *Journal of American History* 85.3 (1998): 982-1007; Bertram Wyatt-Brown, "Modernizing Slave-Owning Rhetoric," in *The Shaping of Southern Culture: Honor, Grace, and War, 1760s-1890s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

continuity as it does change – episodes of social dynamism that amounted to both more and less than "paternalism rising."[7]

Initiated by the eighteenth century "discovery" of black humanity and culminating in an uneasy resolution of black essentialism by the 1830s, the post-colonial process of racialization unfolded in multiple stages. The first stage was a dialogue between traditionalists and prescriptivists, a discursive watershed in the wake of the Denmark Vesey affair that exposed a growing concern with the tension between interracial likeness and alterity. Torn between contradictory relations with black peers and black chattel, white Carolinians appealed to both traditional and prescriptive strategies of resolution. The aftermath of the Vesey conspiracy generated a great welter of social and racial commentary that signaled prescriptive ascendancy, but also provided a rule for the success of social prescription. Many logical strategies for racial reform, proposed by well-respected Carolinians, failed to resonate among the state's power brokers. The filter that screened social prescriptions was, ironically enough, tradition. Proposed solutions to the racial question only resonated as they articulated extant traditions or latent dispositions, like the residue of colonial patriarchy or the empathy that had developed between black and white Carolinians over the course of the revolutionary era. This rhetorical competition, between exponents of several semi-distinct social prescriptions, was the second stage of the racializing process. The principle bone of contention was black religious liberty, as white Carolinians debated whether to expand or restrict the spiritual license of their black dependents, and ventured to root their prescriptions in

[7] Joyce Chaplin, *An Anxious Pursuit: Agricultural Innovation and Modernity in the Lower South, 1730-1815*. (Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, by the University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 53-58 ; Ford, *Deliver Us from Evil*, 147-48.

tradition, to normalize their platforms of racial restriction or evangelical outreach to the point of popular resonance.

The stages of this process organize this chapter into four sections. The first two sections treat these first two stages – the discursive contests between traditionalists and prescriptivists, and expansionists and restrictionists – as overlapping developments that culminated in a political compromise of black liberty in 1834. This "four-fifths" compromise of black humanity is the focus of section three. The fourth and final section of the chapter exemplifies the outcomes of this compromise by examining, biographically, the range of racializations expressed by white Carolinians during the 1830s and 40s.

Though, like the historiographic landmarks outlined above, the focus of this chapter is the white mind, this is not a narrative of conscious ideological reconfiguration. Instead, this chapter describes how the social currents that intersected in the religious communities in and around Charleston shaped the direction and expression of racial consciousness. In the revisionist bent of Jeffrey Young, this chapter provides a "new vocabulary" to enrich the historiography of American slavery and capitalism and Christianity. The concluding argument does not describe the ascendance of "paternalism," nor does it fully endorse Young's alternative vocabulary of "corporate individualism," but it does advance one of Young's subsidiary observations. Young noted that the slave's capacity for growth was a prominent theme of post-colonial southern thought, an individualist dimension of slave advocacy obfuscated by the concept of paternalism. This theme of black, and slave, potential, in both its experienced and

imagined dimensions, was the radioactive core that emanated the most controversial and consequential discursive trends of the antebellum period. [8]

The "discovery" of black humanity, fueled by evangelical tenets of spiritual equality, fired psychological and rhetorical agitations over the "degree" of black inferiority and generated both internal and external challenges to southern orthodoxy. As this chapter will demonstrate, these challenges provoked Carolinians to reconfigure their identities according to new foundational myths. For white Carolinians, the most compelling of these myths was an invented tradition of black dependence that undergirded political strategies of sectional defense. Both racial modernists and humanitarian "stewards" advanced a relational construct of white identity – an imagined community of white independence and black dependence. Whether real or imagined, black engagement became essential to the construction of national identity in South Carolina. For both white and black Carolinians, the most reliable meter of this evolving identity complex was the strange career of African-American religious freedom. Black intellectual and spiritual autonomy was a contested terrain comparable to the interracial worship spaces of the previous chapter. The issues at the heart of this contest were black leadership and literacy, linked implicitly through the literacy required of black teachers (and some preachers) and culturally through the empowerment inherent in each. White attitudes towards these expressions of black independence underwent a profound change during the early national period.

Consider the egalitarian application of evangelical principles by early national Methodists as one representation of the "before" picture, an early attempt to expand

[8] Young, *Domesticating Slavery*, 9-10.

scriptural access, regardless of race. In 1790, the South Carolina Conference meeting in Charleston raised the question, "What can be done to instruct poor children, white and black, to read?" The Conference resolved to "labor as the heart and soul of one man to establish Sunday Schools in or near the place of public worship," and "to teach, gratis, all that will attend and have the capacity to learn, from six o'clock in the morning until ten and from two o'clock in the afternoon until six, when it does not interfere with public worship." As evidenced by the labors of Richard Holloway and the Cumberland Church School, the Methodist tradition of black education persisted into the next century. In a testament to the central significance of literacy among black Methodists, the Rev. George Dougherty wrote in 1800 that "The title of Negro School Teacher in connection with Methodist Preacher makes a Black Compound sure enough." The inextricable linkage of education and evangelism created a role for Negro Preacher-Teachers as co-producers of Methodist outreach, and facilitated the denomination's remarkable success among black Carolinians. [9]

Methodists still occupied the social margins around the turn of the century, but black literacy was also a normative feature of religious life within the mainstream. In 1795, the Anglican Church issued an order, through the auspices of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, for all Anglican slaveholders to take the measures necessary to teach their slaves to read the scriptures. 25 years later, the Rev. Frederick Dalcho concluded that the "general deportment" of literate black Episcopalians had validated the educational ministries of his denomination. The exemplary conduct of black Carolinians taught to read the scriptures by black and white agents of the Anglican Church convinced

[9] J. Holloway; *Extracts of Letters Containing Some Account of the Work of God Since the Year 1800* (New York: Ezekiel, Cooper and John Wilson, for the Methodist Connection in the United States, 1805).

Dalcho "of the usefulness of these institutions, for meliorating the moral character of our black and coloured population." Other Carolinians were not convinced. The lowcountry planter and politician (and nominal Episcopalian) Whitemarsh Seabrook viewed Anglican education of the black and coloured population as a problem, a "levelling system" that resulted in the "irremediable insubordination" of indoctrinated Negroes. Seabrook launched a legal initiative to prevent any slaves or free people of color from learning to read in any format. In 1834, Seabrook's initiative resulted in a law that represents the "after" picture of white attitudes towards black religious freedom: a compromise package of racial restrictions that made it illegal for anyone in South Carolina to teach a slave to read. [10]

This statist turn towards racial restriction was much more subtle and complicated than a reaction to the Vesey Affair or response to abolitionist mail campaigns. Antislavery agitations figured into this restrictive turn, but only as they catalyzed deeper and more general concerns. Racial restriction was a process stimulated by three principle influences: African-American pursuit of intellectual and religious autonomy, a statist countercurrent of racialization fueled by economic and cultural competition (racial modernity), and an evangelical movement to institutionalize Christian stewardship as the social objective of South Carolina slaveholders.[11]

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[10]Frederick Dalcho, *Practical Considerations Founded on the Scriptures: Relative to the Slave Population of South-Carolina* (Charleston: A.E. Miller, 1823), 36; Whitemarsh Seabrook, "An Appeal to the People of the North and East on the subject of negro slavery in South Carolina …" (New York, 1834), 13; Janet Cornelius, *"When I Can Read My Title Clear": Literacy, Slavery, and Religion in the Antebellum South* (Columbia, S.C: University of South Carolina Press, 1991).

[11] On racial modernity see chap. 2, n. 1. On stewardship see Charles Irons, *The Origins of Proslavery Christianity: White and Black Evangelicals in Colonial and Antebellum Virginia*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008). Consider the following reflection from James Adger as indicative of this formulation of "stewardship:" "in the great and good school of slavery, then, our slaves were receiving the most needful and valuable education for this life, and very many of them for the life to come. The two races were steadily and constantly marching onwards and upwards together. Hence, when emancipation

Black access to education and literacy grew slowly but steadily between 1790 and 1834, most regularly facilitated by institutions affiliated with Charleston's evangelical churches, but also through organs less formally attached to religious institutions. While the black class leaders and exhorters of lowcountry Methodist and Baptist churches continued to expand the semi-autonomous spaces of religious education, free black schoolmasters like Thomas Bonneau and Daniel Alexander Payne trained hundreds of students in a wider curriculum of reading, writing, arithmetic, history, and science. As evidenced by institutional support for black Methodist classes, and the array of local religious and political leaders who petitioned the legislature on behalf of the independent African Church, many white Charlestonians approved these measures of black religious and intellectual initiative. However, as evidenced by the elimination of the black Methodist class and conference in 1815 and the destruction of the African Church in 1822, there was also a strong countercurrent of disapproval. [12]

White attitudes towards Daniel Payne and his school reflected this divergence of opinion. Though he counted a number of Charleston's most prominent white intellectuals among his patrons, he also felt consistent opposition from those who declaimed him "an imposter," and his school as the work of the devil. The Lutheran pastor and naturalist John Bachman, for example, mentored Payne and "conversed with [him]… as freely as though all were of the same color and equal rank." The family of Judge Lionel Kennedy exemplified the opposite reaction. Upon learning of the extensive curriculum Payne was exposing to Charleston's slaves and free people of color,

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was suddenly forced upon us, it found a good many pupils in the school of slavery who were ready to be graduated, while it found all of them considerably educated;" James Adger, *My Life and Times*, (Richmond: Presbyterian Committee, 1899), 162.

[12] Payne, *Recollections*; Edmund Drago, *Initiative, Paternalism & Race Relations : Charleston's Avery Normal Institute*. (Athens: University of Georgia, 1990).

Kennedy's son remarked "Why, pa, Payne is playing hell in Charleston." To generalize from Payne's account into the new vocabulary of slavery proposed in this chapter, humanitarian "stewards" proceeded from an empathic understanding of black education to endorse Payne's endeavors, while racial modernists evaluated black education in the abstract, according to (ideological) standards of their social ideal, and condemned his school as an institution of boundary-transgression.[13]

Payne implied that this confrontation between his students and the Kennedys helped to bring about the law against slave literacy that forced Payne's school to close its doors. The younger Kennedy served in the state house of representatives in 1834, and may have sponsored the "act to amend the laws in relation to slaves and free people of color" as a reaction to his discovery of Payne's cell of black intellectual independence.[14] Even if the link between Payne's school and the literacy law was less direct, it was no less obvious. Kennedy's comment embodied the same spirit of racialization expressed by lawmakers later that year. Payne's white supporters accommodated this emergence of racial modernity, and advised Payne to do the same. John Bachman consoled Payne by suggesting that "a mysterious providence has so ordered…that your usefulness in the profession you have chosen is at an end in your native city," and if he would "yield submissively to the laws of the land" and "trust in God," then "all will most assuredly be overruled for your future good." [15]

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[13] Payne, *Recollections*, 25-25, 36-37. Another way of reflecting this contrast would be to typify Bachman's steady and constant exposure to Payne's activities (personalization) against the sudden and jarring realization that provoked Kennedy's condemnation (remote observation).
[14] This is the interpretation provided in Marina Wikramanayake, *A World in Shadow: The Free Black in Antebellum South Carolina* (Columbia: Published for the South Carolina Tricentennial Commission by the University of South Carolina Press, 1973), 168.
[15] Payne, *Recollections*, 37.

Religious leaders like John Bachman took another form of consolation from the restrictive climax of 1834. They were architects of a humanitarian interpretation of slavery as a form of stewardship, an interpretation which proved essential to the process whereby white leaders negotiated the legal parameters of black dependence. In return, evangelical stewards won an important concession from the state – a public institutional commitment that empowered white evangelists to replace black Carolinians in the active role of slave Christianization. By passing a law that denied slave access to literacy, the state of South Carolina obliged not only its slaveholders, but also its citizens to replace the written scripture with alternative means to provide for the spiritual welfare of South Carolina slaves. This law was a product of a psychological, discursive, and ideological dialectic in the white mind, between the top-down impulses of social abstraction and racial modernity and the bottom-up impulses of evangelicalism and interracial experience. The psychological and discursive confluence of these two impulses have as much to do with the rhetorical and legal obligation of masters to provide for the welfare of their slaves as any other external or internal pressure or historical consideration.[16]

Prescription Ascendant

The first stage of this discursive transition – the ascendance of prescriptive and statist racial regulations – was under way years before Denmark Vesey became a household name. In 1820, a number of influential Charlestonians petitioned the state legislature to protest the "evil" of "Negro slaves…taught reading and writing…not only

[16] Other impulses historiographically attributed to the same end include: the capitalist incentive to improve slave production, the close of the international slave trade, the growth of an American/Creole slave population, the expansion of short-staple cotton production, the growth of domestic evangelicalism, and a burgeoning rhetorical industry of sectional defense; see Lacy K. Ford, *Deliver us from Evil*, 146–47.

by Negroes and coloured people," but also by "white persons of this state" and missionaries funded by Abolitionist Societies. The last of these charges was likely a reference to a small group of free colored Charlestonians recently returned from Philadelphia with the ordination of the A.M.E. Church. Whether cultivated by black or white pedagogy, these petitioners categorized "negro" literacy as an evil to be restricted by the state.[17]

The signatories to this petition invoked a traditionalist argument against the African Church as an example of progress gone awry, but also presaged the rhetoric of racial modernists seeking to police the cultural boundary between black and white. Many traditionalists assumed that the natural relationship between slaveholder and slave was one of enmity and suspicion, and proceeded from this assumption to argue that programs of religious education would profit black Charlestonians little, as long as they were concomitantly plagued by the distrust and hostility of a slave society. In 1822, charges against Denmark Vesey and other affiliates of the African Church seemed to prove their point – Negro and slave education actually did more harm than good. Edwin Holland, one of the 1820 petitioners, used the attention generated by the Vesey scare to magnify this point. He wrote that the intended insurrection was triggered by the black underclass "being taught to read and write:"

> the first bringing the powerful operation of the Press to act on their uninformed and easily deluded minds; and the latter furnishing them with an instrument to carry into execution the mischievous suggestions of the former.[18]

[17] General Assembly Petitions (Oct. 16, 1820), SCDAH. Signatories included Edwin Holland, Benjamin Seabrook, John Horlbeck, Thomas Wigfall. The state legislature also enacted a law restricting slave emancipation the same year. Thomas Cooper, David James McCord, and South Carolina Historical Society, *The statutes at large of South Carolina* (Columbia, S.C.: Printed by A.S. Johnston, 1841), 459.
[18] Edwin Holland, *A Refutation of the Calumnies Circulated against the Southern and Western States, Respecting the Institution and Existence of Slavery Among Them* (Charleston: A.E. Miller, 1822).

For traditionalists and racial modernists, Denmark Vesey personified the dangerous spectre of black literacy, but for benevolent evangelicals and humanitarians intoxicated with the spirit of post-colonial unity, Vesey was but a misguided outlier. The Vesey Scare unleashed a wave of social commentary, which revealed the broader spectrum of latent social dispositions contained within the realm of public opinion. Each commentator incorporated his or her own pathology of the past and present in to a mixture of spiritual and temporal prescriptions for future security. Post-Vesey reform programs fell loosely into two overlapping camps: those who blamed the late insurrection on negligent masters, and demanded public attention to black spiritual needs as the necessary remedy; and those who blamed the insurrection on an indulgent white society, and demanded more stringent enforcement of slave discipline as the best means to preserve the social order.

Both camps moored their arguments in a (selectively) firm foundation of early modern social tradition; both described the Negro's present condition as intellectually inferior and interpreted the failure of Vesey's conspiracy providentially. To varying degrees, both camps also recognized the present moment of crisis as an important moment of international attention. Through different empirical strategies, the two camps developed divergent pathologies of the master-slave relationship and racial relations in general, which in turn generated contradictory prescriptions for reform. Those who called for the expansion of evangelical outreach moored their arguments in personal observations, promoted a vision of the slave and slavery as latent with potential good, and suggested moral suasion as the most suitable means to effect their reforms. Those who advocated the restriction of African-American religious practice tended to argue

according to the abstractions of the material bottom-line, defining slaves as permanently inferior and slavery as an evil that needed to be contained through a radical overhaul of social relations, and requesting state intervention as the surest course of action.[19]

The most formidable religious commentary on the crises of 1822 came from the rector of Charleston's First Baptist Church, Richard Furman. Furman wrote to the Governor on behalf of state Baptists, to plead for social reform via an expansion of slave religious instruction. Furman's letter was an eloquent and powerful argument for God's word as universal panacea, which through immediate application in South Carolina would diffuse the universal (spiritual), local (social), and national (political) pressures generated by the Vesey scare. While others feared that talk of the conspiracy would stimulate insurgency within the state and criticism without, Furman requested that the state impose a public "Day of Public Humiliation and Thanksgiving" to commemorate its providential frustration. Public commemoration, then, would demonstrate to potential conspirators that not only was *God* against them, but also "the truly enlightened and religiously disposed" among the slave population. Furman hoped to relate his supreme faith in God's univocal message to the governor and the public he represented. God had

[19] Prominent examples from the expansionist camp included Richard Furman, "Rev. Dr. Richard Furman's 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: A.E. Miller, 1823), ; Frederick Dalcho, *Practical considerations founded on the scriptures, relative to the slave population of South-Carolina respectfully dedicated to "The South-Carolina Association"* (Charleston, S.C.: A.E. Miller, 1823); Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, *An address delivered in Charleston, before the Agricultural Society of South Carolina, at its anniversary meeting, on Tuesday, the 18th August, 1829.* (Charleston: Printed by A.E. Miller, 1829).; notable restrictivist publications were Edwin C. Holland, "A refutation of the calumnies circulated against the southern and western states respecting the institution and existence of slavery among them to which is added, a minute and particular account of the actual state and condition of their Negro population : together with historical notices of all the insurrections that have taken place since the settlement of the country," 1822, http://www.archive.org/details/refutationofcalu00holl; Whitemarsh Benjamin Seabrook and S.C. Agricultural society of St. John's Colleton, "A concise view of the critical situation, and future prospects of the slave-holding states, in relation to their coloured population," (Charleston: A.E. Miller, 1825); Achates, *Reflections, occasioned by the late disturbances in Charleston* (Charleston: A.E. Miller, 1822).

foiled Vesey's conspiracy through his earthly agents, and thanks should be given to Him and those who enacted His will. [20]

Just returned from the State Baptist Convention, where talk centered on the antislavery impulses and social mandates of his northern brethren, Furman recontextualized the national zeitgeist of benevolence into an argument for religious protection of the southern social order. For his governor, he localized the social questions wrought by the burgeoning free labor market elsewhere in the Atlantic World:

> Thus, what is effected, and often at a great public expense, in a free community, by taxes, benevolent institutions, bettering houses, and penitentiaries, lies here on the master, to be performed by him, whatever contingencies may happen; and often occasions much expense, care and trouble, from which the servants are free. Cruelty, is, certainly, inadmissible; but servitude may be consistent with such degrees of happiness as men usually attain in this imperfect state of things. [21]

In the imperfect southern state of things, masters were responsible for the "happiness" of their servants. Just as the state intervened to protect worker interests in free labor societies, Furman advocated comparable regulations of the master-slave relationship:

> …it appears to be a just and necessary concern of the Government, not only to provide laws to prevent or punish insurrections, and other violent and villanous conduct among them (which are indeed necessary) but, on the other hand, laws, also, to prevent their being oppressed and injured by unreasonable, cruel masters, and others; and to afford them, in respect of morality and religion, such privileges as may comport with the peace and

[20] Furman was the most prominent theologian, and perhaps Charlestonian, of his era. In 1825, when the Marquis de Lafayette's visit became the most elaborate Charleston event of the century, the city appointed Furman to serve as featured speaker at his welcoming ceremony. His 1822 open letter to the Governor was reprinted and widely circulated in 1823 (and again in 1838). Richard Furman to Governor Bennett, 24 December, 1822, LC; *Dr. Richard Furman's Exposition of the Views of the Baptists*…(Charleston: A.E. Miller, 1838).

[21] Furman, *Exposition*, 14; Daniel Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age*. (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998).

> safety of the State, and with those relative duties existing between masters and servants, which the word of God enjoins.[22]

Furman suggested that the government should defend the religious privileges of the slave, but stopped short of determining how "such privileges…may comport with the peace and safety of the state." More than any of his contemporaries, Furman's deft manipulation of internal and external pressures and integration of legalist and persuasive methods was prescient. The social and spiritual dexterity of his 1822 letter became the prototype for a convergent stream of southern social discourse that would develop over the next three decades.

Frederick Dalcho, Minister at St. Michael's Episcopal Church, echoed several dimensions of Furman's argument in his 1823 pamphlet of scriptural commentary "relative to the slave population of South Carolina." Also like Furman, Dalcho directed his writing to a secular audience, the South Carolina Association, an extralegal body of slaveowners, established in the wake of the Vesey crisis to enforce laws "made to regulate the conduct of our colored population." Though Dalcho's pamphlet also incorporated social and political arguments for the religious instruction of slaves, it delved deeper than Furman's letter into scriptural exegesis and the administrative details of religious outreach. The curse of Ham relegated slaves to perpetual servitude, but Paul's Letters limited Hamite inferiority to the realms of corporeality and temporality. Dalcho included a brief ethnography of Ham's descendants in the "hot regions of Asia, Palestine, and…Africa" to demonstrate the Curse of Ham extended beyond individuals to nations of men, but also concluded that it did not extend to "the soul and eternity."

[22] Furman, *Exposition*, 24.

"Christianity robs no man of his rights," Dalcho claimed, so the master should acknowledge the earthly law that made a slave his dependent just as he should observe the Christian law that made him a spiritual equal.[23]

Secular commentators like Edwin Holland, editor of the Charleston *Times*, reinforced Dalcho's firm boundary between the spiritual and the temporal but reprioritized the order of separation from the other side, demanding firmer state control over spiritual license. Holland's "Refutation of the Calumnies Circulated Against the Southern and Western States," a 90-page pamphlet addressed to the South Carolina legislature and Charleston City Council, posited an argument for restriction of African-American religious freedom amid a wide stream of legalist commentary on the past, present, and future of racial relations in the state. What their northern and eastern accusers failed to recognize was that the late insurrection was not wrought by the inhumane policy of slaveholders, but rather "by the swarms of Missionaries, white and *black,* that are perpetually visiting us, who, with the Sacred Volume of God in one hand…scatter…with the other, the fire-brands of discord and destruction, and *secretly* disperse among our Negro Population, the seeds of discontent and sedition." Holland and his co-authors requested that their legislature not only close the borders to missionary activity and inflammatory religious literature, but also that they exile the symbolically dangerous free black population from the state altogether.

> Our slaves, when they look around them and see persons of their *own color* enjoying a *comparative* degree *of freedom,* and assuming privileges beyond their own condition, naturally become dissatisfied with their lot, until the feverish restlessness of this disposition foments itself into

[23] *Charleston Courier*, July 24, 1823; Alan January, "The South Carolina Association: An Agency for Race Control in Antebellum Charleston." *South Carolina Historical Magazine* Volume 78 (1977) 191-201; Dalcho, *Practical Considerations*, 11-20.

> insurrection, and the "black flood of long-retained spleen" breaks down every principle of duty and obedience. We would respectfully recommend to the Legislature, therefore, *the expediency of removing this evil, and of rooting it out of the land.* A law, banishing them, male and female, from the State, under the penalty of death, or of perpetual servitude, upon their return—or placing such a tax upon them, as, from its severity, would render it impracticable for them to remain among us—is desirable.[24]

Though rooted in patriarchal notions of "black spleen," Holland's prescription of demographic reconfiguration ran counter to the laissez-faire inclinations of his traditionalist peers. Those reluctant to pursue such drastic measures made for strange bedfellows with expansionists who opposed Holland for other reasons. Dalcho affirmed this linkage between instructional expansion and the conservative mandate in a renunciation of Holland's radical restrictions as wrongheaded and counterproductive. The universally positive influence of free black Episcopalians proved that the drastic reprisals proposed by Holland and likely supported by members of Dalcho's intended audience (the South Carolina Association) ran counter to the providential and deliberate course of early modern religious tradition:

> If we would reason from facts that are known, and not speculate upon **opinions which are yet to be proved**, perhaps, we should be more generally disposed to afford these people, the means of receiving moral and religious instruction.

As Assistant Rector at St. Michael's and official historian of the Episcopal Church of South Carolina, Dalcho reasoned from facts well-known to churchgoing Episcopalians. He invoked the previous century of interracial fellowship at St. Philip's and St. Michael's, the distinguished character of free black pewholders, and the absence of Episcopal Negroes from the ranks of Vesey's conspirators as proof of the efficacy of

[24] Holland, *Refutation*, 83.

religious instruction in the Episcopal mold. Starting with Alexander Garden's Anglican school for people of color, the Parishes of Charleston had established a proud tradition of careful ministry among the city's African-American population, both slave and free.

> I think there is sufficient evidence to establish the fact, that the general character for orderly conduct, in many of the Negroes and people of colour, belonging to the Protestant Episcopal Churches in Charleston, is, in a great measure, to be attributed to the excellent foundation which was laid, for their moral and religious instruction, in the School established before the Revolution, in St. Philip's Church. There are several very orderly and decent negroes, and people of color, now living, who were instructed in that School: and their general deportment has satisfied me, of the usefulness of these institutions, for meliorating the moral character of our black and coloured population.[25]

For those who demanded restriction of African-American religious freedom, the students at Garden's school, trained to read and write by black tutors, embodied many of the greatest perceived threats to the racial order; but instead of conspiracy and insurrection, these literate and free-thinking Negroes applied their skills and experiences to the cause of order and decency. Dalcho used these men and women to exemplify the mutability of African-American character and the rightful products of African-American religious instruction. He conceded the potential for the word of God, if tortured and abused by radical ignorants, to "excite malignant passions" among black believers, but believed even more strongly that "obedience, not rebellion, is the fruit of the Gospel." If properly administered, religious instruction would not only activate the soteriological potential of "these people," but also set them on an unlimited path to moral improvement. Dalcho observed these fruits of the Gospel on a weekly basis, as the most self-consciously *respectable* colored families of Charleston occupied their pews in his church.

[25] Dalcho, *Practical Considerations*, 36.

The elite tinge of Charleston's free colored community purchased pews in the galleries at St. Philip's to share in a sense of class solidarity with the leading white Charlestonians who occupied the pews below. Though most white Episcopalians may not have reciprocated this sense of interracial solidarity, many noted the thorough extent to which these "decent Negroes" had internalized the Gospel of obedience. [26]

Dalcho translated the mimetic status consciousness of colored Episcopalians into evidence for the potential and necessary elevation of Charleston's African-American population. The fidelity of black Episcopalians clearly set them above the dastardly conduct of non-Episcopal conspirators, and the conscious efforts of St. Philip's colored elite to dissociate themselves from the lesser members of their race in the white mind succeeded in at least one respect: Dalcho recognized his colored parishioners as a cut above the "benighted" masses, a step towards the realization of black potential. Dalcho echoed Garden in his assumption of racial mutability, but also in his recognition of the gravity of racial degradation and the glacial pace of progress. On the eventual outcome of spiritual and moral improvement, Dalcho figured that "ages and generations must pass away before they [slaves] could be made virtuous, honest, and useful members of the body politic." The path to political membership might have been long and hard, but at least it was viable. Elevation of Negro character was not only the evidence but also the impetus for Dalcho's pamphlet. His "Practical Considerations" answered the vocal contingent of Charlestonians who judged all people of color by the reports of Vesey and his conspirators. Those like Holland who would use Vesey to prove the essential and permanent evil of the African race failed to recognize that Vesey's evil was an isolated

[26] Dalcho, *Practical Considerations*, 32; Drago, *Initiative, Paternalism & Race Relations*, 15-22.

expression of delusion and ignorance, conditions curable by enlightenment. Dalcho even argued the point through analogy to social mobility: "because I am poor, does that mean that I should not endeavor to become rich?" The gradual improvements observed over the course of a century of interracial fellowship at St. Philip's constituted a formidable argument for the accumulation of black spiritual wealth and refuted the radical proscriptions of those who would keep African-Americans in spiritual poverty.[27]

Holland and his collaborators did not confirm or deny the social good that could come from locally-operated slave ministry, but they did militate against the need to expand the missionary effort. It was not the duty of southerners to expand the already ample spiritual accommodations afforded their slave dependents, but rather to surveil and contain the Negro evil that lurked within, to encourage the "fidelity and attachment of some" and to enforce the "realization [of duty and inferiority] among the more reflecting." In the estimation of Holland and his collaborators, the root of the late insurrection was not negligence, but leniency. "Relaxation of discipline" and the application of "regulations that would be applicable to whites" deprived slaves of the intimidating presence necessary to understand themselves. Holland included a letter from the distinguished Charleston lawyer Robert Turnbull to certify this relational construct of slave identity:

> The regulations that would be applicable to whites entirely fail when applied to the government of slaves. The only principle upon which any authority over them can be maintained *is, fear;* and he who denies this, has but little knowledge of them. Where there is this principle in the bosom of a slave, coupled with a strong sense of his inferiority to his master, he is happy and contented, and this is almost universally the case with the

[27] Dalcho, *Practical Considerations*, 6. The glacial pace of change suggested as the upshot of Dalcho's stewardship was perhaps tempered to suit the assumed disposition of his audience, the South Carolina Association.

> *country Negroes.* In his dreams, no visions visit him to remind him of his servitude. Born a slave, he need only be assured that he will be well fed and clothed for life, and worked in moderation, and he will regard himself as the happiest of mortals.

Turnbull distinguished the rightful model of happy, contented, fearful, and submissive "country Negroes" from the urban anomaly of racial slippage. The liberties afforded the slave in Charleston compelled him to question his servile status and confused his racial consciousness. Stringent discipline, as exemplified in the swift punishment of accused conspirators and the legislative crackdown on black liberties that followed, would return urban slaves to contentment with their earthly plight.[28]

Though Turnbull and the other contributors to Holland's pamphlet at least tacitly concurred with the author's larger scheme of racial categorization, they also recognized degrees of variety within the Negro race. Holland consistently classed "our Negroes" as "the Jacobins of the country…the anarchists and the domestic enemy," but his pamphlet also recognized segments of the Negro population for their good conduct. As per Turnbull's assessment, effective discipline was one means to civilize people of color, but there were others. Apparently, racial admixture was one of these. Holland decried those who would group "free mulattoes" in with the "affliction" of free blacks, arguing that free people of mixed race were mostly "industrious, sober, hard-working mechanics." Many of this class owned considerable property, including slaves, and thus composed a necessary "barrier between our own color and that of the black – and, in cases of insurrection, are more likely to enlist themselves under the banner of the whites."[29]

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[28] Dalcho, *Practical Considerations*, 55.

[29] It was true that mixed-race Charlestonians were proportionally more likely to be free and own property than their darker-skinned counterparts, but there were also a fair number of free property-owners classified as "black" in local records. Holland's terminology was the artifact of two mutually reinforcing sets of

Another engine of racial improvement was religious instruction. For the most part, Holland's attention to black religious life elided the potential benefits of slave Christianization, but he included excerpts from local planters that supplemented his depiction. Several commentators remarked that the "fidelity of some of our Negroes," like those who exposed the insurrection, was the rightful god-fearing counterpart to the tortured dogma imbibed by slave conspirators. One contributor explained the religious mechanisms of fidelity in greater detail; lowcountry planter Benjamin Roper observed that the Presbyterian and Episcopal Churches of his parish (St. John's) "opened every Sabbath to every Negro," and that "every Negro who proves good character worships with whites in the area." This was the extent of religious instruction offered by the restrictivists: maintain the spiritual accommodations provided by existing white institutions and eliminate those that fell outside the bounds of immediate local white supervision.[30]

In certain rhetorical dimensions, expansionists echoed Holland's concerns about the dangers of black religious independence, but they differed in their assumptions about the function and product of religious instruction. In Holland's view, religious instruction acted as an auxiliary police to contain worldly Negro evil, but for Furman and Dalcho, religious instruction was the quintessential catalyst of the innate human goodness within the immortal black soul. Where Holland lamented the civic lenience that allowed space for African-Americans to develop their own counterhegemonic theologies, Dalcho wailed

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popular perceptions: 1) as marker of identity and citizenship, property was often conflated with whiteness, i.e. whiteness coexisted with and eventually replaced property as general signifier of status and level of political participation; 2) "free mulattoes" generally enjoyed a greater level of legal and economic privilege than "free blacks:" (limited) protection of property rights, more frequent patronage and emancipation, and greater inheritance from white parents or relatives. Holland's comments are in apparent response to more radical indictments of all people of color.

[30] Holland, *Refutations*, 50, 81.

against the civic negligence that compelled African-Americans to forge ahead into their own spaces of religious ignorance without access to necessary theological resources. Dalcho channeled Holland in his call for restrictions against slave involvement with "unknown itinerants" and meetings led by "people of their own colour…as ignorant and superstitious as themselves," but modified his censure and directed his argument in ways that reflected fundamentally divergent assumptions about race and religion. Dalcho made it clear that not all black religious leaders were as "ignorant and superstitious" as their followers and called for white Carolinians to increase both their support for and slave access to programs like the one developed in his Episcopal Church. Prior to the post-Vesey crackdown on black assembly, colored Episcopalians conducted their own religious meetings, where "the sober, rational, sublime, and evangelical worship of the Protestant Episcopal Church" provided nothing "to inflame the (malignant) passions of the ignorant enthusiast." Each Sunday, colored class leaders met separately with white priests, where they received their weekly readings from the Book of Common Prayer and reported on the progress of their individual classes, then assembled their classes for evening services. "White persons were often [but not always] present" at class meetings where colored Episcopalians received the entirety of the ritual experience "with the exception of the sermon" from lay preachers of their own race.[31]

These were the firsthand encounters that informed Dalcho's conception of racial difference. He observed that black Charlestonians, when provided appropriate guidance, were capable of managing their own religious communities to positive effect. He hesitated to predict the social and political implications of black religious progress, but

[31] Dalcho, *Practical Considerations*, 34.

assumed that at some distant moment the moral transformation of Africans into Christians would become part of a political transformation of individual blacks into "virtuous, honest, and useful members of the body politic." In this prediction, Dalcho and the expansionists diverged from the social and racial sensibilities of their restrictivist contemporaries. Holland and his collaborators consistently regarded slavery as an evil in their midst, the root of mistrust, fear, and enmity between the races. According to their traditionalist readings of slavery and human nature, the only way to remove racial animosity would be to remove slaves, and this was not a practicable solution. Most hoped that God and his vigilant southern agents could police these animosities into a workable social order, but some entertained more radical solutions. Thomas Pinckney, for example, in his "reflections on the intended insurrection" concurred with most of Holland's analysis, most significantly his pathology of urban slavery, but instead of removing free blacks, he suggested that the best path to racial progress was the exile of urban slaves. Writing under the pen name "Achates" (faithful sidekick to the protagonist of the *Aeneid*), Pinckney diagnosed the social ills that fed insurrectionist spirits in Charleston and offered a shockingly pragmatic assessment of the possible cures for each.[32]

Pinckney was the archetype early modern American; a blueblood Carolinian born in 1750, Revolutionary War hero, former congressman, ambassador and governor, Pinckney embodied the spirit of the early national period. Like most of his traditionalist cohort, Pinckney assumed the prescriptions of Charleston's spiritual healers could not cure the enmity that infected the master-slave relationship, but he broke traditionalist

[32] Ibid., 6; Aachates, "Reflections, occasioned by the late disturbances in Charleston," pamphlet bound in volume "An Account of the Late Intended Insurrection among a Portion of the Blacks of this City," SCL.

rank by offering a social prescription of his own. By replacing city slaves, particularly those employed as domestics or craftsmen, with white immigrant labor, Pinckney's plan of demographic reconfiguration promised to benefit all parties. For the white residents who remained, Charleston would be a safer and more productive city.[33] For slaves removed to some rural utopian destination where "they cannot give rise to unfriendly emotions," "the kindlier feelings of nature will freely operate in ameliorating their condition." Pinckney noted that "want of education" left the "morals of the slave…more depraved than those of the freeman," but the root of moral inequality ran deeper than educational opportunity. No educational program could make up the social, moral, and intellectual deficit between black and white within the political parameters of the United States. The contemporary "nature of things" was the product of a long cycle of social and political development that could not be reversed. "Any class of white men, possessing the privileges enjoyed by all in the United States" emerged into a distinct social species, immiscible with any class of African-American, historically "degrade(d) by the vices of the slave." Pinckney provided a codex to translate the hardened racial animosities of patriarchy into the modern language of nationalism. Though many of his contemporaries argued that literacy should be one of the barriers that separated privileged citizens from degraded slaves, Pinckney understood slave literacy to be another aspect of social tradition that could not be practicably changed. State and local lawmakers had the authority to interdict slave literacy, but

> the execution of these laws may be so frustrated by public inattention, and more by the particular ways of thinking and weakness of many

[33] Pinckney's plan of demographic reconfiguration would also enhance the quality of urban craftsmanship, as slave laborers, with no interested incentive in maximizing efficiency or quality, were prone to sloppiness, indolence, and distraction.

> proprietors, that it is to be feared this evil will not be effectually checked, particularly as it respects the dangerous instrument of learning, which many of them have acquired; for it is not only impracticable to deprive them of what they have attained, but as it is easily communicated, it is probable that, spite of all endeavors to the contrary, this evil will rather increase than diminish.[34]

Despite his radical suggestion of demographic reconfiguration, Pinckney's traditionalism set him apart from the prescriptive tendencies of both racial modernists and humanitarian stewards. Contrary to Achates' assessment of legal impotence, racial modernists believed it was the responsibility of the state to police Negro behavior and supported the power of extra-legal associations like the South Carolina Association to enforce racial regulations. They called upon the state to strengthen and enforce laws like the Negro Act of 1740, which outlawed teaching slaves to write, and intimated that it was the role of both the state and the master to ensure that such skills were not so "easily communicated." In contradiction to Pinckey's assumption that racial animosity was a natural byproduct of slavery, best alleviated through slave removal, evangelical humanitarians felt that the moral and social distance between the races could be closed through the expansion of religious instruction. Pinckney engaged the issue through the cognitive lens of a previous era, and his divergence from modern statists and stewards reflects a burgeoning gap between early and late modern sensibilities. In response to the Vesey Affair, Pinckney spoke with the voice of his "revolutionary" generation. His radical program of demographic exchange aside, Pinckney's racial sensibilities and laissez-faire reflected the received wisdom in Charleston circa 1822. The inherited wisdom of Pinckney's generation on matters of race and the role of the state still

[34] Aachates, "Reflections," 8-9.

dominated the mainstream of public opinion, but those who broke from Pinckney on these issues signified a widening of the discursive margins. The fact that these contradictions came from men (Furman, Dalcho, and Holland) of considerable influence indicated the extent to which the discursive margins infiltrated the mainstream, and provided an early signal of the tipping point from tradition to prescription.

Competing Prescriptions: Expansion vs. Restriction

Each of these prescriptive responses to Vesey appealed to the social traditions of the state, and selectively mined an ample trove of historical precedents. Those who sought to eliminate black literacy linked their cause to colonial restrictions on African-American liberties and those who sought to expand black religious license elegized programs of social and religious outreach, but both tracks struggled to find their audience. Expansionists were able to raise awareness of African-American religious instruction within their own churches, but failed, at least initially, to extend this drive to the wider community. They failed in part due to competition with the restrictive turn of racial discourse that continued to drive social policy during the 1820s, but encountered a more trenchant obstacle in the cultural viscosity of traditionalism. As modeled by Achates' assessment of state impotence, Carolinians proved abundantly willing to let go and let God deal with the daily trials of social turbulence. Restrictivists succeeded in advancing the moderate bulk of their agenda through the court of public opinion, but found the more radical edge of their proposals (like free black or slave removal) similarly impeded by the staggering weight of the status quo, and the overwhelming market demand for black labor.

It would take the confluent force of racial modernist and humanitarian currents to breech the dam of conservative inertia. The man most responsible for advancing the course of racial modernity and negotiating this discursive confluence into the next generation was a lowcountry politician and reformer of moderate renown: Whitemarsh Seabrook. Seabrook was a member of one of the wealthiest families in South Carolina; his elder cousin William Seabrook was the greatest sea-island cotton planter of his era, owner of a coastal steamship line, over 1500 slaves, and land-holdings that extended across the South Carolina and Georgia lowcountry, including the entire sea island which today bears his name. Whitemarsh never reached the economic heights of his elder relations, but did enjoy the prestige that came with the Seabrook name, as well as a tidy estate on Edisto Island. Endowed with enough land and slaves to make his own fortune in the family trade of sea-island cotton, Seabrook devoted some of his time to the management of his own plantation, but more to intellectual and political pursuits. He graduated from the College of New Jersey (Princeton) in 1812 and entered the South Carolina House of Representatives two years later, at the age of 21. He served as state representative until his election to the South Carolina Senate in 1826, and eventually climbed through the ranks of one-party politics in South Carolina to Lieutenant Governor in the 1830s and Governor by the 1840s. At the time of the Vesey Scare, Seabrook was an ambitious reform-minded politician from the sea islands, reverent of his state's prominent place in the history of the early republic, but anxious about the prospect of preserving that prominence.[35] In 1825, Seabrook publicly responded to the questions of

[35] Seabrook was also a member of the Protestant Episcopal Church and leader in several local and state-wide agricultural societies. See N. Louise Bailey, Mary L. Morgan, Carolyn R. Taylor, *Biographical Directory of the South Carolina Senate, 1776-1985* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1986).

race and slavery that had recently triggered national debate with a series of market-oriented arguments designed to modernize southern rhetorical strategy.[36]

In this speech before the Agricultural Society of St. John's, Colleton, subsequently published and widely read, Seabrook provided his audience with an array of modernist talking points, itemized according to the sectionalized political debates of the past five years. In order, Seabrook assessed the threats posed by: the rhetorical invective that surrounded the Missouri debates, western state rulings against slavery, the international legal controversy that surrounded local impressment of Negro sailors, and federal support for African (re)colonization. Seabrook grounded his contentions in the firm ground of tradition, repeatedly citing Charles Pinckney's contributions to the Missouri debates. As a Carolinian, and the only signer of the Constitution to participate in congressional debates over the admission of western territories, Charles Pinckney personified the proud tradition of Carolinians on the national stage, a tradition that Seabrook sought to propel into the next generation. He cited Pinckney's economic bottom-line response to sectional agitation against slavery,[37] and extended this into political and demographic indices to argue against federal intervention, not only on

[36] First among Seabrook's list of offenders / those who encouraged boundary transgression were preachers, lawyers, journalists, and legislators: "Under the specious plea of aiding the cause of the free colored population, and of effecting a reformation in the condition of this portion of the community, the pulpit and the bar, the press and the legislative hall, have vied in the delineation of a picture, around which, like the cross of olden time, the modern crusaders will rally. From these sources, it has been asserted that slavery contradicts the primary principles of our government; that our slaves are wretched, and their wretchedness ought to be alleviated; that they are dangerous to the community, and this danger ought to be removed; and, if the evils attendant on the circumstances of our black population are not speedily eradicated, God in his righteous judgement will raise up Toussaint, or a Spartacus, or an African Tecumseh, to demand by what authority we hold them in subjection." Whitemarsh Seabrook, *A Concise View of the Critical Situation, and Future Prospects of the Slave-Holding States, in Relation to Their Coloured Population* (Charleston: A.E. Miller, 1825).

[37] Pinckney estimated that slave states accounted for 32 million of the nation's 50 million dollars in export revenues for 1819. Tables calculating the "value of our slaves to the Union" included in Seabrook, *A Concise View*, 27-29.

matters of slavery, but also on matters of race. Not only would containment of slavery jar the nation's economic engine, but any federal or state support for colonization would also set a dangerous precedent for the southern states of greatest black, and free black, population. The fate of the colored population, whether free or slave, should be decided by those who actually lived among them. The premature wailing of northerners and their outsized federal influence not only distorted the due demographic and political voice of the southern states but also threatened the southern social order. By politicizing such crusades, misguided as they were, colonizationists dangerously inspired southern slaves to "participate in the imaginary benefits of the congressional statute."[38]

Seabrook understood the colonizationist campaign as an aggressive effort to remove southern slaves from the shackles of ignorance, to delude them into thinking "that they are surrounded by the memorials of freedom – that the air which they breathe, and the land which they water with their tears is a land of liberty; that they are never slow in learning that they are fettered, and that freedom is the birthright of humanity." Seabrook thus documented his awareness of the counterhegemonic potential of republican ideology, and warned his audience that though these measures may be voted down, they were nonetheless part of the public discourse that filtered into the minds of Carolina slaves.[39]

The upshot of Seabrook's argument was a warning against high-minded neglect of the material bottom-line. Just as much as he sought to correct the disproportionate

[38] Seabrook, *Concise View*, 4.
[39] Ibid., 10. Indicative of Seabrook's contributions to the racial discourse in South Carolina, he phrased his rhetoric from the perspective of a non-participant observer. He cast off the notion of a black "land of liberty" as a hypothetical nightmare scenario – what *could* happen if they were not careful – in apparent ignorance or denial of the degree to which black Carolinians did in fact internalize American "memorials of freedom."

political influence of northerners whose ideology and ignorance threatened the nation's economic viability, Seabrook also sought to alert Carolinians to the broader forms of backwardness that plagued their own region. Among the impediments to progress in South Carolina were the clergy, whose power over minds and actions, though diminished by the forward march of knowledge, was still of "vast and potent magnitude."

> So long as this influence shall be confined to its legitimate sphere, the revolutions of the sacred wheel of truth and religion, will be constant, regular, salutary. But whenever some direful cause shall propel it beyond its orbit, its characteristic traits will be obliterated, and obedience to its admonitions shall cease to be a virtue.[40]

As evidence for his observation, Seabrook pointed to the clerics who relied upon "abstract moral principles alone" to be their theological guide and arrayed their "perverted tenets of the Gospel" against "the established order of the polity, which no power but that of God, or the slow progress of time, can ever ameliorate." The second Great Awakening set the course of religion throughout the United States into an expansive new orbit which brought "abstract moral principles" to bear upon every dimension of social experience, including those of race and slavery, and Seabrook acted to temper this challenge. His speech proposed a number of new methods to protect the "established order of the polity" against both aggressive northern philanthropy and the overextended evangelical insurgency.[41]

In at least three ways, Seabrook's proposals suggested strategies of rhetorical modernization, bringing the sectionalized talking points of 1820 forward into a new era. Firstly, Seabrook upheld the laws of the state as infallible, impenetrable to philanthropic

[40] Ibid., 17.
[41] Ibid., 17. On evangelicalism and its influence on social change, see David Brion Davis, "The Emergence of Immediatism in British and American Antislavery Thought," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 49.2 (1962).

or religious activism, malleable only to the hand of God or future progress. In this, Seabrook moved beyond the previous stage of state formation that informed the legal consciousness of early moderns like Thomas Pinckney, when ignorance, apathy and defiance turned many legal restrictions into dead letters. Secondly, Seabrook's faith in science and individual capacity for reason trumped his faith in clerical authority over scriptural interpretation. In contrast to early modern faith in the unitary power of the sacred word, Seabrook recognized that the lens of subjectivity fractured scriptural doctrine into multiple meanings, and Seabrook's higher faith in his own powers of interpretation led him to condemn the clergy whose rude Biblical fictions asserted that "the ends of religion and morality are to be attained by the wanton sacrifice of human victims."[42]

Finally, Seabrook's modernist inclinations also pervaded his racial consciousness. He rejected the unstable racial constructions of his forebears, and offered a cleaner, modernized racism in its place. Early modern racism was the product of a semi-conscious tension between doctrines of racial difference and real experience of interracial commonality. White masters understood their slaves as a separate class of beings, but also recognized their common humanity. In his analogy between the spiritual ignorance of the Negro and the poverty of a white man, Frederick Dalcho constructed a first-person link to the black mind: "because I am poor, does that mean I should not endeavor to become rich?" Seabrook's pursuit of racial modernity invalidated the substrate of commonality that linked masters and slaves in the early modern mind. He cited with disgust an antislavery sermon that deployed a rhetorical strategy comparable to Dalcho's.

[42] Seabrook, *Concise View*, 19.

The sermon correlated the predicament of American slaves to that of white Christian men enslaved in Algiers. The sermonizer rhetorically inserted his white audience into the mind of the black slave through reference to white slavery, asking "what would you do in this situation?" To Seabrook, this was an invalid comparison; any gesture toward empathic understanding of the black mind was anathema to the reality of race relations in the southern states.[43]

It was through the latently empathic understanding of slave life that many slaveowners of Thomas Pinckney's generation developed early modern mechanisms of control; their belief that it was only natural for men of both races to protect their interests laid the groundwork for an architecture of violence designed to convince slaves that their best interest was to serve their master. Many slaveowners also understood that the threat of the lash would not permanently hold the forces of black self-interest in check. As long as slaveowners clung desperately to such imperfect structures of racial subjugation, "it is in human nature that they [slaves] will be viewed with distrust." Thusly this semi-conscious interracial empathy also yielded slaveowner distrust and fear of their bondsmen. Beneath Thomas Pinckney's observation that slaves had become "objects of apprehension" in the white mind lurked suspicions generated by white imaginings of the black mind. Men like Pinckney realized that slaves were human beings relegated to the status of beasts and could not possibly be kept ignorant of this incongruity. Despite their best efforts to ignore or overcome this disconnect through the cultural trappings of racism, slaveowning patriarchs continued to harbor suspicions borne of human empathy and remained perpetually insecure about their methods of subjugation. Though reflective

[43] Ibid., 15-16. Seabrook quoted "Dr. Lindsley's farewell sermon, delivered at Princeton, August 15th, 1824."

patriarchs like Thomas Pinckney diagnosed this tension as an inherent flaw of southern society, most were less introspective, content to proceed as if racial slavery was a conventional part of the natural order until their slaves, and the rest of the world, recognized it as such. [44]

This "anxious" naturalization of racial slavery in South Carolina had many audiences: southern slaves and free people of color, nonslaveholding southern whites, national and international social critics, and the rising generation of slaveholders. Whitemarsh Seabrook was a member of this last audience. On the plantations of Edisto Island, he observed the apparent naturalization of racial distinction, but also felt the anxieties of white slaveholders. Soon after entering the state legislature, Seabrook realized that he could develop the present state of race relations into a future remedy for white racial anxieties. Instead of indulging past perceptions of slavery as an inherited and transitory evil, Seabrook observed the present moment as an opportunity for future improvements. Though he proceeded from a different set of assumptions about racial difference, Seabrook was savvy enough to articulate his plan for the future of Carolinian racial relations in terms that would also resonate with his more traditional colleagues. Through strategies like those employed in his 1825 speech - invoking the spirit of Charles Pinckney and Thomas Paine, phrasing his defense of slavery in terms of resistance to the changes aggressively pursued by outsiders - Seabrook was able to demonstrate the continuity of his modernist racial sensibilities with those of the previous generation.[45]

[44] Aachates, "Reflections;" Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995).
[45] Chaplin, *Anxious Pursuit*, 53-58.

From the outset, Seabrook's program of racial progress targeted the legal realm. In reference to the series of lawsuits incurred by enforcement of South Carolina's Negro Seamen's Acts, Seabrook drew a rhetorical line between those groups who merited legal consideration and those who did not. The laws of the United States existed to guarantee the rights of free white men and their families, and did not extend to the "self-styled liberties of a Hindoo or Malay." By the same token, the political will of South Carolina's African-American population was not guaranteed any security by the state constitution. Whether slave or free, African-Americans were categorically incapable of responsibly representing themselves in a republican society, so existed under the authority of the Carolina citizenry. Seabrook thus argued for racial modernization - to consolidate white public opinion around a firmer construction of racial boundaries that aligned legal and political definitions of racial difference with the more nebulous and individualized understandings of social and biological difference.[46]

This was an impossible dream. In addition to the evangelical and humanitarian assertions of spiritual equality that consistently challenged essentialist categories, the truest obstacles to any project like Seabrook's were African-American performances of racial equality, demonstrated regularly to those who cared enough to observe. Black Carolinians were not passive, impotent beings dependent upon their white neighbors and masters to determine their best interests, and they lived this negation on a daily basis. Both free and enslaved people of color operated within autonomous psychological and social spaces, hiring their own time, raising their own families, and worshiping their own God. Under the shadow of white control, Carolinians of color developed their own moral

[46] Seabrook, *Concise View*, 7.

and spiritual economies. For some, these economies closely resembled those of their white neighbors and masters, but for others, they were markedly different. Variant interpretations of slave theft provide some of the best examples of this divergence. Whereas some slaves understood theft from their masters as a rightful reappropriation of the fruit of their own labor, most white observers understood it as a willful violation of the eighth commandment, and/or a natural expression of Negro ignorance and immorality. Though most plantation owners likely did not understand the justification of plantation theft, they did understand its consequent impact on their economic bottom-line. Modernist planters listened to evangelical humanitarians who recognized that the moral distance between master and slave diminished productivity and devised reform measures to close this distance. The earliest, and perhaps most influential manifestation of this reform impulse came from Charles Cotesworth Pinckney. [47]

This C.C. Pinckney, named after his uncle, a signer of the Constitution and two-time presidential candidate, was also the son of Thomas Pinckney (Achates) and second cousin of Charles Pinckney. Born in 1789, there is no better example of elite post-revolutionary social consciousness in South Carolina than C.C. Pinckney the younger. His formative years were the period of evangelical insurgency in South Carolina, during which the campaigns of itinerants and missionaries, previously marginalized by elite society, infiltrated the hearts and minds of the "respectable" community. Informed by both the evangelical zeitgeist of his era and the Pinckney family tradition of interrelating local concerns and national politics, Pinckney was uniquely suited to carry the traditions

[47] Norrece Jones, *Born a Child of Freedom, yet a Slave: Mechanisms of Control and Strategies of Resistance in Antebellum South Carolina* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1990), 17-8; E.P. Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century," *Past and Present.* (1971), 76-136.

of Carolina slaveholders forward into the next generation. Pinckney was no idle or absentee planter; by the 1820s, he was busy researching and implementing programs of agricultural improvement on his extensive holdings along the Santee. In 1828, after learning of the "happy results which had followed the pious endeavors of a Methodist overseer in Georgia," Pinckney invited the Reverend William Capers to help him devise a similar program for his own plantation. Capers referred him to the Methodist Board of Missions, and they included his slaves in their missionary circuit. Pinckney's firsthand experience with the immediate moral transformation of his own slaves established the basis from which he launched a statewide campaign to prioritize religious instruction among methods of slave management.[48]

The primary cell through which Pinckney and his coterie of progressive planters endeavored to reach Carolina slaveholders was the agricultural society. In 1829, he delivered an address to the Agricultural Society of South Carolina on slave management, in which he asserted the relative benefits enjoyed by southern slaves, vis-à-vis the other working classes of the Atlantic World. In addition to the material welfare of their unfree workers, Pinckney commended slaveholder attention to their spiritual welfare. Ministry to plantation workers benefited not only the slave, but also the master, and society at large. In his reasoning, Pinckney echoed the arguments of expansionists like Dalcho and Furman:

> nothing is better calculated to render man satisfied with his destiny in this world, than a conviction that its hardships and trials are as transitory as its honors and enjoyments; and that good conduct, founded on Christian

[48] Jeffrey Robert. Young, *Proslavery and sectional thought in the early South, 1740-1829 : an anthology* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 2006).; William Capers and William Wightman, *Life of William Capers, D.d: One of the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South; Including an Autobiography* (Nashville, Tenn: Southern Methodist Pub. house, 1858), 292.

> principles, will ensure superior rewards in that which is future and eternal.[49]

Pinckney went on to quantify the return on planter investment – to demonstrate how Christian outreach could improve the planter's bottom-line. He explained that "the mischievous tendency of bad example" fostered a plantation culture of deception and theft. "[Slave] depredations of rice have been estimated to amount to twenty-five percent," and the best means to prevent future losses was to replace "bad example" with the pedagogy of white master or missionary. Pinckney moored his arguments in personal experience, but extended these to more general corollaries. He had witnessed the merits of missionary activity, both at home and abroad, and recognized that the evangelical trend would need some redirection to maximize its local impact. He praised the accomplishments of abolitionists who had endeavored to end the slave trade, and lauded the intentions of evangelical missions in Africa, but tempered his praise with criticism that abolitionists overextended their ideals to injure the welfare of those they pretended to promote, and that funds diverted to African missions would be better spent on missions to the Africans living in America. This correlation between foreign and domestic missions will be developed more fully in the next chapter, but it is important to note here that Pinckney understood the religious education of slaves on South Carolina plantations as part of a larger, international evangelical trend.[50]

Pinckney's address drew from the same currents of modernization that fed contemporary social reform and abolitionist movements elsewhere in the Atlantic World, but redirected these into a localized plan of improvement for slave society. Much as

[49] Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, *An Address…* (1829).
[50] Ibid.

evangelicalism grew to reinforce the social order in free labor societies, Pinckney recognized a comparable potential for religion in South Carolina. By advocating his plan through voluntary societies, like the various missionary and agricultural organizations of the state, Pinckney reflected another valence of the trend towards modernization. Much like the reform organizations of the antebellum north, Pinckney envisioned the voluntary association as a means to corral the modern impulses of individualism and humanitarianism into an agency of social conservatism. In Pinckney's estimation, the southern reflection of this trend should focus upon Christian outreach to plantation slaves.[51]

Though South Carolina's religious leaders had solidified the cause of slave ministry long before Pinckney entered the scene, and Pinckney won a number of converts from his elite associates, the movement to organize programs of religious education for plantation slaves struggled to gain wider support. In addition to the old "prejudices and objections" that had hindered black ministries since the days of Alexander Garden, more recent developments gave rise to a new slate of concerns that stood in the way of religious reform. Some of these included: a growing preoccupation with time management that discouraged slaveowners from diverting labor time to religious pursuits, the stigma attached to masters who admitted the need for outside help in providing adequate material or spiritual resources for their slaves, and the financial interests of barkeepers, black market traders, and others who profited by the unchristian conduct of

[51] Lois Banner, "Religious Benevolence As Social Control: a Critique of an Interpretation." *The Journal of American History* 60.1 (1973), 23-41; Barbara Bellows, *Benevolence Among Slaveholders: Assisting the Poor in Charleston, 1670-1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1993); Lori D. Ginzberg, *Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality, Politics, and Class in the Nineteenth-Century United States* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); John Quist, *Restless Visionaries: The Social Roots of Antebellum Reform in Alabama and Michigan* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1998).

slaves and feared the financial losses they might incur by programs of moral improvement.[52]

Throughout the 1830s, missionary organizations strengthened their efforts to overcome these objections through the evidence of their accomplishments, and the state's various agricultural organizations continued to examine the issue and its relation to production. Political escalations wrought by the radicalization of northern abolitionist movements intensified the light cast upon African-American religious instruction in South Carolina, and along with the expanding influence of the missionary interest, forced many to reconsider their position. Whitemarsh Seabrook situated himself at the center of this discursive reevaluation; he issued commentary both locally, before agricultural societies and legislators, and nationally, through widely-distributed pamphlets.

As a son of Edisto Island, Seabrook was well familiar with the traditions of an apathetic, defensive, or "unwilling" public. During the 1760s, the rector of Edisto's Anglican Church lost his job after promising to initiate religious education among their slaves; thirty years later, Methodists on the island were forced to rescind their request for circuit preachers by local authorities troubled by the denomination's association with antislavery; during the first decades of the nineteenth century, local objections to interracial fellowship forced the burgeoning interracial Baptist Church on the island to fold, and compelled its white members to relocate to the mainland. Seabrook reflected the anti-evangelical tendencies of Edisto elites during his early career, but by the 1830s had moved into a more self-consciously modern and moderate stance. He defended the right of anxious slaveholders to constrict the religious life of their slaves, but did so from

[52] Dalcho, *Episcopal History*, 103; Jones, *Child of Freedom*.

afar, from a non-participant, historical perspective. He did not reference personal knowledge of cases in which religious liberty had facilitated black malfeasance, but instead cited analogue maxims. Whenever the religious privileges of the slave had been restricted, he claimed that "the cause can be traced to the impolitic and unwise interference of ministers, who have brought him lessons, as inconsistent with their Christian missions, as they have been dangerous to the quietude of the hearer."[53]

To contextualize the restrictivism of South Carolina planters, Seabrook paralleled the master-slave relationship to that of employers and employees in European factory towns. If "indiscreet or evil men" exposed the workers of Europe to the same inflammatory doctrines they had preached to the slaves of South Carolina, it "would immediately call forth the most rigid interposition of government." Those who defended legal protections of the social order in free labor societies should not condemn the comparable impulses of a slave society. Seabrook narrowed this transatlantic hypothetical into an argument for the restriction of religious liberties of slaves in the United States. Opening the gates to radical theologies, like those that informed Denmark Vesey and Nat Turner, guaranteed violent consequences not only for the master class, but also for deluded black radicals. Therefore, for the well-being of master and slave alike, it was necessary to carefully restrict African-American access to religious resources.[54]

In 1834, Seabrook prescribed a new program of master-slave relations to the Agricultural Society of St. John's, Colleton, one that centered on methods of religious

[53] Ephraim Seabrook, *The History of the Protestant Episcopal Church of Edisto Island* (Charleston: Walker & James, 1853), 17-30; Seabrook, "An Appeal to the People of the North and East on the subject of negro slavery in South Carolina …" (New York: n.p.,1834), 12-3.
[54] Seabrook, "Appeal to the North and East," 13; Whitemarsh Seabrook, "Essay on the Management of Slaves and especially, on their religious instruction," (Charleston: A.E. Miller, 1834), 15, 25; Bailey, *Biographical Directory*.

instruction. Seabrook organized his address in response to a recent wave of publications advocating religious instruction of slaves in South Carolina and Georgia. With trademark rationality, Seabrook detailed the shortcomings of three separate proposals: a Presbyterian Synod report of 1833, an article from Charleston's Episcopal *Gospel Messenger*, and a program of religious instruction authored by Georgia Presbyterian Thomas Clay. Most generally, Seabrook conceded that "no Christian [would] deny the importance of religious instruction to slaves," but objected to the excessive burdens and dangers that these propositions would inevitably create. Chief among Seabrook's objections to the prevailing and proposed pedagogical methods were: the "levelling practice (sic)" of preaching the same sermons to both black and white audiences; black exhorters; non-slaveowning ministers; involvement of "Associations formed for the religious instruction of the Negroes;" intermixture of plantations in religious services; weekday, nighttime, or unsupervised services; the use of prayer and exhortation to exert worldly authority; and teaching slaves or free people of color to read or write.[55]

Seabrook varied his evaluation of South Carolina traditions to suit his audience. In "An Appeal to the People of the North and East," Seabrook aligned himself with the ideals that compelled South Carolina slaveowners to grant these privileges to their slaves, and used the exemplary privileges enjoyed by South Carolina slaves to rebut the charges of spiritual negligence levied by external critics. For local audiences, he cited these same forums of religious privilege as examples of the problems that arose when naïve evangelical slaveholders neglected their higher responsibility of social control.

[55] Whitemarsh Seabrook owned 475 acres and 90 slaves (ca. 1850) on Edisto Island. He was also a longtime state politician, serving in the State House of Representative during the 1810s and in the Senate from 1826-33 before serving as Lt. Governor between 1834 and 1836 and as Governor from 1848 to 1850. Bailey, *Biographical Directory*; Seabrook, "Essay on Management" 6, 14-5.

Unapproved preachers, mixed audiences, and literacy were some of the paths through which inflammatory doctrines took root in the susceptible black minds of San Domingue, Charleston, and Southampton. Seabrook thus acknowledged both the restrictive tradition of rational prudence that debarred radicalism on Edisto and the expansionist tradition of evangelism that vindicated South Carolina slaveholders on the national stage, but made it clear that neither policy was fully sufficient, and South Carolina needed a program better-suited to meet modern challenges. Seabrook worked to bridge this divide through a new program of social reform that acknowledged the burgeoning evangelical impulse of slave stewardship, but with two caveats; Seabrook's program refined the process of racial improvement into an established orthodoxy and lifted some of the burden of stewardship from the individual master through state intervention. White patrons did what was best for their slaves, but themselves sometimes needed guidance. Seabrook's proposal integrated the idealism of evangelical expansion and the pragmaticism of social restriction into a carefully prescribed system of modern religious pedagogy.[56]

Seabrook held firm to his *proscriptions* as a more appropriate alternative to the prevailing brand of institutionally approved *prescriptions* spurred by the missionary zeitgeist of the late 1820s and 1830s. Informal evangelists, many associated with the Methodist church, had proven successful among black Carolinians and inspired many whites, including some from of the state's most conservative religious circles, to follow in their missionary mold. When Episcopalians and Presbyterians shifted their weight to the cause of African-American religious liberty, Seabrook sounded the alarm. He sought to redirect the respectable religious communities of his state from the dangerous course

[56]Seabrook, "An Appeal to the…North and East."

they were charting. In practical terms, the proposals of the 1830s placed an excessive onus upon the slaveholder. Their plans were "sophistical and illusory," out of touch with the "arduous and harassing duties of the plantation," and "calculated practically to enslave the master and liberate his bondsmen." They followed the false example of English missionaries who endeavored to prepare their enslaved converts for freedom. Through "ecclesiastical preferment" of black religious leaders, they inverted the racial order of white master and black follower. By providing for autonomous African-American religious meetings, they facilitated slave duplicity - "reverence to the Lord in the face, but the malignity of the fiend in the heart." Perhaps most problematically, these publications advocated scriptural literacy. Their retrograde idealism blinded them to the lessons of recent history. Whenever literacy was extended, "the slave has always been deluded and instead of learning to read precepts of benevolence and love, the first lessons he has been taught, have been those of disaffection and revolt."[57]

The surest means to correct these dangerous precedents was through new management. Instead of missionary societies, Seabrook advocated agricultural and police associations as the primary agents of pedagogical reform, seconded by state intervention. Attention to his audience of potential agricultural reformers surely figured into his calculations, but so too did recent events from the legislative fray. Seabrook had learned from a series of unsuccessful attempts to implement racial reform via jure. During the legislative session of 1832, Seabrook introduced a "Bill to amend the Law in relation to Slaves and free persons of colour" to the South Carolina Assembly, but it was rejected by the Senate Judiciary Committee and returned to House of Representatives for revision of

[57] Seabrook, "Essay on Management," 14; Seabrook, "An Appeal," 13.

its first clause. This clause would have made it illegal for any person of the state to teach, aid, or allow the teaching of a slave or free person of color to read or write, under punishment of fine or imprisonment. Likely because the legislative agenda was crowded by debates surrounding the Nullification Crisis, the House was unable to satisfactorily revise the bill to Senate specifications before the 1832 session closed, and the Seabrook resolution failed. Seabrook did not return to the Legislature the following November, but his reform agenda was soon adopted by another like-minded politico, Edward Laurens.[58]

The Four-Fifths Compromise of Black Religious Freedom

Edward Rutledge Laurens was the grandson of the prominent slave trader and Patriot politician Henry Laurens. Raised on a failing lowcountry plantation and in the parlors of Charleston's finest homes, Laurens' vantage on racial relations in South Carolina was framed by the same generation of experiences that molded Seabrook's. Also like Seabrook, Laurens synthesized the various slaveowning traditions of his forebears into a self-consciously moderate prescription for improvement. In legal terms, Laurens devised a calculus of master-slave relations that would satisfy both socio-economic and religious obligations. State regulation of the rights accorded to slaves and the responsibilities placed upon their masters was the best means to negotiate "the two-fold relation that the slave bears to his master," as both property and fellow-creatures. Federal law counted the slave as three-fifths of a citizen, but the Bible granted the slave

[58] Judicial Reports, SCDAH; During the winter session of 1832, the South Carolina legislative agenda was dominated by bills related to nullification (including the death penalty for opponents of Nullifications) and a land deal with the Catawba nation. Seabrook's initiatives reflected wider currents of popular demand, for example the "Memorial of the Council of the City of Charleston," undated petition, SCDAH; and M.H. DeLeon, "Petition for Stronger Laws to Prohibit the Teaching of Slaves to Read and Write," c. 1833-36 petition, SCDAH.

the full spiritual rights and responsibilities of any sentient being. Laurens and Seabrook proposed that the spiritual welfare of slaves in South Carolina be determined by what might be called a four-fifths compromise, entitling them to most of the religious privileges necessary for salvation, but restricting them from the portion that overextended their capacities.[59]

Laurens affirmed state intervention as an appropriate means to implement this compromise, so re-introduced Seabrook's "law in relation to slaves and free persons of colour" to the state legislature in 1834. Once again, the Senate bounced the proposal back to the House for amendment. The problem this time was not just constitutionality, but also tradition. The Senate insisted that the law should still permit "free colored persons" to receive reading instruction from whites. Laurens' bill would have been a departure from the "policy of our fathers," a blow against the good works done in schools and parlors throughout the state. Senate conservatism forced a compromise, and in December 1834, the bill passed with the troublesome passage stricken.[60]

If Laurens' reading of his opponents is correct, however, the revised clause did not really address their concerns. Conceding the right to teach free blacks would not have satisfied many of the bill's opponents, who sought to defend the "spiritual well being of the slave" and "his being taught to read the Bible." The concession of free black literacy should have been cold comfort to legislators concerned with the scriptural literacy of South Carolina slaves, but other dimensions of Laurens' arguments must have

[59] Edward Laurens, "Letter to the Hon. Whitemarsh Seabrook In Explanation and Defence of an Act to Amend the Law…" (Charleston: Observer Press, 1835), 17-18. A more complicated, alternative equation of African-American humanity comes from the Fuller-Wayland letters, in which Fuller lists six universal natural rights assumed by all men and suggests to Fuller that slaves are only denied one of these (personal liberty), discussed below.

[60] Judiciary Committee, "Report on a Bill to Prohibit Teaching Slaves to Read," (December 18, 1832) Legislative Series, SCDAH; Laurens, "Letter to Seabrook," 7-8.

warmed them to the bill on the table. Laurens urged his colleagues to look past tradition and respond to the changing tenor of the times: the tolerant policies of Carolina's fathers needed to adapt to contend with the "inflammatory matter" that infected so many contemporary periodicals. The bill's eventual success was likely attributable to this vein of argument, but in its final form, Laurens' compromise would seem insufficient to satisfy either traditional or progressive agendas. The bill violated "tradition" by making it illegal to teach slaves to read, but also violated the modernist impulse towards social control and racial regulation by allowing for the expansion of free black literacy and potential access to the writings of abolitionist agitators. What then was the logic that led the South Carolina Senate to partially sacrifice the policy of their fathers? It was possible that the deciding factor was as simple as constitutionality (restricting literacy of free residents violated state and federal law) or as complicated as political gamesmanship (both parties willing to abandon part of their platform in order to progress other items on their agenda). When considered alongside the subsequent clauses of the bill, a consistent theme emerges to offer some other, perhaps overlapping, explanations. In addition to the literacy clause, the 1834 bill prevented vendors from selling liquor to slaves without an order from their master, strengthened laws against bartering with slaves, and prevented all blacks and persons of color from serving as clerks or "gaming" with whites. Reading, drinking, gaming, and clerking – all of these activities were linked in the public mind as potential threats to the racial hierarchy – "levelling practices" that elevated African-Americans beyond their proper station.[61]

[61] Laurens, "Letter to Seabrook," 8; Seabrook, "Essay on Management," 13.

Each clause generated its own pocket of dissent, and Laurens defended his bill against each argument in turn. Those who opposed the "gaming" law chiefly objected to the mandated punishment for offenders. All men who participated in games of chance with members of the opposite race would be flogged, including whites. The law decreed "those who gamble with slaves or free persons of color, shall be treated as such, and flogged." Laurens counted himself among those who opposed "in every case…inflicting corporal punishment on white men," but proved willing to sacrifice this racial taboo for the greater good accomplished by the bill. Grocers objected to the law for a number of reasons. According to Laurens, their plaints against the commercial damage done by his bill were misplaced. He intended his bill as a corrective to the "common law" practice of bartering with slaves, but did not include any restrictions that were not already on the books; grocers might have had to sacrifice income from liquor sales to slaves, but this would be redeemed individually by the patronage of activist consumers who would otherwise boycott unlawful vendors and more generally, on the state level, by the enhanced production of abstinent slaves; Laurens obfuscated the charge that his law would privilege the wealthy (slaveowner) over the commoner (grocer) by repeating that the law applied equally to all Carolinians.[62]

More than just a rebuttal to popular opposition, Laurens' attention to class conflict was fundamental to his initial motivation. By barring all people of color from the profession of clerk, Laurens intended not only to reduce the threat of skilled and autonomous black professionals, but also to provide opportunities to the "poorer classes

[62] *Defence of Shop keepers of South-Carolina, and particularly of the grocers, against the law 'for the better regulation of slaves and free persons of colour* (Charleston: D.J. Dowling, 1835). Opposition to the Bill also fed off objections to secular oath-taking, resentment of "aristocratic" privilege, and the growing domination of state government; see Ronald Formisano and Stephen Pickering. "The Christian Nation Debate and Witness Competency." *Journal of the Early Republic* 29.2 (2009), 219-248.

of our white population." Black clerks displaced white workers, "degraded" the profession in the white mind, discouraged lesser whites from pursuing such positions, and even deterred working class whites from immigrating to seek such jobs in Charleston. This second clause was part of a wider trend towards professional segregation, documented regularly in the city press and council chambers.[63] Along with the other clauses of Laurens' bill, it also represented a particular discursive cell of the larger contest over racial modernization. This tension between biology and behavior as arbiter of legal categorization was an essential part of the racializing process, as evident in Laurens' reluctance to sanction equal corporal punishment for whites who gambled with blacks. As legislators debated the segregation of leisure activities and occupations and negotiated the terms of punishment for violation on black and white bodies, they brought disparate racial predispositions to the table and articulated these to an equally varied set of material and political concerns. The product of their deliberations was a compromised expression of racial modernity, a bill that rigidified racial properties in most respects, but allowed for their transgression in others. Perhaps the most notable space left open to racial transgression was literacy. It was of course impossible to dispossess literate blacks of their skills, and the bill also allowed for expansion of African-American literacy among the state's free colored population under certain conditions. .

Along with the explanations offered by Laurens above, there were at least two other socioeconomic rationales behind this strategy. The first was the need to maximize agricultural efficiency in the state. By restricting liquor, barter, and literacy from the slave population, the law diminished some of the most apparent causes of distraction or

[63] William and Jane Pease Papers, Avery Research Center Archives.

wastefulness. The second reason stems from the first. In their materialist arguments for evangelism, Seabrook and Laurens endorsed the industrious, docile products of slave missions, but also maintained that this effect could be magnified through standardization of non-literate pedagogical methods. Laurens wrote that in support of the religious development of the slave,

> I would gladly appropriate the tithe of my income to the attainment of an object in every point so eminently desireable – but honestly, I do not think that this measure is to be furthered by teaching them to read, for where one would draw the pure waters of life from the fountain of inspiration, hundreds would follow after false prophets, to their disquiet here, and perdition thereafter.[64]

This principle of pedagogical efficacy applied equally to free people of color, but removing the Bible from free colored hands would oblige the state to replace it with religious instruction at public expense; this was a burden that Carolina's citizenry was not yet willing to shoulder. Like Laurens, however, more and more Carolinians were willing to accept a public spiritual obligation to the state's slave population. In order for secular modernists like Laurens or Seabrook to align religious practice in South Carolina with their restrictive vision of the racial order, they had to concede substantial ground to the evangelical mandate. By acknowledging the spiritual responsibilities of the slaveowner, restrictivists effectively traded their backing of religious education for the license to determine the course of evangelical policy and black religious development. The product of this discursive bargain was a synthetic representation of the Carolina community – an invented tradition of black dependence, co-opted from the genius of

[64] John B. Adger, *My life and times, 1810-1899* (Richmond, Va.: The Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1899); Laurens, "Letter to Seabrook," 9.

mainstream evangelicals like Richard Furman and reconfigured according to the ideological dictates of racial modernism.

This was the big compromise of 1834. More significant than the concession of free black literacy, advocates of racial restriction conceded to Richard Furman's claim that "masters are bound, on principles of moral and religious duty, to give these servants religious instruction." The state intervened in this relationship, to help masters protect "these servants" from the "disquiet" and "perdition" wrought not only by the written word, but also by alcohol, gambling, and overextending their professional station. In so doing, the legislature affirmed black dependence, upon both masters and the "community at large," to make decisions about black well-being that Afro-Carolinians were not capable of making for themselves.

This tradition of black dependence did not spring forth *ex nihilo* from the minds of planter-politicians like Whitemarsh Seabrook. In the parlance of Eric Hobsbawm and Terrance Ranger, invented traditions emerge as "responses to novel situations which take the form of reference to old situations, or which establish their own past by quasi-obligatory repetition." In the novel situation of a post-Vesey, post-Turner, post-Walker, evangelized South Carolina, Seabrook and his ilk selectively established their own past as spiritual shepherd to an orphaned Negro flock. Seabrook did not have to look far for his historical hook – a wealth of mythopoeic interpretations of the Atlantic slave trade had already charted African orphanage as the genesis moment of black dependence. In the estimable account of Richard Furman, "the Africans brought to America were…made slaves under the common law of African nations…by (their) own consent, and by the indulgence of barbarous principles," and "fell into the hands of white men" through the

grace of God.[65] Moral improvement of Afro-Carolinians was a responsibility bestowed upon the state by God and confirmed by law. Seabrook affirmed the first responsibility when he wrote that "omission or neglect to improve the moral condition of his people, is an offence for which hereafter there may be no forgiveness" and the second when he proposed laws to ensure that Carolina be a safe haven from African vice, not a new land of temptation.[66]

Conclusion

Contrary to Edward Laurens' schematic of black literacy, for every one Denmark Vesey, there were hundreds of inspired literate people of color living their lives within the confines of the social stasis. Laurens' exaggerated case for the dangers of black readership was informed more by events that transpired outside of the state – Walker's Appeal, Nat Turner's Rebellion, et al. – than by the personalized sense of racial difference that informed his opposition. His comments thus reflected as much change as they did continuity: the changing times of abolition, sectionalism, and radicalism that were pretext for desperate measures of state restriction; while the cognitive tension between personalization and abstraction continued to form the bases of racial consciousness. In order to answer the "degree of (black) inferiority" question raised in the introduction, the concluding portion of this chapter will recapitulate some nodes of racialization generated by this cognitive tension, enlist Whitemarsh Seabrook's pattern of racialization as a challenge to the historiography of "paternalism," and address how free people of color complicated the process of racialization.

[65] Furman, *Exposition*, 15.
[66] Seabrook, "Essay on Management," 6.

The changing times of the 1820s and 30s catalyzed the continuous tension between personalization and abstraction to signal the emergence of racial modernity in South Carolina. During the first decades of the nineteenth century, white Carolinians worked to set a precise degree of black inferiority through state or institutional policy. Through a two-step process of discursive negotiation with black Carolinians as both individuals and abstractions, white Carolinians arrived at a relational identity construct of white independence and black dependence. Patriarchal slaveholders initiated the first step of this process when the anxious "discovery" of black humanity during the colonial era directed them towards racial essentialism as a compromise category of post-colonial social organization. This essentialist turn initiated a second step of rhetorical naturalization and normalization, as statesmen, intellectuals, and preachers articulated traditional notions of patriarchy and providence to modern processes of state formation and institutionalization. This second step of the process was energized from the margins, by evangelical "stewards" who worked against essentialist boundaries to close the moral distance between black and white, and by racial modernists who fought to prioritize the social capital of whiteness above all other virtues as the civic identity of South Carolina.

The conceptual lynchpin of the racial compromise brokered in 1834 was black improvement. Even the most die-hard essentialists upheld the providential interpretation of the slave trade, and the concomitant assumption that Carolina slaves were better off – materially and morally – through their deliverance from Africa. The upshot of black improvement, however, was a matter of no such consensus. Over the course of two centuries, the providence of interracial contact and evangelical progress bred an ambiguous confidence in the civilizing mission. While all white parties seemed to agree

on the inferior start point of African moral and intellectual development, and that African progress was already evident in South Carolina, there was no explicit end point of black dependence.

"Should…a time arrive, when the Africans in our country might be found qualified to enjoy freedom," Richard Furman promised that his Baptist Convention "would be happy in seeing them free." From his vantage point of 1822, however, Furman figured that Afro-Carolinians, "whether they bear openly the character of slaves or are reputed freemen, will continue in such circumstances, with mere shades of variation, while the world continues." Salvation was the only degree of black improvement that Furman addressed with any precision. To bring Carolina's black dependents "to this happy state (salvation) is the great object of Christian benevolence." Beyond this, the future of black improvement was uncertain.

For Seabrook, the "curse of colour" was God's stamp, a tool of providence that would "always mark them as inferior and distinct from our race." Seabrook's essentialism fed into Edward Laurens' four-fifths compromise, which promised a permanent statist resolution to the human categorization of Carolina slaves, but also allowed for the categorical slippage of free people of color, or white Carolinians who cavorted with blacks. Evangelicals offered similarly open-ended taxonomies. In his letter to Daniel Payne, John Bachman suggested that intellectual capacity transcended race: "knowledge is like gold, it conducts among all classes." But as he developed his scientific treatise on the unity of human species, Bachman used the recent history of

African peoples to prove the intellectual inferiority of African-Americans as a "permanent variety" of the human species.[67]

The writings and ministry of Richard Fuller provide a deeper portrait of the connection between personal experience and racial abstractions. A slaveholding lawyer called to the ministry in 1832, Fuller set out to "confine [his] labors wholly to our colored population," and spent most of his days doing just that among the black majority of the Beaufort area. This breadth of experience formed the ground upon which tackled bigger-picture questions like those posed by the "negro problem" in the United States. In his famous correspondence with Francis Wayland, the Rev. Fuller invoked a specific calculus of human rights. He wrote that all men enjoyed six properties of being: "as an immortal being preparing for eternity, as an intelligent being capable of knowledge, as a moral agent bound to serve his Creator, as endowed with personal liberty, as a fallen creature to whom the gospel is sent, and lastly, as sustaining marital and parental relations," and that slaves were only denied one of these (personal liberty). Fuller worked against the state to protect the slave's right to knowledge through literacy and to family through legal recognition of slave marriage and protection against familial separation.

The Presbyterian Reverend John Adger, a native son of Charleston, fought with Fuller against state neglect of slave families, but proved more reticent on the topic of slave literacy. In the long run, Adger targeted a goal of black "emancipation." According to his calculations, this would be a long and gradual process, but over the

[67] Seabrook, "Appeal to North and East," 21; Payne, *Recollections*, 24.

course of a century, the Charleston "School of Slavery" should be able to qualify a stream of black scholars for membership in the body politic.[68]

Outflanking all of these evangelicals on the spectrum of black humanity was Angelina Grimke. Though Grimke was born and raised in Charleston, a member of Seabrook's generation, the modernist climate of the 1820s and 30s instilled in her a starkly divergent racial consciousness. From her first reflection on the matter, Grimke internalized the suffering of the slave as her own. When she heard her brother whipping a slave in another room, "the curses he uttered went like daggers to my heart." Her personal antagonisms against slavery were profound, but she also channeled the proslavery orthodoxies of her day: "I am continually told that their situation is very good much better than that of their owners." As her diary documented the growth of her thinking on race and slavery, the consistent mantra that characterized her turn to antislavery was spiritual neglect, specifically the deficient religious education of Charleston slaves. "How wonderful that Professors can be reconciled to close the Bible to their slaves," she wrote, "what right have they to take the inspired volume out of their hands and then say that it is best…because they cannot understand it."[69]

This range of racializations, from Seabrook's stamp of inferiority to Grimke's transformative empathy, correlated roughly to the balance of abstract and personal observations that informed the white mind. While statements most prone to abstraction,

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[68] Adger, *My life and times,*188. Full quote: "in the great and good school of slavery, then, our slaves were receiving the most needful and valuable education for this life, and very many of them for the life to come. The two races were steadily and constantly marching onwards and upwards together. Hence, when emancipation was suddenly forced upon us, it found a good many pupils in the school of slavery who were ready to be graduated, while it found all of them considerably educated." Adger career and comments will be the subject of more detailed analysis in Chapters 4 and 5.

[69] Angelina Grimké and Charles Wilbanks, *Walking by Faith: The Diary of Angelina Grimké, 1828-1835* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2003). Diary entry of Feb, 6, 1829.

like the public discourse of Seabrook or Laurens, were most likely to bolster racial distinction, the most personalized expressions of interracial experience, like those in Grimke's diary, were most likely to collapse racial distinctions into empathic understanding. Grimke, like Bachman and Adger and other Charlestonians, endeavored to align her personal experiences with the received wisdom of slavery as she understood it. But unlike Bachman and Adger, Grimke's personal sense of wrong trumped her commitment to the collective rationale of right. Where Bachman and Adger had to answer to their congregations, Grimke had only to answer to her family. She convinced her brother not to whip a runaway slave upon his return, and perhaps in so doing crafted the (personalized) template of social reform (moral suasion) she would cultivate upon her departure from Charleston some years later. In Charleston, however, she influenced only the private sphere of the Grimke family, whereas the impact of humanitarian evangelicals like Bachman or Fuller extended into the public realm.[70]

Though some Charlestonians likely shared Grimke's private evaluation that the slave "power cruelly treads under foot the rights of man and…the mental faculties of the poor negro," few voiced their sentiments to the public. The potential disconnect between public and private personae suggested by the Grimke scenario signifies a larger, more explicit dimension of psycho-social tension that framed racial consciousness for most South Carolinians during the early national period. The Unitarian minister Samuel Gilman, and his wife Caroline, exhibited this duality as they wrote to northern relatives that they were "preparing their slaves for freedom," but concealed any such plans from their congregation and contacts in Charleston. The Gilmans were exceptional in a

[70] Ibid.

number of ways, but this same tension played out more generally among Carolinians caught up in the wave of evangelicalism.[71] As chronicled in Chapter One, doctrines of spiritual equality borne of evangelical insurgency clashed with norms of social inequality borne of necessity and tradition to generate anti-evangelical impulses among the anxious patriarchs of South Carolina. When revivalism overflowed the margins into the mainstream during the early decades of the nineteenth century, guardians of tradition sublimated and racialized their fear of evangelical anomie. The condescending tropes once used to diminish the threat posed by uneducated poor white Methodists and Baptists found a new application in the pathology of black spirituality.

By the 1820s and 30s, the anti-evangelical impulse among white Carolinians only registered in public discourse as it related to black religious education. Post-Vesey commentators blamed the insurrection on the shallow pedagogy of lowbrow evangelicals; Seabrook repeatedly inveighed against the racial naïveté of evangelical clergy as an impediment to progress, and Edward Laurens considered the plantation missions devised by C.C. Pinckney to be a form of "domestic mismanagement." As secular modernists were forced to accommodate the evangelical mainstream, the soul became the most undisputable element of black humanity, and African-American religious practice thereby became the most disputed of black liberties. Frederick Dalcho was not channeling evangelical insurgency when he made the analogy between black moral and white economic improvement ("because I am poor, does that mean that I should not endeavor

[71] Ibid.; Caroline Howard Gilman papers, 1810-1880, South Carolina Historical Society; Mary Saint-Amand, *A Balcony in Charleston* (Richmond, Va.: Garrett and Massie, 1941); Seabrook, "Essay on Management," 14-5.

to become rich?"), but his point was taken all the same. Any indicator of black humanity, apart from race, was equally threatening to racial modernists.[72]

As they watched the expanding liberties of spiritual equality encroach upon the boundaries of social inequality, racial modernists like Laurens and Seabrook warned evangelical institutions against the slippery slope they were paving. Laurens insisted "unless we could say 'thus far and no farther thou shalt go,'" allowing black congregants the same privileges as white congregants would intoxicate the underclass to the ruin of the state. Seabrook went so far as to suggest that the machinations of "societies for the religious instruction of our coloured population" conspired against the social order. In critique of Clay's report of 1830, he wrote "it is proposed…to substitute an ecclesiastical government for the civil system; or, in other words, to rule our slaves by perpetual prayer and exhortation, instead of the practical exercise of the master's authority."[73]

In place of evangelicals gone wild, Seabrook stipulated that religious instruction should be managed by "Agricultural and Police Associations" like the South Carolina Association, in accordance with the regulations and restrictions of state law. In this particular moment, and throughout his public career, Seabrook epitomized a track of social modernization in South Carolina that sheds new light on the "transition from patriarchy to paternalism" historiography surveyed above. By reconsidering the history of post-colonial dynamism through the career of Seabrook and the South Carolina Association, it is possible to isolate the racial arc of this transitional period and highlight

[72] Edward Laurens, *An Address Delivered in Charleston: Before the Agricultural Society of South-Carolina, on September 18th, 1832* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1832). Paragraph includes reference to Dalcho's rhetorical question: "because I am poor, does that mean that I should not endeavor to become rich?" found in *Practical Considerations*, 6.
[73] Seabrook, "Essay on Management," 24.

three features of master class ideology that augment the previous scholarship on "paternalism."[74]

First, Seabrook's involvement with the South Carolina Association traces the steps through which the patriarchal, "kingdom," or conflict model of slaveholding evolved through the political turbulence of the revolution and its aftermath into the "slavocrat" state as legitimate monopoly of violence in a republican society. Secondly, by contrasting the racial dimensions of this evolution with those of the "transition from patriarchy to paternalism," (from fear and enmity to familial bond, reciprocal affections) it becomes clear that many modernist slaveholders openly rejected the tenets of "paternalism." Thirdly, both Seabrook and the South Carolina Association revealed that the interests of nonslaveholding whites and free people of color figured just as prominently into their concerns, and into the track of modernization they effected, as those of masters and slaves.[75]

Whitemarsh Seabrook's impact on the restriction of American-American religious liberties was consistent with the general arc of his public career and confluent with a broader pattern of state formation in South Carolina. In 1823, Seabrook signed a petition for the incorporation of the "Edisto Island Auxiliary Association," a society "in aid of the constituted authorities, with respect to the regulation of the colored population." This was a local chapter of the South Carolina Association, an extralegal association of

[74] On the balance of power between patriarchy and paternalism, between the state and the church, as it related to slave management, Seabrook wrote: "it is proposed…to substitute an ecclesiastical government for the civil system; or, in other words, to rule our slaves by perpetual prayer and exhortation, instead of the practical exercise of the master's authority." Seabrook, "Essay on Slave management," 24.

[75] The operative definition for "paternalism," as deployed historically and historiographically above, is a synthetic one, compiled by Lacy Ford. Paternalism, as an ideology specific to the modernizing slave society, was the composite of four propositions: the humanity of slaves, an empathic understanding of the slave as subject to the dictates of the "golden rule," a style of slave management similar to that of a white family, and a broader, organic acceptance of social responsibility, for the well-being of both neighbors and their slaves. Lacy K. Ford, *Deliver us from Evil,* 147–48.

landowners, organized after the Vesey Scare to aid the enforcement of racialized legislation. Members of these associations perceived the "daily violation or evasion of the laws, made to regulate the conduct of our colored population" as a threat to the "brightest prospects" and security of southern society. Through partnership with the state, the South Carolina Association and its Auxiliaries made it their mission to reform the problematic fluidity and slippage of the post-colonial racial order.[76]

In addition to the prevention of future Veseys, these organizations served the cultural function of solidifying white racial unity. Seabrook's petition cited race control as a means to heal the rift that had grown between planters and non-slaveholding whites on Edisto Island: "the ties of consanguinity and interest are insufficient to prevent even our neighbors from publically thundering their anathema against the holders of slaves." Public activism on the part of slaveholders to bulwark the legal trappings of white supremacy would provide the social cohesion that blood and interest alone could not. The leaders of the South Carolina Association used their substantial influence to lobby successfully for state laws restricting black entry into the state in 1823 and for a Charleston City Ordinance restricting the right of black religious assembly in 1835. The Association remained active throughout the escalating sectional tensions of the 1830s and 40s, most notably when they were implicated in the forcible exit of Massachusetts lawyer sent to test the constitutionality of the Negro Seaman's Act, chased out of town by threat of violence in 1844.[77]

[76] Petition of the Edisto Island Auxiliary Association for Incorporation, Nov. 18, 1823, Records of the General Assembly #151, SCDAH; *Charleston Courier*, July 24, 1823; Alan January, "South Carolina Association."
[77] Edisto Auxiliary Petition; January, "South Carolina Association," 196-200.

Even when these race control organizations faded from the scene in the late 1840s, their mission lived on in the statecraft of members like Whitemarsh Seabrook. As Governor in 1849, Seabrook acted to strengthen the same impulse of herrenvolk democracy that motivated his Auxiliary's charter in 1823. In support of the popular will registered in a series of petitions against the threat posed by the free black population, Seabrook introduced a bill to remove unpropertied free people of color from the state. "This population is nonproductive and corrupting," he wrote, "the right of locomotion enables them to bear intelligence from one part of the state to another and execute orders emanating from foreign sources." Though Seabrook's bill died in committee, it represented an important legalist strain of racial modernity common to other statist structures of black dependence, and begs comparison with Edwin Holland's plan of free black removal 28 years earlier.[78]

Though lawmakers similarly rebuffed Holland's suggestion to remove all free black (but not mullato) residents from the state, the factor that most distinguished the context and intent of Holland's 1822 plan from that of Seabrook's in 1850 was the emergence of racial modernity. Whereas Holland's generation proceeded from an empathic understanding of slavery to recognize that racial difference would not hold a people in subjection so long as there existed a free population of the same race, some of Seabrook's generation had distanced themselves from the implications of interracial empathy to arrive at a new free black problem. Seabrook's plan proceeded from the same set of assumptions he shared with "the people of northern and eastern states" in 1834:

[78] *Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of South Carolina* (Columbia, S.C: J.W. Denny 1850), 37. "Herrenvolk" means "master race;" a Herrenvolk Democracy is a political system in which citizen rights are only granted to the master race of the nation. George M. Fredrickson, *White supremacy : a comparative study in American and South African history* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981); Pierre L. Van den Berghe, *Race and racism; a comparative perspective* (New York: Wiley, 1967).

> Providence has stamped the curse of colour upon them; and that colour, independent of any other influence, will always mark them as inferior and distinct from our race. To free them entirely, we must share with them society – bring them into the social circle – take them into the bosom of our families, and make them bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. That this can never be the case, so long as this one objection is so grossly offensive to the most ready of our senses, …is…sufficiently convincing. They must remain, as in all times they have been, a separate order from ourselves – happy in their sphere – tolerated, when not erring; but victim, whenever…they presume madly to shoot out of it.[79]

Enforcement of slave codes provided a means keep black slaves "happy in their sphere," but did not effectively corral the free blacks who presumed to "madly shoot out of it." Between Holland and Seabrook, advances in racialization and state formation solidified legal regimentations of racial separation, but not to Seabrook's satisfaction. A series of laws passed in the 1820s required every free male Negro over fifteen years of age to have a white male guardian, whose legal responsibility was to sponsor the good character of their free black dependent. According to one scholar of South Carolina law, "the guardian was to be to the free negro what the master was to the slave." This legal dependency grew stronger as the years wore on. Another state law passed in 1835 forbade free people of color to carry arms without written permission from their white guardian. By 1850, many South Carolinians felt comfortable with the laws and conventions that had accomplished what Holland hoped to do through demographic reconfiguration – inoculating the dangerous precedent set for slaves by "persons of their own color enjoying a comparative degree of freedom."[80] Race, however, as an essentialist category, is an inherently instable one, which required the constant attentions

[79] Whitemarsh B. Seabrook, *Appeal to the people of the northern and eastern states*, 21.
[80] *H. M. Henry, The Police Control of the Slave in South Carolina*, (Negro Universities Press, 1968), 179; Cooper and McCord, *Statutes at Large*, 7: 465,471; Holland, *Refutations*, 83.

of racial modernists like Whitemarsh Seabrook. Afro-Carolinians both slave and free performed their independence on a daily basis – this pushback, along with the angst it created among nonslaveholding whites, energized the architects of racial modernity to pursue more permanent boundaries of racial distinction.

Free black patronage, for example, was an imperfect form of black dependence in need of more radical correction. According to an editorial of 1845, the "free colored are far from being a class envied by our slaves – worse off in every respect, they throw themselves under the sheltering wing of some benevolent white man, and instead of being fomenters of insubordination and rebellion among slaves, they pursue here a directly contrary course." The impetus for Seabrook's proposal in 1850 was not only the dangerous role model that free blacks presented to slaves (private anxiety), but also the dangerous competition that they presented to white workers, and the high standards of racial modernity.[81]

As evident in the vectors of racialization generated by both Whitemarsh Seabrook and those of his evangelical opponents (Grimke, Adger, et al.), Afro-Carolinians contributed to both sides of the race-making process. Black church membership validated stewardship and its goal of racial improvement, while the prospect of black boundary transgression triggered restriction of evangelical "levelling practices." Black religious practice simultaneously affirmed and challenged both sides of the expansion-restriction dialectic and thereby energized the triangular dynamic of southern nation-building. Just as race-making proved integral to the abstract processes of state formation and nation-building, religious liberty proved central to the public discourse of

[81] Role of white underclass in governmentality, and racial dimensions of state formation (via E.R. Laurens' address to Agricultural Society) will be a focus of the next chapter.

racialization. The precise soteriological value of a black soul entered into an ideological equation with the economic value and political limitations of the slave body to complicate the spiritual and cultural dimensions of a burgeoning southern identity.

In order to fully translate the discursive relationship between black religious practice and slavocrat politics into a clear argument about the role that race played in the construction of southern nationalism, it is necessary to address the ways in which free people of color complicated the process of racialization. Just as the legal distinction between slaves and free people of color complicated the debate over racial restriction in 1834, variable notions of cultural distinction blurred the racial and conditional boundaries that defined conventions of social order. For white Carolinians, the general trend was towards dissolution of these distinctions, as racial modernists like Seabrook and Laurens lobbied to collapse free and slave into the same category of black dependence. This trend also shifted the identity constructs available to free black Carolinians. Though some maintained their allegiance to the interracial unity of the "revolutionary generation,"[82] and members of the free colored elite clung to a self-image of distinction from the enslaved underclass, most understood the external construction of their identity to be part of the social binary created by racial slavery.

This was the message that Daniel Payne conveyed as he reflected upon his departure from Charleston in 1834-35. First among the mentors he consulted before he left town was Samuel Weston, the black Methodist class leader responsible for the initial stages of his religious education. Weston was a free man, respected in his church and

[82] The "Revolutionary" label for the generation of urban slaves who came of age in South Carolina during the period of post-colonial flux described in Chapters 1 and 2 is co-opted from Ira Berlin, *Generations of captivity : a history of African-American slaves* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003). See Chapter Two for characterization of Richard Holloway as an exemplary member of this "revolutionary generation."

community, but as Payne reflected back on Weston after he had left Charleston, he described him as "only a class-leader because slavery decreed him to the condition of half man and half brute." Slavery, as defined by white opinion-makers, was the active subject of Payne's sentence. Slavery trapped free people of color like Weston and himself beneath the ceiling of black dependence and its ambiguous upshot of racial improvement.[83]

Against the general trend, a strong contingent of traditionalists and humanitarians advanced more nuanced views of slaves and free people of color. Informed by personal experiences with Charleston's free black community, both groups advocated a more fluid line of racial and conditional designation that might exempt certain individuals from the abstract regulations of racial restriction. This early national peerage with men like Richard Holloway was part of the "policy of our fathers" that ultimately won the concession of free black literacy from Edward Laurens' 1834 bill. The traditionalist stance formed one flank of the "counterrevolution of race" initiated in Chapter Two, as the traditional pattern of interracial empathy that defined early modern racial consciousness came into conflict with the essentialist agenda of the racial modernists. Traditionalist responses to the Vesey Scare, for example, outlined the conflict as more slave versus master than white versus black, and predicated these responses upon the assumption that the natural social distinction of classes in Charleston was not blackness, but slavery. By the 1830s, traditionalists were increasingly outflanked by racial modernists who fought to collapse conditional distinctions – free vs. slave, rich vs. poor, slaveowning vs. nonslaveowning – into racial ones.

[83] Payne, *Recollections*, 35.

For Daniel Payne, the four-fifths compromise of 1834 signaled the ascendance of racial modernists and initiated a stage of southern identity construction through subtraction. Full membership in the imagined community of Carolina would be determined by race, not condition. Payne, like Angelina Grimke, decided to reject this bottleneck of American into southern identity and migrated north, but most Carolinians stayed home. Institutionalization at any level is a process that requires a level of abstraction from both institutional architects and their targeted audience. In South Carolina, nation-builders channeled their personal or imagined experiences with fellow "nationals" to a popular audience through law and public discourse. The four-fifths compromise of 1834 was an unstable resolution of national identity, tested by Carolinians against their own experiences over the next two and a half decades. The 1830s, 40s, and 50s were a trial period for the currents of racial and religious modernity that grew out of 1834. The invented tradition of black dependence was an ideal that white Carolinians struggled to realize through a new stage of institutionalization and ministry – tested, refined, and rejected by black Carolinians. This process of negotiation and between ideality and reality, between white prescriptions and black traditions, between the political mainstream and the social margins, is the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

"There is no Back Kitchen in Heaven":

Identification and Inversion in the Late Antebellum Lowcountry

> Great efforts have been made to abolish this practice [black preaching]; but they have been attended with the usual effects of religious persecution, secrecy, and nocturnal meetings in old fields and plantations without white participation or observation… We advise instead to…afford them an opportunity of contrasting the sense and doctrine they hear in such places from men, whom they know to be only their equals, with the religious information to be derived from white teachers, whose superiority in knowledge of every kind, they cannot question.
>
> - Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, Ag. Soc. Address, 1829

> It is…a cheering thought to the philanthropist that he is instrumental in causing light…to be shed on that mind which was but a moment since wrapped in worse than Egyptian darkness, but the hallowed image would be immediately dismissed…when, looking beyond the present moment, it becomes convinced that the very mean resorted to for measurably elevating the class, would be the cause of creating an aspiration towards that eminence which they cannot in safety be allowed to attain.
>
> - Edward Rutledge Laurens, Ag. Soc. Address, 1832

> It was the custom among them when conducting the Lord's Supper, to have the white people partake first, and then say to the negroes –"Now, all you niggers that are humble and obedient servants to your masters, can come and partake." The negroes said among themselves "There is no back kitchen in heaven;" but if they had been overheard, they would have been whipped severely. I fear this case will be an example of the truth of our Lord's saying, "The first shall be last and the last first."
>
> - John Andrew Jackson, "The Experience of a Slave in South Carolina," 1862

In 1829, C.C. Pinckney addressed the South Carolina Agricultural Association to argue for more aggressive religious instruction of American slaves. Pinckney's wide-ranging argument became the talk of the town in Charleston, and has since been recognized as a

classic statement of "the humanizing impact of slavery."[1] Three years later, Edward Laurens delivered a lengthy address to the same audience that was in large part a rebuttal to Pinckney. Though both addresses shared the same grand scope and modernist spirit, each expressed a different vision for the future of racial relations in South Carolina. Both Pinckney and Laurens proceeded from the thesis of black dependence, advocated policies of racial reform, and worked to build a community of consensus through the modern media of the press and voluntary association, but developed these means to different ends. Whereas Pinckney invoked notions of utopia – a worldly community of black and white, slave and free, unified by their new life in Christ – Laurens fought off dystopia – the ruin that would result from the unchecked triple threat of foreign interference, free black Carolinians, and indulgent or misguided masters like C.C. Pinckney.[2]

According to the labels of the previous chapter, Pinckney was an expansionist and Laurens was a restrictivist, but at the root of their arguments, Pinckney and Laurens diverged according to the competing interests that they claimed to represent. Pinckney assessed the material and spiritual welfare of South Carolina slaves relative to working peoples around the world, demonstrated some of the ways in which a religious mission to the slaves would improve slave life, and offered these imperatives of slave interest for the consideration of Carolina power-brokers. Laurens' censure of domestic "evils" was largely a defense of what he imagined to be the interests of the white working class, both "our white artisans and mechanics…driven from their honest trades" by black

[1] Sarah Rutledge to ? Lowndes, Sept. 12, 1829, "Papers of the Adger, Smyth[e], and Flynn families, 1823-1930," SCL; Young, *Proslavery and Sectional Thought in the Early South, 1740-1829: An Anthology*, 51.
[2] Edward R. Laurens, *An address delivered in Charleston, before the Agricultural society of South-Carolina, on September 18th, 1832;* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1832); Pinckney, *An address delivered in Charleston, before the Agricultural Society of South Carolina, at its anniversary meeting, on Tuesday, the 18th August, 1829* (Charleston: A.E. Miller, 1829).

competition, and the potential population of white immigrants repelled by black degradation of the trades in South Carolina. As elite conduits of working class interests, Pinckney and Laurens participated in the production of public opinion through the process of "governmentality." The concept of governmentality, developed by scholars of state formation to describe the relationship between the state and "governmental" intellectuals, requires a bit of modification to describe the uneven modernization of antebellum South Carolina, but also provides an apt structure for understanding the process whereby "silent" interests were represented in the public sphere.[3] Public consent is the lifeblood of a modern institution like the state – measured both directly, through popular "access to national sentiment," and indirectly, through "representation of the people by way of the state's governmental sciences." In South Carolina, only a select minority of the population enjoyed "direct access" to national or institutional sentiment; the disenfranchised majority accessed popular sentiment indirectly, through the intermediation of white male "governmental" advocates.[4]

By the 1830s, religious leaders had assumed a special governmental function in South Carolina. The restriction of Afro-Carolinian liberties in 1834 guaranteed that slaves could not be held responsible for their own salvation; the literate would be responsible for the religious indoctrination of those legally denied the privilege of literacy. In so doing,

[3] Michel Foucault's original usage of governmentality as a "form of surveillance and control as attentive as that of the head of the family over his household" resembles the collective or statist aspects of "paternalism," as defined by Lacy Ford. This theoretical proximity will be addressed in the conclusion. Of more immediate relevance are "the characteristic spaces and roles" created for intellectuals under the auspices of governmentality; Michel Foucault et al., *The Foucault effect : studies in governmentality : with two lectures by and an interview with Michel Foucault* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Ford, *Deliver us from evil : the slavery question in the old South*. For working definition of "paternalism," see Chapter 3, note 76.

[4] Claudio. Lomnitz-Adler, *Deep Mexico, silent Mexico : an anthropology of nationalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 206. Pinckney was a blueblood Carolinian, later elected Lieutenant Governor. For biographical information, see above (Chapter 3, p. 175-76) and Young, *Proslavery Anthology*, 50–52.

South Carolina policy-makers implicitly authorized state religious institutions to represent the spiritual interests of the slave population. South Carolina evangelicals understood this responsibility as an authority "to exert moral power on behalf of the slave." According to Donald Mathews, "once the Church's right to evangelize [the slave] was recognized, no one could easily forbid it to speak on his behalf." C.C. Pinckney, for example, spoke on behalf of the slave and his master to advocate religious education as the surest means to advance the interests of both.[5]

Edward Laurens patronized the interests of those with more direct political access than slaves, but less than masters. Based upon his reading of white working class dispositions, Laurens advocated the restriction of black education, employment, and residency as the surest means to elevate and expand the social space occupied by white workers in South Carolina. Both Laurens and Pinckney were men of substantial privilege addressing an elite audience on behalf of two distinct working class groups. [6] In order to validate their respective institutional initiatives, Laurens and Pinckney inserted the implied consent of the white and black working class into narratives about the progress of slave society. Though crafted to fit to the "circumstances" of distinct social interests, the relational identity construct of white independence and black dependence was central to both narratives. This chapter carries their governmental labors forward, as white nation-builders worked to build public opinion around their vision(s) of racial progress through

[5] Donald G. Mathews, "The Methodist Mission to the Slaves, 1829-1844," *The Journal of American History* 51 (1965): 615–631. There is abundant evidence for evangelical governmentality on behalf of slave interests: examples include Bowen's call for members to lobby for favorable legislation (state-required religious instruction of slaves), J.B. O'Neale's legal commentary on the need to reform slave laws, evangelical advocacy for slave literacy and violation of the literacy law, Rev. Alexander Glennie, Rev. Richard Fuller and others who demanded greater legal protections for slave marriages and families.

[6] In the grander scheme of state and institutional policy, both speakers organized events into convenient "narratives about the progress of the population" that led their audiences to conclusions in line with their social objectives; Lomnitz-Adler, *Deep Mexico, Silent Mexico*, 208.

various statist and institutional initiatives of the 1840s and 50s.[7] Ultimately one policy emerged as a means to best satisfy the governmental interests of both Pinckney and Laurens. Christopher Gadsen, the Bishop of the Episcopalian church to which both Laurens and Pinckney belonged, endorsed plantation chapels – schools of black students under white institutional authority – as a social panacea. Institutional religious instruction of South Carolina slaves would not only benefit slaves, but also the "proprietor, children, overseers, their children, his servants, and the poor whites in the neighborhood."[8]

The ideological foundation of these policies was a special southern covenant, a collective promise to "enlighten…the…hundreds of thousands of Africa's children" brought by God (and his human proxies) to "the shores of this country." God willed that South Carolina would be a vessel of African salvation, so Carolinians were chosen to redeem their degraded black dependents. Richard Furman's providential interpretation of the African slave trade became a foundational myth, canonized through a liturgical recitation of the covenant that bound white citizens and black non-citizens into an imagined community of God's chosen. By 1845, the "Revelation" that "Divine Providence" had placed African slaves "in our hands," and made "the same…dependent on us" was a trope ingrained in the social consciousness of white Carolinians and a meaning embedded in their experience of slavery.[9] This "Carolina liturgy," distinct from the more traditional usage of "liturgy" in previous chapters, refers to a more general

[7] Wording paraphrased from Lomnitz-Adler, *Deep Mexico, Silent Mexico*.
[8] Christopher Gadsden, "Bishop's Address," *Charleston Gospel Messenger* (March 1849): 355-56.
[9] Charleston (S.C.) Meeting on Religious Instruction of Negroes, *Proceedings of the meeting in Charleston, S.C., May 13-15, 1845 on the religious instruction of the negroes, together with the report of the committee, and the address to the public. Pub. by order of the meeting* (Charleston, S.C.: Printed by B. Jenkins, 1845), 6.

exercise of civil religion in late antebellum South Carolina – the rhetoric and rituals through which white Carolinians formalized the Carolina covenant, and performed the "symbolic complexes" of the invented tradition of black dependence.[10] This liturgical recitation of the Carolina covenant pervaded social commentary as white Carolinians narrowed their boundaries of community formation amid rising tides of sectionalism. As this chapter will show, the liturgy of the Carolina covenant explicit in sermons, catechisms, and governmental discourse, eventually became implicit through the performance of rituals like slave ministry and the construction of spaces like the plantation chapel.

By the 1840s, the Carolina liturgy had become official policy through a series of projects designed to uphold the covenant of black dependence or address some of the ways Carolinians were falling short of their covenantal obligations. Some of the reform measures designed to better police the boundaries between white independence and black dependence included the segregation of urban trades in Charleston, white public education initiatives, and repeated attempts to remove the free colored population from

[10] This chapter deploys the "liturgical mode" of national ritual as a marriage of two historiographic tropes (Pocock and Ranger/Hobsbawm) into a unique, synthetic formula. Americans, as transplanted peoples, were especially dependent upon foundational myths of national identity. The most prominent and resonant of American myths was that of a special covenant, affirmed rhetorically and historiographically through two modes of recitation: "One is liturgical, the recital of how the covenant was kept; the other, and by far the commoner, is jeremiad, the recital of how it was not kept and of what sufferings have fallen on the nation by reason of its sins and shortcomings." The jeremiad was sporadically present in references to the Carolina covenant, but more often applied to external plans of improvement (abolition, etc.), and was effectively purged from southern rhetoric for long stretches by two anxieties – one borne of sectional defense and one borne of the need to police counterhegemonic ideas and racial boundaries. The invented tradition of black dependence, introduced at the end of the last chapter, became a foundational myth of Carolina identity – a special covenant between God and his chosen mix of black and white peoples in South Carolina - formalized into ritual and symbolic practice through liturgical recitation. The liturgy of the Carolina covenant and the invented tradition of black dependence were explicit rhetorical motifs of public discourse, that also became implicit meanings embedded into the rituals and spaces of the slave mission – religious experiences created for black Carolinians by white authority; J. G. A. Pocock, "Between Gog and Magog: The Republican Thesis and the Ideologia Americana," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 48, no. 2 (1987): 325–346; E. J. Hobsbawm and T. O. Ranger, *The Invention of tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

the state.[11] Most of these projects achieved only limited support and less success. Far more popular and central to the liturgy of black dependence was an ecumenical mission to convert and civilize South Carolina slaves.

The nexus of this mission was a public assembly, held in Charleston in 1845, to discuss matters related to religious instruction of the state's colored population. During the 1830s and 40s, governmental inquiries into religious education as a strategy of slave management inspired a series of ecumenical gatherings and publications, which culminated in the public forum of May 1845. This meeting and its published "Proceedings" synthesized public opinion on the issue into an official expression of the Carolina covenant. The final statement asserted that "a common law of sentiment" on proper slave management was especially important to an institution that involved so much personal discretion on the part of the master. In order to fulfill this need, the organizing committee declared that "religious instruction of the Negroes" was "THE GREAT DUTY…THE FIXED, THE SETTLED POLICY OF THE SOUTH (sic)."[12]

The 1845 meeting signified the processes whereby religious leaders and governmental intellectuals built a community of consensus around the discourse of religious instruction as social reform. The Presiding Committee addressed the "holders of slaves in South Carolina," in an effort to construct an imagined community of correspondents and subscribers that represented not only the state's predominant economic interests, but also the legal point of access to Carolina slaves. In advance of

[11] Michael D. Thompson, "Working on the dock of the bay : labor and life along Charleston's waterfront, 1783-1861," (Ph.D. dissertation: Emory University, 2009); Frank. Towers, *The urban South and the coming of the Civil War* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2004); Maurie McInnis, *The politics of taste in antebellum Charleston* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); initiatives to remove free people of color, other programs of demographic (racial) reconfiguration addressed above in Chapter Three.
[12] Charleston Meeting, *Proceedings* (1845).

the May convocation, those in charge of the meeting circulated a questionnaire to slaveholders throughout the region, asking respondents to consider both the "why" and the "how" of slave evangelism. More than a simple format of data collection, the circular served the function of building consensus and consolidating the reform community. Aimed at determining whether the benefits of religious instruction were worth the costs, the litany of dogmatic and pragmatic benefits suggested by the questions "led the witness" to the foregone conclusion of the presiding committee.[13] Only a very few of the responses included in the official "Proceedings" varied from orthodoxy as they answered 'why' religious instruction was worthwhile, but there was considerable variance in answers to questions of 'how' slaves should be instructed.[14] The contentious discourse of *how* (instructional methods) represented the web of complications and contradictions that lurked beneath the rhetorical consensus or "settled policy" of religious instruction.

This chapter tracks the discourse and practice of African-American religious instruction through the 1840s and 50s, in order to demonstrate both why Carolinians supported such ventures and how they felt missionary activity should be conducted. There were a wide range of answers to these questions, from both white and black Carolinians. The composite of this lively interracial discourse was a continuation of the triangular dynamic laid out in previous chapter, as slaves challenged and informed institutional debates over the methods and objectives of "plantation missions." In order

[13] See Appendix C: Circular Questionnaire; On how the circular served more to advertise and disseminate information than to survey and gather information, seeWarren Susman, *Culture as history : the transformation of American society in the twentieth century* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984); and Charles McGovern, *Sold American: consumption and citizenship, 1890-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

[14] The most common practical benefits of religious instruction described were along the lines of the following: "Plantations under religious instruction are more easily governed than those that are not. They have a greater disposition to do what is right." (Thomas Cook, Marlborough District); and "For years I have not been robbed of the value of a pin." (J. Grimke Drayton, Charleston). Charleston Meeting, *Proceedings* (1845), 24, 50.

to test the resonance of the invented tradition of black dependence, this chapter gauges the success of the slave mission as a nation-building project, and investigates the extent to which slaves imagined themselves as part of a community bound by the Carolina covenant.

Popular enthusiasm for the slave mission, like any reform movement, was contingent upon its articulation of other popular interests. In South Carolina, the discursive resonance of African-American religious instruction as a reform project fluctuated according to two interrelated indicators of popular sentiment: white and black. Among white audiences, the general ideological or rhetorical commitment to reform surmised by the leaders of the 1845 meeting did not guarantee any specific course of action. The Presiding Committee concluded that religious instruction would be the policy of local slaveholders, "but of the responsibility it involves, each individual is bound to judge for himself; and to each the Committee leave it." This meant there might be as many methods of religious instruction as there were teachers, and seemed to reflect historiographic conventions of "southern" reform. Drew Faust, for example, distilled a general sense of reform ideals from a *Sacred Circle* of five southern intellectuals. She surmised that southern reformers directed their energies more "toward the spiritual elevation of individual human beings" than at larger institutional structures or social units.[15] The Committee's "Public Address" seemed to confirm this priority, but also suggested an organic linkage between the two levels of reform – the collective and self-propagating weight of individual acts registered at the level of the social (or national)

[15] Drew Gilpin Faust, *A sacred circle : the dilemma of the intellectual in the Old South, 1840-1860* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), 80-86, 112-23, quotes from p. 85, 121. Understanding of "mud-sill theory" also comes from Genovese, *Slaveholder's Dilemma* and J. William Harris, *Plain Folk and Gentry in a Slave Society* (Baton Rouge, LA: LSU Press, 1985).

composite. They wrote that "a good man makes a valuable contribution to society in the mere influence of character," and as one man follows the good example set by another, "such men are multiplied," until "their methods of thinking and acting be infused into general sentiment."[16]

Black audiences constituted a secondary, but doubly significant, complication of reform policies so superficially "settled." Slave education was contingent upon the willing engagement of actual slave students, and black Carolinians doubled their impact upon educational reform discourse through the *imagined* qualities of black intellect and character that framed white pedagogy. Most slaves, and all free blacks, could have refused the worship experiences offered by white religious authorities – to maintain their own measure of autonomous black religious space – but most did not, instead opting to engage the gray areas of the interracial church for their own reasons, to carve out or maintain some semblance of semi-autonomous black religious space under the auspices of white institutional authority. In both its real and imagined dimensions, black input informed and challenged reformist strategies of religious instruction.

The institutionalization of slave missions represented the most viable means to work out the kinks that complicated or contradicted the "settled policy of the South." Institutionalization bridged the gap between the why and the how of religious instruction in an ideological sense, and linked white reformers to black students in a more substantial sense. This chapter narrates the history of institutionalization to bridge both gaps – first examining the how and why of slave missions from the vantage of white objectives, and then from that of black reception. Through sermons, public discourse, catechisms, the

[16] Charleston Meeting, *Proceedings* (1845), 8-9.

institutionalization of slave missions served as a nexus of transmission for the Carolina covenant, not only between governmental intellectuals and individual citizens, but also between slaveholders and their slaves. As such, the institutional narrative of this chapter perpetuates some of the dynamic threads initiated in previous chapters. In this chapter and the next, Carolinians narrowed and completed the process of Americanization described in Chapter One. The intergenerational and interracial tensions that wrought a peripheralization of black spirituality in Chapter Two, and the four-fifths compromise of black religious liberty in Chapter Three, continue to drive the triangular action of evangelical trial and error in this chapter. This chapter carries these dynamics forward to argue that the interracial dialectic that framed the institutionalization of the slave mission also energized liturgical recitations of the Carolina covenant to imbed the invented tradition of black dependence as a foundational myth of a Carolina "nation." The objective of this chapter, in tandem with Chapter 5, is to elucidate the extent to which race, generally, and Afro-Carolinians, specifically, contributed to the cultural framework of southern nationalism.

Part One: The White Man's Burden

As the second half of this chapter will show, white missionaries failed to fully indoctrinate Carolina slaves into the type of nuanced and hierarchical community envisioned by governmental nation-builders, but the rhetoric of slave missions succeeded in elevating the invented tradition of black dependence to the level of public orthodoxy. Richard Furman's providential interpretation of the African slave trade became the

hypothesis for a new governmental science of moral alchemy, as white Carolinians endeavored to transform slavery from necessary evil to positive good.[17] The state's religious and political leaders tested a number of methods to fulfill their providential obligations, but most of these failed to overcome the mounting cultural obstacles of their day. Abolition, no matter how conditional or gradual, was cast as part of the problem, a policy that could be embraced only by those who misunderstood the American Negro burden. In South Carolina and many other states, legislative restrictions made emancipation increasingly difficult. In 1820, the South Carolina Assembly ordered that "no slave shall hereafter be emancipated but by act of the Legislature."[18] By the late 1820s, South Carolinians also came to regard colonization as impractical and potentially dangerous. C.C. Pinckney declared that Africans in America were better off than their cousins back in the motherland. The editor of the *Southern Agriculturist* wrote that the American Colonization Society was "an abolitionist society at bottom," and that contributing to the ACS or any other "northern" society bent on intervening in the affairs of southern blacks was tantamount to "suicide."[19]

The most prominent formula of moral alchemy to survive the political agitations of the 1820s and 30s was the evangelical mission to the slaves. By the 1830s, southern Christians had thoroughly integrated themselves into the Anglo-American campaign for

[17] Furman, "Rev. Dr. Richard Furman's 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: A.E. Miller, 1823), 15. See above, Chapter Three, page 191: "…the Africans brought to America were, slaves, by their own consent, before they came from their own country, or fell into the hands of white men. Their law of nations, or general usage, having, by common consent the force of law, justified them, while carrying on their petty wars, in killing their prisoners or reducing them to slavery; consequently, in selling them, and these ends they appear to have proposed to themselves; the nation, therefore, or individual, which was overcome, reduced to slavery, and sold would have done the same by the enemy, had victory declared on their, or his side. Consequently, the man made slave in this manner, might be said to be made so by his own consent, and by the indulgence of barbarous principles."
[18] Cooper, and McCord, *The statutes at large of South Carolina*, 7:459.
[19] J.D. Legare, "Editorial Remarks," *Southern Agriculturist* 2 (1829), 528-9.

international missionary work. Carolinians initially geared most of their missionary energies towards the evangelization of Indian nations along the western frontier, but also targeted other savage populations, including those of "Western Africa, the most ignorant and degraded…realm of Paganism."[20] According to Edward Laurens, this missionary impulse was symptomatic of the same "universal principle of the human heart" that induced foreigners to interfere in the affairs of slaveholders. People "attach far greater consequence to…notes of distress which are wafted to our ears from distant lands" than those closer to home. The same "honest but wrongheaded" motives that compelled foreigners to interfere in South Carolina induced Carolinians "to send out annually large sums for Heathen conversion, whilst our own parishes and homesteads are unsupplied with pastoral care." Though Laurens may not have been referring primarily to the neglect of black spiritual interests, many of his contemporaries made similar arguments about the heathen in Africa who won attention away from the African heathen in their own backyards.[21]

In fact, many of South Carolina's most notable slave evangelists received the call to serve their home state while living elsewhere. William Capers' early work in the Indian missionary campaign was the catalyst for his trailblazing Methodist slave mission; Charles Colcock Jones, the Presbyterian cleric who would become the face of the slave mission in South Carolina, cultivated his utopian vision of the Christian plantation while studying at Princeton Seminary. The Charlestonian John Adger initially decided against a career in the slave missions and opted to serve abroad. While in Charleston, Adger felt

[20] William May Wightman, *Life of William Capers, D.D., one of the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal church, South; including an autobiography.* (Nashville: Southern Methodist Pub. house, 1858).
[21] Laurens, *Address*, 563; C.C. Pinckney made similar comments regarding misplaced missionary priorities ("funds diverted to African missions would be better spent on missions to the Africans living in America"); Chapter Three, page 177.

that the call to Armenia, "where no gospel at all had ever been preached" was stronger than that of the "Negroes in this Christian country, where, in a great many of the Christian churches throughout the whole south, more or less attention was paid to their spiritual wants." But while abroad, when the Presbyterian Missionary Board forced Adger to choose between his ministry in Armenia and his ownership of slaves back in South Carolina, he reconsidered the prospect of domestic missions and concluded that "Christianity, as accepted by white masters, had not adequately impressed itself on their poor black dependents." Professional and political pressures awakened Adger to the pressing need for his services back home. He returned during the 1840s to serve in a post of his own creation, as missionary to the Negroes of Charleston.[22]

In addition to the human tendency to abstraction noted by Laurens, distance proved essential to the mission impetus for reasons of simple practicality. It was more feasible for religious leaders to diagnose the need for slave ministry from the safe distance of abstraction, beyond the more direct and personal implications of their comparative arguments for domestic missions. Lumping American slaves with ignorant Africans in the same category of non-Christian heathen implied a charge of negligence against slaveholders who had failed to provide their people the resources necessary to salvation. Christianization generated an Afro-Carolinian religious culture distinct from that of "African heathen," but the ideological exigencies of the proslavery argument shifted the "heathen in our midst" into a comparable rhetorical space. In response to external critics, slavocrats like Whitemarsh Seabrook depicted slaveholders as devoted Christian stewards, but spent more time depicting African-Americans as a population in

[22] Adger, *My Life and Times*, 137–38.

need of further (and perpetual) improvement.[23] In order to fulfill the southern covenant, and validate the providential interpretation of the slave trade, this line of argumentation was rhetorically dependent upon the ongoing work of slave missionaries. When cast inward onto the institutions of South Carolina, the proslavery argument magnified the social relevance of evangelical leaders and opened a window of opportunity for them to inject humanitarian sentiments into modernizing social norms.[24]

This window of opportunity created a professional space for a new generation of evangelical leaders who devoted themselves to the formerly thankless work of slave ministries. The economy of the religious press around the time of the 1834 law against slave literacy exemplified this trend, as a rising demand for non-literate modes of religious instruction developed in tandem with a burgeoning supply of evangelical innovation. Though not standardized or exclusive, oral instruction had long been a regular feature of religious teaching, and those with the most experience in this area were poised to feed a hungry evangelical marketplace. Planters and preachers stocked their shelves with "catechisms for slaves" according to denominational preference – William Capers for the Methodists and Alexander Glennie for the Episcopalians. Across denominational lines, the most widely-used catechist was the Presbyterian Reverend Charles Colcock Jones, who emerged during the 1830s to become the antebellum lowcountry's leading advocate of African-American religious instruction. When he started his missionary career among southern slaves, Jones intended to evangelize

[23] Seabrook's defense to external critics typified in his *Appeal to the people of the northern and eastern states, on the subject of negro slavery in South Carolina* (New York, 1834).
[24] Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe : postcolonial thought and historical difference* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000); Faust, *Sacred Circle.* The call to sectional defense opened a window of opportunity for self-consciously underappreciated intellectuals. Faust's "Circle" generated programs of institutional change (cf. governmentality) as the means to create more relevant roles for themselves in Southern society.

through the written word, but he soon found this to be an impractical method in the face of such large and diverse slave congregations.

> As the children could not make use of books, and being the only teacher, I was compelled to throw the whole school into one class, and to teach them all together on the infant school plan. The questions were asked and the answers repeated, until they were committed to memory; and the lesson was accompanied with repeated explanations and an application.[25]

Jones' home church was in Liberty County, Georgia, but he also held a position at the Presbyterian Seminary in Columbia and traveled throughout the South to advance his plans for improving the "moral and religious condition of the Negroes." His skills and ambitions proved eminently suited to the professional trends of the ministry in 1830s South Carolina. Jones launched his missionary initiative just as lowcountry planters were turning their attentions to his cause and joining the national marketplace for evangelical guidance.[26] A slaveholding Presbyterian, Jones presented a preferable alternative to the better-established forces of Methodist itinerancy, with their questionable associations and radical doctrines. By the end of the decade, Jones had developed an intimate connection to Charleston, particularly with the city's evangelical church leaders. All of these factors, accelerated by the reconfiguration of missionary protocol that came with the anti-literacy laws of the 1830s, compelled Jones to meet the rising demand for non-literate pedagogical tools with a series of published lessons and commentaries.

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[25] Association for the Religious Instruction of the Negroes in Liberty County, *Tenth annual report of the Association for the Religious Instruction of the Negroes in Liberty County, Georgia.* (Savannah, Ga.: The Association, 1845), 21.

[26] Charles Colcock Jones, *Religious Instruction of the Negroes* (New York: Negro Universities Press, repub. 1971) 277. Janet Cornelius has argued for Jones' earlier, private critique of slavery, absent from his later published writings. Her observations are based upon personal letters when Jones was a seminary student in New Jersey. See Chapter 4 in Janet D. Cornelius, *Slave Missions and the Black Church in the Antebellum South* (Columbia : University of South Carolina Press, 1999).

In a succession of pamphlets and synthetic volumes, Jones satisfied the market demand for programs of oral instruction, but also included passing references to "Plantation Schools," "Scripture Cards," and other auxiliary tools that implicated African-American literacy. The Jones mode of catechism involved a multi-tiered process of question and answer, designed to standardize responses to given questions among each student in attendance. The structure of his lessons provided a mechanism of social conformity, but his absolute confidence in the positive impact of God's Word also stimulated him to include scriptural exercises that opened the door to contrapuntal interpretations. Jones' lessons reinforced the spiritual equality of master and servant and encouraged slaves to contemplate sensitive themes like the immorality of master cruelty:

> Q. Does God show favor to the Master more than to the Servant, and just because he is a *Master*?
> A. No. Eph. 6:9; Job 31:13-15.
> Q. How does God judge every man?
> A. According to his works. 1 Pet. 1:17.
> Q. To whom are Masters to render and account for the manner in which they treat their Servants?
> A. To God.[27]

The level of repetition required by Jones' catechism seemed to embody the connection between religious instruction and social control,[28] but his extensive scriptural basis ran counter to other trends of religious restriction. Many planters concurred with Whitemarsh Seabrook's estimation that those who exposed slaves to the entirety of the

[27] C.C. Jones, *A Catechism of Scripture Doctrine and Practice* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1843, rev. 1852), 4-5, 127-29. As point of comparison, the second most-widely used Catechism for Negroes in South Carolina, Alexander Glennie's *Sermons Preached on Plantations* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1844) contains but one sermon (of a total 52) based on Old Testament readings (Isaiah 53).

[28] Erskine Clarke, *Our southern Zion : a history of Calvinism in the South Carolina low country, 1690-1990* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1996), 133; Saidiya V. Hartman, *Scenes of subjection : terror, slavery, and self-making in nineteenth-century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

Bible "would [be] entitled to a room in the Lunatic Asylum," and sought catechisms that were highly selective in their doctrinal excerpts – heavily laden with New Testament descriptions of classical slavery and the virtues of obedience. Jones, on the other hand, was less anxious about the prospect of counterhegemonic interpretations. Jones and most of his evangelical contingent assumed that the bottom line of his catechisms, and all Christian teachings, reinforced the slaveholding order. The lesson excerpted above continued to explain that if the Master "threatens and punishes more than he ought," the servant was still to "do his best to please him," for "when the Servant suffers wrongfully, at the hands of his master, and takes it patiently…God [will] reward him for it." Confidence in his own scriptural interpretation overwhelmed any anxieties about inflammatory "texts of scripture" or teaching. Contrary to the claims of Whitemarsh Seabrook and the objections of the "unwilling laity," Jones believed that the fullest awareness of Christianity functioned as a centripetal force on the social order.[29]

Differences of methodology aside, most of those who commented openly on the issue concurred with Jones on the spiritual responsibilities of the slave master. Even those who refused to concede spiritual authority to overconfident evangelicals selectively incorporated the products of grassroots evangelism into their vision of social progress. Ultimately, the selective incorporation of works like Jones' *Catechism* provided the missing link between slavocrat objectives of defending slavery and racial modernization.

[29] Whitemarsh B. Seabrook, *An essay on the management of slaves and especially, on their religious instruction : read before the Agricultucal [sic] Society of St. John's Colleton* (Charleston: Printed by A.E. Miller, 1834), 15-6. Seabrook was specific about troublesome passages in essay: "the impropriety of the following quotations and comments will readily be perceived: 'God hath mad of one blood all the nations of men.' 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' The negroes are our neighbours for they are men, members of the same great family. If they are not our neighbours, whom we are bound to love as ourselves, we have no neighbours at all.' 'All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.' 'God is no respecter of persons.'"

Both evangelicals like Pinckney and governmental intellectuals like Seabrook and Laurens pointed to Jones' oral pedagogy as an example of what they were looking for – the means to articulate material and spiritual interests into a common objective of evangelization with racialization.

The material function of religious instruction was to make better slaves, an objective that only became viable with formalization of the oral catechism. As developed by C.C. Jones and a number of other American theologians, southern religious institutions deployed these systematic templates of indoctrination as a "pedagogy of oppression." As described by historian Erskine Clarke, "when African-Americans accepted the dependence and submission taught in the catechism, when they believed that God had created a world of hierarchical social positions and that they were to 'stay in their place,' then religious instruction served to reinforce the status quo."[30] The pedagogical tools crafted by Jones and others made possible a system of religious instruction safe enough for restrictivists like Seabrook and Laurens to include in their list of social prescriptions for the south. Southerners needed to acknowledge their obligation to elevate the religious and moral character of the slave, but also that this obligation should only be fulfilled in the most prudent and deliberate fashion.

The mission movement of the 1830s and 40s represented the confluence of two competing theories of educational value. Whereas Seabrook determined the value of religious instruction according to the extent to which it served the material and social needs of the community, others subscribed to a more spiritualist theory that qualified the value of education according to soteriological standards. During the 1830s, these

[30]Clarke, *Our Southern Zion*, 133.

conflicting theories manifested in negotiations over the terms of religious modernization, but also reflected a longer historical pattern of conflict that had been a part of social discourse in Charleston since the colonial era. The eighteenth-century "to convert or civilize" debate discussed in Chapter One survived in Whitemarsh Seabrook's polemic against nineteenth century slave missionaries gone wild. Among other targets, Seabrook singled out the "levelling system" of Anglican missionaries around the world as the inevitable catalyst of "irremediable insubordination" among the state's colored population.[31]

In hopes of defending the denomination from association with its radical transatlantic counterpart, the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina initiated a series of institutional forums to refine their missionary agenda. A committee comprised of leading clergy and laymen, including Lieutenant Governor C.C. Pinckney, crafted an official report on African-American religious instruction, and Bishop Nathaniel Bowen commended their findings to his Diocese.[32] In his "Pastoral Letter on the religious instruction of the slaves," Bowen challenged Episcopalians to lead the missionary charge: "forming as we do a large majority of the slaveholders in the lowcountry, we, more than other denominations of Christians are bound to inquire into the duty and means of affording instruction…to make them wise unto salvation." Bowen capably argued the materialist case for religious instruction, citing Seabrook and Laurens to validate the cause, and synthesized their contentions into a multivalent argument for the universal protections that could be achieved through religious control. Slaves were spiritual

[31] Seabrook, *Essay on Slave Management*, 14, 21; see also Seabrook's writing on slave management in the *Southern Agriculturist*, for example, *SA* 7 (1834), 239-40 and *SA* 1 (1828), 26.
[32] The same C.C. Pinckney described above (1789-1865) served as lieutenant governor from 1832-34.

beings, and as such, would find religion, or religion would find them. Slaveholders could never be so vigilant as to prevent fanaticism from reaching the slave mind in some form, unless they pre-empted fanatic religions by exposing their slaves to the true faith. To "pre-occupy and guard their minds by means of religious instruction" would profit the soul of slave and master and defend the country from the influence of outside agitators.[33]

Beyond this basic correspondence with the materialist rationale for slave pedagogy, Bowen's letter channeled a disparate missionary agenda. He endorsed the methods put forward in the Thomas Clay report of 1833 that Seabrook found so problematic, and commended items from his own committee's report that he knew ran counter to local interests. The committee's call for twice daily worship, for example, was more than "proprietors could be induced to approve." On temporal matters such as the plantation schedule, Bowen conceded authority to the citizens and slaveholders of the state, but also conjured a means to co-opt or circumvent that authority, by encouraging his ministers to "occasion such modifications in sentiment…as would induce civil measures to be modified in conformity with the demands of evangelical benevolence, towards these people [slaves], as its objects."[34]

Ultimately, the Bowen report was confluent with Pinckney's plan from the previous decade. Pinckney read the history of religious persecution to predict that restriction would not eliminate the threat of black preaching, but simply push it underground, into "nocturnal meetings in old fields and plantations without white participation or observation." Pinckney advised instead to "afford them an opportunity of

[33] Nathaniel Bowen, *A pastoral letter, on the religious instruction of the slaves of members of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the state of South-Carolina prepared at the request of the convention of the churches of the diocese. To which is appended a table of Scripture lessons, prepared in conformity with the resolution of the convention.* (Charleston: Printed by A.E. Miller, 1835), 5.
[34] Bowen, *Pastoral Letter*, 11, 14.

contrasting the sense and doctrine they hear in such places from men, whom they know to be only their equals, with the religious information to be derived from white teachers, whose superiority in knowledge of every kind, they cannot question." Pinckney's (market-oriented) solution stemmed from a tendentious reading of the heterogeneous religious climate of nineteenth century South Carolina. From a single account of two black preachers on a Carolina plantation who "fell into disrepute, and were neglected by their former congregation," once a white missionary began to regularly attend the plantation slaves, Pinckney generalized a predictive assumption about the spiritual inclinations of Afro-Carolinians. By the 1830s, Pinckney's strategy of outcompetition, vetted by planters and preachers hamstrung by legal restrictions of African-American liberty, had germinated into a novel high-church program of low-church evangelism.[35]

As Episcopalian periodicals like the *Charleston Gospel Messenger* championed the cause of slave ministry, its contributors sounded the familiar refrain of paternal obligation and material benefit, but also advanced a more particularly Episcopal agenda of black religion. By standards specific to their own articles of faith, Episcopalian commentators measured the gap between the "very large proportion" of slaves who called themselves Christians and the number of these who performed the expected behaviors of a Christian slave. The *Gospel Messenger* republished an observation that "very few [of the professed Christian slaves] seem to exhibit the spirit of Christ, or seem to be made better by it as regards their habits, dispositions, tempers, etc." Local evangelicals failed to achieve the metamorphic objectives of slave Christianization, but this did not discourage Episcopalian proponents of slave missions. Instead, contributors to the

[35] Pinckney, *Address to Agricultural Society* (1829), 4-5.

Episcopal press shifted their attentions to the ostensible roots of this failure: African-American propensity for delusive conversion experiences and the heterodox brands of doctrine that catalyzed their delusions. Such observations typified the empirical basis for an increasingly popular pseudo-science of black spiritual pathology. Lay Episcopalians like Edward Laurens and C.C. Pinckney participated along with Nathaniel Bowen and other clerics in what they perceived to be a transitional moment in both public and denominational discourse. It was ultimately through their participation in these discourses that they helped to frame the racial consciousness of South Carolina's most influential policy makers.[36]

For the heirs of high-church Episcopal tradition, the threat of evangelical anomie was continuous with old world social anxieties, but novel in its racialization. Once the post-revolutionary storms of Anglican persecution had blown over, Episcopal leaders turned their attentions to more pressing "American" problems, namely the paucity of Episcopalian membership relative to the widening net of other Protestant denominations. Demographically, the most pressing challenge came from the droves of African-Americans and underclass whites who affiliated with Methodist and Baptist Churches. Over the first few decades of the nineteenth century, Episcopal leaders witnessed a "low-church" formalization that transformed "awakening" into a budding population of rival factions. Though all denominations grew via early-century revivalism, membership in

[36] "Southern Churchman," *Charleston Gospel Messenger and Protestant Episcopal Register* 14 (1837), 311. The story of their Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina is essential to understanding the state's history, especially during the antebellum era. Though the social consequences of revolution and disestablishment were actually minimal (as most of the wealthiest and most influential families of the state maintained their ties to the Anglican-Episcopal denomination), the rhetorical weight and ministerial burdens generated by these events were great. The Anglican Church's American representatives weathered some passing storms of persecution, but seemed to devote less energy to fighting these storms than they did to representing their fight as a signal of denominational strength. Once these storms had blown over, Episcopal leaders turned their attentions to other problems left in the wake, namely the paucity of Episcopalian membership relative to the widening net of other Protestant denominations.

lowcountry Methodist Churches exploded. Most of this growth was due to Methodism's special popularity among slaves and free people of color. From the first formal organization of its recognized practitioners in Charleston, Methodism was an interracial affair.[37] A number of social, historical, and ritual elements attracted Carolinians of African origins to the Methodist faith as it developed in Charleston, and these early adherents left their mark. Methodist evangelism among Carolinians of color generated a self-propelled cycle of exponential return: certain features of the faith and its practitioners attracted black members, who in turn presented a more familiar, blacker face of Methodism, with which potential converts among the state's African-American community could more easily identify. Closely following identification came ownership, as black Methodists, even within the ecclesiastical confines of white authority, enjoyed a remarkable degree of control over their own spiritual lives and religious communities.

In other parts of the south, including the upstate of South Carolina, the spiritual inclinations of African-born slaves and their descendants translated into a special affinity for the ritual approach of the Baptist Church. In the South Carolina lowcountry, however, these same Africanist predilections led slaves on a different path to Afro-Christianity, through the auspices of Methodism. The oral media of African religious traditions left many predisposed to a Methodist style of preaching and worship less reliant upon the written word. Many slaves arrived in South Carolina from the Caribbean, where the most successful agents of slave evangelization were Moravians, whose emotional style and Lutheran doctrine became a large part of the Methodist

[37] See above (Chapter One, 46-48) for discussion of racial structuration of church and denominational membership; See also Chapter Two (124-25) for discussion of spatial/denominational "ownership" and whiteness / race as "property."

Church in North America. The most attractive features of Methodism to Afro-Carolinians, however, were more political than doctrinal or ritual – practices born of traditional Wesleyan attitudes towards race and slavery.[38]

According to Methodist tradition, it was in Charleston that God told Wesley not only to break from the Anglican Church, but also to devote himself to the spiritual needs of African slaves.[39] The legacy of this moment compelled Wesley's followers not only to distinguish his "method" from those of the Anglican church, but also to implement this method in more universal fashion – consciously and energetically inclusive of neglected groups like Afro-Carolinians. Enhanced by Wesley's abhorrence of slavery, the interracial makeup of Charleston's Methodist Churches made Methodism the most popular brand of denominational Christianity among early nineteenth century slaves and free people of color. More than any other denomination in South Carolina, early Methodist leaders criticized slavery and incorporated this critique, at least implicitly, into their preaching. Even after such critiques were effectively suppressed within the lowcountry, the Methodist association with antislavery survived in the memory and legacy of early black converts. Such associations overwhelmed the turbulence wrought by the schisms of 1817 and 1834, as Methodist brand loyalty among Afro-Carolinians not only persisted, but even gained strength throughout the antebellum period.[40]

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[38] Sylvia R. Frey and Betty. Wood, *Come shouting to Zion : African American protestantism in the American South and British Caribbean to 1830* (Chapel Hill, NC: The Univ. of North Carolina Pr., 1998).
[39] Christopher Leevy. Johnson, "I wouldn't take nothing for my journey now : a journey to an Afro-Methodist faith in the South Carolina lowcountry before the Civil War," (M.A. Thesis, University of South Carolina, 2000); Gary B. Hutcheson, "A church divided : the Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, 1785-1835," (M.A. Thesis, College of Charleston, 2005).
[40] See Chapter Two for narrative of the "African Schism" of 1817 and the "corporate party" schism of 1834.

In their efforts to account for the rapid growth of lowcountry Methodism, concerned high-church observers used the distinctive properties of the denomination to explain what they perceived to be a pathology of psychological manipulation. The Methodist Church was blacker, less literate, and more critical of slavery than any other denomination in early nineteenth century South Carolina, and therefore attracted the most ignorant souls of the state. Episcopalian analyses of Methodist operations represented not only the critical and condescending attitude of the master class, but also an index of slaveholder anxieties wrought both (internally) by independent-minded slaves and (externally) by sectional critique and competition. Throughout the early decades of the nineteenth century, the Episcopalian Church (along with the Reformed Churches) of South Carolina counted among their members or affiliates most of the largest slaveowners in the state, yet ministered to relatively small numbers of slaves.[41] As the Methodist slave missions and interdenominational religious instruction campaigns of the 1830s intensified, Episcopalian leaders expressed a critical interest in both the general state of black religiosity in the South and the level of services provided to the colored minority of their own congregations.

Most frequently, when Episcopalian observers wrote of African-American worship patterns, they diagnosed pathologies of excessive emotionalism and ritualization, which came at the expense of sober and effective indoctrination, thus yielding a deluded and dangerous brand of Afro-Christianity. Condescension to the base spiritual instincts of a subaltern humanity was not new to Anglican doctrine. The religious marketplace of the slave south, however, represented a new field of low-church competition, in which

[41] See Appendix B: Colored Church Membership.

the heart too often trumped the mind to win the soul of the slave. As they sought to expand their denominational stake in the spiritual welfare of South Carolina slaves, Episcopalian leaders enhanced general motives of evangelical humanitarianism with denominationally-specific incentives of redirection and corrective redemption.

First-generation African and early-generation African-American converts eagerly embraced and understood Christian rituals like immersion,[42] but seemed to do so in terms variant from white expectations. While their willing conversion sent one signal to superficial accountants of evangelical success, the lack of observable change in their behavior sent another to careful high-church critics. Thoughtful Episcopalians projected these crossed signals onto their perception of black experience; as they explained it, the previous failure of slave evangelism was the consequence of an imbalanced religious diet, too heavy on the Christian outcroppings of ritual and ceremony and too light on doctrinal education and internal reflection. When South Carolina Episcopalians observed their baptized slaves, "thinking themselves to be God's elect," but living "just as evilly as they had before immersion," they diagnosed the problem through lenses of denominational, social, and racial bias.[43]

According to the denominational categories implied by Episcopal catalogues, most people of color belonged to churches "whose ministers not being as well educated as those of other denominations, place entirely too much confidence in keeping up a strong religious excitement." What they lacked in religious intelligence, Methodist and Baptist missionaries made up for in emotive appeal, an appeal neatly suited to an

[42]Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave religion : the "invisible institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978); Frey and Wood, *Come Shouting to Zion*.
[43] "Southern Churchman," *Charleston Gospel Messenger*14 (1837), 311.

audience of limited intellect and hearty emotion. Among high-church circles of critical discourse, a classist contempt for the religious experiences afforded by less-educated denominations flowed neatly into a racist evaluation of African-American religious capacity. The emotions of a slave, unprotected by intellectual reserve, were "more easily wrought than others" into spontaneous excitement and the superficial "feeling" of conversion, yielding a nominal and "empty hollow piety."[44]

To fill the void of this "hollow piety" with the real stuff of Christian faith, Episcopalians ventured to replace lowbrow spiritual manipulation with a more sober and durable style of religious experience in the Episcopalian mold. According to the liberal norms of a disestablished republic, their remedy involved competition in the religious marketplace, and did not guarantee a cure for black pathologies of excessive emotionalism and ritualization. Though some assumed that the power of their own religious experience could also transform the black soul, most voices in the Episcopalian call to action called for doctrines and methods adapted to the intellectual and social conditions of the slave. They demanded an extension of the conversion template to make the emotive impact of the ritual experience transformative, permanent, and observable in slave behavior. As latecomers to the institutional stage of domestic missions, the Episcopalians confronted a specific set of challenges.

[44] The general attitude of Episcopalian leadership towards revivalism was anxiety. Bishop Bowen expressed "fears" about revivalism, but also that he would "not refuse to acknowledge any satisfactory evidence" of the spiritual benefits revivals might bring to participants and the community. Bishop Gadsden acknowledged the rising tide of informal evangelism as a potential threat to church authority and a symptom of an "era of insubordination." Some Episcopalian clergy evidently got caught up in the lure of revivalism; they "commingled" in revival meetings, "where canonical obligations have, I fear, been somewhat overlooked." Albert Sidney Thomas, *A historical account of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina, 1820-1957; being a continuation of Dalcho's account, 1670-1820* (Columbia, 1957), 23-5.

By the mid-1830s, Nathaniel Bowen was working with other energetic lowcountry ministers to adapt a standard Anglican catechism to the perceived needs of American slaves. Bowen and his cronies selectively enhanced or distilled lessons from the most widely-used Anglican text, Bishop Mann's "Familiar Exposition of the Church Catechism…and prayers for the use of parents, children, and servants" into the building blocks of black Episcopalism.[45] Their modifications demonstrated some of the social imperatives and racist presumptions inherent in the white approach to black spirituality, and ultimately represented one of the faces of white religion perceived by Carolina slaves. For the most part, the "colored" catechism was an abbreviated collection of lessons from its white predecessor, but it also included a number of additional treatments, specialized and expanded from the original version. The colored lesson on the Sixth Commandment, for example, elided some of the details intended for an audience of white children. According to Mann's program, white Anglican families were to discuss God's commandment against murder, but also the situations in which killing another human did not constitute murder; no discussion of these exemptions appeared in the lessons designed for persons of color. On the other hand, the colored catechism devoted additional exposition to its lessons on the Third Commandment. Mann's Exposition explained to white children why it was wrong to steal from their parents or others; Bowen's added to these explanations an injunction against theft from slave masters, a sin worse than theft from others, "because they have trusted you."[46]

[45] Mann's Exposition originally published in 1760s. Christopher Gadsden served as chair of the committee to devise a slave catechism. See Thomas, *Historical Account*, 34.
[46] Member of the Diocese of South Carolina, *Observations and exhortations based upon the catechism of the Protestant Episcopal Church : intended chiefly for the use of teachers in instructing classes of servants, or other uneducated persons, designed to accompany "The church catechsm [sic] simplified"* (New York: Daniel Dana Jr., 1847).

In order to achieve the lasting behavioral objectives of religious instruction, the racialized catechism explained that God organized mankind into a social hierarchy and slaves should honor his creation by staying in their place and respecting their superiors.[47] In some cases, Bowen's 'pedagogy of oppression' did not stray too far from Mann's template. The shift from British prescriptions of social stratification and underclass contentment to American scenes of slave indoctrination was often a subtle one. In both Old World and New World editions, the catechist explained that the poor should be "contented with what God gives, diligent in their work, and submissive to those whom God has placed above them." Mann generalized his text to instruct all classes of mankind, but Bowen's catered to black dependents. When Bowen's catechist asked his colored flock "should the poor be thankful?," the designated response shifted to the first person. "Yes, **we** ought to be thankful for the least mercy." Bowen's catechism trained slaves to identify themselves with "the poor" and understand themselves as noble characters in a scriptural narrative of suffering and submission.[48]

In other cases, Bowen found it necessary to extend the English model more dramatically. Most notably, the racial distinction between catechizer and catechized created a dynamic that Mann's text was not equipped to address. For example, Bowen's catechism took special care to describe an afterlife in which souls would not be divided by race or status, but only according to the stuff of their souls. God would gather "all nations" at the Last Judgment and divide these into two classes: the saved and the damned. White evangelists presented images of a race-less heaven, or at least a place where race did not matter, and this image fractured into myriad translations according to

[47] Erskine Clarke, *Southern Zion*, 133
[48] Member of the Diocese, *Observations and Exhortations*, 36, 54.

the individual dictates of each slave's conscience. The fracture pattern of black heavens will be examined in detail below, but it is important to note here the varying levels of attention to black translations that informed or failed to inform white tactics of indoctrination.[49]

Until the 1840s, Episcopal missionary campaigns were local affairs, inspired by the initiatives of individual clerics, like Alexander Glennie of All Saint's Parish, or energetic laity, like C.C. Pinckney in Charleston and Abbeville. This meant that lowcountry slaves outside of Charleston encountered the high-church doctrines of the Episcopalians only sporadically. As more planters answered the Episcopalian call to elevate the religious sensibilities of their slaves, they developed and supported programs to widen the scope of their church's plantation outreach; still, African-American exposure to this special face of white religion grew unevenly. Beginning during Bowen's episcopate, and accelerating during that of his successor, Christopher Gadsen, Episcopal latecomers coopted elements of local evangelical culture and channeled the humanitarian zeitgeist of the international reform community (press) into an institutionalized program of domestic missions.[50]

The rigid standards of high-church liturgical tradition made the conventional model of Episcopal community formation more difficult to export to plantation slaves. Lay catechists, parish ministers, and the rare full-time missionary gradually familiarized lowcountry slaves with the Episcopal brand, but confirmation (into membership) could

[49] A few Episcopalian representatives (for example, Alexander Glennie and Paul Trapier, discussed below and in Chapter 5) were able to adapt their approach through regular and intimate contact with slave audiences. The insights of this informed minority, and the informal expansion of their evangelical campaigns, eventually made their way into a denominational program otherwise crafted out of *a priori* racialized assumptions and implemented from the top-down through institutional expansion.
[50] Bowen's episcopate lasted from 1818 to 1839, Gadsden's from 1840 to 1852.

only come at the hand of the Bishop. The late antebellum institutionalization of religious instruction connected bottom-up networks of local catechizers to the top-down schedule of parish integration; many large plantation owners centralized weekly religious operations through the construction of sizable plantation chapels and the Bishop recognized their efforts through regular visitations during his yearly tours. By 1849, ten lowcountry plantation owners affiliated with the Episcopal Church had erected chapels on their property "for the accommodation of the blacks." In the estimation of Bishop Gadsen, such symbols of spiritual service to lowcountry slaves were a blessing to the entire community: "proprietor, children, overseers, their children, his servants, and the poor whites in the neighborhood."[51]

Part Two: Identification and Inversion

In order to accurately assess the role that these plantation chapels played as building blocks of Carolina community, it is necessary to consider the other side of the interracial dialectic – how Carolina slaves recognized and responded to white religiosity and interracial religious experiences. A condensed survey of late antebellum slave commentaries on religious life in South Carolina provides a means to test the hypotheses laid forth in the first half of the chapter. Slaves documented the competition predicted by C.C. Pinckney, as they were increasingly afforded the opportunity to contrast the doctrines of their "equals" with the "superiority in knowledge" of white teachers." In part two of this chapter, these voices will be used to determine the extent to which Pinckney's strategy of outcompetition held up amid the lively transactions of the late antebellum

[51] *Charleston Gospel Messenger*, March 1849, 355-75.

religious marketplace, and by extension, to gauge the extent to which slaves bought into the imagined community suggested by the liturgy of the Carolina covenant. Slave engagement with white missionaries and religious institutions was fluid and ambiguous, but also conformed to several patterns that ultimately encouraged white nation-builders to perpetuate their project of bi-racial community formation through religious outreach. This second part of the chapter profiles some of the spaces and scenes in which slaves encountered white Christians, depicts the range of slave responses to these encounters, and uses these to determine the extent to which slaves identified with their white Christian brothers and sisters.

By 1850, most lowcountry slaves were familiar with at least one of the various faces of white evangelism. Reports of plantation ministry and records of black attendance and membership suggest that a significant majority of black Carolinians in the lowcountry were regularly exposed to white evangelical preaching and teaching, but still less than half of these observers joined white evangelicals as full members of their religious communities.[52] Religious life for the unaffiliated black majority, as well as many of the confirmed members of white-run denominations, conformed to the parameters of their nested reality – a spiritual nation of black slaves within a political nation of white citizens. During an average week, a plantation slave might have participated in an interracial religious service from the segregated gallery, stayed to hear a special sermon delivered by a white preacher to an all-black audience, attended all-black evening prayer sessions during the week, listened to meal-time prayers delivered by a member of the master's family, received religious instruction from regional

[52] See Appendix B: Colored Church Membership.

missionaries, chanted spirituals during the workday, and listened to plantation elders tell tales of "haints" round the twilight fire. On each lowcountry plantation, there were likely slaves who encountered none, some, or even all of these scenes. According to the individual dictates of their religious appetites or the religious products available, slaves constructed consciousnesses of this world and the next out of an eclectic array of constituent parts – new and old, white and black, African and American.

Consider the following set of ritual (experiential) profiles, extrapolated and distilled from slave narratives, slaveholder accounts, and Carolina travelogues. White Christians invited slaves to share a range of spiritual spaces - from private catechisms in the master's house, to isolated evangelical churches around the lowcountry, to an index of Protestant Sunday Schools in Charleston – but the cell of interracial worship most vital to the work of slave missions was the plantation chapel.[53] Centralized plantation chapels of varying sizes became increasingly typical venues of (semi-obligatory) slave worship during the 1840s and 50s. In the lowcountry, the largest of these chapels affiliated with the Episcopal Church and enlisted the catechetical model of Alexander Glennie. Glennie arrived in Pawley's Island to serve as a tutor but made a name for himself as the leading Episcopalian missionary to the slaves. He was ordained in 1832 and by 1860 had built 13 plantation chapels in All Saint's Parish, including one on Plowden Weston's Hagley Plantation, reportedly more elegant than many of the regular churches in the diocese. Glennie started out with a plantation service abbreviated to fit his prior expectations of

[53] The symbolic significance of plantation chapels is developed below and in Chapter Five. Practically and institutionally, plantation chapels served a vital function as the most satisfactory, or least offensive, cell of slave indoctrination. Provided they met certain qualifications, the safety and surveillance of plantation chapels appealed to restrictivists like Laurens and Seabrook; as they were gradually incorporated into denominational circuits, plantation chapels also satisfied the objectives of expansionists like Dalcho and Bowen. Through a feedback loop with the churches of Charleston, plantation chapels informed the methodology and institutional development of religious outreach to slaves statewide.

the negro attention span, but eventually expanded this to include all the liturgical staples of the "white" service, as well as specialized catechisms and sermons.[54]

Glennie was a familiar face among the 5000 slaves of All Saint's Parish. Waccamaw slaves like Sabe Rutledge could hear "Parson Glennie… give us a service once a month on the plantation," but also had limited access to informal churches and praise meetings led by free black or slave preachers.[55] Hagley Plantation, for example, was home to both the two-hundred seat St. Mary's Chapel and Jemmy, a renowned slave preacher who worked as the Westons' houseservant. Hagley Plantation and All Saint's Parish served as proving grounds for Pinckney's strategy, that slaves should be allowed to contrast "the sense and doctrine" of their black equals against the impressive figure cut by white men of superior knowledge. Alexander Glennie's record at All Saints' seemed to demonstrate that some slaves were indeed impressed with white preaching. Glennie kept statistics to quantify the resonance of his appeal to lowcountry slaves. Whether as itinerant preacher, author of slave catechisms, or architect of plantation chapels, Glennie brought 519 Afro-Carolinians into full membership of the Protestant Episcopal Church. Given the relative lack of success among his Episcopal peers, Glennie's appeal was likely due to the personalized and reactive character of his ministry. Three decades of trial and error attuned Glennie to the needs and wants of lowcountry slaves: interactive sermons, a pastoral confidence gained through "sympathy and kind attentions," and above all, respect for the moral significance of holy matrimony. In his advocacy of slave marriage as the easiest and most important means for the state to advance slave morality, Glennie

[54] Glennie bio – cite OG from PE history
[55] Glennie, "Letter to the Bishop of North Carolina (1862)," in Thomas, *Historical Account*, 381-84; Works Progress Administration, *Slave Narratives: A Folk History of Slavery in the United States From Interviews with Former Slaves, Volume XIV* (Washington: s.n., 1941), 4:66; Charles W. Joyner, *Down by the riverside : a South Carolina slave community* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984),169.

exceeded the institutional politic of his church. He lobbied masters and statesmen to protect the bond of slave matrimony and predicted that the "time is approaching when provision shall be made by our Legislature to end the separation of married slaves."[56]

On his Charleston District plantation along the North Santee, James Ladson built a chapel to accommodate 110 slaves. Alternating with Episcopal and Methodist itinerants, Ladson ministered Sunday services to his slaves, as well as some of "the negroes of adjoining plantations…who are permitted to come and hear the word of God read and preached." Ladson's service was a selection of appropriate articles from the Episcopal prayer-book, "followed by a familiar and affectionate appeal of my own," usually a reading from Glennie's "Sermons for Negroes." Ladson's chapel also hosted Sunday and weekday religious instruction, taught by a Methodist missionary using Capers' Catechism. When the bell sounded on Sunday mornings, Ladson noted that those who did not show up tend to be younger slaves, attracted by the "amusements of 'out-doors,'" while those who did were more likely to be "older, conservative negroes." Sunday was a free day that young people liked to spend doing something other than listening to a master, while those for whom travel was difficult, or were more settled and connected to the social life of the inter-plantation community, spent their Sundays at the home chapel.[57]

Another typical venue of interracial worship was the rural church. As described in Frederick Olmsted's account of the rice country "Cracker" church and in numerous slave narratives, these were welcoming but not entirely comfortable environs for black

[56] John Tucker and Glennie responses to 1845 Circular in Charleston Meeting, *Proceedings* (1845), 35-37; Glennie "Letter" in Thomas, *Historical Account*, 382-3. Note that 90% of the Afro-Carolinian population in his Parish did not opt for membership.
[57] Ladson response to 1845 Circular in Charleston Meeting, *Proceedings* (1845), 52-55.

worshipers. In remote areas, there were few religious options. Slaves were compelled, if not obligated, to attend the same church as their masters. White surveillance and careful enforcement of the social hierarchy through ritual made some slaves feel apprehensive and alien. Genia Woodberry remembered that "plantation peoples hadder go derre to de Ole Neck Church (in Marion County) evey Sunday" and that the master's wife would surveil the church to count which of her slaves were in attendance. Color-coded seating at Ole Neck carefully regimented sacred space according to race and class:

> all dem well-to-do folks hab dey own pew up dere in de front of de chuch wha dey set on evey Sunday. Dey seat wuz painted pretty lak uh bedstead en den de poor peoples set in de middle uv de chuch in de yellow kind uv seat. Aw de colored peoples hadder set in de blue seat in de back uv de chuch.

The interior design of the cracker church Olmstead attended was similarly status-conscious: fifty whites filled about half of the ground floor in proper pews, but the majority of those in attendance were Negroes, crowded onto benches in the cockloft. The preaching and white response was emotional to the extreme – loud, disorderly, "violent," and "painfully irreverential" – but the black audience watched with silent reserve. The preacher paid no direct attention to the black gallery until the very end of the service, when he announced a special address to follow. Olmstead suspected that the negro attendants could worship "with a good deal more energy and abandon, if they were called upon," and felt confirmed the next day when he observed negroes from the same community "so hoarse they could barely speak."[58]

[58] WPA, *Slave Narratives*, 4:225; Frederick Law Olmsted, *A journey in the seaboard slave states*, (New York: New American Library, 1969), 461. Frederick Law Olmsted was a journalist from New England who wrote extensively of his travels in the antebellum South. His accounts of the Georgia and South Carolina "rice country" are described in greater detail below.

Another, more intimate, form of exposure to white religion was the private tutorial. Masters, mistresses, members of the family, or other agents (like Alexander Glennie, the hired tutor) indoctrinated slaves through one-on-one or group sessions. For many evangelicals, private, domestic religious instruction was the perfect rehearsal of black dependence – the ritual cement of the master-slave bond.[59] Some violated state laws and taught their slaves to read the scriptures for themselves. These were exceptional cases, as with Jimmie Johnson, an orphan slave taught to read and play piano by his master and "Missus," or Paul Jenkins, whose master used education as a reward for exemplary behavior.[60] More typical was the policy enforced on Fred James' African-born grandfather, who "wasn't allowed to learn to read and write. Dey whipped us if dey caught us wid a book trying to read and write. Ma said dey cut off a hand if dey caught you."[61]

The urban profile of religious experience for Afro-Carolinians resembled its rural counterparts in many of its general features – interracial fellowship, racialized seating, literacy restrictions and exceptions – but urban religious culture was distinguished by its variety. Cities like Charleston hosted a more concentrated array of organized religious offerings. The interracial religious communities of late antebellum (1850s) Charleston will be the focus of the next chapter, but it is necessary to include a preview here for two reasons: 1) for comparison, to represent several of the various faces of white religion,

[59] Mathews, "The Methodist Mission to the Slaves, 1829-1844;" Donald G. Mathews, "Charles Colcock Jones and the Southern Evangelical Crusade to Form a Biracial Community," *The Journal of Southern History* 41, no. 3 (1975): 299–320.
[60] For examples of white evangelical opposition to and violation of the literacy law, see John Belton O'Neall, *The negro law of South Carolina,* (Columbia: Printed by J.G. Bowman, 1848); "Citizens of Abbeville District, Petition for the Repeal of a 1834 Law Slaves from Being Taught to Read the Bible," General Assembly Petitions (ca. 1838), SCDAH; "Citizens of Chester District, Petition to Repeal Part of an Act Making it Illegal to Teach Slaves and Free Blacks to Read the Bible," General Assembly Petitions (November 1838), SCDAH.
[61] WPA, *Slave Narratives* 3:54, 31-2, 15.

and 2) for breadth, to represent the urban church as an integrated aspect of religious experience for tens of thousands of plantation slaves and rural people of color who lived in the vicinity of Charleston, or to a lesser extent Beaufort and Georgetown.

All of the Methodist, Baptist, Episcopal, and Presbyterian/Reformed Churches in Charleston operated "coloured schools" of oral catechism. Most instruction took place on Sunday and most students were colored children. At Second Presbyterian Church, for example, about two-thirds of Sabbath School students were children and one-third adults. Adult slaves were also involved in these schools as parents supporting their children. Fathers of students at the Trinity Methodist School, for example, addressed the school at an anniversary celebration in 1845, and did so in a "forcible, impressive and Christian manner." The urban environment also provided for mono-racial worship and instruction under the auspices of white religious institutions. The Presbyterian and Methodist Churches, for example, hosted "well-attended" services and classes conducted by black leaders.[62]

Each of the anecdotes used to flesh out these profiles also gives a sense of Afro-Carolinian response to a specific form of white religious outreach. The statistical record of Glennie's influence, or the truancy of younger slaves from Ladson's chapel, or a slave's recollection of "Marse William's" bible-reading "as a happy time," plot particular points along a range of interracial identification through religious experience. It is also possible to isolate more general patterns of response from a wider survey of anecdotes and profiles like those above. From the canon of South Carolina slave narratives, four persistent themes emerge that illustrate the complex of Afro-Carolinian attitudes towards

[62] Charleston Meeting, *Proceedings*, 38-9.

white religious outreach and interracial religious communities: 1) the interracial church and performative piety as avenues to slave "respectability," 2) the sense of alienation experienced by slaves at the "white folk's church," 3) racial groupings of community in the afterlife imagined by slaves, and 4) a code of ethics that equated corporal punishment with evil. Each of these themes overlaps the others and reveals an ambiguous pattern of engagement with the evangelical arms of Carolina nation-builders. The first theme of "performative piety," for example, pairs with the second theme of alienation to depict both sides of black experience at the "white folk's church." Indicators of interracial identification from the third and fourth themes were just as ambivalent, as Carolina slaves developed visions of heaven and hell and doctrines of good and evil that engaged, challenged, and rejected the utopian norms of the Carolina liturgy.

The remainder of this chapter analyzes these themes to gauge the extent to which slaves included white Carolinians in their imagined spiritual communities and engaged the nation-building project expressed by the Carolina liturgy, with its implied meanings of racialization and black dependence.

Racial consciousness pervaded slave accounts of church life and spiritual practice. In some cases, slaves actively engaged the spiritual pathology of excessive emotionalism, as they affirmed the racial divide between more enthusiastic "black" religion and the more staid "white" ritual experience. Cordelia Jackson (Spartanburg, b. 1857) described her faith as an emotional asylum, inaccessible to "white folks" who "don't feel sech as I does." According to Jackson, white folks were afraid to lose themselves in the power of the Holy Spirit. "I stay independent of what white folks tells me when I shouts. De Spirit moves me every day, dat's how I stays in….but dey stays out. Dey tries me, and

den I suddenly draps back to serving the holy God." In other cases, slaves described the proper relationship between white religion and black spirituality as a mimetic one, and endorsed a path to black improvement (through emulation) closer to that prescribed by white pathologists. Walter Long (Chapin, b. 1852) recounted that "us slaves 'sorbed all the good us had in us from our mistress" and that slavery endowed his mother with "a heap of sense dat she got from de white folks."[63]

Many readings of white religious influence were more critical. Jimmie Johnson (Spartanburg, b. 1846) lamented the false religiosity of his black peers as the lingering influence of slavery, mimesis, and flawed white models. "Many of them is very 'ligious widout 'ligion. He takes all dat from white folks. So many think 'ligion is gwine to git them somethin' widout working for it and fool people by makin them think they is good and can be trusted and all dat." Johnson's critique of performative piety represents a prominent theme of Carolina slave narratives and demonstrates an important dimension of shared consciousness between master and slave; repeated exposure to the Carolina liturgy of black dependence and improvement made slaves aware that black piety was among the expectations of the master class and that religious behaviors would be rewarded. In remote areas, like that served by Genia Woodberry's Ole Neck Church, slaves were expected to attend the same church as their masters. Those who did so won a measure of respectability, a value of social capital established habitually by veneration and good treatment. Henry Jenkins (Sumter, b. 1848) internalized the values of respectability and tradition as he recounted his religious history. "My mother jined de

[63] WPA, *Slave Narratives*, 3: 5-7, 120.

Baptis' church, and I followed her footsteps. Everybody ought to belong to some church, cause it's 'spectable."[64]

Membership or involvement in an interracial church afforded slaves the benefit of respectability, but did not guarantee any sense of ownership in the "white folk's church." More often, slaves alienated by the second-class worship experience returned the favor; they understood the interracial religious experience as the exclusive domain of white folks and saw themselves as strangers or visitors rather than brothers and sisters. Olmstead accurately diagnosed this sense of detachment in the "self-satisfied smiles" of the black gallery at the cracker church, who observed the church spectacle "like Europeans watching an Indian pow-wow."[65]

Many slaves participated, but did not identify, with white worshipers. The ritual experience delivered messages of white domination that slave audiences internalized in terms variant from those intended by white preachers and church leaders. In his interpretation of a segregated Eucharist at a country church around Sumter, John A. Jackson demonstrated the workings of this black filter:

> It was the custom among them when conducting the Lord's Supper, to have the white people partake first, and then say to the negroes – 'Now, all you niggers that are humble and obedient servants to your masters, can come and partake.' The negroes said among themselves 'There is no back kitchen in heaven.'[66]

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[64] WPA, *Slave Narratives*, 3: 53-55, 24.

[65] Olmsted, *Seaboard Slave States*, 460; For example of slave commentary on staid atmosphere of Presbyterian Church service, see WPA, *Narratives*, 3:143: "No piano nor organ was 'lowed in de church them days. I set up dere many a Sabbath and see Marse Robin Stinson knock his fork on de bench, hold it to his ear, and h'ist de tune. Then all jine in and let me tell you it had to be one of de Bible psalms, by de sweet singer of Israel, and no common glory hallelujah hymn. No sir, they didn't tolerate deir chillun engagin' in breakin' de Sabbath in dat way!"

[66] John Andrew Jackson, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Documenting the American South (Project), and University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Library, "The experience of a slave in South Carolina," 1996.

This covert rejection of "back kitchen" theology was the underside of a slave's double consciousness, the silent complement to his or her performative piety. This second theme of slave narrative registered most prominently in the othering of interracial religious experience. When asked if slaves went to church, many interviewees echoed the refrain of Nellie Lloyd: "dey never had any churches, but dey had to go to church and so dey went to de white folks' church and set in de back or de gallery." Many also contrasted the semi-obligatory experience of going to the white church with the more voluntary and organic experience of black ceremony. "Niggers didn't have no church till atter de war," reported Mary Kelly, but slaves did exert ownership over informal "brush arbors," "frolics," slave weddings and other festivals. Gabe Locklier (b. 1851, Clarendon) summarized the social calendar of the late antebellum lowcountry slave:

> Go to frolic on Saturday en go to white folks church on Sunday en sit in portion of church in de gallery. Den on Christmas eat en drink de best liquor dere was en de Fourth of July de one day dat dey have to go to Eutaw Springs…go to all de slave weddings too. Dey would mostly get married bout on a Sunday evening.[67]

This menu of ritual and ceremony yielded an interconnected amalgam of communal cells and identities: secondary status in white spaces and primary status in black spaces. The presence of slaves in plantation chapels and interracial churches comprised an important behavioral indicator of engagement with the Carolina nation-building project, but the theologies and doctrines that they took away from these places indicated ideological divergence from the intended messages of the Carolina liturgy. Viewed from the top-down, the swelling ranks of African-American attendance and membership provided some apparent validation of the nation-building project. When

[67] WPA, *Slave Narratives*, 3: 126, 112-4, 89.

considered from the ground level, however, the relationship between black student and white teacher was much more complicated. Beneath the surface of gross statistics signifying evangelical success lurked latent streams of heterodox and even counter-hegemonic religious practices and beliefs. Some of the most vivid manifestations of this doctrinal divergence comprise a third theme of slave commentary - African-American understandings of the afterlife.

Charles Ball, a twice-escaped slave, recounted the visions of heaven offered up by the master class in South Carolina. White preachers taught Ball and his fellow captives "to look forward to the day when all distinctions of colour, and of condition, will be abolished, and they shall sit down in the same paradise, with their masters, mistresses, and even with the overseer." But according to Ball, "the gross and carnal minds of these slaves, are not capable of arriving at the sublime doctrines taught by the white preachers." The sublime doctrine of an interracial, or raceless heaven of former masters and slaves, did not translate into the conventional theology of Afro-Carolinians. Racial inequalities persisted in the next world, but with the power dynamic reversed:

> In the next world…the whites…will, by no means, be of an equal rank with those who shall be raised from the depths of misery…A favorite and kind master or mistress, may now and then be admitted into heaven, but this rather as a matter of favor, to the intercession of some slave. [68]

According to Ball, heaven could only exist for the slave as a space where he could "be avenged of his enemies." Social inversion and retribution were the norm in "the negro's

[68] Charles Ball, "Slavery in the United States a narrative of the life and adventures of Charles Ball… containing an account of the manners and usages of the planters and slaveholders of the South, a description of the condition and treatment of the slaves, with observations upon the state of morals amongst the cotton planters, and the perils and sufferings of a fugitive slave, who twice escaped from the cotton country," (New York: John S. Taylor, 1836), 221. Contrast Ball's afterlife with the vision presented above by Bowen's Catechism, of heaven as a gathering of "all nations."

heaven," where "an agreeable recreation of the celestial inhabitants…will be a return to the overseer of the countless lashes that he has lent out so liberally here." Godly slaveowners and their accessories could only be granted access to the heavenly kingdom through the grace and forgiveness of their slaves; Most were damned, or represented as victims of slave vengeance, or admitted at a diminished level of salvation.[69]

Charles Ball endured two separate tours as a slave in South Carolina, during the first decade of the nineteenth century until his initial escape and again after his re-capture twenty years later, and wrote a great deal about what he observed and learned of slavery in the state. Once emancipated from the bonds of his former life, Ball assumed a critical distance in his analysis of the therapeutic function of the "negro" heaven. He reflected upon a Heaven that meant everything to slaves:

> …exceedingly prone to console themselves with the delights of a future state, when the evil that has been endured in this life, will not only be abolished, and all injuries be compensated by proper rewards, bestowed upon the sufferers, but, as they have learned that wickedness is to be punished, as well as goodness compensated, they do not stop at the point of their own enjoyments and pleasures, but believe that those who have tormented them here, will most surely be tormented in their turn hereafter.[70]

In this and other passages, Ball reflected two important properties of interracial religious discourse in South Carolina: the tremendous psychological value attached to the afterlife by slaves as release from the sufferings in waking life and the racial contestation of heaven as a psycho-spiritual realm. White preachers knit slave and master together in an imagined community of the saved, but slaves filtered these "sublime

[69] Ibid., 220-21.
[70] Ibid., 220. On hegemonic function of slave heaven, see also Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll; the world the slaves made* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974).

doctrines" selectively. The utopian dimensions of this "official" heaven fulfilled the therapeutic function of slave theology, but failed to meet slave standards of retributive justice. Ball attributed this failure to a cultural gap that separated the "gross and carnal minds" of slaves from the intellectual traditions of cosmopolitan religious institutions. Though less familiar with the inner workings of slave eschatology, Ball's white contemporaries observed and interpreted the culture gap in similar fashion. For Ball, the only way to bridge this gap and redeem the slave was to remove the violent and immoral stain of slavery; white Carolinians of the governmental set offered a more moderate solution: the slave mission.[71]

Frantic efforts to contain the spread of Walker's Appeal, the literacy restrictions of 1834, and the mail riots of 1835, signaled escalating levels of public concern with slave heterodoxy during the 1830s.[72] C. C. Pinckney also reflected this concern in his call to eliminate unregulated "black preaching" through outcompetition. By expanding the slave missions to maximize exposure to "religious information …derived from white teachers," governmental intellectuals and evangelical leaders hoped to close the cultural gap that divorced slaves from the Carolina liturgy of bi-racial community. Over the next two decades, these measures achieved some (superficial) measure of success. By the late antebellum period there is evidence to suggest a level of interracial spiritual identification among South Carolina slaves, but also an abundance of evidence to suggest the resilience of inverted spiritual hierarchies like those documented by Charles Ball. The testimonies of ex-slaves like Adeline Hall typified spiritual consciousness closest to the target of

[71] Ball, *Slavery in the United States*, 220.
[72] Jane H. Pease and William Henry Pease, "Jane H. and William H. Pease papers (1970," Avery Research Center; William H. Pease and Jane H. Pease, "Walker's Appeal Comes to Charleston: A Note and Documents," *The Journal of Negro History* 59, no. 3 (1974): 287–292.; William Wilhartz Freehling, *The road to disunion Vol. I, Secessionists at bay, 1776-1854.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 291.

nationalist indoctrination. Hall's married name was Adeline Johnson, but she preferred to use the last name of her former master. Hall embraced not only the name, but also the religious profession of her masters, including their ambiguous doctrine of racial identity in the afterlife:

> Whether I's white or black when I git dere, I'll be satisfied to see my Savior dat my old marster worshipped and my husband preach bout. I wants to be in hebben wid all my white folks, just to wait on them, and love them and serve them, sorta lak I did in slavery time. Dat wil be nough hebben for Adeline.[73]

For every Adeline Hall, there were many others who deflected the doctrinal incursion of slave missionaries and rejected the notion of sharing heavenly space with their white oppressors. John Andrew Jackson, a South Carolina slave who escaped to freedom in 1846, condemned to hell all those who participated in the brutality of slavery, and claimed this to be a sentiment shared by most of his fellow slaves. White piety was anathema to slaveholding; no level of Christian profession, even the ministry, was sufficient to save a slaveowner from the damning consequences of their ownership and treatment of human chattel.

On the Sumter County plantation where Jackson situated most of his narrative, the inversion was even more profound and particular than that generalized from Ball's observations of the previous decade. Jackson's master was a Methodist minister, who read and actively explained scripture to his slaves, but also unwittingly enabled the translation of scripture into meanings other than those he intended. The Reverend English took his slaves to Methodist camp-meetings, where they took part in segregated rituals like the Lord's Supper. "It was the custom…to have the white people partake

[73] WPA, *Slave Narratives*, 3: 36-38.

first, and then say to the negroes –'Now, all you niggers that are humble and obedient servants to your masters, can come and partake.'" Many slaves begrudgingly participated in this "second seating" of the Eucharist, while grumbling "there is no back kitchen in heaven." According to Jackson, this layer of resistance remained beneath the surface, for "if they had been overheard, they would have been whipped severely."[74]

As a self-conscious contributor to the anti-slavery movement, it is important to consider Jackson's narrative through the lens of his polemical tone. Jackson juxtaposed the espoused Christianity of his masters with graphic depictions of their sadistic conduct. The deathbed scene of Jackson's master fit this juxtaposition, but also documented another vital track of the slave's circumscribed spiritual autonomy. Upon hearing of their master's death, Jackson described the consensus response of his fellow slaves:

> Thus ended the life of a member of a Christian Church. When the tidings of his death reached the negroes, they were overjoyed, and especially Willis, who went round to every hut, and shook hands with every negro, saying, "How d'ye do, brudder, de devil is dead an' gon' to hell."[75]

The power to imagine the master's place in the afterlife was not one freely granted to the slaves, but rather claimed within the circumscribed space of black spiritual license. Jackson described another deathbed scene, that of his master's son, a man of wild and cruel temperament. After the son died, "swearing and cursing," his father lamented, within earshot of the slave attendants, "Wife, our son is dead and gone to hell." To which his wife replied "Hush! hush! talking so before the niggers." When such talk fell on slave ears, it violated a sense of decorum rooted in respect for the private sphere and the need to preserve the plantation hierarchy. Notions of master class damnation suggested a

[74] Jackson, *The Experience of a Slave in South Carolina*, 23.
[75] Ibid., 10.

means for slaves to invert the spiritual hierarchy, both within their own consciousness and without. Patterns of inverted spiritual hierarchy were regular, if hidden, features of religious life for many slaves.[76]

Most slaves developed eschatologies that fell somewhere between Adeline Hall and J.A. Jackson on the spectrum of racial identification and inversion. The universal morality of slaves like Richard Mack (of Charleston) translated into a simple raceless calculus of good deeds as the price of heaven. Mack recounted an organic social order in which "de nigger was the right arm of the buckra class" and "de buckra was de horn of plenty for de nigger." The evangelical mandate transcended racial boundaries as "all we save and help are stars in our crown." Mack thus represented many lowcountry slaves for whom the path to heaven was a universally accessible ladder of works to "save and help" others.[77]

As reflected by Ball, Jackson, and Richard Mack, the power to accredit "stars in our crown" was reserved to God, but accessible to all believers by interpretation. Within the Protestant framework of the priesthood of all believers, slaves asserted the power to imagine "negro heaven(s)," along the lines of those illustrated by Ball and Jackson. Both Ball and Jackson revealed how slaves reversed the racial balance of power, replacing the white supremacy of the physical world with the black power of the metaphysical. They intimated visions of a black Saint Peter, who would deny access to all slaveholders except for those select few exempted through the intercessions of their slaves. Among South Carolina slaves, the full range of imagined afterlives was much too rich and

[76] Ibid., 13.
[77] WPA, *Narratives,* 3:153.

complicated to be distilled into such singular images, but the general principles of race and salvation invoked by Ball, Jackson, and Mack resonated widely.

The strongest correlate of white damnation in the mind of South Carolina slaves was the practice of corporal punishment. Both the experience and witness of pain inflicted on slave bodies stood for hell on earth; the masters, overseers, drivers, and patrollers responsible for inflicting these pains succumbed to "evil" and became agents of the Devil himself. The forces of good and evil, and how they played out in the ethics of slave discipline, comprise a fourth theme of slave commentary on white religion. Consistent references to evil and the "debbil" present in acts of corporal punishment represented the most prominent critique of Christianity as practiced and preached by white agents. The moral order that moved the hand at one end of the whip differed starkly from that of those at the receiving end. For most slaves, the whip carved a line between the sin of the punisher and the holiness of the punished. When a Charleston County slave called out for God to deliver her from the pain of her master's beating, the master replied with a taunt: "'show me dat damn man' den he say, 'I am your only God.'" The same "mossa use to take de fork an punch holes in dere body when he got mad." The whipping demonstrated mastery of the slave body, but the master also understood the act as an assertion of mastery over her soul. Through this latter assertion, the master insinuated himself into a spiritual competition he had no chance of winning. There was no place in the slave's imagined spiritual community for a master who pierced

the flesh of his slaves to release his own inner demons. On many other plantations, however, the racial delineation of goodness and evil was not so clearly black and white.[78]

Whether from local evangelists or inborn humanitarian principles of compassion, or both, lowcountry Carolina slaves gained a firm grasp on Protestant doctrines of human merit and divine grace, and personalized these qualities of the physical and the metaphysical into discrete equations of good and evil, salvation and damnation. Most slaves were abundantly familiar with the sadistic extremes of plantation discipline, yet many proved willing to exempt the slaveowners ultimately responsible for such acts from their own personal code of condemnation. The psychic calculus of the slave was a survival tool that enabled him or her to distill the pervasive evil of human bondage into the most immediate and obvious vessel – the hand stained with blood. Some, like J.A. Jackson, (who had the time and opportunity to distance himself from the experience of slavery and slaveowners) condemned all those who tolerated the institution to hell. Most slaves, however, clung to more permeable and personalized standards of damnation. Slaves filled their imagined hell with sadistic masters and mistresses, but just as often exempted individual masters from the existential burden of their association with such a pernicious regime.

Many slave narrators made a point to draw a rhetorical contrast between the goodness of their master and/or mistress and the evil of those who did the master's bidding. Some reported tales of the master protecting his slave property from the victimization of the patrollers, or distinguished the master's kindness from the brutality

[78] WPA, *Narratives*, 4:192. More explicit examples of such racialized doctrines: "De Slaves had a church name Lazarus an' some went to de white church. Dey had us bar off frum de whites an' we use to look t'rough a glass door. I member when a preacher say, 'honor your missus an' mossa dat your days may be long for dey is your only God.'"

of his overseers and drivers. Jane Johnson (Columbia, b. 1844) remembered that "Master Tom was good to us…but dat nigger overseer was de devil sittin cross-legged for de rest of us on de plantation all de time." Others described corporal punishment as a regular part of the routine on *other* plantations, or in *other* regions of the south. This was a common motif of spatial distinction, as slaves and ex-slaves recounted tales of the tortures perpetrated by notorious masters or overseers (in other places or other times), or of the general fear of brutal conditions in the western slave states, but insisted that their master did not permit such treatment. Gabe Locklier had no complaints about his master, but he heard "bout de overseer en de driver whip plenty of de slaves" and worse, "dey would put em in de sorrow box over night."[79]

The decorum of the interview dynamic, old age, and the relative hardship of living in Depression-era South Carolina, may have superimposed a rose-colored lens upon slave remembrances of their masters. Still, these ex-slaves told many chilling and graphic tales of random violence and mistreatment committed by slaveowners and their agents, and did so in ways that represent the durability of psychological mechanisms developed to cope with their formative experiences under slavery. In their critique of the brutality endured by fellow slaves, these narratives provide the most salient and explicit representation of the evil of slavery. In the spiritual exemptions they afforded some of the parties ultimately responsible, they also demonstrated a grace unique to the slave conscience, which represented both a psychic coping device and an apparent

[79] WPA, *Narratives*, 3: 49-50, 93.

internalization of Christian principles of forgiveness that undergirded the Carolina liturgy.[80]

In the Afro-Carolinian balance of good and evil, many slaves shifted the spiritual onus of violence away from their master, or more often, a beloved mistress. Accounting for the regular thrashings administered by the master and his overseers, one midlands slave reflected, "it was hell when de overseers was around and de mistress nor none of de young marsters was dere to protect you." In this way, slaves projected their own standards of status-differentiation upon the stratified layers of southern white folk, and internalized a variant brand of moral class-consciousness. It was not the size or refinement of the estate that convinced slaves of the elevated character of the master class, but the level of physical involvement in plantation violence. Those who could afford to have others do the dirty work of discipline for them maintained a level of dignity readily observed by their slaves. Late antebellum slaves frequently observed that the overseer was "de poor white trash," and that "good white men never dirty deir hands and souls in sich work of de devil as dat."[81]

Another important device of sentimental distinction was the displacement of mistreatment to other masters or even other states. Most descriptions of graphic violence in South Carolina slave narratives were observations or hearsay – tales of atrocities endured by other slaves on other plantations, or rumors of the hellish southwest. Nellie Lloyd reported that "some of the slaves was hanged for stealing, but my master never hanged any." This late antebellum veil of nonviolence obfuscated the latent terror with

[80] Charles Joyner provides a comprehensive explanation of the interpretive methodology used here to filter the inherent narrator and interviewer biases from slave narratives in his "Foreword" to the *Comprehensive Name Index for The American Slave* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1997).
[81] WPA, *Narratives*, 4:171. Full "po white trash" quote from Ella Kelly: "De overseer was de poor buckra, he was what you calls dis poor white trash."

which slavery was enforced and served multiple psychic functions for both slave and master. Slaves milked reassurance from daily plights preferable to the sufferings of others and masters consciously presented their benevolence as a carrot to contrast with the stick of crueler masters or the threat of market alienation. Gabe Locklier "heard tell of how" masters would sell slaves "if dey didn' do like dey tell em to do." But when a speculator offered "my boss $1000 for my brother Joe…he wouldn't sell him." South Carolina slaveowners revealed one side of the stick when they "turned [slaves] loose to go to a hanging," and the other when they regularly threatened and enacted the sale of incalcitrant slaves to the West.[82]

Conclusion

The recurrent exemption of masters from moral condemnation was likely attributable to two factors: an empathy born of regular contact with individual masters and mistresses who personally did the slave no harm, and/or a source bias of former slaves remembering their masters as they thought was expected of them. Either way, this master exemption clause reveals an important degree of resonance for the Carolina liturgy. Those who spoke fondly of masters to respect the sensibilities of white interviewers indicated a degree of master-slave intersubjectivity – they knew what their masters would have wanted them to say. Those who genuinely upheld the goodness of their slaveowning acquaintances exhibited a more precise dimension of shared consciousness. At least superficially, these slaves joined themselves with masters and mistresses in an imagined community of the good, and occupied a space of interracial

[82] WPA, *Narratives*, 3:126, 158.

identification consistent with that targeted by Carolina nation-builders. This slice of biracial community, when explored in greater depth, reveals a relationship between slaves and the communal liturgy put forward by white religious institutions that was more complicated than its architects could have imagined. The master exemption clause, like each of the themes of slave narrative isolated above, illustrates how slaves pursued two simultaneous tracks of community formation – a surface track, conscious of and incentivized by the objectives of the slave mission as a nation-building project, and an interior track, veiled and protected from white infiltration by racist assumptions like the science of black pathology. According to the fracture pattern created by this double-layering of black (social) consciousness, each theme of slave narrative indicates two functional levels of interracial identification among South Carolina slaves.

The master exemption clause of slave narrative, for example, exposes both sides of slave consciousness and demonstrates how each layer worked its way into the interracial dialectic that framed plantation community. This recurrent trope of selective white goodness demonstrated the extent to which the Carolina liturgy, in one way or another, infiltrated slave thinking and rhetoric. When cast into relief against simultaneous expressions of resistance and racial inversion, the master exemption clause also delineates the underside of slave double consciousness. Praising individual slaveowners while condemning the institution of slavery as "jest a murdering of de people," slaves exhibited split affinities and affirmed their dual membership in "a nation within a nation."[83] The underside of slave consciousness that lurked beneath the moral exemption of preferred masters was a more general condemnation of the immorality of

[83] Sam Mitchell (b. 1850, Beaufort) in WPA, *Slave Narratives*, 3: 200-01.

slavery and the racial order it enforced. When Charles Ball noted that "a favorite and kind master or mistress, may now and then be admitted into [the slave's] heaven," his point was that this was an exceptional "matter of favor." The boundaries of a slave's imagined spiritual community were a permeable membrane that elevated the tormented above their white "tormenters" and separated slaves from the "back kitchen" theology of the "white folk's church."

Even in the shared worship experience, this separation was evident. J.A. Jackson observed the distance between white and black religious habitus in song. His fellow slaves sang songs "composed of fragments of hymns, which we heard sung at the meeting houses…of the white men." For Jackson, these less "intelligible" slave compositions signified the absurdity of second-class non-literate indoctrination, but white Carolinians who heard these songs ascribed different meanings to the experience. The sound of slaves singing hymnal patois confirmed a number of white biases. As mimetic expressions of white religious culture, such moments served as both testament to the power of the Carolina liturgy and evidence of black spiritual pathology. As observed by white Carolinians, what Jackson described was a scene of subjection – an episode that fit white expectations of black conduct and signified their tacit consent to the external construction of black identity.[84]

There is ample record to corroborate the interracial church as a scene of subjection. Extrapolating between slave narratives and the statistical record of slave attendance at interracial worship, the composite picture is one of steady slave engagement with the "white folk's church." As viewed from the macro-perspective of

[84] Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*.

institutional history, slaves participated in the process whereby slavery became modern and legitimate – a dynamic of social control formed by both the controllers and the controlled. When viewed from other angles, there are more immediate explanations for the apparent consent to this form of social control. As described above, performative piety could become a measure of social capital. James Johnson (Orangeburg, b. 1856) remembered that this was a behavior learned from white Christians: "So many think 'ligion is gwine to git them somethin' widout working for it and fool people by makin them think they is good and can be trusted and all dat." Slaves learned that religious behavior could win special privilege, and so acted accordingly. Piety served the social interests of slaves, while also enhancing the efficiency of plantation operations and validating the governmental link between providential ideals and progressive reforms. By articulating institutional interests to the spiritual and social interests of individual slaves, plantation missions won the support of white evangelicals, planters, reformers, and slaves, to become the most successful social reform project of antebellum South Carolina.[85]

[85] Another scenario of slave cooperation involves a track of methodology that exists outside this materialist line of inquiry, and requires more serious consideration of religious preference. Interrogating the slave mission as a negotiation of interests, a form of social control, runs the risk of deducing the movement's origins from its social functions. For the purposes of building a larger argument about institutionalization and governmentality, this is an acceptable risk. In order to consider the full range of slave motivations for engagement with white evangelicals, however, such a conclusion would demonstrate "little more than [my] own incapacity to take religion seriously." Whether through the immediate hand of white evangelicals or their proxies, many slaves underwent authentic transformative religious experiences as a result of the slave missions. The messages of grace and salvation that they took from these experiences were messages of universal application– 'God is no respecter of persons, God hath made of one blood all the nations of men.' They joined a community of the converted, as they understood it, where membership was determined both by profession (internal / self-identification) and action (external markers). See Paul E. Johnson, *A shopkeeper's millennium : society and revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978). Paraphrasing Tocqueville to comment on the social function of revivalism in the antebellum north, Johnson writes (p. 139): "We have seen that revivals did indeed create order, but only as prescribed by an emerging industrial bourgeoisie. Here we enter dangerous territory. For if we infer the causes of revivals from their results, we must conclude that entrepreneurs consciously fabricated a religion that suited

The articulation of black interests, both real and imagined, was essential to the governmentality of bi-racial progress in South Carolina. Slave interests figured prominently into reform-minded "narratives about the progress of the population." By the late antebellum period, this was particularly evident in the ascendance of "spare the rod" nonviolent strategies of slave discipline. Agricultural and religious reformers advertised a new approach to plantation management informed both by observation of slave behavior and modernist social theory. When planters and overseers reported negative responses to punishments meted out on slave bodies and positive responses to alternative incentives like missionary outreach, reformers saw evidence to support a disciplinary style more in line with the burgeoning transatlantic spirit of humanitarianism. Thus the interior track of slave consciousness – moral condemnation of white brutality – became evident in slave behavior, and generated the empirical basis for this call to modernize the master-slave relationship.

Ella Kelly's observation that "good white men never dirty deir hands and souls in sich work of de devil" was both cause and effect of the late antebellum turn away from violence as the most regular corrective of slave misconduct. As slaves selectively incorporated evangelical dogma into the inverted hierarchy of their imagined afterlife, they created a world that was not only uncontrolled by white authority but also inserted a control of its own into the mind of the master class. Slaves reappropriated the authority of white evangelicals, and defined the terms by which the masters of this world would be received in the next. According to the available slave narrative, the most consistent determinant of white membership into their imagined community (heaven) was the extent

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their economic and social needs. That would demonstrate little more than our own incapacity to take religion seriously."

to which each individual involved him/herself in the discharge of corporal punishment. Though initially a point of divergence – the power to evaluate white goodness was not conceded to black Carolinians, and corporal punishment was seen as a necessary bulwark to the social and economic order – interpersonal contact with slaves gradually changed white perceptions.

The tension between personal affinities and abstract animosities that informed racial consciousness for both white and black Carolinians also worked its way into the evolving habitus of master-slave orthodoxy. In 1845, the official Charleston report on religious instruction synthesized personal accounts of slave management alongside insights from the field of criminology to declare that masters should integrate insights from humanitarian reform into their own system of plantation rigor. According to the *Proceedings* of the 1845 meeting, "the progress of Christianity in its influence upon society" had demonstrated its greatest influence in modifications to the "penal administration of Christian nations." Through implementation of more subtle and general moral improvements, "high and severe penalties have become obsolete, because they have become unnecessary."[86] Thus, observations from the field of interpersonal contact converged with abstract intellectual trends (modern notions of power and the individual that transformed the norm of institutional discipline from public spectacle to private penitentiary) to push antebellum Carolinians towards a consensus disdain for corporal punishment. This was an uneasy consensus that Carolina slaveholders found difficult to put into practice.[87]

[86] Charleston Meeting, *Proceedings* (1845), 10, 8.
[87] For an analysis of discursive transitions in penal reform, see Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York : Vintage Books, 1995).

Amid a narrative drenched in slaveowner brutality, J.A. Jackson also acknowledged a master class taboo against whipping. He remembered one of his masters "The Rev. Mr. Reed, minister of Mount Zion Church," asked by his wife to whip a slave girl who defied her. Reed refused on the grounds that he was "a minister of the gospel," to which his wife responded "Well, other ministers whip their niggers, and you can whip yours, too." As a minister of the gospel, Reed held himself to a higher standard of conduct, an ideal not yet realized, but nonetheless significant for its idealization. During the 1840s and 50s, reform-minded planters produced an abundance of literature that testified to the success of more dignified methods of manipulating slave behavior, including religious instruction.[88] A contributor to the *Southern Agriculturist* commended a more efficacious system of less brutal penalties and rewards, and reported himself "happy to think that this idea is rapidly gaining ground among planters." Despite such reporting, this modern incentivist strategy of slave management never fully supplanted the necessary evil of the lash before the political interruptions of 1860-61. The bearing of this reformist literature will be a focus of the next chapter, but is important to note here as evidence of the mutual impact of the interracial dialectic.[89]

During the late antebellum period, aspiring reformers and old-school planters generated a multiplicity of overlapping regimes of slave management. In addition to the persistence of the old-school "patriarchal" model of brute force and the burgeoning popularity of the "paternalist" mode of conscious solicitation, a newer influx of

[88] Jackson, *Experience of a Slave in South Carolina*, 41-42.
[89] Contributors to the *Southern Agriculturist* issued repeated calls to reform the violence of plantation discipline. Whipping was increasingly seen as a problem, an inefficient taboo, to be augmented and replaced by more "enlightened" forms of social control, like religious instruction. See, for example, *SA* 6 (1846), 304-5. Olmsted quoted a piece from "The South Carolinian," claiming that "for serious offenses, other punishments, such as solitary confinement should be used. I am happy to think this idea is rapidly gaining ground among planters." Olmsted, *Seaboard Slave States*, 487.

industrialist methods designed to cultivate and exploit the self-interest of slave laborers emerged to complicate the master-slave dynamic.[90] The factor that seemed to determine which course of discipline each slaveholder pursued was the extent of personal contact he had with his slaves. Whitemarsh Seabrook, like many of those uninformed by personal contact, would have attributed the Reverend Reed's refusal of the lash to his preference for "abstract moral principles" over the harsh reality of slave management. Seabrook faulted those who would apply humanitarian trends to the treatment of black brutes. He argued that allowing "abstract opinions of the rights of man…to modify the police system of a plantation" would ruin "the authority of the master, and the value of his estate" as well as "the peace of the blacks themselves."[91] The scale of abstraction, however, seemed to contradict Seabrook; he based his treatment of slaves as brutes upon more abstract ground than the empiricism of slaves who suffered or witnessed whipping as the "work of the devil," and restricted white goodness to those who "never dirty deir hands and souls in sich work."

Men like Seabrook proved willing to abstract themselves from the devil's work of their overseer or slave driver proxies without ever figuring sin into the equation. Subjective observations of slave humanity contraindicated the more reassuring 'objective' truth of racial modernity, where the sub-humanization of Afro-Carolinian slaves guaranteed a comfortable future for the full measure of white humanity. According to Seabrook, "Providence…stamped the curse of colour upon them," and "colour, independent of any other influence, will always mark them as inferior and

[90] Incentivized slave management exemplified by the anonymous rice planter "Mr. X" (Richard James Arnold) in Olmsted, *Seaboard Slave States*, 484-85, et al.
[91] Seabrook, "Essay on Slave Management," 9.

distinct from our race." Nature would extinguish any effort to "take them into the bosom of our families." This could never happen "so long as this one objection is so grossly offensive to the most ready of our senses... They must remain, as in all times they have been, a separate order from ourselves – happy in their sphere – tolerated, when not erring; but victim, whenever…they presume madly to shoot out of it."[92]

Thus Seabrook stood at one pole of interracial identification, opposite white Carolinians who made more regular and intimate contact with black Carolinians and internalized these experiences into a greater awareness of their commonality. At the other end of the spectrum were slaveowning missionaries like C.C. Jones or James Adger. Adger's spent his formative years in Charleston among black nannies, playmates and peers, and spent most of his adult life immersed in slave ministry. In 1847, he opened a sermon on the religious instruction of South Carolina slaves with a picture of interracial intimacy that provides a stark counterpoint to the militant distance of W.B. Seabrook. Adger insisted that the poor of Charleston were distinctly marked by "color" and "national origin," but also more "closely and intimately connected with the higher classes" than any other class of urban poor. He reminded his audience that though slaves "belong to us…we also belong to them…they live with us…forming parts of the same families. Our mothers confide us, when infants, to their arms, and sometimes to the very milk of their breasts."[93]

Both Seabrook and Adger acknowledged the bi-racial community of South Carolina as the work of Providence, but where Seabrook saw God's hand in the permanent stamp of black inferiority and separation, Adger wrought a more inclusive

[92] Seabrook, "Address to People of North and East, 21.
[93] Adger, *My Life and Times*, 167.

interpretation of God's social mandate. Africans were "a race distinct from us, yet closely united to us; brought in God's mysterious providence from a foreign land, and placed under our care, and made members of our households." Adger performed an exceptional variety of the Carolina liturgy that merited the label of "paternalism," while Seabrook worked the same rhetoric into a direct indictment of the familial metaphor for slaveholding. Seabrook's anti-paternalism and the persistence of slaveowner brutality (among other indicators, like market alienation) exposed the limits of slave humanization and represented a zone of racial consciousness outside the rhetorical target of bi-racial community.

Black Carolinians occupied a comparable range of positions along the spectrum of interracial identification. While J.A. Jackson, like Seabrook, refused to recognize any common ground with Carolinians of the opposite race, slaves like Adeline Hall trusted lessons learned from the liturgy of interracial unity to guide them through this world and into the next. Hall remembered slaves as part of a "happy family" who worked "all de harder 'cause us loved de white folks date cared for us." Whether felt or faked, comments like those of Adeline Hall demonstrate the penetration of the Carolina liturgy, and demark an aspect of consciousness shared by black and white Carolinians. Late antebellum slaves like Adeline Hall were subject to a variety of mechanisms designed to cultivate slave contentment and relative happiness, and incorporated these into a mixed bag of responses that neither fully defeated nor satisfied the aims of the Carolina covenant/liturgy.

When this range of black responses to institutional Christianity is superimposed upon the white range of interracial identification, a fleeting area of overlap emerges to

substantiate the idealist target of Carolina community. Between the uncompromising racial modernity of Whitemarsh Seabrook and the thundering anathema of J.A. Jackson lurked a medial range of interracial fellowship. Adeline Hall and James Adger may not have typified the communal groupings of their race, but they shared an important rhetorical space as spiritual equals.

The shared rituals of lowcountry religious practice were multivalent points of overlap: between masters and slaves, white institutions of spiritual community and Afro-carolinian alternatives, ideological dictates of spiritual equality and social inequality. These were also shared spaces and experiences over which neither party, black nor white, had any control over the messages that would be received by the other. Ultimately, the imagined spiritual communities of each group of participants were not mutually exclusive. *This* area of overlap, of an imagined interracial nation, perhaps minimal in the size of its imaginers, was maximized by external rhetorical exigencies into one of the fundamental visions of southern nationalism. The root of this vision was the plantation chapel of the high-church circuit, amplified through the construction of urban counterparts during the 1850s, and parlayed into the symbol of an ongoing project of interracial nation-building. The amplification of this area of spiritual overlap, the institutional venues through which this interracial community was constructed, and the tensions that surrounded both, will be the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Charleston "School of Slavery":

The Separate Churches Movement and the Secession of a Bi-Racial Nation

> …the conduct of the missionary's life also was very simple. He did not have to be much conformed to the world around him. In fact, the very object of his mission was to effect a change in the character, life and manners of the people to whom he came. The minister at home, in some things, must carefully conform to his congregation, for many of their ideas and customs are good and right. With the foreign missionary, it is different. He must set himself in opposition to their most cherished ideas and their most settled habits of life.
>
> - John Adger, *My Life and Times*[1]

During the late 1840s, Charlestonians initiated a second movement to create separate black churches, distinct from the first movement of the 1810s in many ways. Most crucially, this movement acted from the top-down, an institutional innovation of white ecclesiastical organizations, as opposed to the bottom-up organization of black Methodists into the African Church. Though much had changed between 1817 and 1847, the central impetus for separation remained the same: a popular preference for mono-racial communities of fellowship and worship exhibited by both black and white Charlestonians. This movement was born of racial and communal dynamics in evolution

[1] Adger, *My Life and Times, 1810-1899*, 143-44; Full quote: "..the conduct of the missionary's life also was very simple. He did not have to be much conformed to the world around him. In fact, the very object of his mission was to effect a change in the character, life and manners of the people to whom he came. The minister at home, in some things, must carefully conform to his congregation, for many of their ideas and customs are good and right. With the foreign missionary, it is different, He must set himself in opposition to their most cherished ideas and their most settled habits of life. While he endeavors to give no offence, yet he must not seek to 'please men,' or he 'cannot be the servant of Christ.' The foreign missionary life is calculated to make a man feel that he is a stranger and a pilgrim in the world."

since the first slaves were brought to South Carolina, but was also the product of much more immediate and contingent circumstances. As suggested by the first epigraph, the architects of these separate churches had to navigate a web of established "ideas and customs," but ultimately found a "public mind…ripe for the movement." Their apparent success should not diminish the significance of their opponents: an influential band of reactionaries who proved just as significant to the communal ethos of Charleston as those who embraced the separate church as the next stage of social evolution.[1]

As with the first four chapters, this final chapter proceeds chronologically, from the birth of the separate churches movement to secession. Whereas previous chapters operated through an oscillating geographic scope, from the city, district, and county of Charleston, through the lowcountry and the state of South Carolina, with tangents connecting narrative and analysis to section, nation, and the Atlantic World, this chapter returns to Charleston as the focal point of analysis. Thus, chapter five culminates the dissertation not only chronologically and geographically, but also thematically. This is the "last chapter" before the Civil War, arguing outward from the inner-workings of the self-proclaimed "Capital of Southern Civilization," and concluding the narrative and analytical threads laced through previous chapters.

The churches created by this movement were both the highest expression of congregational structuration and the most perfect institutional symbols of black dependence realized by Charlestonians before the end of slavery. As narrated in previous chapters, the racial structuration of congregations reflected a preference amongst both black and white to worship alongside those with whom they most readily identified.

[1] Adger, *Life and Times,* 144; *Southern Presbyterian Review* 1 (1848), 94.

Carried through the themes of black preference isolated from slave narratives (in Chapter Four), the sense of alienation experienced by slaves at the "white folk's church" registered as one of the factors that compelled white religious leaders to create a more familiar spiritual home for slaves. As the next century of Afro-Carolinian history would attest, "black" churches – spaces of black community circumscribed by a herrenvolk southern nation – were the most appealing social and spiritual structures available to black southerners attached to home and community.

Thirty years of racialization charted a new course for the artificial, synthetic process that yielded the second separate churches movement, distinct from the more organic partition of the first "African" Church in 1817.[2] There were also striking parallels and continuities that connected and framed these two movements, among other punctuated episodes of racial modernization. Each of these transformative moments were revealed through displacement, as intensified external pressures coincided with internal social dynamics to refocus local tensions along racial lines. The social strains of establishing a post-colonial racial order escalated reciprocally with external pressures stemming from the Missouri debates, until the lid blew off in the summer of 1822, exploding on Denmark Vesey and the African Church. Again, during the summer of 1834, external tensions wrought by the Nullification Crisis magnified racial grievances on the local level until they were displaced onto Richard Holloway and black Methodists and released in the Methodist Schism. Between debates over the Wilmot Proviso and the First Secession Crisis, atmospheric pressures of sectional politics and paranoia descended

[2] The impetus for secession from the Methodist Church evolved organically, from the bottom-up, but the movement ultimately linked itself to a top-down structure of sorts in the A.M.E. denomination.

upon Charleston once again, generating a storm of discourse during the summer of 1847 and a riot in the summer of 1849, both of which targeted separate black churches.

The social contours of the 1849 riot in Charleston resembled those of the violent episodes that plagued northern cities during the 1830s – extralegal mobilizations of underclass whites against symbolic centers of black community and independence (black neighborhoods and churches).[3] Despite their best efforts to portray Charleston as a "fair city…relieved of the odium which justly attaches to mob rule," sectional publications like the Charleston *Mercury* did so in language that only affirmed the parallel. Working class southerners, both black and white, were elevated above their northern counterparts by the high cultural function of slavery realized in the integrated church. In its ideal form, the interracial church was a zone of mutual observation. Slaves looked down from the galleries in admiration and emulation of their racial superiors; through the reflexive property of whiteness, even the lowest-class white Charlestonians assured themselves of high character, elevated by the black subaltern that observed them. If separate churches deprived them of this exposure, it would also remove the firmament that elevated the working classes. Without this reflexive protection, the black Charlestonian on the street would see only "the rudeness or vulgarity of what he most loathes – a white man of low and vicious habits." In their pursuit of racial modernization, contributors to the *Mercury* blamed the riot on the black Episcopal Church, not the rioters.[4]

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[3] See chap. 2, n. 1. James Brewer Stewart noted a punctuated episode of "mob terrorism against immediate abolitionists and African-American communities that swept the North between 1831 and 1838." Contributors to Stewart's Roundtable Discussion in the *Journal of the Early Republic* (Vol. 19, no. 4) note that the wave of racial violence lasted much longer. Episodes of mob violence continued to plague northern cities throughout the 1840s and 50s, as fastidiously reported by the editors of the Charleston *Mercury*.

[4] *Charleston Mercury*, July 21 and Aug. 2, 1849.

Things had changed since the "counterrevolution of race" that wrought the Methodist Schism of 1834, but the cultural and governmental contest between black and white working classes remained the engine of racial modernity. The generation of counterrevolutionaries had matured, but continued to nurture doubts about the stability of the racial order, and confronted regular challenges from black and white Charlestonians of disparate racial sensibilities. Thus they perpetuated the cognitive and cultural tension between interracial likeness and alterity that constantly pushed the boundaries of social and spiritual community and propelled the racial architecture of social institutions like slavery. Racial consciousness was fluid but consistent. The same range of racial typologies – from old school tenets of mutability and empathy, fear and enmity, to the modernist posture of indifference and essentialist distinctions – persisted to frame white ideals of the racial order and approaches to slave management. The result was a mixed bag of patriarchal, paternalist, and industrialist strategies, all of which advocated religious instruction at some level. The separate churches movement was both cause and effect of this dynamic racial and social discourse. It never appealed to all of the people all of the time, but appealed to some of the people long enough to render it the final stamp of race, identity, and community in Charleston as the city innovated a new motif of national identity through secession.

The Second Separate Churches Movement: Origins (1847-1849)

Observed through the macro-perspectives of race and community layered by previous chapters, the evolution of separate churches seems like a logical extension of the plantation chapel, a predictable next step for the narrative of institutionalization and

racialization in Charleston. The story of its origins, however, depicts a movement that was much more contingent – a fleeting, opportunistic initiative made possible only by the stagnation of two careers – launched at the right place at the right time before the right audience.

The second separate churches movement was actually two movements. Independent of one another, the Presbyterian and Episcopal denominations in Charleston began to move forward with the idea of a separate black church at roughly the same time. Each movement emanated from the efforts of an individual mastermind – Paul Trapier, the architect of the slave mission that would become Calvary Episcopal Church, and his Presbyterian counterpart John Adger, who delivered the call for what would become Anson St. Chapel and eventually Zion Church. For both men, the separate churches movement also fulfilled a professional objective. Paul Trapier and James Adger were both well-connected Charlestonians who entered the ministry in the early 1830s. Both men struggled to find their professional niche, bouncing from post to post until they arrived at the cause of slave missions in 1847. Mission work provided a new field of opportunity for men of the cloth like Trapier and Adger who could not find (professional) homes in the high pulpits of the Holy City. While Adger served a decade in the Presbyterian Mission abroad, Trapier filled several posts in Charleston, including a stint as Rector of St. Michael's. Trapier was unpopular among the elite churchgoers at St. Michael's, so spent the bulk of his early career working with the "mission to the poor" in St. Stephen's and St. John's Parishes (Hampstead). For both Trapier and Adger, missionary experience framed their perspective on slave ministry in Charleston and prepared them to approach slaves as the "practical heathen" of the southern states. More

proximately, both men found themselves unemployed over the winter of 1846-47, and developed their push for a slave mission in Charleston, at least in part, out of professional desperation.[5]

Paul Trapier's tenure at St. Michael's (1840-46) was stained by one controversy after another. Much of the congregation resented his leadership from day one, perhaps due to his association with the underclass midtown churches. Trapier made the situation worse by an overzealous defense of high-church principles and liturgy that alienated even more of his parishioners. In 1846, Trapier agreed to resign. He spent weeks "bewildered… without a salary," increasingly anxious about prospects for supporting his family. "After a while" of contemplating his options, Trapier "thought of the negroes, only a small portion of whom could be accommodated in the churches of the city, and whose capacities and considerations called for ministrations different from that of their owners." It then occurred to Trapier that "the best way to meet their wants would be to form them into a distinct congregation." The best way to meet the needs of his family and the wants of the negroes would be to win denominational support for this "distinct congregation" and contract a place for himself as leader of the new church.[6]

Trapier's separate church initiative promoted a number of denominational and ecumenical trends long in the making. Trapier had been considering an institutional mission to the slaves at least since 1829, when he attended C.C. Pinckney's address on slave instruction before the South Carolina Agricultural Society. He took a great interest in Pinckney's call to action, and was "so pleased" with Pinckney's iteration of the cause

[5] Adger, *Life and Times*; Paul Trapier, *Incidents in my life : the autobiography of the Rev. Paul Trapier, S.T.D, with some of his letters* (Charleston: Dalcho Historical Society, 1954).
[6] Trapier, *Incidents*, 27.

that he sent several copies to his friends in the northern states. As an ambitious young Episcopalian minister, Trapier recognized the religious instruction of South Carolina slaves as an important project, but did not consider this thankless work to be a professional calling. He pursued other posts in the "white" churches of Charleston, but had difficulty "acquiring influence" in these stations. Upon receiving his first call (to St. Stephen's), his friend Sarah Rutledge worried about the "awful responsibility of office he has undertaken," so much dependent upon his "power of pleasing" and "being useful" to the community. Trapier proved successful in the latter function, as ordained Episcopalian ministers were in great demand, but not so much in the former, as he failed to please the community's most powerful brokers of influence. After floundering his way through the white ministry, Trapier reconsidered the cause of slave missions at a more personal level. The missionary imperative that first caught his attention in Pinckney's simple call to action had grown up quite a bit since 1829. In their efforts to break the more evangelical monopoly on slave souls, the Episcopal Diocese of South Carolina launched a program of domestic missions that had recently sprouted a burgeoning complex of lowcountry plantation chapels.[7]

During the 1830s and 40s, the domestic missionary strategy of the Episcopal Church evolved a few steps beyond Pinckney's "build it and they will come." Developed by Alexander Glennie and borrowed from non-Episcopalian evangelists like C.C. Jones and William Capers, the new program was increasingly specialized and racialized to accommodate the perceived limitations of black attention span and intellect, and to a lesser extent, black liturgical preferences. The need for specialization figured into

[7] Sarah Rutledge to ? Lowndes, Sept. 12, 1829, "Papers of the Adger, Smyth[e], and Flynn families, 1823-1930," SCL.

Trapier's argument for a separate black church, but only secondarily, as a pragmatic reappropriation of racial modernity.[8] Trapier's ideal scenario would have been a new bi-racial church, where whites and their "servants" would "join in the same worship, partake of the same ordinances, and listen to the same preaching." He realized, however, that this was a pipedream, "unreasonable" to most Charlestonians, and "revolting" to others. Trapier observed that the "negroes will not come" to worship with their masters, because "they are so fond of the Methodists and Baptists." In addition, white congregants would not long abide the tedium of remedial instruction required to reach the black members of a mixed congregation. "With the present tastes of our city congregations," Trapier wrote, it would not be feasible "to instruct and move the servant at once and the master." Trapier navigated a new course of black ministry blinkered by trial and error and restricted by obstacles of financial and spatial politics. The Diocese could afford to construct a one-level church, but could not gather the resources necessary to build a more amenable church with galleries. White Episcopalians would not support a church that mixed black and white seating on a common level, so in order to fulfill its objective of black ministry, the new church could only house one common level of black congregants. Trapier found ample precedent for the success of such an endeavor in the example of plantation chapels – mono-racial congregations of slaves led by white ministers and teachers – which provided a rough, organic template for the synthetic, institutional stage of racialization that would follow.[9]

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[8] Racial modernity, as deployed in previous chapters, refers to the reform of racial boundary transgression, the cultural, political, and spatial defense and consolidation of racial boundaries; see chap. 3, n. 12.

[9] *Charleston Mercury*, July 20, 1849. As quoted in the December 1847 issue of the *Southern Presbyterian Review*, Trapier depicted the separate church as an extension of the plantation chapel. Through the accomplishments of plantation chapels, it should be evident to "planters and country clergy" that "the

In the spring of 1847, right around the same time Trapier was rallying support for this Negro congregation, James Adger was considering a slave mission of his own. For several months, Adger vetted plans for wider slave outreach among "all the leading minds of the community." These confidential affirmations helped Adger to reach the same conclusion as Trapier – that his denomination should create a new church wholly devoted to the religious instruction of Charleston slaves and people of color. Adger presented his conclusions to the congregation at Second Presbyterian in May, one month before Trapier initiated his fund-raising circuit through Charleston's Episcopal Churches. Though many Charlestonians assumed that the separate church movements of the Episcopal and Presbyterian churches arose independently, the idea was likely transmitted from one denomination to the other. The editor of the *Southern Presbyterian Review* considered it to be "a striking fact that" the plan of separate congregations "should have had a simultaneous independent origin in two of the leading Christian denominations among us," but also "disclaim(ed) the merit of [Adger] having solely originated the plan." In the months leading up to his May address, Adger surely conferred with leaders of the Episcopal Church, and in February, he attended the Diocesan Convention where Trapier's plan was approved. Whether the direction of transmission was from Trapier to Adger, or the other way around, the process whereby Adger resolved to lead his own movement for a separate Negro church was unique. [10]

Prayer book only needs to be explained and taught orally and familiarly, and the slaves even on our plantations will delight in them." *SPR* 1, no.3, 92.

[10] *SPR*, 1, no. 3 (December 1847), 94. According to a footnote inserted by the editor, "Mr. A was for months engaged in consulting, confidentially, all the leading minds of the community, so far as he could get access to them." Adger consulted the Methodist minister Whiteford Smith, attended the Episcopalian Convention where Trapier's plan was approved, and likely consulted some Episcopalian leaders before Trapier made his plan public. In his autobiography (*Life and* Times, p. 170), Adger remembered that "very soon after this Presbyterian movement, a very similar, but entirely independent one, was commenced in the

In 1846, when John Adger returned to Charleston on his scheduled break from missionary work in Armenia, his visit coincided with several local and international developments that transferred his missionary attentions to the home front. Abolitionist agitators threatened his position as a slaveholding missionary working for the international Presbyterian Board of Missions. This assault on southern institutions, in tandem with his observations of slaves in the galleries at Second Presbyterian, renewed Adger's interest in the spiritual welfare of Afro-Carolinians. He arrived in Charleston on the heels of a Presbyterian revival, which swelled membership and attendance, crowded the Sunday services, and complicated Presbyterian reconsideration of negro accommodations. As he watched 300 colored members, overcrowded onto gallery benches, glaze over during Dr. Smyth's sermon, he "felt how far preaching to his white congregation went over their heads." For John Adger, the winter of 1846-47 was a perfect storm that not only redirected the arc of his ministerial career, but also catalyzed special qualities of his character – his upbringing and missionary experience – to lead a movement that would define the final stage of bi-racial community formation in antebellum South Carolina.[11]

As an outsider, a missionary steeped in experience with the racial and religious "other," Adger observed negro congregants in the galleries of Charleston's Presbyterian churches with a fresh set of eyes. As an insider, connected to great wealth in his own family and to Thomas Smyth, the rector of Second Presbyterian Church by marriage,

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Episcopal church." On separate churches movements elsewhere in the slave south, see Charles F. Irons, *The origins of proslavery Christianity : white and black evangelicals in colonial and antebellum Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008).

[11] Adger, *Life and Times*, 137.

Adger's proposals won quick support from an influential group of Charlestonians.[12] Even more than this insider/outsider duality, Adger's approach to slave ministries was the product of a longer history, a deeper and reciprocal relationship with Charleston's multi-racial religious communities. Adger's formative years in Vesey-era Charleston informed his racial sensibilities as much as his time abroad in the foreign mission. His alarm at the inadequacy of black ministry in Charleston reflected his longstanding assumptions about race and slavery in Charleston as much as it did the conditions of race and religion in the city circa 1847.

Adger grew up a son of Charleston's most prominent merchant and banker, in a family of slaveholding Presbyterians. His father, James Adger, provided a majority of the funding for the construction and early operating costs of Charleston's Second Presbyterian Church and though not a "professing member" until late in life, his was the most prominent voice in the worldly operations of the church for its first half-century. As with most wealthy Charlestonian families of the early nineteenth century, the Adgers sent John north for his education. Despite his father's meager attempts to convince him otherwise, John ultimately answered a call to the ministry, and a foreign missionary post. Decades of living outside of Charleston – in the northern states and abroad – imbued Adger's commentary on domestic affairs with an air of distance or abstraction less common in the accounts of his home-side contemporaries.[13]

[12] Smyth married Adger's sister Margaret Milligan Adger, in July 1832.
[13] James Adger was the primary financier of Second Presbyterian Church from its charter in 1809, see Records of Second Presbyterian Church (Charleston, SC), SCL.

This striking objectivity was particularly evident in Adger's remembrance of the Vesey conspiracy.[14] Unlike most of his contemporaries, Adger blamed neither "misguided benevolence" nor master neglect and brutality for the slave discontent that fed Vesey's insurrection. According to Adger, the root of discontent was the slave's "natural desire for liberty," exacerbated perhaps by a level of religious ignorance, but not fanaticism. In fact, Adger praised the integrity of Morris Brown and his "worthy co-adjutors" in the African Church. Adger focused his evaluation on public reaction to the exposed conspiracy, admitting that it may have been excessive, but was certainly understandable. In this assessment, Adger drew an explicit parallel to opponents of his separate churches movement two decades later. "I would see how sensitive our good old City had been rendered by the attempted insurrection," he wrote in reference to the public animosity that plagued the early years of his slave church. Adger's reflections on the Vesey era were not published until the 1890s, and colored by the lens of postbellum retrospect, but were also consistent with the humanitarian bent of his earlier writings on slavery.[15]

This consistent and basic empathy with all humankind also typified his approach to foreign missions. Adger's experience as a missionary in Smyrna offered a clear analogue to the slave mission, even before he recognized it as such. Adger understood the Armenian "race" in the same terms of Noahic taxonomy used to explain Afro-Carolinian alterity. Adger figured the Armenians were descendants of Japhet, since "their physiognomy distinguishes them from the descendants of Shem and their color

[14] Adger experienced the Vesey scare as a young man, prior to leaving Charleston, but authored these interpretations of the affair long after.
[15] Adger, *Life and Times*, 55. For earlier examples of Adger's trans-racial humanitarianism, see his *Christian doctrine of human rights and of slavery, in two articles, from the Southern Presbyterian review* (Columbia: I.C. Morgan, 1849).

from those of Ham." Though one degree closer to his own Japhetic stock, he applied the same methods used to convert the Hamitic races in South Carolina to his conversion and instruction of the Armenians. The text he used for catechism was C.C. Jones' *Catechism for Coloured Persons*, which he translated into "Modern Armenian" not literally, "but largely, as Dr. Jones had written it." Adger found Jones' text to be a "great success, exceedingly popular, exactly adopted to the existing condition of religious ignorance, even among intelligent Armenians."[16]

Adger found his professional niche in the translation and publication of evangelical and catechetical tracts for missionary use, and focused his energies and attentions on the heathen peoples of Eurasia. He paid little attention to the sectionalization of his own country, only as it reared its ugly head in the politics of the Presbyterian mission board. His involvement in slavery was largely unexamined, and he seemed to cling to early modern tenets of "necessary evil" or conditional antislavery. Only when the rising international tide of abolitionism muddied the waters of his own career did Adger come to consider the more immediate implications of slavery and sectional politics. When a controversy over slaveholder admission to the Presbyterian Mission Board erupted at a London meeting in 1846, Adger realized "what I had never thought of before…that, in a sense, I was one of those who were guilty of the sin of holding slaves." Adger sent a letter home renouncing "all right or title to any property in these slaves." As he reconsidered his personal relationship with slavery, Adger also began to think more generally about the institution and its function in God's plan for South Carolina. What followed was an ideological transformation to the religious

[16] Adger, *Life and Times*, 92, 100-01.

defense of slavery, exceptional in its timing and humanization. Adger thus represented a second wave of "paternalism," and pursued a closer expression of the paternalist ideal than any of his contemporaries.[17]

Only two years after confessing the "guilt" and "sin" of slavery in his personal writings, Adger professed that southerners "must sustain the institution of slavery against the mad and wild interference of people outside our borders." When forced to turn from the wide world of evangelism to the inner workings of the Carolina Covenant, Adger came to recognize the "great and good school of slavery" as the key to fulfilling God's will for his people. Returned from abroad under siege of abolitionists, Adger's "old interest in the Southern Negroes naturally reasserted itself." He saw "plainly that Christianity, as accepted by white masters, had not adequately impressed itself on their poor black dependents," and set out to close this racial gap in Christian understanding. Despite the abundant analogies, Adger realized that he could not apply the same template to this project that he had used in Armenia. Whereas a foreign missionary worked to change "the world around him," a domestic missionary "must carefully conform to his congregation, for many of their ideas and customs are good and right." In order to balance these objectives, to convert "these heathen in our midst" while conforming to the

[17] Adger, *Life and Times*, 134. Adger held slaves through his wife and estate back in Charleston. His agents in South Carolina were able to free all but one of these by the time his certification came before the Presbyterian Mission Board in April 1849. Prior to his transformation, Adger observed sectionalization from afar, so disinterestedly clung to the "limited emancipationist impulse" of the previous generation, described by Bill Freehling in "The Founding Fathers, Conditional Antislavery, and the NonRadicalism of the American Revolution" in William W. Freehling, *The reintegration of American history : slavery and the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994). After this ideological transformation, Adger's representation of "paternalism" reflected the humanitarian pole of the ideology as defined by Lacy Ford. See Chap. 3, n. 76.

ideas and customs of black and white Charlestonians, Adger devised a plan of racially separated churches.[18]

When Adger took his plan to the public, his arguments for separate churches presaged many of the points Trapier would make to Episcopal audiences over the summer. Adger built his May sermon out of three sequential theses: Afro-Carolinians, particularly slaves, were the "poor of the city of Charleston;" the gospel was "not adequately preached" to these poor black dependents; and white Charlestonians were not only obligated to provide for these spiritual wants, but there was also an expedient way to fulfill this obligation – through a separate black Presbyterian church, funded and controlled by white Presbyterians. Without explicit reference to the "poor of Charleston," Trapier's summer sermons reiterated most of Adger's points, and went further to assert the institutional weight of this plan, already approved by the Episcopal Diocese and state of South Carolina. At each oration, Trapier spent a third of his time reporting the convention's decision to "make arrangements for establishing and keeping up" his new black congregation.[19]

Trapier also distinguished himself from Adger by enunciating his local bona fides and directing his address primarily to slaveholders. Trapier ensured his audience that he was one of them, a proud slaveholder "born and bred in your midst." The collective "we" in the title of his sermon – "what shall we do for our servants?" – articulated Trapier's propertied interest in slavery to that of his audiences from the outset.[20] Though

[18] Adger, *Life and Times*, 149, 138, 143-44.
[19] Trapier, *The Religious instruction of the Black population ... A sermon preached in several of the Protestant Episcopal Churches in Charleston on Sundays in July 1847* (n.p., 1847); Adger, *Life and Times*, 72.
[20] According to Trapier's baptismal records, Calvary was very much a personal experiment. Most of the slaves who joined Calvary during its first years belonged to Trapier or members of his family. See Paul

he adopted a more personal tone, Trapier's message was the same as Adger's. He propagated Adger's estimations of black dependence, white obligation, and institutional shortcomings. Slaves were "human beings, with thoughts and feelings of their own…sitting in darkness…having no hope, without God in the world." The only way they could come to know God, and hope, and light, was through the cooperation of their masters. The fact that so many lived in darkness, and were accordingly "given to vices…pestilential to our whole community," was evidence to the institutional shortcomings of the master class. Police action could not remedy "this, or any other moral disease." The only cure was religious instruction, presently meted out in such limited dosage that the overwhelming majority of slaves in Charleston were left to their own moral devices. Trapier documented this moral gap with the same statistics used in Adger's calculations. Both Adger and Trapier estimated that the total capacity of Charleston's churches to accommodate slave attendants was 6000 seats. They used census figures from 1840 to deduce that from the total population of 20,000 slaves in Charleston, the churches left an "appalling residue" of 14,000 wayward dependents out in the cold.[21]

Trapier also distinguished himself from Adger by openly diminishing his pursuit of a separate black congregation by degrees of pragmatism. Whereas Adger vetted his plan behind closed doors, Trapier confessed that the separate church initiative was not

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Trapier, *The private register of the Rev. Paul Trapier.* (Charleston: Dalcho Historical Society of the Diocese of South Carolina, 1958).

[21] Trapier, *The Religious instruction of the Black Population* ,quoted in Adger, *Life and Times*, 171. Subsequent references to Trapier's statistics suggest a potential disparity with those cited by Adger; both Adger and the editors of the *Southern Presbyterian Review* quote Trapier as using the same figure of 20,000 slaves, while two July 31 letters to the *Mercury* cite 14,000 as a standard number derived from Trapier. Census records for 1840 counted 14,673 slaves and 1558 free people of color in the City of Charleston; the numbers for 1850 were 19,532 slaves and 3257 free people of color; numbers for Charleston District (County) were much higher, counting 58,539 slaves and 3201 free colored in 1840.

"absolutely the best" plan. Given the less-than-ideal conditions of a limited budget, black and white Charlestonians who preferred to worship separately, and the additional (remedial) effort required to reach most slaves, a separate black congregation was only the *most* satisfactory option available. Some of Adger's supporters actually faulted him for not including similar language in his pitch for separate churches. They intimated that he could have evaded some of his early opponents by initiating his new church project "in the plea of its being for poor white people, but with a view to transferring it afterward to the use of the blacks." This was a dubious proposition, a misguided effort to avoid and explain the immediate and fervent wave of public opposition to the separate churches movement that targeted Adger's plan, but not Trapier's.[22]

As soon as the Charleston *Courier* reported the publication of Adger's sermon, the editors and contributors of the Charleston *Mercury* launched an aggressive campaign to alert the community of the dangerous path Adger was treading. Starting July 20 and continuing well into August, the *Mercury* ran daily editorials and letters denouncing Adger's initiative as unnecessary and potentially hazardous. The *Mercury* endorsed the opinion of Andrew Magrath,[23] writing under the pseudonym "Many Citizens," who assessed Adger's plan as faulty, "offensive," and "more than questionable" for the policy of its implications in the public press. This last point most concerned the editors of the *Mercury*, who announced early on that they would not publish any letters that supported

[22] John B. Adger, *The religious instruction of the colored population a sermon preached by the Rev. John B. Adger, in the Second Presbyterian Church, Charleston, S.C., May 9th, 1847*, (Charleston: T.W. haynes, 1847), 26, 7.
[23] Most readers recognized "Many Citizens" as the nom de plume of Andrew Magrath. See Adger, *Life and Times*, 172.

Adger's initiative, or that otherwise rebuked the community's resources for the spiritual needs of local slaves.[24]

When Adger wrote that the "present plan of providing the Gospel to our poor is a failure," and the *Courier* endorsed Adger with a suggestion that slaveowners needed to do more for their slaves, it put the writers and readers of the *Mercury* on the defensive. The *Mercury* acted not only as a defense of hard-working ministers and responsible slaveowners, but also as a police of the public record, destroying potential ammunition for external critics. In the first notice of Adger's sermon to appear in the *Mercury*, "Many Citizens" wrote that Adger's appeal was "very far from aiding us in that contest for the preservation of our institutions now impending." Two weeks later, he summarized the dual threat of this separate church discourse: "such a system as he recommends would be dangerous at home, such arguments as he addresses to us on the subject are calculated to do us irreparable injury abroad."[25]

It seemed curious to some Presbyterians that this first round of opposition did not directly target the contemporary Episcopalian initiative. In the same issue as Magrath's first response to the Adger plan, the *Mercury* reported news of Episcopalian action towards the creation of a separate black church, but did so inaccurately. Based on second-hand information provided by a member of the Episcopal Church, the *Mercury* reported that the Diocese of South Carolina had *referred* Trapier's plan to investigative committee. A week later, they printed a correction, and reported that the Diocesan action had in fact *approved* Trapier's plan for a separate black church and *authorized* a committee to initiate the organization and construction of the church. This softer, errant

[24] *Mercury*, July 20-27, 1847.
[25] *Courier*, July 24, 1847; *Mercury*, August 3, 1847.

presentation of the movement afoot in the Episcopal Church went unheard amid the alarm sounded by Many Citizens. Adger's sermon also contained a stronger critique of the present system of negro religious instruction than Trapier's. Along with its commendatory notice in the *Courier,* this made his church a more likely target of opposition. More urgently than anything Adger said, the editorial notice of the *Courier* put "Many Citizens" on the defensive. Quoting the *Courier* (selectively and) out of context, he tilted against the paper's suggestion that "*we have been wanting* in our duty to that class of the population." He insisted that "We have done our duty as a class with great fidelity to those whom Providence has cast in our land," and to suggest otherwise was offensive to the hard-working preachers who did all they could for these people.[26]

This first round of objections came before either Magrath or the editor of the *Mercury*, John Carew, had read Adger's sermon in its entirety. Once he perused Adger's pamphlet and the appended proceedings of the South Carolina Presbytery, Magrath admitted to some of his previous misunderstandings. Instead of alleviating his concerns, however, Adger's words added fuel to Many Citizens' fire. Adger's proposition that "God will curse us" and place a "blight on our own souls and those of our children," unless we improved the system of religious instruction was "censure." Magrath objected to Adger's appeal on many fronts. Like the rest of the letters and editorials published by the *Mercury* in opposition to Adger's plan, his objections broke down into three levels: the first, simple "misapprehension" of Adger's plan, objections to practices or proposals that were never on the table; second, a deeper anxiety, a nervous pathology that led opponents to jump to some of these errant conclusions, but was not remedied by

[26] *Mercury*, July 20, 1847; italics in original.

correction; and deeper still, a third level of fundamental grievances with Adger's objectives, an interminable difference of opinion that underlined and transcended disputes over the details.[27]

The *Mercury* refused to publish any letters in support of Adger's dangerous plan, but they did publish two of Adger's letters for the sake of accuracy, to correct some of the previous misstatements they had published regarding his plan. Adger's letters corrected several exaggerated charges: the new congregation would not be vested with any ecclesiastical authority, instruction would be strictly oral, and there were no plans to elevate the congregation from subordinate to independent status at any time in the future. Another contributor to the *Mercury*, writing under the initial "Y," supplemented Adger's letters of clarification with a few of his own. Y's primary objective seemed to be a defense of the *Courier* – to demonstrate that other local papers had also published laudatory notices of Adger's sermon and provide the context missing from Macgrath's quotation of the Courier editorial. (This and other factors suggest that "Y" was the pseudonym of Richard Yeadon, former editor and current owner of the *Courier*) In defending the *Courier*, Y also found it necessary to correct some misperceptions of Adger's plan, and thereby clarify his paper's recommendation.[28]

Y wrote that Adger's plan had been misrepresented as a novelty, when in fact separate all-black meetings had been in place in the Methodist Churches for decades. Since the Methodists employed colored teachers and exhorters, Adger's plan was actually an improvement of the extant system, employing only white teachers "of southern blood,

[27] *Mercury*, July 27, 1847; William L. King, *The newspaper press of Charleston, S.C. a chronological and biographical history, embracing a period of one hundred and forty years.* (Charleston, S.C.: E. Perry, 1872).
[28] Ibid.

feelings, interests and principles." Y strengthened his argument through analogy to missionary activity among the sailors who passed through the port of Charleston. The new Presbyterian congregation would turn slaves into better "servants and subjects," just as "seamen under appropriate pastors become better sailors, better citizens, and better men." Such analogies were anathema to the opposition. The prospect of black heathen advancing through the same steps and means as white sailors was exactly what the opposition was fighting against. Despite Adger's corrective that these students would not be reading the scriptures for themselves, a deeper anxiety obfuscated such details amid paranoid imaginings of the consequences of black knowledge. The Presbyterian Church would not instruct slaves to read, but this did not invalidate the general (argument and) fear of black knowledge and freedom of thought. Magrath made the class-race analogy explicit. He asked "why is it that the artificial distinctions that govern society in the old world" are absent here in South Carolina? He answered with the great leveler of knowledge. All classes of white society in the United States enjoyed access to knowledge, the "glass that exposes arrogance and pretension." This was a universal truth, according to Magrath, which would produce the same effect among all classes of men, including negro slaves. In order to keep slaves distinct and subordinate, it was necessary to keep this looking glass out of their reach.[29]

Even after Adger and his Presbyterian supporters explained that their intent was not to create an independent or autonomous black church, the *Mercury* continued to run pieces that assumed this was the case.[30] Adger's letter in the *Mercury* explained that the

[29] *Mercury*, July 24, 1847; *Mercury* July 23, 1847.
[30] Most prominent among Adger's early supporters in this effort was James Henley Thornwell, by most accounts the most formidable and influential southern theologian of his era; see Eugene D. Genovese, *The*

new church would exist in a subordinate capacity "as long as 'our state of society' deems it necessary" to "withhold from them the full rights and privileges which that system confers upon ourselves." Whether formal or informal, separation was (symbolically) tantamount to independence, and thus a dangerous model for impressionable black minds. "Old Mortality," another contributor to the *Mercury*, wrote that this change in religious status would eventually and inevitably transform classes and congregations into "disguised names for companies and battalions." Even after Magrath acknowledged that some of his misapprehensions had been cleared up by reading Adger's plan, he continued to harp on many of the same canards, most redundantly the prospect of a future transition to congregational independence.[31]

In his penchant for outrage, "M.C." reflected a style of writing typical of the *Mercury*. Though varied in their racial sensibilities, *Mercury* contributors were consistent in their hypersensitive hermeneutic.[32] The (immediate) tendency to read Adger's critique as an accusation was consistent with the paper's general inclination to treat every impotent antislavery resolution made by distant church or city council, or Republican agitation, as a threat to their way of life. During the 1840s and 50s, the *Mercury* regularly broadcast news that the "handwriting is on the wall, signing the doom of the southern states." The most threatening, and thus most exaggerated feature of Adger's pamphlet, as targeted by his opponents in the *Mercury*, was the possibility of

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slaveholders' dilemma : freedom and progress in southern conservative thought, 1820-1860 (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1992).

[31] *Mercury*, July 28, 1847; *Mercury* August 2, 1847.

[32] The spectrum of racial sensibilities among *Mercury* contributors in opposition to the separate church ranged from the Old School patriarchal enmity and suspicion expressed by Old Mortality to the modern manipulation of mutable black intellect advocated by MC. Whereas Old Mortality used the curse of Ham and African history to prove essential negro inferiority, MC recognized the constructivist nature of racial difference and worried about the dangers inherent in a society built upon the slippery slope of racial hierarchy.

congregational autonomy inferred by Adger's appendix of Presbytery Proceedings. The Presbytery listed three types of possible congregational arrangement, but refused to consider or voted down the two proposals that would eventually allow black Presbyterians control of their own church. The only option that survived was that of a "missionary branch" of an existing church (Second Presbyterian), the management and discipline of which would be conducted by the mother church. Nonetheless, language selected from the defeated proposals continued to dominate commentary in the *Mercury*.[33]

Beneath the confused and exaggerated details of the proposed congregation dwelt the essence of the conflict – a fundamental divergence, not of facts, but of their meanings. Both sides seemed to agree that the "goal of education" was "to change them from what they are to what they should be," but Adger and his opponents disagreed on what slaves "should be." For Adger, slaves should be saved, education should enable them to reach their full moral and spiritual capacities; for Many Citizens, slaves should be slaves, education should make them better slaves, or at least not make them worse. With or without literacy, knowledge was power. "You mature their minds that they might be able to see what is right. It would be childish to say that you instruct them only that they may see as you see, and believe as you may believe." Whereas Adger had no fear of black freedom of thought, or the ability "to see what is right," his opponents feared the exercise of this freedom would lead slaves to dangerous conclusions. In a separate church of their

[33] In addition to the abundant political reports likely to stoke fear in the hearts of their readers, a good example of the *Mercury*'s role as product and producer of paranoia was the daily cholera quarantine notice it ran on the front page, noted below. The first defeated proposal of the Presbyterian council was a new church under the temporary authority of their pastor until the church "could elect its own officers and discharge the functions of a particular church." The second proposal was for a church governed by white elders elected by members of the (black) congregation, eliminated due to its unconstitutionality.

own, slaves would learn that "what they suffer for it will be a proud distinction." They would learn "lessons of zeal, that the faggot and pile could not consume martyrdom that scorned the most ingenious devices of cruel intolerance. To minds thus mature, what shall be the language of the master or the owner?"[34]

A common expression of this binary – between confident and paranoid styles of black religious education – was a debate over the degree to which Afro-Carolinians benefited from "white preaching." Adger based his argument for separate churches largely upon his perception that most of the slaves who attended white churches could not comprehend sermons addressed to white audiences.[35] His opponents rejected this estimation, but not out of any higher esteem for black intellectual capacity. Their evidence for the benefits accrued to the colored portion of integrated congregations amounted to a series of platitudes and circular logic. "We know that their colored congregations are satisfied with" the present system because they have never given us any reason to think otherwise. Their pastors work hard, and do all they can do, if they can understand the truth of Christ, surely they can make these truths understood by slaves.[36]

The great majority of white Charlestonians would never have thought to dig deeper into the field of black comprehension. Whether or not slaves understood the highbrow sermons of Charleston's lettered Doctors of Theology, they caused no trouble, thus there was no reason to alter the present format of ministry. In the minds of Adger's

[34] *Mercury*, July 20 and 23, 1847.
[35] Adger estimated that only one-half or one-third of the 6000 slaves who attended church could comprehend the meaning of "white preaching."
[36] *Mercury*, July 27, 1847. "Many Citizens" wrote "Our preachers do all they can…unless they labor in vain because they are incapable of making themselves understood by the colored people...I will not admit this. If the pastors understand the truth themselves, they can make it understood by others…do you doubt they understand the truth?"

opponents, the only reason to enact such a change would be to "to prepare them for…a radical change in their position," i.e. the end of slavery. There were also other, more positive, reasons to preserve the racial integration of Charleston churches. Many of the *Mercury's* readers subscribed to a mimetic theory of acculturation and racial difference. Since "imitation is strong among all inferior races," combining black and white provided a simpler and superior means of religious education through emulation. Slaves needed to observe their white superiors at worship, because "of all the peculiarities of the white race the one that they covet the most is religion."[37]

What all these objections boiled down to, the factor that determined the consensus line of division between Adger and his opponents, between the *Courier* and the *Mercury,* was a personal and institutional level of satisfaction with the religious status quo. Whereas Adger feared what might happen if Charleston did not alter its slave ministry, his opponents feared what might happen if they did. As a recent convert to the Carolina covenant, still energetic and idealistic in his proslavery defense, John Adger worried more about his community's evident failure to fulfill the obligations Providence had placed upon it. Those who had spent more time wrestling domestic realities and external pressures into a hard-fought equilibrium of pragmatic inconsistency resented his aggressive naiveté. They believed that Providence and tradition had established a regular order in which Afro-Carolinians observed their white superiors at worship, for the benefit of both parties. The divinely-sanctioned tradition of integrated churches dictated that "these negroes will sit together and learn the lesson of those duties equally important to the bond and the free." The only way to know if the present system could be improved

[37] Letter from "Old Mortality," *Mercury*, August 2, 1847.

in accordance with the prevalent tastes of both black and white audiences would be to break tradition and conduct "a very fearful experiment" in racially segregated services, more potential risk than reward.[38]

The self-conscious separation of entrenched conservatives from naïve progressives was evident in the joke "Old Mortality" used to open his first letter against the racial segregation of Charleston churches. Before he got into the grit of argument, he endorsed the *Mercury*'s decision not to devote any "columns to the speculations of that most pestilent race – **modern reformers**." Reform was a "disease of prosperity," the drunken delusion of well-meaning men like Adger intoxicated by the spirit of progress, "a morbid desire to make things better than it has pleased heaven to vouchsafe."[39]

In the immediate debate over separate churches, this brand of religious conservatism often translated into a contentious obsession with statistics – challenging the numbers cited by Adger and Trapier to verify local shortcomings and revising these into more moderate schedules of improvement. Opponents of separate churches quoted lower populations of slaves in Charleston, or cut children and the elderly from the number of eligible churchgoers. Though some disputed its size, none disputed the existence of a gap between the number of slaves in Charleston and the number of available gallery seats. Many Citizens even skewed the statistics enough to suggest a more moderate means to close this gap. Dividing the lowball figure of 14,000 slaves by the total number of "evangelical" churches (28) in Charleston, he deferred the seating

[38] *Mercury*, July 23, 1847.
[39] *Mercury*, August 2, 1847.

responsibility to 500 per church, and left it to each church to make the necessary arrangements.[40]

Magrath's proposal was oppositional, and rendered unrealistic by the financial and architectural obstacles inherent in such a universal plan, but nonetheless represented a third way of reform, a moderate means to satisfy the same objective conjured by Adger's radical plea. Most Charlestonians recognized the need to serve their neglected black dependents, but chafed at the extremism of Adger's plan as caricatured in the *Mercury*. "Another Citizen" intimated that "heads as old and hearts as warm as ours" would need much more dramatic evidence to support such a dramatic change. Moderation was the key to the "warm hearts" of Charleston, and many of these "old heads" found it in the pages of the *Courier*, as well as in the ostensibly more pragmatic course of Trapier's Episcopalian Church. While the *Mercury* backed away from the separate churches issue to allow for denominational autonomy, the *Courier* echoed Trapier's argument for separation as only the second best option to fulfill the collective obligation of Charleston slaveholders. This more moderate position, bolstered by assurances from the most respected churches (Episcopalian) and most read paper in town (the *Courier*), proved more palatable to conservative tastes. [41]

The editor of the *Courier* spoke for the mainstream of the city, "as a Christian community," obliged to provide for the spiritual welfare of Afro-Carolinians "in our churches, or out of our churches; that is in churches expressly erected and set apart for them." The *Courier* expressed doubts about separating black from white, as "God is no respecter of persons," and "the due subordination of the subject race requires that the

[40] *Mercury*, July 27, 1847.
[41] Letter from "Another Citizen," *Merc*ury, July 22, 1847.

master and the slave should meet, for religious service, in the same temple, each in his marked and distinctive place." Due to the excessive population of their urban community, the Courier recognized that it was not possible to sufficiently expand the extant churches to accommodate the "distinctive place" of the "subject race," so the best alternative was to build new and separate black churches. This was the same sequential logic presented by Paul Trapier, adopted by the Episcopal Diocese of South Carolina, and quoted by John Adger in an effort to deflect the criticism he engaged in the public press.[42]

Trapier's separate church plan did not endure the initial opposition that beleaguered Adger's. This helps to explain why the Episcopalians worked faster to organize their black congregation than the Presbyterians. In March of 1848, Trapier conducted the first services for his all-black congregation in the basement of St. Philip's parsonage, and transferred meetings to Temperance Hall by July. Over the next year, Trapier's church steadily gained attendance, claiming 30-40 "black and colored" attendants at the morning service, and 100 at the afternoon service. Statistically, his Sunday School was even more popular, with 276 total students, including 40 free children, and 40 adult slaves. Trapier also held meetings at his house during the week for the few attendants who opted for confirmation.[43]

The Episcopal Diocese purchased a lot on the corner of Beaufain and Wilson streets, and by the start of the next year, Trapier had raised enough money to start construction of his church for negroes. Brick by brick, Calvary Episcopal Church built up resentment among the more radical (and popular) segments of the populus, until an angry horde of white opponents disrupted construction on the night of July 14, 1849.

[42] *Courier*, July 20, 1847; Letter from "Y," *Mercury*, July 24, 1847..
[43] Trapier, *Incidents in my life*, 27.

The summer of 1849 was a period of escalating national and domestic tensions, an anxious lull before the storm forecast to develop around congressional debate of the Wilmot Proviso in December. On July 13, a notoriously rebellious slave named Nicholas Kelly initiated a confrontation in the Charleston Workhouse that spiraled into a full-scale breakout, resulting in the assault of several white men and the escape of 37 slaves. This great escape touched off a panic in Charleston, which quickly racialized to focus on the most prominent physical structure of black autonomy – the nearly constructed "nigger church" on Beaufain Street, one block from the workhouse. Nicholas and most of the escaped slaves were captured soon after, and Nicholas was tried the next day. Immediately following his trial, a mob of white Charlestonians descended upon the Calvary construction site and attempted to tear the unfinished building down.[44]

As evident in the pages of the *Mercury*, Charlestonians adopted an increasingly oppositional attitude towards national politics, a growing fury and fear that inflected commentary on all matters, local, national, and international. Even moderates agreed with the sentiment (expressed in support of John Calhoun's letter to the *Courier*) "that we can expect nothing from Whigs or Democrats in defense of our peculiar institutions." The editorial bent of the *Mercury* exaggerated and exacerbated these frustrations to prepare Charlestonians for what they saw as a looming social and political crisis. As Charlestonians warmed up for imminent catastrophe, the paranoid spirit quickly spread to other concerns. During the summer of 1849, the front page of the *Mercury* was filled

[44] Robert F. Durden, "The Establishment of Calvary Protestant Episcopal Church for Negroes in Charleston," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 65, no. 2 (1964): 63–84; lull-storm metaphor extrapolated from Durden; history of Charleston Workhouse summarized below.

with daily announcements regarding cholera outbreak and quarantine, until the workhouse panic emerged to dominate the paper through its back pages in late July.[45]

Notice of the mob action that targeted Calvary Church appeared only secondarily in the *Mercury*, in dispute of a report from the *Wilmington Commercial* that "1200 citizens repaired to the Church, lately erected for the worship of blacks, with the intention of pulling it down." The Mayor intervened, and succeeded in getting the mob to postpone their destruction of the church. The local military were also in force, but the unnamed Charlestonian who sent this report to Wilmington was assured that if they were ordered to protect the church, they would have refused. The editor of the *Mercury* included this notice only to dispute it. His editorial comments diminished the size of the mob to 300, fully "three-quarters of whom were opposed to all measures of violence and would have resisted." In addition, there were no military present or needed to calm the crowd. The editor's revisionist objective was explicit: to assure Charleston, and the rest of the world, that "our fair city can be relieved of the odium which justly attaches to mob rule."[46]

Over the next month, the local news of the *Mercury* consisted of the traditional reports of Independence Day celebrations and toasts, alternating with responses to the jailbreak and riot of July 13-14. The *Mercury's* coverage of the Workhouse Trial was comprehensive, but reports on the Calvary attack appeared only indirectly, through implicit references made in certain letters to the editor.[47] Though the primary focus of local news was the jailbreak – news of escapees captured, exhaustive transcripts of

[45] Notice of Letter from John C. Calhoun, *Mercury*, July 17, 1849.
[46] *Mercury*, July 21, 1849.
[47] *Mercury*, July 20, 1849. One of these rare examples occurred in a letter defending Calvary Church, insisting that the goal of the church was "nothing that would cause an attempt to prevent its accomplishment by unlawful force."

testimony from the ensuing trial, letters demanding reform of workhouse policy – the editors also ran a steady stream of commentary on Calvary Church, a second wave of opposition to the separate churches movement initiated by the riot on July 14. Calvary Church and the Charleston Workhouse represented the two faces of racial control (positive and negative reinforcement) through two institutional prongs of negro management. In tandem, these two currents of local discourse comprised the latest chapter of institutional racialization in Charleston. This was a lively chapter, as letters debating the proper course of black ministry appeared alongside a critical discussion of workhouse regulations to reveal the persistent variety of racial consciousness and strategies of negro management.

The history of the workhouse unfolded according to the stages of racialization and social control laid out in previous chapters. Created during the early eighteenth century as a means to house and punish servants of both races, by the early nineteenth century, the workhouse had become exclusively an institution of Negro correction (housing both slaves and free people of color). The "disagreeable nature of (slave) discipline" rendered the workhouse a necessity of urban slavery. Masters sent unruly or disobedient slaves to the workhouse for whippings, confinement, and forced labor. By the 1840s, managers of the workhouse had developed a relaxed but efficient mien of operation. When the jailbreak of 1849 exposed its inner workings to public scrutiny, many Charlestonians were alarmed at the laxity of workhouse managers and demanded reform. Letters to the *Mercury* took aim at the use of workhouse detainees as supervisors, and the reluctance of white authorities to use more deliberate force in response to insubordination. "Verbum Sat" wrote that elevating the status of "negro drivers" in the workhouse set a bad example

and a dangerous precedent. "Everyone acquainted with the vanity and conceit of the negro character, knows how easily it is acted upon by such a circumstance." Verbum Sat and "Old Citizen" insisted that the norms used in white penitentiaries would not have the same effect on a people more accustomed to subjection and servitude. Ostensibly a bulwark to the racial order, the workhouse instead became a slippery slope of boundary transgression, where disobedient and disorderly (dangerous) negroes were elevated above their rightful, subordinate station.[48]

In response to the workhouse panic, and the public outcry from Charlestonians like Old Citizen and Verbum Sat, the city council passed a motion on July 18 to investigate and reform the operations of the workhouse. Two days later, the mayor announced a public meeting and promised a committee to investigate and reform recent developments on the other side of negro management, namely the separate churches movement. Much like the workhouse panic, this latest chapter in black ministry was continuous with the longue durée of racialization and social control in Charleston. Nonetheless, many Charlestonians perceived the construction of an Episcopalian Church for Negroes as a new and threatening development. Most of these blamed the riotous conduct of July 14 not on "demagogues" or the "popular rabble," but instead on the threat posed by Calvary Church. As with the destruction of the African Church in 1822, Charlestonians targeted Calvary Church, the most prominent physical symbol of Afro-Carolinian community, as the release valve for escalating racial tensions. Opponents of the church militated against this threat, "seemingly new in the city," without regard for

[48] Henry, *The Police Control of the Slave in South Carolina*, 46-7;Basil Hall, *Travels in North America, in the years 1827 and 1828* (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea & Carey, 1829), 204; *Mercury*, July 14-19, 1849. "Verbum Sat" is an abbreviation of a Latin phrase meaning "a word to the wise (is sufficient)." Verbum Sat once visited the workhouse to find his own disobedient slave with a whip in his hand. Nicholas was purportedly utilized as a driver, as discussed below.

the fact that similar structures of black religion had existed for decades in Charleston, and that the same plan of ministry "had, for many years, been successfully and beneficially acted upon in the country." The Methodist plan of organization and instruction had involved much more populous semi-autonomous black classes since its incorporation, and sizable all-black plantation chapels had been growing to prominence over the previous decade. These cells received limited treatment in the published opposition to Calvary Church, but did nothing to deflect the focus of the mob.[49]

One of those who wrote to the *Mercury* in opposition to the separate churches movement included a familiar, but curious anecdote to flesh out his understanding of the stakes involved in the racial contestation of sacred space. "Charleston" attended service at an integrated Episcopalian church, where he observed the baptism of two white children of "highly respectable parents," before "a negro child was brought in, baptized with the rest, all the sponsors and parents standing around, and in every respect treated as one of the white children." Ignoring the fact that a separate church like Calvary would actually avert such spectacles, he asked "if such things are permitted, will not our blacks soon be taught to consider themselves our equals in other respects?" In clear invocation of the slippery slope argument against ritualist displays of spiritual equality, "Charleston" warned if "you put them on equality on one subject…there is no barrier which will be finally left." He saw Calvary as the black half of the baptismal font writ large: "the negro church is the first step [to equality], and I heartily hope the good sense of the community will put a stop to it."[50]

[49] *Mercury*, July 20, 1849.
[50] *Mercury*, July 23, 1849.

For "Charleston," this episodic blackening of white sacred space was a sign of things to come. It was the most immediate experience he associated with the trouble lurking in a separate negro church. The racialization of sacred space was an important touchstone in this second wave of debate over the separate churches movement. Opponents believed black congregants needed not only white ministry, but also to observe white congregants at worship. As a metaphor for the world outside of the church, masters and slaves worshiping together, but apart – "each in his marked and distinctive place" – served as sacred, spatial reinforcement of the "due subordination of the subject race." Opponents faulted Calvary for excluding white role models, or for failing to adequately distinguish white seating so as to establish "a degree of communism among the different classes of worshippers, entirely at variance with our institutions."[51]

The Committee in charge of Calvary Church had already responded to these complaints in February of 1848, when they mandated a "certain part of the church to be 'set apart from the latter, and distinguished beyond mistake, from the benches for servants.'" The committee responded again, to the charge made in the *Mercury* on July 23 by "A Citizen" that there were no special seating arrangements made for whites in the building. Henry Lesesne, the secretary for the committee, wrote that the church was incomplete and no benches had been installed, but the church plan called for "benches in the front, along the wall, longitudinally, facing the pulpit (and the congregation in the middle) to accommodate 50 whites." These benches would be painted a different color and set off by "a wide space between them and black seats." Lesesne added that this "discrimination has been deemed sufficient" by previous oversight, but construction was

[51] *Mercury*, July 21, 1849.

not yet complete, so the committee could do more to reform the seating structure if deemed necessary by the public.[52]

Another, less overt, touchstone of debate was class conflict: "demagogues" and the "Charleston rabble" united in opposition to a movement supported by "the owners of the larger part of the slaves in the lower country." Calvary's defenders emphasized the propertied interest behind the church. Lesesne claimed that all those who voted to approve the Calvary plan in 1848 "are owners of slaves, many hold large numbers of them, and are necessarily interested in the regulation of slavery." Both Trapier and the *Mercury* depicted the July 14 rioters as members and exploiters of the underclass. Trapier remembered the rioters as "white mechanics…the rabble of the city, set upon by some demagogues," while the editors of the *Mercury* diminished the radical contingent to 75 uninformed and "easily alarmed" rowdies. Even the "most respectable" opponents of Calvary Church admitted to the superior socioeconomic influence of the Church's supporters. In his letter to the *Mercury* "Charleston" reported that many of those present at the Convention that set Calvary in motion regarded the plan with aversion, but "held [their] tongues out of respect for those in charge." The riot "dissipated [their] confidence in these architects" and catalyzed their silent aversion into vocal opposition. Instead of airing his grievances to the Episcopalian Convention, "Charleston" wrote to the *Mercury*. His intent was to show Charlestonians that they could not allow a denominational committee, no matter how respectable, to decide "matters of public interest."[53]

Over the next few months, "Charleston" got what he wanted. On the heels of the Episcopalian call for public feedback and the action promised by James L. Petigru and

[52] Ibid.; *Mercury*, July 20, 1849.
[53] Trapier, *Incidents in My Life*, 5, 26; *Mercury*, July 20 and 23, 1849.

the influential Charlestonians who quelled the riot on July 14, the Mayor organized a public meeting in response to the riot and a bureaucratic investigation into the separate churches movement. Mayor Hutchinson appointed three sub-committees to investigate the laws pertaining to black assembly and religion, the brief history of Calvary Episcopal Church, and the available methods of religious instruction for people of color.[54] By November, each sub-committee had returned its results to the Mayor to be synthesized and published in an official report. The report concluded that Calvary Episcopal Church was an institution suited to both local traditions and present realities. Committee members entertained every possible objection to the church, and found that churches like Calvary were not only tolerable, but necessary to

> insure to the slave that appropriate Religious and moral Instruction, which will make him content with the station in which Providence has placed him, submissive to his superiors, and observant of the laws…it is the duty of all…to regard this provision as essential, not only to the welfare of the slave, but to that of the State **of which he is a humble but most useful component part**.[55]

Trapier's church was not just acceptable, or beneficial for the small group of masters and slaves it served, but also "a model for others engaged in the same laudable work." Among the recommendations included in the Mayor's report was stronger

[54] The first Sub-committee, chaired by M.T. Mendenhall, was appointed to research methods of "religious instruction to slaves and free persons of color…in this city and other places;" the second sub-committee, chaired by Edward McGrady, was charged with legal inquiry, to determine whether "any remedy…or legislative provision in regard to the management of the slave population of our city, is called for by the interests of the public good." The objective of the third subcommittee, chaired by W.J. Grayson, was to examine the "measures taken or…in contemplation, for the erection and organization of Calvary Church. According to one historian of the Calvary Committee, all three sub-committee chairs, as well as Petigru and the Committee Secretary (F.R. Shackleford) were "mission advocates;" Janet Duitsman. Cornelius, *Slave missions and the Black church in the antebellum South* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1999)., 122.

[55] Committee of Fifty on Calvary Church (Charleston, S.C.), *Public proceedings relating to Calvary Church, and the religious instruction of slaves. With an appendix, containing the reports of the sub-committees, and the answers of different persons interrogated. Published by order of Council.* (Charleston, S.C.: Printed by Miller & Browne, 1850), 20.

legislative attention to the needs and institutions of black religious instruction. Specifically, the legal sub-committee requested more precise legislation to quantify the number of white attendants required at black religious gatherings. More generally, the report acknowledged the need for greater public support of institutions like Calvary Church. Calvary demonstrated the means through which the state of South Carolina might fulfill its providential obligations to this "humble but most useful component part." In order to implement this model on a wider institutional scale, it was advisable to "combine…the indispensable obligation of imparting religious instruction to our slave population…to our political institutions."[56]

Each sub-committee inflected the report with unique observations, but the composite of their work was approval: previous church operations suggested that Calvary would continue to provide a constructive influence; most of those surveyed on methods of religious instruction for slaves preferred the Calvary plan of separate churches; and the church did not violate any state or local laws against unsupervised black assembly.

The legal committee, headed by Edward McCrady, considered the racial dynamics involved at Calvary through the legal precedent of plantation chapels.

> Many of our planters, we know, have for years been enjoying the privilege of gathering their negroes together for religious worship and instruction, on their respective plantations in private chapels, or in houses erected expressly for this purpose, by several neighboring planters, not only with the sanction of the law, but with the hearty approbation of the whole community.[57]

McCrady's committee also recommended several policies to keep separate church management in accordance with the law, all of which were consistent with those enacted

[56] Ibid., 10.
[57] Ibid., 13.

by Trapier and his staff. Religious instruction should be conducted orally, by white teachers, and worship should be conducted in "places designed in part for the use of an established congregation of white persons." Beyond the hegemonic (and mimetic) function of observing whites at worship, this qualification offered a number of other practical guarantees. Regular white attendance or membership would not only secure easy supervision but also ensure that the religious experience was "holy" and conducive to moral and spiritual improvement. McCrady wrote that "the best security we have that it is a religion without licentiousness, is the open and avowed profession of that religion by some established congregation of white persons." White congregants would act as an insurance policy against heresy, as they would never permit the "defilement of a place they consider holy."[58]

The sub-committee charged with investigating the inner workings of Trapier's church approached their subject from several angles, but none of these exposed any dangers. William Grayson and his sub-committee probed Episcopal records for viable alternative means of expansion among black Charlestonians, but found nothing to challenge Trapier's conclusion that a new separate church was the most practical option. Grayson's conclusions were heavy with the influence of the Episcopal parishioners who sanctioned the church. These men of considerable status gave "to the city the most unexceptionable guarantees, in character, property and attachment to the State." Their bona fides consisted not only in their wealth and interest in slavery, but more

[58] Ibid., 15.

dramatically in their "wives and children, property, opinions, and even prejudices," all of which acted to "secure [their] pledges to the community."[59]

The critical refrain of Grayson's report was black dependence. Grayson's committee was "moved by the destitute and dependent condition of the black population." Just as "these people" were "dependent on their masters for their temporal comforts, they are quite as much so, for their moral and religious improvement." Grayson quoted the report of the Episcopalian Convention to affirm their rationale of black dependence and white obligation. "Man cannot live on bread alone," he reported, the Word of God was just as necessary to the sustenance of slaves, so imparting this Word was "a duty which masters could not refuse or neglect to perform."[60]

The Committee on Religious Instruction, chaired by Dr. M.T. Mendenhall, distributed a circular questionnaire among regional parties with experience in slave instruction. Their report repeated many of the affirmations and (re)commendations made by the other two committees, and also synthesized the results of their questionnaire into a general report in favor of the operations at Calvary Church.[61] Mendenhall's committee received 69 responses to the circular, 23 of which came from Charleston, and eighteen more from other parts of South Carolina. 36 respondents expressed a preference for racially separated congregations of worship and instruction. The general consensus behind this preference was that "preaching can be better adapted to both whites and blacks when they are separately addressed." Those who supported separation tended to be more familiar with "the ignorance, slowness of mental action, and difficulty of fixing

[59] Ibid., 19.
[60] Ibid., 17.
[61] See Appendix C for complete questionnaire.

religious truths in the memories of negroes." This black pathology, they believed, made specialized preaching "indispensable." "Black" preaching "should be well adapted to their capacity, plain, simple, replete with repetitions and illustrations, drawn from the familiar objects and scenes of their daily life." Separation was thus a necessary consequence of specialization, as "intelligent white people" would find this simple style, with its illustrations of slave life, "not only…irksome and unprofitable, but even distasteful."[62]

This public contest over the separate churches movement revealed two layers of ideological conflict among white Charlestonians. The first was a debate over the status quo, between conservatives who favored the working imperfections of the traditional church and progressives confident in the new prescription for improvement. The second was a tension between the cultural and governmental imperatives of slavery (advancing the interests of black dependents) and those of race (building solidarity around the interests of white independents / superiors). Though the chronological layers of opposition organized neatly into two separate waves – discursive evaluation of the Presbyterian plan followed two years later by public assault on Calvary Church – the ideological layers of opposition were much more tangled.

The first wave of opposition came from members of the political and intellectual elite: venerated conservatives who took aim at Adger's Presbyterian project, while

[62] Committee of Fifty, *Public Proceedings Related to Calvary* (1850), 21-24. Only eleven respondents expressed outright opposition to the plan of separation. Most of these did so out of preference for the traditional and hegemonic values received by slaves who worshipped in the presence of their masters. 67 replied that the religious instruction of slaves was an imperative duty of southern churches, and all but three of the respondents replied that this instruction should be conducted by white teachers. A great majority also insisted that slaves should receive only oral instruction. In both the mandate for white teachers and oral instruction, the most notable contradictions came from Charleston. A significant sub-theme of the questionnaire was the prospect of autonomous negro "bands," which seemed to be familiar to most respondents, but not threatening to any of their localities.

allowing the comparable initiative of their aristocratic peers in the Episcopalian Church to progress unmolested. This first wave gathered around the letters of Andrew Magrath, a prominent Charleston lawyer, former state representative and future governor of Confederate South Carolina. Magrath argued that a century of gradual improvements had yielded a racial equilibrium (of pragmatic inconsistency) worth defending. Most pointedly, he defended this status quo against the charge that "God will curse" South Carolina for her failure to advance the spiritual welfare of black dependents. [63]

Magrath invoked "providence" in typical acknowledgement (liturgical recitation) of the Carolina Covenant, but interpreted the providential will at work in mid-century South Carolina differently from Adger and his more progressive peers. God's will was evidently laissez-faire on black outreach, but activist on white privilege. In both respects, Magrath's position was continuous with longer threads of racial discourse. The "civilize" side of the eighteenth-century "to convert or civilize" debate over the function of religious outreach flowed through more recent materialist theories of educational value into the framework of Magrath's behavioral evidence for laissez-faire. The goal of religious outreach was to civilize the African brute, "to change them from what they are to what they should be," and this was a goal that Carolinians had pursued with "great fidelity to those whom Providence has cast in our land." Magrath feared Adger's Church would change slaves into what they should not be – independent-minded slaves, striving for equality, "prepared for a radical change in their position."[64]

[63] Magrath was a former protégé of J.L. Petigru, who once supported Petigru's moderate, cooperationist political position but evolved into a more radical southern rights advocate by the 1850s. He resigned from a federal judgeship in protest when Lincoln was elected in 1860. See Magrath biographical tracking below in Epilogue.
[64] *Mercury*, July 20, 1847.

The more activist bent of Magrath's argument against separate churches was a call to defend and perpetuate the democratization of white privilege. Over the past 30 years, racial modernists substantially widened white access to status elevation, at the expense of black cultural autonomy. They had worked to transform a new world without the "artificial distinctions that govern society in the old world" into a society governed by new, more natural, distinctions. Implicitly, however, Magrath seemed to concede that replacing socioeconomic distinctions with racial ones was not an entirely natural process. He moved beyond the assumptions of black pathology to situate the defense of white privilege amid a more realistic (mutable) racial context. "If you mature their minds that they might be able to see what is right," slaves will think for themselves, come to their own conclusions, and assert their intellectual equality. Once exposed to religious equality, they will hunger for social and political equality. In order to defend this "natural" hierarchy from the logical outcome of black humanity, it was necessary to maintain the institutional artifice of white independence and black dependence.

In this governmental advocacy of white interests against those of Afro-Carolinians, Magrath, and his fellows in the first wave of opposition to the separate churches movement, articulated the popular class sentiment that punctuated the second wave of opposition two years later. Though its character was more popular and more violent, the discursive expression of this second wave was not so different from the first. In a general sense, the attack on Calvary expressed the same impulse of herrenvolk democracy as that articulated by governmental proxies. "Demagogues" incited the "mob" to displace the paranoid energy of the workhouse panic onto the closest symbol of black community. A rough rhetorical equation rendered the boundary transgressions at

work in the independent black church equivalent to the black usurpation of white authority at the workhouse. Black Charlestonians had escaped from the traditional enclosure of the workhouse into the safe harbor of the "seemingly new" and revolutionary black church down the street.

In addition to their grievance against racial slippage, the rioters expressed their resentment of slaveholders who not only failed to protect the public from their criminal slaves, but also encouraged slave empowerment through institutions like Calvary Church. The oppositional discourse that framed this second wave might not have been authored by members of the working class, but its arguments (at least implicitly) represented their interests. Thus, the "class" distinction that set the second wave opposition apart from the first was not so much in the socioeconomic status of the opponents but in that of their targets. The target of first-wave opposition was the Presbyterian Church, well-established, but dominated by an upstart mercantile contingent distinct from the elite and traditional targets of the second wave. The Protestant Episcopal Church that built the Calvary mission represented the vestige of aristocracy in Charleston, old-money slaveowners who "gave to the city the most unexceptionable guarantees, in character, property and attachment to the State." [65]

The 1849 riot created an opportunity for elite opponents of Calvary, long silent out of deference to denominational bona fides, to speak out on behalf of the general public. Reticent conservatives respected private property and private initiatives, but distressed at the prospect of some haphazard impulse exceeding the bounds of immediate

[65] Committee of Fifty, *Public Proceedings* (1850), 21. For more on Presbyterians, especially the denizens of Second Presbyterian as representatives of the commercial class, see Clarke, *Our southern Zion : a history of Calvinism in the South Carolina low country, 1690-1990*, 264.

master supervision into the public and the mastery of other people's slaves. Both Adger and Trapier connected their denominational initiatives to a larger movement, affirmed by the editorial proclamation of the *Courier* that Charleston was "bound, as a Christian community, to provide for [black dependents] in our churches, or outside of them, that is in churches expressly erected and set apart for them."[66]

This extension of the private obligation of slaveholding into the public sphere generated the ultimate line of division between bureaucratic reformers and their popular and conservative opponents. When "Charleston" described the dangers of the baptismal font writ large – ritual equality as the first step to full negro equality – he may have misdirected his anecdote, but like-minded Charlestonians got his point. "Charleston" (both the author and the conservative element of the city) failed, in the short run, to recognize how their concerns could be alleviated by the institutionalization of separate churches. Nonetheless, their concerns were valid. Separate churches like Zion and Calvary elided the ritual boundary between black and white, and afforded Afro-Carolinians a sacred space of their own. Spatial autonomy was a powerful selling point for those who experienced separate churches from the inside; for those who imagined these same spaces from the outside, separate churches yielded two different perspectives on spatial reinforcement of the "due subordination of the subject race."

While some Charlestonians would come to see these black churches - funded, built and lead by white contributors and authorities –as the most perfect representation of the Carolina Covenant, others resented and feared the consequences of their departure

[66] *Courier*, July 20, 1847; *Mercury*, July 24, 1847; see above, p. 311-2: In his letter to the *Mercury* "Charleston" reported that many of those present at the Convention that set Calvary in motion regarded the plan with aversion, but "held [their] tongues out of respect for those in charge." The riot "dissipated [their] confidence in these architects" and catalyzed their silent aversion into vocal opposition (July 23, 1849).

from the tried-and-true formula of joined master-slave worship. Fundamentally, what separated these two perspectives was governmental interest. Those who prioritized the slave interest recognized separate churches as a panacea for the modern slave society, while those who prioritized white interest sought to defend (and perhaps expand) the present system against a potential threat. These subjective tensions survived beyond the municipal accord in favor of the separate churches movement. Opponents conceded the panaceac qualities of private and organically collectivized initiatives like the plantation chapel, but bucked when these were extended into schemes of public commitment and obligation. This tension persisted until its partial resolution in the ministry of J.L. Girardeau, which compelled opponents of the separate churches movement to realize the universal benefits of granting Afro-Carolinians the greatest spiritual resources they had to offer.

Success of Separate Churches: J.L. Girardeau and Zion Presbyterian (1852-1860)

Even with the official sanction of local authorities, the separate churches movement struggled to gain popular approval until well into the 1850s. White opponents continued to entertain notions of sleeper cells lurking in the cellars of the Anson Street and Calvary Chapels, while the vast majority of local slaves and free people of color showed little interest in these new missionary stations. Adger and Trapier hoped "that the African race would be attracted to this mission, but the work was not a success." The first communicants at both Calvary and Anson Street Churches were mostly the slaves of Trapiers, Adgers, and other masters affiliated with the new ventures. Membership and

Sunday School attendance at Calvary grew a bit before the riot of 1849, and rebounded during the 1850s, but never came close to the numbers of Afro-Carolinians who attended or joined Charleston's Methodist Churches. The first substantial growth for the separate churches movement did not come until the Anson Street Chapel detached from the authority of Second Presbyterian Church in 1854. The figure most responsible for this separation, as well as the steady growth of what would become Zion Presbyterian Church, and the eventual "success" of the broader movement, was John Lafayette Girardeau.[67]

Through Girardeau's leadership at Anson Street and Zion Presbyterian, the separate churches movement finally gained popularity among black Charlestonians and effectively advanced beyond or won over its white opposition. By 1857, Girardeau was able to write of his church that "the tide of popular feeling, among the colored people, generally, seems at length to be setting in its favour." After taking over from Adger in 1854, Girardeau's congregation began to grow. Membership tripled in two years, from 48 in 1855 to 145 in 1857. The Anson Street Church served many more than this through hundreds of non-members who attended Sunday worship and/or Sunday School on a regular basis. Demand rapidly overflowed supply, into a new church building with the largest sanctuary in Charleston, built for Girardeau's colored congregation by "the citizens of Charleston" in 1858-59. Attendance at Sunday afternoon service in the new

[67] Trapier, *The private register of the Rev. Paul Trapier*; "Records of Session," Second Presbyterian Church Records, SCL.

church swelled to over 2000 on peak days. By 1860, Zion Presbyterian counted 462 colored members and 62 white.[68]

Girardeau's colored congregants claimed him as one of their own, "yas, he face is white, but he heart is black." While Girardeau sponsored this sense of black ownership within the church, he developed a public institution that validated traditions of black dependence without. His ministry not only alleviated many white anxieties, but also reversed many of the arguments that white Charlestonians levied against the separate churches movement. More than any other local cell of southern society, Girardeau's Zion Church sanctified slavery as a public (not just personal) obligation. For those who encountered Girardeau or witnessed his ministry, he was a man of unimpeachable spiritual power, whom masters could trust to foster the spiritual development of their slaves. Even for those who did not know him, Girardeau became a symbol of the Carolina Covenant. The people of South Carolina sacrificed the energies of their greatest preacher for the sake of their African dependents, and thereby demonstrated the lengths they were willing to take to fulfill their providential obligations.[69]

Girardeau's interracial appeal was exceptional. He achieved a degree of resonance and acceptance among both black and white Carolinians unrivaled by any of his contemporaries. Early in his career Girardeau developed a style of preaching that emphasized and repeated keywords designed to simultaneously penetrate the intellect and psyche of black and white spectators. In his prime, the holy pitch of Girardeau's voice could create "joy in two worlds." In the pulpit, his emotions were as "easily touched [as]

[68] J.L. Girardeau, "Report to Charleston Presbytery (1857)" in George A. Blackburn, *The life work of John L. Girardeau, D.D., LLd. : late professor in the Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Columbia, S.C.* (Columbia, S.C.: The State Co., 1916), 36-38, 98.
[69] Blackburn, *Life Work of Girardeau*, 104.

those of the negro." He was a fantastic preacher, but his appeal was much more than oratorical. Of his many natural gifts and acquired expertise, the most valuable was an adaptive style of ministry that evolved dynamically through his relationship with various lowcountry communities and made him more acutely aware of the wants and needs of Afro-Carolinians. This, more than any of his other special skills, rendered Girardeau "a man singularly gifted and wondrously fitted for such a work" (of black ministry).[70]

The characteristic most often used to explain Girardeau's special resonance among black Carolinians is his familiarity with Gullah language (and culture).[71] Speaking Gullah was but a colorful symbol of his success. J.L. Girardeau rarely used Gullah to address his congregants, but he learned to "speak their language" at a deeper level. Gullah, as a specific representation of his general familiarity with the culture of lowcountry Afro-Carolinians, indicated the key to his success: a willingness to experiment, adapt, and **learn** from his ministerial experiences, most notably those within slave communities. In the old Whitefieldian mold of evangelism, Girardeau "stooped to convert" those within his parish, heedless of contemporary standards of "civilization." According to one of his obituaries, Girardeau "would listen with profound respect to the humblest negroes, and cheerfully acknowledged that from them he had often learned some of the profoundest and most important lessons of the Christian life."[72]

In accordance with his belief that the progress of religious instruction "can only by determined by actual experiment," Girardeau's career perpetually improved upon methods of negro ministry in South Carolina through a process of trial and error. More

[70] Ibid., 51, 71.
[71] For the leading example of Girardeau's Gullah as part of his appeal, see Erskine Clarke, "An Experiment in Paternalism: Presbyterians and Slaves in Charleston, SC," *Journal of Presbyterian History*, 53 (Fall 1975) 223-38.
[72] Blackburn, *Life Work of Girardeau*, 379.

than any of his contemporaries, Girardeau argued that religious instruction should be accommodated "to the wants and the tastes of the coloured people which is secured by it." His greatest contributions to the social ecosystem of antebellum South Carolina, including Zion Presbyterian Church, were products of this argument and his observation that "where a choice exists, masters and servants are very generally found in different Churches." Girardeau's willingness to follow his heart in accordance with personal knowledge of Afro-Carolinian tastes was a trait nurtured over a long career, an early intuition that survived countervailing tides of condescension and black pathology. As a bright-eyed young evangelist on his father's plantation, lowcountry slaves provided Girardeau with the first encouragement of his spiritual calling, and he devoted the rest of his life to the recreation of that experience in bigger and broader dimensions.[73]

John Lafayette Girardeau was born on James Island in 1825, to a father of Huguenot descent and a pious Presbyterian mother, known for her charity among local slaves. Thanks to his mother, the black folk of James Island doted on young John. He was only seven when his mother died, so slave reports of how "Miss Claudy" did "much for sick and needy negroes" colored recollections of his mother, and filled memories of his youth generally. Girardeau's account of his early years on James Island are full of names and anecdotes of colorful local characters – "Daddy Prince," the old slave to whom young James delivered food, "Marm Bella" the roadside vendor he passed five days a week, "William" who could be counted on to sing the "new song just imported from 'Town.'" Girardeau's elegiac treatment of his formative years among South

[73] Girardeau, "Letter to Presbytery (1857)," in Blackburn, *Life Work of Girardeau*, 37, 43. Even Adger did not go this far – he advocated accommodation, but to what he saw as black needs, not black "wants and tastes."

Carolina slaves reflected not only the nostalgic highlights of his youth, but also the transformative experiences of his early career in the ministry.[74]

One of Girardeau's earliest memories of Christian worship was his uncle's "family worship early every morning," sounded by the horn and attended by "the servants, whom I remember as being in his family…Sally, Maria, Chloe, Philip and 'Driver Isaac.'" From that point forward, when Girardeau heard a horn at daylight, he thought of "Driver Isaac's morning call." After an arduous conversion experience in his teens, Girardeau tried his hand at preaching to local slaves. "Before I became a preacher, I used to hold meetings on my father's plantation, the cotton house affording a convenient place of assemblage." In these meetings, Girardeau received his first encouragement, the first signals of what would become a calling to his life's work. The tangible responses to his work – "the merry strains of the fiddle…the rhythmical shuffling…in the Ethiopian jig…and the light, carnal song gave way to psalms and hymns" – set young John on a new path, in search of ways to recreate and extend this transformational effect. For the rest of his life, despite the attractions of the large and influential white congregations who called Girardeau, "it was like a first love with him to serve these children of Africa."[75]

Thanks to the institutional growth of the plantation mission during the 1840s, Girardeau was able to incorporate this first love into a profession. Thanks to his particular lowcountry setting, each step of his professional arc roughly paralleled the institutionalization and evolution of the plantation chapel. He was part of the new generation of domestic clergy empowered to seek opportunities in slave ministry created

[74] Blackburn, *Life Work of Girardeau*, 13-15.
[75] Ibid., 13, 74-75.

by the political exigencies of the proslavery argument, among other conditions. [76] John Girardeau entered the Columbia Theological Seminary in 1845 and in 1848 was licensed to preach by the South Carolina Synod. It was customary for pious young seminary students to serve in a foreign mission during or soon after their theological training. Young John, however, was redirected from the call to serve abroad by the preemptive call to serve in his own backyard. By 1848, low-country Afro-Carolinians were served by a network of Methodist missions and a burgeoning series of plantation chapels "supported mainly by the planters," like those serviced by Alexander Glennie. Since the Presbyterian Church cancelled their local missionary initiative around the turn of the century, Afro-Carolinians had only limited exposure to Presbyterian preaching, mainly through established churches like Charleston's First Scots and Second Presbyterian.[77]

God called Girardeau to serve in the Presbyterian ministry, but he was also "peculiarly called to the training of the negroes." As recounted in the more grandiose terms of his biographer, "the same spirit of **sacrifice** that sent Brainard to the savages of North America and Paton to the cannibals of the New Hebrides, and Damien to the lepers of Molokai…sent Girardeau to the 'voodoo' dominated negroes of the Carolina coast." In the simultaneous pursuit of both callings, Girardeau proceeded from this missionary impulse at each station of his early ministry. One of his first posts was at Wappetaw Church, where he would "regularly" traverse Christ's Church Parish to "stop at the same plantation and preach… to the negroes" on his way home from Sunday service. Girardeau's next calling was to Wilton Parish, where he preached Sunday morning to

[76] On professional opportunities created by institutionalization of domestic missions and political coincidence of proslavery argument and domestic missions, see above, chap. 4, p. 222-24.
[77] Girardeau, "Letter to Dr. Mallard (November 10, 1890)," in Blackburn, *Life Work of Girardeau*, 73.

"some of the most cultivated white men in the state," before preaching "to the coloured people in the afternoon at one of the nearby plantations."[78]

According to Girardeau, the colored people of South Carolina "virtually constitute a frontier settlement. They are, although not geographically, yet morally and intellectually, the frontiers of society." Girardeau maintained this frontier mentality, even as he approached the high pulpits of Charleston in the 1850s. In 1852, while filling in at Charleston's Circular Church, Girardeau began to translate the techniques refined in his plantation laboratories to the urban frontier. Whether in Carolina or Angola, those of African origins constituted a "frontier settlement." Anson Street Church was a "missionary post" along this frontier, a foreign structure conforming to domestic customs, a hybrid community operating under the auspices of a unique system of ecclesiastical government. In order to exist amid the legal restrictions posed by civil society, it was necessary to adapt this "missionary post" to the social and civil "exigencies" of her locality. While rector of Anson Street, and eventually Zion Presbyterian, Girardeau presided over a tiered process of adaptation and evolution that normalized the government of his "missionary" church, and by extension, formalized the plantation chapel (model) into its final antebellum stage of development. [79]

From Adger's basement enterprise, the Second Presbyterian Church mission grew into a separate branch, with a separate building on Anson Street for the primary purpose of negro worship and religious instruction. John Girardeau inherited the Anson Street Chapel from Adger in December of 1853, and fostered the next stage of development, as the church separated from Second Presbyterian to become an autonomous missionary

[78] Blackburn, *Life Work of Girardeau*, 64, 61.
[79] Girardeau, "Letter to Charleston Presbytery," in Blackburn, *Life Work of Girardeau*, 48.

post under Girardeau. As the church grew, so did Girardeau's renown. As Charleston's white leaders took notice, some worried that Girardeau was wasting his talents on the colored folk. Christopher Memminger sent a message to Girardeau that "he was doing himself a great injury in his efforts to bring down his mental gifts to the capacity of his people," and Girardeau conceded that he would like a larger white audience at morning service so he could "use his studies" in the morning sermon. In 1857, John Adger's brother, Robert, approached Girardeau with an offer to help him pursue this goal. Robert Adger and several other white members of Second Presbyterian wanted to join Girardeau's Mission Church, but recognized that the church was already overcrowded, so offered to build Girardeau a larger building.[80]

Girardeau agreed, but only under the stipulation that the new plan would "not interfere in any way with our negro work." Adger and his cadre raised $25,000 to construct an 80 by 100 foot church building on Calhoun Street (the largest sanctuary in the city) and by 1858, Zion Presbyterian Church was a regular (no longer "missionary") church governed by its own white session. In addition to the larger building, Girardeau discerned other important reasons to embrace the Adger plan. Through this new contingent of committed and respected white Presbyterians, Adger charted the path to a "self-supporting" independent black church. As with his previous posts at Wappetaw and Wilton, the moneyed white interest provided Girardeau with the means to pursue the ends of the slave mission. Unlike his previous schedules of evangelization, at Zion his priorities were explicitly reversed. As a condition of admission, prospective white members pledged

[80] Blackburn, *Life Work of Girardeau*, 33-35.

> that we enter this Church, as white members of the same, with the fullest understanding that its primary design and chief purpose is to benefit the coloured and especially the slave population of this city, and that the white membership is a feature added to the original organization for the purpose of better securing the ends of that organization.[81]

With the help of these white supporters, Girardeau organically integrated the missionary framework of the plantation chapel into the operations of a "regular" urban interracial church. The Adgers and other white Presbyterians who joined Zion did so, at least in part, so that "we may assist by our means and our personal efforts…this missionary work, regarding this field of labour as one that has peculiar claims upon us." In this voluntary expression of paternalism, the white members of Zion affirmed both the private and public obligation of black dependence, as slaveholders or residents of a slaveholding community who cared for the spiritual welfare of slaves of other masters.[82]

Thus, Girardeau (perhaps unconsciously) manipulated the dynamic tension of bi-racial community – between inclusion and exclusion – to maximum effect. While embraced and owned by the black spiritual community that was his life's work, he maintained a missionary approach that othered his black congregants into secondary status and thus validated the invented tradition of black dependence. He was a missionary to members of his own "family." Two incidents from his ministry at Zion exemplify the duality of his appeal: first, a revival in 1858 that substantiated his spiritual union with the Afro-Carolinian community, and second, a showdown with white militants in his church that demonstrated the breadth of his acceptance as a paragon of Carolinian virtue.

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[81] Zion Presbyterian Church, "Act of Incorporation," in Blackburn, *Life Work of Girardeau*, 81-3.
[82] Ibid.

Girardeau professed that "the most glorious work of grace I ever felt or witnessed…occurred in 1858, in connection with this missionary work in Charleston."[83] Every night, for weeks on end, Girardeau gathered his congregation for prayer vigils. He spoke from the pulpit, but not to the crowd, instead addressing his words directly to God. Among other things, Girardeau prayed for an "outpouring of the Spirit." Some of his white advisors suggested he "commence preaching services, but he steadily refused," praying on and on, waiting for the Spirit to strike him. Finally, one evening while leading the prayer, "he received a sensation as if a bolt of electricity had struck his head and diffused itself throughout his entire body." He planned to dismiss the congregation and announce that he would begin preaching the next day, but noticed that the same electric bolt of Spirit had also "taken possession of the hearts of the people." He started to exhort, and "they began to sob, softly, like the falling of rain; then, with deeper emotion, to weep bitterly, or to rejoice loudly, according to their circumstances." Girardeau and his congregation rode this emotional crescendo until midnight, when the service was dismissed.[84]

The revival went on for a total of eight weeks, converting large numbers of both black and white attendants, adding to the membership and notoriety of Zion. More than any of these after-effects, that singular moment at the heart of the revival, when the spirit simultaneously struck Girardeau and his negro congregation, signified his greatest accomplishment. The connection he shared with the black folk of the lowcountry was both cause and effect of his preaching style –a self-propagating cycle born of that first sermon on his father's plantation and strengthened through each subsequent encounter.

[83] Blackburn, *Life Work of Girardeau*, 79-80.
[84] Ibid., 99-100.

Even the trials and distractions of running the largest church in Charleston did not sever Girardeau from the emotional wavelength of his people. "When in his preaching," the "responsive interest" of his negro audiences "was like the answer of an echo," which in turn exhilarated the preacher. Girardeau "forgot all his **sacrifices** and was filled with joy exceeding great as he felt the glowing sympathy of his spell-bound hearers…he saw before him not a dark cloud of ignorant, degraded negroes, but a cloud crimsoned with beauty divine."[85]

White Charlestonians did not forget Girardeau's "sacrifice," but instead understood it and remembered it as their own. Girardeau articulated the emotions of Afro-Carolinians better than any other white preacher of his era, but this did not detach him from the emotional wavelength of his white peers. The same revival stirred white hearts to conversion, and Girardeau facilitated the racial transcendence of this emotional wavelength to forge an important element of bi-racial (spiritual) community – a transformative moment of shared experience that followed even those who joined other churches. Another example of Girardeau's bi-racial appeal was the dramatic turnabout experienced by a band of Girardeau's most militant opponents, an extralegal band of "Charleston Minute Men" who attended Sunday worship at Zion with the intention of killing Girardeau on his altar, but were instead converted by his spiritual integrity.

Shortly after the revival of 1858, a probationary member of Zion was implicated in the murder of a white man, captured, and eventually executed. This incident, and the trial that followed grabbed a good deal of attention in Charleston, and Girardeau planned to capitalize on the event with a sermon "warning…negroes against bad company, sinful

[85] Ibid., 68.

living, and delay in coming to Christ." He announced this plan to his congregation, but somehow the message filtered out into white ears as news that "he was going to preach a sermon justifying the negro (murderer)." The racial tensions surrounding the murder trial brought white anxieties to the surface, and, like so many parallel cycles of racial modernization, the target of these exposed anxieties was the black church. A member of Zion overheard a group of angry white men in Summerville plotting how to punish Girardeau and his church for fostering this black-on-white crime. "Some were in favor of killing him outright as a dangerous character, others thought best to tar and feather him and burn the church."[86]

Once informed of the plot, the mayor dispatched a guard to protect the church from the outside, while Zion's white members came to church armed and ready to protect the preacher from the inside. These measures did not dissuade the "Charleston Minute Men" from descending upon the church as planned. On the Sunday that Girardeau was to preach on the murder, the mob of armed vigilantes filled one gallery, "for the purpose of shooting the preacher as soon as the subject should be mentioned," while Girardeau's armed supporters stared them down from the opposite gallery, "determined to shoot down the first man who drew a gun." Filling the ground floor seats beneath them "were a great mass of negroes determined to destroy every minute man in the building" should "something happen to their beloved pastor." Girardeau preached to the packed house without acknowledging the impending showdown. His sermon fed off the "tenseness of the congregation" to climax with the image of "the condemned and hanging criminal,"

[86] Ibid., 99-100. Attacks also referenced in Thomas Smyth, *Autobiographical Notes, Letters and Reflections,* (Charleston, S.C.: Walker, Evans & Cogswell, 1914), 200; and Erskine Clarke, *Wrestlin' Jacob : a portrait of religion in the Old South* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1979), 153.

struggling with his last breath against the awful consequences of sin. His eloquence cast a spell that made all in the audience, including the minutemen, forget the animosities that brought them together. After the service, many of the minutemen sought out Girardeau to apologize for their misgivings, some of whom also became attendants of his church.[87]

Even those minutemen who did not return to services at Zion became Girardeau's advocates and defenders. Girardeau's ability to deliver such a powerful message, at once universal to all sinners and localized to Carolina slaves, was remarkable. He was doubly remarkable for making this secondary audience of slaves his primary field of labor. He did not work primarily among "the southern whites, that people of almost pure British stock, with whom in everything he was in full and hearty sympathy, but among negro slaves whose black skins and kinky hair were symbols of their inferiority." Instead of fearing and attacking Zion as a symbol of black independence, those with firsthand experience of Girardeau were comforted by the man and his church as symbols of black dependence.[88]

The key to this transition – from white perception of a black church like Zion as token of racial transgression to white acceptance of (black churches like) Zion as a symbol of black dependence – was the malleable and transformative rhetoric of ownership. At both personal and institutional levels, J.L. Girardeau's ministry provided the pivot point for this transition. The Charleston Minute Men, and all the other white folk who attended services at Zion, learned firsthand that Girardeau was not just a "black preacher," and his was not just a black ministry. For the community at large, the

[87] Blackburn, *Life Work of Girardeau*, 99-100; one of the converted belligerents even gifted Girardeau with a trip to Europe.
[88] Ibid., 58. A significant portion of Blackburn's volume on Girardeau's "Life Work" was compiled and authored by Joseph B. Mack. Mack's contribution is distinguished by a more flagrant racial essentialism, as indicated by this excerpt, and addressed below in the epilogue.

institutional history of Zion recorded independent white citizens as the active agents in construction of the black church to make it clear that this was not just their church, it was ours – a **public property of whiteness**. Black dependents were but passive recipients of white goodwill, as "the white people of Charleston built for the colored population a large and handsome Presbyterian Church." The institutional record of Zion, first propagated by Girardeau but then upheld by postbellum Presbyterian chroniclers, not only divested the church from black ownership, but also granted full legal acknowledgement to its rightful owners: "the white people of Charleston." This became part of the story white Charlestonians told themselves about themselves – a foundational myth of the Carolina Nation. As the state inched closer and closer to secession and separation, separate churches like Zion and Calvary earned credence as the most modern reflections of the invented tradition of black dependence and most recent extensions of the Carolina Covenant. [89]

Conclusion

The famous chapel of St. Mary's Weehawka, built and designed by the slaves of Plowdon Weston's Hagley plantation, was perhaps the lowcountry's finest symbol of the Carolina Covenant. Weston spared no expense in construction of the cross-shaped Gothic temple, replete with high chancel, stained-glass windows, and a great tower to house a chiming clock ordered from England. The chapel was built to serve the slaves of All Saint's Parish, but ornamented to impress Weston's white neighbors and visitors. While Weston's slaves were laying the foundation for this great chapel in Georgetown

[89] John L. Girardeau, *Sermons,* (Columbia, S.C: The State Co., 1907), 10; Cheryl I. Harris, "Whiteness as Property," *Harvard Law Review* 106, no. 8 (1993), 1707–1791.

County, John Girardeau opened the doors to the new Zion Presbyterian Church building on Calhoun Street in Charleston. Zion was comparably impressive, the largest church in the Holy City, a unique design of Edward Jones, with a wide street frontage and dual porticos. [90]

For those who funded the construction of Zion and the Weehawka chapel, the external audience was just as important, if not more so, as those gathered inside. While Plowden's chapel was clearly understood as a symbol of his paternal benevolence, Charlestonians required more convincing to see Zion in a similar light. Thanks to the coincident intuitions, aptitudes, and opportunities of J.L. Girardeau – his principled adaptability, expert manipulation of sacred space, and timely professional arc – Zion earned a place in the spatial imagination of Charlestonians comparable to that occupied by the plantation chapels of the lowcountry. This was the multivalent trick required to validate the invented tradition of black dependence; while cultivating a space of black ownership within the church, Girardeau was simultaneously able to represent Zion as a symbol of black dependence to all those who viewed the church from the outside. Through this dual occupancy – an interior zone of black ownership and exterior representation of black dependence – Zion was a "nation within a nation."

Throughout his ministerial career, Girardeau effectively manipulated the needs and resources of the white Carolina elite for the spiritual benefit of the state's black majority. In Charleston, he merged the duality of his previous posts – white parish preacher and plantation chapel itinerant – into the institutional structure of Zion. He reversed the traditional priorities of the great urban churches to create a space of worship

[90]Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*, 20-21, 72; C. Patton. Hash, *Charleston: Alone among the Cities* (Charleston, S.C.: South Carolina Historical Society, 2000), 98.

funded by white Charlestonians but owned by slaves and free people of color. White benefactors were a means to the ends of black ministry, only admitted to Zion in auxiliary capacity, to protect and preserve "the religious culture of colored members."[91]

Sacred space was a key component of the religious culture Girardeau hoped to preserve. Black Presbyterians exerted ownership rights to the ground floor pews of Zion's precedent homes, and this right was affirmed in the by-laws of the new church. "The coloured people shall always be allowed to occupy, in these services designed peculiarly for their benefit, the main floor of the building, excepting such seats on the right and left of the pulpit as may be appropriated to the whites." Furthermore, the seating policy of the church reflected a sense of individual ownership, established through piety, as "the person who first occupies a seat shall be entitled to hold the same" until his or her forfeiture through absence.

The sense of individuality and ownership encoded in these regulations signified an important dimension of Zion's resonance and popularity among black Charlestonians. At the same time, white control of spatial regulation in Zion Presbyterian provided a symbolic guarantee of black dependence. The rules of seating further stated that "a white superintendent and persons under his direction shall be appointed by the Session who shall be charged with the seating of the congregation and the maintenance of order." White governance of black sacred space was but one element of the racial status quo that Girardeau incorporated into his otherwise experimental mode of religious community. Like Adger and Glennie and all of the transgressive missionaries who came before, Girardeau selectively incorporated traditions from both sides of the racial divide; but

[91] Charleston Presbytery Records (1858), in Blackburn, *Life Work of Girardeau*, 58.

more than any of his predecessors or peers, Girardeau did so in a way that resonated with both sides.[92]

From insights accumulated over a lifetime of personal contact with Afro-Carolinians, Girardeau built a real cell of black ownership that ultimately validated abstract ideological objectives of black dependence. Through opportunities made possible by professional specialization and ideological need, Girardeau became an icon of the Carolina Covenant – chosen by God for this work, he elevates our black dependents so we don't have to. Racially separated churches abstracted individual white Charlestonians from the actual process of black spiritual improvement. Thus abstracted, slavocrats were free to imagine the perfect community consolidated within the unseen spaces of the separate church. The sacred spaces of Zion and Calvary "sanctified" the master-slave relationship in a form not only "consistent with the genius of southern institutions," but also adapted to meet the exigent realities of a modernizing state and urban society. The separate churches movement suggested a new spatial regime – an organically developed institution of religious apartheid.[93]

Initially, social commentators more prone to abstraction argued against Girardeau. They found a more traditional politics of race and sacred space – master and slave worshiping in the same church – more useful to abstract social doctrines of race and slavery. According to the conventional ideal, "the master looks up into the gallery and sees his servant there, and the servant looks down and sees his master there." The utility

[92] "Rules for the Government of the Coloured Members of Zion Presbyterian Church," in Blackburn, *Life Work of Girardeau*, 84-96.
[93] Girardeau, "Letter to Presbytery (1857)," in Blackburn, *Life Work of Girardeau*, 41-46. Phrasing here is reversal of the original quote, in which Girardeau described an argument made by opponents of the separate churches movement. His opponents claimed that "the separate system fails to sanctify their relation [masters and slaves] to each other," and "the establishment of separate Churches for blacks is inconsistent with…the genius of Southern institutions."

of this image was twofold: as a spatial and spiritual representation of the bi-racial imagined community, the interracial church reflected the national ideal; as a spatial representation of the racial hierarchy, black galleries overlooking their white superiors at worship sanctified a performative ritual of hegemony. Girardeau acknowledged both functions of the traditional model, but proposed an alternative more suitable in both respects. He considered the present ideal of sacred space to be "eminently patriarchal," but ultimately "more beautiful than substantial." He noted that "where a choice exists, masters and servants are very generally found in different Churches." Through modification of the spatial ideal, Girardeau proposed an institution that could accommodate this contrary reality, while simultaneously consolidating the bi-racial community and modernizing the religious architecture of (racial) hegemony.[94]

The slaves in and around Charleston enjoyed "a large and unrestricted freedom in religious matters," and their masters enjoyed even larger and less restricted freedoms. The exercise of these freedoms generated an organically segregated religious society, in which "masters and servants do not ordinarily, particularly in cities, attend the same services. Masters worship with other men's servants, and servants worship with other men's masters." In Girardeau's estimation, "servants" preferred churches other than those of their masters, in part "from **their wish to avoid association with them in worship**," also out of their affinity for novelty and passion for change. The separate churches movement mixed "other men's servants" and "other men's masters" in a more perfect voluntary arrangement. The following arguments demonstrate the ways in which these voluntary associations advanced both the national ideal of bi-racial community and

[94] Ibid.

the hegemonic ideal of black dependence. The conceptual key to both of these arguments is the historicization of sacred space.[95]

The central component of the link between community and sacred space is identity. For those who considered them sacred, the sanctuaries and holy places of the separate churches conscripted "memory in the construction and reconstruction of identities," and thus hold the key to understanding historical expressions of identity and community otherwise hidden from the known record. For the thousands of Afro-Carolinians who attended worship at Zion or Calvary, the separate church became a sacred totem of black identity. Zion Presbyterian was a cell of voluntary association, where slaves and free people of color chose to spend their Sunday mornings and weekday evenings under a leader of their own choosing. Though he was a firm advocate of slavery and black dependence, "the negroes believed that Dr. Girardeau was the special representative of God to their race." Thus through (inter) personal affinity, black attendants at Zion included white men like Girardeau in their imagined spiritual communities, and validated the Providential interpretation of the slave trade that brought them together.[96]

For the majority of black Charlestonians, the sacred spaces of separate churches, or any interracial churches for that matter, did not generate the filaments of bi-racial community. This fact was perhaps most clearly evident in the mass exodus of black Protestants from association with white-run churches as soon as they had the chance in the late 1860s. In 1865, T.W. Lewis, a black Methodist class leader at Trinity Methodist

[95] Ibid., 42.
[96] Louis Nelson, ed., *American Sanctuary: Understanding Sacred Spaces* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 9.

captured the spirit of this exodus, the latent sense of alienation long simmering under the lid of black "dependence" in the segregated galleries of interracial churches. By the end of the Civil War, Trinity Methodist Church had changed hands twice in as many years, first from the Methodist Episcopal Church, South into the control of the national denomination, and then in October 1865, back into the hands of its local white authorities. Lewis interrupted a meeting, called by the white Vestry to invite black Methodists to "return to your old places in the galleries," with the proclamation: "brethren and sisters, there will be no galleries in heaven." He went on to close the meeting in dramatic fashion, by appealing to the imagined spiritual community of black Methodists. Lewis asked those who believed in a heaven without galleries to build a more perfect earthly spiritual community that more closely resembled their heavenly goal. "Those who are willing to go with a church that makes no distinction as to race or colour," Lewis directed, "follow me to the Normal School on the corner of Beaufain and Wilson Streets."[97]

Among white Charlestonians, Zion exerted a much wider spatial impact upon the conscription of identity, providing a point of reference not only for those who entered the space as a sanctuary, but also for those who considered it from the outside. As historically-specific cultural constructions, sacred spaces reveal essential and hidden features of the culture they inhabit. The sacred spaces of Charleston's separate churches were constructed and contested both internally and externally, and thus reveal two layers of late antebellum culture. The internal dynamics of churches like Zion contained the

[97] Centenary Methodist Episcopal Church Records, Avery Research Center, College of Charleston; Bernard Edward. Powers, *Black Charlestonians: A Social History, 1822-1885* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1994), 195.

purest form of bi-racial community – a wavelength of mutual resonance that linked black to white through sacred experience. The select band of white Presbyterians and Episcopalians who attended services at Zion and Calvary secured a special and symbolic bond of voluntary bi-racial community. More than any traditional assortment of masters and slaves, grouped together by custom and chance, the voluntary association of separate churches cultivated a "sympathy between the two classes…even more perfect because the community of worship is more distinctly felt." This sense of community was sustained by contrast with the customs of spatial and temporal segregation that marked other churches. "They sit on the same floor, and during the administration of the Lord's Supper, are served at the same time."[98]

The dynamics that framed the sacred spaces of these churches from the outside were more complex and less overt. As the most conscious indicator of the ideal social order and the most regular influence on experiential interpretations of reality, sacred space presents a window of exposure into a set of beliefs so common and accepted that they appear only implicitly in the written record of historical experience. As imagined from the outside, separate churches like Calvary and Zion performed the same function of the plantation chapel – a spatial recitation of the Carolina liturgy. This was the hidden record of belief exposed by external perceptions of separate churches. As white Carolinians observed or imagined the operations at Zion, they included but peripheralized black Carolinians in their imagined community. This was the spatial meaning of separate churches, understood but unarticulated by most white Carolinians, a subconscious acknowledgement of slavery as both a public institution and public obligation.

[98] Girardeau, "Letter to Presbytery (1857)," in Blackburn, *Life Work of Girardeau*, 44.

Churches served as microcosms of the ideal community, contested but nonetheless powerful metaphors for understanding Charleston's place in larger imagined communities. In order to perfect both the churches they attended and the wider society they reflected, Charlestonians had waged a steady campaign of reform and schism since the Revolution. In order to form these more perfect unions, church leaders adopted racial specialization as a rational modern strategy of religious instruction and community. Assumptions of racial difference and black pathology eventually made separation a necessary consequence of specialization, as the remedial exigencies of "black preaching" diverged from those of the general congregation and "intelligent white people" found this black preaching "not only…irksome and unprofitable, but even distasteful."

Through the transformative ministry of J.L. Girardeau, separation also became an acceptable means to realize and modernize the local tradition of black dependence. Through the reflexive property of racialization, Zion also exerted a profound impact upon white identity. A spatial recitation of the Carolina liturgy was the meaning intended by Zion's impressive exterior, but this was not always the message received. The white vanguard who joined Zion as gallery attendants clearly internalized this meaning, but to those outside the church, Zion meant many different things. One way to bridge this gap between the internal and external layers of culture exposed by the spatial experience of Zion is through the accounts of non-members who visited the church.

During the Democratic National Convention of 1860, two delegates – Col. Alfred Robb of Tennessee and Gen. Benjamin Butler of Massachusetts – joined in the lobby of their hotel Sunday morning to "go hear a great white preacher whose life is consecrated to the salvation of negroes." Girardeau's ministry was known throughout the southeast,

and thus to Robb, but only a curiosity to Butler. The sanctuary of Zion fascinated them from the first, as "they found the negroes occupying the main floor, while the whites were seated in the gallery." Their fascination grew to exhilaration during Girardeau's sermon. Butler "bathed…his face in tears" and filled the collection basket with two handfuls of silver coin. He remarked to Robb that he had "never heard such a man and never heard such a sermon" in all the "white" churches he had attended across the United States. This was the message received from these two visitors to Zion – the greatest preacher in the great City of Charleston "consecrated to the salvation" of the city's black dependents.[99]

Another out-of-town group visited Zion with a very different recommendation. The authors of an (1859-)1860 post in the *Richmond Examiner,* under the heading "Nigger Church," hurried to Zion through a "tempest of rain" in anticipation of public action against the church. They heard that the Mayor would close the church "during divine service…by proclaiming the whole concern an unlawful assembly, and with the aid of the police, sending Sambo flying through the window." They were disappointed to find "things going on as usual, and the pastor preaching a sermon to niggers which we thought rather too obstruse for comprehension by brains covered with wool." The message received by these Virginians from a circulating climate of panic and rumor in Charleston was one of racial antagonism, and their visit to Zion did little to change that message. Thus opposition to the separate churches movement continued to swirl around

[99] Blackburn, *Life Work of Girardeau*, 57-58.

Zion and Calvary, and profaned these spaces as laughable or dangerous gathering places for wooly-brained "niggers" in "fine attire."[100]

Girardeau's ultimate victory over this last reticent strain of racist resentment would not come until after the War, when even those who continued to traffic in the ugliest racist classifications could commend Girardeau's "sacrifice" to the greater good. According to these racial apologists, where everyone else "saw…a dark cloud of ignorant, degraded negroes," Girardeau saw "a cloud crimsoned with beauty divine." Though some of his contemporaries were unable to grasp Girardeau's vision of progress until much later, many others shared in his vision, and understood Girardeau's church as a model for the future of racial relations in Charleston. In the suggestion of evangelical apartheid, separate churches represented a novel but promising future for race relations in South Carolina. Through Girardeau, Charleston moved to catch up with the rest of the industrial world and replace the performative, mimetic hegemony of old world tradition with the more subtle, effective, surveillant hegemony of the modern world.[101]

Beneath this materialist macro-perspective of church operations was an important dimension of subaltern fulfillment; black Charlestonians who attended separate churches got what they wanted, regardless of the church's external significance. Even if generated by an institution of black oppression, Zion was a space of black ownership, "from the first the great building was filled, the blacks occupying the most of the main floor, and whites the galleries." The spatial hierarchy wrought by racial modernization during the

[100] Smyth, *Autobiographical Notes*, 199-200.
[101] Blackburn, *Life Work of Girardeau*, 69; Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995).

1820s and 30s had been reversed to prioritize black attendants as worshipers and reprioritize white attendants as observers.[102]

Hegemony is a process of negotiation, between those with power and those without. Power dynamics that cling closer to the hegemonic standard of negotiation are less clear and coercive, but more effective and subtle. Whereas previous stages of interracial community formation in Charleston involved the obvious but more implicit participation of slaves and free people of color, Girardeau's argument for separate churches registered an explicit measure of black participation as equal to the register of white trends and tastes. In order to form a more perfect racial union out of what he saw as the present mess of master-slave dis-union, Girardeau proposed the shared space of the nominally separate church.

By incorporating black voices into the process of community formation, Girardeau updated the local mode of racial hegemony. Those who upheld the "beautiful" and "patriarchal" myth of slaves doting upon their masters from church galleries were losing touch with reality. John Adger noticed that slaves would not, or could not, listen to "white preaching," and Paul Trapier noted that Charleston's galleries did not have space to accommodate the vast majority of the city's slaves. Like Adger and Trapier, Girardeau advocated separate churches as the best means to replace and augment the outdated models. But unlike any of his contemporaries, Girardeau's church proferred a more substantial and more modern form of hegemony to replace the beautiful but insubstantial patriarchal ideal.

[102] Blackburn, *Life Work of Girardeau*, 74.

The degree to which separate churches satisfied black interests was debatable, but the assumption that separate churches satisfied *some* black interests was invaluable. The imagined spaces of the plantation chapel and separate church contained the religious dynamic most satisfactory, or least offensive, to the largest number of Carolinians. The institutionalization of plantation chapels, as active symbols and cells of both **stewardship** and **race control,** conveyed white attention to black needs. The separate churches movement also conveyed white attention to black desires. As such, it also modernized Carolina's foundational myth. For governmental intellectuals (addressing both domestic and national audiences), separate churches fulfilled many of the expectations of their ideal community – evangelization with racialization – a sphere of interracial contact that not only conformed to both black and white popular preferences, but also confirmed the hierarchical and peripheralized standards of their imagined community.

Despite the collective rhetoric of the Carolina Covenant, the latent assumption of most white Charlestonians was that they were not immediately responsible for the salvation of Carolina slaves. Most assumed somebody else would shoulder the burden: slaveowners assumed that local churches could minister to their slaves; nonslaveowners assumed the burden was on slaveowners; non-churchgoers assumed that their pious peers had opened adequate resources to meet the spiritual needs of local slaves; even those who encountered or ministered slaves in their church assumed that the great majority of slaves outside their church would be served by others. Despite any ideological claims to the contrary, most white Carolinians tacitly acknowledged that slavery, or at least the moral improvement clause that came along with the providential interpretation of slavery, was not a personal, but a public obligation.

Like it or not, the management of South Carolina's slave population was an obligation shared by the community. Any step to alleviate that burden was thus of benefit to the entire community. Those steps that were advertised as such entered the public imagination to connect all disinterested parties to the institution of slavery. If plantation chapels provided a local panacea to the "proprietor, children, overseers, their children, his servants, and the poor whites in the neighborhood," separate churches provided an institutional panacea not only to the city of Charleston, but also, by example, to the state of South Carolina and the rest of the south. Like the plantation chapels of the lowcountry, the separate churches of Charleston failed to fully meet the spiritual and social needs of all Carolinians, but they satisfied more demands than any other cell of interracial worship. Separate churches were a step up from black preaching, but not a symbol of interracial equality; they satisfied both black and white preferences for mono-racial worship, while reassuring whites of their superior status.[103]

Churches like Zion were both products and producers of a racial politics of space that suggested a new direction for slave society. In its ideal form, the separate church was a perfect expression of the Carolina Covenant, a forum of bi-racial community in line with the tradition of black dependence, and thus a modern reflection of the national ideal, the foundational myth. By 1860, Girardeau won the tacit consent of thousands of Afro-Carolinians to these invented traditions through their attendance at Zion. By reversing the spatial and ministerial priorities of the interracial church, Girardeau became a symbol of this invented tradition – the city's finest preacher devoting his life to the black mission – what he does for them, he does for us. Through these channels, Charlestonians

[103] Christopher Gadsden, "Bishop's Address," *Charleston Gospel Messenger* (March 1849): 355-56.

urbanized the plantation chapel into the separate churches movement. Racial specialization was the first step towards the racial separation of Charleston churches, and separation was the first step towards religious (and social) apartheid. The institutionalization of the plantation chapel and the separate churches movement were the final antebellum stages in the evolution Carolina's bi-racial community. The dynamic tension between likeness and alterity that generated previous expressions of racial consciousness and religious community emerged through an organic process of trial and error to suggest the plantation chapel, and ultimately the separate church, as the most perfect means to resolve these tensions.

EPILOGUE: "A Nation Within a Nation"

> While we leave to the leaders of secession to state the civil reasons which sustain their movement, we believe that the full development of Christianity among the negroes of the South, demands an immediate and final separation from a government which, so far from quieting, has been the willing agent of excitements and agitation what have proved powerful obstacles in 'the spread of Scriptural holiness through the land.' The secession of South Carolina will settle forever the question of slavery. The vague dreams of abolition-redemption will soon fade away from the mind of the slave, and leave him happy and contented. Satisfied with the condition in which God has placed him, he will the more certainly and rapidly advance in religious enlightenment and Christian morality.
>
> - *Minutes of the SC Conference of the ME Church, South*, 1860

> We will fit him for usefullness here and glory hereafter, we will cast his pliant mind in the mould of the gospel, we will arrest the human sacrifices of his native country, we will transport him in comfort and security from the land of his barbarism his cannibalism and his crime, we will overthrow the seats of emancipationers, and the high places of colonizationists, we will maintain him in his normal, his only happy condition, that of subjection to the white man - we will teach him useful arts and avocations, we will impart to him, through our benign institutions, that force of will, which is requisite to overcome his native indolence, we will make the world confess, that the race which is last in its esteem for capacity, shall be first for usefulness
>
> - William Prentiss, Quote from Fast Day Sermon, Nov. 21, 1860

When considered in light of what happens next, the story of the separate churches movement reads like a "pre-history" of segregation, and in many ways it was. Separation evolved organically, as a modern accommodation of an ongoing tradition, according to public tastes, separate but unequal. The process of spatial peripheralization, accelerated by Zion and Calvary, spiraled into unparalleled dimensions over the next century. The interracial dialectic of community formation that framed imagined community over the course of generations also informed national identity in South Carolina before, during,

and after the Civil War. This was the framework through which Carolinians confronted the prospect of disunion and national regeneration in 1860 and developed the foundational myths – the stories they told themselves about themselves – that validated secession. Of these myths, the most defensible and durable was the defense of black dependence and bi-racial community. These were the filaments of national identity that girded Carolinians for the trouble ahead. Black salvation was Carolina's sacred duty, a work in progress with no end in sight. The perpetual peripheralization of black interests was an impossible dream, but one that white Carolinians would pursue for the next 100 years.

For John Girardeau, the filaments of identity, national or otherwise, started and ended with his home state. From childhood, "he was impressed with the idea that the State of South Carolina was his native land;" as a young man he resolved "to live in no other State, to labor among no other people, and to sleep, after death, under no other soil." Girardeau felt that God had called him to serve the bi-racial spiritual communities of the lowcountry, and declined a number of more prestigious ministerial opportunities that would have taken him out of state. As South Carolina seceded and entered the war against northern aggression, Girardeau answered the call to serve his countrymen as chaplain to the 23rd Regiment of South Carolina Volunteers. He enlisted in the Fall of 1861, and served until his capture "on the retreat from Richmond" in April 1865.[1]

After his release from Federal prison in early July, Girardeau journeyed home with a wagonload of Carolina veterans. As soon as the wagon passed the state line into South Carolina, Girardeau "shouted 'Stop,' and then leaping out of the wagon he kneeled

[1] Blackburn, *The Life Work of John L. Girardeau,* .

down and laid his head on the ground. With eyes streaming he exclaimed, 'O South Carolina, my mother, dear, God be thanked that I can lay my head on your bosom once more.' (It was a strange scene but characteristic of the man.)"[2]

Girardeau was an exceptional individual, but not so for his Carolina consciousness. Girardeau represented a generation of Carolinians "born about the time when South Carolina stood ready to assert her sovereignty." Girardeau was also the face of an explicitly bi-racial nation, the public persona of an imagined community joined by thousands of black and white Carolinians. The Carolina Covenant was the essence of his national identity. Girardeau believed

> that association with the white man was essential to the uplift of the negro. He realized that both races were descended from the first Adam, and that for both the second Adam had died, but he also believed that God in His Providence had made the negro to be the inferior; that as to climb upward, the vine needs the trellis and the ivy the way, so the negro needs the white man.[3]

Fulfilling this covenant of black dependence was his life's work. It was also the destiny of his home state and what motivated him to risk his life in defense of her independence. Many of his contemporaries considered themselves part of the same divine project and validated secession in similar terms. The Methodist Church of South Carolina endorsed the trellis-vine interpretation of bi-racial community as just cause for separation from a government that obstructed Christianization and "happiness…among the negroes of the South." Girardeau and the authors of the Methodist statement (first epigraph) perpetuated a functional myth to sustain Carolinians through the upcoming trials.

[2] Ibid., 60-61 (Mack), 106-22; the latter account was authored by J. Mclaurin, Girardeau's "brother in arms;" parentheses in original.
[3] Ibid., 70 (Mack).

Girardeau's racial defense was but one among several contemporary nationalist tropes developed to bind Carolinians to secession, and to each other. While many of these were complementary to Girardeau's vine-trellis interracial nationalism, others presented contradictions. In order to assess the degree to which Girardeau's black-defense trope resonated amongst Charlestonians on the eve of secession, this epilogue considers four indicators: First, black constructs of community and national identity, to gauge the extent to which black Charlestonians saw themselves as members of a "black vine" community dependent upon a benevolent "white trellis" for advancement; Second, intellectual biographies of selected religious leaders and secession delegates, to demonstrate how changes and crises of the 1850s more dramatic than the separate churches movement, framed disparate perspectives on race and nation.

Thirdly, a scan of the prayers contained in the Fast Day Sermons, delivered by invitation of the South Carolina legislature, "to protect and sustain us in all the trials we may be called upon to undergo." Especially in times of crisis, Charlestonians received information of the outside world filtered through the pulpit.[4] Fast Day Sermonizers presented their audiences with language to understand the righteousness of their cause, and thereby spawned the fundaments of Carolina nationalism for a significant cluster of the population. The epilogue closes with a fourth indicator, a return to John L. Girardeau, but with attention to his post-bellum legacy, both to clarify his racial sensibilities and to demonstrate the mythic function performed by the separate church initiative.

[4] Fox-Genovese and Genovese, *Mind of the Master Class*, 6-8; 414-42.

1. Black Nationalism

For the majority of black Charlestonians, the sacred spaces of separate churches, or any interracial churches for that matter, did not generate the filaments of bi-racial community. Though anecdotal and not specific to Girardeau, the most vivid indicator of black engagement with the prospect of bi-racial nationality was the 1865 scene in Trinity Methodist Church, when T.W. Lewis rallied a mass exodus of black Methodists under the cry "there will be no galleries in heaven." When White Methodists, confident that they had supported a war to protect and preserve "the full development of Christianity among the negroes," regained control of their churches at the end of the war and invited their colored brethren to "return to their old places in the galleries," they assumed their long legacy of interracial fellowship would carry forward into black consent for a perpetual peripheralization of their space in the church. Lewis's exodus signified the latent rejection of antebellum peripheralization, and the overt will of an independent postbellum black community to organize themselves as such. The "colored" membership of Charleston's Methodist Churches fluctuated a bit over the 1850s, but none of these fluctuations compared to the cold numerical shock of the 1860s. From a combined total of 4323 colored members in 1860, the total colored membership of Cumberland, Trinity, Bethel, and Spring Street Methodist Churches dropped to zero by 1866.[5]

The immediate postbellum schism of the Methodist Church, and the denominational reorganization that followed, lent credence to Joseph Holloway's retrospective schema of black national identity by denominational affiliation. Richard

[5] Centenary Methodist Episcopal Church Records, Avery Research Center, College of Charleston; Bernard Edward. Powers, *Black Charlestonians: A Social History, 1822-1885* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1994), 195; see above, chap. 5, p. 343; see Appendix C for membership statistics.

Holloway's grandson revised his family's history of regular attendance at Charleston's Methodist Churches to imply a primary identification not with the local charter, but with the Methodist Church as a national unit. The Holloways held firm to American Methodism not only against the tide of black secession in 1816, but also amid the regionalized tensions that wrought a national schism in 1844. The younger Holloway insisted that his family's *national* Methodist identity had been secured by a proud history.

> The Methodist Church has always been the champion of freedom and equality. Her stand in 1844 against the worst of all iniquities, slavery, shows that she would rather sacrifice territory, members and association than principles and is sufficient reason for me to stand by one that was a friend in time of need.[6]

This alternative antebellum nationalism –available only to cosmopolitan negroes like the Holloways, who identified more with northerners than their neighbors – became available to a wider swath of Afro-Carolinians after the war.

Despite the dearth of voluntary identification with the national construct of bi-racial community, Afro-Carolinians contributed to the framework of Carolina nationalism through their imagined input. The disconnect between actual and assumed black identity was only revealed in the postbellum lamentations of disaffected covenanters like Paul Trapier and Thomas Smyth. Trapier, like Girardeau, devoted his late career to the cultivation of interracial bonds. But unlike Girardeau, Trapier's post-bellum experience demonstrated his failure to secure those bonds. Both Girardeau and Trapier "felt the pain of [postbellum] spoliation," but whereas Girardeau returned to his old church, and most of his old congregation, Trapier "more poignantly felt the loss of intimacy and affection

[6] James H. Holloway, *Why I am a Methodist : a historical sketch of what the church has done for the colored children educationally as early as 1790 at Charleston, S.C.* (n.p.: H. Wainwright, 1909).

between himself and his colored people." Trapier bought into the foundational myth of a bi-racial Carolina nation, created by God for the good of white liberty and black dependence, so was unsettled by the open destabilization of his ethos by separation from his black dependents.[7]

The Reverend Thomas Smyth, another well-established racial moderate and advocate of bi-racial nationalism, was similarly disaffected by the postbellum "loss of intimacy" with his former colored congregants. Smyth made a public statement to this effect – that his "colored members refused to approach [him] and with but one or two exceptions deserted the church" – that produced a response from one of his colored associates in 1871. According to this anonymous correspondent, what separated Smyth's rejection from Girardeau's acceptance was simple initiative. If Smyth had approached the black community instead of waiting to be approached, "they would have flocked to your standard as they have done in Dr. G's case, despite his surrender of post for field in struggle to perpetuate slavery." Black denial of interracial spiritual community was not categorical, but conditional, two of the main conditions being the antebellum *and* postbellum racial politics of space and the degree of personal affinity with white church leaders and members.[8]

Smyth's anonymous correspondent reported colored members remaining at "Dr. Dana's Church" (Central Presbyterian), and at "Mr. Tupper's Second Baptist Church…now known as Morris Baptist." He also noted selective black defection from "Mr. Wightman's Church," where the "colored were the main base of support, but…were crowded into galleries, had to enter from the basement, and took Sacrament at an altar

[7] Girardeau's post-bellum career and the congregation of Zion are narrated below (section 4).
[8] "Anonymous Letter from a Negro," in Smyth, *Autobiographical Notes*, 694.

separate from the whites." Ultimately, Smyth's colored charges left his church "for lack of spiritual comfort." Whether defined through interpersonal contact and comfort with white leaders and brethren or through spatial experience of liturgy and worship, Afro-Carolinians sought some conveyance of equality with white members of their spiritual community. Connecting the antebellum tradition of black dependence with the postbellum reality of black independence, Smyth's antagonist informed him of the underlying impulses of black religious organization. In response to the "deprecating spirit of exclusiveness forced upon them by debarring them of rights due to all church members in good standing….Separate organizations have been entered into to attest to Whites our desire to worship God unmolested under own vine and fig tree."

The loss of black "intimacy and affection" suffered by secessionists like Trapier and Smyth cut deeper for their understanding of secession as a defense of black dependence. Afro-Carolinians responded naturally to the institutional bars that kept them from full citizenship "in the household of God." Though Trapier and Smyth surely regretted this turn of events, many of their contemporaries felt differently. They were members of a seminal generation that came of age through the "counterrevolution of race," an institutional triumph over their elders during the 1830s.[9] This generation of counterrevolutionaries fractured as it matured, and met new impulses like the separate churches movement of the 1840s and 50s with variable affinity. As the first distinctly "modern" generation of Carolinians grew beyond their coming-of-age moment in the 1830s, they became more comfortable with a status quo of their own making**,** and tended towards the more conservative pole of future disputes. This trend manifested in the

[9] See above, chap. 2, n. 52.

laissez-faire posture with which Andrew Magrath and his cohorts responded to the more progressive Adger-Trapier impulse of religious separation.

2. Secessionist Biographies

Most of the Charleston delegates to the Secession Convention were born between 1797 and 1816, coming of age during the counterrevolution of race signified by John Honour's schismatic fight against his Methodist elders. Honour's political escalation, from Cashier of the Charleston Insurance and Trust Company Cashier to alderman, to mayor, and delegate to the Convention of 1860, originated with his pursuit of racial modernity in 1834. Over the years, Honour's advocacy of racial modernization evolved to accomodate the more progressive position of separate churches. Appointed to the committee on religious instruction that endorsed the Calvary and Zion plans in 1849, Honour's signature and religious integrity shifted the weight of institutional modernism towards an inclusive, but peripheralized, interracial spiritual community.[10]

One third of the delegates elected from the Parish of St. Michael's and St. Philip's to attend the December Convention were born after 1816. The most vocal of this younger set was Leonidas Spratt, born in 1818, an ambitious Charlestonian of proud heritage (first cousin of James K. Polk) but limited means. Spratt was a prolific writer,

[10] John Amasa May and Joan Reynolds Faunt, *South Carolina Secedes* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1960). Edward T. Horn, *In Memory of Rev. John H. Honour, D.d: Born 20th December, 1802. Died 26th November, 1885* (Charleston, S.C: News and Courier Book Presses, 1885). See Honour biography in chap. 2, p. 110-11. Delegates to the Convention from the Parish of St. Philip and St. Michael were Andrew W. Burnet, Jr. (b. 1811), Henry W. Conner (b. 1797), Richard de Treville (b. 1801), Robert N. Gourdin (b. 1812), Thomas M. Hanckey (b. 1822), Isaac W. Hayne (b. 1809), John H. Honour (b. 1802), Andrew Magrath (b. 1813), Gabriel Manigault (b. 1833), Edward McCrady (b. 1802), Christopher G. Memminger (b. 1803), Williams Middleton (b. 1809), William Porcher Miles (b. 1822), Francis J. Porcher (b. 1821), Robert Barnwell Rhett (b. 1800), F.D. Richardson (b. 1818), Benjamin H. Rutledge (b. 1822), Thomas Y. Simons (b. 1828), J.J. Pringle Smith (b. 1816), Leonidas Spratt (b. 1818), John F. Townsend (b. 1799), and Theodore D. Wagner (b. 1819).

editor of several Charleston newspapers.[11] In 1860, he authored a piece that agonized over the political consequences of Charleston's recent demographic transition, as the city grew closer to the socioeconomic makeup of the northern electorate:

> But even here the process of **disintegration** has commenced…within ten years past as many as ten thousand slaves have been drawn away from Charleston by the attractive prices of the West and laborers from abroad have come to take their places. These laborers have every disposition to work above the slave…And when [white laborers] shall come in greater numbers to the South they will…question the right of masters to employ their slaves in any works that they may wish for; they will invoke the end of legislation; they will use the elective franchise to that end; they may acquire the power to determine municipal elections; they will inexorably use it; and thus this town of Charleston, at the very heart of slavery, may become a fortress of democratic power against it.

In the same document, Spratt made the case for secession as a preemptive strike against the social and electoral changes that would eliminate slavery as a shield against class conflict.[12]

When paired with Girardeau and the Methodists, Spratt's addendum meant two arguments for secession – to defend Afro-Carolinians and/or to prevent conflict with working class white Carolinians. Ultimately, both arguments became part of the same jeremiad against Republican tyranny. Whether by military or electoral force, the northern way of free-soil Republicanism, "impractical agrarianism and equality," was invading the south. Beneath these macro-narratives, individual Charlestonians adopted more idiosyncratic viewpoints on secession and Carolina nationalism. Paul Trapier, born in 1806, grew up in a Charlestonian atmosphere of noble living, where "honor, dignity,

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[11] King, *The Newspaper Press of Charleston, S.C.*, 162-3, 183.
[12] L. W. Spratt, *The Philosophy of Secession: A Southern View, presented in a letter addressed to the Hon. Mr. Perkins of Louisiana, in criticism on the provisional constitution adopted by the Southern Congress at Montgomery, Alabama* (Charleston, S.C.: s.n., 1861).; Towers, *The Urban South and the Coming of the Civil War*, 34-35; see also Appendix A for census data on the demographic "deterioration" of Charleston.

culture, learning, and grace were more than words… an atmosphere too rare to exist but too rich to forget." As a minister, Trapier was a stubborn high-church liturgist who struggled with both local and national resistance. He saw secession as a means to "a more perfect apostolic union," removing the imperfections of the national church. For Trapier, secession was an opportunity; it was not so much a reactionary impulse, as a strategy of reform. Trapier got what he wanted in the short term; he authored "the Code (of Canons) which was in the main adopted" at the first meeting of the General Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederate States of America.[13]

Trapier also parlayed his renown as religious leader and "expert on slavery" into a public advocacy of disunion. He "supported the war enthusiastically" and by his own account "preached [disunion] up from the pulpit." In this regard, Trapier diverged from the public stance of many of his colleagues. Following Thornwell, the most principled preachers "left it to Caesar to take care of his own rights, and…insisted only upon the supreme rights of the Almighty." When the state legislature "invited" John Bachman, rector of St. John's Lutheran Church, to deliver a sermon on the November 21 Day of Fasting, Humiliation, and Prayer, he "avoided the political questions of the day as much as possible." He preached on "the duty of a Christian to his country," addressing his usual congregation, the Citadel cadets who elected to gather at St. John's, and the "colored brethren" separately. Regardless, or perhaps because of his political scruples, John Bachman was the most universally respected clergyman in Charleston in 1860. The

[13] Trapier, *Incidents in my Life*, chapter 4.

Charleston delegates who organized the secession convention in December elected Bachman to give the opening prayer.[14]

A proud Unionist from New York born in 1790, Bachman's shift to disunion, prioritizing his adopted home above that of his birth, did not come easily. The most personal and authentic expression of the reasoning behind his transition appeared his extended correspondence with the Rev. J.A. Brown, a Maryland minister who was called to serve as President of Newberry, the Lutheran college Bachman founded in 1831, but resigned before his Unionist beliefs could be exposed. In February 1861, Bachman responded to Brown's concern for southern negroes, and plea for moderation and a hasty peace, with the assurance

> that the South need not the north to protect them from insurrection. With all their pamphlets – their John Brown raids – their Helper's book recommended the Slaves to cut their masters throats – a book endorsed by nearly every man in office among the black republicans – notwithstanding the praying and preaching against the slaveholder from ten thousand pulpits in the north, they have never been able to get up an insurrection among us and I will venture to say – if an army of wide awakes was to make its appearance here – those of our negroes who were cowards would hide in the woods to escape their worst enemy and those who were brave would stand by their masters to the death.[15]

This was Bachman's perspective on bi-racial community, and his foundational statement of Carolina nationalism. He not only endorsed the Carolina Covenant of black dependence, but also insisted that Afro-Carolinians shared his vision. Some of those who shared in Bachman's prayer as delegates to the secession convention were not so confident. Andrew Magrath was one of these, largely due to the contrary presumptions

[14] C. L., Haskell, John Bachman., Audubon, John James,, Bachman, *John Bachman, the pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church, Charleston.* (Charleston, S.C.: Walker, Evans & Cogswell, 1888), 362-63.
[15] John Bachman Papers, SCL.

of race and nation with which he entered the foray of secession. Previously credited as "Many Citizens" in the *Mercury* debate over separate churches, Magrath's letters publicized his imaginings of the black mind, the counterhegemonic ideas exposed to black dependents through education. He wrote against the "maturation" of negro minds and the "lessons" of spiritual independence, lest they "incline" to an antislavery "text of scripture" or learn that that "the faggot and pile could not consume martyrdom that scorned the most ingenious devices of cruel intolerance."[16]

Magrath was a bit of a firebrand, but had arrived at his opposition of religious separation through dialogue with the foremost moderate of his era, James L. Petigru. Magrath was Petigru's former student and protégé, who once supported Petigru's moderate, cooperationist political position but evolved into a more radical southern rights advocate by the 1850s. While Magrath was drafting letters in favor of the destruction of Calvary and Zion, Petigru interrupted the mob at Calvary to deliver a bold defense of moderation and civic order:

> How can you be such damned fools, as to attempt to destroy this Church, even if you have to set fire to the town. Have you not seen enough of fire here to be afraid of it? It is the only thing that decent men are afraid of ! Men, let us call a meeting; if you are right, I will go with you; if you are wrong, you will carry out your purpose over my dead body.[17]

Magrath rode the temper of the mob through the ranks of South Carolina radicalism, serving as delegate to the Southern Rights Convention in 1852, and as federal district judge until he resigned his post in defiance of Lincoln's election in 1860.

[16] *Mercury,* July 20 and 23, 1847.
[17] James Louis Petigru, *Life, letters and speeches of James Louis Petigru, the Union man of South Carolina* (Washington, D.C.: W.H. Lowdermilk & Co., 1920), 280-81.

Some of Magrath's fellow delegates were not so resolute in their defiance of Lincoln and his Republican regime. Edward McCrady was a stalwartly principled attorney and regular servant of St. Philip's Episcopal Church, elected from Charleston to four terms in the House of Representatives before he was elected as delegate to the state Convention of December 1860. He served often as legal counsel for the Episcopal Church and was appointed by the Mayor in 1849 to chair the legal committee that investigated the operations of Calvary Church. He was also one of the few white Episcopalians willing to volunteer for supervisory duties at black class meetings. In the weeks prior to Lincoln's election, McCrady exchanged a rapid correspondence with his nephew, William Henry Trescot in Washington, D.C. In June, Trescot became acting Secretary of State, and it was in this capacity that he wrote to his uncle, the former congressman, to address his concerns about the upcoming election. Trescot speculated on Lincoln's presidency and persuaded his uncle that Lincoln was a populist uniter. He supposed "that Lincoln is a great man," and "that he would become for the North what Jackson was for the nation." Thus, in Trescot's estimation, the better way to fight him would be by dividing the Republicans in Congress.[18]

Ultimately, both McCrady and Trescot conceded that their course of moderation and Unionism was hopeless. In logical extension of Lincoln's maxim that the "Union cannot survive half slave and half free," McCrady signed on to inevitability: "I do not see how action from the state is to be prevented." In this light, McCrady abandoned the cause of moderation for the lesser of two evils, a preemptive strike in defense of a work

[18] Edward McCrady, Edward McCrady papers, 1750-1922 (1258.00), South Carolina Historical Society; Committee of Fifty, *Public Proceedings Related to Calvary* (1850); McCrady was also described by Frank Towers as a "a leading South Carolina disunionist;" Towers, *Urban South and the Coming of the Civil War*, 26.

in progress. For McCrady, this was a defense of black improvement and a nation of two races bonded by God. Added to the list of idiosyncratic rationales for secession, McCrady joined Trapiers pursuit of denominational reform, Bachman's die-hard bi-racial community, and Magrath's vision of political progress. Each of these, and especially Spratt's case for secession as a preemptive strike to defend the social order by severing ties with the northern mobocracy and their potential to manipulate the local working-class electorate, resonated among the state's electors.[19]

The long-simmering tension between Carolina's political legacy of aristocracy (one-party rule) and the ascendance of herrenvolk democracy spilled out into Spratt's concerns over slavocrat impotence to control the local electorate. Spratt correctly diagnosed this tension as part of the continuing competition between the governmental interests of the white working class and slavery (black working class), and feared the numerical potential of the white working class to threaten slavery in a state where whites were in the minority, where "it were to be supposed that here the system of slave society would be permanent and pure." Ultimately the factionalization of both interests, and both generations, coalesced in a common default strategy, secession as a means to self-determination and preservation of the status quo. Both the class-conscious and race-conscious arguments for secession were common themes of Fast Day jeremiads. Fast day sermonizers seemed to endorse both arguments, but one (racial) more than the other.

[19] Edward McCrady papers, SCHS.

3. Birth of a Nation

The Democratic National Convention, held in Charleston during the spring of 1860, forced Carolinians to reconsider the political dimensions of their imagined community and confront their electoral impotence on the national scene. A series of party conventions throughout the summer frustrated hopes of national influence and escalated local anxiety. By the fall, the state's leaders consolidated around the impossibility of Republican rule in South Carolina. A month before the election, Governor Gist circulated letters to other southern governors testing their support for secession, and suggested that South Carolina would secede even if they did not. One week after Abraham Lincoln won the presidential election, Gist signed an order from the state legislature inviting "clergy and people of all denominations to assemble" on Wednesday, November 21 for "a day of Fasting, Humiliation and Prayer" to pray for God "to give us one heart and one mind to oppose, by all just and proper means, every encroachment upon our rights."[20]

The language of the legislative order, as well as that of the Fast Day sermons, anticipated God's blessing on a new national Covenant. The state legislature affirmed for the residents of South Carolina a national identity continuous with that of "our forefathers, not only in resistance to oppression and injustice, but in supplication for Divine aid," a "people who acknowledge the hand of God in every event." Fast Day sermons developed this providential framework through biblical and historical precedent to describe the present moment as the launch point for a new national Covenant, between

[20] Dates of Democratic National Convention: April 23- May 3; date of Presidential Election: Nov. 6; date of legislative order: Nov. 13. Legislative order excerpted in most published fast day sermons, including Thomas Smyth, *The Sin and the Curse* (Charleston: Evans and Cogwell, 1860), 1-2.

God and the people of Carolina. These sermons provided a new birth for the well-established Carolina Covenant of black dependence, accentuated by contrast with the "impractical agrarianism and equality" of free-soil Republicans, and regenerated by separation from the federal covenant of the previous century. The Reverend William Prentiss, in his Fast Day sermon at St. Peter's Episcopal Church, witnessed the present moment as a great transition: "We see this day the greatest nation on the face of the Earth going to destruction for an idea; we see a greater, Phoenix-like rising from its ashes." Both of these events were "from the Lord." God sanctioned one Union, now sentenced to death for its intoxication with the spirit of "congregational infallibility," to be a nursery for a more perfect union of Carolinian confederates.[21]

Thus informed by their legislature and their preachers, Carolinians were doubly chosen: a special people chosen from among God's chosen nation. Just as the Union would be destroyed by an idea, Carolina would be delivered (from destruction) by an idea. The genesis of Carolina nationalism, as articulated in these Fast Day sermons, was the Carolina Covenant: a "Divine Revelation…that justice and equity, and goodwill and kindness, to all, whatever be their station…are the true, the Christian remedies for the inequalities which Divine Providence has ordained." Thus, the religious architects of public sentiment rhetorically distilled the present moment into two possible outcomes: through **jeremiads** against the "impractical equality" and "congregational infallibility" at the heart of Republican demagoguery, Fast Day sermonizers warned their audiences of

[21] William O. Prentiss, "A sermon preached at St. Peter's church, Charleston, by the Rev. William O. Prentiss, on Wednesday, November 21, 1860, being a day of public fasting, humiliation, and prayer, appointed to be observed by the legislature of the state of South Carolina, on contemplation of the secession of the state from the union, and repeated at St. Peter's church, at the request of the congregation, on the evening of Sunday, November 25, 1860, and again in the legislative hall at Columbia, during the session of the legislature," 1860.

the dystopian future that would come with "foreign occupation;" through **liturgical** recitations of the Carolina Covenant, these spokesmen of civil religion not only affirmed the righteousness of secession, but even extended its trajectory into a utopian future of bi-racial empire.[22]

Both the jeremiad and the liturgical style of national history reinforced the duality of national covenants and prioritized the nested identities of Carolinians into a clear duality: a local community rooted in black dependence and separation above a federal union promising mongrelization and amalgamation.[23] Those who answered the state's invitation to attend a weekday prayer service joined a new nation gathered to seek guidance for their prayers and direction for their cause. Each preacher offered a different angle on the proper direction of national prayers and reflections, but most basically and most prominently, they insisted that their congregations pray for deliverance from racial ruin. William Prentiss ordered his audience to be steadfast in their devotion to the Carolina nation, lest "mongrels, spurious and depraved…occupy your palaces and bear about their bastardy in triumph." As suggested by the epigraphs, liturgy and jeremiad were two sides of the same coin; the liturgical mode of national consolidation entailed a positive *alternative* to mongrel occupation and bastard triumph. Fast Day congregations prayed for protection and preservation of the bi-racial community they had labored so long to orchestrate. The official statement of South Carolina Methodists stated the religious reasons for secession to be "the full development of Christianity among the negroes of the South" to content and satisfy the slave "with the condition in which God

[22] Ibid.; for Prentiss quote regarding "empire," see second epigraph.
[23] Pocock, "Idelogia Americana," 391.

has placed him," so that he may "more certainly and rapidly advance in religious enlightenment and Christian morality."[24]

As these germinal nationalists listened to the rallying cry of negro enlightenment, they heard it as a panacea, a means to guard the well-being of all Carolinians. As the most valuable and vulnerable link in the local chain of social interdependence, a racial order bulwarked by the legal tradition of slavery and the cultural tradition of black dependence secured the place and potential of each and every member of their imagined community. In his Fast Day Sermon at Trinity Presbyterian Church, the Reverend W.C. Dana brought the self-evident social function of these traditions to the surface. Slavery was "an institution which involves the welfare of every member of this state," which "the Word of God recognizes and regulates and which Providence has made here a necessity." The Reverend James Elliot compelled his Fast Day audience at St. Michael's to reflect upon how they had "discharged [their] duties as masters and obligations as law-givers towards that race which Providence has placed under our charge." Through the reflexive property of black dependence, their efforts to defend and improve one people would determine the fate of all.

This was the timbre of Fast Day sermons, the civil religion of a race-based Carolina nationalism. Preachers and legislators assured Charlestonians anxious over the present crisis that God would protect them if they stayed the course. Those who attended the weekday service came with a range of questions about the spiritual dimensions of their "nation," and left with a range of answers. Most Fast Day sermonizers dwelt upon the theme of "national sins." In Columbia, Thornwell incited his audience to repent for

[24] *Minutes of the Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South* (Charleston: Evans and Cogwell, 1861), Wofford Library.

the national sins of perverting government to selfish ends and to come before the Lord as "penitents," as "the people whom we hold in bondage are the occasion of all our troubles;" In Charleston, Thomas Smyth acknowledged not only the obvious national "sins" of "atheists, infidels, communists, free-lovers," et al. that had brought this great "curse" upon their nation, but also indicted the "all men are created equal" provision of the Declaration of Independence as the "bitter root of all our evils." For most audiences, this meditation upon national sins entailed a general repentance for their share in the inter-sectional events that provoked this sectional calamity. For some, repentance was more localized. The Reverend Elliot encouraged his audience to repent not "our sins in general, but …our sins in particular – in the special relation of our social life, which is endangered, and through which and on account of which this evil has come upon us." Elliot called for a congregational inventory of the Carolina Covenant, to ascertain "if we have left unfulfilled many duties which we owed to this people, whom along with ourselves we are protecting from the insane folly of our adversaries." Though those present may not have sinned against their own slaves, Elliot confessed on their behalf that, "we" as a congregation and community, "have allowed abuses and oppressions, which should have been checked by the strong hand of the law and the stern rebuke of a righteous public opinion." For this collective neglect, Elliot led his listeners to repent, and humble themselves before "His justice" to "deprecate His anger."

For others, repentance over "national sins" was merely lip service, a rhetorical device to demonize northern opponents, and admonish the audience to search their hearts for any strain of sympathy with the "progressive morality" of northern demagogues. William Prentiss led his congregation to pray for God "to deliver us from evil," in the

earthly form of an aggressive northern amorality. His jeremiad implicitly compelled listeners to reflect upon the evil sympathies and doubts that dwelt in their hearts and sponsored the condemnation wrought by northern pathology, but the meat of his message was void of any middle ground. Northerners were under the spell of an evil Republican demagoguery, with deep heretic roots in the New England soil. Carolinians were a people chosen for their stalwart defense of scriptural truth and natural hierarchy. Prentiss extended the regnant policy of the radical press into ponerology, equating any domestic critique or inter-sectional cooperation with (an infiltration of) evil, anathema of southern good. In his conclusion, Prentiss simplified the present conflict for his audience; it was not a choice "between two systems of labor, but between life or death…honor or infamy."

By means of jeremiad, Prentiss and his colleagues threw up profound lines of national distinction that ran much deeper than those of party affiliation, and thus outlined an identity for the as-yet-stateless Carolina nation. The good/evil binary of the jeremiad provided identification through contradistinction; every claim against free-soil Republicans and their ancestors inferred a contrary positive trait of the Carolina tradition. Their opponents were descendants of Puritans, who believed that the Bible did not complete the interpretation of the Truth, and through the doctrine of "congregational infallibility" adopted a cumulative bottom-up revision of God's word. This tradition persisted into the present generation "practically regarding morality as a progressive science," and thus "exalt(ing) each man into his own savior." Among the consequent evils of this atomized moral authority, Prentiss listed the degradation of marriage by divorce rights afforded women in northern states, the murder and dispossession of native

Americans by self-interested northern ethics and laws, and the violation of a federal covenant sanctioned by God's law and favor.[25]

In many ways, the dividing lines that Prentiss used to sort the good/evil binary rhetoric of the new national covenant resembled the typical divide between conservatives and progressives. When presented with the theological status quo – a Biblical sanction of slavery, received and honored for millennia – "our enemies meet these facts with the assertion, that there is a higher law," determined not by God, but by man. Northern theology was so distinct as to deify a different God from that of the Carolinians; northerners "refuse[d] to worship a God who can sanction the right of one man's property in the body of another." Though many Carolina nationalists shared Prentiss's assessment of theological polarization, his conjectures represented only one pole amid a range of sectional theologies. Others stopped short of insisting that northerners and southerners worshiped two different gods, but clung just as firmly to the conviction that northerners and southerners had become two separate peoples. James Elliott asked his esteemed audience at St. Michael's to pray for the misguided northerners who were "still our brethren in race and religion." He found an appropriate historical analogy in the relation between Athens and Sparta, allies and kinsmen who had become enemies. Through this explicit parallel to "another great system of free states," Elliot legitimated the opposition and thus raised the stakes of the present conflict.

In this more moderate interpretation, the United States had become two nations under one God, increasingly foreign and hostile neighbors. W.C. Dana reasoned that the present crisis was one of national identity. He asserted that the "Northern and southern

[25] South Carolina's constitutional laws against divorce were not amended until 1947/1949. See Article VII at http://www.scstatehouse.gov/scconstitution/a17.php.

states are by their different institutions so far distinct **nations** that the possession of the federal government by a northern party implacably hostile to southern interests…is a form of foreign aggression." Dana suggested that the "northern party was as foreign to southern soil…as Spain," but this was not accurate. The threat of foreign possession was much closer than some Spanish analogue.

The double threat of black and/or white underclass mobilization was inborn to southern society, sublimated by the invented tradition of black dependence but vulnerable to reformation and activation through northern models and influence. Only "righteousness" – the yield of absolute devotion to the Carolina Covenant – "exalteth a nation….lest our enemies find the root of our destruction in our own bosom." Whether by force or by ballot, the northern model of inverted social despotism would invade South Carolina. This looming spectre of "servile hordes and starving mobs asserting a liberty they knew not how to use" was a common theme of Fast Day jeremiads. Particularly disconcerting was the prospect of a union between black and white working classes, or white abolitionists and black agitators. In his lengthy digression into racial theory, William Prentiss suggested that he could "additionally prove…the absurdity of believing that dangerous combinations could be formed" between Africans and "badly disposed white persons." In the context of his pseudo-scientific diatribe on black inferiority, Prentiss seemed to suggest that Africans were categorically incapable of achieving any solidarity with whites, no matter what their disposal. He also included another explanation, that "our police regulations do not permit [the African] to be acquainted" with these dangerous white persons.

While attempting to reassure his audience (of what was ostensibly absurd), he reminded them of what was at stake. It was a clever rhetorical device, which bound both of the predominant communal approaches to secession – to protect black dependents and to avoid white class conflict – into a common fear of northern invasion (jeremiad). The key to securing both objectives was racial separation, a feature of racial modernity already developed institutionally by the city's most influential denominations. The proto-apartheid model of the separate church promised a means to both prevent "dangerous combinations" of black and white and ward of the "process of disintegration" fueled by white resentment of black competition. If the races could be separated institutionally (surveille and police), there would be no combination, and no competition.

4. A Carolina Elegy for John L. Girardeau

Zion Presbyterian Church, and more specifically, John Girardeau, became mirrors upon which white Charlestonians reflected their own racial sensibilities. Before the War, Girardeau's "nigger church" reflected boundary-transgression to hard-line racial modernists like the Charleston Minutemen and progress to racial "moderates" like John Adger. After the War, elegiac nationalists dissolved this spectrum of sensibility into a consensus redemption of Girardeau and his good work at Zion. As evidenced by the contributors to Girardeau's biography, post-bellum hard-liners did not soften to accommodate new evidence of racial mutability, but rather solidified even more exaggerated essentialist assumptions, and reached back to connect with Girardeau's utopian experiment as evidence of what could have been.

Joseph Mack, the most racially conscious of Girardeau's early biographers, made it clear that Girardeau's standards of racial classification were less rigorous than his own, and used this contrast to aggrandize Girardeau's sacrifice. Mack classified "Gullah lowcountry negroes" as "the most inferior sort" of American humanity, but admitted that when Girardeau approached these "former cannibals" from the pulpit, "he saw before him not a dark cloud of ignorant, degraded negroes, but a cloud crimsoned with beauty divine." Mack was separated from Girardeau not only by their system of racial classification - Girardeau's attention to spirit over skin and his own bio-cultural assessment of black inferiority – but also by 50 years of interracial experience.[26] Thus Mack was able to resolve the former distinction by the latter, collapsing the distance between their racial sensibilities through historicity. Mack's postbellum reality transformed and elevated Girardeau's antebellum ideals of bi-racial community into the utopian projections of a bygone era. Closing the gap through racial apologetics amplified the mythic function of Girardeau's ministry, and its reflective influence upon white identity creation: Mack emphasized black inferiority to emphasize white sacrifice. In order to explain why the city's finest preacher would focus his energies on the least rewarding segment of the population, Mack organized his biography into an analysis of four factors: Girardeau's love of South Carolina, the needs of domestic heathen, his career as a slaveowner, and his encouraging success in the field.

Though they diverged on the valuation of black character, Girardeau agreed with Mack that his racial project was a work in progress, interrupted by federal intervention.

[26] Blackburn, *Life Work of Girardeau*, 58-63, 70. Mack's standards of African inferiority included voodoo, cannibalism, African history, hair, and illiteracy. Afro-Carolinians were "little more than brutes," "negro slaves whose black skins and kinky hair were symbols of their inferiority," etc. However, Mack clearly admitted that Girardeau did not share his methods of gauging black value.

Girardeau certainly believed in the Carolina Covenant and black dependence, but the upshot of his antebellum statements on racial mutability was unclear. In defense of his ministry, he wrote that God had made Africans inferior and introduced them to white men for their improvement and salvation – "the white man is like a trellis for the African vine to climb" – but did not extend this metaphor to any conclusion. The policy-specific details of Girardeau's postbellum writings provide clarifications consistent with these vague progressive metaphors. During the 1870s, he opposed both the Independent Colored Presbyterian Church and the policy of sending African-American missionaries to Africa. Provided proper white guidance, Afro-Carolinians might be prepared at some future date to run their own church and minister to a savage people, but that date had not yet arrived.

This was part of the ongoing process of community formation that Girardeau and his Carolina confederates fought to defend. Girardeau "knew that these people were, by nature, almost destitute of executive and managerial qualities." Whether due to the disruptions of war and federal occupation or their own nature, Afro-Carolinians had not yet passed through the stage of black dependence with adequate preparation to manage their own affairs. Moreover, neither white nor black Carolinians were yet ready for former slaves to join white citizens as peers in congregations of religious equality. Both before and after the War, Girardeau "knew the irreconcilable antipathies of the two races to being mixed in a common organization." "Consequently," he advocated black "organization under the tuition and patronage of their white brethren until such a time as they might be prepared for a separate and independent Church life."[27]

[27] Ibid., 215.

Thus, John Girardeau reflected the ambiguous upshot of racial improvement suggested by John Adger's "School of Slavery," a moderate species of antebellum thought extinguished by the political crises of the 1860s, when discursive exigencies crystallized the racial middle ground into "Carolinian-correct" binaries. Once this nadir of the middle ground subsided, prognostications of racial mutability and the end point of racial improvement resurfaced in postbellum reflections like those of Mack and Girardeau. Whereas before the War, these sentiments informed practical strategies of institutional development, after the war, they served more of a mythic function. Mack used Girardeau as a foundational symbol of the ill-fated Carolina nation – a noble people who gave their best preacher to their black dependents. As evident in Mack's own racist hyperbole, the only way to build a community, much less a nation, out of two peoples so far apart was through exceptional, transgressive individuals like John Girardeau.[28] Though the nuances of empathy and racial mutability may have been excised by pressures of national genesis, Mack's story was already a story Charlestonians were telling themselves about themselves before the war.

Girardeau's racial bearing and influence was remarkable for the continuity of its impact, before, during and after the discursive fluctuations that marked the genesis of Carolina nationalism. William Prentiss's Fast Day Sermon provided perhaps the most jarring stamp of Girardeau's symbolic function. Prentiss's sermon was the most censorious of the racial middle ground (mutability), going so far as to insist that "experience teaches us, that [the African] is totally uninfluenced by even white teachers of morality, politics, arts or anything else." But Prentiss acknowledged one exception to

[28] Ibid., 67: "the negroes believed that Dr. Girardeau was the special representative of God to their race."

this rule of permanent inferiority, if "the instructor becomes a personal acquaintance," and suggested that through this vector of personalization, it was possible for Afro-Carolinians to transgress the cultural boundaries of inferiority. In an implicit endorsement of Girardeau's work in progress, Prentiss concluded that "the degree of the teachers influence is exactly proportioned to the length and intimacy of such acquaintance."

Charlestonians never adopted a graduation plan for their "School of Slavery," but Afro-Carolinians matriculated into freedom nonetheless, and created cultural "schools" of their own. Unlike most of their peers, hundreds of Zion's colored members remained loyal to their "intimate (white) instructor," and thousands continued to attend Girardeau's services.[29] They proved that the interracial dialectic of personalization and abstraction worked both ways. Personal contact with John Girardeau belied any abstract qualities associated with white skin – "yas, he face is white, but he heart is black."

As for white Carolinians, postbellum reflections on antebellum events added a third rhetorical trope to the nationalist styles of liturgy and jeremiad. Historians like Joseph Mack adopted an elegiac lexis to describe the noble sacrifices and accomplishments of their white ancestors. As in the canonization of J.L. Girardeau, these elegies often evoked a utopic public institution of black dependence, in contrast to the racial quagmire of the present. Paternalism, and extended interracial familial bonds, were not the aspirations of the present, so neither were they the ideals of the past. Filtered

[29] Girardeau wrote, "For years they declined to separate themselves from the Southern Presbyterian Church, and even after its Assembly had, in 1874, recommended an organic separation of the whites and blacks, the continued to maintain an independent position." Blackburn, *Life Work of Girardeau*, 80-81.

through the lens of teleology, this was the legacy of Girardeau, and the Carolina Covenant, and the Charleston School of Slavery.

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APPENDIX A: **Racial Demography**

Table A.1: Colonial South Carolina

Year	**Coloured**	**White**
1700	2,400 (Slave)	3,100
1708	4,100 (Black Slaves, plus 1,400 "Indian Slaves")	4,080
1720	12,000 (Slave)	6,500
1730	20,000 (Slave)	10,000
1740	40,000 (Slave)	20,000
1750	43,333	21,667
1760	52,000	32,000
1770	80,000	50,000

Table A.2: Antebellum Charleston (City of Charleston unless otherwise noted)

Year	Slave	Free Colored	White
1820	13,252	1475	11,229
1830 • Charleston Neck	15,534 5919	2107 incl. in "Free" pop.	12,828 4135 ("Free")
1840 • Charleston Neck	14,673 9175 (non-white)	1632 incl. in non-white pop.	13,039 2681
1850 (incl. neck)	19,532	3441	20,012
1860 (incl. neck)	13,909	3257	23,376

APPENDIX B: Colored Church Membership in Charleston

Table B.1: Colored Church Membership by Percentage of Total Colored Population

Year	**Total Colored Members**	**Colored Population (Slave and Free)**	**Membership Ratio**	**Notes**
1820	7005	14,747	47.5%	4300 A.M.E., 1300 Methodist, 700 Baptist, 350 Episcopalian, 235 Congregational, 120 Presbyterian, 30 Lutheran
1845	8300	23,410	36%	Membership estimate totaled from findings of Charleston Report on Religious Instruction
1860	7738	17,166	45%	4323 Methodist, 1637 Presbyterian, ca. 1520 Baptist, 198 Lutheran ca. 130 Episcopalian

APPENDIX C: Circular Questionnaires

1845: Distributed throughout South Carolina in the spring of 1845 and published in the *Proceedings* of the 1845 Charleston Meeting on "Religious Instruction of the Negroes"

You are, therefore, respectfully invited to attend a meeting for this purpose, to be held in Charleston on the 13th of May next, at 12 o'clock N, at the Depository in Chalmers street, and in promotion of the object, to furnish, in writing if convenient, but if not, orally, information on the following points, viz: -

1. The number of negroes in your parish or district; and, of these, the number which belong to the church in which you worship, and the number which belong to another church.
2. The number of ministers or religious teachers who labour among them; and the denominations to which the ministers or teachers belong – whether any of them are persons of colour, and if so, under what regulations their teaching is admitted, and what is its practical result.
3. The number of times and the specific plan under which this instruction is given; and the number of children who are catechized.
4. The different comparative results observable in those who have grown up under religious training, and in those who have only received instruction as adults.

5. The degree of benefit apparently derived by the negroes generally from the instruction imparted, and particularly as it regards their morals – their tempers and their conduct in the relations of parent and child, and husband and wife – their chastity – their regard to truth – to the rights of property – and their observance of the Sabbath.
6. The influence of this instruction upon the discipline of plantations, and the spirit and subordination of the negroes.

1849: Distributed throughout South Carolina in August 1849, and published along with compiled responses in the *Public Proceedings Relating to Calvary Church*…(1850)

INTERROGATORIES

1st. Have any and what measures been adopted by your Church or Congregation to communicate religious instruction to the colored portion of the population? and for what length of time?

2d. What have been the different modes used, and what are their comparative and general results?

3d. Is the instruction oral or printed? and whether by white or colored teachers, and preachers?

4th. Is there a separate ecclesiastical organization of the colored members, and what is its nature? Does your system embrace both joint meetings of whites and blacks, and separate meetings of the blacks? Which part of the plan is the more efficient for good?

5th. Do any of the colored members preach, exhort, or teach as Catechists?

6th. Do the negroes hold meetings by themselves, and in what rooms or houses, or do some white persons always attend with them, and if so, what number, and how is their attendance secured?

7th. Have such meetings bee attended with salutary or injurious effects on the colored people who thus assemble. Have they been more or less submissive to authority, more or less given to a violation of the rules which govern them, and what has been the effect on free colored people?

8th. Have such colored people, slaves or free, taken advantage of such meetings to devise or organize for mischief against their masters or the community?

9th. What is the number of the colored members of your Church and congregation, what number can be seated in your house of worship, and could you provide to accommodate more, and how many?

10th. Have you a Sabbath School for the colored people? Are the teachers white or colored, and the instruction oral or printed, the number of scholars, and what proportion of them read?

11th. Have any and what disadvantages resulted from the measures and modes adopted for imparting religious knowledge to the adult or junior portions of the colored population?

12th. If disadvantages have arisen, what has been found the most successful mode to avoid their recurrence?

13th. Of the colored members of the Church, do the slaves or free colored persons respectively bear the greater proportion to their aggregate number in each

congregation, and which of these classes is most uniformly attentive, docile and faithful to their duties, as members of the Church or Sabbath School?

14th. Are the colored people, or any of them, of your Church and congregation organized, in what they call band societies – and what is the nature and object of said organization – the duties and privileges of the members; and are they composed exclusively of males or of females? Do the members of said bans contribute funds, and for what purpose? Are their meetings public or confined to their members, and are they attended by any white persons? What is your opinion of their influence and results on the character and conduct of said people?

15th. If you do not reside in South-Carolina, please state if you have any statutes of your State, or laws of your city or town, prohibiting or regulating the meetings of colored people for religious instruction and worship, and briefly what they are?

16th. So far as your experience and observation go, can you speak favorably of the system of colored leaders and class meetings of colored persons, as it obtains in your Church"

17th. Knowing the object of these inquiries, please state any other matter that may enable the Committee to come to a correct conclusion in the premises?