

# Cavalier South vs Puritan North? Hypocrisy and Identity in the American Civil War

Edward G. Manger\*  
Charleston, South Carolina

*During the antebellum period and American Civil War, 'puritan' was a contested identity, fraught with layers of meaning and interpretation. Historians have charted the ways Southern intellectuals cast the differences between North and South as an outplaying of the old conflict between Cavalier and puritan. This article highlights the ways Southern ministers claimed the puritan identity for the South and accused the North of hypocrisy, for having fallen far from the theological ideals of their puritan forebears. Furthermore, Southern ministers noted the hypocrisy of Northern puritans for having escaped religious tyranny only to impose it upon those who did not conform to their form of Christianity; they had thus fallen into the very sin which they had decried. This came from Southern ministers whose attempt to appropriate the memory of puritanism as liberty-loving revealed their own hypocrisy in fighting for the 'liberty' to maintain a system of racial slavery.*

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By the beginning of the American Civil War (1861–5), white Southerners had grown accustomed to accusing Northerners of hypocrisy. They bemoaned Northern attacks on slavery that hypocritically ignored the material and economic benefits that those in the Northern states enjoyed as a result of the 'peculiar institution'.<sup>1</sup> They also bewailed the fact that Northern ministers hypocritically claimed to be orthodox Christians, whilst dabbling in theological speculation.<sup>2</sup> Throughout the antebellum period (c.1830–60), this

\* 4932 Durrant Avenue, North Charleston, SC, 29405, USA. E-mail: [egmanger@gmail.com](mailto:egmanger@gmail.com).

<sup>1</sup> See, for instance, Benjamin Morgan Palmer, *Thanksgiving Sermon, Delivered at the First Presbyterian Church, New Orleans, on Thursday, December 29, 1860* (New York, 1861), 10–11.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, John H. Boccock, 'Modern Theology, Taylor and Bledsoe', *Southern Presbyterian Review* 4 (1856), 492–512, at 494–5.

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accusation of hypocrisy was used to undermine the moral position from which Northern abolitionists criticized slaveholders. The charge of hypocrisy therefore became a significant component of white Southern rhetorical attempts to associate abolitionism with corruption in morality, piety and politics. Northern hypocrisy was often attributed to New England's puritan origins, especially in the context of the American Civil War, when both sides attempted to explain the conflict with reference to history. This attempt manifested itself in the common representation of the conflict between the Confederacy and Union as a replaying of the English Civil War, with the roles assigned as puritan (Parliamentarian) North vs Cavalier South.<sup>3</sup> In this article, I argue that this picture was contested by many Southern ministers who, sympathizing with puritanism in general, saw the locus of the North's hypocrisy in its departure from puritanism, not in puritanism itself.

Prominent historians of the religious dimensions of the Civil War have overlooked the nuances of Southern clergy's use of puritanism – both the term itself and its theology – in their sermons and religious literature. For example, Harry Stout writes that 'Many [Southern] writers justified the righteousness of their cause by contrasting the evangelical Christianity of the revivals with the "Puritan" spirituality of the North.'<sup>4</sup> Similarly, George Rable has observed that the common comparison between the Confederate general, Stonewall Jackson, and Oliver Cromwell was: 'Ironic in light of the widely held notion of a yawning gulf between Southern Cavaliers and Northern Puritans.'<sup>5</sup> Such comments ignore the fact that many Southern ministers did not see this 'yawning gulf' as being between themselves and Northern puritans, but rather as being between puritanism and what the North had become. Drew Gilpin Faust comes closer to an accurate description of the South's position when she points out that the white Southern view of puritanism was not an unalloyed critique, but acknowledged elements of good in the puritan

<sup>3</sup> See, for instance, John Quitman Moore, 'The Belligerents', *De Bow's Review* 31 (1861), 69–77, at 72–5. See also A. Jeffrey, 'European Emigration and New England Puritanism', *Southern Literary Messenger* 37 (1863), 463–72, at 470–1.

<sup>4</sup> Harry S. Stout, *Upon the Altar of the Nation: A Moral History of the Civil War* (London, 2007), 333.

<sup>5</sup> George C. Rable, *God's Almost Chosen Peoples: A Religious History of the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2010), 138.

past.<sup>6</sup> However, it was specifically the Southern clergy who insisted upon a positive view of puritanism, in distinction to secular commentators. This shows that Southern ministers did not simply regurgitate the narratives they encountered in the surrounding culture, but attempted to insert their own voice, views and priorities into their constructions of the Civil War's meaning.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, the regularity with which Southern ministers referred to the puritans and to the English parliamentary armies indicates that clergy used a historical identity to explain, understand and interpret the war as vociferously as James Byrd has recently demonstrated they used the Bible.<sup>8</sup>

In this article, I argue that many Southern ministers and churches rejected the Cavalier vs puritan framing of the Civil War and were instead intent on claiming themselves as the true heirs of the puritans, both in their quest for liberty and in the Christianity of their armies. This enabled Southern clergy to cast the North as nothing more than hypocrites who claimed to be the descendants of the puritans, but were in reality persecuting and warring against the true successors to puritan ideals. This helped Southern ministers maintain the intellectual independence from the North that Micheal Bernath has convincingly argued was a concern for Southerners in general.<sup>9</sup> Ministers did not need to concede that they had anything positive to learn from the North just because they praised puritanism. Instead, they appropriated various aspects of puritan history for the South to emphasize the North's degeneracy. In doing so, Southern ministers unintentionally gave the North an instant retort in a counter-charge of hypocrisy, as the South claimed to be fighting for liberty, freeing themselves from supposed religious oppression from Northern abolitionists, whilst denying liberty to their slaves. This underappreciated aspect of Southern religion and the Civil War displays the contradictions inherent in the puritan legacy, including the label of puritan itself.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Drew Gilpin Faust, *The Creation of Confederate Nationalism* (Baton Rouge, LA, 1995), 27.

<sup>7</sup> This was an important but overlooked point made by Anne Lovelace, *Southern Evangelicals and Social Order, 1800–1860* (Baton Rouge, LA, 1981), ix–x.

<sup>8</sup> James P. Byrd, *A Baptism of Fire and Blood: The Bible and the American Revolution* (Oxford, 2021).

<sup>9</sup> Michael T. Bernath, *The Struggle for Intellectual Independence in the Civil War South* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2010).

<sup>10</sup> John Coffey has written of puritanism's 'puzzling set of legacies': see John Coffey, 'Puritan Legacies', in idem and Paul Lim, eds, *Cambridge Companion to Puritanism* (Cambridge, 2008), 327–45, at 327. Although necessarily puzzling, Southerners' use of puritanism is contradictory and somewhat unexpected.

Indeed, 'white Southerners' use of the term varied greatly, from abuse to praise. As George Rable has shown, the South built up negative stereotypes, depictions and tropes about the North in their rhetorical attempts to demonize the 'Yankees', and part of this was in referring to them as puritans, a term that could be populated with any number of derisory attributes and which served as a catch-all insult to denote the negative differences of the North when compared to the South. However, Rable's examples are primarily drawn from secular sources.<sup>11</sup> My survey of printed Confederate sermons and religious newspapers shows that Southern Protestant clergy were not as quick to use puritan as a term of abuse.<sup>12</sup> Puritan identity was malleable: it could simultaneously be used negatively, as a straw man constructed from negative attributes ascribed to the settlers of New England; and positively, to describe religious orthodoxy and love of liberty when puritanism was considered as a broader movement. To harmonize all such uses of puritanism, that is, to see it as a blanket term of abuse or a positive claim to identity would therefore be to overlook the complexities that the term reveals within white Southern society during the antebellum period and the Civil War.

#### CAVALIER SOUTH VS PURITAN NORTH

Sidney Ahlstrom has described the Southern Cavalier trope as central to a new kind of Southern nationalism emerging from the 1830s onward.<sup>13</sup> It was advanced enthusiastically by leading white intellectuals in the pages of the most influential Southern publications, while at the same time being reinforced by Northern depictions of the South as exotic and 'other', as James Cobb has shown.<sup>14</sup> William

<sup>11</sup> George C. Rable, *Damn Yankees! Demonization and Defiance in the Confederate South* (Baton Rouge, LA, 2015), 11–15.

<sup>12</sup> This is based on the reading of over one hundred sermons and addresses delivered by Southern clergy during the war, as well as extensive reading of multiple issues of fifteen separate Southern religious journals and newspapers in which references to 'puritans', 'puritanism', 'Cromwell' and 'Parliamentarians' are overwhelmingly positive, and negative references to the same are rare.

<sup>13</sup> Sidney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven, CT, 1972), 654.

<sup>14</sup> James C. Cobb, *Away Down South: A History of Southern Identity* (Oxford, 2005), 1, 4. For a good overview of Southern anti-puritanism, largely through the work of the prolific Southern intellectual George Fitzhugh, see Jan C. Dawson, 'The Puritan and the Cavalier: The South's Perception of Contrasting Traditions', *The Journal of Southern*

R. Taylor summed up the result, writing that, by 1860, most Americans believed that ‘each section of the country ... possessed its own ethic, its own historical tradition and even, by common agreement, a distinctive racial heritage.’<sup>15</sup> According to this tradition, the Southern states, particularly Virginia and the Carolinas, had been settled in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries by Cavaliers and their descendants. These settlers had, through their character and innate virtues, bequeathed to their posterity respect for order, propriety and regulated liberty. At the same time, they were also seen as enjoying the leisurely pursuits of plantation life, based on those of the English country gentry. This identity developed in distinction to that of the North, which was depicted as having been settled by puritans, joyless, overbearing fanatics who hypocritically chastised and oppressed the liberty-loving Cavaliers of the South.<sup>16</sup>

Upon the outset of the war, this regional association with the Cavaliers took on new levels of importance and became an implement in the Confederate rhetorical arsenal with which to attack the North. No less an authority on the nature of the Confederacy than its president, Jefferson Davis, was able to say in his first speech after his inauguration (as reported by the *Richmond Dispatch*) that ‘the Northern Roundheads “bred in the bogs and fens of Ireland and Northern England”, could never dominate the Southern people, who were descendants of the bold and chivalrous Cavaliers of old.’<sup>17</sup>

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*History* 44 (1978), 597–614. The role of the North in romanticizing the South through travel is also a theme of Susan Mary Grant’s *North Over South: Northern Nationalism and American Identity in the Antebellum Era* (Lawrence, KA, 2000), 81–111.

<sup>15</sup> William R. Taylor, *Cavalier and Yankee: The Old South and American National Character* (New York, 1957), 15.

<sup>16</sup> The relative merits of, or problems with, this view of the settlement of the various states of America are not our concern. Instead, it suffices to say that these distinctions were widely held to be true and meaningful by Northern and Southern commentators and historians, and literature consumed in the antebellum period would have confirmed that belief. In the twentieth century, Clement Eaton was of the opinion that the Cavalier origin of the South was not entirely without basis: see Clement Eaton, *A History of the Old South* (New York, 1949), 69. David Hackett Fischer has seen as fundamentally important the streams of migration from England forming ‘Folkways’, the Southern iteration of this phenomenon being created in part by ‘Distressed Cavaliers’. See David Hackett Fischer, *Albion’s Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (Oxford, 1989), 213.

<sup>17</sup> Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *The Shaping of Southern Culture: Honor, Grace, and War* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2001), 180.

The animosity between Cavalier and puritan became commonplace as an explanatory framework for the war. A writer in the *Richmond Dispatch* put it this way: ‘We never believed that slavery had as much to do with this war as personal resentment and vindictiveness, transmitted from generation to generation, smoldering embers of the old Cavalier and Puritan feuds, which never died out.’ This author asserted, in no uncertain terms, that ‘the descendants of those two classes in the North and the South would have gone to war, sooner or later, if such a thing as slavery never existed.’<sup>18</sup>

Such interpretations of the war were also racialized, as can be seen by the title of an 1861 piece in the *Southern Literary Messenger*: ‘The true question: A contest for the supremacy of race, As between the Saxon Puritan of the North, and the Norman of the South.’<sup>19</sup> This further equation of Norman with Cavalier, and puritan with Saxon, enabled Southerners to conceive of the war as a struggle between disparate races. Drawing on contemporary racial theory, the author of this article argued that due to ‘ethnological differences’ those who populated the North had a national character which was ‘incapable of self-government, and ever violating, when left alone, the established law of reciprocal justice towards others.’<sup>20</sup> Two months later, an article in *De Bow’s Review* made a similar case, arguing that the ‘radical and irreconcilable’ differences between the Cavalier South and puritan North had inevitably led to the disruptions of the Civil War.<sup>21</sup> It also maintained that ‘The Puritans ... were in their hearts tyrants.’<sup>22</sup> A direct line was drawn between the puritans of the seventeenth century and the Northerners of the nineteenth, which established their equivalence ‘in all [their] vices’, not least in their hypocrisy.<sup>23</sup>

This narrative of the Cavalier South vs the puritan North played into the hands of Northern ministers, providing them with ample opportunity to use the charge of hypocrisy as an attack against the South. Northern ministers, especially those in the New England

<sup>18</sup> *Richmond Dispatch*, 14 September 1863.

<sup>19</sup> Anon., ‘The True Question: A Contest for the Supremacy of Race, as Between the Saxon Puritan of the North, and the Norman of the South’, *Southern Literary Messenger* 33 (1861), 19–27.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* 21.

<sup>21</sup> Anon., ‘The Puritan and the Cavalier; or, The Elements of American Colonial Society,’ *De Bow’s Review* 31 (1861), 209–52, at 209–10.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* 210–11.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.* 223.

states, were becoming increasingly proud of their puritan heritage. They were only too happy to conceive of their struggle in the American Civil War as a continuation of the principles for which the puritans had struggled before them.<sup>24</sup> Part of this puritan rehabilitation project involved clearing their own name of the charge of hypocrisy and rejecting the idea that the puritans of New England had been intolerant. Instead, the history of puritanism was reframed to make the puritans responsible for the ideals of liberty which stood behind the Declaration of Independence (1776).<sup>25</sup> For a Northern preacher such as the popular and widely read Henry Ward Beecher, the quest for liberty was innate to the puritan character, the cause of the church and the cause of the Union. Indeed, Beecher claimed: 'I love every drop of Puritan blood the world ever saw, because ... Puritan blood means blood touched with Christ's blood.'<sup>26</sup>

#### TRULY PURITAN SOUTH VS FORMERLY PURITAN NORTH

From the outset of the war, the Roman Catholic Church in the South adopted a clear anti-puritan stance, seeing New England religion as a form of ultra-Protestantism and the Cavalier ethos of the South as more conducive to Roman Catholicism.<sup>27</sup> When it came to the Protestant churches, however, those most likely to subscribe to this standard narrative of Cavalier South vs puritan North were Episcopalians. They enjoyed ecclesiastical descent from the Royalists, specifically from the Restoration establishment that had ejected the vast majority of puritans from the Church of England in 1662. It made sense, therefore, for Episcopal churchmen to ride the wave of Cavalier nostalgia. Consequently, the Episcopal Church experienced a high level of influence in the Confederacy, particularly over its

<sup>24</sup> For an interest in puritan history during New England's antebellum period, see Edwin Hall, *The Puritans and Their Principles* (New York, 1847). For an interesting example of the 'multidimensional discourse of faith, history, and nation in antebellum New England', see Lindsay Dicuirci, 'Reviving Puritan History: Evangelicalism, Antiquarianism, and Mather's *Magnalia* in Antebellum America', *Early American Literature* 45 (2010), 565–92, at 566.

<sup>25</sup> Stout, *Upon the Altar*, 391, citing an 1864 sermon by Lavalette Perrin.

<sup>26</sup> Henry Ward Beecher, *Discourses on Topics Suggested by the Times* (Boston, MA, 1863), 75.

<sup>27</sup> Rable, *God's Almost Chosen Peoples*, 136.

president Jefferson Davis, who worshiped at St John's Episcopal Church in Richmond (Virginia) and was baptized and confirmed an Episcopalian during the war.<sup>28</sup> However, the Episcopal Church did not speak with one voice, and even when Episcopalian clergy criticized puritanism, they usually attacked the form that puritanism had taken in New England, rather than puritanism itself.<sup>29</sup> This is a crucial distinction, which, when combined with the broad sympathy with evangelicalism found among many Southern Episcopalians, allowed the popular and prolific wartime orator and Episcopal bishop of Georgia, Stephen Elliott, to praise Cromwell and invoke the 'Anglo-Saxon race' and the 'bold commoners who brought the Stuarts to the proper knowledge of a people's rights.'<sup>30</sup> Elliott was in sympathy with the cause of puritanism during the English Civil War, and expected his congregation to resonate with his exhortation to emulate puritan Parliamentarians rather than Cavaliers by asserting their rights against a despotic North.

Sermons and religious journals produced in the South during the war show that many Southern Protestant clergy never accepted the central tenets of the Cavalier vs puritan, South vs North narrative, steeped as they were in the literature of evangelical Christian militarism, which valued the piety of (Southern) Christian soldiers over the supposed aristocratic virtues of the Cavaliers.<sup>31</sup> Instead, Southern

<sup>28</sup> For Jefferson Davis's religion, see William J. Cooper, *Jefferson Davis, American* (New York, 2000), 388.

<sup>29</sup> The *Richmond Dispatch* has been seen as a religious publication under Episcopal editorship which perpetuated the Cavalier vs puritan narrative of the war, and capitalized on its connection to 'old Virginia Anglicanism': Harry Stout and Christopher Grasso, 'Civil War, Religion and Communications: The Case of Richmond', in Randall Miller, Harry Stout and Charles Reagan Wilson, eds, *Religion and the American Civil War* (Oxford, 1998), 313–59, at 336–7. It appears from Stout and Grasso's article that the criticism of puritanism in this publication focuses on its Northern fanaticism leading to 'Mormonism', 'Spiritualism' and the Northern hubris of 'manifest destiny', rather than a critique of Cromwell, the Parliamentarians, or broader English puritanism.

<sup>30</sup> Stephen Elliot, *How to Renew our National Strength: A Sermon Preached in Christ Church, Savannah, on Friday, November 15th, 1861, Being the day of Humiliation, Fasting, and Prayer, Appointed by the President of the Confederate States* (Savannah, GA, 1861), 15; Stephen Elliott, *The Silver Trumpets of the Sanctuary: A Sermon Preached to the Pulaski Guards* (Savannah, GA, 1863), 8; Diana Hochstedt Butler, *Standing Against the Whirlwind: Evangelical Episcopalians in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York, 1995).

<sup>31</sup> Olive Anderson, 'The Growth of Christian Militarism in Mid-Victorian Britain', *EHR* 86 (1971), 46–72. Southern ministers often called upon the memory of Henry Havelock and Headley Vicars, two British officers who had not long before died in the Indian

ministers tended to apply the aesthetic of the Cavalier heritage to the South, but crucially, fused this with the religiosity and independence of the puritans. In this way, they could consider themselves orthodox heirs to the piety of the puritans, whilst maintaining the hierarchical and chivalrous notions of society that were central to the Southern way of life.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, the use of the Norman vs Saxon trope, in contrast to commentary from secular sources, is virtually non-existent in the sermons and literature produced by Southern ministers during the war.<sup>33</sup> Instead, they were more than happy to revel in their perceived Saxon racial identity as the embodiment of Protestant orthodoxy and political liberty.<sup>34</sup> At the same time, Southern clergymen wished to retain the charge of hypocrisy against the North, leading them to find new ways to praise the puritans and claim that the North was hypocritical in assuming that label for themselves.<sup>35</sup> In doing so, they recast the Civil War as puritan South vs formerly puritan North.

The evangelical culture of the largest Protestant denominations in the South – Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian and Episcopal – had long drawn upon puritan spiritual traditions, not least devotionally. Authors such as John Bunyan and Richard Baxter remained staples for Southern religious readers.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, Presbyterians and Baptists could trace the histories of their denominations directly

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Mutiny and Crimean War, respectively, and who were praised and repeatedly written about as Christian soldiers: see, for example, William J. Hodge *Sketch of Dabney Carr Harrison: Minister of the Gospel and Captain in the Army of the Confederate States of America* (Richmond, VA, 1861), 34.

<sup>32</sup> In this way, the same publication, *The Southwest Baptist*, could praise Cromwell and the piety of Baptists in his army, but also run a piece from the *Huntsville Democrat* which used the language of Southern Cavaliers to denote manliness, bravery and chivalry in praising the military exploits of the Confederate Army: ‘Manassas’, *South Western Baptist*, 24 October 1861, 1.

<sup>33</sup> I have been unable to find any reference to the Norman nature of the South in my survey of Confederate sermons and religious publications from the war.

<sup>34</sup> See, for instance, William A. Hall, *The Historic Significance of The Southern Revolution* (Petersburg, VA, 1864), 24, 37. Stephen Elliott self-identified as Anglo-Saxon, not Norman, and declares: ‘The Anglo-Saxon race has never waited until the stroke of tyranny actually descended.’ Elliott, *The Silver Trumpets*, 8.

<sup>35</sup> This is the clear implication of the arguments in favour of the puritans and the attempts to disassociate the North from the puritanism of William, Hall, Alexander Sinclair and Joseph Atkinson discussed below.

<sup>36</sup> Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene Genovese, *The Mind of the Master Class: History and Faith in the Southern Slaveholders’ Worldview* (Cambridge, 2005), 327–8.

back to the events of the English Civil War. The October 1861 edition of the *South Western Baptist* pointed out to its readers: ‘Many of Cromwell’s ablest officers were Baptists, and so were many of his army.’<sup>37</sup> Presbyterians were also highly attuned to their historical connection to the events of the English Civil War. The Westminster Confession of Faith, so highly prized by old school Presbyterians of the South, had been composed by an assembly of puritan divines convened at the behest of Parliament in the 1640s. It is therefore unsurprising that ministers and theologians from these traditions were slow to endorse the Cavalier vs puritan narrative.<sup>38</sup>

Southern churches and ministers preferred to adapt the history of the English Civil War to draw their own parallels and push back against any denigration of puritans. The *Central Presbyterian* commented in November 1862: ‘There are a few senseless scribblers in some of our political papers who are never weary of heaping indiscriminate abuse upon the old Puritans; a class of men of whom, with all their faults, the world was not worthy.’<sup>39</sup> The most striking example is offered by the Presbyterian William Hall, chaplain to the Washington Artillery, in a lecture given at least four separate times in Richmond and Petersburg (both Virginia). This lecture focused on the historical meaning of what Hall termed the ‘current revolution’. In it, he repudiated ‘The absurd idea that this unprecedented struggle ... is a renewal of the strife between the Puritan and the Cavalier,’<sup>40</sup> and offered an overview of the constitutional and ecclesiastical conflicts involving the puritans, from the Reformation to the English Civil War. Hall argued that it had been the Parliamentarians, not the Cavaliers, who had fought for liberty and inherited rights in a way comparable to the South. He reminded his listeners: ‘The Puritans included all the lovers of civil and religious liberty in that age’, continuing: ‘England is indebted to the Puritans for every principle of liberty.’<sup>41</sup> Hall admired the puritans of England not only for

<sup>37</sup> *South Western Baptist*, 24 October 1861, 2.

<sup>38</sup> See, for example, Thomas Smyth, ‘The History, Character and Results of the Westminster Assembly of Divines: A Discourse in Commemoration of the Bi-centenary Anniversary of that Body’, in *Complete Works of Rev. Thomas Smyth D.D.*, vol. 4, ed. John W. Flinn (Columbia SC, 1908), 385–434.

<sup>39</sup> *Central Presbyterian*, 27 November 1862, 1.

<sup>40</sup> William A. Hall, *The Historic Significance of The Southern Revolution* (Petersburg, VA, 1864), 24.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.* 27.

their role in fighting for liberty, but also for their religious qualities. In his narrative, the North had fallen away from the pure puritan faith that it may originally have had. Hall argued: 'Puritanism, properly so called, has no connection whatsoever, with this inhuman crusade upon the confederate states,' and presented the North as having 'Repudiated every principle of the Puritan faith,' particularly its 'Reverence for the Word of God.'<sup>42</sup>

Other ministers in the South also attempted to rehabilitate what they understood to be the original meaning of puritanism. Alexander Sinclair, Presbyterian minister of the church in Six Mile (South Carolina), declared: 'I have heard men in their ignorance attribute our national disorders to the influence of Puritan doctrines. Egregious error! The doctrines of the original Puritans were, and are, the doctrines of the Bible.'<sup>43</sup> Far from seeing a great gulf between puritanism and Southern Christianity, he insisted: 'They are the truths which, from Sabbath to Sabbath, are preached in all the Presbyterian pulpits of the South.' However, he ended his thought with an indictment: 'But the descendants of the Puritans have gone far astray from the creed of their forefathers.'<sup>44</sup> One of the South's most prominent theologians, Robert Louis Dabney, also echoed this sentiment. He believed that puritanism was a mighty movement of God that had trailed off and become cold, formal and, finally, apostate. The lesson for the South was explicit: Southerners should maintain a fervency of spirit in orthodox piety, in order to avoid the doctrinal slide experienced in the North.<sup>45</sup>

An article published in the *Southern Presbyterian Review* in 1863 also sought to defend the puritans while accusing their Northern descendants of hypocrisy. The author, the Rev. Joseph Atkinson, exclaimed: 'No intelligent person can fail to have perceived, no evangelical believer can fail to have deplored, the indiscriminating censure

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. 31.

<sup>43</sup> Alexander Sinclair, *A Thanksgiving Sermon, Preached in the Presbyterian Church at Six-Mile, Lancaster District, S.C., on Thursday, Sept. 18th, 1862* (Salisbury, NC, 1862), 40.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> See Richmond, Union Presbyterian Seminary, William Smith Morton Library Archives, Robert Lewis Dabney Faculty Papers Collection, Dabney Army Sermons 001, online at: <<https://cdm17236.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p17236coll4/id/0/rec/1>>, accessed 12 January 2024. For Dabney's influence and position as a Southern theologian, see Thomas Cary Johnson, *The Life and Letters of Robert Lewis Dabney* (Richmond, VA, 1903) and Sean Michael Lewis, *Robert Lewis Dabney: A Southern Presbyterian Life* (Phillipsburg, NJ, 2005).

and scorn with which the Puritans have been stigmatized of late.<sup>46</sup> He argued that the puritans had been responsible for championing the cause of Parliament during the English Civil War against the tyrannical king. However, Atkinson refused to identify the ‘insane and inhumane crusade now instituted against the people of the Confederate states with the creed and character of the Puritans.’ Rather, he insisted the South was ‘contending this day for the very truths and doctrines ... for which the Puritans contended in Great Britain.’<sup>47</sup> He provided a sympathetic account of the history of the puritans, restricting himself to no single period of puritanism, but drawing lessons from the entire movement, including puritan resistance to the ecclesiastical policies of Queen Elizabeth I. He concluded: ‘In contending for the rightful supremacy of the word of God in opposition to the mandates of kings and the decrees of councils, the Puritans conferred a priceless boon on the human race.’<sup>48</sup> However, the North had not been able to maintain the traditional beliefs and character of this honourable heritage and was hypocritical in claiming to do so.<sup>49</sup>

These examples are representative of a larger tendency among Southern ministers to speak positively about puritanism and negatively about what the North had become. Many Southern ministers

<sup>46</sup> Joseph M. Atkinson, ‘The Puritans’, *Southern Presbyterian Review* 15 (1862), 230–55, at 234. Atkinson’s article is a review of Samuel Hopkins, *The Puritans: or The Church, Court and Parliament of England, During the Reign of Edward the Sixth and Queen Elizabeth*, 3 vols (Boston, MA, 1859). Atkinson was scathing about Hopkins’s work and much preferred Daniel Neal’s classic text, *The History of the Puritans*, first published between 1732 and 1738. Neal’s work has been seen as ‘prefiguring nineteenth-century Whig conceptions of Puritan history’ and casting the puritans as the true source of liberty and individualism. For this view, see Laird Okie, ‘Daniel Neal and the “Puritan Revolution”’, *ChH* 55 (1986), 456–67. This Whig view of puritan history was well received in New England, but also found reception in the South. Many Southern ministers were influenced by Thomas Babington Macaulay and saw the rehabilitation of puritanism as beginning with his essays on Milton and Hampden, ‘The Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell’, *Southern Presbyterian Review* 1 (1847), 121–55, at 127.

<sup>47</sup> Atkinson, ‘The Puritans’, 235.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.* 242.

<sup>49</sup> The thrust of Atkinson’s argument is that Southerners should not be critical of puritanism and should not associate puritanism with the North. However, the charge of Northern hypocrisy is implied throughout the argument in as much as Atkinson consistently regards contemporary Northerners, who claimed to be puritans themselves, as less than puritan. He praises the puritan settlers of New England, Edward Winslow, John Winthrop and John Endicott, but sees Northerners of his day as ‘corrupt and degenerate descendants’: Atkinson, ‘The Puritans’, 236.

were convinced that its orthodoxy and genuine piety on the one hand, and commitment to liberty on the other, made puritanism the most fitting comparison to the South. Taken in these terms, puritanism could be readily appropriated, even by Southern ministers who had little historical claim to be its literal descendants. Southern ministers had been worried about the trajectory of what they considered Northern infidelity for several decades before the war.<sup>50</sup> They were suspicious of the revivalist methods of the popular Northern preacher Charles Finney, concerned about the challenges to confessionalism represented by Yale professor and theologian Nathaniel Taylor and influential minister Lyman Beecher, and aghast at the rise of Unitarianism.<sup>51</sup> Yet above these concerns was the potent mix of fear and consternation felt at the anti-slavery and abolitionist rhetoric emanating from Northern pulpits.<sup>52</sup> The growing strength with which the anti-slavery message was proclaimed was met with an ever more febrile assertion of the biblical basis for the racial slavery of the Southern states.<sup>53</sup> In this context, attacks on slavery and appeals to its justification became a question of faithfulness to God's word; the separation of North and South was, as Mark Noll has called it, a theological crisis.<sup>54</sup> If Southerners saw themselves as faithful to orthodoxy, the preservers of true Protestantism and biblical Christianity, it was a simple move to equate themselves with the

<sup>50</sup> The growing alienation between Northern and Southern Christians due to the Southern association of orthodoxy with pro-slavery and widespread fear about anti-slavery attitudes to the Bible, is the focus of much scholarship on Southern religion in the antebellum period: see, for instance, Samuel Hill, *The North and South in Southern Religion* (Athens, GA, 1980), esp. 46–89 (ch. 2, 'Third Cousins Alienated'); and Mitchel Snay, *Gospel of Disunion: Religion and Separatism in the Antebellum South* (New York, 1993). Fears and suspicions were only heightened by denominational divisions in the Methodist, Baptist and Presbyterian churches. This is most extensively covered in C. C. Goen's classic *Broken Churches, Broken Nation: Denominational Schisms and the Coming of the Civil War* (Macon, GA, 1988).

<sup>51</sup> John Holmes Bocock, 'Taylor and Bledsoe', *Southern Presbyterian Review* 9 (1856), 492–512; Thomas Curtis, 'John The Baptist: The Unitarian Jesus', *Southern Presbyterian Review* 2 (1848), 250–69.

<sup>52</sup> See, for example, George Armstrong, *Politics and the Pulpit: A Discourse Preached at the Presbyterian Church, Norfolk, VA* (Richmond, VA, 1856), 37.

<sup>53</sup> The desperate exasperation of Southern defenders of slavery on the eve of the Civil War can be detected in an article by George Howe, professor at Columbia Theological Seminary in South Carolina, in response to the raid by John Brown on Harpers Ferry: George Howe, 'John Brown and the Progress of Abolition', *Southern Presbyterian Review* 12 (1860), 784–816.

<sup>54</sup> Mark Noll, *The Civil War as A Theological Crisis* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2006).

puritans of old. Evangelicals in the South had a vested interest in claiming a robust form of Protestantism that had little or no place for the high church sensibilities of Cavalier clergymen or the Erastian authoritarianism of the Caroline church. When they looked back to the history of the puritans, they experienced implicit sympathy with their cause and resonated with what they found to be similar issues facing the churches of their own day.

The second feature with which puritanism was associated in the minds of Southern ministers was the quest for liberty. This was an association which Northern ministers also made. However, liberty is a slippery concept, and the rival claimants to the liberty of puritanism proffered vastly divergent visions of who should enjoy its benefits. Southern appeals to puritanism and the memory of the puritans rested on the assumption that they were the ones escaping oppression and seeking liberty. For most Southern clergymen, their concept of history, if not entirely and systematically thought out, was influenced by a Whig interpretation that emphasized progress toward (white) liberty and the constitutional rule of law. This explains why a thinker such as the Episcopal minister James Warley Miles was able to affirm to the graduating class of the College of Charleston (South Carolina) in 1863: 'The whole history of England is that of the progress of constitutional liberty.'<sup>55</sup> Similarly, the Rev. O. S. Barton could tell his congregation in Warrenton (Virginia) that each nation 'has represented some leading idea, England's [was] constitutional liberty'; while the Rev. John Bailey Adger was able to write in the *Southern Presbyterian Review* of the 'Pure stream of the English doctrine of liberty.'<sup>56</sup> Along the path to constitutional liberty, there were understood to be distinct steps where clear and accepted progress had been made, one of which was the English Civil War, which had reduced the arbitrary power of the monarchy. The Rev. George Howe, also writing in the *Southern Presbyterian Review*, informed his readers that when it came to constitutional liberty, 'The English Puritans have done their share, the Hampdens and the Sidneys of the

<sup>55</sup> James W. Miles, *God in History: A Discourse Delivered Before the Graduating Class of the College of Charleston on Sunday Evening, March 29, 1863* (Charleston, SC, 1863), 18.

<sup>56</sup> O. S. Barton, *A Sermon Preached in St James Church Warrenton, VA., on the Fast Day June 13th, 1861* (Richmond, VA, 1861), 6; John D. Adger, 'Motley's Dutch Republic', *Southern Presbyterian Review* 15 (1862), 94–159, at 99.

days of Cromwell.<sup>57</sup> Those Southern clergymen who embraced this view saw the Cavaliers as emblematic of arbitrary rule and of a seemingly less godly, certainly anti-Calvinistic, stance in matters of religion. In an editorial of 1861, the *Southern Episcopalian* cast the South in the position of the puritans and Parliamentarians, comparing the actions of the Northern states to the ‘despotic phases of Charles I,’ a comparison that was also made by one of the South’s most prolific preachers, Benjamin Morgan Palmer.<sup>58</sup> In this respect, the startling hypocrisy of the Southern ministers was put on full display. Core to their accusation of hypocrisy against the North was that, as puritans, the Northerners had escaped discrimination and persecution only to use their newfound liberty to oppress others. Yet, in a grim irony, which appears to have entirely escaped them, Southern ministers were engaged in precisely that. They claimed to be fighting for liberty from Northern oppression, but did so expressly to preserve the enslavement of over four million human beings.

#### SOUTHERN CROMWELLIANS

When identifying a historical precedent for the Confederate armies, there was no choice between puritan Roundheads and Cavalier Royalists: Southern ministers appealed to the memory of Cromwell and his parliamentary armies repeatedly throughout the war. They believed that the morality of an army determined its success, so appeals to the Cavaliers were of little value. In the armies of Cromwell, ministers found the perfect example of a pious and godly soldiery with which to demonstrate to their men that soldiering and piety could go hand in hand. Soldiers could make good on ministers’ claims to be fighting for a cause comparable to the puritans by imitating the piety and reliance on God that had characterized the Parliamentary armies. Earlier historians, such as James Silver, observed that Southerners made this comparison between Cromwell’s army and their own forces, but did not explore the

<sup>57</sup> George Howe, ‘The Scotch-Irish and their First Settlements on Tyger River and Other Neighboring Precincts in South Carolina’, *Southern Presbyterian Review* 14 (1861), 472–501, at 497.

<sup>58</sup> ‘Editorial’, *Southern Episcopalian* 8 (1861), 147–9, at 147; Timothy F. Riely, ‘Benjamin M. Palmer: Secessionist become Nationalist’, *Louisiana History* 18 (1977), 287–301, at 293.

meaning of this equivalence.<sup>59</sup> Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene Genovese come close to the heart of the matter when concluding that the Confederates viewed ‘their army [as] rightful heir to Cromwell’s bible-reading army.’<sup>60</sup> The Rev. Thomas V. Moore, for example, pronounced to his Southern congregation: ‘I believe, that there has never been an army since the time of Cromwell, in which there was a more pervading sense of the power of God than our own.’<sup>61</sup> He concluded his oration by reiterating the fact that it was the piety of the parliamentary armies that had enabled them to achieve great victories, affirming: ‘Did time permit, it would be easy to show that the religion which fits men for any duty ... nerved the iron men of Cromwell to such deeds of daring prowess.’<sup>62</sup> The Rev. Charles Wesley Andrews agreed, pointing out to the soldiers of the Confederacy that it was prayerfulness and reliance on God that had ‘made the armies of Cromwell the terror of all Europe.’<sup>63</sup>

Anecdotes retold from pulpits around the South recalled how Cromwell’s men would pray before battle, carry their Bibles under their armour, or sing Psalms during an engagement. In a sermon preached to the infantry regiments in Georgia before the Union and Confederates clashed in battle, the Rev. John Jones told the assembled forces that reliance on Scripture had made Cromwell’s armies formidable: ‘They were never defeated! These men, with their leader, carried their bibles into their camps and studied them as they did their maps and charts. Their battle cry often was a word or verse of scripture.’<sup>64</sup> Jones emphasized that piety bred discipline: by imitating the parliamentary army, the Confederates could become like ‘Cromwell’s men’ who were ‘remarkable for their obedience.’ Jones buttressed his argument with a story about the inspiration Cromwell’s army had found in their use of Scripture: ‘In the midst of the battle of

<sup>59</sup> James Silver, *Confederate Moral and Church Propaganda* (Tuscaloosa, AL, 1957), 32.

<sup>60</sup> Fox-Genovese and Genovese, *The Mind of the Master Class*, 686.

<sup>61</sup> Thomas V. Moore, *God our Refuge and Strength in this War: A Discourse Before the Congregations of the First and Second Presbyterian Churches, on the Day of Humiliation, Fasting and Prayer, Appointed by President Davis, Friday, Nov. 15, 1861* (Richmond, VA, 1861), 13.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.* 15.

<sup>63</sup> Charles W. Andrews, *A Christian Address to the Confederate Soldiers* (Winchester, VA, 1861), 15.

<sup>64</sup> John Jones, *The Southern Soldiers Duty: A Discourse Delivered to the Rome Light Guards, and Miller Rifles in the Presbyterian Church of Rome, GA., on Sabbath Morning, the 26th May 1861* (Rome, GA, 1861), 13.

Dunbar, wherein the enemy was flying, Cromwell called off his Ironsides, and they united in singing the 117th Psalm ... then they dashed upon their foes, sweeping them like chaff before the whirlwind.<sup>65</sup> Similarly, the Rev. John S. Harris, in his letters of encouragement and counsel to Confederate soldiers, urged them: 'See what Oliver Cromwell with his immortal Ironsides achieved! With a firm confidence that theirs was the cause of God and truth and righteousness.' Harris proposed Cromwell's army as an example for the Confederate army to follow: 'before they would engage in a battle they would commit themselves in prayer to the God of battles, and chanting an inspired Psalm, they would make that dashing charge which always brought defeat to the army of Charles.'<sup>66</sup>

In 1863, a reproduction of the Soldiers' Bible issued to parliamentary soldiers during the English Civil War was printed for the Confederate troops. A brief introduction explained the reasons for its issue and offered encouragement to the reader: 'Cromwell's Ironsides ... fed their faith upon God's word, went into battle with psalm-singing and prayer; and fearing God only, were the best soldiers perhaps the world has ever seen.'<sup>67</sup> The *Richmond Christian Advocate* even claimed that 'the success of Cromwell's army commenced immediately on the publication of "The Soldier's Pocket Bible", and they never lost a battle.'<sup>68</sup> This artifact provided an opportunity for the individual soldier to actively participate in the piety that had made Cromwell's army holy. In so doing, they were to recreate the success of the past and become, in the words of the introduction to the *Pocket Bible*, the 'best soldiers the world [had] ever seen'. At about the same time, a copy of the same Bible was also printed and issued in the North, further exacerbating the South's feeling that the North was intent on acting hypocritically.<sup>69</sup>

Such radically opposed uses of the memory of the Roundheads demonstrate the malleability of the puritan legacy and the ways it could be used to shape both Northern and Southern identities. Opposing claims to the same historical legacy were then simply

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> John S. Harris, *The True Soldiers Spiritual Armor: Being a Series of Letters to the Volunteers of the Confederate States* (Columbia, SC, 1861), 13.

<sup>67</sup> *The Soldiers Pocket Bible: Issued for the Use of the Army of Oliver Cromwell* (Charleston, SC, and Raleigh, NC, 1861), 4.

<sup>68</sup> *Richmond Christian Advocate*, 31 July 1862, 1.

<sup>69</sup> Rable, *God's Almost Chosen Peoples*, 131.

rejected as further evidence of a hypocritical mind. The war between the states became a competition to prove which was the actual godly army, and which was acting on behalf of the forces of oppression. Kenyon Gradert has demonstrated the centrality of a recapturing of the puritan heritage for Northern abolitionists, drawing out how free blacks in particular reappropriated the spirit of puritanism for their own narratives. Black soldiers enlisting in the armed forces of the Union were encouraged to think of themselves as black Cromwellians.<sup>70</sup> In the diametrically opposite case, Southern ministers of various denominations were keen to cast the self-consciously white Confederate troops as the only true modern Cromwellians.

Southern ministers' uses of the parliamentary army's history were primarily religious, and clergy were first and foremost concerned with increasing the piety of Confederate soldiers, considering the armed forces as the most significant mission field on which the Southern churches were engaged.<sup>71</sup> It is not easy to assess what impact – if any – this rhetoric had on the troops or on the home front. However, widespread revivals in the Confederate army in the years 1863 and 1864, which seemed to develop in size and fervour in proportion to the defeats that were suffered, only served to heighten the idea that the Confederate army was a genuinely holy army akin to that of Cromwell.<sup>72</sup> Regardless of how soldiers and non-combatant Confederates experienced their ministers' rhetoric, it is clear from sermons and the religious press that the clergy intended to influence the religious life of the soldiers in particular, the nation more generally, and indeed to affect the outcome of the war.<sup>73</sup> Reid Mitchell has argued that the image of the Confederate army as deeply pious increased with time. When emphasizing the piety of the defeated Confederate forces became a priority for Southerners following the war, Cromwell's army was again the obvious comparison.<sup>74</sup> The

<sup>70</sup> Kenyon Gradert, *Puritan Spirits in the Abolitionist Imagination* (Chicago, IL, 2020), 151–74.

<sup>71</sup> Arnold W. Miller, *The Confederate Army and Navy Bible and Tract Depository: Ministering to the Spiritual Need of our Noble Defenders* (Richmond, VA, 1861), 1.

<sup>72</sup> Steven E. Woodworth, *While God is Marching on: The Religious World of Civil War Soldiers* (Lawrence, KA, 2001), 209–10.

<sup>73</sup> For a helpful discussion of the religious press in the Confederacy, see Kurt O. Brends, 'Wholesome Reading Purifies and Elevates the Man: The Religious Military Press in the Confederacy', in Miller, Stout and Wilson, eds, *Religion and the American Civil War*, 131–66.

<sup>74</sup> Reid Mitchell, 'Christian Soldiers? Perfecting the Confederacy', in Miller, Stout and Wilson, eds, *Religion and the American Civil War*, 297–312.

consistent use of examples from the parliamentary forces by Southern ministers during the war laid the foundation for this development.

With all the attention focused on recreating the piety and success of the Roundheads, it is no surprise that commentators and ministers on both sides were casting about for a modern-day Cromwell. Some secular observers in the South were happy to associate Cromwell with Lincoln, highlighting the fanaticism of his campaign against slavery, and to equate the Northern invasion of the South with Cromwell's actions in Ireland.<sup>75</sup> Others earnestly desired to find a Southern Cromwell to lead their Southern Cromwellians to victory. Such a figure was found in the person of General Thomas 'Stonewall' Jackson. John Eston Cooke, the novelist, published a short memoir of Jackson in 1863 in which he twice compared him to Cromwell.<sup>76</sup> William Pendleton, Episcopalian priest and Confederate general, commented in his diary after reading Carlyle's life of Cromwell: 'General Jackson is the exact counterpart of Oliver as Carlyle draws him.'<sup>77</sup> At the funeral oration of Stonewall Jackson, Dabney chose instead to liken him to Cromwell's cousin, the renowned martyr to the Parliamentary cause, John Hampden.<sup>78</sup>

Part of the reason for the popularity of Cromwell during this period can be attributed to two publications by the British historian Thomas Carlyle.<sup>79</sup> The first, published in 1841, was Carlyle's influential *Of Heroes, Hero-Worship, and The Heroic in History*, in which he placed Cromwell alongside Napoleon in the category of 'Hero as King'. 1845 saw Carlyle further develop his rehabilitation of Cromwell with an edition of his letters and speeches.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>75</sup> *Charleston Mercury*, 3 January 1862, 2.

<sup>76</sup> John Eston Cooke, *The Life of Stonewall Jackson: From Official Papers, Contemporary Narratives, and Personal Acquaintance* (Richmond, VA, 1863), 25, 283.

<sup>77</sup> Susan P. Lee, *Memoirs of William Nelson Pendleton, D.D., rector of Latimer Parish, Lexington, Virginia; Brigadier-General c.s.a.; Chief of Artillery, Army of Northern Virginia* (Philadelphia, PA, 1893), 230.

<sup>78</sup> R[obert] L. Dabney, *True Courage: A Discourse Commemorative of Lieut. General Thomas J. Jackson* (Richmond, VA, 1863), 22.

<sup>79</sup> Carlyle received a mixed, but generally warm reception in the Southern states, where readers relished his attitudes to race and appreciated his refusal to adhere to any prevailing scheme or philosophy of which they disapproved: see Gerald M. Straka, 'The Spirit of Carlyle in the Old South', *The Historian* 20 (1957), 39–57; anon., 'Carlyle's Works' (review), *Southern Quarterly Review* 14 (1848), 77–101.

<sup>80</sup> Thomas Carlyle, *Of Heroes, Hero Worship and the Heroic in History* (London, 1841), 317–93; idem, *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches: With Elucidations, in Two Volumes* (New York, 1845).

This publication found a generally favourable audience in the Southern religious press. The widely read *Southern Presbyterian Review* printed a positive review of the book, which expressed satisfaction that Carlyle had given appropriate attention to Cromwell's religiosity and fervent piety. The author lamented that Americans would 'sigh' over those Cavaliers who 'retarded the cause of freedom and the progress of civilization'.<sup>81</sup> Cromwell's religiosity allowed Southerners more generally, and ministers in particular, to make the equation between Cromwell and Confederate General Stonewall Jackson. Robert. E. Lee, as well as Jefferson Davis, reflected other values of the Southern elite, such as civility and chivalry, but it was Jackson who embodied the piety, devotion and other-worldliness which, to many, seemed to pervade Cromwell's life and personality.<sup>82</sup> Jackson's eccentric and enigmatic character, combined with the impressive military results he achieved, received adulation and praise in his lifetime from Southerners who were deeply bereaved at his death.<sup>83</sup> For his Southern observers, his life was the distilled essence of fervent faith and the good within puritanism.

This project of seeking a modern-day Cromwell was spurred by the popularity of Carlyle's 'great man' theory of history, which Southern ministers were quick to Christianize. When looking for a hero to lead the Confederacy to what they expected to be their God-ordained victory, ministers could reframe Carlyle's ideas to reinsert God into the picture. As the Rev. Sinclair of Six Mile (South Carolina) expressed it: 'When God would maintain a nation he raises up in their behalf men whom he endows with qualities fitted for the emergency of the times ... When he would correct the abuses of suppressed State, he raises a Cromwell.'<sup>84</sup> For Southern ministers, great men did affect the

<sup>81</sup> Anon., 'The Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell' (review), *Southern Presbyterian Review* 1 (1847), 121–58, at 126.

<sup>82</sup> Cromwell was not, of course, a universally admired figure, and his reputation in the South was not always associated with such positive virtues. For a Southern example of Cromwell as a hypocrite, see anon., 'Bonaparte, Cromwell, and Washington', *De Bow's Review* 28 (1860), 139–54. For Cromwell's wider reputation and associations with hypocrisy throughout history, see Blair Worden, *Roundheaded Reputations: The English Civil War and the Passions of Posterity* (London, 2001) and David Runciman, *Political Hypocrisy: The Mask of Power, from Hobbes to Orwell and Beyond* (Princeton, NJ, 2010), 62–3, 195.

<sup>83</sup> Daniel W. Stowell, 'Stonewall Jackson and the Providence of God', in Miller, Stout and Wilson, eds, *Religion and the American Civil War, 187–207*.

<sup>84</sup> Sinclair, *A Thanksgiving Sermon*, 8.

outcome of history and could be responsible for the rise and fall of nations and peoples. However, this was only possible through the providence of God and under God's guiding hand: God brought these great men to the fore and worked in them and through them. Ministers were sure this was the case with Jackson, as it had been with Cromwell before him.

CONCLUSION: CAVALIER, PURITAN OR BOTH?

Hypocrisy was a crucial accusation in the South's attempt to undermine and delegitimize the North's war effort. It was a propaganda tool used to rally support and denigrate the enemy. It was broadly deployed in white Southern culture in applying the trope of Cavalier South vs puritan North. However, it was also used by Southern ministers who wanted to claim the puritan heritage for themselves. For Southern Protestant clergy, the history of puritanism could be used to evoke the fight for religious or political liberty and provide parallels to the cause of the Confederacy. Moreover, puritanism also supplied the ultimate example of godly soldiering in the form of the parliamentary armies, which proved useful for instilling religiosity in the Confederate troops. However, in using the historical memory of puritanism in this way, Southern ministers overplayed their hand. They revealed their own deep-seated hypocrisy in claiming to stand in the line of defenders of religious and political liberty to use that liberty to defend and perpetuate racial slavery.

Following the fall of the Confederacy in April and May of 1865, the discussion of hypocrisy and puritanism became ever more embittered. In the immediate post-war, Robert Louis Dabney, the former Confederate chaplain and chief of staff to Stonewall Jackson, published his life of the fallen general. Dabney was happy to refer to Jackson as a 'gallant Cavalier' and rejected the comparison to Cromwell, asserting that Jackson 'had a moral and spiritual character so much more noble that they can not be named together.'<sup>85</sup> The following year, in his diatribe against the Union, *The Defense of Virginia*, Dabney returned to this trope, accusing the North of 'crimes of malignant slander and vituperation which their people are accustomed to launch at us from the vile hiding place of their

<sup>85</sup> R[obert] L. Dabney, *Life, and Campaigns of Lieut.-Gen. Thomas J. Jackson* (New York, 1866), 610, 114.

hypocritical Puritanism.<sup>86</sup> In 1888, former Confederate army chaplain John Jones published his homage to the Confederate troops, *Christ in the Camp*, which proved a foundational work in the mythology of the lost cause and highly influential in enshrining the memory of the Southern soldier as truly Christian. Jones argued that the ‘devout piety’ of the Confederate soldiers surpassed that of the Roundheads, whose ‘religious fanaticism’ he contrasted with what he saw as the ‘genuine religious tone’ of Jackson’s men.<sup>87</sup> This is a return to a rejection of puritan motifs. However, for many Southerners in these post-war years, the insistence on a heroically defeated Cavalier South persisted alongside wistful memories of the Cromwellian religiosity of the Confederate army.<sup>88</sup>

The use of puritanism in the South during the antebellum and Civil War era offers an example of the complex and contradictory nature of the legacy of the puritan movement, and highlights how this legacy could be used in parallel ways within one cultural region. In the Southern secular press and among intellectuals and commentators who were not ministers, ‘puritan’ was often used as a stand-in for hypocrisy. Yet a significant number of clergy and ministers equated puritanism with godliness, liberty and pious soldiering. Puritan identity could also be claimed by both Northern and Southern ministers in ways which were profoundly contradictory, yet overlapping: both sides saw puritanism as exemplifying liberty and piety, and both sides sought to recreate the faith and success of Cromwell’s army. The irony of the Cavalier rhetoric of Southern politicians, orators and commentators was that the Cavaliers had been on the losing side of the English Civil War. In defeat, the South would most accurately emulate the Royalists before them. In the end, for the defeated Southern Cavaliers, their ministers’ attempts to recreate the puritan army of the English Civil War were revealed to be nothing more than futile and ultimately hypocritical.

<sup>86</sup> Robert L. Dabney, *A Defense of Virginia [and through her of the South,] in Recent and Pending Contests Against the Sectional Party* (New York, 1867), 285.

<sup>87</sup> John William Jones, *Christ in the Camp: Or Religion in Lee’s Army* (Richmond, VA, 1888), 20, 540.

<sup>88</sup> For Lee as the ‘supreme Southern Cavalier’, and Jackson as puritan, see Charles Regan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause 1865–1920* (Athens, GA, 1980), 48–51.