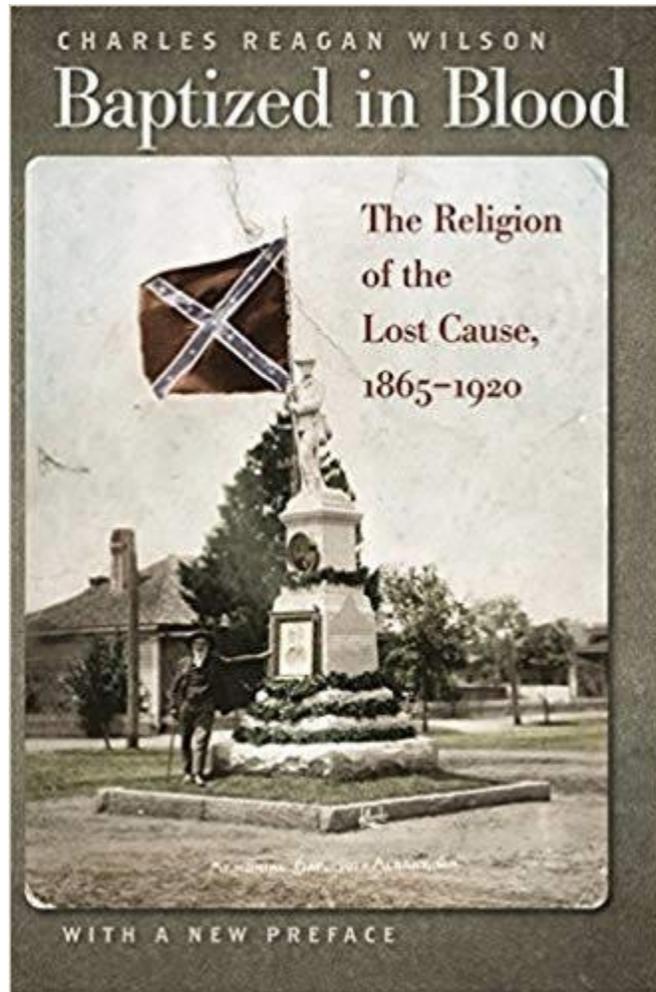


**Hijacking of Christianity: Don't blame Jesus Christ or Christianity  
for the American Civil War, Racism, or the South's Lost Cause Theology**



I often wonder how history would have been different if more Christians were true to their calling of being Christ's salt and light in their society instead of adopting the ways of their prevailing culture—and thus becoming what Christ calls 'tasteless, good-for-nothing salt, destined to be thrown out and trampled down underfoot by men' (Matt. 5:13).

In previous articles, I outlined ten socio-economic-politico (SEP) hijackings of Christianity and subsequent tramplings of Christianity and the name of Jesus Christ: (1) by Rome/Constantine (313), (2) by the crusades (1100-1300), (3) by the inquisitions (1231-1834), (4) by colonialism/imperialism (1400-1800), (5) by the antebellum South in America (1650-1863), (6) by reconstruction (1863-1877), (7) by Jim Crow South (1877-1960), (8) by Nazi Germany (1930-1940), (9) by consumer/prosperity Gospel (1950-2018), and (10) by modern political Christianity on the Right and the Left (1950-2018).

The last few articles were on (5) above, our antebellum South (1650-1863). What if the South chose the ethics of Jesus Christ regarding the nature of man (love, the eternal dignity of all men) rather than the Greek view (slavery) or the Roman view (Stoicism)? What if Christians of the South chose the way of Christ rather than Mammon? Moreover, what if they kept Christianity pure rather than marry it to Southern ideals taken from pagan Greek and Roman culture? What if antebellum South became the shining city on a hill rather than a mix of Christian/pagan culture that put profit and culture over people? Not only would Christ and Christianity not be tarnished with the brutality of race-based slavery, we would not have lost 620,000 of fellow Americans in the Civil War, and we would not continue to be plagued with racial and political acrimony that we continue to experience this very day.

Christians are to be known not only for love and grace, but for Truth. This Truth is not pragmatic truth, or coherence truth, but correspondence Truth—there is a correspondence between what a person says, and the way things are in the extra-mental world. Correspondence Truth is the way things are, not what works (pragmatic) or what agrees with other thoughts that one has (coherence). CORRESPONDENCE TRUTH IS NEVER PARTISAN! Pragmatic truth and coherence truth are always partisan and subjective, which explains why there is so much divisiveness and acrimony today.

In this last article on the hijacking of Christianity by Graeco-Roman ethics in antebellum South, I would like to touch on what is known as the theology of the Lost Cause. After the South's defeat in the Civil War, instead of repenting of the evils of racial superiority and race-based slavery, the South maintained that they had the most pure and righteous Christian society on Earth.

In order to sell the idea that the South was a very righteous Christian society, the narrative of the South had to be changed regarding the reason for the Civil War. The idea that the South fought for slavery was recognized as a losing battle. In sum, the South's love for race-based slavery for profit needed to be erased. One way to do this is to teach that the Civil War was not about slavery at all. Rather, it was about far more noble causes: freedom, State's Rights, the superior southern way of life, southern nobility.

We continue to hear this today. On a recent news program (Fox News), a conservative claimed that all one had to do to realize that the Civil War was not about slavery at all was to do a Google search. OK, let's take his advice.

The first hit by typing in "causes of the Civil War" was <http://www.historynet.com/causes-of-the-civil-war>, which says

"The burning issue that led to the disruption of the union, however, was the debate over the future of slavery. That dispute led to secession, and secession brought about a war in which the Northern and Western states and territories fought to preserve the Union, and the South fought to establish Southern independence as the new confederation of states under its own constitution."

The second link on Google was to PBS and its History Detectives series at <http://www.pbs.org/opb/historydetectives/feature/causes-of-the-civil-war/>. There we read,

"What led to the outbreak of the bloodiest conflict in the history of North America? A common explanation is that the Civil War was fought over the moral issue of slavery. In fact, it was the economics of slavery and political control of that system that was central to the conflict."

The third hit on Google was <https://www.thoughtco.com/top-causes-of-the-civil-war-104532>. That page offered five main reasons and the first one was "Economic and social differences between the North and the South." And what were those differences? The differences were all about slavery. As the site notes,

"With Eli Whitney's invention of the cotton gin in 1793, cotton became very profitable. This machine was able to reduce the time it took to separate seeds from the cotton. However, at the same time the increase in the number of plantations willing to move from other crops to cotton meant the greater need for a large amount of cheap labor, i.e. slaves. Thus, the southern economy became a one crop economy, depending on cotton and therefore on slavery."

The fourth link was <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/trigger-events-civil-war?referrer=https%3A//www.google.com/>. The trust wrote "The Civil War was the culmination of a series of confrontations concerning the institution of slavery."

Of course, it is possible that the Internet has been hijacked by some vast conspiracy that seeks to denigrate the idyllic, noble, righteous South. So, let us take a look at the actual words and thoughts of the Confederate leaders themselves, taken from primary sources.

Consider the South Carolina Secession Statement ([https://www.battlefields.org/learn/primary-sources/declaration-causes-seceding-states#South\\_Carolina](https://www.battlefields.org/learn/primary-sources/declaration-causes-seceding-states#South_Carolina))

The ends for which the Constitution was framed are declared by itself to be "to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity." These ends it endeavored to accomplish by a Federal Government, in which each State was recognized as an equal, and had separate control over its own institutions. **The right of property in slaves was recognized by giving to free persons distinct political rights, by giving them the right to represent, and burthening them with direct taxes for three-fifths of their slaves; by authorizing the importation of slaves for twenty years; and by stipulating for the rendition of fugitives from labor.** We affirm that these ends for which this Government was instituted have been defeated, and the Government itself has been made destructive of them by the action of the non-slaveholding States. Those States have assume the right of deciding upon the propriety of our domestic institutions; and have denied the rights of property established in fifteen of

the States and recognized by the Constitution; **they have denounced as sinful the institution of slavery**; they have permitted open establishment among them of societies, whose avowed object is to disturb the peace and to eloign the property of the citizens of other States. They have encouraged and assisted thousands of our slaves to leave their homes; and those who remain, have been incited by emissaries, books and pictures to servile insurrection.

Consider the Mississippi Secession Statement (<https://www.battlefields.org/learn/primary-sources/declaration-causes-seceding-states#Mississippi>):

In the momentous step which our State has taken of dissolving its connection with the government of which we so long formed a part, it is but just that we should declare the prominent reasons which have induced our course.

**Our position is thoroughly identified with the institution of slavery-- the greatest material interest of the world. Its labor supplies the product which constitutes by far the largest and most important portions of commerce of the earth. These products are peculiar to the climate verging on the tropical regions, and by an imperious law of nature, none but the black race can bear exposure to the tropical sun. These products have become necessities of the world, and a blow at slavery is a blow at commerce and civilization.** That blow has been long aimed at the institution, and was at the point of reaching its consummation. There was no choice left us but submission to the mandates of abolition, or a dissolution of the Union, whose principles had been subverted to work out our ruin. That we do not overstate the dangers to our institution, a reference to a few facts will sufficiently prove.

Consider the Texas Secession Statement (<https://www.battlefields.org/learn/primary-sources/declaration-causes-seceding-states#Texas>):

**We hold as undeniable truths that the governments of the various States, and of the confederacy itself, were established exclusively by the white race, for themselves and their posterity; that the African race had no agency in their establishment; that they were rightfully held and regarded as an inferior and dependent race, and in that condition only could their existence in this country be rendered beneficial or tolerable.**

**That in this free government \*all white men are and of right ought to be entitled to equal civil and political rights\* [emphasis in the original]; that the servitude of the African race, as existing in these States, is mutually beneficial to both bond and free, and is abundantly authorized and justified by the experience of mankind, and the revealed will of the Almighty Creator, as recognized by all Christian nations;** while the destruction of the existing relations between the two races, as advocated by our sectional enemies, would bring inevitable calamities upon both and desolation upon the fifteen slave-holding states.

Consider the words of Alexander Stephens, vice president of the Confederacy, who said the states would fight to keep “the negro” in “his natural place”—note how he wraps his pagan Greek and Roman ideas with biblical language. Note how antithetical to the teachings of Jesus Christ, whom Stephens claimed to follow.

**Many governments have been founded upon the principle of the subordination and serfdom of certain classes of the same race; such were and are in violation of the laws of nature. Our system commits no such violation of nature’s laws. With us, all of the white race, however high or low, rich or poor, are equal in the eye of the law. Not so with the negro. Subordination is his place. He, by nature, or by the curse against Canaan, is fitted for that condition which he occupies in our system. The architect, in the construction of buildings, lays the foundation with the proper material—the granite; then comes the brick or the marble. The substratum of our society is made of the material fitted by nature for it, and by experience we know that it is best, not only for the superior, but for the inferior race, that it should be so. It is, indeed, in conformity with the ordinance of the Creator. It is not for us to inquire into the wisdom of His ordinances, or to question them. For His own purposes, He has made one race to differ from another, as He has made “one star to differ from another star in glory.”** The great objects of humanity are best attained when there is conformity to His laws and decrees, in the formation of governments as well as in all things else. **Our confederacy is founded upon principles in strict conformity with these laws** (<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/cornerstone-speech/>).

Consider the words of Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederacy. Note how he cites slavery for the reason for going to war in 1861 and rallied in its defense until his death in 1889. His take on the Emancipation Proclamation, reiterated in his memoirs, is quite telling.

We may well leave it to the instincts of that common humanity which a beneficent Creator has implanted in the breasts of our fellow-men of all countries to pass judgment on a measure by which **several millions of human beings of an inferior race**, peaceful and contented laborers in their sphere, are doomed to extermination, while at the same time they are encouraged to a general assassination of their masters by the insidious recommendation ‘to abstain from violence unless in necessary self-defense.’ Our own detestation of those who have attempted by the most execrable measure recorded in the history of guilty man is tempered by a profound contempt for the impotent rage which it discloses. ... (<https://www.brooklynhistory.org/blog/2014/01/07/the-emancipation-proclamation-jefferson-davis-responds/>).

The Secessionists and Confederate leaders could not have been clearer about what they were fighting for and their attitudes toward Blacks. No matter how many times they went to church, read their Bibles, and even made references to the Bible in their racist defenses, they remained

hijacked and captive by socio-economic-politico powers more akin to Greek and Roman thought than the love, humility, and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. How could they think, feel, talk, and act so unchristian?

It all comes down to the hijacking of the Christian faith. The problem continues in our own culture as we witness Christians thinking, talking, and acting just like unbelievers regarding socio-economic-politico matters. Like their antebellum counterparts, their attitudes are more shaped by economic, social, and political forces rather than Jesus Christ. Like their antebellum counterparts, many they are totally unaware of it.

The above picture is of a great resource on the marrying of Christianity with Southern culture.

In His Matchless Grace,

Pastor Don Hargrove