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BAPTIZED IN BLOOD

The Religion of the Lost Cause 1865–1920

With a new preface

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TO MY PARENTS
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This is a study of the afterlife of a Redeemer Nation that died. The nation was never resurrected, but it survived as a sacred presence, a holy ghost haunting the spirits and actions of post-Civil War Southerners. Embodying the dream of Southerners for a separate political identity, the Confederacy was defeated by Father Abraham and an apparently more blessed, as well as more self-righteous, Redeemer Nation. But the dream of a separate Southern identity did not die in 1865. A Southern political nation was not to be, and the people of Dixie came to accept that; but the dream of a cohesive Southern people with a separate cultural identity replaced the original longing. The cultural dream replaced the political dream: the South’s kingdom was to be of culture, not of politics. Religion was at the heart of this dream, and the history of the attitude known as the Lost Cause was the story of the use of the past as the basis for a Southern religious-moral identity, an identity as a chosen people. The Lost Cause was therefore the story of the linking of two profound human forces, religion and history. This study examines the product of this connection in the South from the end of the Civil War until the end of World War I. It was a Southern civil religion, which tied together Christian churches and Southern culture.

The religion of the Lost Cause originated in the antebellum period.
Religion's central role in the South did not emerge early in Southern history. To be sure, the first settlers at Jamestown brought their Anglicanism with them, and a strong religious-moral tone existed in Virginia's earliest years, as in the Puritan colonies of New England. Despite the best efforts of clergymen and civil authorities, religion in the South did not become as vital a force as it was in Massachusetts Bay Colony. With the American Revolution, the Church of England in the new United States became the Episcopal church, and its position as the established church of the South ended. A new voluntary system of religious affiliation began in the South, as in the rest of the country, giving rise to the distinctive American denominational configuration. In Dixie, the Baptists and Methodists, who had only moved into the region in the late colonial period, and who had effectively participated in the challenge to the idea of an established church, emerged as the dominant denominations by 1800. This was primarily due to their role in the Great Revival of 1787 to 1805. The revival, which began in Kentucky in 1800, quickly spread to other areas of the South, bringing outcroppings of millennial thought centering on the South and establishing a central evangelical belief system.

After 1805 the revival ebbed but did not dissipate, as spiritual awakenings periodically occurred thereafter. Schisms grew out of this revival era, but the important point was that by 1830 an evangelical unity had settled on the South, accompanied by a conservative orthodoxy of doctrine. While the Baptists and Methodists were numerically dominating the Southern religious picture, the Presbyterians managed to hold their own in terms of influence because their ministers were well educated and their congregations tended to include prominent societal leaders. Similarly, the Episcopal church was the church of the planter class, concentrated in Virginia, coastal South Carolina, and the Mississippi delta. It adapted to the Southern scene by becoming Low Church, giving more attention to morality than to the mysteries of the ritual. In fact, in some areas the church was evangelical in orientation, like the other Southern denominations. Despite the variations between genteel Episcopalians, theologically oriented Presbyterians, and the intensely evangelistic popular denominations, all were united in opposition to rationalism, thus preventing the growth of the Unitarianism that was making inroads among Northerners. "What the Southerner desired above all else in religion," said Richard M. Weaver, "was a fine set of images to contemplate. . . . The contemplation of these images was in itself a discipline in virtue, which had the effect of building up in him an inner restraint." By 1860 a religious culture had been established, wherein a religious outlook and tone permeated society. At a time when Northern religion was becoming increasingly diverse, the Southern denominations remained orthodox in theology and evangelical in orientation.

While these developments were occurring in religion, similar events were changing Southern society's contours and self-image. By 1830 the formerly liberal political South of Thomas Jefferson had become conservative. Intellectually, as William Taylor has shown, it developed a new image of itself as a chivalric society, embodying many of the agrarian and spiritual values that seemed to be disappearing in the industrializing North. The cult of chivalry developed, focusing on manners, women, military affairs, the ideal of the Greek democracy, and Romantic oratory. A plantation legend became the cultural basis for the South's collective action. Of the South's regions, Virginia first developed a distinctive cultural consciousness, deeply infused by themes from the European Romantic movement. In the 1820s the center of Southern power shifted from Virginia to South Carolina, just at the time when the South was becoming aware of its minority status. In South Carolina the dream of Southern nationalism emerged, but not until the 1850s. Although it came from indigenous sources, it closely resembled the ideas of Romantic nationalism then popular in Europe. In the 1850s Southern leaders began more consciously drawing from European ideas. Southerners came to believe in "cultural nationalism," the longing of a homogeneous people (of the same blood and lineage, and possessing common artifacts, customs, and institutions) for national political existence. The stress was on the idea of "peoples," the builders and transmitters of distinct cultures.

Southern religious leaders were not among the major formulators of the dream of Southern nationalism, but they had done their part in creating the conditions for it by encouraging the growth of sectional churches. A major contribution to the preservation of sectional consciousness came in the 1840s, when the two leading denominations,
the Baptists and the Methodists, split from their Northern brethren over the issue of slavery. The New School Presbyterians underwent a similar division in 1857, and in 1861, after the start of the war, the Old School Presbyterians of the South formed the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America, with which the New School synod merged in 1864. The Episcopalians did not formally divide, although during the Civil War the Southern dioceses functioned under a separate organization, the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederate States of America.4

Southern religion also contributed to the defense of Southern society against the growing criticisms of it by militant abolitionists in the North. In the 1840s and 1850s Southerners advanced a pro-slavery argument that defended their society as a high achievement of civilization and attacked the Northern industrial, free society as an inhumane one. Southerners by this time were united in the defense of slavery on the grounds of protection of property and public safety, and these intellectuals who articulated the pro-slavery argument suggested the positive benefits derived from a slave civilization. South Carolina was the leader in this defense, with Southern clergymen playing a prominent role. The pro-slavery argument leaned more heavily on the sanction of the Bible than on anything else. Ministers cited biblical examples of the coexistence of Christianity and slavery, quoted Old Testament approvals of slavery, and interpreted a passage from Genesis to mean that blacks were descendants of the sinner Ham and destined to be forever bondsmen.5

By 1861 Southern churches, like other regional institutions, had thus laid the basis for secession. For a generation they had preached of slavery’s divine nature and the need to protect it. Unionist sentiment did exist among ministers, and those in the border states urged a policy of moderation after Lincoln’s election. But in the crisis of secession and the attack on Fort Sumter in the spring of 1861, Southern clergymen and their institutions made clear their commitment to what they believed was God’s cause. Like their counterparts in the North, Southern clerics preached that their cause was a holy one; they interpreted battle victories as God’s blessings, and defeats as God’s punishments for their failings. A recurring phrase in the Confederate religious lexicon was “baptism of blood.” In his sermon “Our National Sins,” preached on November 21, 1860, before Lincoln’s inauguration, the distinguished Presbyterian theologian James H. Thornwell called for secession, even though “our path to victory may be through a baptism of blood.” In 1862 the Episcopal Bishop Stephen Elliott observed, "All nations which come into existence at this late period of the world must be born amid the storm of revolution and must win their way to a place in history through the baptism of blood." “A grand responsibility rests upon our young republic,” said the Episcopal rector B. T. Lacy in 1863, “and a mighty work lies before it. Baptized in its infancy in blood, may it receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and be consecrated to its high and holy mission among the nations of the earth.”6 This evocative, powerful terminology suggested the role of war in bringing a redemption from past sins, an atonement, and a sanctification for the future.

Possessing the mechanisms for molding public opinion—clerical leadership, local churches at the heart of the Southern community, higher organizations such as synods, conferences, and associations, and the denominational press—the Southern churches became the most effective morale-building agencies. One of the most ubiquitous ways of reaching the Southern masses was through the declaration of a day of fasting, in humiliation or thanksgiving. Jefferson Davis proclaimed nine of these, and so many more were declared by Congress, state legislatures, and religious bodies that strict compliance with them “might have saved enough food to feed Lee’s hungry army,” in the words of James W. Silver. Moreover, identifying the Confederate cause as God’s cause, preachers rarely criticized it. Although harsh comments about Jefferson Davis filled the secular press, the churches did not judge the Confederate leader. In the last months of war, notes of despair and depression did appear in sermons, as one would expect; nevertheless, ministers retained much more enthusiasm and conviction of ultimate victory than they were able to instill into their congregations. Until the end, they remained an important factor in maintaining law and order and in approving unpopular war measures. While historians have shown that one reason for the Confederacy’s collapse was a failure of the will to win, this could not be said of the region’s religious leaders.7

Southern religion also contributed to the Confederacy through the
chaplains. The Confederate government made only a half-hearted effort to encourage an effective chaplain system, but the churches took the initiative and coordinated much of the work. The chaplains extended religion's influence into the ranks of the Confederate armies by preaching, praying, counseling, baptizing, confirming, celebrating the sacraments, delivering Bibles and religious tracts, and comforting the wounded. Sometimes they took an active part in the fighting—as in the case of I. T. Tichenor, of an Alabama regiment, who killed a Union colonel, a major, and four privates. Tichenor was only slightly wounded, but many chaplains received severe injuries in battle. Most officers, even if irreligious, wanted chaplains in order to build morale. For the chaplains themselves, as for the soldiers, the war was the greatest personal experience of their lives, and it understandably influenced their later activities. Civil War chaplains had the experiences and made the acquaintances that became the basis for the postwar emergence of an organized movement to remember the past. These chaplains logically became the main celebrants of the Lost Cause rituals after the war.

Christian ministers directed the revivals that occurred in army ranks, especially in Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. In the early months of the war, religion did not play a large role in the camps, but as casualties increased, the Southern soldier showed more interest in matters of the spirit. The first revival erupted in the Army of Northern Virginia in the winter of 1862–63, following the battle of Fredericksburg. After this, revivals came in cycles, decreasing during the times of active campaigning and returning with fervor when the army paused for rest and regrouping. Another awakening occurred during the winter of 1863–64, when Lee's army was camped along the Rapidan River, and the final phase of the Virginia revival came among the troops in the siege along the lines from Richmond to Petersburg in the last months before Appomattox. Meanwhile, smaller and less frequent revivals were occurring in the Army of Tennessee. No revival occurred in the winter of 1862–63, but in the fall of 1863 a memorable one did break out near Dalton, Georgia, where General Joseph Johnston's army went into winter camp. In May, 1864, the movement of Grant against Lee in Virginia ended the revival temporarily, and that of Sherman against Johnston in the West all but finished it. Numerous factors promoted spiritual awakenings: the well-organized efforts of the denominations to supply chaplains and religious materials to the soldiers; the character of the troops, who had come from a revivalistic religious tradition; the decline of confidence following the increasing losses after the second year of conflict; and the ubiquitous spectre of death. The revivals exercised a potent influence on the postwar Southern religious mind. Preachers could recall the memory of communal religious possibility, of a profound religious occurrence in the midst of a profound social event. The Lost Cause profited from these experiences.9

At the end of the Civil War, Southerners tried to come to terms with defeat, giving rise to the Lost Cause. "The victory over Southern arms is to be followed by a victory over Southern opinions," said the Macon, Georgia, Christian Index in March, 1866; others echoed this call for wariness. Fearing that crushing defeat might eradicate the identity forged in war, Southerners reasserted that identity with a vengeance. In The Lost Cause (1866), the Richmond editor Edward A. Pollard called for a "war of ideas" to retain the Southern identity. The South's religious leaders and laymen defined this identity in terms of morality and religion: in short, Southerners were a virtuous people. Clergymen preached that Southerners were the chosen people, peculiarly blessed by God. "In a word," says Samuel S. Hill, a leading historian of Southern religion, "many southern whites have regarded their society as God's most favored. To a greater degree than any other, theirs approximates the ideals the Almighty has in mind for mankind everywhere." This attitude helped wed Southern churches to Southern culture. As Hill points out, the "religion of the southern people and their culture have been linked by the tightest bonds. That culture, particularly in its moral aspects, could not have survived without the legitimating impetus provided by religion. Their co-existence helped enable southern values and institutions to survive in the face of internal spiritual contradictions and external political pressures. For the south to stand, its people had to be religious and its churches the purest anywhere."10 Unfortunately, the self-image of a chosen people leaves little room for self-criticism. This deficiency has led to the greatest evils of the religion-culture link in the South.

Southerners interpreted the Civil War as demonstrating the height
of Southern virtue, as a moral-religious crusade against the atheistic
North. In light of defeat, the ministers cautioned against decline: they
feared throughout the late nineteenth century that their society would
not measure up to its past heroic standards of virtue. They feared that,
in present and future crises, Southerners would not meet the chal-
lenges. They saw that their own age produced only men, not saints—a
disturbing thought, when measured against the past. Religious leaders
continued the wartime military-political battle for virtue on a new
level, by the creation of a civil religion. The antebellum and wartime
religious culture evolved into a Southern civil religion, based on
Christianity and regional history.

All of this was intimately related to what was happening in the
churches themselves. Before the war, an evangelical consensus had
been achieved in the South; however, as Samuel Hill observes, “This
consensus of the southern population in a single-option religious cul-
ture... preceded widespread institutional commitment to a religious
vision of reality, which did not occur until the period between 1870
and 1930.” After the war, Southerners assumed a societal obligation to
join their sectional churches. By joining, they were affirming the
South’s distinctive religious approach. The Baptists and Methodists
extended their institutional control, although by 1900 the former had
surpassed the latter as the largest regional denomination. An increase
in expression of religiosity, at both the personal and organizational
levels, accompanied the increased enrollment in the evangelical sects.
After the war Southern churches also extended a pervasive puritanical
moral code throughout the region.10 The churches’ powerful role in
the Civil War, and their expansion and dominance after 1865, suggest
that if the Confederacy before dying was baptized in blood, Southern
religion was likewise symbolically baptized, born again in a fiery sacra-
ment that gave it new spiritual life. The Southern churches thus prof-
ited from the holocaust.

Antebellum Southern religious leaders had proclaimed the doctrine
of “spirituality of the church,” which meant that the church’s role was
in religious affairs, not in political and societal matters. As their role
in the slavery and secession questions demonstrated, they never fol-
lowed this idea strictly, and after the war the churches were never as
otherworldly as the Bible Belt stereotype might suggest. While South-
ern religious leaders and their institutions had a sense of social re-
ponsibility, they believed in the preservation of the status quo. Social
concern, in short, meant a conservative interest in the preservation of
religious, political, societal, and economic orthodoxy. Thus the
churches organized and agitated for moral reforms enforced by the
power of the state, and they avoided any involvement in such social
issues as the rights of labor, the poor, and blacks. Ironically, the two
dominant Southern denominations, which had begun as dissenting,
non-established sects, emerged as virtually the recognized religion of
the South. They learned to use the state to gain their goals.12

As a result of the evangelical consensus, a lack of pluralism and di-
versity came to characterize the Southern religious scene. While early
nineteenth century American churches had, in general, known this
same evangelical unity, new religious forces had entered the picture
even before the Civil War, and this trend accelerated in the late nine-
tenith century. Heterogeneity characterized the Northern religious
scene, but the South remained as it had been for decades. To be sure,
intense denominational debates and squabbles occurred among the
various Protestant sects in the South, but this should not be allowed
to obscure the fundamental agreements of the churches. “On such
concepts as heaven and hell, God and Satan, depravity and re-
demption, there was little dispute,” writes Kenneth K. Bailey. “Few
Southerners doubted the literal authenticity of the Scriptures or the
ever-presence of God in man’s affairs.”13 This environment fostered
the growth of the interdenominational Lost Cause movement; it, in
turn, contributed to furthering the atmosphere. The ministers active
in the Lost Cause brought with them their own denominational atti-
dudes and ideas, contributing them to the Lost Cause civil religion.
At the same time, the experience broadened their own sectarian
attitudes.

One should note that, despite their homogeneity, shared values,
and moral role in society, the Southern churches were insecure amidst
this seeming invincibility. Just as the clergymen worried that South-
ern society in general would fall into decline, so they dreaded the same
development in their own ranks. As John L. Eighmy has pointed out,
the Southern Baptists, fearing their own loss of separate status, strug-
gled throughout the late nineteenth century for a distinctive identity
apart from the dead slavery issue, which had been the crystallizing factor in their emergence. This fear in fact existed in the other Southern churches, and it focused especially on the North—its churches, its religious movements, its immigrants, its power in the American nation—as the underminer of Southern religious hegemony. Southerners brooded that the Civil War had unleashed powerful forces that would descend from the North, or perhaps even emerge indigenously, and destroy the Southern Zion they were building. As Eighmy suggests, the Southern Baptists were culturally captive, because they needed a consensus of separate values from the North in order to maintain a separate identity. This fear, then, helped mobilize the churches and enabled them to extend extraordinary influence in preserving the South’s status quo.

Judged by historical and anthropological criteria, the civil religion that emerged in the postbellum South was an authentic religious expression. As Clifford Geertz has said, the anthropological study of religion (in this case, the Lost Cause religion) is a twofold undertaking: first, one must analyze the symbols and the myth of the Southern faith for the meanings they embody; second, one must explore the relationship of these meanings to “social-structural and psychological processes.” The South faced problems after the Civil War which were cultural but also religious—the problems of providing meaning to life and society amid the baffling failure of fundamental beliefs, of extending comfort to those suffering poverty and disillusionment, and of encouraging a sense of belonging in the shattered Southern community. The anthropologist Anthony F. C. Wallace argues that religion originates “in situations of social and cultural stress,” and for postbellum Southerners such traditional religious issues as the nature of suffering, evil, and the seeming irrationality of life had a disturbing relevancy. Scholars stress that religion is defined by the existence of a sacred symbol system and its embodiment in ritual. As Geertz has said, the religious response to the threat of disorder in existence is the creation of symbols “of such a genuine order of the world which will account for, and even celebrate, the perceived ambiguities, puzzles, and paradoxes in human experience.” These symbols create “long-lasting moods and motivations” which lead men to act on their religious feelings. At the heart of the religion of the Lost Cause were the Confederate hero, who came to embody transcendent truths about the redemptive power of Southern society. In fact, the Lost Cause had symbols, myth, ritual, theology, and organization, all directed toward meeting the profound concerns of postwar Southerners.

In addition to fulfilling the role of religion as, in Geertz’s words, interpreter of “social and psychological processes in cosmic terms,” the Lost Cause religion also fulfilled another function of religion by shaping these processes. Southerners used the Confederate past for their own purposes in the late nineteenth century. Businessmen and politicians employed the glorious legacy for their own needs; Southern ministers did the same. As the guardians of the region’s spiritual and moral heritage, they used the Lost Cause to buttress this heritage. This study stresses that Christian clergymen were the prime celebrants of the religion of the Lost Cause. They were honored figures at the center of the Southern community, and most of them had in some way been touched by the Confederate experience. Not all Southern preachers were celebrants of the religion of the Lost Cause, but those who were true believers were frequently prominent church leaders; the phrase “minister of the Lost Cause” identifies those who were most clearly committed to it. These ministers saw little difference between their religious and cultural values, and they promoted the link by constructing Lost Cause ritualistic forms that celebrated their regional mythological and theological beliefs. They used the Lost Cause to warn Southerners of their decline from past virtue, to promote moral reform, to encourage conversion to Christianity, and to educate the young in Southern traditions; in the fullness of time, they related it to American values. Anthony F. C. Wallace has speculated that all religions originate as cultural revitalization movements, and it is clear that Southern ministers and their churches achieved this revitalization by shaping their culture. While some revitalization movements have been utopian, looking to the future, the Lost Cause religion was a revivalistic movement, aiming, as Wallace has said, “to restore a golden age believed to have existed in the society’s past.”

Race, of course, was of fundamental importance to Southern culture. Indeed, Samuel Hill argues that Southern “racial traditions and practices have served as the cement for the South’s cultural cohesion,” and that white supremacy was the “primary component” of Southern
from the American civil religion. Dixie's value system varied from the one Herberg discussed—Southerners undoubtedly were less optimistic, less liberal, less democratic, less tolerant, and more homogeneously Protestant. In their religion Southerners stressed "democracy" less than the conservative concept of "virtue." The Enlightenment tradition played no role in shaping the religion of the Lost Cause, while the emotionally intense, dynamic Revivalist tradition was at its center. The secularized legacy of idealistic, moralistic Puritanism also helped form its character. While the whole course of Southern history provided the background, the Southern civil religion actually emerged from Dixie's Civil War experience. Just as the Revolution of 1776 caused Americans to see their history in transcendent terms, so the Confederate experience led Southerners to a profound self-examination. They understood that the result of the Civil War had clearly given them a history distinct from that of the North. The story of the civil religion included the founding of Virginia in the colonial period, the Southern role in the American Revolution and World War I, and the myths of the Old South and Reconstruction. These aspects were adjuncts to the religion of the Lost Cause, which contained ritualistic, mythological, theological, institutional, educational, and intellectual elements that were simply not present in the other aspects of the civil religion. Without the Lost Cause, no civil religion would have existed. The two were virtually the same.

A civil religion, by definition, centers on the religious implications of a nation. The Southern public faith involved a nation—a dead one, which was perhaps the unique quality of this phenomenon. One of the central issues of the American faith has been the relationship between church and state, but since the Confederate quest for political nationhood failed, the Southern faith has been less concerned with such political issues than with the cultural question of identity. Because it emerged from a heterogeneous immigrant society, the American civil religion was especially significant in providing uprooted immigrants with a sense of belonging. Because of its origins in Confederate defeat, the Southern civil religion offered confused and suffering Southerners a sense of meaning, an identity in a precarious but distinct culture.

The institutional aspect is perhaps the most controversial part of
the civil religion debate. The civil religion possesses a basic conceptual ambiguity: Has it been a separate religious tradition? Or simply an aspect of other societal institutions? Recent historical studies have cast doubt on Bellah’s assumption of the continuing existence of the American public faith in permanent organizations. Scholars increasingly believe the term “civil religion” should be used to denote episodes of religious nationalism, heavily influenced in the nineteenth century by evangelical Protestantism. This study of the religion of the Lost Cause extends the conceptual debate on this controversial issue of the civil religion. Bellah’s original insight seems to have qualified validity for the South; the Southern public religion was not a formal religion, but it was a functioning one. It possessed well-defined elements—mythology, symbolism, theology, values, and institutions—which combined to make a religion. Its elements were not unrelated parts, but interactive aspects of a well-organized, multidimensional spiritual movement. Even more than in the North, a strong connection existed between the Southern civil religion and the Protestant churches. Although support of the Lost Cause was indeed a prominent theme of Southern Protestantism, certainly not all religious leaders supported it. This volume is a study of the Southern civil religion and should not be seen as a study of Southern Protestantism. Its conclusions do not apply to all Southern clergymen; in addition, many important concerns of Southern Protestantism did not touch on the Lost Cause.

The religion of the Lost Cause, moreover, had its own distinctive structure of institutions. John Wilson has shown that voluntary associations have been perhaps the key organizational embodiment of the American public faith, and similar groups (the Confederate veterans’ groups and the Ku Klux Klan, as well as the churches and denominational schools) expressed the religion of the Lost Cause. Because of this complex structure of well-defined, interactive institutions, the Southern civil religion, again, should not be seen simply as the equivalent of Southern Protestantism. Southern ministers who believed in the Lost Cause were the indispensable individuals who mediated between their own denominations and the other institutions of the Lost Cause. They were frequently members of these voluntary associations and directed their organizational and ritualistic activities.

While they shaped the religion of the Lost Cause in the image of Southern Protestantism, organizationally the two were not precisely the same.

The persistent Bible Belt image suggests that the South has been long regarded as a sacred society. To be sure, secular values have been potent, especially in the twentieth century; nevertheless, the South’s historical development resulted in longer dominance of an “old-time religion.” The pioneering sociologist Emile Durkheim argued that all societies have a sacred quality, a spiritual dimension, and that members may even regard their society itself as holy. But postbellum Southerners saw their culture, rather than their society, as enduring. The reality of Southern culture’s alleged sacredness was less important than the Southerner’s conviction that his regional values and cultural symbols were holy. Another of Durkheim’s insights helps to clarify further the question of the South’s sacred or secular quality. He pointed out that religion divides existence into two realms, the sacred and the profane, based upon the perception of holiness, rather than upon the inherent qualities of the sacred items. Sacredness depends not on the item itself, but on the perception of its holiness by a religious person or group. The South was sacred to its citizens because they saw a sacred quality in it. The religious culture in Dixie, including the Confederate memory, promoted the self-image of virtue and holiness and thus helped maintain the cohesiveness of Southern society in a critical postwar period.

As historians and novelists have shown, the Southern historical experience that was the basis of the civil religion has been an existential one. Defeat, poverty, guilt, disillusionment, isolation, dread of the future—all have characterized the Southern past. Samuel Hill has recently urged Southerners to look to this past for an authentic religious revelation to set beside their literalistic reading of the biblical revelation. “Surely living this way,” he says of the Southern experience, “provokes acknowledgement of the transparency of earthly events to the depths, to ultimate meaning.” In fact, Southerners have tapped this existential religious resource in their Lost Cause religion. Taking a profound historical experience based in suffering and linking it with the deeply felt Christian forms resulted in institutionalizing a distinctively existential outlook among Lost Cause devotees.
However, the mythmaking or religious frame of mind represents an effort to overcome existential chaos, substituting a simplified, more comprehensible view of life for the ambiguities and contradictions that give rise to existentialism. Existentialism is a philosophy, attempting to interpret human activities in cosmic terms—but most people are not philosophers. Human beings seem to need some way to control events, if only symbolically; this is what religion does, which distinguishes it from philosophy. Southerners have indeed been existentialists, but (like other human beings) they could not bear their experience without the support of religion—the Lost Cause religion. They have remembered their suffering and have cultivated the memory, in order to affirm that it was not meaningless.

Samuel Hill compassionately hopes that the recovery of the existential dimension of the Southern experience by today’s Christian churches in the South will make them somehow wiser and more humane in race relations. One might hope that would be true; however, in the Lost Cause religion the perception of transcendence in the Southern experience did not make the participants in the spiritual mysteries ethically wiser, mainly because Southern ministers tied the Lost Cause religion to the religion of the Southern churches—evangelical Christianity. On the racial question, indeed, the Southern historical experience as embodied in the Lost Cause provided the model for segregation that the Southern churches accepted. In short, the Lost Cause religion did not have the prophetic, ethical dimension that Hill calls for. Its prophetic aspects were not focused on racial issues. As the Southern churches did not judge regional racial ethics from the standpoint of the Christian love ethic, so the Lost Cause religion failed to judge the society’s racial patterns. The Southern civil religion also failed after 1900 to perform a prophetic function in regard to the American civil religion. Rather than questioning the nation’s purposes in terms of transcendent values, Southerners showed an eagerness to identify with the sometimes self-righteous dreams of glory and virtue of the American nation. Robert Penn Warren has observed that the Confederates offer the lesson that human dignity and grandeur are possible, even amid human weakness and vice. The lesson of the ministers who constructed a religion of the Confederate past is perhaps that they should have paid more attention to human weak-ness and vice, to the moral ambiguities and uncertainties of life, to the possibility that their society, indeed, any society, might not be virtue incarnate.22 Southerners, then, made one attempt to utilize the spiritual resources of their historical experience, but, as in all things human, they fell short of perfection.
RICHMOND REMEMBERED. It had been the capital of the Southern Confederacy, and when the drive for independence failed, Richmond became the eternal city of Southern dreams. It, in turn, preserved the memory of its past and catered to the activities of the Lost Cause. Appropriately, therefore, one of the first large postwar gatherings of defeated Confederate veterans occurred in the city in October, 1875, a decade after the war's end and one year before the nation's centennial celebration. The Confederates met for a celebration, but not of the American nation: they celebrated ritualistically the Confederate nation that still lived in their minds. "Memory-fraught Richmond, the soldier's Mecca," as one Southerner later described it, was the site on October 26, 1875, of the dedication of the first statue in the South to Stonewall Jackson.  

As the South's monument-making obsession gathered momentum, days like this one became ever more frequent, reaching a peak between 1890 and 1910. Richmond augmented its position as the capital of the Lost Cause. By 1920 the city boasted a sixteen-acre Hollywood Cemetery, holding the graves of 16,000 Confederate soldiers, including 3,000 from the Gettysburg battlefield; the Hollywood Cemetery Monument, a massive, ninety-foot-high Egyptian-like pyramid of James River granite; the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument in Libby Hill Park, a seventy-two-foot-high shaft, topped by an eighteen-foot-high bronze Confederate; the Confederate Memorial Institute, known as the South's Battle Abbey; the White House of the Confederacy, which had been made into the United Daughters of the Confederacy Museum; and a carefully maintained Monument Boulevard, with statues of J. E. B. Stuart, Stonewall Jackson, Robert E. Lee, and an elaborately Jefferson Davis monument, dedicated in 1907 before 200,000 people, the largest crowd ever to assemble to honor the Confederates. The 1875 gathering thus represented a beginning of the movement that lasted for generations. Its events and tone were representative of the hundreds of future dedications. It was a truly region-wide meeting to celebrate and to mourn the Confederacy. The Lost Cause was an intellectual attitude, with a marble embodiment in the monuments that proliferated throughout the South after 1875.

Ironically, the first Southern statue dedicated to Stonewall Jackson was the result more of English than of Southern effort. After Jackson died on the battlefield of Chancellorsville in 1863, Virginians immediately began plans to honor him. A group of English gentlemen had the same thought—plus the money to finance it. They subscribed the money for a statue and persuaded the sculptor T. H. Foley to undertake the work. Other projects prevented Foley from completing the statue until the mid-1870s, but, as it turned out, that may have been the most propitious time for it. When they elected Brigadier General James L. Kemper, who had been wounded in Pickett's famous charge at Gettysburg, as governor in 1874, Virginians ended the era of Republican Reconstruction in their state. Earlier, in 1872, members of the Association of the Army of Northern Virginia had expressed concern that the Reconstruction government would be unfriendly to the idea of a statue to a Confederate hero. After Kemper became governor, the Virginia legislature appropriated $10,000 to defray the cost of transporting and setting up the monument. Although Lexington and Winchester competed against Richmond for the honor of being the statue's home, the capital city was the destined choice.

The day of the dedication displayed a curious mixture of joy and sadness, perfectly capturing the essence of the Lost Cause itself. Balmy Indian summer weather contributed to a festive summer atmosphere among the people; but one could not escape noticing that the year was dying, and that the Indian summer was only postponing death. General Daniel Harvey Hill wrote that the autumn winds sang "a requiem to the 'Lost Cause,' and the dead leaves falling on the base of the pedestal seemed to be Nature's tribute to the lost hero." Richmond spared no expense in decorating for the occasion, but the decorations also contributed to the mixed mood. The American flags on the streets
were all new, with deep, rich colors, while the Confederate flags, torn and faded, were authentic ones used in the Civil War. One observer noted, “The flag that floats over the Capitol—grounds is the flag of the conqueror. The conquered banner is wrapped around the dead hero’s body in the dead hero’s grave.” The Confederate veterans dressed in their gray uniforms. Many of the city’s decorations blended religious and military motifs; one of the most striking was the Grand Arch at a downtown corner. A Richmond reporter described it:

It was thirty-two feet high and sixteen wide. It was constructed with two tur- reted towers covered with evergreen, with an arch connecting them. On the west side of the arch was inscribed in large letters ‘Warrior, Christian, Patriot.’ Just above this was a painting representing a stone-wall, upon which was resting a bare sabre, a Bible, and a Confederate cap, with the angel of peace ascending, pointing heavenward; and on the pinnacle of the arch, just above this, was a pennant bearing the cross, as the emblem of Christianity.

This picture, with the emblem above, was a beautiful design figurate of the blissful rest which our departed hero has long since enjoyed.3

The setting might have been that of a popular outdoor religious drama.

The activities began early, with the city’s natives and numerous visitors scurrying to obtain the best places from which to view the events of the day. At eleven o’clock the procession (the largest Richmond had ever seen) started moving through the streets, arriving at the capitol grounds an hour and a half later. Almost 50,000 people had gathered for the occasion. Stonewall Jackson was the quintessential Confederate martyr-hero to Southern ministers, so when the first statue to him was dedicated they helped make the occasion a religious one. The procession had included representatives from the Baptists’ Richmond College and from denominational societies. Seated on the platform were several clergymen: Robert Lewis Dabney, the unreconstructed Presbyterian theologian who had served on Jackson’s staff; the Reverend J. D. Smith, also of the General’s staff; Methodist Bishop D. S. Doggett, who gave the invocation; and the day’s orator, the Reverend Moses Drury Hoge.3

The ceremonies began with Doggett’s prayer, which was significant in affirming God’s benevolence and omnipotence despite the Confederate defeat. Doggett acknowledged that God always acted in the best interests of His subjects and to the glory of His name, and he thanked Providence for gifted men who fulfilled the “benevolent purposes” of the Creator. Jackson, said Doggett, was such a man. At the heart of Doggett’s prayer was a passage relating the day’s events directly to religious concerns:

Grant that the monument erected on this spot, to the honor of thy servant, may ever stand as a permanent memorial to thy praise, and a perpetual incentive to a high and holy consecration to thy service, in all the avocations of life. May it silently and effectually inculcate noble ideas and inspire lofty sentiments in all spectators for all time to come. Above all, may it teach the youth of the land the solemn lesson of thy word, that the foundation of true greatness is fidelity to thee.

Governor James L. Kemper then delivered a short address, in which he referred to Jackson as a “Christian warrior,” and noted that for all mankind Jackson’s career would be an “inspiration, teaching the power of courage and conscience and faith directed to the glory of God.” The day’s religious rhetoric was obviously not limited to the clergy.3

To give the featured oration, the Virginia legislature had unanimously chosen Moses Drury Hoge, pastor of Richmond’s Second Presbyterian Church. Tall, lean, and muscular, Hoge stood erect, with the bearing of a military man. Although he sported a stylish mustache as he stood before the crowd, his thinning hair betrayed his advancing age. The son and grandson of eminent Presbyterian clergymen, Hoge was educated at a leading Southern Presbyterian school, Hampden Sydney College of Virginia. He played an important role in the Confederacy, which he believed was waging a war for “civil and religious freedom.” While continuing to preach to his Richmond congregation, Hoge at the same time served as a spiritual adviser to many Confederate leaders; he led the daily opening prayer at the Confederate Congress, and served as a volunteer chaplain at the training camp outside Richmond. In that latter position he preached at least three times a week, and sometimes daily, to a total of 100,000 soldiers just before they embarked on their first combat experiences. In 1862 his service to the Confederacy took him abroad. Hoge ran the Northern blockade of
the South at Charleston, South Carolina, and sailed to England to obtain Bibles and religious pamphlets for the Southern armies. He superintended the transport of over 300,000 items, which arrived in the Confederacy after again running the blockade. The Southern defeat crushed Hoge. In May, 1865, one month after Appomattox, he wrote to his sister that “God’s dark providence envelops me like a pall.” Shattered were his dreams of “a gospel guarded against the contamination of New England infidelity”; as a result, he felt “like a shipwrecked mariner thrown up like a seaweed on a desert shore.” His depression and accompanying physical illness continued for a year or so, but eventually he reassured himself that, despite defeat, the South had not been wrong in the war.¹

On this October day in 1875, then, his own history had prepared Hoge to address the issue of the abiding meaning of the Confederacy. As he faced the gray-clad Confederate veterans, he may have sensed that he was in a time warp—back in the glory days when all things seemed possible for those who loved the Lord and trusted Jefferson Davis. Hoge could not deny defeat, but, as on all such communal Southern occasions, the participants seemed to believe that a holy Confederate spirit descended and touched those present.

Hoge began by comparing the day’s activities to the ceremonies of the ancient Greeks. Although peace was the theme of Hellenic festivals, and of this Southern event, Hoge saw a crucial difference between the two in their motivations. The Greek festivals were deficient in morality. Hoge made certain the same could not be said of the monument dedication. In his speech he frequently referred to the day as the inauguration of a new era: a new age of hero-making, of mythmaking. He praised Virginia’s heroes of the American Revolution, and he predicted that the Confederate heroes would join them in immortality. “We lay the corner-stone,” he said, “of a new Pantheon in commemoration of our country’s fame.” Southern mythmaking was not always a subtle process.²

Hoge then proceeded to the central figure of the day, Stonewall Jackson. Each Confederate hero had a somewhat different image, but in Hoge’s speech Jackson functioned as the symbol of the Confederate crusade. Admitting that this general was the “most unromantic of all great men,” the preacher said that he still became the “hero of a living romance.” Hoge’s explanation for this came from an examination of the qualities of Jackson’s character. First, he had the traits of a born leader: “strong, adventurous, and indomitable.” At the same time, he was as tender as a child. “The eye,” he said, “that so often sent its lightning through the smoke of battle, grew soft in contemplating the beauty of a flower.” The key to Hoge’s oration lay in his discussion of another element of Jackson’s character, his piety. Admitting that Jackson would have been great without religion, the preacher insisted that the General’s faith made him “purer, stronger, more courageous, more efficient.” Hoge cautioned against confusing Jackson’s belief in Providence with fatalism, and he denied that any denominational bigotry affected his religion. He also noted that Jackson was a believer in the supernatural, despite his training in physical science. Hoge illustrated the desire of Southerners to purify their heroes of any stain, especially in the crucial area of religion.³

After considering the hero himself, Hoge grappled with the central, precipitating factor of the Lost Cause—the meaning of Southern defeat in the Civil War. Success was always pleasant, conceded Hoge, but pleasure was not everything. In a sentence that summed up the Southern religious interpretation of the Confederacy’s defeat, Hoge said, “Defeat is the discipline which trains the truly heroic soul to further and better endeavors.” Hoge saw hope for the future, and he praised the Southern people, especially the Confederate veterans, for their postwar behavior. Hoge ended his oration with an obligatory statement of the South’s willingness to accept defeat, and of its desire for a fair reconciliation with the North; he noted, however, that the federal union was no longer the same as it had been in 1875. He then verbalized the fear of a catastrophe that haunted many Southerners, especially Southern preachers accustomed to thinking in apocalyptic terms:

And if history teaches any lesson, it is this, that a nation cannot long survive when the fundamental principles which gave it life, originally, are subverted. It is true republics have often degenerated into despotisms. It is also true that after such transformation they have for a time been characterized by a force, a prosperity, and a glory, never known in their earlier annals, but it has always
been a force which absorbed and obliterated the rights of the citizen, a prosperity which was gained by the sacrifice of individual independence, a glory which was ever the precursor of inevitable anarchy, disintegration, and ultimate extinction.\footnote{5}

When Hoge finished, to the applause of the audience, soldiers hauled in the halyards attached to the canvas covering the statue, unveiling the monument to the accompanying sounds of musket and artillery blasts. After a brief pause the members of the Richmond Philharmonic Association performed a hymn of Luther’s, “A Castle of Strength Is Our Lord.” By three o’clock the official ceremonies were completed, but this was not the real conclusion of the day’s events. At the end of the ceremonies Governor Kemper introduced Stonewall Jackson’s daughter, Julia, described by a reporter as “a sweet-looking girl of thirteen,” to the survivors of the Stonewall Brigade. They removed their hats, stood quietly, and then loudly cheered the hero’s child. After she walked to the statue and placed a bouquet of flowers on the pedestal, she returned to her carriage and spoke individually to the men who had fought under her father’s command. Some of them cried softly when they met her.\footnote{6}

The sacred ceremony of October 26, 1875, was the ritualistic expression of the religion of the Lost Cause. Ritual is crucial to the emergence of a religion, because, as Clifford Geertz has argued, it is “out of the context of concrete acts of religious observance that religious conviction emerges on the human plane.” “The primary phenomenon of religion is ritual,” says Anthony F. C. Wallace. In a chaotic world, ritual embodies a symbol system that is “simple and orderly.” The Lost Cause ritual celebrated a mythology which focused on the Confederacy. It was a creation myth, the story of the attempt to create a Southern nation. According to the mythmakers, a pantheon of Southern heroes, portrayed as the highest products of the Old South civilization, had emerged during the Civil War to battle the forces of evil, as symbolized by the Yankee. The myth enacted the Christian story of Christ’s suffering and death, with the Confederacy at the sacred center. In the Southern myth the Christian drama of suffering and salvation was incomplete: the Confederacy lost a holy war, and there was no resurrection. But the clergy still insisted, even after defeat, that the Confederacy had been on a righteous crusade.\footnote{7}

As Mircea Eliade has said, “It is not enough to know the origin myth, one must recite it.” While other Southern myths could be seen in literature, politics, or economics, the Confederate myth reached its true fulfillment after the Civil War in a ritualistic structure of activities that represented a religious commemoration and celebration of the Confederacy. One part of the ritualistic liturgy focused on the religious figures of the Lost Cause. Southern Protestant churches have been sparse in iconography, but the Southern civil religion was rich in images. Southern ministers and other rhetoricians portrayed Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson, Jefferson Davis, and many other wartime heroes as religious saints and martyrs. They were said to epitomize the best of Christian and Southern values. Their images pervaded the South and were especially aimed at children. In the first two decades of the twentieth century, local chapters of the United Daughters of the Confederacy undertook successfully to blanket Southern schools with portraits of Lee and Davis. Lee’s birthday, January 19, became a holiday throughout the South, and ceremonies honoring his birth frequently occurred in the schools. Lee’s picture on the wall was the center, the altar, for the event. The effect of these images could be seen in an anecdote concerning Father Abram Ryan, the poet-priest who wrote elegies about the Confederacy. He saw his young niece standing before a painting of the death of Christ, and he asked her if she knew who the evil men were who had crucified her Lord. “Instantly she replied, ‘O yes I know,’ she said, ‘the Yankees.’”\footnote{8}

An explicit linkage between Confederate images and religious values was made in the stained glass windows placed in churches to commemorate Confederate sacrifices. One of the earliest of these was a window placed in Trinity Church, Portsmouth, Virginia, in April, 1868, while federal troops still occupied the city. The window portrayed a biblical Rachel weeping at a tomb, on which appeared the names of congregation members who had died during the war. One church, Biloxi, Mississippi’s Church of the Redeemer, “the Westminister of the South,” was particularly prominent in this activity at the turn of the century. St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Richmond, which had been the wartime church of many Confederate leaders, established a Lee Memorial Window, which used an Egyptian scene to connect the Confederacy with the stories of the Old Testament. Even
Sacred Southern Ceremonies

A Negro Presbyterian congregation in Roanoke, Virginia, dedicated a Stonewall Jackson memorial window in its church. The pastor had been a pupil in Jackson's Sunday school in prewar Lexington, Virginia.15

Wartime artifacts also had a sacred aura about them, with Bibles that had been touched by the Cause being especially holy. The United Daughters of the Confederacy kept under lock and key the Bible used when Jefferson Davis was sworn in as president of the Confederacy. More poignantly, a faded, torn overcoat belonging to a Confederate martyr named Sam Davis was discovered in 1897; when it was shown to a United Daughters of the Confederacy meeting, the response was, said an observer, first "sacred silence" and then weeping. One Presbyterian preacher, James I. Vance, noted that, "like Elijah's mantle of old, the spirit of the mighty dwells within it." Museums were sanctuaries containing such sacred relics. The Confederate Museum in Richmond, formerly the White House of the Confederacy, contained a room for each seceding state. These rooms housed medals, flags, uniforms, and weapons from the Confederacy, while the Solid South Room contained the Great Seal of the Confederate States."16

If the Southern civil religion had its reverent images and its sacred artifacts, it also had its hymns. One group of hymns sung at postwar Confederate gatherings was made up of Christian songs straight from the hymnal. "Nearer My God to Thee," "Abide with Me," and "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow" were popular, but the favorite of this category was "How Firm a Foundation," which was sung at Stonewall Jackson's funeral and at the funeral of every member of Jefferson Davis's family after the Civil War. It was the official hymn in the United Daughters of the Confederacy's "Ritual."17

Another group of Confederate sacred songs was created by putting new words to old melodies. The spirit of "That Old-Time Religion" was preserved when someone retitled it "We Are Old-Time Confederates." Several Southerners, including one minister, wrote new versions of the classic "Dixie," but conservative veterans' organizations rejected this tampering with tradition. J. B. Stinson composed new verses for the melody of "When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder I'll Be There":"
of seemingly unwarranted suffering. Although Southerners usually ignored the national Thanksgiving Day, complaining that Northerners used that day to exploit the war issue and to wave the bloody shirt, they did celebrate thanksgiving days designated by their own denominations. In general, however, the days of humiliation, fasting, and prayer were more appropriate to the immediate postwar Southern mood.

Southern reverence for dead heroes could be seen in the activities of another ritual event, Confederate Memorial Day. Southern legend has it that the custom of decorating the graves of soldiers arose in Georgia in 1866, when Mrs. Charles William, a Confederate widow, published an appeal to Southerners to set apart a day "to be handed down through time as a religious custom of the South to wreath the graves of our martyred dead with flowers." Like true Confederates, Southern states could not at first agree among themselves on which day to honor, but by 1916 ten states had designated June 3, Jefferson Davis's birthdate, as Memorial Day. Women played a key role in this ritual, as they were in charge of decorating the graves with flowers and of organizing the day's other activities. It was a holy day, "The Sabbath of the South." One Southern woman compared her sisters to the biblical Mary and Martha, who "last at the cross and first at the grave brought their offerings of love." Another noted that the aroma of flowers on Memorial Day was "like incense burning in golden censers to the memory of the saints."

A third ritual was the funeral of a wartime hero. The veterans attending the funerals dressed in their gray uniforms and acted as pallbearers, or honorary ones, and provided a military ceremony. Everything was done according to the "Confederate Veteran's Burial Ritual," which emphasized that the soldier was going to "an honorable grave." "He fought a good fight," said the ritual, "and has left a record of which we, his surviving comrades, are proud, and which is a heritage of glory to his family and their descendants, for all time to come." These ceremonies reiterated what Southerners heard elsewhere—that, despite defeat, the Confederate experience proved them a noble, virtuous people. Moreover, the Confederate funeral included the display of the Confederate flag, the central symbol of the Southern identity. Sometimes dramatically placed over the hero's casket just before it was lowered into the ground, at other times the folded battle flag took the floral form of "a pillow of immortelles" under the hero's head. Even when Southerners again honored the American flag, they continued cherishing the Stars and Bars as well.

The dedication of monuments to the Confederate heroes was a fourth ritualistic expression of the Lost Cause. In 1914 the Confederate Veteran magazine revealed that over a thousand monuments existed in the South; by that time many battlefields had been set aside as pilgrimage sites containing holy shrines. Preachers converted the innumerable statues dotting the Southern countryside into religious objects, almost idols, that quite blatantly taught Christian religious and moral lessons. "Our cause is with God" and "In hope of a joyful resurrection," among the most directly religious inscriptions on monuments, were not atypical. El Dorado, Arkansas, erected a marble drinking fountain to the Confederacy; its publicity statement said—in a phrase culled from countless hymns and sermons on the sacrificial Jesus—that the water in it symbolized "the loving stream of blood" shed by the Southern soldiers. Drinkers from the fount were thus symbolically baptized in Confederate blood. The dedication of monuments became more elaborate as the years went on. Perhaps the greatest occurred in 1907, when an estimated 200,000 people gathered in Richmond for the dedication of a statue to Jefferson Davis. Governor Claude A. Swanson made a featured address as 12,000 members of Confederate veterans' groups marched in the parade to the site on Monument Boulevard. Richmond was the Mecca of the Lost Cause, and Monument Boulevard was the sacred road to it.

Rituals similar to these existed as part of the American civil religion. In both instances, to use Claude Lévi-Strauss's categories, they were partly commemorative rites which re-created the mythical past, and partly mourning rites which converted dead heroes into revered ancestors. Both common religions confronted the precariousness and instability of collective life; they provided a way for the community to help its citizens meet their individual fears of death. As the sociologist W. Lloyd Warner has said, "Whenever the living think about the deaths of others they necessarily express some of their own concern about their own extinction." By the continuance of the community, the citizens in it achieve a kind of immortality. For Southerners,
need for such a symbolic life was even greater than for Northerners. Union soldiers, too, had sacrificed, but at least the success of their cause seemed to validate their deaths. Postwar Southerners feared that the defeat of the Confederacy had jeopardized their continued existence as a distinctively Southern people. By participating in postwar Lost Cause rituals, Southerners tried to show that the Confederate sacrifices had not been in vain. While similar rituals existed to honor the Grand Army of the Republic, the key point was that Southern rituals began from a very different starting point and had a different symbolic content than Northern ones. Within the bounds of the United States, there was a functioning civil religion not dedicated to honoring the American nation.

Anthony F. C. Wallace suggests that, just as liturgies form ritual, so rituals themselves make up "cult institutions." The permanence of the Lost Cause religion could be seen in its structural-functional aspect, in the institutions which directed its operations, providing ongoing leadership and institutional encouragement. One organizational focus was on Confederate veterans' groups. Local associations of veterans existed in the 1870s and 1880s, but Southerners took a step forward in this activity with the establishment of the United Confederate Veterans in New Orleans in 1889. In 1896 the heirs of the Lost Cause formed another group, the United Sons of Confederate Veterans, which provided more energy for the movement. The frequent meetings held by local chapters of these organizations were an important social activity for Southerners, especially those in rural areas. They also had their holy elements, mostly in the rhetoric used in orations. The highlight of the year for the veterans was the annual regionwide reunion, held in a major Southern city. It was one of the most highly publicized events in the South. Railroads ran special trains, and the cities lavishly welcomed the grizzled old men and their entourage of splendidly dressed young women sponsored by the local chapters. Tens of thousands of people invaded the chosen city each year to partake in a few days of the past. The earliest reunions were boisterous gatherings, but that spirit did not prevent an equally religious tone from existing, especially as the veterans aged. In 1899 the reunion was held in Charleston; a city reporter noted that while the veterans were light-hearted at times, they also were as devout as any pilgrim going "to the tomb of a prophet, or a Christian knight to the walls of Jerusalem."  

Each day of the reunion began with a prayer, which usually reminded the aging Confederates that religion was at the heart of the Confederate heritage. The Presbyterian clergyman Peyton Hoge, in a prayer at the tenth reunion in 1900, was not subtle in suggesting his view of the typical Confederate's afterlife. He prayed that those present "may meet in that Heavenly Home where Lee, Jackson and all the Heroes who have gone before are waiting to welcome us there."

After the invocation, a hymn was usually sung; one favorite was the "Doxology," which ended with the explicitly Christian reference, "Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost." A memorial service was held each year at a local church as part of the official reunion program that directly linked Christianity and the Confederacy. At the 1920 reunion, for example, the Baptist cleric B. A. Owen compared the memorial service to a Christian sacrament, Holy Communion. In the Communion service, he said, "our hearts are focused upon Calvary's cross and the dying Lamb of God"; in the Confederate sacrament, "we hold sweet converse with the spirits of departed comrades." The dead heroes were "the aristocrats of suffering and sorrow," he said, in a curious phrase that seemed to blend the image of Jesus with that of an Old South planter. In any event, in order to coordinate their work at memorial services and elsewhere, the ministers of the Lost Cause organized a Chaplains' Association before the Atlanta reunion in 1898.

The Nashville reunion of 1897 was probably the single most religiously oriented Confederate meeting. The veterans met at the downtown Union Gospel Tabernacle, which later would be known as Ryman Auditorium, the home of Southern music's Grand Ole Opry. A new balcony was added to the Tabernacle for the 1897 convention, and it was dedicated as a Confederate memorial. Sitting on hard church pews, facing the altar and the permanent baptismal font, the veterans had a rollicking yet sacred time in the sweltering summer heat of the poorly ventilated Tabernacle. Each reunion ended with a long parade, and the 1897 procession was one of the most memorable. The reviewing stand was set up on the campus of the Methodists' Vanderbilt University, where the old veterans paused before continuing their march. The reunion coincided with Tennessee's centennial celebration, which saw the unveiling in Nashville's new Centennial Park of the Parthenon, the replica of the ancient Greek temple, and a
mammoth statue of the Greek goddess Athena. The Confederate parade ended in Centennial Park; as the old soldiers entered the grounds, the bells from a nearby tower chimed the hymn "Shall We Gather at the River?" Apparently unintentionally, the ceremony evoked comparisons with the annual Panathenaic Procession in ancient Athens, which went from the lower agora to the Acropolis (the citadel of the city) and then to the Parthenon (the temple of Athena). A difference, however, was that while the ancient rite initiated young Athenian men into the armed forces and thereby into adult status in society, the Nashville procession consisted of old soldiers renewing their status as society's heroes.  

If religion pervaded the United Confederate Veterans, it saturated the United Daughters of the Confederacy. The importance of Christianity to the Daughters could be seen in the approved ritual for their meetings. It began with an invocation by the president:

Daughters of the Confederacy, this day we are gathered together, in the sight of God, to strengthen the bonds that unite us in a common cause; to renew the vows of loyalty to our sacred principles; to do homage unto the memory of our gallant Confederate soldiers, and to perpetuate the fame of their noble deeds into the third and fourth generations. To this end we invoke the aid of our Lord.  

The members responded, "From the end of the earth will I cry unto Thee, when my heart is overwhelmed; lead me to the rock that is higher than I." After similar chanted exchanges, the hymn "How Firm a Foundation" was sung, followed by the reading of a prayer composed by Episcopal Bishop Ellison Capers of South Carolina, himself a Confederate general before entering the ministry. After the prayer, the president then read the Lord's Prayer, and the meeting or convention began its official business.  

The Daughters provided an unmatched crusading zeal to the Lost Cause religion. A typical local chapter motto was that of the Galveston, Texas, group: "With God Everything, Without God Nothing." The members rarely seemed to doubt that God was on their side. Cornelia Branch Stone entitled her 1912 pamphlet on Confederate history a "U.D.C. Catechism for Children," a title which suggested the assumed sacred quality of its contents. The Daughters took an especially aggressive role in preserving the records of the Southern past. These were sacred documents, viewed by the women in a fundamentalist perspective. Mrs. M. D. Farris of Texas urged the organization in 1912 to cooperate in guarding its archives, "even as the children of Israel did the Ark of the Covenant."  

The second organizational focus for the Southern civil religion was the Christian churches. The religion of the Lost Cause and the Christian denominations taught similar religious-moral values, and the Southern heroes had been directly touched by Christianity. The God invoked in the Lost Cause was distinctly biblical and transcendent. Prayers at veterans' gatherings appealed for the blessings of, in J. William Jones's words, the "God of Israel, God of the centuries, God of our forefathers, God of Jefferson Davis and Sidney Johnston and Robert E. Lee, and Stonewall Jackson, God of the Southern Confederacy." Prayers invariably ended in some variation of "We ask it all in the name and for the sake of Christ our dear Redeemer." At the 1907 veterans' reunion, the Reverend Randolph McKim, like other preachers before and after him, invoked the third person of the Christian godhead, praying for "the blessing of the Holy Ghost in our hearts." The references to Christ and the Holy Ghost clearly differentiated the Southern civil religion from the more deistic American civil religion. The latter's ceremonies rarely included such references because of the desire to avoid potential alienation of Jews, who were a small percentage of the Southern population. In Dixie, the civil religion and Christianity openly supported each other. To Southern preachers, the Lost Cause was useful in keeping Southerners a Christian people; in turn, Christianity would support the values of society.  

Certainly, the most blatant connections between religion and the Confederacy were made during Confederate rituals. The evidence is that, in their normal Christian services, Southerners did not worship the Confederacy. Nevertheless, Southern religious journals, books, and indeed pulpits were the sources of Lost Cause sentiments. Church buildings were the most frequently used temples for Memorial Day activities, funerals of veterans, and memorial meetings held when prominent Confederates died. Such gatherings were interdenominational, with pastors from different religious bodies participating. A spirit of interdenominationalism had existed in the wartime Con-
federate armies, and it survived in the postbellum South in the attitudes of the Lost Cause. The overwhelmingly Protestant character of Southern religion facilitated the growth of the ecumenical Lost Cause religion, which, in turn, furthered Protestant ecumenicism. Although predominantly Protestant, Southern religion was not manifested in one church, but was ecclesiastically fragmented. The Lost Cause provided a forum for ministers and laymen from these differing churches to meet as participants in a common spiritual activity. Preachers occasionally made reference to particular denominational beliefs, but since Southerners shared so many of the same doctrines a basis for cooperation existed. Moreover, despite the Protestant orientation of the Lost Cause, Catholics and Jews were not excluded from it. Members of these faiths joined the Confederate groups, and priests and rabbis occasionally appeared at Lost Cause events. Catholics and Jews accepted the Protestant tinge of the religion of the Lost Cause and made their own contributions to it.14

The Southern churches proved to be important institutions for the dissemination of the Lost Cause. Despite the opposition of some clerics, on Sunday morning, November 27, 1884, congregations across the South contributed to a well-promoted special collection to finance a Robert E. Lee monument in Richmond. The denominational papers approvingly published such appeals from Confederate organizations for support, editorially endorsed Lost Cause fund raising, recommended Confederate writings, and of course praised the Lost Cause itself. The Confederate periodicals, in turn, printed stories about Christianity which seemed unrelated to the usual focus on the Civil War. Richmond, the center of Lost Cause activity, was also a religious publishing center. The Episcopalians, Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians all published periodicals there, and the Southern Presbyterian Publishing House was located in the city. Nashville was a religious publishing center as well, with the same Confederate-Christian mixture. Confederate Veteran magazine, the most important organ of the Lost Cause after 1890, had its offices in, and was published by, the Publishing House of the Southern Methodist church in the city.15

The close connection between the churches and the Confederate organizations could be seen in terms of the central experience of Southern Protestantism—evangelism. Confederate heroes were pop-ular choices to appear at Southern revivals. The most influential Southern evangelist, the iconoclastic Georgia Methodist Sam Jones, was a master at having Confederates testify to the power of Christianity in their lives, preferably its inspirational effect on the battlefield. At the same time, a significant feature of the religious rhetoric of the reunions was the insistence on a response from the veterans. The invitation to follow Christ, which was made during the memorial services, was also an invitation to follow once again Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson, and Jefferson Davis. Some of these reunions thus resembled vast revivals, with tens of thousands of listeners hearing ministers reminding them of the imminence of death for the aged veterans, and of the need to insure everlasting life.16

One of the most important conclusions about the Christian-Confederate connection was that, despite their suspicion of popery, Southern Christians in the Lost Cause religion invested profound meaning into their Confederate artifacts and symbols. This was an indication that the most ascetic and fundamentalist Southern Christians were not in control of many activities of the Lost Cause. While Methodists and Baptists openly endorsed and participated in the religious atmosphere of the Lost Cause rituals, the Episcopalians played an especially prominent role in the Southern civil religion, particularly in its rituals. This stemmed partly from their position in Southern society: the Episcopal church was the church of the antebellum planter class, and after the war the Episcopalians helped make the Lost Cause a defense of aristocratic values. The role played by the Episcopalians in the Lost Cause also came from their leadership role in the Confederate cause. Jefferson Davis, for example, was a Baptist in Mississippi, but when he moved to Richmond during the Civil War his Episcopal wife persuaded him to change denominations, as much for social as for religious reasons. Bishop John Johns baptized him in the Confederacy's Executive Mansion and later confirmed him at St. Paul's Episcopal Church. St. Paul's was almost the official church of the Confederacy, because of the number of influential men who worshipped there. The army's leadership was laced with Episcopalians, including Lee, Leonidas Polk, and Ellison Capers. During the war Polk baptized or confirmed Generals William J. Hardee, John B. Hood, and Joseph E. Johnston. The denomination also claimed a disproportion-
ate number of chaplains. While the Methodists led all groups, with 200 chaplains, the Episcopalians had at least 65, only 35 fewer than the Baptists. Four Episcopal chaplains later became bishops, and others had done voluntary war work in the army ranks. Again, this wartime participation laid the basis for postwar involvement in the religion of the Lost Cause. Additionally, as the most ritualistic of Southern Protestants, Episcopal churchmen may have been a logical choice for prominence in the highly ritualized religion of the Lost Cause.37

In any event, all of the rituals and institutions dealt with a profound problem. The Southern civil religion emerged because the experience of defeat in the Civil War had created a spiritual and psychological need for Southerners to reaffirm their identity, an identity which came to have outright religious dimensions. Each Lost Cause ritual and organization was tangible evidence that Southerners had made a religion out of their history. As with all ritualistic repetition of archetypal actions, Southerners in their institutionalized Lost Cause religion were trying symbolically to overcome history. By repeating ritual, they recreated the mythical time of their noble ancestors and paid tribute to them.38 Despite the bafflement and frustration of defeat, Southerners showed that the time of “creation” still had meaning for them. The Confederate veteran was a living incarnation of an idea that Southerners tried to defend at the cultural level, even after Confederate defeat had made political success impossible. Every time a Confederate veteran died, every time flowers were placed on graves on Southern Memorial Day, Southerners relived and confronted the death of the Confederacy. The religion of the Lost Cause was a cult of the dead, which dealt with essential religious concerns. Having lost what they considered to be a holy war, Southerners had to face suffering, doubt, guilt, a recognition of what seemed to be evil, and above all death. Through the ritualistic and organizational activities of their civil religion, Southerners tried to overcome their existential worries and to live with their tragic sense of life.

Chapter Two

CRUSADING CHRISTIAN + RELIGIOUS MYTH OF THE CONFEDERATES LOST CAUSE

LIKE ALL RELIGIOUS RITUALS, that of the Lost Cause had its mythology. While related to the myths of the Old South and Reconstruction, the myth of the Lost Cause was a distinct one, having to do primarily with the Civil War itself. While most Southerners paid homage to the Lost Cause, they saw different meanings in it. Politicians and political philosophers, for example, interpreted the Lost Cause as a defense of states’ rights, and they waved the gray shirt to enable former Confederates to win election. The most profound and lasting interpretation of the myth of the Lost Cause was the religious one. To distinguish it from other meanings, one can label the religious interpretation of the Lost Cause as the myth of the Crusading Christian Confederates. Myths represent one formulation of a religion’s belief system, and at the center of this myth was the idea of virtue. Realizing that Confederate defeat jeopardized what they believed to be essentially religious and moral values, Southern preachers developed a set of symbols of virtue and an overarching myth which embodied the threatened values.

Although time did not radically alter the contours of the myth, changes in Southern intellectual history from 1865 to 1920 did influence the myth’s development. The years from 1865 to 1880 were ones of poverty, confusion, and disorganization in Southern life, including its cultural activity; however, during this period the Lost Cause myth emerged. In these years many Southerners, especially military leaders, bickered over defeat and lambasted allegedly disloyal Southerners. Southern ministers, who had been perhaps the most unswervingly loyal of all Confederates, did not generally participate in this bickering, instead maintaining that the Confederacy was a glorious fight for
Chapter Five

**MORALITY AND MYSTICISM** + **RACE AND THE LOST CAUSE**

White supremacy was a key tenet of the Southern Way of Life, and Southern ministers used the Lost Cause religion to reinforce it. The implications of the Lost Cause for racial relations were disturbing. The Ku Klux Klan epitomized the use of the Confederate experience for destructive purposes. The Klan represented the mystical wing of the Lost Cause, as the most passionate organization associated with this highly ritualized civil religion. Its mysticism was attained not through a disciplined meditation, but through the cultivation of a mysterious ambience, which fused Confederate and Christian symbols and created unique rituals. The racial views expressed within the context of other Lost Cause institutions were more moderate than the Klan’s. Race itself did not play a large role in the Confederate myth, where the central focus was on the virtue of the Confederates. Southerners insisted that they had fought for principle, not for slavery, and the Negro’s wartime loyalty was a respected part of the Lost Cause myth. The special concern of Lost Cause ministers was the obstacle that postbellum blacks presented to the preservation of a virtuous Southern civilization. The ministers’ views on this subject thus reflected the essential concern of the jeremiad; one could see here, as elsewhere, that the Lost Cause vision of the good society was paternalistic, moralistic, well ordered, and hierarchical.

The post–Civil War years saw segregation emerging to replace slavery as the South's solution to the “race problem.” Southerners were united in believing in white supremacy, but historians have identified several different positions within the general acceptance of white dominance. After the instability of Reconstruction, the position that dominated the 1880s was the paternalist-conservative one, closely aligned with the New South business philosophy. The paternalists typically rejoiced at the demise of slavery, but they nostalgically praised the harmonious race relations of the antebellum period. They saw no black moral or cultural decline after the Civil War, and they stressed that the races had continued their harmonious relations. The second position, which came to dominate after 1890 and especially after 1900, was of negrophobia. The Southern position partly reflected the nationwide growth of Anglo-Saxon racism in this era. The extreme racists of the South believed that the Negro was a beast, and that he had sunk to a morally degenerate condition when the discipline of slavery had been removed. They advocated rigid repression and control, which meant strict public segregation at the least, and which sometimes even extended to the justification of lynching.¹

Southern ministers were among the leading defenders of white supremacy. As H. Shelton Smith has suggested, racial heresy was more dangerous to a preacher’s reputation than was theological speculation. White Southerners perceived dissension on the racial issue as a threat to the social order itself, and clergymen made clear their commitment. One could find ministers whose views fell into each of the two major racial positions, although few religious leaders succumbed to extreme racism. Most typically the clerics preached acceptance of Negro inferiority and white supremacy, while working to mitigate the harshness of the system through individual cases of charity and kindness. The attitude of ministers of the Lost Cause did not precisely fit either of the two dominant categories; they were paternalists, but their attitudes came from a different source than those of the New South paternalists. Lost Cause belief focused on the moral retrogression of blacks after emancipation, but preachers articulated this idea before the extreme racism of the end of the century made it a dominant article of faith. The belief in moral retrogression stemmed from the legacy of slavery, the blacks’ behavior in the Civil War, and the Reconstruction experience.² The fear of Negro decline was the basis for both racial positions associated with the Lost Cause—the extreme Ku Klux Klan viewpoint, and the more moderate paternalistic-moralistic position. The Klan represented negrophobia, while the Lost Cause paternalists tried to find a substitute for slavery as a way of insuring Negro virtue and thus Southern virtue.
After the Civil War, prominent antebellum clergymen restated the argument that slavery was a God-ordained, spiritual institution. They believed that God had rescued the Negro from savagery, so that Southern whites could train him in Christian civilization. Slavery had thus opened a missionary field of four million people to Southern white evangelists. In explaining emancipation the Methodist Albert T. Bledsoe, among others, concluded that blacks had been “in the protecting matrix” long enough: God had allowed them to be freed so they could return to Africa, in order to spread Christianity and civilization. The Presbyterian cleric John B. Adger, a prewar evangelist to the slaves in South Carolina, was typical in claiming that “the South has no tears to shed” over the end of slavery, which he said represented the “deliverance from a very serious and weighty responsibility.” But just as typically he added that the religious principles underlying slavery “cannot die.”

While the clerics thus stressed that slavery Christianized the blacks, they also admitted the closely related point that slavery provided a valuable system of moral and social discipline. The key word was “order.” As the Methodist pastor Albert T. Goodloe remarked, slaves “were contented and orderly”; the Episcopal prelate William B. W. Howe added that slavery was a blessing to blacks because they led “comfortable and well-ordered lives.” The preachers portrayed slavery as an expression of a profound eternal truth, the need for order in society and in individuals. William Harrison, in his novel Sam Williams: A Tale of the Old South, summed up the institution as one with “a firm but mild authority on the one hand, and a confiding obedience on the other.” Through it, a commendable hierarchy had been achieved. Methodist minister George Smith, in his novel Boy in Gray, observed that slaves “were not permitted to do as they wished, and alas! I have found that when people, young or old, black or white, are permitted to do as they wish, many of them wish to go wrong. They were made to work, and alas! it is a sad fact that many people will not work unless they are made to do so.” His words reflected his opinion of the contemporary world as well as the Southern past. Episcopal Bishop Richard Wilmer of Alabama praised slavery for bringing order to white Southerners and black slaves alike. At first, he said, slavery was based on the economic considerations of the white planters; but soon religious motives touched the slaveowners, and “the relation between them and their servants became less and less mercenary, and more and more patriarchal.” For their part, Wilmer continued, African blacks had been “heathen savages” until Southern slavery civilized them: “Their habits of subordination to their earthly master inclined them to an easier submission to the will of God.” He concluded approvingly that, in this properly ordered condition, obedience soon “went forth to every object of reverence and authority.” He contrasted this antebellum society of subordination, submission, reverence, and authority with the postwar South, which experienced “conflicts of races, animosity and distrust, jealousy of capital, suffrage without sense, religion without morals, service without reverence.”

The frequent reassertions of the religious and moral principles of slavery suggested that the preachers were still defensive about the institution. Throughout the late nineteenth century, and especially during Reconstruction, Northern denominations ignored their Southern counterparts by uncompromisingly attacking it. Southern denominational assemblies were concerned enough with the issue to justify slavery long after its demise. As late as 1876 the Southern Presbyterian Church Assembly was reaffirming that “domestic servitude is of Divine appointment” because its essential principle was that of submission, which was “an essential element” in every society, government, and family. The Southern Baptist Convention reasserted slavery’s religious dimensions in 1892. While urging reconciliation with the North, Baptist editor James B. Gambrell typically responded with anger when he heard Northern criticism of the Southern past: “If we are to be told that our fathers were barbarous in holding in servitude a people committed to them in a state of slavery, we are sufficiently human to resent it as unjust and untimely.”

As a result of the war and Confederate defeat, Southern ministerial defenders of the Lost Cause in effect extended the pro-slavery argument to include new elements needed to justify the prewar institution and, later, segregation. For example, they portrayed blacks’ behavior in the Civil War as a vindication of slavery. “They were quite as loyal to the Confederacy as their masters, and to them we are indebted for the fact that the war lasted four years,” said the Georgia Christian Index. Another Christian Index contributor, Richard Carroll, in 1917
pointed out that blacks had contributed to the Confederacy by feeding the soldiers, constructing fortifications at the battlefront, and guarding women and children on the home front. Albert T. Bledsoe in the *Southern Review* made black behavior seem even more significant when he accused the North, with its "advanced Christian civilization," of trying to provoke slaves into a bloody rebellion. "These devilish instigations failed however," he said, "and the poor semi-barbarous negroes proved themselves to be more civilized than their instigators." The Episcopal Bishop Stephen Elliott evoked a concept from the myth of Confederate virtue when he said that the behavior of slaves in the war was "the sublimest vindication of the institution of slavery" that could have been given.  

To the defenders of the old order, the heroism of Southern white men and women had reached its peak in the Confederacy; likewise they conceded that blacks, as slaves, reached the height of their dignity as a race in the war. If the Confederate heroes were noble, heroic, and honorable, the key word to describe the black role in the Confederate myth was "loyal." Blacks had achieved dignity, said Methodist Rebecca Felton, "by reason of discipline and habit, restraints on idleness, and [the] good example of white slaveowners. They had remained in their allotted order in society and had been exalted by their loyalty. One clergyman went further than most when he argued that blacks had developed "a genius for religion" through contact with whites in slave times, and that the slave's religious "influence was afterward felt in the religious tone of the Confederate armies." In making such comments, Southerners were careful to attribute the virtuous wartime conduct of blacks to the antebellum influence of slaveowners.  

Throughout the late nineteenth century Southerners praised and even romanticized "the old-time Negroes" produced by the plantation. Southern religious leaders and laymen were perhaps even more prone to this view than most people in Dixie; they sentimentally reminisced about the influence of the old uncles and beloved mammies, freely granting that the chivalrous character of Southerners owed much to the spiritual example of these old slaves. Betsy McKeehen had served the Leonidas Polk family all of her life, and when she died in 1874 they praised her as an embodiment of the principles of the Episcopal church, as a teacher of her own upright children, and as one who had nurtured the character of the Polks themselves. A few ministers professed, in retrospect, to having had doubts in childhood about slavery because of its effects on their black nurses and friends. Sumner Cunningham, the editor of *Confederate Veteran* magazine, proposed in one of his first issues that old blacks who had been slaves for twenty years should be given homes in honor of their service.  

Surveying the Southern landscape, the Reverend A. H. Gilmer in 1896 went so far as to observe, "So many monuments, yet how strange no one has thought of these dear old mammies and faithful servants." In fact, at the turn of the century the Confederate groups did debate the question of building a monument to the slave's loyalty in the war. Methodist cleric Howard M. Hamill described one such proposed statue as "a trinity of figures to be carved from a single block of Southern marble, consisting of the courtly old planter, high-bred and gentle in face and manner; the plantation 'uncle,' the counterpart in ebony of the master so loyally served and imitated; and the broad-bosomed black 'mammy,' with varicolored turban, spotless apron, and beaming face, the friend and helper of every living thing in cabin or mansion." The issue was controversial. Indeed, one Daughter of the Confederacy, Mrs. W. Carleton Adams, was outraged at the suggestion. Noting that the South was "already black with their living presence," she insisted that Negroes deserved no monument. The trusted slaves were well rewarded for their wartime loyalty, she continued, and she suggested that money for a slave statue could be better spent in building a home for Confederate women. Her final argument seemed to her to be insurmountable. Writing in 1904, she noted that every Southern town was "in mourning for some beautiful woman whose life has been strangled out by some black fiend." Who, she asked, could propose in light of this situation a tribute to blacks?  

Nevertheless, the United Daughters of the Confederacy pledged $1,000 for a Negro monument. A spot at Harpers Ferry was chosen, where Heyward Shepherd, a former slave employed as a railroad night watchman, had refused to join John Brown's raid. A 900-pound boulder was chosen, and a contract was given to the Peter Burghard Stone Company of Louisville. Opposition to the project came from the city council and from students at a nearby Negro institution, Stoner Col-
lego. Not until 1937 was the memorial boulder placed and dedicated at Harpers Ferry on land contributed for that purpose. The inscription said that the stone was a "memorial to Heyward Shepherd, exemplifying the character and faithfulness of thousands of negroes, who, under like temptation, throughout subsequent years of war, so conducted themselves that no stain was left upon a record which is the peculiar heritage of the American people and an everlasting tribute to the best in both races."

The ministers of the Lost Cause believed strongly that slavery had provided essential order, discipline, and morality in Negro life, qualities which were seen in the Civil War experience. But when slavery ended, they consequently came to believe in the moral retrogression of blacks. As Rebecca Felton put it, the black race "was more honest, more upright, and more virtuous in the South, at the time of the surrender at Appomattox, than they are today." Her use of the word "virtuous" pointed to the concern among Lost Cause religious figures that the traditional virtue of the South was endangered after the war. Black immorality, it was feared, could destroy Southern virtue.

The preachers themselves praised the Negroes whose character had been molded by slavery, but they feared the young blacks growing up in freedom. In an 1893 editorial on recent lynchings, the editor of the Christian Advocate asserted that those lynched were rapists. He warned that they were not "the old slaves who watched over their masters' families with so tireless a fidelity in the dark days of 1861-1865"; instead they were "the representatives of a new generation, intoxicated by a liberty which they have not known how to use." Instead of being hard-working, moral, and religious, they were now "indolent, sensual, devilish." Similarly, the Reverend John Paris warned that when blacks gained their freedom it soon became license. These "simple minded people," he said, believed they had been "freed from the restraints that servitude had thrown around them," so they "abandoned themselves to a cause of reckless dissipation [sic]." In his words was the assumption that people, and especially blacks, could never legitimately abandon "restraints." Howard M. Hamill made the same point. While freedom was "an inestimable boon," he said, the "careworn faces of the remnants of old-time negroes" indicated that they had discovered the limitations of freedom. "I take exception," Hamill said, "to the much-vaulted doctrine of liberty as the panacea for all human ills."

Robert Lewis Dabney was surprisingly frank about the sexual dimensions of his fears. The young black woman seemed to him to symbolize Southern doom. He wrote that, without slavery, black girls in the antebellum era would have "grown up besotted victims of brutal passions." With Southern defeat the restraints of slavery were gone, and he saw only predictable results. Black women "breed the future incubus of your descendants," he wrote a friend. His solution was to make the South's problem the North's problem, by urging young black women to go North, "out in a steady stream upon Washington City, Philadelphia, New York, Boston, etc." The relationship between his fears and the Confederate heroes was painfully clear in the speech he gave in November, 1867, at the Presbyterian Synod in Virginia:

"Yes, sir, these tyrants know that if they can mix the race of Washington and Lee and Jackson with this base herd which they brought from the pens of Africa, if they can taint the blood which flowed in the veins of Manassas with this sordid stream, the adulterous current will never again swell a Virginian's heart with a thrill noble enough to make a despot tremble. But they will then have, for all time, a race supple and gourging enough for all the purposes of oppression."

In 1891, in one of his last letters, Dabney was still unrelentingly warning of the black presence as "an eating cancer" that imperiled the South. Southern clergymen especially worried over the alleged decline of black religion after emancipation. Southerners had contended in the pro-slavery argument that slavery was a Christian, missionary institution that allowed white Christians to bring the glad tidings to the heathen. Whites had, in fact, exercised great supervision of slave religion, but after the war the situation changed. While most religious leaders wanted to retain blacks within the existing denominations, they refused to give equal status to blacks in church offices and worship services. Consequently, by the end of Reconstruction, Southern Christians were segregated into black and white denominations.
darkness." They complained that the Negro's innate emotionalism had resulted in a false religion. "Colored people being naturally very excitable," said Richard Wilmer, "their meetings become the scene of the wildest orgies, savoring much more of heathenism than the peaceful work of the Spirit." To such observers, it seemed to be a short step from "a seeming religious exaltation to the lowest act of sensuality and vice." Another pastor, John Paris, conceded that blacks were faithful worshippers, but he added that they believed "some of the most glaring absurdities." The Reverend J. M. Rittenhouse charged that Negroes were now taught by "men as ignorant as themselves—'blind leaders of the blind.'" The black preachers were said to be too often venal, ignorant, licentious and unworthy of their offices. The General Assembly of the Southern Presbyterian church in 1874 observed that blacks needed a good dose of sound Presbyterian doctrine to counterbalance "the mere frenzy of the emotions," while the Episcopal Southern Churchman in 1911 suggested that Negroes needed "the moral leaven," which, incidentally, was "just exactly the thing our Church has the history and genius to give."³⁵

While believing in the moral retrogression of blacks, many ministers of the Lost Cause did not see a hopeless situation. They were paternalists, searching for a substitute for slavery, which would restore what they thought was the moral discipline of the peculiar institution. Episcopal Bishop Thomas Dudley, for example, represented a moderate racial position, and he was a prominent minister of the Lost Cause. Born and raised in Richmond, Virginia, Dudley served as a major in the Confederate army in his home state, and after the war he became an Episcopal bishop in Kentucky and an active member of the veterans' groups. He later became vice-chancellor at a leading Lost Cause college, the University of the South. With a strong identity as a defender of the old order, he had been able to propose in a national magazine a more liberal racial policy than most Southerners favored. In "How Shall We Help the Negro," which appeared in Century Magazine in June, 1885, Dudley opposed rigid segregation, especially in church work. Like all Lost Cause ministers, Dudley accepted the doctrine of black moral retrogression after emancipation, but he argued that this decline was not inevitable and that it could be halted by contact with "individuals of the higher race." For this reason he openly opposed segregation in churches and schools. His position was that white religious leaders still had the same Christian responsibilities toward blacks as the prewar ministers and planters had had toward slaves. Although his opposition to segregation was atypical, his belief in white responsibility toward blacks was a key assumption shared by Lost Cause preachers.³⁶

By the 1890s segregation had become the accepted substitute for slavery. The ministers of the Lost Cause saw the institution as a paternalistic one. Methodist Bishop Charles B. Galloway of Mississippi was perhaps the best-known Lost Cause paternalist in the post-1900 period. Born to pious Mississippi parents, he reached adolescence during the Civil War, and he always remembered that the Southern preachers he had heard when young had "expounded the old prophecies and proved to my perfect satisfaction that the South was bound to win." He later became one of the most prominent second-generation ministers of the Lost Cause. Unlike Dudley, Galloway was a segregationist. In "The Negro and the South," an address delivered at the Seventh Annual Conference for Education in the South, he outlined his white supremacist views, advancing four principles for race relations: no social mixing, separate schools and churches, white control of politics, and opposition to the colonization of blacks. Galloway claimed that whites still had a paternalistic responsibility to halt black decline, although (in contrast to Dudley) he had retreated on the issue of segregated churches. Galloway absolutely refused, though, to justify or to condone the lynchings that plagued racial relations after 1900. He blamed the resort to lynch law on political demagoguery and the sensation-seeking press. While these institutions had failed the South, he noted approvingly in 1904 that a Confederate veterans' camp in Mississippi had again provided the moral leadership for the South. These "heroic men, who feared not the wild shock of battle in contending for what they believed to be right, recently passed some vigorous resolutions against this spirit of lawlessness." He insisted after 1900 that blacks were impotent and "the old cry that 'white supremacy' may be imperiled is a travesty on Anglo-Saxon chivalry."³⁷

Like Galloway, Episcopal Bishop Theodore DuBose Bratton was a child of the Lost Cause, and a spokesman on racial matters for his denomination. He advanced the idea of Negro education as a way to
substitute self-discipline for the vanished discipline of slavery. In a 1908 address in Memphis before the Conference for Education in the South, Bratton pointed out that disfranchisement of Negroes had correctly settled the political aspect of the racial relationship, but he insisted that any permanent solution required Negro education. He claimed that blacks were unable to direct that education and thus needed "white guidance and white leadership." As on the antebellum plantation, supervision of blacks was "the duty of the Christian South," although, unlike earlier, education was now a duty, as was evangelism.86

While the paternalists thus looked for moderate means to insure a moral black population, the Ku Klux Klan saw only a violent and harsh solution to the problem of perceived black moral retrogression. The ministers stressed the background of the development of the Klan and its inevitability. The myth of Reconstruction was an integral part of the Klan story. Southern religious leaders believed that black virtue had reached its height during the Civil War, but that moral decline had accompanied freedom. In Reconstruction blacks, aided by Yankee carpetbaggers and Southern scalawags, began using freedom as license; they soon were threatening the civilization of the South. Ignorance and corruption were said to have dominated politics under black rule, the indifference of Negro workers hampered the economic system, and black crime and brutality threatened society itself. Without the bonds of slavery, the primitive nature of the blacks was emerging.87 Into this situation, "this condition of total lawlessness," as James Gambrell phrased it, came the savior of the South—the Ku Klux Klan. "Christianity and civilization lay in the balance," said one pastor, and the Klan was simply one more illustration of how "the mighty Anglo-Saxon race on this continent" had always met the challenges to it. The Reverend John Paris remembered that "disorder sprang up in communities" during Reconstruction, a state which inevitably gave rise to the Klan. James McNeilly wrote that Northerners used the Klan "to show the lawless spirit of the South, yet that mysterious organization arose only when the outrages of carpetbag rule became unbearable." The Klan was needed to deliver the South from "that wild orgy of corruption, graft, thievery, and lust miscalled Reconstruction." The Nashville Christian Advocate in 1889 concisely summed up the Klan's emergence as a desperate attempt to restore "good morals and civil order."88

As the defenders of the old order had it, the main characteristic of the Klan seemed to be its lack of violence. As defenders of the concept of an orderly, moral society, the preachers were aware of the dangers in extralegal activities. The Episcopal theologian William P. DuBose argued that the Klansmen did not desire to be violent; besides, the presence of Northern troops in the South would have prevented any violence. He used the word "discreet" to describe the Klan's handling of the situation. That violence had occurred, though, could not really be denied. One justification was to suggest that any Klan violence had prevented greater bloodshed in the lawless, disordered world of Reconstruction. Other clergymen tried to divert the blame for violence from the Klan. The Christian Advocate in 1889 admitted that "excesses" had existed in the name of the Klan, but it added that these were rare instances when individuals used the Klan to gratify "brutal instincts or personal grudges." When this began happening, the leaders disbanded this "extraordinary agency." The Klan was thus essentially a nonviolent organization, so most of the violence attributed to the Klan was said to be really the fault of other groups. As the Texas Baptist preacher W. T. Tardy wrote, "a kind of bastard Ku Klux organization" functioned in his area long after the Klan officially dissolved. He admitted that it had suppressed the lawlessness of blacks, but he believed it created a lawless spirit among "irresponsible whites." John L. Underwood agreed, asserting that "rowdy imitators" of the Klan did much harm.89

The Klan, in truth, was a vital organization of the religion of the Lost Cause. Southerners romanticized it as a chivalrous extension of the Confederacy. The original Klan began as a social fraternity among six bored young ex-Confederates, all of good family, educated, and active church laymen. Like a college fraternity, they took the name of their group from a Greek word kuklos, meaning circle or band. The organization began in Pulaski, Tennessee, site of the wartime hanging of the Confederate hero Sam Davis; it spread throughout the state as an aggressive opponent of the Northern-sponsored Union League, the Republican party, and the congressional Reconstruction policy. Because of its growth, the Klan reorganized in Nashville in 1867, for-
mulating as its objectives to protect Southern whites from indignities, to aid the impoverished families of dead Confederates, and to defend the American Constitution and legitimate laws. It then became the "Invisible Empire of the South," ruled by a Grand Wizard. A Grand Dragon supervised each state, or realm; a Grand Titan directed each dominion, or county; and a Grand Cyclops dominated each den, or local group. In the first four months of 1868 the Klan expanded from its base in central Tennessee into every Southern state. Republican Governor William Brownlow bitterly opposed the Klan and its violence, and in February, 1869, he proclaimed martial law in east Tennessee. By this time the Klan had clearly become a terrorist group, with an important political function, supporting the Democratic party. It was on a vigilante crusade for white supremacy. The organization was officially dissolved in 1869, because of growing opposition and because its leaders had difficulty controlling the vigilante impulse. Despite this formal action, the Klan continued in effective existence, and other secret bands emerged in imitation of it. Congress launched an investigation of the Klan conspiracy, and it passed anti-Klan laws in 1871.22

The Ku Klux Klan had crucial Confederate connections that made it a part of the religion of the Lost Cause. The first and only Grand Wizard was Nathan Bedford Forrest, the chivalric Confederate general from Tennessee; many other former Confederate officers also participated. John B. Gordon, the popular first commander of the United Confederate Veterans in the 1890s, was the Grand Dragon of the Georgia Klan, and George W. Gordon, also a leader in veterans' activities, was active in the Tennessee Klan. Father Abram Ryan may have served as a chaplain. Confederates used their wartime military connections to spread the Klan's influence. Klansmen frequently bypassed established political leaders, who might be suspicious of extralegal activities, so the Confederate link was a vital organizational factor. It was a natural step for the rank-and-file Confederate soldiers to become rank-and-file Klansmen. One old Confederate veteran put it colorfully on his tombstone: "An unreconstructed Johnnie, who never repented, who fought for what he knew to be right from '61 to '65 and received one Mexican dollar for two years' service. Belonged to the Ku Klux Klan, a deacon in the Baptist Church and a Master Mason for forty years."23 In the Reconstruction years, before the Confederate organizations had emerged, the prominence of Confederates in the Klan kept alive the holy memory and tied it to the Klan's racial approach.

The Klan's religious orientation reflected the mystical Celtic roots of early Scotch, Irish, and Scotch-Irish Southern settlers. To be sure, ministers of the mainline Southern Protestant churches were more middle class than mystical. The local Klans apparently included many community leaders, but, in contrast to the second Klan, little direct evidence existed to indicate that Southern ministers were Klan members. In the testimony before a congressional committee, only one incident involving a cleric as Klansman was identified. More important than direct ministerial responsibility for Klan activities was the mystical, religious tone to the Klan. Its members cultivated a mysterious appearance, dressing like medieval penitents in robes, usually ghostly white or demonic black. They also wore conical headpieces, decorated with devilish horns, beards, and sometimes long red tongues sticking out. The organization used phrases to evoke the images of darkness, graveyards, and ghosts. The Klansmen worked at night, said the Presbyterian clergyman Walter Capers, so that "the mystery and fear of the unseen" would aid them. As a result, the Klan "became a terror to the guilty. Their imagination became invested with the grim images of retribution." The Klan left as its calling card such delightful warnings as gallows or miniature coffins. The Reverend James McNeilly played down any Klan violence, emphasizing instead that the Klansmen, with "their ghostly apparel, their mysterious movements, their dread warnings in the sepulchral tones of the dead" frightened superstitious blacks into submission. In 1917, at the unveiling in Pulaski of a bronze tablet commemorating the birth of the Klan, a local pastor evoked the religious nature of the organization in his prayer honoring the men "who came from dens and caves in the weird mystery of nightfall to the defense of our rights and homes." The Klan was thus "an army of defense, a safeguard of virtue, and a victory for the right. Thine be the glory, Almighty God." The ceremony ended with the singing of the hymn "Now Firm a Foundation."24

The Klan thus entered Southern mythology. The Southerner who most sensationally explored in fiction this relationship between the
Klan, blacks, religion, and the Confederacy was a minister, Thomas Dixon, Jr., of North Carolina. Born in 1864 in Shelby, North Carolina, Dixon grew up during the turmoil of Reconstruction; one of his strongest recollections was a nighttime Klan parade that frightened him in 1869. His mother quieted his fears, telling him that the Klansmen were “our people,” who were “guarding us from harm.” Dixon’s uncle, Colonel Leroy McAfee, was the leader of the Klan Den in Piedmont, North Carolina, and his colorful tales and romantic example stimulated the youngster’s imagination. Thomas was equally affected by his father, the Reverend Thomas Dixon, a prominent North Carolina Baptist cleric. An 1883 graduate of Wake Forest, a North Carolina Baptist college, Dixon went to graduate school and was an actor, a lawyer, and a state legislator before becoming a Baptist preacher.25

Dixon’s ambitions prevented him from being a typical minister of the Lost Cause, since his career took him into the North. Indeed, before 1900 he wrote little in justification of the South or in condemnation of the Negro, and he never mourned the passing of the slaveholding class. He seemed to have deserted his Lost Cause heritage. Around 1900, however, he reassessed his values in response to nationwide developments. Dixon approved America’s new overseas involvement; he came to believe that, just as the “inferior” peoples of the Philippines and Puerto Rico did not deserve equality with Anglo-Saxons, so America’s blacks did not deserve equality. When he came to view the threat of blacks to American democracy as being immediate and apocalyptic, he began a nationwide crusade against Negroes. Dixon’s actions were thus part of a national movement toward racism, but he soon used his Southern past to embroil his views.26

Dixon became a popular novelist and two of his novels, The Leopard’s Spots (1902) and The Clansman (1905), dealt especially with black decline in the Reconstruction era. By showing how Reconstruction had turned the Negro into “a possible beast to be feared and guarded,” Dixon represented Southern negrophobia at its peak. He portrayed the black as an animal who “roams at night and sleeps in the day, whose speech knows no word of love, whose passions, once aroused, are as the fury of the tiger.” During Reconstruction, black terror—represented “a veritable Black Death for the land and its people.” Dixon praised the Ku Klux Klan, noting that its purpose was “to bring order out of chaos, protect the weak and defenceless, the widows and orphans of brave men who had died for their country, to drive from power the thieves who were robbing the people, redeem the commonwealth from infamy, and reestablish civilisation.” Dixon’s portrayal of the Klan especially stressed its religious nature. An important character in The Clansman was the Reverend Hugh McAlpine, a Presbyterian preacher and the chaplain of the local Klan. McAlpine’s prayer at a Klan meeting held to avenge the rape of a Southern white girl expressed Dixon’s view of the Klan’s religious orientation:

Lord God of our Fathers, as in times past thy children, fleeing from the oppressor found refuge beneath the earth until once more the sum of righteousness rose, so are we met to-night. As we wrestle with the powers of darkness now strangling our life, give to our souls to endure as seeing the invisible, and to our right arms the strength of the martyred dead of our people. . . . While heathen walks his native heath unharmed and unafraid, in this fair Christian Southland, our sisters, wives, and daughters dare not stroll at twilight through the streets, or step beyond the highway at noon.28

Dixon’s novel was made into one of the most popular movies of all time, The Birth of a Nation, by another Southerner, D. W. Griffith. After seeing the film, Southern-born President Woodrow Wilson said it was like “writing history with lightning.” The Reverend A. J. Emerson, undoubtedly representative of countless others, expressed approval of it in the pages of the Confederate Veteran magazine, further using the occasion to reassert the Klan’s worth. He claimed that between 1868 and 1872 a war had been fought against Negro domination, and that through the efforts of the Klan an unwritten amendment was added to the American Constitution: “The American nation shall forever have a white man’s government.” Emerson concluded that the Klan celebrated by Griffith “was one of the most remarkable and successful armies that ever campaigned in any age or nation. They were good men and true.”29

The movie was so powerful and so popular that it encouraged the formation of a second Ku Klux Klan in 1915. The Birth of a Nation premiered in New York City in March, 1915, and on Thanksgiving night of that year, before its Atlanta premiere, the Klan was born again. William J. Simmons, an Alabama native and a former Methodist cir-
cuit rider, led a contingent of fifteen followers, including two members of the original Klan, to the top of Stone Mountain, a huge granite slab east of Atlanta. It became a Confederate monument in the 1920s, with the figures of Lost Cause heroes carved in the granite. Simmons and his disciples gathered stones on that Thanksgiving night to make an altar, on which they placed an American flag, an unshodded sword, a canteen of initiation water, and a Bible open to the book of Romans, chapter 12. In this resurrection of the Klan, its leader made a striking ritualistic advance. The burning of crosses was an ancient practice in the Scottish highlands, and the ceremony was dramatically recalled to Americans through the novels of Thomas Dixon, Jr. On that November night in 1915, Simmons lighted a cross of pine boards soaked with excelsior and doused with kerosene, thus making cross burning the central Klan ceremony.30

The week after this ritual Simmons, whose father had been a member of the first Klan, incorporated the group in Atlanta. Like its Reconstruction predecessors, Simmons’s group began as a fraternal club; however, it cultivated publicity, rather than secrecy. Simmons had a talent for ritual and an understanding of fraternalism, which he blended with the new Klan’s white supremacist philosophy. The modern Klan knight had mass initiations and rallies, parades, picnics, midnight cross-burnings, ceremonial greetings and liturgies, masks and robes. The Klan grew slowly, though, and by early 1917 it had less than 2,000 members, mostly in Georgia and Alabama. With strong Confederate roots, the Klan marched in the 1917 reunion parade of the United Confederate Veterans. When the United States entered World War I in April, 1917, the Klan began a new phase, with a new purpose of representing an endangered “Americanism.” In 1920 it entered an even more aggressive period, when Simmons allowed the Southern Publicity Association to direct the expansion of the group. At this point vigilante violence became an integral part of the Klan’s promotion of what it defined as “Americanism.” An intolerant inquisition resulted. By 1921 Klan membership rolls included 100,000 dues-paying members, and its influence was even greater in the Midwest than in the South of its birth.31

By this time the reconciliation process with the North had matured to the point where the Lost Cause virtually stood for the same old-fashioned, rural-based values that “Americanism” represented. As earlier, white supremacy was a vital part of the second Klan’s outlook, especially in the South, but the Klansmen directed much of their ugly vigilante actions less at blacks than at Jews, Catholics, foreigners, and those Protestants who were deemed moral degenerates. The Klan’s crucial value, which united “Americanism” and the Confederate outlook, was Protestantism, so that it became above all a defense of Protestant morality. Even more thoroughly than in the first Klan, white supremacy and Protestant morality became intermixed. Baptist, Methodist, and Disciples of Christ congregations provided the rank and file of the Klan, and their preachers gave it leadership and respectability. The First Grand Dragon of the Texas Klan was A. D. Ellis, an Episcopal prelate from Beaumont; a Baptist pastor named L. A. Nalls was a leader of the Alabama Klan. Most Klan lecturers were Protestant clerics, and many local cyclopes were from small rural churches. Whenever the Klan appeared in an area, it worked to gain the support of clergymen by giving them free membership, leadership positions, and financial contributions for their churches. The Klan leadership promoted the unification of Protestant denominations and even proposed the creation of a Klan church itself. The symbolism, membership, and organization thus reflected the organization’s Christian roots.32

By the 1920s, then, differences had appeared between the first and second Klans. What had begun in the Reconstruction period as a secret Southern white supremacist cadre was now a national, highly organized group, dedicated above all to preserving morality through vigilante actions. But, as earlier, this simply testified to the close link between racial and moral issues in the minds of Southern whites. Like the more moderate Lost Cause paternalists, the Klansmen feared the threat that blacks represented to their vision of a virtuous society. While Klansmen took the fear to a harsh extreme, they, like the paternalists, were essentially moralists. In the tightly knit Southern small towns, the Klan’s contribution to the religion of the Lost Cause was in its symbolism, ritual, and organization. The second Klan was less Confederate and more Christian in its symbolism than the earlier group, but both organizations united the two themes. Confederate organizations endorsed and publicized the Klan’s work. The mainstream philosophy of the Lost Cause did not focus on race, however, and
when Southerners met to celebrate their Lost Cause religion in its non-Klan rituals and organizations, they did not frequently talk about blacks and racial questions. The ministers of the Lost Cause accepted segregation as a substitute for the discipline of slavery, but their vision of the Southern identity did not hinge only on race. Although racial superiority was assumed, the religion of the Lost Cause taught that the two fundamentals of the Southern identity were religion and regional history. It thus provided a foundation for the Southern identity that was related to, but separate from, race. Nevertheless, the white supremacist outlook was so pervasive in Southern society and was perceived as being so synonymous with Southern tradition that most Southerners must have seen the caste system as visible evidence that the Lost Cause still lived. The post–Civil War Klan had linked the Confederacy to a white supremacist philosophy in a way that Southerners would never forget.

**Chapter Six**

**J. WILLIAM JONES**

**EVANGELIST OF THE LOST CAUSE**

In addition to its prophetic function, the Southern civil religion, like the American civil religion, had a priestly function. While the ministers feared that the defeated South would abandon its traditional values, many of them tried to prevent this, not by castigating their brothers with jeremiads for their failures, but by celebrating the virtues of the Southern Way of Life. By affirming the tenets of the Southern creed and evoking the memory of past sacrifices, Southerners could be made to realize their place in a distinctive culture and to understand the need for continued commitment to it. A peculiarly Southern aspect of the priestly function was the role of evangelist. Growing out of a prewar evangelical orthodoxy and developing at a time when a prevalent postbellum Southern religious trend was revivalism, the Lost Cause, in the hands of many preachers, took on an evangelical dimension that apparently has not been well defined in the American civil religion.

The supreme exponent of this tendency was the Reverend Mr. John William Jones, a Virginia Baptist who was known as J. William Jones. The catchwords, phrases, appeals, and techniques of Southern evangelical religion reverberated in his career as a spokesman for the Lost Cause and for his own denomination. He was of special interest also because he was the most influential and well-known clergyman in the cult of the Lost Cause; as one of the most popular Southerners in late nineteenth-century Dixie, Jones is a man worth examining. Through his involvement in the religion of the Lost Cause, one can observe its organization and channels of communication. He explored several themes of the movement—the primary focus on virtue, the use of Confederates as moral exemplars, the ecumenical nature of the Lost