As explained in the illuminating books by George Fredrickson and Anne Rose on Americans whom the war pushed in secular directions, we know that there were other American intellectuals, contemporaries of Charles Hodge, who were, in fact, inspired by the war to sweat over what they should do and to think hard about what caused events. But perhaps because these individuals were repelled by the simplistic way in which traditional believers invoked providence during the war, they appealed less and less to providence themselves.

The result in American intellectual life can be keyed to the stance of Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln joined together trust in providence and much agnosticism about the work of God in the world. After Lincoln, American thinkers were increasingly divided between those who, on the one side, continued to trust in providence and who knew very well what God was doing in the world, and those, on the other, who gave up on providence and embraced agnosticism about the ultimate meaning of the world.

Regarded in traditional religious terms, it was certainly not unwise for American theologians (and ordinary believers as well) to trust in providence. Without such trust, it is hard to imagine that traditional Christianity could exist, or for that matter traditional Islam or most varieties of traditional Judaism. The difficulty was not trust in providence as such but trust in providence so narrowly defined by the republican, covenantal, commonsensical, Enlightenment, and – above all – nationalistic categories that Protestant evangelicals had so boldly appropriated with such galvanizing effects in the early decades of the nineteenth century. For that kind of providence, the war – with its clash of armies and ideologies, with its unprecedented moral, legal, governmental, and social complications, with its avalanche of death and destruction – should have posed insuperable difficulties. That kind of providence very much needed to be seen in light of what Abraham Lincoln finally concluded – in the apt summary of Phillip Paludan: "The war had become too complex, too astounding, for him to believe that mere argument made complete sense."[44]

Chapter 6

Opinions of Protestants Abroad

The opinions of non-Americans on religious aspects of the War between the States represent a minor theme in the more general question of how the Civil War was viewed from outside the country.[1] Yet even preliminary attention to the subject can aid us in understanding why the Civil War amounted to a theological crisis in the United States. Views from abroad were naturally shaped in their moral and religious evaluation of the American conflict by national, class, and denominational perspectives. In addition, up-to-date information about unfolding events and opinions in North America was harder to come by abroad in that era before successful deployment of the transatlantic cable, not to speak of air travel, radio, the Internet, and CNN. Yet, with those limitations duly recognized, it is still the case that foreign observers often saw what Americans could not see or, to put it more precisely, often saw certain things about singularities in the structure of American thought that were hard for Americans within that structure to comprehend.

In particular, concerned outside observers perceived with unusual clarity that American disputes over the Bible and slavery grew as much from broad interpretive assumptions brought to the text as from detailed exegesis of the Book. Some grasped a biblical distinction between slavery and race that only a few Americans were able to understand. Moreover, foreigners tended to be sharply conscious of how American economic practice and American political ideology influenced the shape of religious argument. Foreign Catholics were also alert to how traditions of Dissenting Protestantism bestowed a distinct coloration on American political developments. Outside observers, in short, testified to the deficiencies and advantages of viewing American developments from afar. Even if their opinions lacked the nuance afforded by extensive close observation, they illuminated the distinctive strengths and

the internal contradictions of American developments – religious as well as political, intellectual as well as social.

My own efforts at charting foreign reactions to religious dimensions of the Civil War are still only fragmentary. While I have been able to read in books and articles from Scottish Presbyterians, Irish evangelicals, Anglicans and other English Protestants, Upper Canadian Presbyterians and Methodists, Lower Canadian Catholics, Union Protestants and Roman Catholics from Germany, Catholics and Protestants from France, and Jesuits from Rome itself,[2] and while I have been able to canvass some of the secondary literature touching on this subject,[3] there is still much additional pertinent material to be examined. Nonetheless, my preliminary inquiry has revealed fascinating, if scattered, insights from abroad for this war at home.

In this chapter I describe salient opinions expressed by Protestants from France as well as from Britain and its dependencies (England, Scotland, Ireland, Canada). These opinions are noteworthy not only for the seriousness with which they examined the moral issues of the American conflict and the ease with which they linked evaluations of slavery to evaluations of other American circumstances, but also for the relative superficiality of their attention to the question of the Bible and slavery. Canvassing these examples of Protestant opinion from abroad underscores what was distinctive in American Protestant debate and what was shared with overseas Protestant communions. It also opens a path to initial consideration of larger questions concerning the state of American religious thinking in the mid-nineteenth century.

In the next chapter foreign commentary on the Civil War from Roman Catholics is the central concern. Since Catholic opinion in America often reflected European Catholic convictions, I pause in that chapter for a brief review of domestic Catholic opinions. Even more than those of foreign Protestants, the views of foreign Roman Catholics, especially of conservative Catholics, are instructive precisely because they inverted so many American Protestant assumptions. To examine those inversions is to see more clearly the distinctive character of American Protestant thought and also to understand the major problems of theological reasoning occasioned by the war. Significantly, attention to the Bible – both the interpretation of the individual passages and reflection on broader hermeneutical issues – was almost as extensive among foreign Catholics as it was scarce among foreign Protestants.

Much of the foreign Protestant commentary that I have been able to survey shared the moral sentiments of Northern abolitionists on slavery, although with much less political support for the Union. Those opinions came from British, Canadian, and French sources. By contrast, commentary in the London *Times* offered a perspective closer to American proslavery biblical opinion. Viewpoints from Germany moved further away from the standard lines of American debate and were, therefore, more provocative in what they concluded about the broader religious situation in America. After a survey of the relevant writings, it will be possible to say more exactly what foreign Protestant opinion revealed about the distinctively American character of religious debate on the Civil War.

Trent and Beyond

To catch the flavor of Protestant commentary found abroad, it is useful to begin with foreign reactions to a diplomatic tangle early in the Civil War. In late 1861 and early 1862, tensions were high between the United States and Britain. Union seizure of two Confederate diplomats from the British mail steamer *Trent* on November 8, 1861, was the occasion for a crisis, but long-standing British apprehension about the tendencies of American politics (both North and South) and long-standing American suspicion of Britain's imperial aims fueled the inflammatory rhetoric heard on both sides of the Atlantic in late December and early January. Soon, however, cooler heads prevailed; the diplomats were released into British custody; and preparations for war between the United States and Britain (with its Canadian provinces) were called off. Yet for English, Scottish, Irish, and Canadian public opinion – religious as well as political – the *Trent* affair was a galvanizing moment. In Scotland, the monthly magazine of the United Presbyterian Church was appalled at the thought of war between the United States and Britain: "For two countries professedly Christian (and, if they are not so, Christianity has scarcely a home upon earth) to proclaim war upon each other, because some barbarous law is susceptible of a double interpretation, is enough to fill one with an agony of grief, and to lead us almost to despair of the advance of our race."[4] In Ireland, the *Evangelical Witness*, though maintaining a pro-North and antislavery stance, nonetheless opined that the Civil War with all its horrors was proving to be the "fiery baptism" that America needed to purge "the

corruption" lingering on her shores as an inheritance from European despotism. In this Irish Protestant view, the distinctive American sins were clear: "vain-glorious devotion offered to the idol of the Constitution in every page of the nation's literature . . . the scandalous corruption and cupidity by which the whole body politic has been contaminated and defiled . . . [and] the atrocious virulence of party warfare."[5] In May 1862, after Britain and the U.S. had pulled back from the brink of war, a poem titled "A Voice from Canada" summed up the emotions that the crisis had evoked from one Presbyterian there:

> We thank our God for peace within our land,
> But had the *time of trial* come indeed,
> We had been ready at our post to stand
> For *Queen and Country*, in the hour of need.
> . . . .
> In all that realm on which no sun may set
> No land more loyal is than ours to *thee!*[6]

More than two years later, another Canadian posted a lengthy letter to the *Home and Foreign Record of the Canada Presbyterian Church* in which, once again, religious sensibility filtered commentary on the politics of the United States. The correspondent was a resident of British Columbia who had found himself in San Francisco on the Fourth of July. It proved to be a day "such as one is not likely soon to forget. . . . 'Our government' – 'Our nation' – 'Our principles' – 'Our flag' – 'the excelsior of the western continent,' and consequently of the eastern and every other, were the sentiments read, spoken, and published in a thousand ways throughout the rejoicing on that great historic anniversary." Such a display struck the Canadian as distinctly unseemly: "The Apostle's prudent and practical admonition, 'Let your moderation be known to all men,' seemed to be taken with some exception when applied to love of country." The political lesson to this Canadian was just as plain from observing "the institutions of our American neighbours": "They who are really sound and sincere in their profession of loyalty to king and country, must not fear when occasion requires boldly to avow it."[7] Such scattered opinions take on larger significance when it is realized that other, more comprehensive foreign views were also being published, and with unusual frequency.

Liberal Protestants: Count Gasparin and Goldwin Smith

Major works by a French Protestant statesman, writing from Geneva, and an English journalist-historian, who later emigrated to Canada, illustrate the nature of liberal Protestant opinion on the War between the States. Count Agénor Étienne de Gasparin (1810–71) was trained as a lawyer in Paris; during the European revolutions of 1848, he played an active part in French political affairs.[8] In 1849 Gasparin moved permanently to Geneva, where he continued the prolific advocacy for progressive Protestant causes he had begun in France. Gasparin's causes were the defense of Protestantism against Catholic and secular opponents, abolition of slavery and the slave trade, and freedom of religion in the face of oppressive regimes of all kinds. For Gasparin, following Alexis de Tocqueville's famous *Democracy in America* (1835, 1840), the United States was the place where both religion and statecraft had become most gratifyingly liberal in the nineteenth-century European meaning of the term (stressing the development of free individuals over the prerogatives of inherited traditional authority). His earlier interests in America, the antislavery cause, and religious freedom lay behind his publication in the early 1860s of two substantial books in which moral and theological assessment of the American situation featured prominently.[9]

Goldwin Smith (1823–1910) enjoyed a precocious career as a classicist and historian at Oxford before he entered into a broader life of journalism and public advocacy.[10] In 1869 he would emigrate to North America, eventually settling in Toronto, where he continued to support the progressive politics and liberal Protestantism that he had also advocated in England. Smith was a great opponent of traditional Anglican prerogatives in English religion and education and also a great promoter of political self-sufficiency for Britain's many colonies (except Ireland and India). Although his convictions on such issues would be expressed many times in many ways throughout his life, they were already well in place by 1863, when he published a small monograph in answer to the question, "Does the Bible sanction American slavery?"[11] Like Gasparin's books, Smith's work dealt seriously, but not necessarily thoroughly, with the theological debates stimulated by the American war.

In his volumes, Gasparin took pains to discuss both "the churches and slavery" and "the gospel and slavery" and to make a direct appeal "to Chris-

tians."[12] His first book, which was prepared for the press in its original edition before the outbreak of hostilities, was not without criticism of American excesses – the United States, "it is said, is the country of the dollar." But mostly it praised Americans for "bringing individual energies into action," for "religious liberty," and for "the voluntary system" that shaped public life.[13] Gasparin admitted that, since "the power of surroundings is incalculable," he could understand how someone whose "monetary interests" were "menaced by Abolitionism" and whose whole life was defined by the Southern context could defend slavery. But to Gasparin it was equally clear that, once having noted the power of environment over religious convictions, it was a relatively simple matter to demonstrate the incompatibility between true Christianity and slavery: "Take away the South, and no one in America, any more than in Europe, will dream of discovering in the Gospel the divine approbation of the atrocities of slavery."[14]

Gasparin was, in fact, mistaken in suggesting that biblical theories in favor of slavery "proceed" essentially from the South.[15] But that opinion probably explains why his refutation of proslavery biblical arguments remained relatively superficial. In both of his books, he did address particular scriptural passages used in the proslavery biblical defense: for example, by contending that Jesus "drew the line of demarcation between the law and the Gospel" and so eviscerated the Old Testament sanctions for slavery, by denying that Philemon's enslavement of Onesimus was relevant to contemporary debate, and by labeling as "gross literalism" the defense of slavery based on a failure of New Testament writers to condemn the system.[16] But for the most part he relied on a general sense of incompatibility between slavery and Christianity to carry his case. Thus the major thrust of his argument was to show that "there exist, thank God, between liberty and the Gospel, close, eternal, and indestructible relations": that there is "an implied abolition of slavery (implied but positive) at the bottom of that close fraternity created by the faith in the Saviour"; that it is "easy" to refute "such monstrous doctrines" as the biblical defense of slavery; and that, despite all appearances to the contrary, "the Christians of the United States have been unable to suppress even for a single day the fundamental antagonism which will always exist, thank God! between the Gospel and slavery."[17]

In short, Gasparin represented a rhetorically powerful European Protestant variation of the American abolitionist claim that slavery was simply incompatible with the essence of Christianity. Although his books failed to comprehend the broad American influence that biblical defenses of slavery enjoyed both North and South, they testified eloquently to the high hope that European Protestants of Gasparin's liberal convictions sustained for the course of American affairs.

Goldwin Smith's monograph, *Does the Bible Sanction American Slavery?*, offered much more particular attention to biblical proslavery arguments, but not quite as much as its title announced. It was, however, one of the most thorough European attempts of any sort to demonstrate how a reading of Scripture inspired by progressive Protestant convictions ruled out slavery in its American form. A great deal of Smith's book was given over to broad historical considerations of slavery in the ancient world, and much of his attention to Scripture developed arguments that proslavery advocates had long since answered to their own satisfaction. Smith, for example, claimed that if Americans defended slavery on the basis of the Old Testament, they should also defend practices like polygamy and the complete annihilation of defeated armies that are also prescribed in the Old Testament.[18] But biblical proslavery advocates had frequently pointed out that, while Christ and the apostles had specifically condemned the latter practices, they had not brought up slavery for similar denunciation.

In the course of his arguments, Smith did deal with almost all of the relevant scriptural passages, from regulation of slavery in the Pentateuch to the New Testament guidelines for the behavior of masters and servants. For his interpretation of these passages he cited a number of authorities, from the German mediating theologian August Neander and the American emancipationist Francis Wayland to the American Unitarian William Ellery Channing. Smith's argumentation was often telling, especially in contrasting American racial slavery with the nonracial slavery of the ancient world, as we shall discuss in more detail below.

With regard to one particular, Smith saw clearly what most Americans, including the learned Moses Stuart, did not grasp. As he discussed the details of Old Testament slavery, Smith stressed the many provisions for incorporating non-Jewish slaves into the Hebrew community. To Smith it was "the most important point of all" that the Jews of the Old Testament shared their religion with their slaves. With such provision, "the right of circumcision administered to all alike, and the participation of the whole household in the

family rite of the Passover, . . . effectually incorporated even the foreign slave into the community."[19] With such incorporation, foreign slaves had to be treated as if they were Hebrew slaves, which meant that they would be liberated at the end of, at most, seven years of service. It was an effective demonstration.

Most prominently, however, Smith relied on what he considered the progressive moral character of the Christian religion to make his case. For example, right at the start of the essay, he admitted that the Old Testament recognized slavery and the New Testament did not condemn it. But he then went on with a brief statement about the overarching purpose of the Bible: it was "to implant in man's heart a principle, viz. the love of God and Man, which should move him to work (God also working in him) for the improvement of his own state and that of his fellows, and for the transforming of his and their life into the image of their maker."[20] Toward the end he returned to the general spiritual direction of Scripture, this time by contrasting New Testament norms with what he understood to be common practice in the South. Smith stressed that Christian celebration of the Lord's Supper exhibited a great "equalizing and reconciling power," but that this power was contradicted when blacks and whites worshipped separately and did not participate together in the service of communion.[21] This too was a strong argument, but it was one that relied more on what Smith understood as the general spirit of the New Testament than on careful exegesis of its letter.

Smith's opinions were representative of views held by most English Nonconformists as well as by many evangelical and broad church Anglicans. Although his conclusions about what the Bible taught concerning slavery were not widely shared by traditionalist Anglicans, for the rest of the English Protestant world they spoke clearly, and they were laid out at greater length than one could find in the work of almost any of his peers.

Voices from Scotland, Ireland, and Canada

Within a broadly abolitionist framework, there were significant variations of opinion among other English-language Protestants as one moved westward from Scotland to Ireland and then into Canada. The United Presbyterians of Scotland were one of the British denominations best prepared by their history for taking up the cause of antislavery. The denomination had resulted

from a merger in 1847 of the United Secession and Relief churches, both of which had originated as eighteenth-century protests against the arbitrary authority of Church of Scotland patrons in appointing the ministers of local parishes, and both of which also sustained an elective affinity with Scotland's strong liberal and free-trade movements. The United Presbyterians were distinguished by their frank defense of traditional Calvinist theology and by their admiration for the doctrinally conservative theologians of American Presbyterianism. Coverage of the war by the United Presbyterians' monthly magazine was particularly alert to spiritual intelligence – for example, signs of revival in the Federal army or promises of the British Bible Society to support the distribution of Scripture in the States.[22] At least as witnessed by their periodical, these Scottish Presbyterians were also never uniformly pleased with the actions of the Union, which it accused of helping to pitch "the war-spirit" to "a most deplorable ardour" and of relying on its "blustering boosters" instead of hard calculation before the first battle of Bull Run.[23] Yet the main interest of the Scottish United Presbyterians in the American war was the elimination of slavery and what they hoped would become "the final struggle between slavery and freedom for the Blacks."[24] Without any of the compunction that held back their theologically conservative counterparts in the States, these Scottish Presbyterians were eager, even at the height of tension over the *Trent*, to hail "the heroic band of Abolitionists who held aloft the flag of freedom through bad report" and then, somewhat later, to affirm "that whatever may come out of the war, nothing good can come out of bondage, and that in any case, and on every supposition, it is a upas-tree to be utterly eradicated."[25]

In Ireland, similar opinions came from the *Evangelical Witness*, which spoke for Presbyterians who had taken part in the great Irish revivals of 1858–59, which many at the time linked to the well-publicized Business Men's Revival in the United States. The magazine's opinions on the American war were consistent throughout: it was pro-Union but even more ardently antislavery. To these Irish evangelicals, the founding of the American colonies had represented a great boon for "civil and religious freedom," but it was a boon threatened by slavery, which was "an accursed inheritance . . . transmitted from the old country to the new." Slavery, in turn, had encouraged in the South the "ebullition of . . . deadly hate against the New England and North-Western States . . . that restless spirit of aggression . . . [and] the

border-ruffianism and other kindred atrocities in Kansas." Months before Lincoln published plans for freeing Confederate slaves, the *Evangelical Witness* indicated the way it thought he should go. Statesmen may say what they wish, but "the war is essentially an anti-slavery one."[26] After Lincoln had made his plans for emancipation public, the *Evangelical Witness* still focused on the destruction that "the slave power . . . – a power, fierce, insolent, determined, outraging all law and principle, scowling defiance in the seat of government" – had caused in the United States with its "moral hurricane" and, in so doing, "rendered their [that of the South? the U.S.?] boasted liberty the opprobrium of the world." The Irish showed they were reasonably familiar with American opinion by quoting James Henley Thornwell to the effect that "the people whom we hold in bondage are the occasion of all our troubles," but then reversed Thornwell's own conviction by contending that all who had helped perpetuate slavery, including the British, incurred a dreadful price to pay for their wrong.[27] The magazine also showed that its knowledge of American affairs was limited, for it lavished high praise on both the conservative Presbyterian Charles Hodge and the romantic Congregationalist Henry Ward Beecher, whom no one in the United States would have positioned together.[28]

Through a regular series of sprightly reports, the Irish *Evangelical Witness* offered its readers a positive view of the course of events in the war. It rebuked other Britons who left the impression that in the United States it was all "silly braggadocio and senseless impertinence."[29] It hailed the triumph of the North as signaling "the irrevocable doom of the detested system that gave [the war] birth" and averred that, with slavery removed, the United States was poised "to take its place among the nations as the champion of universal freedom."[30] With an emphasis not typically found in the States, its eulogy for Abraham Lincoln in mid-1865 praised the "Calvinistic theology of the last inaugural of the lamented" president.[31] In the *Evangelical Witness*, the Union had a foreign friend whose thorough abolitionism was matched by strong doctrinal orthodoxy and whose attention to the faults of the United States did not make it waver in its support of antislavery Americans.

Because Canadian Presbyterians were still divided into several parallel strands at the time of the Civil War, it is not surprising that their journals reflected differing attitudes toward the American conflict. The Presbyterian Church of Canada was the group in central Canada that remained in fellowship with the Scottish Kirk after the spin-off of the Scottish Free Church in 1843 had led to a corresponding spin-off of a Canadian Free Church from the main Scottish body in Canada. If evidence from its journal can be credited, the Canadian branch of the established Scottish church showed no particular interest in the American conflict except when war with Britain loomed in the wake of the *Trent* affair.[32]

Other Canadian Presbyterians, however, displayed more obvious concern for what was happening south of the border. The Canada Presbyterian Church, which was a North American union of Scotland's more pietistic Free and Secession denominations, featured devotional material and missionary reports in its publications, but it also made room for fairly regular commentary on the war. Most of that commentary urged prayer for a speedy peace or treated the war's effects on missionary efforts. On several occasions, however, the editors published more general assessments of political and religious conditions, such as the Fourth of July report from 1864 cited above. It also paused on one occasion to make the point that African Americans were also stressing: the missionary propagation of the Gospel was being hurt by the American toleration of slavery. After the cessation of hostilities, it expressed agreement with the "moderate and good men" of the North that full political rights were a necessity for the freed slaves.[33]

Broader and more frequent reports on the American conflict came from the Kirk Presbyterians in Nova Scotia, whose monthly journal kept up a fairly dyspeptic barrage of commentary on both the North and the South. Early on, the editor claimed that it would be "madness" for the North to try to force the South back into the nation, but he also argued that the earnestness of the South had gone "to the verge of madness."[34] Although the journal maintained a strong stance against slavery – "that moral nightmare" – it highly praised Stonewall Jackson after his death as "by far the most remarkable man that this sad contest has brought to the surface."[35] Its wartime commentary, though sporadic, was the most aggressive and opinionated that I have found in any English-language journal.

Compared to the Presbyterians, Canadian Methodists were more consistently engaged with the American conflict and less hesitant about defining the issue strictly in terms of slavery. Within the various Canadian Methodist churches, there existed a range of opinions as to whether slavery should be excised quickly through immediate abolition or whether it should be under-

mined through gradual emancipation. But few if any Methodist voices in Canada supported the institution or the confederacy that arose to protect it.

The *Christian Guardian* of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada reflected the characteristic pietism of this denomination by tiptoeing around the politics of the war. Its desire to promote amity among Christian believers extended to a willingness to print lengthy correspondence from Methodists in the South who defended both slavery and secession. But the journal's own writers just as regularly rebutted those arguments.[36] The editors did urge ministers to be cautious in meddling with public issues that could compromise their religious calling and their role in moderating worldly passions. At the same time they also concluded that "the North seems to have right on its side" while predicting that the South would lose sympathy around the world, "for they are going to fight for a bad institution."[37] By the end of the first year of hostilities, the editors were becoming bolder: "We believe that in speaking favourably of the Northern cause, we express the feeling of the entire Methodist church of Canada."[38]

Even more assertive was the official organ of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada, the *Canada Christian Advocate*, which was published in Hamilton, Ontario. Well before fighting broke out, it defended resistance to fugitive slave laws, especially any effort to recover escaped slaves from Canada. Once the conflict started, it featured hard-hitting articles with titles like "The Barbarism of Slavery."[39] The abolitionism of the *Canada Christian Advocate* was almost as determined as that of the *United Presbyterian Magazine*.

The foreign Protestants who most closely resembled American Protestants were, in sum, exercised primarily about the evil of slavery, although they did not ignore political issues contested between the North and the South. In expressing their opinions, they showed little of the hesitation that held back so many of their American contemporaries.

The London *Times* as Exception

One prominent exception to the general judgments rendered by British and Protestant sources was the editorial voice of the London *Times*. This paper, with Tory and high-church leanings, commented regularly and at length on the American War between the States. Occasionally religious themes intruded into that commentary.

In January 1863, for instance, the *Times* took off by name after Henry Ward Beecher, the evangelical Episcopalian Stephen Tyng Sr., and the abolitionist Congregationalist George Cheever for preaching "the emancipation of every slave in the Union . . . as an absolute dogma . . . to be carried into immediate effect."[40] This particular article went on to offer a rare instance from Britain where the Bible was used against abolitionism (which is examined in more detail below). It closed its negative assessment of Northern moral pretensions by wondering why supporters of abolition did not go on to condemn Northern involvement in the economic products of slavery: "But will the North ever declare that slave-grown cotton, sugar, and tobacco are an unclean thing, and must not be touched or carried in Yankee ships, or bought and sold with Yankee money?"[41]

Ten weeks later the *Times* returned with an even sharper, more comprehensive critique of American abolitionism. As Philip Schaff had done at the start of the war, the *Times* insisted that "there are two distinct questions in America which the English people ought not to mix up with each other. . . . The one is the question of slavery; the other is the question of the Negro." It then went on to blame radical abolitionists for turning a political question into a sacred cause: "The Northern fanatic, who declared slavery to be humanly wrong, produced the Southern fanatic, who declared it to be divinely right."[42] Abraham Lincoln's particular evil with the Emancipation Proclamation was to threaten the South with a race war at the hands of liberated slaves; his greatest crime was "treason to his race." The *Times* had nothing but scorn for a Northerner who would wage war to eliminate slavery but who then would "refuse him [the freed slave] the right of citizenship."[43] It spotlighted Northern racism by pointing out how few, even among abolitionists, approved of interracial marriage, how the Northern population of free blacks was diminishing because of its ill treatment, and how the champions of abolition did nothing for the economic betterment of free blacks. As an instance of that last hypocrisy, it blasted Horace Greeley's *New York Tribune*, "the champion of the [black] race," for not being able to "employ a Negro compositor or machinist, under the penalty of a general and indignant strike of all its white workpeople." This particular indictment of the North's failure to deal with race ended with an unfavorable comparison between the fate of Northern workers and that of Southern slaves: "If the condition of the Southern Negro be slavery, it is slavery with health and life; and . . . if

the condition of the Northern Negro be liberty, it is liberty with disease and death, as well as with social degradation."[44]

With regard to the Civil War, the *Times* was far from typical of British opinion; it was even more of an exception when it came to the general abolitionist views of British Protestants. But the newspaper was a significant voice precisely because it challenged prevailing opinions, especially in its willingness to raise embarrassing questions about Northern moral consistency.

Protestant Opinion from Germany

The opinions of continental European churches on the war differed from those of English-language denominations in their propensity to explain the conflict against a broader background of general Protestant history. To the modern researcher, they are intriguing because their assessments often reflected reports from fellow religionists who had emigrated to America. But in order to put that commentary in perspective, it is important to sketch first the course of German ecclesiastical contributions to the New World.

Owing to increased emigration, the Lutheran, Reformed, and Union churches in the German estates had by midcentury an ample flow of direct information from the United States. Increased contact made it possible for the Europeans to assess the sectional conflict with theological standards that for the immigrants had already begun to accommodate to American ways. On the continent, Lutherans especially had developed a set of theological principles that differed significantly from the characteristic Reformed or Calvinist principles infusing American public life. Thus Protestants of German heritage were in the same position as Roman Catholics, whose most interesting religious commentary on the war came from outside the United States instead of from within. In the Old World, Lutherans followed Martin Luther in stressing the principles of Law and Gospel, typically asking how any individual scriptural passage illuminated the standing of the reader before God in sin or in grace, rather than seeking immediately to discover the passage's ethical implications for the believer, as was more common with Reformed Protestants. Lutherans had also developed a strong Two Swords theology, in which a sharp divide was drawn between the proper business of the church in announcing sin and grace and the proper business of the state in maintaining public order.[45] Early polemics with Calvinists over the meaning of the Lord's Supper and later skirmishing with Anabaptists and Baptists on the question of who should be baptized and at what stage of life had given the Lutherans a habit of defending their distinctive views of the real presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper and baptismal regeneration for infants as much from the general meaning of the whole Bible as from the dictate of any one text.

Early Lutherans in America had sustained these perspectives. Henry Melchior Mühlenberg (1711–87), patriarch of Lutheranism in North America, eventually became skilled in the use of English, but he did not Americanize his approach to Scripture or Lutheran traditions.[46] Mühlenberg's successor as the leading American Lutheran, J. H. C. Helmuth, spoke out even more sharply than his predecessor about the need to retain Lutheran traditions in the American sea of democratic individualism. In 1793, for example, Helmuth registered a Lutheran protest to what, even at that early date, was becoming the characteristic American approach to the Bible: "It is altogether harmful when someone reads his whims and fantasies into this holy book. . . . This is to make a weather vane out of Scripture and so turn it in every direction of the imagination, for one person pointing to the East and for someone else who knows where."[47] After Helmuth's passing, however, Lutherans in the United States rapidly began to take on at least some standard American instincts.

The process of Americanization encouraged later Lutheran leaders like Samuel Schmucker of Gettysburg and John Bachman of South Carolina to soften Lutheran distinctiveness in order to assist the broader Protestant purposes of evangelization and Christianization, as defined by American Calvinists.[48] Schmucker, for example, came to resemble other Northern Protestants as a strong backer of the Evangelical Alliance, a strong defender of temperance, and a strong promoter of Sabbath observance. By the time of the Civil War, Schmucker's pronounced antislavery stance was of a piece with what Lutherans called "American" positions.[49] On the other hand, Bachman's defense of slavery was "American" in a Southern form rather than discernibly Lutheran.[50]

In the Old World, by contrast, more traditional assessments were still possible. One such assessment came from the *Protestantische Kirchenzeitung für das evangelische Deutschland* (Protestant Church Newspaper for Evangelical Germany), a journal out of Berlin that promoted the principle of "Evangelical

Union" as a way of joining the historical Lutheran and historical Reformed streams from the German Reformation into a single vigorous church. Its coverage of the American Civil War, which was drawn mostly from the reports of German or Swiss immigrants in the United States, was sympathetic to yet also clearly skeptical about certain "American" practices. In that coverage, persistent reference was made to the need for immigrants to maintain their original language, religion, and culture in the New World.[51] But more attention was devoted to the plight of American slaves, even to the point of floating the impractical scheme of raising money for the purpose of bringing black children to Germany for education and acculturation to German ways. Along the way, the *Protestantische Kirchenzeitung* also paused to commend armies both North and South for the leadership assumed by "Jünger des Evangeliums" (disciples of the Gospel).[52]

But far and away the most interesting commentary came early in the war when the journal reprinted and then discussed a lengthy dispatch from the editor of a German Reformed periodical in Ohio. The Berlin editors quoted this correspondent with approval when he claimed that Americans, including American Christians, lacked proper "respect for existing powers and authorities." A particular difficulty, according to the correspondent, was that Americans often claimed to be following a higher law even when that higher law turned out to be only "a personal persuasion." In the editors' view, that kind of individualism violated the principles of the first Protestants and even of the founders of Methodist and Baptist churches. Because of practices in America, "the truth and the honor of Christ suffer harm from such proceedings." The South's action in leaving the Union illustrated this characteristic American problem in the fullest measure, which was why the editor from Ohio held that God would ensure a Union victory, "so that through it all Americans might be shown anew that God takes no pleasure in schisms, separatism, or a special confederacy [*Sonderbund*], but rather that he wants us to defend and nurture the truth under the civil and ecclesiastical power and authority under which he has set us."[53]

With this assessment by the Ohio editor, the Berlin Protestants could not have been more in sympathy. But then they went on to point out that this same editor had left the Swiss church in which he had been born and thus had violated the very principles he articulated so well. Moreover, the Ohio editor's supposed loyalty to the objectivity of historical confessions was self-

defeating, since even earnestly held confessions could not obliterate the fact that there were now multitudes of earnestly held confessions. So who could find among them the one true church? Why should the Ohio editor wonder, given the huge number of different churches in the United States, that there had been this "break up of the civil union"?

The solution offered by the Berliners to the dilemma of ever more fragmentation within the Protestant world was the movement toward ecumenical Union that their journal championed: "The splintering into ever smaller pieces is, however, nothing but the consequence of confessionalism, and it will continue in Germany, as everywhere else, as it has in England and America, where free right of association reigns independent of citizens rights, unless the spirit of evangelical union deprives separatistic tendencies of their sustenance."[54]

In short, the Berlin Protestants were pointing to the combination of religious seriousness and the absence of overarching religious authority as a prime source of American civil strife. It was a point to ponder.

Prominent Themes in Foreign Protestant Commentary

To examine the prominent themes in foreign commentary is to see where American religious analysis of the Civil War was distinctly American and where it was a more general function of religious opinions widely shared in the Western world. With regard to the latter category, it is interesting that United Presbyterians in Scotland, German Protestants in Berlin, and Count Gasparin from Geneva all linked success in battle to the observance of the Sabbath, which was also a regular feature of American religious commentary.[55]

More important was the idea of divine providence as the key to the American struggle because it was as pervasive outside the United States as it was domestically. Irish evangelicals, Scottish United Presbyterians, Canadian Methodists, Canadian Presbyterians, French Protestants, and German Protestants all raised the same chorus that was so widespread in the United States. To the Irish, "a higher hand has been apparent in the tremendous crisis, and amid the surging sea of treason and of blood that now surrounds her, America can look confidently to Him who, from the beginning, has directed her destinies."[56] To Count Gasparin, it was simply evident that "the influ-

ence of the Gospel is immense in America." He also felt that the Business Men's Revival of 1857–58, "which, save at a point in Baltimore, stopped short at the frontiers of the South," had amounted to a "great providential means against slavery."[57] The same clarity about God's purposes was reflected in a letter published by the Scottish United Presbyterians in 1863. It was from a missionary "standing upon the shores of Africa, and contemplating this accumulation of guilt in reference to Africa and her children," someone who knew "that a fearful day of retribution was coming"; indeed, he wrote, "It has come."[58] Similar references to "God in His Providence" and "an all-wise and over-ruling Providence" appeared with great regularity.[59] Also common was the reasoning similar to what appeared in scores of American jeremiads: "The calamities of this war [are] . . . a punishment of the American people for the sin of human oppression."[60] In these expressions the foreign observers were using a vocabulary that was second nature to the Americans.

It was similar, yet with a difference, with respect to the prominent strain of anti-Catholicism in commentary from abroad. The United States had by no means put aside the stiff anti-Romanism that had been so prominent in its history, but compared to the nativism that rose steadily from the early 1830s and then exploded into the Know-Nothingism of the early 1850s, anti-Catholicism during the Civil War itself was relatively restrained. But if American Protestants were relaxing their vigilance against Rome, Protestants outside the United States were not. At the time of the *Trent* affair, Irish evangelicals and Scottish United Presbyterians both urged moderation, at least in part because of what they anticipated would be the Catholic schadenfreude if Britain and the North went to war.[61] The editors of the *Protestantische Kirchenzeitung* got it wrong when they described the "overwhelmingly Catholic" character of the Southern slave states that seceded,[62] but the connection between slavery and Catholicism was a consistent Protestant assertion. One of the exchanges that the Canadian Methodist *Christian Guardian* published with Southern Methodists turned on this perception. The New Orleans *Christian Advocate* had complained that its Canadian counterpart had praised "John Brown, the horse-thief, robber, murderer, and traitor," even as it carried on its long-term campaign against "Romanism." But, according to the New Orleans Methodists, what John Brown stood for was far worse than Romanism. The Canadians shot right back: "We are not surprised that the *Advocate* [in New Orleans] prefers *Romanism* to our Methodism, for the simple

reason, that as Romanism is a system of slavery, the adherents of Rome, and especially its agents in the United States, are generally found amongst the abettors of slavery."[63]

A more provocative evocation of anti-Catholicism came from the London *Times*. Its attack on the North included recognition of the abolitionist claim "that Slavery is at variance with the spirit of the Gospel." Yet to the *Times* this appeal to the spirit of Christianity was precisely what Catholics did in defending many of their practices that were not specifically mandated in Scripture: "The Roman Catholics have just as much to say for any one of their peculiar doctrines as the Abolitionists have for their one article of a standing or falling community."[64]

In the ongoing Protestant attacks on Rome that seem to have marked foreign commentary more strongly than American commentary, there is a hint of broader concerns. Outside the United States, Protestants continued to view Rome as the paradigm of religious despotism; within the United States, the great debate had become, at least temporarily, whether slavery was inherently despotic or, as the South's most skillful advocates claimed, the strongest republican bulwark against despotism. By temporarily displacing historical anti-Catholicism, American Protestants may have worked a subtle theological alteration in which Christian sanction or censure of a currently vexing American problem took precedence over a traditional theological agenda where anti-Romanism was the key to religious self-identity. If so, the war was modernizing American Protestantism by shaking it loose from history and substituting contemporary interests as stronger reference points for theological alignment.

More obviously telling in the foreign commentary was a prominent strand of vigorous antirepublicanism. Irish evangelicals, for instance, mocked the Confederacy for not following through on its vaunted ideological foundations when it came to slavery: "However much the Southern States might prize Republicanism, there was a 'peculiar institution' which they prized still more."[65] The United Presbyterians of Scotland thought they could see "an ambition in the North to have a big republic" in order "to create a power which shall humble Europe or 'whip creation'."[66] Even sharper was criticism from the Canadian Maritimes, where, early in the war, a Presbyterian editor rebuked the North for the "combined imbecility and bluster" that were responsible for restrictions on freedom of speech – "a most disgraceful thing in

a republic." Later the editor went further. Quoting reports from the States, he concluded that "republican institutions were not so unmistakably good as had often been pretended" since it had become obvious that "the Northern republican" meant only "the representative man of the large trading class, believing in human equality, American greatness, and the almighty power of the dollar."[67]

Even more common in foreign observations than harsh treatment of republican traditions were general doubts about the North joined with stiff antislavery convictions. Into 1862, the Scottish United Presbyterians regularly chastised the North in just about the same terms as it did the South because the Union did not act against slavery. These sentiments were expressed forcefully in September 1862, in a report written shortly before word of Lincoln's intention to issue an Emancipation Proclamation reached Scotland: "One glorious issue will, to all appearance, under Providence, result, namely, the abolition of slavery throughout a region where liberty has always been paraded and insulted. In almost every other respect the war is an unmixed and atrocious evil."[68]

Canadians were capable of the same searing criticism of the North expressed alongside regular attacks on slavery. One of English Canada's leading theologians of the period, Robert Burns of the Presbyterian Knox College in Toronto, expounded on this combination at the end of the war. To Burns, God's providential action was responsible for the fact that candidates favoring the elimination of slavery had been winners in recent American elections. But Burns did not think that beneficent providence extended any further. Rather, the United States, this "boasted land of the brave and the free," had "clung convulsively to the gilded bait, and is now paying the penalty of her madness. In the meantime, God has been working great marvels" on his own in bringing the slave system to a close.[69] Canadian Methodists chimed in on the same issue early in the war when they argued against treating North and South as moral equals. To be sure, there had been little difference between the two at the start of the conflict; but once emancipation had been proclaimed, the North was being cleansed by its decision to eliminate slavery.[70]

An awareness that many foreign Protestant observers were less *for* the North than simply *against* slavery bears quite directly on the question of American theology during the conflict. In September 1865, the Irish evangelicals explained why, although they had maintained a consistent defense of

the North, so many in Britain had kept "a general disposition . . . to stigmatize the Northerners as mean and tyrannical." The reasons were the pro-Southern views of the London *Times*, a lack of sufficient information about the American situation, a long-standing animus against the United States, false views about the respectability of the South, and admiration for the bravery of Southern armies.[71] Significantly absent in this list of British reasons for favoring the South, which appeared in a periodical of strict theological orthodoxy, was any mention of the scriptural defense of slavery.

The Bible and Slavery

Irish evangelicals and many other foreign Protestants simply took for granted that the Bible ruled out slavery, although a few Protestants located abroad did address this issue directly. In general, however, the most striking feature of foreign Protestant commentary on the American Civil War is its weak engagement with the Bible.

As we shall see in the next chapter, foreign Roman Catholics, whom all Protestants denounced as antiscriptural, did in fact examine the Bible at length in connection with its teachings on slavery. Yet while American Protestants were tying themselves into knots over whether the Bible supported slavery, foreign Protestants simply did not. For over thirty years Americans battled each other exegetically on this issue, with the more orthodox and the ones who took most seriously the authority of Scripture being also the ones most likely to conclude that the Bible sanctioned slavery. Outside the United States, one rarely encountered the conviction that to trust the Bible meant to approve, however reluctantly, the slave system in its American form.

The key historical issue with respect to Scripture is best stated as two questions. First, why in the United States did simply quoting passages like Leviticus 25:45 or 1 Corinthians 7:20–21, which indicated approval or tolerance for slavery per se, carry such weight for virtually all Americans, whether in the North or the South, whether for abolitionists like Garrison (who was ready to give up such a Bible), conservative emancipationists like Hodge (who rejected the idea that slaveholding was sinful as such), or proslavery advocates like Thornwell (who felt that such passages demonstrated absolutely the legitimacy of Southern slave society)? But, second, why outside the United States, even among groups that were at least as theologically orthodox as conser-

vatives in America, did quoting the same biblical passages carry almost no weight at all? An answer to the first query is found in looking at the foreign observations. An answer to the second requires a broader comparison of cultural values.

To be sure, foreign Protestants were not quite unanimous in denying that the Bible supported slavery. In one of the very few contrary instances, the London *Times* set out an anti-abolitionist position that, with its words of concession, moved closer to moderate American opinion. Abolitionists, according to the *Times*, "preach with the Bible in their hands." But "in that book there is not one single text that can be presented to prove Slavery unlawful, though there is much which naturally tends to its mitigation, its elevation, and its final extermination." The *Times* was not the venue for extensive exegesis, but it did refer to the standard biblical proslavery arguments. The Apostle Paul, it asserted, was "the man who represents the last revealed phase and development of the Gospel," and yet he sent the slave Onesimus back to his master Philemon. Without directly citing the text, the *Times* claimed that legitimate debate over 1 Corinthians 7:21 concerned only whether slaves who were offered manumission should accept or reject it. And in attacking the abolitionists' use of the "spirit of Scripture," which we have already noted, it wondered why that spirit was not evoked against "ecclesiastical titles, . . . good clerical income, and many other things that are contrary to the spirit of the Gospel, or, at least can be proved so as easily as slavery."[72] Although the *Times* was a general interest newspaper, its parroting of prominent proslavery biblical arguments was no measure of their popular appeal in Britain, where the religious press and the learned theological journals hardly gave them attention.

In the vast majority of cases, foreign Protestants took note of biblical arguments in support of slavery only to dismiss them. Among the fullest treatments were those included in Count Gasparin's two books and the substantial pamphlet by Goldwin Smith. Yet even here, where biblical texts were quoted at some length and detailed contra-exegesis was provided, the quality of argumentation fell well below the high standard set by American advocates of the various positions. Goldwin Smith had his finger on a key element of the American situation when he claimed that "the philosophic theory as to ineradicable differences of race, on which Slavery is now founded by its defenders, is directly contradicted by the New Testament."[73] But the direct

contradiction he offered was only to quote Acts 17:26 and then move on. Gasparin had even less patience when examining individual passages. After a rapid survey of New Testament teaching, his primary conclusion was to wonder at "that prodigious paradox according to which the Gospel is the patron of slavery."[74]

As a rule, foreign Protestants dispatched biblical proslavery arguments even more quickly. Some of the foreign commentators took the path followed by conservative American abolitionists, who wanted to retain an authoritative Scripture even as they opposed slavery. Thus Canadian Wesleyan Methodists gave a great deal of space in the *Christian Guardian* to reprinting an essay from the New England author and philanthropist Lydia Maria Child; in quoting many biblical texts, she underscored differences between how the mistreatment of slaves was mitigated in the Hebrew Bible and how it was exacerbated by legal statutes of the Southern states.[75] In 1864 the *Protestantische Kirchenzeitung* responded to a book published by Stephen Hopkins, the Episcopal bishop of Vermont, who defended slavery as a biblical institution; the editors offered what they considered an effective *reductio ad absurdum* by merely referring readers to another American publication that used Hopkins's type of arguments to justify the practice of polygamy.[76] For German Protestants, it was that simple.

Most foreign Protestants ignored the details of proslavery biblical exegesis and followed Goldwin Smith and Count Gasparin by appealing to Christian consciousness. The Methodist *Canada Christian Advocate* wrote scathingly about "the sin of worshiping the American God" that manifested itself in "the priests of the slave power [who] . . . extort from a tortured Bible, the justification of their deeds"; it was enough to contend to the contrary that "Jehovah has written the equality and inalienable rights of man on the conscience of intelligent men, as well as along the pages of Revelation."[77] Other Canadians were just as dismissive of efforts to "defend slavery, pronounce it scriptural, [or] describe it as an unspeakable blessing." Methodists could only wonder "what would Wesley and Asbury say to all that?" Or in responding to the London *Times*' biblical defense of slavery, they simply dismissed it as proving that "nothing is more tyrannical or exacting, than an evil cause."[78] The same note came from Ireland, where Benjamin Morgan Palmer's claim that the South was formed to preserve slavery was met with the prediction that "the cause of universal liberty and Christian civilization" would deal the

Confederacy "a fatal blow."[79] In Scotland a letter from Southern Presbyterians justifying secession brought the charge that "in these days of Christian light and liberty" religious defenses of slavery deserve not God's blessing "but His righteous wrath."[80]

Weighty as counter-exegesis or an appeal to the moral consciousness of enlightened Christians might appear outside the United States, American advocates of biblical proslavery confidently felt they could handle such arguments with ease. The most skillful use of the Bible in defending slavery came from Americans like Richard Fuller, Thomas Stringfellow, or even Moses Stuart who were careful exegetes of individual passages but who also knew how to pose the question of orthodox fidelity: will you follow God's faithful word in the Bible or the deliverances of your own finite and easily swayed conscience? That dilemma, which carried great weight in the United States, almost never exerted any force on Protestants abroad.

Two other arguments put forward by foreign Protestants were more perceptive and more fundamental. They repeatedly attacked American slavery in terms of racial oppression rather than of economic organization. They also condemned it for violating numerous ethical norms about which the Bible spoke unambiguously. As an illustration of the first, James Gibson in Ireland challenged those "Economists and Theologians" who proclaimed "it as a great physical, moral, and philosophical truth, that one race of the common brotherhood of mankind has been created to be eternal bond slave of another."[81] The missionary to Africa who wrote to the *United Presbyterian Magazine* in September 1863 offered a detailed defense of the spiritual and moral capacities of the Africans with whom he was personally acquainted. In his experience he had "nowhere seen evidence of that native inferiority which many good and learned men suppose to exist." Moreover, while speaking frankly about African civilizations as "deplorably ignorant and desperately depraved," he also suggested that much of the degradation he witnessed in African societies "exists generally where the foreign slave-trade has or does prevail."[82] At about the same time, the Free Church of Scotland's magazine described the legislation of the slave states as resting wholly upon the infidel science of George Gliddon and Josiah Nott (spelled here "Knolt"), which divided humanity up into different species, with Africans occupying "a place intermediate between man and the monkey"; to the Free Presbyterians, this was a "doctrine of devils."[83] As it happens, at least some biblical

proslavery advocates like J. H. Thornwell also repudiated Gliddon and Nott's polygenetic conclusion that blacks constituted a lower species of humanity. But much foreign commentary stressed that for the American slave system racism rather than the protection of property was the deepest issue – and that the Bible flatly condemned racism.

In the lengthy treatises of both Goldwin Smith and Count Gasparin, attention to race played a prominent role. Smith put succinctly what only a few critics of American slavery were willing to argue: "Those who found slavery on a doom pronounced against the negro race must say no more about the recognition of their institution by the law of Moses or by the New Testament, for the slavery recognized by the law of Moses and the New Testament was not that of negroes, but of other races."[84] Gasparin was just as blunt: "American slavery, which its friends so strangely claim to place under the protection of the Apostles, has nothing in common with that of which the Apostles had cognizance. . . . Slavery, in the United States, is founded on color, it is *negro* slavery." Yet such a slavery was much more difficult to uproot than the type countenanced by biblical writers. To Gasparin the contrast was clear: "A normal servitude of right, based upon a native and indestructible inferiority was not then in question, but an accidental servitude among equals, to which the chances of war had given birth, and which emancipation suppressed entire. Quite different is the slavery that depends on race."[85]

The weakest proslavery argument was that a form of slavery limited to one race only was the form present in the New and Old Testaments. To foreign Protestants, the failure of this claim amounted to a failure of the proslavery biblical argument as a whole.

The second strong argument made repeatedly by foreign Protestants was their insistence on a distinction between slavery considered in the abstract, or as a very specific form of social organization in the ancient world, and slavery understood as the type of chattel bondage protected by law in the United States. The Germans registered this distinction in 1860 when they reported on the traumas of Northern Methodists concerning "the regrettable question of slavery," and particularly whether to condemn slavery entirely or just the buying and selling of human beings required to make the Southern slave system work.[86] The *Christian Guardian* in Canada went further in October 1861 by attacking the fugitive slave laws of the United States as a "direct violation and opposition to the Word of God, which says [in Deuteronomy

23:15], 'Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee.' " To these Canadian Methodists, a system that allowed such violations of biblical injunctions amounted to pure social poison: "Slavery has sapped the foundation of moral and religious principle in the North as well as in the South."[87] Even more direct was the *Canada Christian Advocate*, which in early 1861 published a substantial article under the title "Hebrew and Negro Slavery Unlike." This essay combined the criticism of American slavery as racially grounded with a lengthy recital of the differences between the slavery practiced in ancient Israel, which was guarded by many humane ameliorations, and the slavery practiced in the Southern states, which abounded in direct violations of the biblical commands prohibiting man-stealing, protecting families, providing for education, offering the possibility of manumission, and encouraging the development of citizenship. The *Advocate's* conclusion was unequivocal: "No two things on earth can be more unlike, both in principle and in practice, than Hebrew and Negro slavery."[88] Count Gasparin made the same point succinctly: "Does any one fancy Philemon treating Onesimus, after this epistle, as fugitive slaves are treated in America?"[89] It also loomed large in Goldwin Smith's assault. As Smith saw the situation, "In America . . . there appears to be no religious communion between the master and slave. . . . It is only by putting [i.e., substituting] names for things that the American master and slave can be said to be of the same religion."[90] This fact was for him proof positive that American slavery was very different from the slavery described in either the Old Testament or the New, where in both cases divine commands insisted on the integration of slave and master in a common worship.

Significantly, as we have seen, antislavery Americans also pushed the same objection upon biblical defenders of slavery – that is, because the American system entailed so many antibiblical practices, regardless of what one might want to say about slavery in the abstract, the American style of slavery was in biblical perspective a crime. Yet in the United States this objection was usually not linked to an attack on American slavery as racially grounded. Thus when attacks were mounted against abuses of the slave system, they were much easier to rebut by reference to general statements about slavery in Scripture than was the case abroad. By contrast, when foreign Protestants looked at America, they saw a racial slavery whose practices violated cardinal biblical norms. They did not see slavery per se, nor did they recognize what

they saw in the United States as the slavery mentioned in the Bible. Antislavery arguments that did not seem to work in the United States exerted crushing force outside the country.

Taking Stock

Once it has been observed that the same arguments carried different weight inside and outside the United States, the pressing question is why this was so. One explanation is materialist. It emphasizes the economic interests of those who defended slavery. Goldwin Smith began his monograph with two examples of the many "strange things" that were found in America: "By the side of the Great Salt Lake is a community basing itself upon Polygamy. In the Southern States is a community basing itself upon Slavery." After noting that both Mormon polygamists and Southern slaveholders claimed the sanction of Scripture, Smith wondered, "Perhaps if the Mormonite were equally an object of political interest to a large party, his plea might be accepted also."[91] Count Gasparin reasoned similarly in responding to the biblical proslavery sentiments he had himself heard in New York City churches and from the Old School Presbyterian *New York Observer*. His explanation was that "these revolting excesses seldom appear except in seaports, and especially in New York," where "the interests of this great city are bound up to such a degree with those of the cotton States."[92] In modern parlance, Gasparin was saying that, for resolving the issue of Scripture and slavery, it was sufficient to follow the money. What better rationalization for defending material interests could be found in a Bible-besotted culture than use of the Bible itself?

Certainly, there is merit to this materialist explanation. Yet, just as certainly, it cannot comprehend the whole American situation. At least some Southern advocates of slavery did try to bring the system into line with other biblical norms. Many Northern defenders of slavery as biblical had virtually no stake in the system. Most important, many earnest Christians (both North and South) who would gladly have welcomed a sure biblical word against slavery concluded reluctantly that allegiance to Scripture simply had to override murmurs of conscience against the peculiar institution.

Explaining how a common trust in the one Bible led to such different conclusions gets further by referring to the broader social, cultural, and religious circumstances that shaped interpretations of Scripture. Four observa-

tions may be helpful. First, outside the United States, traditional orthodox Christianity was much more likely to be a- or antirepublican than Christianity in the United States; it was also more likely to be governed by inherited communities of interpretation and to be wary of claims for autonomous and freshly proposed understandings of the Gospel.[93] Consequently, biblical interpretation outside the United States was more often a corporate exercise, which respected the developmental traditions of Christian communities more than the individual's own grasp of Scripture. If that corporate consciousness condemned slavery, it could easily overrule what looked like individualistic or eccentric appeals to the Bible. A measure of this difference is the contrasting shape of revivalism during the nineteenth century. In the United States, revival worked mostly through voluntaristic, self-created structures. By contrast, in the vigorous British revivals of the era, renewal movements tended to energize tightly organized local communities (the Methodists), to draw on the long-standing traditions of state churches (the Presbyterian communion seasons in Scotland and the Protestant union movement in Germany), or to be guided by leaders of the dominant institutional churches (as in Ireland by Church of Ireland and Presbyterian ministers).[94]

Second, outside the United States, traditional orthodox Christianity was not particularly democratic. Thus it did not matter as much how self-selected individuals, whether populist or learned, interpreted the Scriptures compared to how the traditional churches interpreted the Bible. As in the United States, the Bible in Canada and Europe was foundational for Protestants. The contrast was that while prime contexts for interpreting Scripture were provided for these foreigners by history, tradition, and respect for formal learning, the prime American context was the interpretive will of the people.

Third, outside the United States, antislavery was not linked to heterodox theology or to the rejection of Christianity. Whereas in America a noticeable connection existed between ardent abolitionism and a willingness to abandon the Bible, in Britain and on the European continent the strongest opponents of slavery usually came from the more evangelical or more orthodox segments of the religious community. So it was that the biblical attack on slavery from the theologically liberal Goldwin Smith represented an exception for Europe.

Fourth, in Britain, both traditionalist and evangelical varieties of Christianity leaned against the literalist exegesis of Scripture that provided the greatest strength for biblical proslavery. In particular, British High Church and evangelical believers distrusted the principle that each and every Bible verse had a simple meaning to be extracted only by attending to just the words in that verse. Unfortunate recent experiences with the followers of Edward Irving and the early Plymouth Brethren, who developed novel eschatologies from this kind of literalistic biblical exegesis, confirmed many British Protestants in their resistance to overtly literal interpretations of Scripture.[95]

In sum, viewed from outside the United States, the issue of the Bible and slavery did not pose the difficulties that it did within. Trust in the Bible was virtually the same. But because trust in the people at large to interpret any part of the Bible by relying on republican and democratic common sense was much weaker abroad, foreign Protestant Bible believers easily turned aside the proslavery arguments that seemed so much stronger in the United States.

In the case of Roman Catholics outside the United States, whose views were echoed by American Catholics, there was much overlap with foreign Protestant commentary—and considerable difference. That Catholic-Protestant difference, to which we now turn, also illuminates much about the American theological situation as revealed by the crisis of the Civil War.