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Abolitionism as Maleficence: Southern Unitarians Versus "Puritan Fanaticism" —

1831-1860

Douglas C. Stange

IN DECEMBER 1850 the New Orleans *Daily Picayune* rebuked the "pulpit treason" of Theodore Parker and other abolitionist fanatics who put their consciences above the authority of the Fugitive Slave Law. Happily, the newspaper reported, there were "many distinguished clergymen" who in a "temper of Christian moderation" had maintained the "absolute duty" of "all professing Christians — to yield full obedience to the laws of the land, and aid in the constitutional protection of Southern property." The Reverend Henry W. Bellows of New York City was one northern preacher who had shown a "pure love of country." The paper explained that Bellows had been among those northern patriots who held "the duty of obedience to law, and the obligations to maintain, inviolate, the rights to slave property" which the Constitution recognized and protected. The paper also recommended the sermon of the Unitarian minister of New Orleans, Theodore Clapp. The paper carried on the front page of the *Daily Picayune* Clapp's "Thanksgiving Sermon." The sermon condemned the sons of "our puritanical forefathers" who disturbed the peace of the Union by their absurd and impractical sermons on slavery. The abolitionists are "the aggressors," exclaimed Clapp. He asked the abolitionists to treat southerners as brothers and fellow citizens and to obey God and the Constitution by returning fugitives who belonged to the South, "instead of upholding and encouraging [the fugitives] in rebellion and licentiousness."¹

¹ Theodore Clapp, "A Thanksgiving Sermon, Delivered in the First Congregational Church, New Orleans, December 19, 1850," [*New Orleans*] *Daily Picayune*, 22 December 1850.

The following abbreviations are used in footnotes of this article:
AMB: *American Medical Biographies*, Howard A. Kelly and Walter L. Burrage, eds. (Baltimore: Norman, Remington Co., 1920).

As one of the tiny band of Unitarians who lived in the deep South, Clapp bore the stigma of adhering to the theology of a denomination almost wholly restricted to the North, and largely confined to Massachusetts, a state noted for its abolitionism. Excluding the border states — Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Maryland, and the District of Columbia — viable Unitarian congregations existed, in 1850, only in New Orleans, Savannah, and Charleston. The expulsion of George F. Simmons from the congregation in Mobile, Alabama, for preaching an antislavery sermon, had for all practical purposes terminated that church's life. The congregation at Richmond, Virginia, was dormant, and the one that emerged at Wheeling, Virginia, in the middle 1850s soon disintegrated. The congregation at Augusta, Georgia, was "strangled" before the middle of 1845. Although the American Unitarian Association held high hopes at first for missionary expansion in the South, the area was about as receptive to Unitarian theology as the North and the Boston aristocracy were to southern Baptist theology. Unitarian congregations in the deep South depended upon New England clerical expatriates and a few prominent local southern laymen to lead and sustain them. Strong and permanent, stable and sizable Unitarian congregations did not exist in the deep South.²

AUA Letters, MH-AH: American Unitarian Association Letters, Andover-Harvard Theological Library, Harvard University.

CAL: *Cyclopædia of American Literature*, Evert A. Duyckinck and George L. Duyckinck, eds. (New York: Charles Scribner, 1855).

DAB: *Dictionary of American Biography*, Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone, eds. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928-1958).

GHi: Georgia Historical Society.

MB: Boston Public Library.

MCR: Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America, Radcliffe College.

MH: Houghton Library, Harvard University.

MH-AH: Andover-Harvard Theological Library, Harvard University.

MHi: Massachusetts Historical Society.

MoSW: Washington University, St. Louis.

NeD: William R. Perkins Library, Duke University.

NeU: Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina.

SCHi: South Carolina Historical Society.

SCU: South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina.

² Clarence Gohdes, "Some Notes on the Unitarian Church in the Ante-Bellum South: A Contribution to the History of Southern Liberalism," *American Studies in Honor of William Kenneth Boyd*, David Kelly Jackson, ed. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1940), pp. 352, 356, 357-359, 364-366. George H. Gibson has written several essays on Unitarian congregations in the South; see his "Unitarian Congregations in the Ante-Bellum South," *Proceedings of the Unitarian Historical Society*,

A. "DEARER TO US FOR ITS TROUBLES"

Most young Unitarian seminarians found that the prospect of serving a congregation in the South chilled their missionary ardor. The southern congregations had special qualifications for their ministers. The southern Unitarians preferred conservative gentlemen as their pastors and they knew clearly the ideal type of person. A layman writing from Richmond, Virginia, to the American Unitarian Association requested "a *discreet gentleman*" for a minister. "A *youth* just from school will *not answer*." But much more important was the requirement that ministerial recruits from the North had to throw off their "ENTIRE devotion to N[ew] England institutions."³ The reason for these qualifications was obvious. In nearly all the southern Unitarian congregations were slaveholders and slaves.⁴ Thus, one Harvard Divinity School graduate looked upon a possible ministry in the South as "exile."⁵ Another thought of one southern city as "the most detestable" of all places in the universe, "the product of slavery, poverty and southern habit."⁶ Still another, who served in the South, cried to get out: "I *cannot* conscientiously *live* in a slave country."⁷

Most Unitarians in the North shared this antipathy for the South

XII, Part II (1959), 53-78, "The Unitarian-Universalist Church of Richmond," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, LXXIV (July 1966), 321-335, "Unitarian Congregations in Ante-Bellum Georgia," *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, LIV (Summer 1970), 147-168. See also Arthur A. Brooks, *The History of Unitarianism in the Southern Churches* (Boston: American Unitarian Association, [1906?]).

³ Isaac Davenport to Charles Briggs, Richmond, 25 January 1836 (AUA Letters, MH-AH). In a request for an assistant minister, William G. Eliot made the same point about leaving New England biases behind; see Eliot to Ephraim Peabody, St. Louis, 4 January 1849 (William Greenleaf Eliot Collection, MoSW).

⁴ Dexter Clapp, "Letter on the Religious Condition of Slaves," *Monthly Religious Magazine*, III (May 1846), 207; one observer wrote that in some Unitarian churches in the South nearly every member was a slaveholder. See [Charles M. Taggart?] "The Christian Examiner and Southern Unitarian," *Christian Inquirer*, VIII:32 (13 May 1854), 2. Taggart was probably the author of the article—the writer had a detailed knowledge of the Nashville Unitarian Congregation, of which Taggart had been the sole minister, and the style of the article resembles his.

⁵ Charles T. Brooks to [Charles E. Norton], Newport, 11 November 1851 (Norton Papers, MH).

⁶ William H. Channing to Julia Channing, Washington, D.C., 14 [March] 1838 (William H. Channing Papers, MH).

⁷ William Silsbee to Henry Whitney Bellows, Savannah, 3 February 1840 (Bellows Papers, MHi).

and its institutions. Because of this general aversion for the South, those Unitarians who thrived in the southern milieu were understandably defensive about their way of life. Their concern for northern opinion of their region reached such a passion that for some it became no longer the defense of a regional way of life, but of a civilization, of American civilization. Among the Unitarians who loved the South, six were of particular importance to the establishment and nourishment of Unitarianism in the South: Samuel and Caroline Gilman, Charles Manson Taggart, and Dr. Samuel Henry Dickson of Charleston; Dr. Richard Dennis Arnold of Savannah; and Theodore Clapp of New Orleans.

For Samuel Gilman (1791-1858) the adult course of his life was set in 1819. In that year he was ordained minister of the Archdale Street Unitarian Church in Charleston and was married to Caroline Howard of Boston. Gilman had left a teaching post at Harvard College to accept the assignment in Charleston. His new parish had a history independent of New England Unitarianism. It traced its liberal theology back into the eighteenth century. Although not a mission church, the congregation was in debt and one of Gilman's first tasks was to pull the congregation onto a sound financial basis.⁸ He succeeded and his congregation became one of the "highly respectable" parishes in Charleston. Gilman failed to attract Charleston's aristocracy — the Episcopal churches had netted them — but he did draw to the Archdale Street Church many merchants and professional people. His wife was extremely pleased with their new surroundings:

We associate with great enough fashion, to keep us animated in society, just enough mental cultivation to preserve a literary taste, just enough riches and

⁸ Gohdes (note 2 above), pp. 337-340. For additional information on the Archdale Street Church, see Gibson, "Unitarian Congregations in the Ante-Bellum South" (note 2 above), pp. 53-57; Mary Maxine Larisey, *The Unitarian Church in Charleston, South Carolina: A Brief History* (n.p.: 1967). For additional information on Samuel Gilman, see Samuel A. Eliot, *Heralds of a Liberal Faith*, II (Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1910), 274-280; *DAB*, VII, 305-306; Henry Wilder Foote, "Samuel Gilman, Author of 'Fair Harvard,'" *Harvard Graduates Magazine*, XXIV (June 1916), 610-616; Daniel Walker Howe, "A Massachusetts Yankee in Senator Calhoun's Court: Samuel Gilman in South Carolina," *New England Quarterly*, XLIV (June 1971), 197-220. For information on Caroline Gilman, see Caroline Gilman, "My Autobiography," *The Female Prose Writers of America*, John S. Hart, ed. (Philadelphia: E. H. Butler & Co., 1855), pp. 49-57; *DAB*, VII, 298-299; *CAL*, II, 179-181. See also Mary Scott Saint-Amand, *A Balcony in Charleston* (Richmond: Garrett & Massie, 1941), and William Stanley Hoole, "The Gilmans and the Southern Rose," *North Carolina Historical Review*, XI (April 1934), 116-128.

display not to regret that we are limited, and receive just enough attention to make us satisfied with our influence.⁹

Samuel Gilman was optimistic about Unitarian prospects in the South. Had the Unitarians got an early start, Gilman was convinced that Unitarianism would have been "everywhere the national religion." In 1834, he strongly recommended that a Southern Association of Unitarian Churches be formed.¹⁰ His work in the cultural center of the South has been called "the golden age of Unitarianism in Charleston,"¹¹ but this does not say enough. For indeed, his ministry was the golden age of Unitarianism in the South. The Unitarian hope of success and influence in the South — as slim as that hope has been and probably always will be — lay within the forty-year ministry of Samuel Gilman in Charleston.

It has been asserted recently that Samuel Gilman, as a transplanted New Englander, wilted intellectually in the "stifling environment" of his southern home. Much of the evidence given in support of this thesis suggests that Gilman was homesick for New England and became unwillingly conservative in his new surroundings.¹²

In any event, Caroline Gilman (1794-1888) found happiness in South Carolina. Her whole life was bound up in her husband and his ministry ("He for God Only," she poetically explained, "She for God in Him");¹³ in the aspirations of her state ("A word against Carolina, is a personal offence to me!");¹⁴ and her region ("the South is dearer to us for its troubles").¹⁵ Yet, Caroline Gilman was an independent

⁹ Caroline Gilman to Ann Maria White, Charleston, 27 March 1820; Caroline Gilman to Mrs. Harriet Fay, Charleston, 4 March 1821 (Caroline Gilman Papers, SCHi).

¹⁰ Samuel Gilman to Jason Whitman, Charleston, 17 June 1834 (AUA Letters, MH-AH).

¹¹ Daisy Priscilla Smith, "Historical Sketch of the Unitarian Church of Charleston," [Charleston] *Interlude* (newspaper clipping, SCU).

¹² Howe (note 8 above), pp. 202-206, 209-212, 215.

¹³ Caroline Gilman, "He for God Only, She for God in Him," *The Harp and the Cross: A Collection of Religious Poetry*, Stephen G. Bulfinch, ed. (Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1857), pp. 187-188. "It was [Samuel] I worshipped, I prayed to him, all my hopes united in him . . ." — see Caroline Gilman to [?], Charleston, 20 January 1861 (SCHi). See also Caroline Gilman, "My Autobiography" [circa 1852], p. 9 (typescript, SCHi).

¹⁴ [Anonymous] "Biographical Sketch and Letters of Caroline Howard Gilman" (typescript, SCU).

¹⁵ Caroline Gilman to Louisa Loring, Charleston, 17 January 1833 (SCHi), quoted by Saint-Amand (note 8 above), p. 27.

woman, an author of some note in the South; the editor of the *Southern Rose*, a juvenile magazine; and a steadfast defender of the Confederacy during the Civil War.¹⁶ Her views on slavery, and perhaps her caustic personality, won her few friends in the North. Anne Weston, a Boston abolitionist, found her cunning and "an exceedingly disagreeable woman"; English author Harriet Martineau saw her as a pro-slavery apologist; and American author Lydia Maria Child judged her as "a thoroughly worldly, ambitious, selfish woman."¹⁷

Her sensitivity occasionally produced ill-tempered comment or conduct, prompting Mr. Gilman to intercede and to sweeten his wife's acerbity.¹⁸ She had plenty of opportunities to use her sharp tongue. Her frequent visits with her husband to New England brought her into conflict with abolitionist relatives and their friends: her niece, Maria White Lowell (Mrs. James Russell Lowell); her sister-in-law, Louisa Loring, and husband, Ellis Gray Loring; fellow author, Lydia Maria Child, and others.¹⁹ She defended the South's "peculiar institution" before these abolitionists and was acknowledged to be very good in her defense. Her eldest daughter and her second daughter were married to slaveholders. Her friends in Charleston owned slaves. She and her husband possessed slaves.²⁰ As far as house-servants in Charleston

¹⁶ Saint-Amand, *ibid.*, p. 2, provides a list of Mrs. Gilman's writings. Her most popular work was probably her *Recollections of a New England Bride and of a Southern Matron* (New York: G. P. Putnam & Co., 1852); see Hoole (note 8 above). She showed a "remarkable patriotism" for the Confederacy, remarked a southern historian. See the account of her work in behalf of the southern war effort in James Welch Patton, ed., *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Greenville Ladies' Association in Aid of the Volunteers of the Confederate Army, Historical Papers of the Trinity College Historical Society, Series XXI* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1937), 117.

¹⁷ Anne Weston to Deborah Weston, 4 October 1836 (Weston Papers, MB); Harriet Martineau to Lydia Maria Child, Westminster, 10 January, n.y. (Autograph file, MH); Lydia Maria Child to Sarah Blake (Sturgis) Shaw, Wayland, 7 July 1877 (Child Papers, MH). See also Child to Louisa Loring, n.p., 11 July [1837?] (Loring Family Papers, MCR).

¹⁸ Caroline Gilman to Mrs. Harriet Fay, Charleston, 4 March 1821, with caveat by Samuel Gilman (SCHI).

¹⁹ "Biographical Sketch" (note 14 above), p. 15; Lydia Maria Child to Sarah Blake (Sturgis) Shaw (note 17 above). The Gilmans' visits were generally not returned. Louisa Loring wrote to her brother, in 1850, to spend the summer with them; "I wish you would come," she begged, "for I do not see any immediate prospect of S. Carolina's abolishing slavery and receiving us there." See Louisa Loring to [Samuel Gilman], Brookline, 13 March 1850 (Loring Family Papers, MCR).

²⁰ Anne Weston to Deborah Weston (note 17 above); Ellis Gray Loring to

were concerned, she preferred Black slave labor to White free labor.²¹

Samuel Gilman's attitudes on slavery are an enigma. His apologists have said that he purchased slaves for ultimate freedom. The solitary reference to this in his own hand, which the present research has produced, occurred in a letter to his sister, Louisa Loring, in 1844. He spoke of teaching their "little James" in preparation for "ultimate freedom." Yet, by the time of the Civil War, James was still a slave of the Gilmans and very likely was over twenty-one years of age. In sixteen years, James had not earned his "ultimate" freedom. References to the Gilman slaves in the work of Mary Scott Saint-Amand gratuitously carry in brackets after their names the information that they were purchased in order to be given their freedom. The only reference apparently extant to slaves in the Gilman household actually freed, however, is to slaves owned by Mrs. Gilman and her relatives at the conclusion of the Civil War, who were either freed or ran away following the defeat of the Confederacy.²²

We do know that Samuel Gilman believed the South had a perfect right to "a vehement defence of slavery"; that he looked upon the abolitionism of his brother-in-law, Ellis Gray Loring, as a fault; and that he stopped a guest clergyman from England, Russell Lant Carpenter, from offering a prayer in the Archdale Street Church which included the words, "we would remember those in bonds as bound

Harriet Martineau, Boston, 22 March 1840 (Loring's Letterbook, MH); Samuel Gilman to Louisa Loring, Charleston, 14 February 1844 (SCU).

²¹ Caroline Gilman, *Recollections of a Southern Matron* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1838), pp. 236-238, 249. This work (later combined with Mrs. Gilman's *Recollections of a New England Bride*) was based on truth and was largely autobiographical in fantasy and reality. Mrs. Gilman wrote in her preface to the book, "Every part, except the 'love-passages' is founded in events of actual occurrence" (p. viii). A reviewer of her book, in 1838, wrote that "no one can doubt that [the book] does present, as exact a picture as possible of local habits and manners." Quoted by Saint-Amand (note 8 above), p. 3. One can safely refer, then, to the description of slavery in the work as the picture that Caroline Gilman had of the institution.

²² Samuel Gilman to Louisa Loring, Charleston, 14 February 1844 (SCU); Saint-Amand (note 8 above), caption of picture of Gilman slave quarters facing p. 2, and pp. 15, 113; Caroline Gilman to Eliza [Webb Gilman Dodge], Greenville, 17 September [1865], "Letters of a Confederate Mother: Charleston in the Sixties," *Atlantic Monthly*, CXXXVII (April 1926), 513-514. Howe (note 8 above) observes the fragmentary evidence regarding the Gilmans' alleged emancipation efforts and states that if there were slaves freed in this way the number would have been very small (p. 206). His source is Saint-Amand's volume.

with them." He did receive support from Henry W. Bellows, a conservative Unitarian minister in New York, when he was criticized for refusing to discuss slavery before his people. But he was judged by Maria Child as "not anti-slavery, in deed or word" and primarily interested in pleasing his parishioners. Samuel May, Jr., testified against Gilman's slaveholding as giving "countenance and shelter . . . to every slaveholder in the land! Surely, if ministers of the Gospel may hold Slaves, who may not?"²³ Gilman's position was incriminating. Gilman maintained "slave quarters" and benefited from slave labor. He could have carried his slaves to the Lorings and to freedom. Their work with fugitive slaves was well known.²⁴ Perhaps he was overruled by his wife. Reluctant slaveholder though he may have been, a slaveholding Christian minister he was still. Samuel Gilman had adapted well to his southern home and when he died, Charleston displayed the most "sincere, wide-spread, and spontaneous utterance of grief and sorrow" since the death of John C. Calhoun.²⁵

Charles Manson Taggart (1821-1854), Gilman's assistant minister, had come to Charleston after a short ministry in Nashville, Tennessee. He was born in Montreal, Canada, spent his youth in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and studied at the Meadville Theological School in Meadville, Pennsylvania.²⁶ A convert from Presbyterianism, he ex-

²³ Samuel Gilman to Henry W. Bellows, Charleston, 5 May 1849 (MHi); Harriet Martineau, *Harriet Martineau's Autobiography*, Maria Weston Chapman, ed. (Boston: James R. Osgood & Co., 1877), I, 344; "Review of *Observations of American Slavery, after a Year's Tour in the United States* by Russell Lant Carpenter, B.A.: — Whitfield, 1852" [from the *London Morning Advertiser*, 14 February 1852] (offprint, Estlin Papers, Dr. Williams's Library, London); [Henry W. Bellows,] "Southern Views of Slavery," *Christian Inquirer*, IV:15 (19 January 1850), 2. Mrs. Child felt that Caroline Gilman had a stronger personality than Samuel Gilman and held sway over him, especially in the matter of slavery. Whenever the topic was broached at the Lorings and Samuel Gilman was present, Mrs. Child said that he grew red in the face and left the room. "I guess his conscience prick[ed] him," suggested Mrs. Child. See Lydia Maria Child to Sarah Blake (Sturgis) Shaw (note 17 above); Samuel May, Jr., "American Unitarians," MS notes, 1853 (May Papers, MB).

²⁴ Louisa Loring to Ellis Gray Loring, Boston, 29 May 1852 (Loring Family Papers, MCR); Ellis Gray Loring to Caroline Weston, Boston, 18 January 1846, Loring to Weston, 1 February 1846, Loring to Weston, 22 February 1846 (Weston Papers, MB).

²⁵ [A. O. Andrews,] *Sixteen Years Chaplain, Friend, and Counsellor, of the Washington Light Infantry, of Charleston, S. C., the Rev. Samuel Gilman, D.D.* (Charleston: Walker, Evans, & Cogswell, [1858?]), p. 16.

²⁶ Charles Manson Taggart, *Sermons with a Memoir*, by John H. Heywood (Boston: Crosby, Nichols, & Co., 1856), pp. ix, xi, xvi.

hibited the convert's typical staunch loyalty to his new faith in his missionary zeal and dedication to "true Unitarianism."²⁷ The "extreme conservatism" of his social opinions made him few friends at Meadville. He defended southern institutions before his classmates with a "chivalric enthusiasm" worthy of Clay or Calhoun. He had traveled widely in the South and desired to settle there, but upon the request of the Meadville faculty he accepted a call to Albany, in 1849. His ministry there was a disaster, very likely due to problems raised over "his Southern partialities," and he left after ten months. He traveled and preached throughout the South for over a year, determined to found a church. He established a mission in Nashville, but after two years he failed to gather a permanent congregation of more than twenty souls. Finally, Taggart arrived in Charleston, in 1853, to assist an ailing Samuel Gilman.²⁸

Taggart at last found an environment in which his predilections could blossom and he enjoyed approval by the Charleston congregation. But his new-found bliss was short-lived. On 13 October 1853 he preached the discourse on the fast day appointed by the governor of South Carolina. In offering thanksgiving that Charleston was spared the yellow fever epidemic that had ravaged New Orleans, Taggart theologized,

It is not that God has preferred *us* above our neighbors, and exercised over us a supernatural preserving care, but that in the course of natural events, it has been our happy lot, as moral agents, so to co-operate with the order of Providence, as to bring no disasters upon ourselves by disturbing the elemental forces of the world, or deranging and transgressing the divine laws of life and health.²⁹

One year later Taggart was dead. The Archdale Street Church was draped in mourning for six months. A tablet in Taggart's honor was placed in the vestibule of the church and a monument above his grave. Because the congregation believed his sermons carried "eloquent

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. xiv; Charles M. Taggart, *Spirits in the Church, A Discourse Before the Unitarian Christians of Nashville, Tenn., . . . December 19th, 1852* (Nashville: J. F. Morgan, n.d.), p. 12.

²⁸ Taggart, *Sermons* (note 16 above), pp. xix-xx, xxvi, xxxv, xxxviii-xliv.

²⁹ Charles M. Taggart, *The Virtue of Fasting and Prayer. A Discourse, Preached on Thursday, Oct. 13, 1853, a Day of Fasting, Humiliation and Prayer, Appointed by the Governor of South-Carolina* (Charleston: Steam-Power Press of Walker & James, 1853), pp. 15-16.

lessons of honor to God and love for our fellow-men" a memorial edition of his writings was published.³⁰

One layman who grieved over the death of Taggart as "an able champion in the cause of truth" was Dr. Samuel Henry Dickson (1798-1872).³¹ Dickson was born in Charleston and educated at the College of Charleston and Yale College. He received his M.D. degree from the University of Pennsylvania, in 1819. He developed a successful practice in Charleston, but abandoned it in 1824 to assist in establishing the Medical College of South Carolina. When controversy arose in the school, in 1832, Dickson resigned, and accepted, a year later, a professorship in the newly created Medical College of the State of South Carolina. Between 1847 and 1849 he was professor in the Medical School of New York University. He returned to Charleston for eight years, and then accepted a post at the Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia, in 1857. When the Civil War broke out Dickson lost his position, since nearly 400 of the 630 students at Jefferson Medical College came from the South. The departure of most of these men left him with few students. His health declined and he spent his remaining years in poverty in Philadelphia.³²

Dickson was a dedicated Unitarian layman, active in his church and beloved by his minister, Samuel Gilman. When he joined Gilman's

³⁰ "Proceedings of the Unitarian Church in this City [Charleston], in Reference to the Death of the Rev. C. M. Taggart," *Christian Register*, XXXIII:45 (11 November 1854), 2; Elizabeth C. Curtis, "Inscriptions on Tombstones in Churchyard and Interior of Church, Unitarian Church, Charles Street, Charleston, S.C." (typescript, n.p.: n.d., SCU), p. 32; Charles M. Taggart, *Eight Discourses on Various Subjects* [these discourses were published at different times] (Charleston: 1854). The volume includes "Slavery and the Law in the Light of Christianity" (No. 7) and "Diversity and Origin of the Human Races" (No. 8).

³¹ Samuel Henry Dickson, "General Report [of the Charleston Unitarian Book and Tract Society]," [Charleston, 1855], p. 2. This report is included in the "Various Writings published at Various Times and in Various Modes by Samuel Henry Dickson. Collected and bound together, May, 1857," 3 vols. (SCU).

³² Samuel X. Radbill, "Samuel Henry Dickson," *Annals of Medical History*, 3rd Series, IV (1942), 382-385, 388; *DAB*, V, 305-306; Franklin Bowditch Dexter, *Biographical Sketches of the Graduates of Yale College*, VI (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1912), 641-643; Joseph Ioor Waring, *A History of Medicine in South Carolina, 1825-1900* (Charleston: South Carolina Medical Association, 1957), pp. 222-226; Elizabeth M. Geffen, "William Henry Furness, Philadelphia Antislavery Preacher," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, LXXXII (July 1958), 288. Cf. Hobart Amory Hare, "Samuel Henry Dickson (1798-1872)," *AMB*, p. 314; *CAL*, II, 259-261; Joseph Ioor Waring, "Samuel Henry Dickson (1798-1872)," *Journal of Medical Education*, XXXV (May 1960), 421-428.

congregation, in 1844, he had his seven daughters and his son baptized in the Unitarian faith with him.³³ Contemporaries of Dickson frequently spoke of his "rich eloquence" and "captivating grace." He was a true gentleman, somewhat of an aristocrat, a man who cherished duelling, oratorical skill, social distinctions, and prestige. He favored euthanasia; enjoyed witnessing executions and observed some forty hangings; gave one of the first temperance lectures in the South, although he had no aversion to fine table wines; owned several slaves; sympathized with the Confederacy and was nearly incarcerated as a traitor during the Civil War. He was a distinguished physician and a most unusual man.³⁴

Dr. Richard Dennis Arnold (1808-1876) contributed significant leadership to the Unitarian congregation in Savannah. He was born in Savannah, educated at Princeton and at the medical school of the University of Pennsylvania, and returned to Savannah in 1832 to practice. He purchased an interest in the Savannah *Georgian*, but after a short time as editor, left the newspaper. He served in the state legislature of Georgia and was mayor of Savannah for six terms. Arnold helped to found the Savannah Medical College and was a member of its faculty. As mayor of Savannah, he had the unhappy task of surrendering the city to General Sherman in 1864.³⁵

³³ [Samuel Henry Dickson,] "The Principle of Life," *The American Review: A Whig Journal of Politics, Literature, Art and Science*, VI (October 1847), 364; Samuel Gilman to Henry W. Bellows, Charleston, 21 September 1847 (Bellows Papers, MHi). He rented a pew in the Archdale Street Church between 1844 and 1847, and 1850 and 1858. See Elias B. Bull, *Founders and Pew Renters of the Unitarian Church in Charleston, S. C., 1817-1874* (Charleston: Unitarian Church in Charleston, S. C. Press, 1970), p. 8; John Dickson to John A. Dickson, Asheville, N. C., 29 February 1844 (Dickson Family Papers, NeU).

³⁴ "Death of Professor Samuel Henry Dickson, M.D.," *Charleston Daily Courier*, 3 April 1872; [Samuel Henry Dickson,] "Duelling," *Russell's Magazine*, I (May 1857), 132-142; Samuel Henry Dickson to H. R. Dickson, Charleston, 2 May 1858 (Dickson Family Papers, NeU); Samuel D. Gross, *Autobiography* (Philadelphia: George Barrie, 1887), II, 369-370; Radbill (note 32 above), pp. 384-386. Dickson gave the Yale Phi Beta Kappa oration, in 1842, in place of Senator Calhoun; see *An Oration Delivered at New Haven, Before the Phi Beta Kappa Society, August 17, 1842* (New Haven: B. L. Hamlen, 1842). See also C. Happoldt, "Biographical Sketch of Samuel Henry Dickson, M.D., LL.D.," *Medical and Surgical Reporter*, X (January 1857), 12-15; Samuel Henry Dickson, *Essays on Life, Sleep, Pain, Etc.* (Philadelphia: Blanchard & Lea, 1852), pp. 284, 289; Samuel Henry Dickson, *Address before the South Carolina Society for the Promotion of Temperance, April 6th, 1830* (Charleston: Observer Office Press, [1830]).

³⁵ *AMB*, p. 39; *DAB*, I, 371-372; Richard H. Shryock, ed., *Letters of Richard D.*

In 1830, a Unitarian society was formed in Savannah and formal services of worship were advertised in the *Savannah Georgian* in 1832. Dr. Arnold, then twenty-four years old, conducted the services with other laymen and provided continuity to the church's management through a succession of different Unitarian ministers. As one of Savannah's distinguished citizens, Arnold was the most influential member of the Unitarian society. The church's continued existence depended heavily upon his leadership.³⁶

Arnold owned at least seven slaves. He was a physician to slaves on plantations near Savannah at the beginning of his medical career, but apparently later withdrew from this work. He continued an interest in the health of Blacks, however, and studied "racial" aspects of disease and contagion. He accepted the role of guardian to a number of free Negroes and exercised his guardianship with care and patience. More than once Arnold had to intervene in order to assure his "wards" of proper treatment and their due legal rights. Sometimes he handled their finances. On occasion he sold slaves, but tried never to divide families. In one instance he was placed in the unusual situation of being the beneficiary of slaves in a will of one of his wards—a free Negro woman. Arnold thought that slavery was central to the southern way of life, and he remarked that the South had inaugurated its revolution in 1861 to save slavery "because it was the cornerstone of our social institutions."³⁷

Arnold, M.D., 1808-1876, Historical Papers of the Trinity College Historical Society, Double Series, XVIII-XIX (Durham: Seeman Press, 1929), 7; Shryock, "A Doctor in Public Life: Richard D. Arnold of Savannah (1808-1876)," Medicine, Science, and Culture: Historical Essays in Honor of Owsen Temkin, Lloyd G. Stevenson and Robert P. Multhauf, eds. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1968), pp. 285-286, 291, 299.

³⁶ Gibson, "Unitarian Congregations in Ante-Bellum Georgia" (note 2 above), pp. 155, 157; Shryock, "A Doctor in Public Life" (note 35 above), p. 287; Shryock, *Letters* (note 35 above), p. 8; Milton H. Rahn, "Savannah Unitarians' Debt to Dr. Samuel Gilman," mimeographed address [Charleston, 1966] (GHI); letter of Richard H. Shryock to the author, Philadelphia, 12 October 1970. There are references to Arnold's Unitarian theology in his diary; see "Diary [of Richard D. Arnold] commenced July 2, 1832," pp. 7, 45, and a record of his donations to the Unitarian denomination is in his "Receipt Book, 1848-1859," pp. 33, 62, 63 (Richard D. Arnold Papers, NeD).

³⁷ Shryock, "A Doctor in Public Life" (note 35 above), pp. 293-294, 296; Richard D. Arnold to Dr. Joe H. Gressoin, Savannah, 15 November 1847, Arnold to Ellen

Theodore Clapp (1792-1866), in New Orleans, defended Unitarianism before his southern neighbors, and slavery in face of criticism from northern friends and foes. Clapp was born in Massachusetts, graduated from Yale College in 1814, spent a year at Andover Theological Seminary, and was licensed to preach by the Congregationalists. Clapp's first church, however, was the Presbyterian congregation in New Orleans. While minister to this congregation Clapp developed a liberal theology that put him at odds with his presbytery. After a trial for heresy, Clapp was deposed from the ministry in January 1833. Most of his congregation sided with him and organized an "Independent Unitarian Society" a few weeks later. Clapp ministered to the society for nearly thirty years, even during the great cholera and yellow fever epidemics which ravaged New Orleans, until ill health forced him to resign in 1857. He retired to Kentucky and died in Louisville, in 1866.³⁸

Clapp wielded tremendous power in his congregation. Significantly, his church was also known as "Parson Clapp's Church." The church centered on the personality and oratorical force of Clapp; it had no prayer books, hymnals, nor congregational singing; it possessed no church council, officers, deacons, or elders; it had no Sunday school, Bible classes, prayer meetings, women's or men's groups, mission societies, or sewing circles; it sponsored "no donation party, no fairs,

Arnold, Savannah, 11 January 1850, Arnold to David R. Dillon, Savannah, 2 December 1844, Arnold to M. J. Ranbin, Savannah, 8 January 1848, Arnold to Thomas C. Nisbet, Savannah, 7 October 1854, Arnold to Mrs. Cornelia Stirk, Savannah, 21 January 1861, Arnold to Mrs. Thomas D. Miller, Savannah, 18 March 1865, Arnold to Dr. J. G. Robertson, Savannah, 29 July 1865, Shryock, *Letters* (note 35 above), pp. 25, 32, 33, 38, 72, 101, 118, 124; Richard D. Arnold, "Receipt Book" (note 36 above), pp. 7, 9, 45, *et passim*; "Account Book, 1854-1875," pp. 2, 11, 14, *et passim* (Arnold Papers, NdD); "Last Will and Testament of Maria Cohen, f.w.c. [free woman of color]" (Arnold Papers, GHi).

³⁸Dexter (note 32 above), VI, 632-634; [Henry Wilder Foote,] "Theodore Clapp, 1792-1866," *Heralds of a Liberal Faith*, II (Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1910), 272-273. Cf. also Henry Wilder Foote, "Theodore Clapp," *Proceedings of the Unitarian Historical Society*, III, Part II (1934), 13-39; Theodore Clapp, *Autobiographical Sketches and Recollections, During a Thirty-Five Years' Residence in New Orleans* (Boston: Phillips, Sampson & Co., 1857); John Duffy, ed., *Parson Clapp of the Strangers' Church of New Orleans* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1957 — this is a critical edition of *Autobiographical Sketches*); Clapp, *Theological Views, Comprising the Substance of Teachings During a Ministry of Thirty-Five Years, in New Orleans* (Boston: Abel Tompkins, 1859).

no organ recital, absolutely 'no nothing,' but Dr. Clapp and his weekly sermon."³⁹

Unitarian colleagues like William Greenleaf Eliot, minister to the Unitarian congregation in St. Louis, and Henry W. Bellows held a low estimation of Clapp, and Eliot thought his popularity was "a bubble." Clapp apparently lacked "clerical dignity," and eagerly sought popularity by playing "'possum' with half the world," — that is, he was "a time-server."⁴⁰ Yet he actively sought fellowship with Unitarians and was accepted by their denomination. Harvard College even considered Clapp as a candidate for an honorary D.D. degree, although it did not award one to him. His pro-slavery opinions — of which Frederic Dan Huntington reminded the College — may have stood in the way.⁴¹

B. "LITTLE KINGDOMS" RULED WITH WISDOM AND LOVE

Clapp for some years owned several slaves and he believed that Negro slaves really enjoyed almost an enviable existence. "I would say to every slave in the United States," he preached in 1838,

you should realize, that a wise, kind and merciful Providence has appointed for you, your condition in life. And all things considered, you could not be

³⁹ Eliza Ripley, *Social Life in Old New Orleans: Being Recollections of my Girlhood* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1912), pp. 120-123.

⁴⁰ William Greenleaf Eliot to James Freeman Clarke, New Orleans, 9 January 1837 (MoSW); Robert C. Goodhue to Henry W. Bellows, New Orleans, 27 April 1843 (MHi).

⁴¹ William Greenleaf Eliot to James Freeman Clarke, St. Louis, March 1837, *Western Messenger*, III (May 1837), 709-710; Theodore Clapp to Henry W. Bellows, New Orleans, 29 May 1844 (MHi); Clapp to Jason Whitman, New Orleans, 28 February 1835, James Freeman Clarke to Charles Briggs, New Orleans, 21 December 1835 (AUA Letters, MH-AH); Foote, "Theodore Clapp," *Proceedings . . .* (note 38 above), pp. 27-28; C. C. Felton to James Walker, Cambridge, 19 May 1856, Frederic Dan Huntington to James Walker, Cambridge, 26 May 1856 (Harvard University Archives). J. Mitchell Pilcher wrote a laudatory account of Clapp on the hundredth anniversary of the founding of the First Unitarian Church of New Orleans; see Pilcher, "A Century of Sacrifice and Service, Being the Parish History of the First Unitarian Church, New Orleans . . ." ([1933], typescript, Special Collections Division, Tulane University Library). For the anniversary celebration, Henrietta Otis Shaw wrote a drama. It depicts Clapp as a kind and considerate minister and includes his jovial slave, "Mammy Lize," complete with white apron and plaid bandana; see Shaw, *Parson Clapp* (n.p.: n.d.), pp. 2-3. Foote's "Theodore Clapp," *Proceedings . . .* (note 38 above), was also given as a discourse at the anniversary of the First Unitarian Church of New Orleans, 26 February 1933.

more eligibly situated. The burden of your care, toils and responsibilities is much lighter than that, which God has imposed on your Master. The most enlightened philanthropists, with unlimited resources, could not place you in a situation more favorable to your present and everlasting welfare, than that which you now occupy.⁴²

American slaveholders had brought the Negro out of darkness and barbarism into light, civilization, and religion, said Samuel Henry Dickson. And Clapp believed that God Himself had established slavery in Christian lands in order to deliver Africa from barbarism. Mrs. Gilman pictured in her book, the *Southern Matron*, a happy slave leading his people in thanks to God for bringing them out of darkness into the light of Christianity and under the tutelage of a good master and mistress.⁴³

The benefits of civilization over darkness were plain, but did a Negro have to be a slave to enjoy the transition? Dickson thought so, and Taggart stated repeatedly that the wretched condition of the free Negro obligated the master to continue slavery in order "to secure [the Negro] a comfortable home." In sharp contrast to the condition of the Negro in the North, which was steadily deteriorating, said Taggart, the condition of the southern Negro slave was advancing remarkably in physical comforts, religious instruction, and moral and mental improvement. It was a picture of the happy, hardworking slave over against "the lazy, discontented, and disappointed freedman."⁴⁴

⁴² C.J.P., "Unitarianism in New Orleans [New Orleans Correspondence, No. IV]," *Christian Register*, XX:15 (10 April 1841); Theodore Clapp, *Slavery: A Sermon, Delivered in the First Congregational Church in New Orleans, April 15, 1838* (New Orleans: John Gibson, 1838), p. 66.

⁴³ S. Henry Dickson, *Remarks on Certain Topics Connected with the General Subject of Slavery* (Charleston: Observer Office Press, 1845), pp. 9-10. This pamphlet comprises two magazine articles; the second originally appeared as a "Letter from S. H. Dickson, M.D.," *Christian Examiner and Religious Miscellany*, XXXVII (November 1844), 427-432. The editors of the *Christian Examiner* deleted so much of Dickson's essay that he felt obliged to publish the original essay himself. See also Clapp (note 42 above), p. 56; Gilman (note 21 above), p. 83.

⁴⁴ Charles M. Taggart, "Rev. Mr. Taggart and Slavery," *Christian Register*, XXX:42 (18 October 1851), 1; Taggart, "Slave Holders and Slaves," *Christian Register*, XXX:48 (29 November 1851), 1; Taggart, *Slavery and Law in the Light of Christianity. A Discourse Delivered Before the Congregation of Unitarian Christians of Nashville, Tennessee, on Sunday Evening, June 22d, 1851* (Nashville: John T. S. Fall, 1851), p. 8; S. Henry Dickson, "Influence of Mechanical Occupations on Health," *Southern Literary Journal*, II (June 1836), 250.

Although slaves participated in communion and worship at least in the Unitarian societies of Charleston and Savannah, the religious instruction that Taggart discussed and Mrs. Gilman depicted was decidedly Methodist.⁴⁵ Dickson believed that Unitarianism was suitable only for "those of superior station" and that any "Christian teaching whatever" would satisfy "the poor ignorant slave."⁴⁶ If this seemed to imply that Black Unitarians were not proselytized, the slaves were not troubled. They enjoyed, said Taggart, their own "spacious and comfortable churches" and thousands happily attended in their best clothes to receive religious instruction. "Multitudes," therefore, were "religiously free and happy," preached Theodore Clapp. As Christ's sincere disciples, they possessed a glorious hope, "the more painful and humiliating the circumstances of [their] condition here, the more bright will be [their] immortal existence hereafter."⁴⁷

The possibilities of "mental improvement" for the slave were not as promising as the possibility of his "moral improvement." Most slave states prohibited teaching slaves to read and write. Dickson felt that many slaves acquired much by oral instruction and a majority of them were better educated than the laboring classes "of the higher races" in other countries. To his credit, Dickson wished to remove all legal impediments from instructing Blacks. Granted he felt the pressure of the "loud voice of public opinion," which demanded an improvement in the slaves' condition, his stand on teaching slaves to read and to write was not popular.⁴⁸

The self-interest of the slaveholder necessitated proper medical care for his slaves. A northern "Cotton Lord," said Arnold, could easily fill the place of a dead worker by hiring another man, but the slaveholder was forced to provide care and attention for his Negroes. Dickson recommended proper medical care as "the soundest policy and the wisest self interest." The medical historian, Richard H. Shryock, has pointed out that slavery had disadvantages as a "system of health insurance." Slaves who did not respond to treatment could have medical attention withdrawn, if their indifferent master thought improvement

⁴⁵ Clapp (note 4 above), p. 207; Taggart (note 44 above, first item), p. 1; Gilman (note 21 above), p. 269.

⁴⁶ Dickson (note 31 above), p. 7.

⁴⁷ Taggart (note 44 above, first item), p. 1; Clapp (note 42 above), pp. 45, 67.

⁴⁸ S. H. Dickson, *Address of Dr. S. H. Dickson, Delivered at the Inauguration of the Public School, Fourth of July, 1856* (Charleston: Walker, Evans & Co., 1856), p. 9; Dickson (note 43 above), pp. 3, 10, 21-22, 30.

was not forthcoming. The property interest argument for slave care was not always binding, said Shryock, for "men have been known to neglect even their live stock." Mrs. Gilman assured her readers that slaves did receive proper medical attention and when they grew old, were gradually withdrawn into a contented retirement. So angelic did she portray the South's health and social security system as being, that the description seemed to embarrass her, prompting her to add a footnote that said, it "may scarcely be necessary to repeat" that all incidents in the *Southern Matron* were "founded in truth."⁴⁹

As far as religious instruction, mental improvement, health care, and general comfort were concerned, the slaves' lot was far superior to that of European laborers, northern workers, or the freed Blacks. Clapp and Dickson both praised the American slave's salubrious existence over against the sad plight of the European working woman. Clapp was shocked by the animal-like existence of the female peasantry and laboring classes in England and France. While visiting these lands he tried to convince his hosts that American slaves enjoyed incomparably freer and happier lives than the lives led by their poor women. The average physical comfort of the Black slave, said Dickson, was "infinitely above that of the wretched white slave of the British manufactory, or worse still, of the coal mine, trained from infancy to push with her forehead a loaded wagon," or to crawl in harness like a beast of burden.⁵⁰

When the two men compared the situation of the American woman and the Negro slave, they saw certain similarities. The dependence of a slave upon his master, taught Dickson, was an evil, but it was "only felt to be an evil among equals." The Negro, inferior to the White, was happy in his dependence upon his master, just as woman was "most happy" in her dependence upon man.⁵¹ In Clapp's view American women (even in Massachusetts) had no political liberty and in this respect "were reduced to the level of our slaves." But conversely this

⁴⁹ Richard D. Arnold to Jacob McCall, Savannah, 29 August 1849, Shryock, *Letters* (note 35 above), p. 33. The letter is also in Richard H. Shryock, "Selections from the Letters of Richard D. Arnold, M.D.," *Bulletin of the Johns Hopkins Hospital*, XLII (March-April 1928), 170. See also Dickson (note 44 above), p. 244; Richard H. Shryock, "Medical Practice in the Old South," *South Atlantic Quarterly*, XXIX (April 1930), 174, 175; Gilman (note 21 above), pp. 80-81.

⁵⁰ Clapp, *Autobiographical Sketches* (note 38 above), pp. 341, 375-379; Dickson (note 43 above), p. 28.

⁵¹ Dickson (note 43 above), p. 6.

meant that the slaves were as free and undisturbed in their "domestic relations" as White women in the northern states:

The slaves in Louisiana are, in all essential respects, as free as the female population of Massachusetts. In common with our fair sisters, at the North, they are cut off from the exercise of the political franchise, and the employments of public life. But in the private sphere marked out for them, they may taste the purest bliss of earth, and be an ornament, a light and blessing to all within their influence.⁵²

Needless to say, Clapp thought most slaves were better off than northern working men.⁵³

Taggart, as seen above, liked to compare the comforts of slaves with the discomforts of free Negroes in the North. Mrs. Gilman suspected one heard more singing and dancing at slave Christmas parties than among fugitive slaves in their "frost-bitten colony" in Canada. So great was the contrast between Negro slavery and Negro freedom, Taggart said, that in a number of cases fugitives voluntarily returned to slavery in order to "spend the remainder of their lives in comfort." How unhappy it was for a master to meet accidentally his "*emancipated slaves*" in the North, and have to refuse their mournful and tearful pleas to have "the privilege" of returning to slavery. Inevitably, Caroline Gilman depicted such a sorrowful encounter in the *Southern Matron* between a master and a free Negro whose "only wish on earth was to live and die in his master's service."⁵⁴

It is difficult to reconcile this Elysian slavery celebrated by southern Unitarians with the satanic institution depicted by the radical abolitionists. Surely a slaveholder could not be considered a sinner and slavery sin if the institution produced so much benevolence and love. Taggart felt all social relations were not essentially sinful, and that slavery, therefore, basically a parent-child relationship, was not sinful.⁵⁵ To the contrary, some slaveholders sustained their master-servant relationship even when slavery was not economically profitable

⁵² Clapp (note 41 above), pp. 43, 46.

⁵³ Clapp, (note 42 above), pp. 42, 44.

⁵⁴ Taggart (note 44 above, second item), p. 1; Caroline Gilman to "My dear Children," Charleston, 16 December 1860 (SCHi); Gilman (note 21 above), pp. 235-236.

⁵⁵ Taggart (note 44 above, first item), p. 1. Taggart quoted Orville Dewey's doubt that slavery was sin.

in order to ensure their slaves' happiness. This benevolence certainly could not be considered sin.⁵⁰

"If I were persuaded of [slavery's] sinfulness," testified Theodore Clapp, "no fear of man should deter me from asserting my convictions of truth and duty on this subject." But it was not sin "to protect, feed and clothe, those who are unable to feed, clothe and protect themselves." To free the slaves to fend for themselves was "most cruel, anti-Christian and unmerciful." Clapp felt the South had to do its duty and to say with St. Paul, "We ought to obey God, rather than men." It was "a dictate of Christianity that our colored population should live and die in servitude."⁵¹ Therefore, the slaveholders of the South, remarked Taggart, no less than antislavery northerners, were "professed christians and reasonable men." The slaveholder was a man, wrote Mrs. Gilman, who "controlled the happiness of a large family of his fellow-creatures" and sought to reign over his "little kingdom . . . in wisdom and love."⁵²

C. POLYGENESIS: WHAT GOD HAS PUT ASUNDER, LET NO MAN JOIN TOGETHER

In support of slavery the southern Unitarians usually supplied two arguments: the biblical precedent for slavery and the maintenance of social order. The biblical argument seemed to Clapp to be a good defense for slavery. Slavery was universal among the chosen people of God in the Old Testament. The patriarchs probably each possessed more slaves than any planter living in Mississippi or Louisiana. God did not countenance any laws or customs among the patriarchs which "at the time were wrong, sinful or immoral." In Genesis God gave Abraham bond-servants. "Here we see God," said Clapp, "dealing in slaves; giving them [to Abraham] as a reward for his eminent goodness." God gave his laws to the patriarchs and slavery was part of those laws. This fact furnished "conclusive evidence of a divine authority for the institution." In the New Testament Christ had set down duties governing the master-servant relationship. Clapp warned that if you abolished slavery you abolished the relationship for which the New

⁵⁰ Taggart (note 44 above, second item), p. 1.

⁵¹ Clapp (note 42 above), pp. 5, 40, 59, 60.

⁵² Taggart, *Slavery and Law* (note 44 above), p. 10; Gilman (note 21 above), pp. 202-203.

Testament provided regulations and in effect you abolished "some of the laws of Christ."⁵⁹ Arnold, Taggart, and Caroline Gilman also found support for slavery in the Bible.⁶⁰

A more hysterical argument for slavery was the maintenance of social order. The great majority of Louisiana slaveholders, wrote Clapp, "hold the African in bondage for his own *good* and the *public* order." The Negroes are "so weak, imbecile and inefficient, as to be absolutely incapable of self-government." What else can a slaveholder do but continue to hold his Negroes in bondage:

To set them free, would be to involve them in speedy and remediless destruction. It would be equivalent to deliberate and cold blooded murder. We have no more right at present, acting upon christian principles, to emancipate our slaves, then we have to put them to death by poisoning, shooting, drowning, or burning. The taking care of them, has been devolved upon us as a solemn duty by our ancestors, and I may add, by Almighty Providence.⁶¹

Dickson thought the dangers to social order were so great that emancipation was "neither *possible* nor desirable." Slavery as an institution, explained Taggart, has "co-existed with christian philosophy and christian philanthropy, for more than eighteen centuries." One just could not eradicate or "even materially modify" an institution with a longevity of centuries. To effect the immediate emancipation of three million Negroes jeopardized the liberty of twenty millions of Whites. In the end emancipation meant the extermination of the Blacks. They would go the way of the American Indian; an inferior race tyrannized and destroyed by the superior White race. Or as Arnold rationalized:

Servitude is happiness to the negro; liberty is a means of happiness to the Anglo-Saxon, and the present relative condition of both races is the best security for the prosperity and well being of the whole community. . . . It has worked well, and would have worked well forever if let alone.⁶²

⁵⁹ Clapp (note 42 above), pp. 8-11, 33; cf. also Clapp, *Autobiographical Sketches* (note 38 above), p. 403.

⁶⁰ Taggart, *Slavery and Law* (note 44 above), pp. 5-6; Gilman (note 21 above), pp. 202-203; [Richard D. Arnold,] "The Reaction Against the Abolitionists—American Civilization Versus Puritan Fanaticism" [1861] (newspaper clipping, Richard D. Arnold Scrapbook, NeU);

⁶¹ Clapp (note 42 above), pp. 25, 27; cf. also pp. 58, 60, and Clapp, "A Thanksgiving Sermon" (note 1 above).

⁶² Dickson (note 43 above), p. 20; cf. also Samuel Henry Dickson to John A. Dickson, Charleston, 7 September 1851 (Dickson Family Papers, NeU); Taggart, *Slavery*

Polygenesis, the concept that God created a diversity of races rather than a unity of mankind, was expounded by Taggart. If one proved that God had made one group of men differently from another group of men and that He blessed an inequality of intellect and potential between different "races" of men, then an institution like slavery could be simply looked upon as a contemporary reinforcement of God's own original creative design. "No argument or fact," informed Taggart, "can be adduced, to prove any thing as regards the original unity of the human family." Men only held on to the theory of the unity of the human race because of tradition. There were serious difficulties in proving the theory and no reason whatever for trying to prove that the theory was true. In other words, it was not necessary to maintain Black and White were one in a divine unity of mankind. Rather "the supposition [of] a diversity of original creations by the Supreme Father," explained Taggart,

appears to . . . harmonize perfectly with all the known operations of the gracious author of nature, in adapting all living beings to the admirable and perfect, though to us, wonderful and incomprehensible laws by which he governs the universe.⁶³

The difference between races was neither recent nor temporary, but "a difference established 4,000 years ago, well known, natural and unchangeable as the *spots* upon the leopard." Men should, therefore, Taggart suggested, interpret Holy Scripture in harmony with "established science, the world's history, and the whole natural order of Divine providence."⁶⁴

Dr. Arnold reviewed, in 1856, the work of the famous polygenists, Josiah Clark Nott and George R. Gliddon. He felt their work was of a great political as well as ethnological importance because their conclusions could be applied to the problem of slavery. If the differences of race were traced back to a "diversity of *origin* of the human race," then slavery had a special purpose in God's plan for the world. The South, Arnold remarked, was not wrong to carry out God's original plan and to maintain an inequality, which was "originally impressed,

and Law (note 44 above), pp. 7-8, 11; Taggart (note 44 above, first item), p. 1; Arnold (note 60 above).

⁶³ Charles Manson Taggart, "The Diversity and Origin of Human Races," *Southern Quarterly Review*, N.S., IV (October 1851), 477, 479-480.

⁶⁴ C. M. Taggart, "Rev. C. M. Taggart's Lecture upon the Origin of the Human Race as Taught by Scripture," *Christian Register*, XXXIII:22 (3 June 1854), 1.

and which, so far, through all history, has been inexorably maintained." In short, it was not wrong for the White man to keep the Black man his slave.⁶⁵ Mrs. Gilman believed that "one race must be subordinate to the other." If the Blacks ever came into power, she told Harriet Martineau, she should not object to being placed on the auction block with her children and being sold to the highest bidder.⁶⁶

Ever anxious to please the clergy, Dr. Dickson told the New England Society of Charleston, in 1854, he neither questioned nor denied the unity of the human race in the sense of religious dogma. But he believed that both "physiologically and socially" there was a striking difference between races of men no matter how that difference was explained.⁶⁷ But privately he expressed another view and said to a friend, as to the Blacks, that the difference between them and himself was chasmal:

When they show me — *Ces Amis des Noirs* — a picture of a flatnosed, thick-lipped, woolly head from whose wide mouth issues a label with the sentimental question, 'Am Not I a Man and a Brother?' I reply you may be of the Genus Homo as Naturalists assert but I decline the honour of any near relationship — the Bat and the Whale belong with me to the Mammalia tribe. The Common parentage I do not understand. The Bible evidently contains the history of the Caucasian or White race. I find little mention of the Blacks in the Sacred volume.⁶⁸

As a doctor in the South, Dickson, like Arnold, was prone to affirm the racial differences in contagion and diseases.⁶⁹ The emphasis on the

⁶⁵ [Richard D. Arnold,] "Review of *Indigenous Races of the Earth, New Chapters of Ethnological Inquiry, etc.*, Edited by J. C. Nott, M.D., and George R. Gliddon," [*Savannah*] *Georgian and Journal*, 13 December 1856 (newspaper clipping, Richard D. Arnold Scrapbook, NeU). Arnold had already shown enthusiasm about the work of another polygenist, Samuel George Morton; see William Stanton, *The Leopard's Spots: Scientific Attitudes Toward Race in America, 1815-59* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), p. 92.

⁶⁶ Martineau (note 23 above), I, 344.

⁶⁷ Samuel Henry Dickson, *Speech Delivered (in Substance) at the Dinner of the New England Society, of Charleston, S.C., on Their Anniversary, Dec. 22, 1854* (Charleston: John Russell, 1855), p. 11.

⁶⁸ Samuel Henry Dickson to Joseph Milligan, Charleston, 2 December 1838 (Milligan Papers, NeU).

⁶⁹ Cf., e.g., S. Henry Dickson, *Manual of Pathology and Practice, Being the Outline of the Course of Lectures Delivered by S. Henry Dickson, M.D.* (Charleston: Published by the Author, 1842), p. 54; *Essays on Pathology and Therapeutics, Being the Substance of the Course of Lectures Delivered by Sam'l Henry Dickson, I* (Charleston: McCarter and Allen, 1845), 26-27; Samuel Henry Dickson, "A History

peculiarities of Negro diseases that pervaded Dickson's medical writings also occurred in the work of many other southern doctors. Shryock has pointed out the support that physicians such as Dickson and Arnold gave to an emphasis upon biological distinctions between the races. This was in turn, "an integral part of the whole pro-slavery argument."⁷⁰

It was not surprising then that one of the primary fears of the southern Unitarians was that the abolitionists might obtain emancipation and destroy the South's "civilization" and its distinctions between the "races." They were certain a primary goal of the abolitionists was amalgamation. Some declared that the abolitionists extolled loudly and publicly such a goal. Taggart believed the abolitionists were preaching miscegenation. Dickson believed they were inculcating amalgamation and declared he would die "a thousand deaths" rather than have this take place. Arnold too felt the "Puritan" abolitionists implied the Negroes' right to amalgamation.⁷¹

D. A SOUTHSIDE VIEW OF "FREE SOIL FANATICISM"

"We are living for posterity," preached Taggart, "for the future, for all our race who may succeed us on the earth." America had a special destiny and had risen to be "the resurrection and the life, to the nations of the earth."⁷² Not all southern Unitarians would have supported Taggart's patriotic effusion for America's manifest destiny, but the people under discussion did in fact hold a common allegiance to the Union. As the abolitionists encroached upon their way of life, allegiance to the Union dwindled. Clapp was a solitary exception and remained loyal to the Union throughout the Civil War. In the early 1830s Gilman composed a Union Ode for the Union Party of South Carolina and received a silver vase from them as token of their appreci-

of the Epidemic Dengue, as It Prevailed in Charleston in the Summer of 1850," *Southern Medical Reports*, II (1850), 385; A. W. Palmer, "Notes on lectures of Drs. Geddings, Dickson, Shephard, & Moultrie, Charleston, S.C., 1851-1852," pp. 80, 96 (A. W. Palmer Books, NcU).

⁷⁰ Shryock, "Medical Practice" (note 49 above), p. 169; cf. Richard D. Arnold to A. P. Merrill, Savannah, 23 May 1854, Shryock, *Letters* (note 35 above), pp. 65-67.

⁷¹ Taggart (note 44 above, second item), p. 1; Dickson (note 43 above), p. 35; Arnold (note 60 above).

⁷² Charles M. Taggart, *The Moral Mission of Our Country. Two Discourses Delivered Before the Unitarian Christians, of Charleston, S. C. on Sunday, July 3D, 1853* (Charleston: Steam Power-Press of Walker & James, 1853), p. 11.

ation.⁷³ Arnold led the Union party in Georgia and right up to the Civil War defended the Union as our "glorious inheritance."⁷⁴ To Dickson the Union was "glorious," still he hedged a bit; he *was* a national unionist, but "A Charlestonian and Carolinian first, and above all."⁷⁵

The abolitionists' attack upon the South was sometimes transposed by the southern Unitarians into an attack upon the Union. Had not the abolitionists spoken of disunion themselves?⁷⁶ For the most part, however, they engaged the abolitionists in warfare in order to protect their southern way of life. "The noisy throng of fanatical abolitionists" had united the South, and the South in turn assailed the "misnamed reformers" for making the slaves' condition worse, for thrusting in the slaves' hands "dangerous and improper primers and picture books," for preaching insurrection to the slaves, for expounding "trashy" and "empty" arguments against slavery, for extolling private conscience above the law of the land, and leading the country into "horrors of anarchy."⁷⁷

Arnold approved of the Compromise of 1850 and felt that the South could accept it without "degradation or dishonor."⁷⁸ When the North

⁷³ Samuel Gilman, "Union Ode. Composed for the Union Party of S.C., and sung July 4, 1831" (typescript); Francis G. Porcher, M.D., A. S. Willington, and Thomas Bennett to Samuel Gilman, Charleston, 19 April 1832 (copy); "To the Author of the National Ode Written for the 4th of July, 1831. The Revd. Samuel Gilman. As a tribute of the affectionate respect for the Patriot, the Scholar and the Poet. The friends of National Union have presented this vase. Chas. So. Ca." (typescript of inscription on vase) - - all of above: SCHi.

⁷⁴ Richard D. Arnold, *An Oration, Delivered in the New Baptist Church, Savannah, before the Union and State Rights Association of Chatham County, on the Fourth of July, 1835* (Savannah: Thomas Purse, 1835), p. 21; Richard D. Arnold to John W. Forney, Savannah, 26 November 1856, Shryock, *Letters* (note 35 above), p. 79.

⁷⁵ Dickson (note 67 above), pp. 3, 10.

⁷⁶ Taggart, *Slavery and Law* (note 44 above), p. 11; Taggart (note 72 above), p. 14; Clapp (note 42 above), pp. 61-62; Clapp, *Autobiographical Sketches* (note 38 above), p. 392; Richard D. Arnold to F. L. Bascom, Savannah, n.d. [1837], Shryock, *Letters* (note 35 above), p. 18.

⁷⁷ Dickson (note 43 above), pp. 3, 21, 30; Samuel Henry Dickson to Joseph Milligan, Charleston, 28 November 1835 (Milligan Papers, NcU); Richard D. Arnold to Chandler Robbins, Savannah, 15 August 1837, Shryock, *Letters* (note 35 above), p. 14; Taggart, *Slavery and Law* (note 44 above), p. 6; Martineau (note 23 above), II, 236; Harriet Martineau to Lydia Maria Child, Westminster, 10 January, n.y. (Autograph file, MH); Clapp (note 42 above), p. 53; Taggart (note 72 above), p. 15.

⁷⁸ "Dr. Arnold's Letter," *Savannah Daily Georgian*, 17 June 1851 (newspaper

failed to honor the compromise, shot down southerners in pursuit of "their just rights," and assisted "black pilferers and colored runaways" to escape, then the South could offer the prayer for these "misguided brethren": "Father, forgive them! for they know not what they do!"⁷⁹ Or the South could make preparations for open warfare. Arnold soon saw the time was coming when every southerner had to stand "in hostile array against Free Soil Fanaticism." He sent \$126 from the citizens of Darien, Georgia to aid Georgian colonists in Kansas and prayed, "God prosper the right."⁸⁰ Samuel Gilman lamented the Kansas bloodshed and the "brandishing of the forked, fiery tongue of Sumner," and hoped for the peaceful separation of the Union into two commonwealths.⁸¹

With the John Brown raid into the South, peaceful separation seemed a slim possibility. Mrs. Gilman was disturbed by "John Brownism," and Arnold thought the North had become a "foreign and hostile people." Northerners threatened the South's "very households" with their "unholy meddling." He thought Sumner and Seward ought to be "shot down in their tracks." Racism clouded his vision of the impending crisis and he wrote a fellow physician, in Washington:

It is a practical question with us, not only as to existence and prosperity, but whether we are to [be] disenfranchised of our liberties and subjugated to domination of the Black Race. In a few words, to gratify an abstract fanatical idea about the equality of the Black and White Races, entertained by men many of whom have hardly ever seen a Negro, the best government on the face of the earth is to be destroyed . . .⁸²

The tragic events weighed heavily upon Caroline Gilman. Like her husband, she had wanted the two antagonistic sections of the country to part in peace, but she knew that was unlikely now. In December 1860 she was alone in Charleston. Her husband had been dead for two

clipping), "Scrapbook, 1871-1875 [of Richard Dennis Arnold]" (NcD); Arnold to John W. Forney, Savannah, 30 March 1858, Shryock, *Letters* (note 35 above), p. 88.

⁷⁹ Taggart (note 44 above, first item), p. 1; Dickson, "Duelling" (note 34 above), p. 132; Dickson (note 67 above), p. 7.

⁸⁰ Richard D. Arnold to Col. John W. Forney, Savannah, 9 September 1851, Arnold to Capt. E. M. McGee, Agent for the Georgian Colony in Kansas, 13 September 1856, Shryock, *Letters* (note 35 above), pp. 57, 77-78.

⁸¹ Samuel Gilman to "My dear children," Charleston, August 1856 (SCU).

⁸² Caroline Gilman to "My dear children," Charleston, 24 December 1860 (SCHI); Richard D. Arnold to Mrs. F. N. Cosens, Savannah, 25 September 1860, Arnold to William C. Lowber, Savannah, 7 December 1860, Arnold to James J. Waring, Savannah, 28 December 1860, Shryock, *Letters* (note 35 above), pp. 98-100.

years. Her children were in the North. She called her slave, James, to her side and explained to him the reasons for the difficulties between the North and the South.

I said, 'You know the old thirteen states made laws together, called a constitution, and promised to keep them. One of the laws was that runaway slaves should be returned to their owners. The North has broken the law, encourages the slaves to run away, and sends them to Canada. They do not take them home and make ladies and gentlemen of them, but put them in a freezing climate, to labor for their own living, good and bad together.'

'Another trouble is about the territories. Can you tell me, James, who owned Louisiana before the U.S. bought it?'

'The French, ma'am,' said he, without hesitation.

'Well, that state, and the other territories were bought by all the States, North and South. The South paid as much money as the North and had the same right to them. After a while some of the Northern States began to say the Southerners should not carry their slaves into new territories. Of course they could not live without their slaves, who are their support, and this made another difficulty. Now the South wants to separate from the North and have nothing more to do with them. James, do you understand all this?'

'Yes, ma'am. Thank you, ma'am.'

'Now James, I hope and trust there will be no fighting, but if there is, you must take good care of me, and I will take care of you.'

'Yes, ma'am.'⁸³

⁸³ Caroline Gilman to "My dear children," Charleston, 16 December 1860 (SCHi); reprinted in her "Letters of a Confederate Mother" (note 22 above), pp. 504-505.

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CORRIGENDA

AN ACCIDENT subsequent to proofreading (discovered in time for correction in offprints of the article) caused two errors in the October 1977 issue (XXV:4), page 425. The second line of footnote 62 was printed upside down, and the last line of footnote 62 was printed as the fourth line of footnote 63.