

“As God Gives Us to See the Right”: War, Reconstruction, Reunion, and Religious Citizenship in the United States, 1861-1877

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<Abstract>

The analysis that follows examines how religious citizenship evolved during the twelve years of Reconstruction (1865-1877) in the United States that followed Lincoln’s injunction to his fellow Americans to act in the years ahead “with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right.” The essay begins by tracing some of the divergences between postwar religious assumptions in the North and South to attitudes honed during the conflict. It takes as symbols of the contrasting views two of the opposing generals at the Battle of Chancellorsville in 1862, Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson, the early avatar of the “religion of the lost cause” in the South, and Oliver Otis Howard, the future head of the Freedmen’s Bureau. It then deals with how Americans made peace with the dead – at least 620,000 of them, or two percent of the nation’s population – in ways that included Horace Bushnell’s theology of “vicarious sacrifice,” resurgent spiritualism, and the annihilation of pain and suffering in Mary Baker Eddy’s *Science and Health* (1875). It concludes with the religious impulse to make peace with the living through reuniting the national family. However, this compassionate religious citizenship too often offered only a blinkered definition of family, for reconciliation with the white prodigal sons of the South typically entailed abandoning the newly admitted African American members of the national family.

[Keywords] *Civil War; Reconstruction; religion; reconciliation; race; sections*

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신이 우리에게 권리를 주신 것처럼:
1861-1877 년 미국에서의 전쟁, 재건, 통합, 종교시민성

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<국문초록>

다음의 분석은 신이 우리에게 권리를 주신대로 단호하게 권리를 주장하기에 앞서, 수년 동안 미국인들에게 행동할 것을 요구한 링컨의 명령을 따른 12년간의 재건(1865-1877)기간에 종교시민권이 미국에서 어떻게 발전했는지를 검토한다. 본고는 북과 남에서 갈등의 시기에 연마된 태도에 대한 전쟁이후의 종교적 가정들 사이에서 생기는 불일치를 추적하며 시작한다. 1862년에 Chancellorsville 전투에서의 서로 반대되는 견해를 펼친 두 장군, 즉 남쪽에서의 "잃어버린 원인의 종교"의 초기 구현인 Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson, 그리고 Freedmen's Bureau의 미래 책임자 Oliver Otis Howard, 이 둘을 다루는데 이들은 대조되는 견해의 상징이다. 다음으로 미국인들이 Horace Bushnell의 "대리 희생"의 신학, 부활하는 영성주의, 그리고 메리 베이커 에디의 과학과 건강(1875)에서 통증과 고통을 없애는 것을 포함하는 방식으로 적어도 62만 명, 즉 전국 인구의 2%의 죽은 사람들과 어떻게 평화롭게 공존하는지를 다룬다. 그것은 국가 가족의 재결합을 통해서 살아있는 사람과 평화롭게 공존하려는 종교적 충동으로 결론지어진다. 그러나 남부의 방탕한 백인 아들 들과의 화해를 위해 전형적으로 새롭게 인정된 흑인계 미국인 가족 구성원을 포기해야 했던 이 자비로운 종교 시민권은 너무 자주 가족의 정의를 흐리게 만들었다.

[Keywords] 전쟁, 재건, 종교, 화해, 경주, 종교

I. Introduction

The religious dimensions of the Reconstruction Era – by longstanding even if occasionally contested historical convention (Foner 2014 [1988], xxv-xxxvii; Downs and Masur 2015), the twelve years between the defeat of the eleven rebellious slave states in the spring of 1865 and the withdrawal of the last U.S. troops from southern states in 1877 – evolved from an irony captured in a wry, wondering observation by Abraham Lincoln as the war drew to a close in March 1865. In his Second Inaugural Address, Lincoln mused that both sides in the conflict remained heirs of the overwhelmingly religious atmosphere in antebellum American culture. “Both read the same Bible,” he noted, “and pray to the same God; and each invokes His aid against the other.” And after his death six weeks later, both would try to shape postwar religious culture in accord with their overlapping faiths but differing experiences during the war – to act, as Lincoln hoped, “with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right,” but with continuing divergences in what they chose to see as right (Lincoln 1989, 687; cf. White 1998).

Despite Lincoln’s nudge and the perception among historians of the extreme religiosity of Americans throughout the nineteenth century – the awareness, as H. Richard Niebuhr put it almost eighty years ago, that the country had been shaped by “an awakening to God that was simultaneous with its awakening to national self-consciousness” (Niebuhr 1988 [1937],

126; cf. Haselby 2015) – until recently religion had not been central to most historians’ understanding of the nation’s greatest trauma, the Civil War. Despite some groundbreaking work from the 1970s on (for example, Morehead 1978; Shattuck 1987; Rose 1992, 17-67; and other works discussed in Gourley 2002), few would have quarreled with the judgment of the organizers of a conference on Religion and the Civil War held in 1994 that “the religious history of the war has yet to be written,” in the sense that “the sort of sustained, productive attention that has been paid to religion in the colonial period, the Revolutionary era, and the modern age is simply not present for the Civil War” (Miller, Stout, and Reagan 1998a, 3). The collection of essays that emanated from the conference (Miller, Stout, and Reagan 1998b) helped to change that perception, with provocative and illuminating contributions by Drew Faust, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, George Fredrickson, Eugene Genovese, James M. McPherson, Mark Noll, Harry S. Stout, Bertram Wyatt-Brown, and ten other scholars (see especially Berends 1998, Faust 1998, Fox-Genovese 1998, Fredrickson 1998, Genovese 1998b, Hill 1998, Mitchell 1998, Paludan 1998, Stout and Grass 1998, and Wyatt-Brown 1998). Besides the appearance of a number of works adding new detail or perspectives to the questions that had been raised about the role of religion during the Civil War (e.g., Genovese 1998a, Woodworth 2001, Berends 2004, Noll 2006, Stout 2006, Miller 2007, and Wesley 2013), the follow-up question about its role during

the Reconstruction years inevitably surfaced (for example, in Wyatt-Brown 2001, 230-295, and above all in Stowell 1998a).

Up to then religion typically turned up in historical accounts of Reconstruction only in the context of black Christianity, the subject of all the mentions of churches and religion in the index of what has become the standard history of the period, Eric Foner's *Reconstruction* (Foner 2014 [1988], 649). One of the results of the new, broader interest was a collection of essays on religion and Reconstruction conceived in self-conscious emulation of the earlier work on the Civil War and Reconstruction (Poole and Blum 2005, 3). Nevertheless, it has to be said that the collection (Blum and Poole 2005) has not had a commensurate effect on historical scholarship, perhaps in part because few of the historians involved had the same level of reputation within the profession, but also because the contributions as a whole did not attempt comparably broad perspectives on the topic (but see Foster 2005, Harvey 2005, Poole 2005, Stowell 2005, and Summers 2005 as partial exceptions). As recently as 2015, an historical account of religion during Reconstruction could argue that "social and political historians have all but ignored the role of religion in the postwar period" (Harlow 2015, 134). It may be useful therefore to offer an overview of the crosscurrents within mainstream American Protestantism during the twelve years after the fall of the Confederacy, to suggest some tentative early conclusions.¹

¹ Although some work has been done on American Catholicism during Reconstruction (e.g., Gleeson 2005 and McConnell 2005), and it would be interesting to view the issues of the era through the

II. Emanations from a Battlefield

Both the similarities and the differences in the religious consciousness of Northerners and Southerners after the war were adumbrated on May 2, 1863 near the crossroads of Chancellorsville, Virginia, with the clash of forces led by two West Point graduates who when war broke out had both been teaching math or science at military colleges but contemplating the prospect of resigning to become full-time Protestant ministers. The similarities even extended to the wounds of these exemplars of the Christian soldier – the northern general had lost his right arm in battle a year earlier, while the left arm of the southern general would be amputated that night after he was wounded by friendly fire. The differences began with their levels of military prowess. The victor that day, as had almost always been the case for two years, was the Confederate General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson, whose flank movement had surprised and scattered the battalion commanded by Union General Oliver Otis Howard (Gwynne 2014, especially 146-148, 156-157, 487-488, 523-544; Davis 1996; Howard 1907, I, 72-93, 347-377; McFeely 1994 [1968], 26-44 [on his ministerial ambitions in 1860, 38]; Sears 1996, 230-297).

eyes of, for example, Jews and Mormons, Protestant denominations represented not only the overwhelming majority of institutional believers in the United States, but also the groups that, because they were most invested in finding national or sectional implications for religion, were most directly involved in defining the religious dimensions of Reconstruction.

But there were other differences between the two men that presaged the different paths that religion would take in the South and North during Reconstruction. Although there were relatively few differences between religious feelings in the North or South, with the possible exception of the compromises and redefinitions required to adjust evangelical Christianity to the requirements of a slave society (Heyrman 1997), white Southerners convinced themselves that they were unique in the intensity and purity of their dedication to religion. Thus, although religious revivals swept through both armies from 1862 until the conclusion of the war (Woodworth 2001, especially 175-255; Miller 2007), Southerners believed that their growing "army of believers" had no parallel (Mitchell 1998; Miller 2007, 155-161). "Does the history of the world record anywhere the like?" one Confederate soldier asked in a letter. "Even Cromwell's time sinks into insignificance" (Gay 2001 [1892], 83). As Drew Faust has observed, "Like the United States before it, the Confederacy became the redeemer nation, the new Israel" (Faust 1988, 22-40, quotation on 29).

Jackson's religiosity and his concern for the salvation of his men, reflected in his solicitation of missionaries to the Confederate armies even before the revival outbreak (Woodworth 2001, 160-161), became central to the mythology that quickly developed around him. Typical was the portrayal of "Prayer in Stonewall Jackson's Camp," an etching made probably in 1863 by the Baltimore Confederate sympathizer Adalbert John

Volck (Volck 1863). Respect and even admiration for Jackson and his beliefs also came from Volck's detested Northern Unionists, for whom Jackson became a Southern-bred variant on John Brown as an Old Testament prophet driven by New Testament beliefs. For Herman Melville, Jackson, although wrong, remained "True to the thing he deemed was due, / True as John Brown or steel" (Stowell 1998b, 194). According to Elizabeth Keckley, the former slave who lived in the White House as dresser and seamstress for the First Lady, even President Lincoln fell under the spell of Jackson's reputation as "a brave, honest, Presbyterian soldier. What a pity that we should have to fight such a gallant fellow!" (Kaufman 2006, 51) But the center of the cult that developed around the general's dedication to religion was then, as it would remain to the present day, in the South. Stonewall Jackson's record of daring victories seemed to signal God's favor on the fervent Presbyterian, and by extension on the Confederate cause as a whole. It was therefore all the more shocking when, as a result of the wounds suffered while returning to his own lines after reconnoitering to pursue Howard's fleeing troops in the moonlight, sepsis set in and killed Jackson eight days after his final triumph.

The reaction throughout the Confederacy was a dry run for the anguished shock with which they met the defeat of Jackson's commander-in-chief Robert E. Lee two years later (Stowell 1998a, 3-13; Stowell 1998b). At first they wondered if they had annoyed God by

worshipping a mere mortal, but over time most came to view Jackson's death and, later, Lee's surrender as signs of their special place in God's plan, that He would deign to inflict temporary burdens on them before their final victory. As the Attorney General of the Confederacy explained, "Christianity may well cherish the memory of this holy hero, as the noblest ample of pious patriotism; and appeals to his name, as an imperishable proof, that the devout conscience of the South, in the fear and love of God, is constrained to yield up life, a bleeding sacrifice upon the altar of its country's independence!" (quoted in Stout 2006, 228). Even when independence failed, the spiritual and political metamorphosis that has come to be called the "religion of the lost cause" promised that defeat was only temporary. Over time God would allow white Southerners to fulfill their thwarted destiny, just as He had with an earlier chosen people. The proof could be found in their memory of the war's uniquely Christian soldiers as symbolized by their martyred Stonewall Jackson (Wilson 2009 [1980]; cf. Hunter 2000; Goldfield 2002, especially 43-75; Berends 2004; Stowell 2005; and Foster 2005).

The coalescence of the "religion of the lost cause" was assisted by the determination of Southern whites to maintain the separate religious existence that had developed before the war as Southern branches of the major Protestant denominations established separate organizations, more or less directly in defense of slavery. Because the war was fought almost exclusively in the South, the war devastated its churches, closed many of its religious colleges and newspapers, and disrupted its denominational synods

and other organizational structures, but the defeated whites rejected the missionaries and other help offered by Northern churches due to the presumption of sin they would have assigned to antebellum social and economic life (Stowell 1998a). Not only did white Southerners maintain their separate denominational structures, but they increasingly flocked to a "born again" group that after the war dominated Southern religious existence as they had not before 1861, and as they would not in the North for the remainder of the nineteenth century – the Southern Baptist Convention (Harvey 1997, Harvey 1998). Only in one major area did white Southerners find themselves thwarted in their effort to reconstruct religious life on the model of antebellum Protestantism – their desire to keep the former slaves within religious organizations dominated by their former masters. Overwhelmingly African Americans chose to take charge of the one area clearly left to them – their souls (Foner 2014 [1988], 88-95; Stowell 1998a, 65-99).

Reconstruction elicited a less intense, more diffuse reaction in the religious consciousness of the North, not because beliefs and spiritual commitments were any less fervid above the Mason-Dixon line dividing former "free" and slave states, but rather simply because the North had won. Military victory allowed an expansive perspective across a variety of issues that had often had to take a backseat during the war – the publication of *The Origin of Species* in 1859 (Roberts 1988) and related questions about the implications of science and modern scholarship for traditional faith; the rapid industrialization and urbanization that in the postwar years seeded the emergent "social gospel" of Washington

Gladden and others; and the internal civil wars of several denominations, especially the Episcopal church that, in the judgment offered in 1871 by one young clergyman, through its contention among High, Low, and Broad Church factions “embraces representatives of all the great tendencies now in motion, and its dissensions represent in miniature the confusion which reigns in religious matters in the world at large” ([Sumner] 1871, 222). The young Episcopalian priest in question, William Graham Sumner, who would in 1872 move to Yale to teach political and social science, has left us almost all of the sermons he delivered between 1868 and 1873, as well as the religious journal he edited during its single year of publication. Over that half-decade of religious engagement that included extensive treatment of social and economic issues, not once did the Reverend Sumner deal with the issues of white and black Southerners (Bellomy 1980, 95-137, 158-184). The only partial exception was a Memorial Day address that Sumner was invited to deliver in 1872 as one of the leading ministers in Morristown, New Jersey, but even in this instance he framed the war as a stage in the evolution of modernity and the maturation of the nation rather than as a moral crusade (Sumner 1872).

Nevertheless, the war’s aftermath did make a difference for many religious Northerners, if not for the future sociologist. If the death of Stonewall Jackson signaled the direction that religion would take for white Southerners, his defeated opponent at Chancellorsville represented a different

religious self-definition – not of martyrdom, but of mission. Within the Union ranks no one had a higher reputation as a “Christian soldier” than General Otis Howard, who would take it on himself to lead the regular Sunday services for his command with what one soldier called his “eloquent addresses and earnest exhortations” if no chaplain were available (Shattuck 1987, 76). Southerners sneered at the “political religion” of the North, as if their own religious defenses of slavery and of secession were not political, but their hypocrisy highlighted a real difference – that many Northerners, in the wake of a war that had become, whatever their original views on the question, a mission to free the slaves, remained for a time more willing to use the government as an instrument of what they interpreted as God’s will.

After the war General Howard became the symbol of this continuing mission as head of the Freedmen’s Bureau, tasked with overseeing the economic and educational welfare of the former slaves (McFeely 1994 [1968]). In this endeavor he was joined by thousands of volunteers dedicated to material assistance and education for Southerners, including missionaries who focused on blacks in the region after whites gave them the cold shoulder, and hundreds of young women who moved south out of a sense of Christian mission to assist African American communities establish schools (Anderson 1988, 4-32; Stowell 1998a, 130-145; Faulkner 2004). Other Northerners involved themselves in different forms of religious outreach. President Ulysses S. Grant’s

“Peace Policy” temporarily withdrew troops from Indian lands and divided the control of agencies on Indian reservations among Protestant denominations. The results were predictably mixed, as with all federal policies regarding Native Americans, but few questioned the intentions of the new agents, especially the pacifist Quakers who were allotted the Comanche and Pawnee tribes (White 1991, 219-220; Frantz 1999 [1993], 21-23; Richardson 2007, 114-116; Hämäläinen 2008, 325-329). If Grant’s policy might seem to blur the line between church and state that many Americans now assume, it did not go far enough for some Reconstruction Era religious figures, mostly Presbyterians or members of the Reformed church who, on the basis of their shared Scottish Covenanter heritage, demanded that, as the government grew in power, it should be held responsible to God’s will through a constitutional amendment establishing Christianity as the basis of the state (Foster 2002, 27-30).

Even without its aura of sharia law, the United States has many reasons to be grateful for the failure of the National Association for the Amendment of the Constitution to achieve its end, for the great hearts unleashed by the crusading spirit of the era could be directed by small minds. Many Northerners became a semi-institutionalized Christian lobby pressing for the prohibition of the sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages, the use of the mail for transmitting “obscene” materials, the practice of polygamy in territories dominated by Mormons, and other activities that seemed counter to what they considered Christian morality (Foster 2002; Summers 2005). It is notable, for example, that the more than four-decade-long career

of Anthony Comstock, who guarded the moral purity of the nation’s young from his position as unpaid special agent of the U.S. Post Office from 1873 on by personally seeing to the arrest of more than 3,600 individuals of all ages for distributing prurient photographs, sexually suggestive literature, or birth control materials, had worked with the U.S. Christian Commission in Florida while still in uniform in the waning days of the Civil War, then launched his initial moral campaign in the early 1870s with support from the Young Men’s Christian Association of New York. He confidently expressed his belief that “Jesus never would wink at any wrong nor would he countenance it” (Bremner 1967, quotation on x).

III. Making Peace with the Living and the Dead

Beneath these differences, similarities in the religious impulses of Northerners and Southerners also flowed, even if at times diverted by their disparate experiences of the war. Above all, religious Americans had to deal with the horrendous number of war dead – at least 620,000, equivalent to 2 percent of the country’s population. In the highest death rate ever recorded for American military personnel, 14 percent of all those who donned a uniform, blue or gray, would die (Neff 2005, 20). As a result, the commemoration of the dead became one of the crucial tasks for Americans during the Reconstruction era (Blight 2001, 64-97; Blight 2004; Blair 2004; Neff 2005, Faust 2008). Southerners suffered far worse proportionately, but over time many could subsume the dead within the “religion

of the lost cause.” In the North, Decoration Day – the ancestor of Memorial Day – was from the start as much a religious commemoration as a celebration of nationhood, as the war dead became sacrifices for a religious mission. The theologian Horace Bushnell made this clear in his *Vicarious Sacrifice* (1866), which argued that Christ’s sacrifice was not unique, but an act of love for others that all humans could and should assume. One proof was the love for their nation shown by Union soldiers “rushing to the field and throwing their bodies and dear lives on the battle’s edge to save it!” (Bushnell 1866, 47) The religious connotations of vicarious sacrifice took a particular human shape for many Northerners with the assassination of Abraham Lincoln from a bullet fired into his head on Good Friday, 1865 (Schwartz 2000, 29-65; Neff 2005, 66-102).

But in dealing with the dead among their own loved ones, many Northerners did not want symbolic significance. They sought a more homely solace and reunion. As Drew Faust has argued, “The Civil War made urgent the transformation of heaven into an eternal family reunion, encouraging notions of an afterlife that was familiar and close at hand, populated by loved ones who were just ‘beyond the veil.’” Assisting anguished Americans grappling with their wartime losses was a resurgent spiritualism, enabling loved ones to feel that they were communicating with dead sons, brothers, husbands, and fiancés (Faust 2008, 180-185, quotation on 180). After the war a flood of books for the first time tried to depict life in heaven for the dead, which

typically turned out, as in Elizabeth Phelps’ *The Gates Ajar* (1868), to resemble a purer vision of middle-class American life on earth, with families reunited and children playing in the front yard. In comforting a young woman whose fiancé has been killed in the war, her aunt explains that “A happy home is the happiest thing in the world. I do not see why it should not be in any world” (Phelps 1869, 140).

Others also sought to erase the boundary between life and death, but not by eradicating the ethereal in favor of the mundane. One of the central religious documents to emerge from the Reconstruction Era was Mary Baker Eddy’s *Science and Health* (1875). The founding document of Christian Science moved in the opposite direction, annihilating physical pain, sickness, even death in recognition of pervasive spirit. Linking herself to the abolitionists who had foreseen the end of Negro slavery in the war that had ended ten years earlier, Eddy proclaimed a day when “matter” was no longer the “master” of man, when humanity would no longer suffer as the “helpless slaves” of “sickness, sin and death” (Eddy 1875; cf. Gottschalk 1973; Gill 1998, 146-233; and Gottschalk 2006).

Yet another reunion loomed large in the religious consciousness during Reconstruction besides that of the quick and the dead: the reuniting in brotherhood of former enemies among the living. The end of Reconstruction was facilitated by the parable of the prodigal son, as understood by Northerners. Although some would continue to “wave the bloody shirt” for at least another decade (Janney 2013), by the

American Centennial celebrations opened in 1876 a recurring motif would become reuniting of the national family. Many veterans used the convocations of the Grand Army of the Republic to press for the completion of their wartime mission through a thorough reconstruction of the South (Jordan 2014), but they could also agree with William Francis Bartlett, a young general who had been wounded four times in the war, then captured and incarcerated in Richmond's notorious Libbey Prison after his prosthetic leg had been destroyed by enemy fire, when he responded to the toast "The North and the South" at the centennial of the first battles of the American Revolution in 1875. "As an American, I am as proud of the men who charged so bravely with Pickett's division on our lines at Gettysburg, as I am of the men who so bravely met and repulsed them there" (Buck 1937, 140). Aware that the South had suffered death and destruction far worse than any that they had endured, Northerners, often led by their ministers, increasingly dropped their calls for repentance and proffered their hands in fellowship. In his Memorial Day address of 1872, Sumner had already spoken for an emerging clerical consensus when he separated the commemoration of the Northern dead from the responsibility of the men who had killed them, for "now that the head of the conflict has subsided, we see distinctly the sad mischief of civil strife. The blows which we struck were blows at our own body; the wounds which we gave left scars upon ourselves; the destruction which we wrought fell upon our own interests.... The names of places which we inscribe on our monuments are not those of a foreign foe; they are our own and a part of the

inheritance of our children" (Sumner 1872, 361).

Nina Silber has described what we can see in retrospect as two separate forces at work in the impulse to reconcile. On the one hand, many middle-class Americans in the North had qualms about the economic and social changes that were transforming their part of the nation. Even before the Civil War, an element of nostalgia for preindustrial values had created an audience for memories of a land where "old times there are not forgotten," as the song "Dixie," debuted in the North in 1859, had put it (Finson 1994, 159-199; Malone and Stricklin, 2003; cf. Taylor 1963 [1961]). Impelled by their doubts about the industrialized, increasingly urbanized America emerging during the Gilded Age, Northerners, Silber argued, "transferred their anger against the southern aristocracy into feelings of pity and respect, ultimately sentimentalizing the unhurried and leisurely lifestyles of the planter class" (Silber 1993, 6). The nostalgia could therefore easily widen into a sentimental identification with suffering, the same compassionate empathy that had created audiences for the novels of Charles Dickens and Harriet Beecher Stowe, only not now an identification with the suffering of Little Nell or Little Eva but rather with Little Eva's mother and other plantation mistresses. "In the sentimental frame of mind," Silber explained, "suffering represented a genuine emotion which cut through economic and political pretenses and revealed true human feelings" (Silber 1993, 38-64, quotation on 51). Silber deals with the influence of sentimentalism on the impulse towards reconciliation during Reconstruction in primarily literary terms, but her analysis

should ring a bell with any student of religion during the period, for it corresponds to the religion of the heart that was defining spiritual relationships almost exclusively in terms of love (cf. Douglas 1977), and that was converting suffering Jesus into the central figure in Protestant Christianity precisely because, in Bushnell's terms, all humanity could share in His vicarious sacrifice by acting on the emotional bonds between them.

In this spirit of empathy and forgiveness, American Christians living in the Northern states could feel, with justification, that they were exemplifying the message of Christ. The only criticism to be offered – though it is a telling one – is that their conception of the national family was too narrow. Their notion of brother and sister did not encompass even all Americans, but ultimately only extended to middle- and upper-class whites who looked like them. Just as Grant's "Peace Policy" towards the Indians would disintegrate in the renewed wars that would lead to Custer's Last Stand in 1876 and the long pursuit of the Nez Perce tribe in 1877 by troops under the command of the "Christian general" Otis Howard, reunion with white Southerners was largely on the terms demanded by the "religion of the lost cause" – that is, an abandonment of the black citizens of the region. Tragically, the era's greatest moral failing arose from sentiments of brotherly reconciliation of the sections, at the expense of the aspirations and expectations of the freed slaves.

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