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"MASTER, GIVE UNTO YOUR SERVANTS THAT WHICH IS RIGHT
AND JUST": A LOOK AT VIOLENT CHRISTIAN SLAVEHOLDERS
AND THEIR RELIGIOUS JUSTIFICATION OF ABUSE

CASS M. HAWKINS

“MASTER, GIVE UNTO YOUR SERVANTS THAT WHICH IS RIGHT AND JUST”:

A LOOK AT VIOLENT CHRISTIAN SLAVEHOLDERS AND
THEIR RELIGIOUS JUSTIFICATION OF ABUSE

A Thesis

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School

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for the Degree of

Master of Arts

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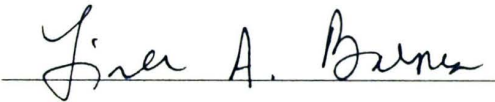
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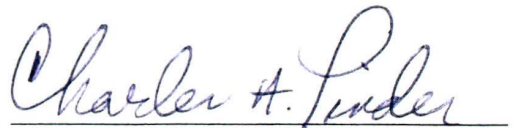


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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my husband, Chad Hawkins, who spent several nights holding down the fort so I could read, write, and study. Thank you for helping me achieve my goals and always supporting me to do my best.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you Dr. Schnell for encouraging my ideas and helping me shape the early ideas for this thesis. Also, I appreciate your willingness to take on this project long distance, although it wasn't ideal, you were a great help. Thank you to the Graduate English Department at Austin Peay State University. Despite your full schedules, I was always able to get the help I needed to pursue this goal of mine. In addition, thank you to my parents, Richard and Chris Montgomery, who instilled in me the value of education and love of books.

ABSTRACT

During the nineteenth century, slavery was a common practice in America. Although there were various levels of slaveholders, those slaveholders who were abusive and even violent towards their slaves often did so under a blanket of religion. Christian slaveholders who abused their slaves in such a manner were able to use their local minister, the Bible, and even God as justification for such behavior. Although this violent Christian slaveholder is seen over and over again in slave narratives, he rarely surfaces in slavery fiction.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Author's Statement of Principles and Influence.....	vi
<i>Master, Give Unto Your Servants That Which is Right and Just</i>	1
Annotated Bibliography.....	26
Vita.....	39

STATEMENT OF CRITICAL PRINCIPLES AND INFLUENCES

Growing up on the West Coast of the United States, I heard stories of the pioneers who trekked west, learned about the Gold Rush on family vacations, and built a sugar cube replica of a California mission for a fourth grade project. This was the American history I considered familiar. As a result of my location, the history of the Southern states was always at a mysterious, yet intriguing, distance. When I began Dr. Schnell's American Literature Seminar in the fall of 2002, the major assignment was a research paper, which included a history of the literary criticism on our chosen topic. Although slightly intimidated by attempting to add to the critical conversation, I knew early on in the semester that I wanted to use Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* because of the way Stowe humanizes slavery, and the impact this novel had on the history of the American South.

Uncle Tom's Cabin is the most widely read novel regarding slavery and there are volumes of literary criticism available on almost every aspect of the novel. While researching for my paper, I began to be discouraged by the overwhelming amount of options for my paper. However, when I stumbled across SallyAnn H. Ferguson's 1996 article, "Christian Violence and the Slave Narrative," something immediately clicked in my mind. Ferguson's article caught my attention because she writes about the ironic situation of a Christian slaveholder who abuses slaves. This could be a slaveholder who professes religion on Sunday, and then never practices it during the week, or a

slaveholder who follows a preacher who uses the Bible as justification for slavery.

Ferguson discussed that these slave owners were often acting on a God-complex, where they were recreating the original Maker's universe by controlling and manipulating the slaves under their care.

I chose to focus a part of my thesis on Ferguson's ideas on the paradox of the violent Christian master. One thing that Ferguson mentions in her article is that she was unable to find any literary criticism on this aspect of slavery. As I continue to research this topic, I am also unable to find significant criticism on the violent Christian master. There is plenty written on the violent master, or a Christian master, but there is little available on the slaveholder Ferguson discusses. Also, Ferguson addresses the violent Christian master found in slave narratives but she does not pursue the same slaveholder in fictional writing. This allowed me to incorporate *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as well as other fictional slavery novels, further opening the critical conversation on this topic.

Another article that helped shape my thesis was Sandra Y. Govan's 1986 "Homage to Tradition: Octavia Butler Renovates the Historical Novel." Govan uses Octavia Butler's *Wild Seed* and *Kindred* as examples of novels that exhibit how "the historical novel, the slave narrative, and science fiction meet" (3). Although I did not use either of those novels in my thesis, I was drawn to Govan's use of the slave narrative. By looking through several slave narratives, Govan creates a guideline that she says most slave narratives follow, including similar stages such as:

[T]he slave's quest for education, the slave's encounter with abusive sexual misconduct and immoral behavior, the slave's recognition of the religious

hypocrisy and the adulterated Christianity practiced by ‘Christian’ slave holders, the slave’s escape attempts, and, finally, the slave’s successful escape. (3)

The idea of Govan’s recurring pattern found in slave narratives helped me to realize that in order to truly research the violent Christian master, I needed to take a New Historicist approach to this paper and use first-hand slave narratives as a major source. I found this part of the paper enjoyable as I read through a few of the hundreds of surviving slave narratives. Some were well-known narratives such as Frederick Douglass’s, while others were relatively unheard of former slaves like James Pennington. Interestingly, the pattern Sandra Govan describes could be found in most of the narratives, and in the case of my thesis, I found several incidents of what Govan calls “the slave’s recognition of the religious hypocrisy and the adulterated Christianity practiced by ‘Christian’ slave holders” (3).

After finding evidence that the violent Christian slaveholder did exist, I began to wonder why this common slaveholder was not specifically discussed more and how this type of behavior could have occurred in the nineteenth-century and be acceptable. This led to the next step of my thesis as I sought to find the proslavery ministers and churches that encouraged and supported the violent Christian master. I was surprised when my research for primary texts proved harder than it should have been. Although I found a few sermons using religion as a justification for slavery and violence, they were hard to come by and fairly obscure. Surely there must have been hundreds of these sermons preached during slavery, so why could I only find a few?

Despite my work, I am not able to answer this question, and I think that is an important statement in regards to the topic of the violent Christian who abused slaves. I

believe this type of slaveholder was an embarrassment then that was not considered valuable and worthy of preserving a record, and in a sense, it is the same today. It is nice to read about noble and brave slaveholders and slaves who fought the system of oppression, not about the weak or tyrannical types who perpetuated the system.

During the nineteenth century, religion and slavery intersected in many ways. Religion was often a haven of peace and strength for slaves, although it was a privilege often withheld by owners. However, slave owners used religion as a justification for the system of slavery as well as for the violent abuses and punishments they would inflict. These violent Christian slaveholders are found in the accounts of former slaves. The autobiographical nature of slave narratives allows the author to express feelings on the experiences of slave life, and condemn slaveholders who justify slavery through the Bible or religious beliefs. Often, the narratives include descriptions of masters who inflict violent abuses on their slaves, all in the name of God. While there are several examples of these violent Christian masters in the non-fictional genre of the slave narrative, examples in fictional representations of slavery are harder to find. The most famous anti-slavery novel, Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, represents various stereotypes of the slaveholder; yet Simon Legree, the most violent slaveholder, is also the most strikingly irreligious one. The violent Christian master existed as evidenced in both fictional and non-fictional writing; and this slaveholder found justification for abuse through the Bible, pro-slavery ministers and their sermons.

In 1845 Frederick Douglass's *Narrative Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, first appeared. Douglass describes the abuse and violence he witnesses and experiences from several masters. Despite a variety of masters inflicting punishments, Douglass asserts, "[O]f all the slaveholders with whom I have ever met, religious slaveholders are the worst. I have ever found them the meanest and basest, the most cruel and cowardly, of all others" (Douglass 46). Douglass recounts an incident when his Christian master, Captain Auld, quotes the following scripture while whipping a woman:

“He that knoweth his master’s will, and doeth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes” (Douglass 33). Douglass clearly articulates the paradox of a master who professes Christianity in justification for acts of cruelty.

Douglass’s narrative is one of thousands of surviving slave narratives, each describing slaveholder abuse in one form or another. According to *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*, “[T]he fugitive slave narrative dominated the literary landscape of the slavery era” and often “[carries] a black message inside a white envelope” (Norton 133). Douglass’s narrative succeeds in doing just that. By presenting the horrific experiences of slavery in an intriguing yet inoffensive manner, he points out the injustices of the system. This is particularly true when Douglass and other ex-slaves discuss religion, a subject where the slave clearly sees the irony of his or her master’s practices.

Published in 1847, William Wells Brown’s *Narrative of William W. Brown, A Fugitive Slave*, carefully handles the complicated area of religion and slavery. Brown describes his master who began each day with mint juleps and family worship: “My master and mistress were great lovers of mint julep, and every morning, a pitcherfull [sic] was made, of which they all partook freely” (Brown 247). Brown would strategically seat himself near the mint julep in an attempt to sneak a glass of spirits so that “[b]y the time prayer was over, I was about as happy as any of them” (Brown 247). Yet one day either his proximity to the pitcher or the drink itself causes Brown to suffer after he drops and breaks a pitcher during a service. He writes, “This was a bad affair for me; for as soon as prayer was over, I was taken and severely chastised” (Brown 248). Here is a master who seems to devote himself to Christianity by opening each day with family

worship. However, the narrative suggests that the morning worship centers on the mint juleps, rather than the Bible. Brown also discusses his assignment as a “soul-driver” where he was required to buy “human cattle” for slave-breeding (Brown viii). He describes the “horrors of the traffic . . . which produced a constant scene of separating the victims from all those whom they loved” causing them to be “given over to minister to the lust of southern *Christians*” (Brown viii). Brown’s choice of the religious term “minister” and an italicized “Christians” further emphasizes this conflict of interests between religion and slavery.

Another of Brown’s stories illustrates the divergent perceptions of a slave and master towards the same Sabbath practices. At times Brown was responsible for driving the family to church, and while the family undoubtedly looks forward to the social and spiritual aspects of the day, Brown writes, “I always dreaded the approach of the Sabbath; for during service, I was obliged to stand by the horses in the hot boiling sun, or in the rain” (Brown 248). While the Master and his family are inside learning of Christ’s love for humanity, Brown is forced to remain outside as if he were one of the animals. Obviously, slave owners are able to listen to the word of God, but assume that its lessons of kindness and charity apply only to their own race.

While on one of his Sunday drives, Brown witnesses one of these slaveholders who assumes he can disregard the virtues of compassion and reverence that are usually associated with a Christian. As the wagon passes the Page house, Brown sees “Mr. Page pursuing a slave around the yard, with a long whip, cutting him at every jump” (Brown 248). Although Brown tells little else of Mr. Page in his narrative, this man is clearly an example of a slave master who practices Christian violence. In addition to whipping a

slave on the Sabbath, Mr. Page, “a deacon in the Baptist church, in good and regular standing,” has also “tied up a woman of his . . . and whipped her nearly to death” (Brown 248). Thus the narrative emphasizes the inconsistency of a nominally respectable Christian who can punish his slaves without regard for the Sabbath, compassion, or even decorum. Perhaps Page is simply a hypocrite, yet he flouts certain standards so flagrantly that he seems to behave according to others, which sanction, rather than censure, violence against slaves.

James Pennington addresses the seeming self-contradiction of Christian violence in *The Fugitive Blacksmith*, published in 1849. Pennington opens with an account of a conversation he has with a stranger who says, “You are not so badly off, for many of your masters are kind Christian masters” (Pennington xi). Pennington’s rhetorical response is simple but effective: “Yes, sirs, many of our masters are professed Christians; and what advantage is that to us?” (Pennington xi). Although outsiders assume that Christianity enjoins compassion on the slaveholder, those within the system of slavery assume that it does not. Pennington describes a beating he received when his master believes that Pennington has rolled his eyes at him: “he came down upon me with his cane, and laid on over my shoulders, arms, and legs, about a dozen severe blows, so that my limbs and flesh were sore for several weeks” (Pennington 8). Like so many slaveholders, his master uses violence to instill obedience in Pennington. Between a description of a flogging and another of slave spies, Pennington notes without comment, “My old master was an Episcopalian” (Pennington 11). The placement of this information may call attention to the discrepancy between the slaveholder’s behavior and the slaveholder’s religion- at least as a reader might understand it. Yet the offhandedness

of the remark also indicates that the narrator does not find this discrepancy as remarkable as a reader might. Perhaps the apparent discrepancy between Christianity and violence derives from the perception of the outsider, the reader who regards violence as unchristian. And possibly the offhandedness of the remark derives from the perception of the insider, the slave and slaveholder for whom Christian-sanctioned violence is an everyday aspect of their lives.

Slave narratives written by women are not as common, yet provide an equally compelling view of the violence of slavery. While a man's perspective often emphasizes the physical abuses a slave endures, a woman's point of view emphasizes the mental and emotional cruelty involved with slavery. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* by Harriet Jacobs deals with the emotional and sexual mistreatment a slave woman endures from her master. Jacobs's own master, Dr. Flint, sexually harasses her for years beginning when she is only fifteen years old. At this time, Jacobs describes the start of "a sad epoch in the life of a slave girl" when her "master began to whisper foul words in [her] ear" (Jacobs 27). The advances of Dr. Flint coupled with Jacobs's young age cause her to feel alone since her mistress "has no other feelings towards her but those of jealousy and rage" (Jacobs 28). In addition, Jacobs feels "shamefaced about telling her [grandmother about] such impure things" (Jacobs 29).

However, things only become worse for Jacobs when her master joins the Episcopal Church. At first Jacobs thinks, "I supposed that religion had a purifying effect on the character of men"; however she soon realizes that "the worst persecutions I endured from him were after he was a communicant" (Jacobs 74). Dr. Flint's abuse becomes more severe after his conversion because as a communicant, he has become

identified with a socially powerful church. As long as Dr. Flint participates in the Episcopal Church, he has religious backing for his actions. Jacobs discusses the irony found in this unusual association:

If a man goes to the communion table, and pays money into the treasury of the church, no matter if it be the price of blood, he is called religious. If a pastor has offspring by a woman not his wife, the church dismiss him, if she is a white woman; but if she is colored, it does not hinder his continuing to be their good shepherd. (Jacobs 74)

Not only do men like Dr. Flint receive justification for their immoral behavior, but also, as Jacobs notes here, even the clergy can take advantage of the slave women without fear of the consequence of losing social status. The constant and intense attention Dr. Flint pays to Jacobs causes her to hide out in a small, cramped attic space for seven years. Harriet Jacobs's narrative addresses both the emotional and physical strains slave women must suffer when pursued by a slave owner.

As a genre, the slave narrative is compelling in part because of the incredible individuals who have escaped and in part because of the horrific nature of the system of slavery. Commenting on the literary aspect of the narratives, transcendentalist clergyman Theodore Parker writes, "[S]lave narratives qualified as America's only indigenous literary form" because "all the original romance of Americans is in them, not in the white man's novel" (qtd. in Gates 133). With the powerful images of an oppressed life with few options that a former slave can create in words, the slave narrative is the authentic story of an American attempting to create a better life. The writers of these narratives often describe violent Christian masters. Whether these masters were simply being

hypocritical, or whether they regarded their behavior as sanctioned by their religion, their violence was a reality for slaves.

On the other hand, fiction about slavery often depicts violent slaveholders but only rarely depicts violent Christian slaveholders. In *Iola Leroy*, Frances E.W. Harper writes about a young woman of mixed race raised as if she was white. It is not until Iola and her mother are sold into slavery that she regards herself as not white. As Iola begins to learn about her surroundings, her experience raises the question of whether the slaveholders' violence is simply hypocritical or sanctioned by their religion as they understand it. Harper uses the casual conversation of two soldiers to introduce this question. Robert Johnson, a former slave, tells Captain Sybil about his old mistress who was "as good as most of them" (Harper 47). Robert continues by saying, "She said her prayers and went to church, but I don't know that that made her any better. I never did take much stock in white folks' religion" (Harper 47). The "white folks' religion" may serve the interests of the slaveholder, but it certainly does nothing for the slave. Since Robert has lived within the system of slavery, he is aware of the discrepancies between his master's religion and a Christianity that would prohibit violence against slaves. Robert is especially critical of his master because he has an example of nonviolent Christianity:

I believe in the real, genuine religion. I ain't got much myself, but I respect them that have. We had on our place a dear, old saint, named Aunt Kizzy. She was a happy soul. She had seen hard times, but was what I call a living epistle. (Harper 47)

Robert often hears Aunt Kizzy shouting “Hallelujah!” and singing spirituals while working in the kitchen, despite the sorrows she endures in her life. Aunt Kizzy’s “child-like faith” impresses Captain Sybil, as he hears how Robert strives for a simple devotion like hers:

Now, Captain, that’s the kind of religion that I want. Not that kind which could ride to church on Sundays, and talk so solemn with the minister about heaven and good things, then come home and light down on the servants like a thousand of bricks If any man wants to save my soul he ain’t got to beat my body. That ain’t the kind of religion I’m looking for. (Harper 48)

Robert expresses the confusing aspects of the white man’s religion. Within a matter of hours a slaveholder could be at church seriously discussing the points of Christianity, and then be home punishing a slave in some horrific manner.

Another novel that deals with the violent Christian slaveholder is William Wells Brown’s *Clotel; or, The President’s Daughter*. Clotel and her sister, Althesa, are slave children who may have been fathered by the President of the United States, Thomas Jefferson. Brown’s novel is set in historical fact, however, the characters are fictional. Clotel, Althesa, and their mother, Currer, are separated and sold into different situations of slavery. Although each woman faces her own challenges of slavery, it is Currer who must deal with the ill treatment of a Christian master. Currer’s new master, John Peck, is “a native of the state of Connecticut, where he was educated for the ministry, in the Methodist persuasion” (Brown 142). Peck is a Northerner who finds satisfaction in the Southern lifestyle, including the roles of a plantation owner and slaveholder. He must be

a pro-slavery minister, since “he became a popular preacher, [who] had a large congregation with a snug salary” (Brown 143). However, the narrator identifies this hypocrisy by saying, “Such is the influence of slavery in the United States, that the ministers of religion, even in the so-called free states, are the mere echoes, instead of the correctors, of public sentiment” (Brown 118). Peck is a successful Southern minister because he preaches what his parishioners want to hear. Curren is hired as a cook for the Peck farm, and her new master at first appears to be a kind master:

Mr. Peck was, every inch of him, a democrat, and early resolved that his “people,” as he called his slaves, should be well fed and not over-worked, and therefore laid down the law and gospel to the overseer as well as the slaves. (Brown 144)

In addition, Peck gives his slaves the gospel since he believes that, “[t]he gospel is calculated to make mankind better, and none should be without it” (Brown 144). By all appearances, Mr. Peck is indeed a good master. However, when he brings in a preacher for his slaves’ Sabbath lesson, it becomes clear that Mr. Peck wants only certain aspects of Christianity given to his slaves.

After the Sunday sermon for his slaves, the preacher ends with a question and answer session, where both the questions and answers are scripted and read to the slaves. Some of the questions particularly address how a Christian master (and slave) should handle punishments:

Q. When the servant suffers *wrongfully* at the hands of his master, and, to please God, takes it patiently, will God reward him for it?—*A.* Yes. . . .

Q. If a servant runs away, what should be done with him?—*A.* He should be caught and brought back.

Q. When he is brought back, what should be done with him?—*A.* Whip him well. . . .

Q. Why should servants not complain when they are whipped?—*A.*
Because the Lord has commanded that they should be whipped.

Q. Where has He commanded it?—*A.* He says, He that knoweth his master's will, and doeth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes.

Q. Then is the master to blame for whipping his servant?—*A.* Oh, no! he is only doing his duty as a Christian. (Brown 153)

These questions and answers establish Peck as a typical Christian slaveholder who uses the Bible to his advantage; yet, attempting to brainwash his slaves is not enough to make him a violent Christian master. Unfortunately, he will prove to fit that stereotype later.

Mr. Peck is a parson by trade and "Everything he did, he did for the 'glory of God,' as he said: he quoted Scripture for almost everything he did" (Brown 167).

Despite his religious phrases, at the heart of Mr. Peck is a man who uses Christianity as a rationalization for his violent punishments. Mr. Peck's anti-slavery daughter is brought to tears when she hears how her father handles a disobedient slave, Harry, who went to town to visit his wife and does not return on time. When he does return to the farm, Harry is flogged and sent away. Since he knew there are more punishments to come, Harry decides to return to the woods. What ensues is a slave hunt using dogs to chase down the runaway slave. These dogs are described as:

[F]erocious, gaunt, and savage-looking animals. They were part of a stock imported from Cuba . . . and fed on Indian corn bread. This kind of food, he said, made them eager for their business. Sometimes they would give the dogs meat, but it was always after they had been chasing a Negro.

(Brown 186-87)

In the case of Harry, the dogs chase him through the woods and catch him in a river attempting to swim for freedom. As Harry fights for his life, this chase becomes less about a human being and more about the sport aspect of a slave hunt:

But Harry had great courage and fought the dogs with a big club; and papa seeing the Negro escape from the dogs, shot at him, as he says, only to wound him, that he might be caught; but the poor fellow was killed.

(Brown 187)

Although Mr. Peck is a parson and a slaveholder who cares for his slaves in terms of clothing and food, he is one of the most violent Christian masters in fiction who even enjoys in chasing down a slave as if he were on a fox hunt.

Of all novels dealing with slavery, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is the most widely read and studied. At the time of publication, it was an instant success that brought Harriet Beecher Stowe acclaim for her ability to humanize slaves, who were previously thought to be subhuman. Jane Tompkins notes in *Sensational Designs* that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is “the first American novel ever to sell over a million copies and its impact is generally thought to have been incalculable” (Tompkins 124). Stowe uses actual accounts from former slaves in order to create an authentic perspective, and includes just about every stereotypical character found on both sides of slavery. For instance, Stowe has Tom

serve slaveholders with various attitudes. Tom's first master, Mr. Shelby, "a fair average kind of man, good-natured and kindly," runs his family farm in Kentucky (Stowe 15). Mr. Shelby cares for the well being of his slaves, and sells them only out of financial desperation. Stowe places his farm in a region where "perhaps the mildest form of the system of slavery is to be seen" (Stowe 14).

In contrast, Tom's last master, Simon Legree, is disturbing simply by his physical description, with: "his round, bullet head, large light-gray eyes, with their shaggy, sandy eyebrows, and stiff, wiry, sun-burned hair [and] his large, coarse mouth . . . distended with tobacco" (Stowe 342). Not only is Legree physically repulsive, but also, he is brutally violent with his slaves. Further, Stowe makes it clear that Legree is not a religious man. When Legree finds Tom's Methodist hymnbook, he clearly states his purpose to drain his slaves of any religious hope: "I have none o' yer bawling, praying, singing niggers on my place . . . *I'm your church now*" (Stowe 346). Although Stowe attempts to create a realistic portrayal of slavery, this is where she fails to portray the role of Christianity in supporting the system of slavery. Simon Legree is exactly the type of man who would relish using the word of God to sanctify his abuses. Instead of using a typical slaveholder found in so many true slave narratives and in at least one novel, Stowe omits this common personality.

Yet even Stowe may at least imply that some slaveholders practice Christian violence. While working for Augustine and Marie St. Clare, Tom gets some exposure to a master using religion as a rationalization for abuse. Augustine is a kind master who cares for his slaves individually, but his wife, Marie St. Clare, demonstrates several of the behaviors associated with a violent Christian master. Marie is a pampered woman who

never had “much capability of affection, or much sensibility, and the little she had, had been merged into a most intense and unconscious selfishness” (Stowe 161). She causes much suffering for her family and servants by her constant illnesses and headaches; and is unkind to her servants, whom she considers “a provoking, stupid, careless, unreasonably childish, ungrateful set of wretches” (Stowe 180).

Yet Marie pretends to have a spiritual side by attending church on Sundays, although Stowe hints that it is all an act. “Marie patronized good things, and she was going now in full force,---diamonds, silk, lace, and jewels, and all,---to a fashionable church, to be very religious. Marie always made a point to be very pious on Sundays” (Stowe 187). Although Marie herself is not violent with her slaves, she approves of floggings. She even complains that her maid and her other slaves are not flogged enough: “As to abuse, she don’t know what it is. She never was whipped more than once or twice in her whole life” (Stowe 176). Marie’s general opinion towards her slaves’ punishments is summarized with her statement to her husband, “The fact is, our servants are over-indulged” (Stowe 176). And Marie certainly uses religion as a justification of her beliefs. After church one Sunday, she tells St. Clare that the sermon was “a splendid sermon . . . it expressed all my views [on slavery] exactly” (Stowe 189). She continues to recount how the preacher:

[S]howed how all the orders and distinctions in society came from God; and that it was so appropriate, you know, and beautiful, that some should be high and some low, and that some were born to serve . . . he applied it so well to all this ridiculous fuss that is made about slavery and he proved

distinctly that the Bible was on our side, and supported all our institutions so convincingly. I only wish you'd heard him. (Stowe 189)

Marie wishes her husband had heard the sermon because his attitude towards slavery is so different from hers. St. Clare rebuts her argument by questioning what exactly she calls religion. "Religion! Is what you hear at church religion? Is that which can bend and turn, and descend and ascend, to fit every crooked phase of selfish, worldly society, religion?" (Stowe 190). For his time, Augustine has an unorthodox point of view concerning religion and slavery. Yet, despite Marie and Augustine's opposing views regarding slavery, in a sense they have a similar view of Christianity- that it sanctions rather than condemns the slaveholders' violence.

In contrast to Augustine St. Clare, Simon Legree represents the dangers of having no religious beliefs at all. In her portrayal of Marie St. Clare, Stowe hints at a violent Christian slaveholder, yet she pointedly excludes religion from her portrayal of her most violent slaveholder, Simon Legree. At one point when discussing Simon Legree, Stowe steps out of her role as narrator to tell the reader, "[T]hose who have been familiar with the religious histories of the slave population know that relations like what we have narrated are very common" (Stowe 400). If she has been reporting factual representations, she purposely left out the violent Christian master because it weakens her argument that Christianity is the key to abolishing slavery. Such a character would damage her carefully contrived representation of slavery.

In regards to literary criticism, the topic of Christian violence has been overlooked when discussing slavery. Perhaps violence seems so obviously a part of slavery that no one thinks to uncover the ideology that underpins it. Perhaps the abusive

religious slaveholder is too repulsive to invite close investigation. Or perhaps now, more often than in the nineteenth-century, people assume that religion cannot be made to sanction violence. Regardless of the reason, this type of slave master has slipped through a crack in the criticism. However, SallyAnn H. Ferguson does address the topic in her 1996 article "Christian Violence and the Slave Narrative." In it she acknowledges the "striking paradox in the portrayal of slave-narrative violence . . . its frequent association with Christianity" (Ferguson 297). Not only does Ferguson look at the "striking paradox" found in Christian violence, but she also discusses the specific type of slaveholder that uses Christianity as a justification for his abuse. She describes the authors of the slave narratives as

especially adept at demonstrating how devout Christians used the theological concepts of original sin, blood sacrifice, and spiritual atonement to rationalize the moral contractions and brutality that attended the practice of Christian slavery. (Ferguson 298)

Not only would these slaveholders abuse slaves physically and emotionally, but also they would often play God by procreating with the women. By doing so, the slaveholder was arrogating to himself a God-like status by meddling with the power "to rearrange the universe into hierarchically ordered groups whose destiny is determined by slave owners and their progeny" (Ferguson 298). This was done in two ways: the slaveholder either breeds slaves to create more property; or by fathering the children, he creates a new race.

Once slaveholders start using religion as a justification, they slip into a cycle of abuse as they become "trapped by their strategy of Christian violence" (Ferguson 305). As Ferguson states, "To stop is to risk baring their immoral souls to divine judgment"

(Ferguson 305). In other words, to stop abusing their slaves is to admit they are doing something wrong.

Finding a master who fits this type would not have been difficult, according to Sandra Y. Govan in her 1986 article "Homage to Tradition: Octavia Butler Renovates the Historical Novel." Through her review of slave narratives, Govan details a pattern found in most narratives that includes the Christian master. A slave narrative will detail:

A loss of innocence wherein the slave, usually as a child, recollects his or her first awareness of the personal impact of slavery. There are detailed descriptions of various phases of bondage as the slave witnesses them and then experiences them. There is the punishment factor, the resistance motif, the glimpse of the life-in-the-quarters. There is also the slave's quest for education, the slave's encounter with abusive sexual misconduct and immoral behavior, *the slave's recognition of the religious hypocrisy and the adulterated Christianity practiced by "Christian" slave holders*, the slave's escape attempts, and, finally, the slave's successful escape.

(Govan 3, my emphasis)

This same pattern is found in most slave narratives, although Govan does acknowledge that there will be variations from narrative to narrative. Most of the slaves provide details in their narratives concerning the religious inconsistencies of slaveholders. At some point, most slaves question how their masters can profess to be Christian while ignoring the non-violent aspects of Christianity.

But the slaveholder who acted with violence towards his slaves was able to do so without worrying about a stigma being placed on him by the slaveholding community.

This was because the master's inflicting punishments could justify their actions on religious grounds. According to preachers of the time, slavery was sanctioned by God. In fact, historian Drew Gilpin Faust suggests that the Bible was at the center of the "proslavery mainstream" (Kolchin 192). In order for a slaveholder to receive this justification from the Bible, there must have been preachers and religious leaders who taught such doctrine, yet trying to find evidence of these sermons can be complicated.

A simple proslavery sermon by Joseph R. Wilson, entitled "Mutual Relation of Masters and Slaves as Taught in the Bible" was delivered in 1861 and meant for Wilson's "own church, and for immediate effect at home," but since there was a request for publication, he hoped "its discussion may be the means of doing service to my slaveholding brethren" (Wilson 4). Wilson opens with a commonly used proslavery verse, Ephesians 6.5-9: "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling." From this passage Wilson builds an argument that culminates in a "scriptural plea to be found for the divine sanction of slavery" (8):

[I]nasmuch as the Bible was intended for all times and all ages, and not for one period and a single country, the fact that it gives directions as plain and full and forcible for the regulation of domestic service as it does for defining and limiting the marital, parental, and filial relations in families, furnishes an inferential proof . . . that no household is perfect under the gospel which does not contain all the grades of authority and obedience. . . .

(8-9)

Wilson's argument also considers that both the fourth and tenth commandment support "domestic slavery" as they mention the roles of the "man-servant and the maid-servant"

(15). He then bolsters the faith of his congregation by instructing them to be strong “before the enemies who press upon it [the institution of slavery] from without” and reminds them that preserving slavery is “in the spirit of the Christian religion” (16). Wilson reminds his members that they need to serve each other as well as their Master in heaven, “They must remember to treat their servants as they will expect their own Master in heaven to treat *them*. They must not neglect discipline, but it must always be the discipline which is dictated by holy principles” (20). Unlike many preachers who likely shared his views, this minister is clearly proslavery.

Not all those surrounded by slavery were blinded by the proslavery preachers. In 1837, Harriet Martineau’s *Society in America*, provides her perspective on some Southern ministers, like Joseph Wilson, who study the Bible with a preconceived notion of the intended message:

[They are] pretending to find sanctions of slavery in the Bible and putting words to this purpose into the mouths of public men, who do not profess to remember the existence of the Bible in any other connexion [sic]. (qtd. in Wood 43)

Martineau suggests that proslavery preachers read the Bible with a bias towards the congregation they address.

Yet slavery was not the only issue that caused a biased reading of the Bible. Other biased readings of the Bible may illuminate the pro-slavery reading. For instance, women were often overlooked in certain Biblical references because of the masculine-coded phrasing. A group of women headed by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, brought together scholars in an attempt for a fair reading of the text. What resulted was *The Woman’s*

Bible, an in-depth study of the Bible from a woman's perspective. This revolutionary book closely looked at the origins of words and stories at the time the Bible was written, in order to determine the true intent. One of the scholars involved with the project, Clara Bewick Colby, addresses the same issue of scriptural justification that also appears with proslavery preachers. She explains the most common method of using the Bible to support a position:

The trouble is too often instead of searching the Bible to see what is right, we form our belief, and then search for Bible texts to sustain us, and are satisfied with isolated texts without regard to context, and ask no questions as to the circumstances that may have existed then but do not now. (qtd. in Stanton 37)

While this is a common technique used by Southern ministers who support slavery, finding proof of these sermons proved not to be an easy task.

In David B. Chesebrough's *God Ordained this War: Sermons on the Sectional Crisis, 1830-1855*, he discusses the types of themes a preacher could have used "in their defense of slavery and the Southern way of life" (145). A review of Chesebrough's findings identifies the three main themes in proslavery sermons: first, slavery is God-ordained and biblically sanctioned; second, doctrine supports that the black race is inferior; and third, that through religious instruction, a slave can have a better acceptance of his or her life. An underlying theme of each point is "that those who opposed slavery were anti-God and anti-Bible" (146). Reviewing these themes when found in original sermons and circumstances, shows a clear attempt to fit the religious doctrine to the lifestyle of a slaveholder.

First, the belief that slavery is God-ordained is a reoccurring theme with proslavery preachers. In a sermon given on May 26, 1850, entitled "The Rights and Duties of Masters," James H. Thornwell, a proslavery preacher, states that "the letter of the Scriptures is distinctly and unambiguously in our favour [sic]" (178). For instance, Thornwell interprets the Apostle Paul's opinion on slavery as, "their services to their masters are duties which they owe to God" (181). In this same sermon, Thornwell also gives the slave owners justification for their violent abuse of slaves: "true he chastises the man, but the punishments inflicted for disobedience are no more inconsistent with personal responsibilities than the punishments inflicted by the law for breaches of contract" (182). He validates the slaveholder's actions as no more than what the slave would experience as a citizen who commits a crime. Thornwell ends by saying, "All that is necessary in any case, is that the punishment should be *just*" (182). As long as the slaveholder feels the punishment is just, there is no crime in the sight of God. Thornwell even assigns moral blame to the victims of floggings:

If by voluntary be meant . . . that which results from hearty consent, and is accordingly rendered with cheerfulness, it is precisely the service which the law of God enjoins. Servants are exhorted to obey from considerations of duty; to make conscience of their tasks, with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men. Whether, in point of fact, their service, in this sense, shall be voluntary, will depend upon their moral character. But the same may be said of free labour. There are other motives besides the lash that may drive men to toil, when they are far from toiling with cheerfulness or good will . . . (183)

And, in what may be the most repugnant passage of his sermon, Thornwell suggests that the violence—or “discipline”—benefits the slave in that it elevates the slave morally:

[S]lavery is not repugnant to the spirit of the Gospel It is one of the conditions in which God is conducting the moral probation of man—a condition . . . not unfit for the moral and spiritual discipline which Christianity has instituted [T]he very violence of its temptations gives dignity and luster to its virtues. The slave may be fitted, in his humble and if you please, degraded lot, for shining as a star in the firmament of heaven. (189)

Using scriptural references, Thornwell is able to provide his congregation with a reassurance that slavery is indeed ordained of God, implying that any punishments associated with it are permissible.

However, this bold preaching style would not last long. As slavery became more political, preachers like Thornwell would fall silent on the issue:

About the turn of the century, as slavery became more firmly entrenched in the South, the Southern pulpits adopted a stance of silence on the issue. Retreating from their earlier antislavery positions, Southern clergy began to affirm that slavery was a civil matter and not a religious concern. (143)

As the pulpit assumes a “stance of silence,” endorsements of slavery are to be found between the lines. When the strong proslavery language disappears, it can be assumed that a member of the congregation would have to be familiar with the minister’s position on slavery outside of a chapel setting.

The second theme found in proslavery sermons is that the black race is naturally inferior to the white race, and therefore slavery is their assignment in life. Chesebrough points out that "The Southern preachers once again turned to their well-used Bibles to support the inequality theme" (147). The most common biblical story to support this belief is the curse of Noah's son, Ham. The story found in Genesis tells how Noah is drunk and falls asleep naked. While two of his sons, Shem and Japheth, take special care to cover their father and avert their eyes, Ham only laughs at his father. When Noah awakes and realizes what Ham had done he said, "Cursed *be* Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren" (*King James Bible*, Genesis 9.25). A simple story comprising only eight verses becomes the source for much contention in nineteenth-century America.

Anne C. Loveland, a critic in the nineteenth-century, explains another approach to supporting racial inequality in the culture of her time:

under the providence of God some are rulers, some subjects; some are rich, some poor; some are fathers, some children; some are bond, some free. And if a man is justly and providentially a ruler, he has the rights of a father, and if a slave, only the rights of a slave. (Chesebrough 147)

The final theme of proslavery sermons is introducing religion to the slaves, or, "the need of evangelicals to give religious instruction to slaves which would lead to their conversion and a better acceptance of their station in life" (150). The process of bringing religion to the slaves became known as the Mission to Slaves. Clergy and masters felt that "Through proper instruction of the slaves the South would become a safer and more orderly society" (150).

25

Another pro-slavery minister, Charles Colcock Jones, dedicated a sermon in 1831 to this topic called, "The Religious Instruction of the Negroes." In this sermon Jones reminds his parishioners that "we are bound to give them [the slaves] the Gospel—*by the express command of God*. We are commanded by Christ to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature, as we have seen" (160). Jones also regards religious instruction as an alternative to violence, but thus he regards both religious instruction and violence as having the same divine sanction: "[O]bedience is inculcated as a *Christian duty*, binding on the Servants, and thus the authority of Masters is supported by considerations drawn from eternity" (171). Although Jones uses the Bible to support his opinion, as well as involve the slaveholders in spreading Christianity, the consensus of his sermon still leans towards benefiting the Master, not the slave:

Happy then shall we be, if we can increase the spirit of obedience in our Servants, and cherish it by considerations drawn from eternity. Happy shall we be if we can raise the standard of their moral character, and place them in some good measure above the influence of evil seducers, and deliver their Masters from the pecuniary loss and the pain of severe discipline, consequent upon their negligence and crime. (173)

The Mission to Slaves is the influence for Dr. Flint, Harriet Jacobs's master in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. It is also what drives Mr. Peck in *Clotel* to bring in a preacher for his slaves. Although Peck provides religious instruction to the slaves, it is only, as Charles Colcock Jones suggests, a means to protect the slaveholder by preventing future rebellions. Refusing to cooperate in their own enslavement, the slaves ignore this preacher and leave to attend a Methodist shout. Like Dr. Flint's efforts to introduce

religion, the true emphasis of the Mission to Slaves was for the master's well being and not that of the slaves.

If these sermons can help explain how a slaveholder used the Bible or Christianity to rationalize what might seem to be unchristian behavior, then many injustices must have fallen under the heading of God's will. There must have been hundreds, conceivably thousands, of proslavery preachers and sermons in existence during the time of slavery. However, trying to find them today is quite difficult. Perhaps the importance of preserving this part of American history seemed trivial at the time, and is still overlooked today. It is easy to find anti-slavery sermons since they illustrate the movement that was instrumental in the abolition of slavery, which is seen as an inspiring and important event in United States history. The pro-slavery sermons only enlarge negative features of slavery like the violent Christian slaveholder, who is an embarrassing aspect of an already embarrassing period of our past.

Yet this type of slaveholder was ubiquitous during slavery, as is clear from the hundreds of surviving slave narratives reporting factual accounts of slave life. The narratives include horrifying stories of what day-to-day life was like for a slave in the nineteenth-century. To be fearful daily of another human, especially one who professes to follow Christ, only adds to the intensity and raw emotion of the slave narratives.

In fiction, the violent Christian master is either omitted altogether, as in the case of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, or the details are softened, as in *Iola Leroy*. Either way, an accurate image of slave life is not complete without looking at all aspects, good and bad, of the lifestyle. An overlooked aspect of slavery is the violent Christian master who

behaved violently toward his slaves, and found support for doing so from pro-slavery ministers and sermons that were perhaps as concealed then as they are today.

Brown, William Wells. "Clotel; or, The President's Daughter." Three Classic African American Novels. Ed. William L. Andrews. New York: Mentor, 1990. 113-283. Thomas Jefferson fathers Clotel and her sister, Althesa. Both girls and their mother are separated and sold into different areas of slave life. Clotel "marries" Horatio Green, whom she lives with for many years and the two have a child, Mary. Once he legally marries a white woman, the new wife insists that Horatio sell Clotel. James French later buys her. Althesa is bought and later marries Dr. Morton, and the two appear to happily live a quiet life. Currer, the mother of both girls, is bought by Rev. John Peck, who by all appearances is a good, kind master. He clothes and feeds his slaves well and brings in religion for them. Yet like most of the Christian slaveholders, he uses the Bible and religion as a justification for his actions, including hunting slaves with dogs like a fox hunt. The story demonstrates how slavery and religion intersect. I was frustrated as to why Brown has every character die. I wondered if it was merely a sentimental ploy, or if Brown was making the point that in the end, regardless of station in life, we all die. Brown makes a case through the character Georgina that he didn't believe shipping former slaves to Liberia that was a realistic solution.

---. "Narrative of William W. Brown, A Fugitive Slave." The Norton Anthology of African American Literature. Ed. Henry Louis Gates and Nellie Y. McKay. New York: Norton, 1997. 247-255. Brown gives an example master who held family worship morning and night. On one occasion Brown

accidentally dropped and broke a pitcher during a service, after which he received a beating from the master. A description of his job as a soul-driver shows how he bought "human cattle" on the slave market for breeding. He describes the horror involved with watching those bought be torn from family and sent to a degrading life. Brown portrays slave life on the farm and in the city. He describes the abuse slaves endured, although he does not describe his own abuse in as much detail.

His narrative follows the traditional slave narrative outline set by Sandra Y.

Govan in "Homage to Tradition: Octavia Butler Renovates the Historical Novel," and finally ends with him obtaining his own freedom.

Casmier-Paz, Lynn A. "Footprints Of The Fugitive: Slave Narrative Discourse And The Trace Of Autobiography." *Biography*. 24.1 (2001): 215-225. Casmier-Paz explores slave narratives as autobiographical. The most important aspect of the narrative is that it is autobiographical stands behind the significant "I" found in the book and on the cover. The former slave is able to step away from being an unknown, and can now stand on his own. This aspect of the genre allows the self to be expressed, as well as suppressed at times. Although the author now had an outlet to express his experience with slavery, after publication he was still in fear that the truth was available to the former slaveholder and those who were anti-slavery. The "slave narratives function as representations...to the extent that readers bring to the slave narrative discourse their own briefs and historical needs".

Chesebrough, David B. God Ordained this War: Sermons on the Sectional Crisis, 1830-1865. Columbia: University of South Carolina, 1991. In Chapter five, "Slavery",

Chesebrough addresses the three main pro-slavery themes found in sermons: the ‘discovery’ that slavery was a God-ordained, biblically sanctioned institution (145), the subsequent sub-theme that those opposed to slavery were anti-God and anti-Bible (146), racial inequality (147), and the need for evangelicals to give religious instructions to slaves (the Mission movement 150). Chesebrough includes primary sources, full sermons from the nineteenth-century. Charles Colcock Jones’s “The Religious Instruction of the Negroes”, which was first delivered in 1831, discusses a slaveholder’s responsibility to “Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel” (156). James Thornwell’s “The Rights and Duties of Masters” discusses the responsibilities of a slaveholder, including the need to discipline a slave if necessary. Thornwell says, “true he chastises the man, but the punishments inflicted for disobedience are no more inconsistent with personal responsibilities than the punishments inflicted by the law for breaches of contract” (182).

Douglass, Frederick. Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave,

Written by Himself. New York: Dover Publications, 1995. Published in 1845

Frederick Douglass’ *Narrative Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* is an autobiographical slave narrative that describes abuse and violence he witnessed and experienced from several masters. However, he asserts, “of all the slaveholders with whom I have ever met, religious slaveholders are the worst. I have ever found them the meanest and basest, the most cruel and cowardly, of all others” (Douglass 46). Douglass retells an incident when his master, Captain Auld, quoted scripture “He that knoweth his master’s will and doeth it not, shall

be beaten with many stripes" (Douglass 33) while he whipped a woman.

Douglass articulates the paradox of a master who professes Christianity, yet practices something quite different. While several thousand slave narratives have survived, Douglass' speaks with a clear and educated voice, which addresses the paradox of a violent Christian slave master.

Ferguson, SallyAnn H. "Christian Violence and the Slave Narrative." *American Literature*. 68.2 (1996): 297-320. While there is plenty written on slave narratives, this is the first article dedicated to the notion of "Christian Violence". Ferguson describes this particular kind of violence, administered by a slave-owner who uses Christianity as justification for his actions. Ferguson discusses that these slave-owners were often acting on a God-complex, where they were recreating the original Makers universe by controlling and manipulating the slaves under their care. One means of controlling their universe was by fathering children with slave women. This not only increased a slave-owner's property, but also allowed him to create a new "breed" of humans and often allowed him to control the women both body and soul.

Gates, Henry Louis and Nellie Y. McKay, ed. The Norton Anthology of African American Literature. New York: Norton, 1997. The introduction to the section on "Slavery and Freedom 1746-1865" establishes slave narratives as literature, "From 1830 to the end of the slavery era, the fugitive slave narrative dominated the literary landscape of antebellum black America, far outnumbering the autobiographies of free people of color, not to mention the handful of novels published by African Americans" (133). Also, the metaphor of the slave

50

narratives as carrying “a black message in a white envelope” in telling. Finally, the quote from Theodore Parker stating that “slave narratives qualified as America’s only indigenous literary form, for ‘all the original romance of Americans is in them, not in the white man’s novel’” (133). This genre is American-born.

Govan, Sandra Y. “Homage to Tradition: Octavia Butler Renovates the Historical Novel.” MELUS. 13.1-2 (1986): 79-96. Govan defines the historical novel as “a continuation of the realistic social novel” where we know “its setting and characters are established in a particular historic context” (2). She then fits slave narratives into these terms by showing how these texts often follow a similar pattern that is fixed historically. Having established these guidelines, she uses Octavia Butler’s *Wild Seed* and *Kindred* as examples of novels that exhibit how “the historical novel, the slave narrative, and science fiction meet” (3). Govan is one of the few authors to discuss the notion of Christian violence.

Harper, Frances E.W. Iola Leroy. Boston: Beacon Press, 1999. The fictional story of a young mulatto woman, Iola Leroy, who was raised to believe she is white. As a result of this unusual upbringing, Iola is privileged to receive an excellent education, which obviously gives her an advantage in life. Along with education, Harper touches on several political topics such as: gender, racism, feminism and religion. There is an interesting discussion between two men in the story that I intend to use in my paper to help support the topic of Christian violence in fiction.

Helps, Sir Arthur. The Life of Las Casas. Williamstown: The John Lilburne Company, 1970. At one point in my research I thought of widening my topic to include

other examples of religion being used as a justification for violent behavior. Las Casas was a 16th Century Spanish bishop who defended the Indians when they were being cruelly abused by his fellow countrymen. Las Casas went to Cuba in 1502 and participated in the conquest of Cuba. However, in 1514 he had a change of heart and felt that the brutish actions of the Spanish were uncalled for and wrong. He spent the rest of his life defending the Indians through his works "In Defense of the Indians and Tears of the Indians." Las Casas defended his beliefs through treatises and speeches. One account of when he pleads his case before Aguirre, executor for Queen Isabelle is as follows. "for I have left in the Indies Jesus Christ, our Lord, suffering stripes, and afflictions, and crucifixion, not once but thousands of times, at the hands of Spaniards, who destroy and desolate those Indian nations, taking from them the opportunity for conversion and penitence, so that they die without faith and sacraments" (127).

Jacobs, Harriet A. Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl. Cambridge: Harvard, 1987. A slave narrative about a young woman's escape from slavery and the sexual advances of her master. Jacobs was forced to hide out in a crawl space in the attic for seven years before she felt confident that her master had given up all hope of reclaiming her. For my thesis, Jacobs offers a woman's perspective regarding slavery and the slave narrative.

Johnson, Charles. Soulcatcher. San Diego: Harcourt, Inc, 2001. *Soulcatcher* is a collection of twelve fictional tales about slavery written as a companion book to the PBS series, *Africans in America: America's Journey Through Slavery*. According to his preface, Johnson positions himself as a student of African-

American individuals and history: "What I learned as an autodidact, as an undergraduate teaching himself in those dizzying, early days of Black Studies, was that American history on every level imaginable-political, economic, and cultural-was simply *inconceivable* without the presence of black people on this continent from the time of the seventeenth-century colonies" (Johnson, x). Using fictional and historical figures such as Martha Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Phyllis Wheatley and Frederick Douglass, each story looks at slavery from a different point of view. Most of the stories focused more on the individual rather than the slaveholder, and as a result, are not helpful to my research. However, "A Lion at Pendleton" tells of Frederick Douglass' recovery after being beaten by anti-abolitionists at a rally. The story opens with: "The white mob in Pendleton, Indiana, had dragged him from the outdoor platform in the woods, where he was denouncing the evils of slavery, how it dehumanized Christian masters and bondsmen alike-this, after the townspeople had denied him use of the local Baptist church" (Johnson, 83). Johnson describes Douglass' presence and power as an attractive, well-spoken abolitionist speaker.

Jones, Charles Colcock. "The Religious Instruction of the Negroes." Ed. Chesebrough, David B. God Ordained this War: Sermons on the Sectional Crisis, 1830-1865. Columbia: University of South Carolina, 1991. 156-176. using a common theme of proslavery sermons, Jones argues that by providing religion to slaves, the slaves will become better people (and by implication, better slaves). Jones argues this is possible because religion has made the slaveholders better people. While this is an ambitious and noble thought, it obviously does not work. Instead,

it is clear that this sermon is full of the ironies that turned slaves away from their master's religion.

Kolchin, Peter. American Slavery 1619-1877. New York: Hill and Wang, 1993. A comprehensive source on slavery. Chapter VI (pgs 189-196) discusses religion and slavery, stating: "Religious arguments provided a kind of bridge between practical justifications based on slavery's necessity and more far-reaching theories predicated on its desirability. Religious idioms pervaded the pro-slavery literature, in part because Protestant ministers played a leading role in the defense of slavery and in part because such language was well educated to appeal to antebellum Southerners" (191-192). In fact, historian Drew Gilpin Faust "suggested that 'the Bible served as the core' of the 'proslavery mainstream'" (192).

Painter, Nell Irvin. Soul Murder and Slavery. Waco: Markham Press, 1995. Painter's thesis is to examine the implications of soul murder and use them to question the completeness of historians' descriptions of American society, and not merely southern society, during the era of slavery. She uses current psychology to examine the impact of incest, child abuse, and the cycle of abuse a victim repeats on applied to the mainly the women and children of slavery. Painter assumes that those victims would have had the inevitable results and issues those similar victims today face. For instance, "an old Alabamian, Ned Cobb (alias Nate Shaw), laments that his father, Hayes, who had been a slave for his first fifteen years, beat his children and wives as he himself had been beaten" (14). Painter speculates that this behavior was partly the result of a pattern of abuse and partly

a survival technique. Slave parents knew their children would be beaten by the masters for disobedience and so they were preparing them to survive in their society, "In other words, slave parents beat slave children to make them into good slaves" (14). In addition, "Parents and owners taught slave children to quash their anger when they were beaten, for anger was a forbidden emotion for slaves to display before owners" (14). Using Harriet Jacobs as an example, Painter discusses the sexual abuse that "For countless women and children, these injuries were magnified by the intimate nature of the abuse" (15). Looking from the feminist perspective at the women involved with slavery, (slaves and their mistresses), Painter discusses the uncomfortable relationship between the two classes of women, "female slaves and female slaveholders were in the market and that in this competition, free women were at a discount due to the ready availability of women who could be forced to obey" (17). Harriet Jacobs "fully realized that mistresses saw themselves (not the slaves) as the victims in these triangles" (18). With dysfunctional slave families, mistresses often took on the mother role for young slave girls, who later became their competition, adding an incestual dimension to the abuse (19). An example provided of this stereotypical "jealous mistress" is Gertrude Thomas (17).

As a means of survival, historians point out "that plantation slaves' psychic health depended largely upon two crucial means of support: first, the essential emotional counterweight to owners' physical and psychological assault that slaves' own birth families provided; and, second, a system of evangelical religious beliefs that denied the masters' religious and social ideology of white

supremacy and black inferiority" (21). Interestingly enough, the slaves still found solace in a white God and "James Cone stresses slaves' identification with the crucifixion" (22).

Pennington, James W. C. The Fugitive Blacksmith; or, Events in the History of James W. C. Pennington. 1849. *Five Slave Narratives: a compendium*. Ed. William Loren Katz. New York: Arno Press Inc., 1968. Pennington did not want the focus of his narrative to be the violence from the slaveholder; rather, he wanted to expose the terrible nature of slavery as a whole. I used his clear discussion of a "Christian master"; and the flogging he received after the master misinterpreted Pennington's rolling eyes. The slave masters were so preconditioned to violence, it really did not matter if the slave actually did anything worth a punishment. As long as the master felt he had justification of any sort, a violent outburst was acceptable (by the master's society).

Stowe, Harriet Beecher. Uncle Tom's Cabin. Oxford: University Press, 1998. The standard work of fiction used when discussing slavery and its toll on the human spirit. Stowe's novel was meant as propaganda to rally abolitionists by appealing to their emotions through the use of sentimental situations and characters. Stowe includes almost every stereotypical character involved with slavery on either side of the debate. However, she does not have any representation of the violent Christian master. What I plan to do with my paper is use the actual accounts of slave narratives describing a master who inflicts "Christian violence", and then compare that to Stowe's representations of slave masters to see her motivation for leaving out a prominent type of slave holder. Uncle Tom has three main slave

holders throughout the novel: Mr. Shelby, Augustine St. Clare, and Simon Legree. Through categorizing these and other masters in the novel, it will become more evident as to why Stowe did not see the need for a violent Christian master.

Thornwell, James H. "The Rights and Duties of Masters." Ed. Chesebrough, David B. God Ordained this War: Sermons on the Sectional Crisis, 1830-1865. Columbia: University of South Carolina, 1991. 177-192. Using a bold preaching style, Thornwell supports, and even encourages his parishioners, to use violent punishments in order to discipline slaves. Thornwell cites the bible saying that the institution of slavery is God-ordained and permissible. This type of proslavery sermon was exactly what I searched for, and what proved to be harder to find than I imagined. These sermons must have been given every Sunday in slaveholding communities, yet they hard to come by in the archives.

Tompkins, Jane P. Sensational Designs. Oxford: University Press, 1985. Tompkins dedicates chapter five (122-146) to *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and the power of the 19th century sentimental novel. Tompkins compares Stowe and other women writers to the traditional male American canon authors, and concludes that women authors should be considered in addition to, not in place of, the traditional canon. She argues the domestic fiction produced by women in the 19th century "represents a monumental effort to reorganize culture from the woman's point of view" and that such writing "is remarkable for its intellectual complexity, ambition, and resourcefulness" (124). Using the death of little Eva and Topsy's emotional plea as examples, Tompkins shows how "*Uncle Tom's Cabin* retells the culture's central religious myth—the story of the crucifixion—in terms of the

nation's greatest political conflict—slavery—and of its most cherished social beliefs—the sanctity of motherhood and family” (134).

Weiner, Marli F. “Rethinking Slavery.” *Reviews in American History*. 29.1 (2001): 29-34. Weiner disputes Jeffrey Young's claims in his book *Domesticating Slavery* as insufficiently looking at slavery as a whole when stating that slave holders were a mix of “bourgeois domesticity... Christian responsibility... as well as the legitimacy of capitalist endeavors” (28). While Young focuses on the pressures of capitalism involved with slave owning, Weiner points out that he did not take into account the role that Christianity played as a threat to slave owners, or the power that slaves had in shaping their own society.

Wilson, Joseph R. “Mutual Relation of Masters and Slaves as Taught in the Bible.” A discourse preached in the First Presbyterian Church. Augusta, Georgia. 6 January 1861. Wilson's proslavery sermon uses every proslavery scripture and justification I have read about, including a few new ones (such as the 4th and 10th commandment both support slavery). Opening with Ephesians 6:5 “Servant, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling...”. The sermon states there is a “scriptural plea to be found for the diving sanction of slavery” (8) and that “the Bible was intended for all times and all ages... the fact that it gives directions as plain and full and forcible for the regulation of domestic service,” this quote concerning those who are anti-slavery, “it is unnecessary to fear that this long-cherished institution will first give way before the enemies who press upon it from without. If slaveholders preserve it as an element of social welfare, in the spirit of the Christian religion” (16). He tells

the people to serve each other and their Master in heaven, but concludes by endorsing violence towards slaves if necessary, "They [the slaveholders] must not neglect discipline, but it must always be the discipline which is dictated by holy principle" (20).

Wood, Forrest G. The Arrogance of Faith. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990. A detailed look at how Christianity and race have clashed through the past five centuries of the world. Wood also includes a specific look at religion and the history of America. Wood divides the book into three main sections: Christianity, Race, and Churches. Christianity is the underlying theme of the entire book, but this specific section handles the idea that "while popes, bishops, preachers, evangelists, and missionaries proclaimed Christianity to be the ultimate solution to all the world's problems, their celebration of that belief created and maintained one of the worst of those problems." The section on race discusses how the Bible came to be cited as God's law endorsing slavery of certain races. Wood includes an interesting and detailed account of how the story of Noah and Ham in the Bible became the basis for modern-day slavery. Finally, the section on churches discusses how several different divisions of Christianity (Colonial, Presbyterians, Methodists, Protestant, and Catholic) all have dealt with race and superiority.

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