Chapter XIV

THE "ATLANTIC FELLOWSHIP" AND THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

The attack on Fort Sumter in April, 1861 and the beginning of the American Civil War immediately awakened deep and sympathetic interest among Nonconformists who had followed the evolution of the republic so closely over the years, particularly since slavery which had dominated much religious discussion appeared to be at the heart of the disruption. It is true that transatlantic amity had become somewhat strained during the 1850s due to that same slavery problem. But the fellowship had also been renewed and strengthened by the great transatlantic revivals of 1858-1859, which indeed even inspired some on both sides of the ocean with postmillennial hopes that the newly revealed power of the Spirit would soon accomplish slavery's decay and extinction. Consequently, when the long prophesied hostilities became a reality British religious publications gave close though somewhat puzzled attention to the conflict. Why the South felt compelled to leave the Union and why the North resisted that departure were not understood, though most British observers hoped that somehow providence was at last propelling slavery toward its final extinction.

Yet the situation created its own ironies and confusions. To the surprised indignation of Americans in the northern states, Nonconformists did not quickly rally to the Union cause. Some dissenting bodies still maintained relations with Southern evangelicals, such as the Scottish Free Kirk's ties to Southern Presbyterians, and every denominational connexion had some Victorian liberals who were moved by a perception of the Confederacy as a people struggling for their freedom and self-determination. More fundamentally, many veteran anti-slavery Nonconformists were unable to detect evidence that the war was a genuine crusade for black emancipation. Declarations emanating from the American Federal government seemed specifically to deny that aim. Consequently, while they decried the bloodshed and lamented the apparent "failure" of the American political experiment, some evangelicals also considered the possibility that the splintering of the United States might mask some good: the secession might fatally weaken
slavery's protected status in the Union and lead to its ultimate destruction.

Accordingly, relations between Nonconformists and their northern American brethren during the early years of the Civil War were difficult, confused, and often embittered. During 1861 and 1862 angry accusations, denials, and recriminations crossed the Atlantic in both directions. At the same time the question of the proper policy toward the Civil War divided dissenting communities within Britain, resulting eventually in rebellion by some pro-Union sympathizers against cautious denominational leaders. After 1863 and the North's acknowledgement of "emancipation" as a war objective an attempted restoration of "good feeling" gradually made limited progress. And still later, after 1865, this effort at reconciliation was advanced by the role of Nonconformists in assisting the new Freedmen in the conquered South. Nonetheless, the Civil War marked the decline of transatlantic cooperation as the earlier conviction of close comradeship in a grand religious and moral crusade subsided.

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Just as Americans were at first confused and unsure of their commitment to the war and divided concerning its necessity and purpose, so also in Britain the reaction during the opening months of conflict was one of ambivalence and uncertainty, and in some cases even exasperation and antipathy. In the first year of the war three significant developments contributed to a serious break in the fraternal relations of Nonconformists with the American churches.

First, throughout the summer of 1861 the most prominent American testimony in Britain strengthened the belief that the war would do nothing for the slaves. Since the disappointing Evangelical Alliance of 1846 British Nonconformists had often been wearied by the insistence of leading American churchmen that they could not effectively confront slavery and by their continuing denunciation of abolitionist agitation. Not surprisingly then, Nonconformists were sceptical of any committed Christian drive in America toward ending black slavery. Unlike Anglicans, they had little inclination toward the Southern cause, but since the Union government disavowed emancipation as an objective of the war, they tended to adopt attitudes of
sympathetic but distant neutrality toward the American struggle.

Ironically, this attitude was fostered by American crusaders against slavery as well. Garrison and his followers, still a force among some British Dissenters, condemned the federal government's leadership since no commitment against slavery had been given. The most influential American publicizing this view in Britain was George Barrell Cheever, the colorful Congregational minister of the Church of the Puritans in Union Square, New York. An extremist in the causes of temperance and Sabbath-observance as well as abolition, Cheever had brought controversy, bitter divisions, and a heavy debt to his church. In July, 1860 he had sailed to England on a desperate begging mission to raise $50,000. He remained abroad for over a year until August, 1861, that is, through the period of the American secession crisis. Taking advantage of his many invitations to preach and lecture, he constantly attacked the Washington administration for failing to define the war as a crusade against slavery. For Lincoln's determination to preserve the Union and fear of alienating the border states he had little sympathy. His tirades certainly strengthened some British views about American reluctance to stand decisively against slavery. Patton reported that after hearing Cheever speak, Lord Shaftesbury expressed the common opinion that "there could be no feeling in this country for either side. . . . There was no honest feeling on the subject of slavery in America except among the Abolitionists."

Cheever's reception among Nonconformists was mixed. Many clergy remained aloof, distrusting his ties to Garrisonian radicals. The Patriot commended his anti-slavery zeal but refused to support his fund-raising attempts. John Campbell's British Standard, at first friendly, became hostile after considering his association with "irreligious" Garrisonians. Yet some London ministers formed a committee, which included Thomas Binney, to promote his mission, and in Scotland he received a friendly reception from Robert Candlish, Thomas Guthrie, Robert Buchanan, and other Free Church worthies. In the spring of 1861 he toured Ireland in the company of the Dublin Congregationalist, Alexander King. Always he insisted that the war could never be won so long as the federal government ignored the claims of the
slave. His itinerancy was closely followed in the American religious press, and his mission was further complicated by a protest against it sent by disaffected members in his own church and printed in the London American. At last discredited, he sailed home in August, 1861, but his activities could only have strengthened British doubts and ambivalence about the moral issues of the American war.

Secondly, the same scepticism was displayed a month later when the Evangelical Alliance met in Geneva in September, 1861. Attendance was primarily of Swiss Reformed, but British evangelicals constituted the largest group of visitors. While the British delegation was far less distinguished than that of 1846, it contained prominent figures with earlier American associations--Sir Culling Bardley-Smith, chairman at the founding sessions of the Alliance, the Baptists John Howard Hinton and Baptist Noel, the Scottish Free Churchmen Guthrie, John Gordon Lorimer, and Hugh Miller, the Irish friends of America, William Urwick of Dublin and William Gibson of Ulster, the Methodists William M. Bunting and William Arthur, and the very political Congregationalist, Edward Baines, publisher of the Leeds Mercury. All were strongly anti-slavery men.

The eight Americans were mostly undistinguished. As their only noted spokesman, Robert Baird, confessed, "Considering the embarrassing situation . . . in America, we have been able to come to you only in very small numbers." Nonetheless, the Americans, all Northerners, were eager to win the Alliance's endorsement for the Union cause. In this effort, Baird, who distrusted the British, may have expected French and Swiss assistance. He had personal ties with their leading deputies, Georges Fisch, J. H. Grandpierre, Charles Cordes, and Frederic Monod, while Agenor de Gasparin had six months earlier published The Uprising of a Great People, an enthusiastic account that strongly commended the Northern cause and chided European sceptics. Yet even in America there was some doubt about Baird's ability to persuade. "Dr. Baird must not be timid on the subject of slavery," warned the Independent. "This was the case with some at Berlin."

At the American session at Geneva Baird's contribution was an essay on
"The Influence of Civil and Religious Liberty on Roman Catholicism in the United States," and it was left to the Congregationalist, Miles P. Squier, philosophy professor at Beloit College, to explain the current war crisis in "The Moral Aspects and Bearings of the American Question." Squier's treatment was strongly Unionist but cautious. The South, he taught, provoked the war by attempting to perpetuate and nationalize slavery. But he was also surprisingly speculative. The outcome, he said, could result in the Confederacy going its own way, but if so, the South would lose the protection of the Constitution, gain the hostility of the North and of Europe, and risk a slave revolt encouraged from the North. Alternatively, the North might be aroused to a new crusade for freedom. To the British he gave warning that the Atlantic slave trade might now be renewed. "We may have a baptism of blood," he concluded. "We deserve it." But the nation will "come forth purified . . . to fulfil our mission of mercy in behalf of other peoples and nations of the earth." Some delegates were satisfied; William Urwick, the Dublin Congregationalist, proposed that the message be printed and "circulated throughout the world." But not all were pleased. The caution of the analysis and the failure to call openly for emancipation gave rise to debate. In the end publication was quashed by referral of the question to a committee.

Two days later, however, Bardsley-Smith decided that America's crisis required a special meeting, and here Baird did try to win over the Alliance. But his approach was not significantly different from his Old School apologetic of the past and invoked constitutional argument rather than fervent moral appeals. Secession was constitutionally illegal, he said, but that same constitutionalism prohibited the United States from interfering with slavery. A pledge of emancipation, moreover, would end the hope of reunion and antagonize the border states. Then, moving to the attack, he assailed the lack of sympathy in British public and press. The Times and Cheever's orations had done "infinite mischief," alleging that the North did not sincerely seek the blacks' liberation. Baird's approach was then seconded by the New Jersey Presbyterian, J. A. Priest, who again rehearsed the familiar argument that federal authority was constitutionally bound and not empowered
to end slavery in the states. Britain, he said, had as much right to abolish slavery in the Southern states as did the government at Washington.

Members were not persuaded. Delegates displayed concern for American bloodshed, but expressed the conviction that the North must show more decision on the moral issue. Consequently, in the end the Americans secured only a tepid resolution expressing sympathy with overseas brethren coupled with a demand for a speedy and complete suppression of all human bondage. Not surprisingly, Baird was indignant at the outcome, and criticism in the American press echoed his anger. Indeed, some journals held Baird partly responsible. "Dr. Baird," complained The Independent, "spoke very much as if he were still Secretary of the Southern Aid Society or were expecting to resume that post after the war." But the general view was that the American cause had been betrayed by overseas Protestants. By the beginning of 1862 religious publications were complaining that the British Organisation of the Evangelical Alliance was pro-Southern.

Finally, this early break in transatlantic amity was sharply intensified by a grave Anglo-American diplomatic crisis. On November 8, 1861 an American warship halted the British mail packet Trent on the high seas and removed two Southern diplomats on their way to Europe. The act was a violation of maritime law which had been previously recognized by the United States. In Britain the incident was regarded as American "piracy" and created huge public indignation. Parliament demanded satisfaction, the Foreign Office sent an ultimatum to Washington, and the press engaged in violent denunciation. For almost two months war was a possibility, especially as the American Congress officially endorsed the deed and Secretary of State William Seward privately speculated that a war with Britain might usefully reunite the American people. The danger receded only when the Confederate commissioners were released in January, 1862.

Some Dissenters joined in the outcry. The Leeds Mercury, the leading Nonconformist organ in the North, was patently hostile, though it later moderated its anger to support arbitration. The Congregational British Quarterly Review was indignant. It observed that though attacked by the
United States, Britain had been patient and forbearing only to have the American press "impugn our motives and malign our views." Yet most of the denominational leaders exerted themselves for peace. Eardley-Smith presided over a special meeting of the Evangelical Alliance at Exeter Hall which urged conciliation. The prominent Congregational minister, Newman Hall, spoke for peace before two thousand workingmen at Surrey Chapel. The Three Denominations issued a call for arbitration. The Congregational Union dispatched an urgent fraternal address to American Congregationalists.

Finally, a deputation of Baptists and Congregationalists waited on the Foreign Secretary, Lord John Russell, to urge him to preserve peace. From France a supportive note was sounded in Gasparin's *Une parole de paix* (Paris, 1861).

The war danger passed, but it left a residue of ill feeling in both Britain and America which furthered the alienation already promoted by Cheever's itinerancy and the American rebuff at Geneva. Theodore Cuyler, the Brooklyn Presbyterian, travelling in Scotland in 1862 noted hostility toward America running "like a mill-race," while American religious newspapers, led by the *Independent*, angrily rebuked British brethren for their "betrayal." Still, few Dissenters favored the South. The Methodist Benjamin Gregory was certain that the United States had violated international law in the "Trent affair." Yet he added that "I hold that the South is clearly in the wrong, although the North is not altogether in the right."

In this environment of undecided and ambiguous Nonconformist response to the Civil War American religious leaders, both North and South, tried to invoke the older transatlantic fraternal tradition to sway British religious opinion. Yet the propaganda from both camps appears to have been largely ineffective and did not alter the denominations' official neutrality.

Confederate champions were clearly at a disadvantage. Not only was there strong bias against the slaveholding South in British Dissent, but Southern advocates and publications could seldom breach the blockade to reach England. The few Southerners in Britain in the early 1860s made little personal impression on public opinion. James H. Thornwell, the South Carolina Presbyterian, had been in England during the crisis summer of 1860 but had not
ventured into political discussions. Similarly, William Anderson Scott, who in 1854 had left his Presbyterian pulpit in New Orleans for San Francisco, fled from persecution to England in 1861 and for a time supplied churches in London and Birmingham, but observed discreet silence on war issues. More exceptional was Charles Force Deems, Methodist minister and former professor of humanities at the University of North Carolina, who did indeed preach up the Southern cause in several English Wesleyan pulpits. But the Confederate viewpoint was more likely to reach Dissent through British publications.

Benjamin Gregory's Methodist father, at first a Northern sympathizer, changed his mind after reading a British argument, James Spence's influential and cogent defense of the Southern states in *The American Union*.

The principal effort of Southern churches to win British support was literary. One of Thornwell's last services to Southern Presbyterianism was his authorship at the end of 1861 of the *Address of the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America to All the Churches of Jesus Christ throughout the Earth*. Forthrightly stating that the Southern church had "planted itself upon the word of God, and utterly refused to make slaveholding a sin, or non-slaveholding a term of communion," this manifesto stressed the church's duty to eschew the "political" slavery question and instead preach salvation to all the blacks that a kindly Providence had brought to America. The *Address*, published in the *Southern Presbyterian Review*, was little noted in Britain and its arguments were unlikely to please Dissenter opinion.

Equally futile was the work in 1863 of the Richmond ministerial convention, led largely by Presbyterians, that framed a religious defense of the Confederacy. Unlike Thornwell's earlier apologetic, this *Address to Christians throughout the World by the Clergy of the Confederate States of America* was given wide British circulation by Henry Hotze, a Swiss-born Alabaman who served as the Confederacy's propaganda agent in Europe. The *Address* was stitched in the same cover with "every respectable religious publication," not only the denominational organs but also such prestigious serials as the *Quarterly Review* and the *Edinburgh Review*. Although a well written justification for an inevitable and peaceable separation from the
Union, its confident pro-slavery arguments shocked some Southern sympathizers and probably damaged Confederate influence. Claims that slavery was "not incompatible with our holy Christianity," that slaves were happy and prosperous, that abolition interfered with "the plans of Divine Providence," and that "the South has done more than any people on earth for the Christianization of the African race" elicited protest from evangelicals not otherwise unfriendly to the South. The Scottish Free Church took the lead in drawing up a rebuttal, written by Candlish and signed by over a thousand ministers of various denominations, declaring abhorrence of the Southern clergy's doctrine.

Appeals from Northern churchmen in Britain were more common, but while their anti-slavery views were more acceptable to Nonconformists, they may not have been more effective in winning support for the Union. Northern churchmen found difficulty in convincing British Protestants that their government aimed at black liberation, and many of their audience adhered to the view (expressed by Thomas Clarkson as early as 1846) that dissolution of the Union would be a blessing leading ultimately to the end of the legal sanction for slavery. Presbyterians Robert Baird and Theodore Cuyler wrote articles, addressed public meetings, and inserted letters in newspapers "correcting" hostile opinion, but Cuyler's letter to the Scotsman was followed by a "long and bitter reply by the editor," while other newspapers denounced the "bloody Presbyterian minister from America." The zealous Methodist abolitionist, Gilbert Haven, wrote a passionate patriotic argument that the United States was fighting the "battle of the world," but his anglophobia was so transparent that the editor of the Wesleyan London Watchman refused to print the second installment.

The New York Presbyterian, William Paton, the ancient friend of the late John Angell James with many Nonconformist acquaintances, may have been the most qualified Union advocate. He published in the London American and British Standard and lectured in London and Edinburgh, and although his appearance at the National Club was cancelled because of opposition, the text of his speech appeared in installments in newspapers. His first book, The American Crisis,
or. The True Issue. Slavery or Liberty (July, 1861) insisted that the Southern "rebels" fought only for slavery, not liberty—which they had enjoyed abundantly in the Union—and that Northern public opinion was determined to effect slavery’s abolition. Nonetheless, Dissenters who sympathized with the North constantly warned their American friends that their only hope of winning British opinion was to proclaim slavery’s end—and official American commitment to this goal did not begin to appear until the end of 1862.

Consequently, at the end of 1862 the Nonconformist denominations still chose to withhold endorsement of the Union cause, instead adopting an official neutrality. All the bodies, except the Congregationalists, had coreligionists in both the North and the South, and in every connexion there were some who for various reasons contemplated the partition of the republic with composure. This same detachment was evident in the stand of the British branch of the Evangelical Alliance.

These views were especially found among Scottish Presbyterians. The close ties of the Free Church with the Old School meant that some of their contacts lay south of the Mason-Dixon line—a relation evident in the reliance of the North British Review on the Southern Presbyterian Review for some of its judgments on the war. But far more determining was the opinion of the North British that slavery had been maintained by the Union and that the breakup of the republic was the best hope for emancipation and a "signal service to humanity [and] civilisation." Stung by American attacks, the Review by 1862 was commenting on the "appallingly rapid and decisive" deterioration of American society in politics, manners, and morals. The United States, "a gigantic but not a great nation," produced little freedom but much arrogance, intolerance, lawlessness, and low morality. Even at the end of the year it dismissed Lincoln’s new emancipation policy as a military expedient, "unconstitutional, hasty, impolitic, and criminal." At a more popular level, the Edinburgh Witness also was charged with critical observations, outraging Americans by its alleged "atrocious slanders" on Lincoln.

Free Church leaders, hitherto much admired in America, such as Thomas
Guthrie and William Hanna, publicly withheld their support from the North. They could see no moral superiority in the Union cause. Guthrie, influenced by Cheever and offended by American rejection of British arbitration, delivered a Birmingham speech in which he assailed American clergy for want of antislavery zeal. He had read the Philadelphia Presbyterian for ten years, he said, and had found only denunciations of abolitionists, none of slavery. When he criticized a recent article by Charles Hodge in the Princeton Review, he became a prime target of the Independent and Northern Presbyterian hostility. From Ireland James McCosh reported that most of the better classes in Belfast displayed sympathy for the Confederacy.

Wesleyans, long committed to immediate emancipation, reviled slavery but displayed comparable ambivalence in supporting the Union. It is true that William Arthur, their great evangelist, was a consistent and public advocate of the Northern cause on the platform, in the press, and in the Evangelical Alliance. Yet his denomination kept to an official policy of neutrality. Wesleyans could not favor the South—indeed Conference had repudiated communion with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South before the war began—but Northern pretensions to a holy crusade remained unconvincing. In May, 1860 238 American Methodist antislavery ministers had called for British Methodist help through memorials and deputations. Yet the appeal—in William Pullen’s The Blast of a Trumpet in Zion Calling upon Every Son and Daughter of Wesley in Great Britain and Ireland to Aid their Brethren in America in Purifying their American Zion from Slavery—also revealed that even Northern Methodists had failed to effectively confront slavery. The appeal was supported by the Methodist New Connexion and the Methodist Free Church, but the Wesleyan Conference was undecided in both 1861 and 1862 and declined to commit itself to the Northern cause.

The Wesleyan Magazine reflected this position. It was certain that the Confederacy fought for slavery and not only for independence. Yet its support for the federal government was qualified. After 1862 it praised the Emancipation Proclamation, but it still remained doubtful about its enforcement. It complained that the North would have "secured a larger amount
of public sympathy and moral support from England, but for the violence and anti-British ravings of their own press." And as late as 1865 the Wesleyan thought Southern independence was a "question only of time."

The Baptist Union followed a similar course. Baptists had long been in the van of the anti-slavery movement and were deeply disappointed by Lincoln's unwillingness to proclaim a crusade for emancipation. Consequently Northern demands for Baptist moral support were often viewed doubtfully. At the commencement of the war Thomas Goadby warned the Americans: "God has rent assunder your Federation because of your idolatry of the Union and the dollar, and your sacrifice of freedom and the poor African to these gods." Still, secession was providential, for "the South in her infatuation is doing all she can to destroy slavery by withdrawing it from under the powerful aegis of the Union." Throughout the war articles in the Baptist Magazine displayed some critical distance, condemning the slaveholding South but finding the North blustering, arrogant, and insolent, "fighting an immoral war for dominion." By 1864 the Magazine conceded that a Northern victory would destroy slavery, though "the North did not enter on the conflict with that object in view. It has had to be coerced by events into the conviction that slavery must be overthrown."

British Congregationalists experienced the greatest pressure to endorse the Union cause. Throughout the century their American ties had concentrated on the northeastern states, and they had virtually no coreligionists in the South. Some prominent ministers were decidedly pro-Union. Such men as Newman Hall, James Massie, and John Waddington were eventually to lead the Nonconformist drive to aid the North. Yet here too there were sceptics. Richard William Dale, John Angell James' brilliant successor at Carr's Lane, Birmingham, was angered by "the Trent affair," doubted the emancipationist resolve of the North, and condemned the Dissenter "habit of extolling all American institutions to the disparagement of our own." He too withheld approval of the Union cause until after the Emancipation Proclamation.

But the most eminent sceptic was Robert Vaughan, professor of theology at Lancashire Independent College and the scholarly editor of the Congregational
British Quarterly. Early in the war Vaughan was alienated by the "vehemence and passion" with which the North maligned British views. To his mind the conflict was not for or against slavery; rather, the issue was the Northern will to impose reunion versus the Southern will to independence. Accordingly, there were sound reasons to stand free of the war. To retain a conquered South, he predicted, the North would inevitably become despotic, as was already evident in its cancellation of Habeas Corpus protections. "It is not Secession, but Reunion," he thought, "which will . . . defer the day of complete emancipation." Even late in the war Vaughan perceived Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation as a political stratagem rather than a moral policy, which might well be abandoned after victory. Yet Vaughan never favored British recognition of the Confederacy.

This ambivalence was reflected in the sessions of the Congregational Union. Always distrusted by some Independent churches as a possible threat to their historic freedom and autonomy, the Union had prudently followed a course of carefully avoiding divisive issues. Consequently, denominational statesmen now sought to banish discussion of the American war from the Union's business, despite the offense to American brethren. The issue assumed prominence in October, 1862 in connection with the bicentenary of the Bartholomew Ejections. Joseph Parrish Thompson of the Broadway Tabernacle in New York, acting for the American Congregationalists, sent commemorative greetings to the English Congregational Union. J. W. Massie, entrusted with drafting a reply, had the Union urging the Americans to work for the "entire abolition of slavery in resistance to the aggressive policy of representatives and rulers chosen and imposed by the influence of a slaveholding oligarchy." Massie's language gave rise to heated debate and provoked strong opposition. In the end the Union refused to adopt his text, objecting that it was too partisan in tone. Eventually the body endorsed a "compromise resolution" deploring the war, offering sympathy to America, and expressing hope for the speedy extinction of slavery.

Finally, the caution evident in the decisions of the Nonconformist denominations was again reflected in the British Organisation of the
Evangelical Alliance. In October, 1862 (the same month as the awkward Bartholomew Ejections correspondence) a fresh attempt was made to elicit a definite pro-Northern declaration from that body. The initiative was taken by the French Branch which, led by Fisch and Gasparin and more openly sympathetic to the government at Washington, sent to London a letter endorsing the North and asking the British to concur. Despite the efforts of William Arthur and other advocates of the North, the British Branch’s response remained non-committal and politically neutral, expressing grief at American bloodshed, a hope for peace, and a profound desire for an end to all bondage. When the British statement was published in America, religious comment throughout the North was irate at this British “betrayal.” Through the winter of 1862-63 William Patton, acting for the American clergy, pressed Hermann Schmettau, foreign secretary of the Evangelical Alliance, for reconsideration and a more positive endorsement. Despite Patton’s elaborate and documented efforts to prove that the American war was to end slavery, Schmettau’s final response was negative. The Alliance was a Christian, not a political, body; it could not express an opinion about the motives of those engaged in the war.

Not surprisingly, the *New Englander* in April, 1863 published all the documents of the Patton-Schmettau exchange, exhibiting the “duplicitry” of the British Alliance in detail. It then proceeded to violently attack the editorial policies of the Alliance publication, *Evangelical Christendom.* "American Christians have given themselves and their sons, and their wealth, to what they believed to be the holiest war freedom ever waged, and their brethren of the Evangelical Alliance deny that there is one redeeming feature, one right or noble motive, in their struggle." The *American Presbyterian Review* forthrightly entitled its account, "Freedom Betrayed by the Evangelical Alliance of England." American bitterness was unrelenting. When Bardley-Smith died in May, 1863, the *Independent* commented that "under such a presidency the later meetings of the Evangelical Alliance have been marked by . . . discreditable abuse of the American people and their institutions."

As this reaction indicates, a massive indignation was building in the
Northern churches at the failure of British brethren to proclaim their solidarity with the Union government at Washington. The American religious press, led by The Independent, routinely castigated Dissent’s publications: The Nonconformist and Baines’ Leeds Mercury, it noted, had denounced the war. The Standard was in league with slaveholders. The Patriot did not want the Union to be reunited. John Campbell of The Standard in his treatment of America repeatedly displayed his "characteristic arrogance, self-sufficiency, and dogmatic ignorance." By 1864 Campbell was supporting the North, but the Boston Review reported that the Patriot still "drivelled" and the British Quarterly "floundered." In July the American Theological Review devoted sixty-five pages to a survey, ironically entitled "British Sympathy with America." Among other outrages, it noted that the North British, organ of the Free Kirk, mounted "the most calumnious and virulent attack upon the whole character, position, and policy of the American Union." "It is not many years," it reminded its readers, "since the Free Church of Scotland sent to this country for pecuniary aid; and now its leading quarterly represents us as in a more debased condition than any other nation pretending to civilisation." The Congregational British Quarterly was perhaps the greatest offender. In its pages "this generation has heard England and will never forget."

Leading American churchmen who had been prominent in earlier Anglo-American exchanges joined in the indictment. Albert Barnes’ popular sermon, "The Conditions of Peace," sharply rebuked British Protestants and was prominently reprinted in the National Preacher. Francis Wayland in similar fashion spoke for the Baptists. The Methodist Gilbert Haven warned darkly that England would soon have to face a democratic revolution inspired by America. The collapse of Presbyterian good will was especially dramatic. It is true that Samuel F. B. Morse had long indicted British reformers. Just after the 1860 election he advanced the theory that Britain was seeking the republic’s dissolution by exporting its anti-slavery enthusiasm to the United States. After the war began the theory seemed quickly out of date, but Morse continued to blame the war not only on British aristocrats but also on the crusaders at Exeter Hall.
But far more significant was the alienation of the dominant voice at Princeton, Charles Hodge. Hodge had hitherto been strongly attached to overseas evangelicals and especially to Free Kirk leaders; he had hugely admired Thomas Chalmers and had counted William Cunningham a close friend. Yet at the beginning of 1862 he devoted a fifty-page article in the *Princeton Review* to the collapse of the transatlantic fellowship. After noting the nation's ancient political and religious indebtedness to Britain, he marvelled that "anti-slavery England takes the side of lawlessness, of slavery and of violence, from selfish and dishonourable motives." The break with the Scots was particularly painful: "The *Edinburgh Witness*, the organ of the Free Church of Scotland, a body to which we are bound by the most intimate ties of brotherhood, publishes and endorses slanders so atrocious as to be incredible by any mind from which God has not withdrawn the spirit of justice." Hodge sounded the death knell of the evangelical overseas partnership: "We deeply regret the conduct of England towards this country in this time of our national trial, because it must produce permanent alienation."

Both angered and distressed at the failure of British Independents to endorse the Northern cause, American Congregationalists decided to send a special envoy to the English Congregational Union in May, 1863. The choice fell on Julian Sturtevant, president of Illinois College. The visit was not a success. Enoch Mellor, the Union's chairman, condemned the Confederacy for supporting slavery, but Sturtevant was warned, before his introduction, not to plead for the Northern cause and thus reintroduce the divisive issue of the war. "I was not permitted to speak one word before that assembly of British Christians for the cause of freedom in my country," was his indignant report. The Congregational Union "suppresses all utterance on one of the gravest moral issues of the nineteenth century." He was reduced to begging ministers to invite him into their pulpits in order that he might uphold the justice of the American war. He was not pleased with Nonconformity. He complained of "insincerity" in men who, he noted, had long rebuked America for its sin of slavery. Even Newman Hall told him, "I am for the North; but the restoration of the Union is impossible, and you are only fighting for a boundary." After
he returned home he wrote *Three Months in Great Britain*, a scathing indictment of a British society unrepentant for her injuries to America. "I knew not what to think of British christianity," was his judgment. And his advice to American audiences was "Above all let us maintain our moral independence. Let us dismiss all this restless solicitude about what Englishmen may think and say of us."

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Although Sturtivant returned home with embittered recollections of Congregationalism's noncommittal stance in the summer of 1863, Dissenters friendly to the North had already begun to mobilize. It is true that official denominational bodies still guarded their neutrality, but an organized drive to support the North now began to exert pressure on British religious opinion. For this trend several factors were responsible. First, in the Nonconformist churches there had always been prominent figures who were convinced that the American war was a just and holy struggle. Long frustrated by Dissent's failure to endorse the cause, they were now emboldened by Lincoln's emancipation policy after September, 1862. Second, they with other like-minded sympathizers outside Nonconformity began to launch a determined propaganda campaign, based on the work of new coordinating committees, a series of public orations, and the issuing of inexpensive tracts. And thirdly, these Dissenters were now able to exploit the more decided pro-Northern opinion of French Protestants and incorporate their arguments into the campaign. The capstone of this shift was the decision to assert Dissenter solidarity with the North by ignoring denominational officialdom, mobilizing a mammoth declaration of support, and dispatching an extraordinary embassy to America. Each of these elements requires brief comment.

American newspapers had early identified those well-known Nonconformists who had publicly stressed the morality of the North's struggle in the American war. Notable among them was the venerable John Howard Hinton, long the minister of the Baptist chapel in Devonshire Square, who in his youth had written a two-volume *History and Topography of the United States* and who throughout his career had served not only the Baptist Union as secretary but
also the causes of revivalism, voluntaryism, and abolition of slavery. Hinton was seventy-two in 1863 and just resigned from forty-seven years in the pastorate, though he continued to preach in London and Reading. When in October, 1862 impatient Dissenters, meeting at the Congregational Library, decided to defy denominational neutrality and launch a pro-Northern organization Hinton occupied the chair.

Less experienced with America but highly influential advocates of the North were Hinton's younger fellow-Baptists, the "Honourable and Reverend" Baptist Wriothesley Noel and Charles Haddon Spurgeon. The aristocratic Noel, brother of a peer and a convert from Anglicanism, was preacher at the John Street Chapel and a recent president of the Baptist Union. In 1862 he was one of the organizers of the London Emancipation Society and three thousand copies of his *Freedom and Slavery in the United States* (1863) were distributed to all the religious denominations. Spurgeon, not yet thirty in 1863, was the sensationally successful preacher at the huge Metropolitan Tabernacle. He did not participate in the organized crusade but his influence was unambiguous. "God bless and strengthen the North," was his prayer before his congregation, "give victory to their arms."

Among the Wesleyans none was more prominent in the American cause than the Irish Methodist, William Arthur. After missionary service in India and pastorates in London, Arthur was secretary of the Wesleyan Missionary Society during the 1850s and 1860s. But he was best known in both Britain and America for his enthusiastic support of the transatlantic revival of 1858-60; his ardent *Tongue of Fire* (1856) had passed through eighteen editions in its first year. Arthur had championed the North from the commencement of the war—in the Evangelical Alliance, in letters to the *Watchman*, and in his tracts *The American Question* (1861) and *English Opinion on the American Rebellion* (1863).

However, the principal role in organizing a pro-Northern crusade among Nonconformists lay with the Independents. In this enterprise all the newspapers paid great attention to Christopher Newman Hall. In his forties in the 1860s, Hall since 1854 had been Rowland Hill's popular successor at the Surrey Chapel, a great orator, and a very public commenter on current affairs.
The son of a newspaper publisher, Hall displayed no hesitation in entering the political arena; he corresponded regularly with Gladstone and sought ways of influencing members of parliament. His great speech in October, 1862, printed (in both London and New York) as The American War (1862), insisted that the war's real cause was the South's determination to expand the realm of slavery. Hence the war was a genuine drive for emancipation that Britain must be made to support. Through 1862 and 1863 Hall itinerated through England and Scotland preaching up support for the Northern cause.

Newman Hall was closely supported in his crusade by John Waddington, since 1846 minister of the oldest Congregational chapel in England, the "church of the Pilgrim Fathers" in Southwark. Waddington had already achieved fame as the historian of Congregationalism when the American war began, a service to be rewarded by a D.D. from Williams College. A frequent correspondent of the Independent, Waddington urged his readers to disregard the hostile Times and assured them that England would eventually come to their aid. His The American Crisis in Relation to Slavery (1862) argued that the Confederacy was "based confessedly on principles more iniquitous than any known to us in the history of civilisation." Like Hall, Waddington became a frequent speaker and organizer of pro-Northern meetings after 1862.

Even more important than Hall and Waddington among the Congregationalists, however, was James William Massie. A Scotsman educated by David Bogue at Gosport, Massie at sixty-three could look back on a career of aggressive agitation and reform—in India, Scotland, and Lancashire. Returning to Britain in 1839 after seventeen years as a missionary, he had quickly organized his small Perth congregation into a voice of protest against the toleration of slavery in America. Then in 1841 he had awakened (and alarmed some) fellow-Independents by his brilliant and militant management of a Manchester convention of dissenting ministers dedicated to the repeal of the Corn Laws. From that moment onward it was recognized that no Dissenter minister was more skilled in the arts of political agitation. At the London meeting of the Evangelical Alliance in 1846 Massie had been an outspoken opponent of any compromise with the Americans which might give comfort to
slaveholders. After a long pastorate in Lancashire, Massie in the 1860s was settled in London as secretary of the Home Mission Society. In 1862 and 1863 he published two tracts on the moral integrity of the Northern states in their struggle against the Confederacy. Moreover, his connection with America was personal. His brother was a minister in Rhode Island and his nephew was enrolled in the Union army.

Since the beginning of the American war Massie had seen the conflict as the best opportunity to destroy slavery and had energetically promoted the Northern cause. Throughout these months Massie had also been increasingly disappointed with the cautious response of the official denominational bodies. In the autumn of 1862 his frustration was increased by two incidents related earlier. First, the Congregational Union rejected his "too partisan" text for replying to the American Congregationalists in connection with the Bartholomew Ejections bicentenary. Then a month later the British Branch of the Alliance responded to a French Protestant proposal supporting American brethren with only a vague resolution deploring the war. Dismayed, indignant, and determined to intervene, Massie was convinced that what was needed was a broad evangelical commitment to work for the victory of the Union armies in America.

All of these ministers had written in defense of the Northern cause, and all were dismayed at the reluctance of the denominations to assume a more decided stand. And by the end of 1862 the American war as a crusade against slavery at last became believable. On September 22, 1862 Lincoln announced the intent of his government to liberate slaves in those states in arms against the United States. Although there was scepticism among many and jeers that Lincoln freed slaves where he could not, and kept slaves in bondage where he could free them, there was also a slow recognition that Northern victory would eventually end American slavery. This moral exegesis of the war became more fixed after the promulgation of the famous Emancipation Proclamation in January, 1863 and encouraged British sympathizers to more aggressive action.

Consequently, by the end of 1862 some of these prominent Dissenters were ready to bypass their denominations and the Evangelical Alliance and mobilize support for the American Union outside their regular connexional structures.
The first result was their formation of the Committee of Correspondence on American Affairs. Then within two months they played a large part in the work of two other organizations that enlisted support from all pro-Northern sympathizers: the London Emancipation Society and the Union and Emancipation Society of Manchester. These three organizations formed the heart of the campaign to win public support for the Northern states and their armies.

The Committee of Correspondence on American Affairs was formed October 13, 1862 at a meeting at the Congregational Library in London. In this step the lead appears to have been taken by Hinton, Massie, Waddington, and J. C. Galloway, the secretary of the Chapel Building Society. It is worth noting that two Americans also were present at the organizational meeting, Albert Woodruff, a delegate to the Congregational Union and William Taylor of California. Five days later the committee secretary, Frederick Tomkins, sent a declaration of its objectives to America. It was published in The Independent and other newspapers and assured Americans that a strong party in Dissent was working in the North's interest. Over the next year the committee published an address, signed by fifty Nonconformist ministers, and at least two pamphlets of which about twenty-five hundred copies which were sent to men of influence. Much of Dissenters' energy for the Northern cause was soon to be absorbed by the more comprehensive London and Manchester committees. Nonetheless, this committee was still in existence in late October, 1863 when it approved a letter to Henry Ward Beecher's Plymouth church, Brooklyn, praising his recent speaking tour in Britain.

The London Society was born a month later than the Nonconformist committee, in November, 1862. Several of its organizers were veteran Garrisonians; George Thompson, now years old, was chairman and his son-in-law, Frederick William Cresson, was the committee secretary, though eventually the committee consisted of over three hundred notables. Prominent Dissenters, especially Newman Hall, were active in the organization. The committee published three thousand copies of two of Baptist Noel's tracts as well as Harriet Beecher Stowe's Address to the Women of England. At year's end the Committee sent a circular to all religious denominations requesting
them to stress the new American emancipation policy in all New Years services. On January 29, 1863 it held an enormous mass meeting at Exeter Hall with speeches denouncing the South by several leading Nonconformists. The tone of the meeting may be glimpsed through the partisan vision of the Tory Weekly Despatch: "Oh, those canting pulpiteers! Those medicine men and rainmakers of this pagan Christendom! Your Newmans and Beechers, and Noels and Cheevers, and mouthing Massies and shouting Newman Halls, and loud-tongued Mials! . . . Here stands Protestant Presbyteryian 'unco gude' Newman Hall howling for war, and hounding on Lincoln and his ban dogs to stick by the slot of the Southern heroes, and lap more blood."

The third committee, the Union and Emancipation Committee of Manchester, was organized at the Free Trade Hall at the very end of 1862. It was an amalgam of Lancashire radicals, anti-Corn Law veterans, revitalized abolitionists, and Nonconformists. A leading figure from its inception was its wealthy Unitarian president, Thomas Bayley Potter, M. P., but Dissenting ministers--Massie, Waddington, and Newman Hall as well as the Scottish Thomas Guthrie--were among its numerous vice-presidents. The Manchester society may have been less impressive in "respectable" membership than the London society, but the level of its activities throughout 1862 and 1863 was unusually high. In its first half-year it was reported to have sponsored over 150 meetings in the North of England and Scotland in support of the American government.

By the end of 1863 the several committees had published over forty tracts, several of them by Dissenting ministers. Noel, Waddington, Massie, Newman Hall, and Arthur all wrote in the Northern interest. Not untypical was Massie's very simple and direct eight-page penny tract, The Case Stated. The Friends and Enemies of the American Slave (1863). Massie quoted extensively and damagingly from Confederate leaders on the aim of the South to maintain its "slavocracy," and concluded that "Christianity and the world are destined to be . . . dishonoured, or exalted as the despotism of the Slave-holder prevails, or as the righteousness of equal government is made to triumph."

It is difficult to assess the impact of the campaign. It may be that it made
few converts but instead confirmed and energized pro-Northern opinion that had been silenced or depressed by the Americans' apparent reluctance to embrace black liberation.

The most spectacular work of the committees was their sponsorship and management of the whirlwind speaking tour of the famous American Congregationalist, Henry Ward Beecher. In late May, 1863 in company with President John Raymond of Vassar, Beecher had sailed to Europe for a six month stay. The Independent reported that "his trip will be mainly for recreation," but that he would speak out if given the chance. In England Beecher was known as a "sort of Spurgeon in New York" and a fiery advocate of emancipation, a commitment that had gained him some notoriety as a frequent critic of Lincoln's caution. At first announced as a speaker at the Congregational Union, his appearance was cancelled for fear that he would provoke discord. But in October Waddington persuaded Beecher to address public meetings under the sponsorship of the Emancipation committees. The result was the famous tour from October 9 to 23 in which he harrassed huge and sometimes boisterous audiences in Manchester, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Liverpool, and London.

In Liverpool where pro-Southern feeling was strong he almost occasioned a riot, and everywhere his addresses were attended by throngs. In Edinburgh many could not get tickets to hear him in the Free Church Assembly Hall. At Exeter Hall the crowds spilled over into the streets. The Nonconformist presence was evident. Beecher was usually introduced by Dissenting ministers, and in Edinburgh the chair was filled by Duncan McLaren, long the mainstay of the Voluntary Church Association. At Exeter Hall the platform was occupied by virtually all the prominent Nonconformist sympathizers with the North—Hinton, Waddington, Newman Hall, Charles Stovel, John Campbell, Robert Halley, Frederick Tomkins, J. C. Galloway, William M. Bunting, and others. (The absent Massie was in America.) Nonconformist students were not neglected. Beecher visited Lancashire Independent College and also spoke at a soiree of theological students gathered from the five Congregational and Baptist colleges around London. The American papers followed his tour closely, and his speeches were quickly published in both England and New York.
Still, his impact may have been exaggerated. Sturtevant, in England in 1863, thought Beecher had not converted any, and Beecher himself reported that most Nonconformist ministers, even Congregationalists, were unfriendly to the North. Looking back in 1865 he reported that "it had seemed to him that the people of that country had been given up to believe a lie that they might be damned." Moreover, there is little evidence that his tour restored the fraternal bonds between British and American denominations. Nonetheless, his influence in galvanizing well-disposed Nonconformists to action cannot be overlooked.

Finally, French Protestants, now closely tied to both British and American evangelicals, also strengthened the effort to provide the Northern cause with a European Protestant endorsement—a substitute for the failed effort to commit the Evangelical Alliance.

French evangelical Protestants had been far more inclined to unambiguously support the North than had been the case with British Nonconformists. Baird had early developed personal friendships with French evangelicals, and he kept them aware of American religion, having published *De l'état et de l'avenir de la religion en Amerique* in 1856. The slavery issue was also familiar to French Protestants; *La case de l'Oncle Tom* (Paris, 1853) had been popular in France, and informative accounts of Southern slavery had been common in the 1850s. John Bigelow, the American Consul-General at Paris, and John McClintock, the former president of Dickinson College and editor of the *Methodist Quarterly Review* and from 1860 to 1864 the Wesleyan preacher at the American Chapel, were strong advocates of the Northern cause. The leading French evangelicals—Frederic Monod, Grandpierre, Fisch, and Agenor de Gasparin—had all accepted the Northern promise that victory would be followed by manumission of black slaves.

Gasparin, a personal friend of Baird, was particularly emphatic in supporting the Union. A devout Huguenot and member of the legislature, he was also a reformer—an advocate of prison reform, separation of church and state, and the extinction of slavery. In the midst of the secession crisis in 1861 Gasparin had written *Les Etats-Unis en 1861: Un grand peuple qui se releve,*
abridged and republished in New York as *The Uprising of a Great People*, a work predicting the future glory of the United States, clearly favoring the North over the slaveholding South, and insisting that the Civil War would lead ultimately to a united and free people. The work, popular in France where it was given favorable notice in the prestigious *Revue des deux mondes*, was enthusiastically and gratefully reviewed in America. Then when the Trent crisis occurred, Gasparin attempted to compose Anglo-American differences in *A Word of Peace on the American Question* (London, 1862). Finally, in 1862 he published *America Before Europe*, a work that directly criticized British Protestants for their ambivalence on the Civil War, though he agreed that Nonconformists, especially Congregationalists, were now becoming more decided. "The party of the Bible has risen; Christian England . . . is about to make reparation and more, for the evil she has done." The book was approvingly reviewed and quoted by American journals as a much needed reproof to British evangelicals.

Second only to Gasparin in American popularity was Georges Fisch, Swiss pastor at Lyons and (after 1855) Paris, who spent 1862 in America and on his return published *Nine Months in the United States during the Crisis* (1863). The book, which included a preface by William Arthur, argued that secession was the work of a small conspiracy and the war a genuine crusade. Monod, reviewing the work, was entirely convinced. "A war against such a confederacy as this," he concluded, "is not to be lamented; it is to be rejoiced at. It is a legitimate use of the sword which God has put in the hands of the rulers of nations."

Understandably, American religious journals cited and praised French sympathizers, contrasting them with the less satisfying attitude of Nonconformists. The French initiative in the Evangelical Alliance brought the contrast into focus. As indicated earlier, their effort to align the Alliance with the North in October, 1862 was thwarted by British opposition. According to Massie, it was this rejection by the British Branch that precipitated the resolve of pro-Northern Nonconformists to defy denominational opposition, ignore official structures, and decisively endorse the Northern
cause. And in this effort they knew they could rely on the help of French Protestants.

All of these elements were important in the turn of the tide in 1863. Each played a role in the effort to repair the rent in the transatlantic fellowship and show American brethren sympathy and support. The centerpiece of this new chapter was to be James Massie's mission to America.

How and where the idea of an evangelical embassy to America was conceived is not certain. The plan was in progress at the beginning of 1863, and the three Emancipation Societies were soon managing its promotion in England. Massie stood at the center of the strategy. Well known throughout English Congregationalism as a veteran reformer and secretary of the Home Missions Society, he could also capitalize on his long ministry in Manchester and on his current station in London. Significantly, he was a member of all three of the sponsoring committees. Moreover, since the 1840s he had been recognized as a highly skilled organizer and manager of opinion in public affairs.

The first step was to solidify support among French evangelicals and to use that support to launch a fresh movement for British commitment to the Northern cause. Early in 1863 Massie journeyed to Paris and conferred with a sympathetic group of evangelical pastors, including Frederic Monod, Fisch, Grandpierre, Eugene Bersier, Louis Pulsford, Louis Rognon, and others. The result was a new French appeal, calling for "a great and peaceful manifestation of sympathy for the coloured race" and support for "those seeking to abolish slavery." This time official channels in securing British concurrence were entirely ignored; the declaration, dated February 12, 1863, was addressed directly to "the Ministers and Pastors of all evangelical denominations in Great Britain." The appeal had been circulated in France and allegedly carried the signatures of seven hundred and fifty French ministers when it was sent over the Channel to England.

In England the Emancipation Committees assumed control, making certain that the Address was published in newspapers and given the greatest publicity possible. Then in May, 1863 the London Emancipation Committee funded a conference of ministers, presided over by Baptist Noel, which drafted a
concurring reply. Now every effort was made to secure mammoth endorsement. The British Reply was issued as a printed circular, published in newspapers, and sent in letters to thirteen thousand British ministers. In consequence, four thousand "certified signatures" were eventually attached to the Reply.

Finally, on June 3 a great public meeting was held at the Free Trade Hall, Manchester where all these proceedings were approved and the text of an Address to America adopted. Still concerned about the strength of the American resolve to free the slaves, the Address cautioned "American statesmen and Christian ministers ... to guard against any reaction in the policy of emancipation" after the war. Then the conference gave the task of carrying the Address overseas to James Massie. (To make the mission credible as an expression of all British evangelicals, he was to be accompanied by an Anglican evangelical, J. H. Rylance of St. Paul's, Lambeth. Rylance had other business in America, however, and on arrival he took no part in the "embassy." ) Expenses were to be paid largely by the Manchester industrialist, Thomas Bayley Potter. The delegates, formally commissioned by the Emancipation Societies, sailed from Liverpool on June 17, 1863.

Arriving in New York, Massie sought the help of Oliver Johnson, editor of the Anti-Slavery Standard. Through Johnson a provisional committee to handle him was quickly formed, made up of Joseph Parrish Thompson of the Broadway Tabernacle, Asa D. Smith, president of Dartmouth College, and Stephen Tyng, the evangelical rector of Holy Trinity. Then from early July to the end of September Massie followed an exhausting schedule, touring the Northern states as far west as Chicago and St. Louis in the difficult task of overcoming American hostility and repairing transatlantic amity.

July was spent in a thorough canvas of the northeast. In New York he spoke to the city's ministers at the Bible House and then before huge audiences at the Broadway Tabernacle, the Church of the Puritans, the Madison Square Presbyterian Church and other churches. His itinerary took him to Providence, Boston, Springfield, Worcester, Lawrence, Portland, Hartford, New Haven, and Saratoga. Then in August he passed on to Philadelphia and Washington. In the capital he conferred with Senator Sumner (who had been
informed of his coming by Joseph Bright) and presented letters to the
Secretaries of State, Treasury, and War. After speaking with Seward, he was
taken to Lincoln for a quarter-hour interview, in which the president assured
Massie that he meant to maintain his Emancipation Proclamation. Then in
September Massie was in the west, following a grueling schedule of attending
meetings, delivering orations, answering questions, and deflecting criticism
in Detroit, Chicago, St. Louis, Cincinnati, Columbus, Cleveland, Pittsburgh,
and Buffalo. Everywhere the text of his address and the local ministers' replies were printed in newspapers and religious journals.

Massie was known as a friend of the North. On occasion he was reported to
have hung the American flag from his office window in England. His brother
was a minister in Rhode Island and his nephew had been wounded in the South.
But despite these strong credentials, his tour was not without friction. He
found that he had to tread carefully between abolition radicals, still highly
critical of the government at Washington, and American patriots resentful of
Dissent's cautious treatment of the North's claim to unqualified support.
In New York at the outset Cheever, expressing "his own unique position,"
strongly criticized American leadership, insisting that the nation was
unrepentant, that emancipation was only a military strategy, and the war's end
might leave slavery intact. Massie had to deliver a careful non-committal
reply. Another minister resented any interference from Dissent in American
affairs. He had been in England, he explained, and had not received courteous
treatment from antislavery reformers. A different problem arose in
Washington; two pastors opposed to the war denied Massie a hearing. In
Philadelphia Albert Barnes for unstated reasons refused to support Massie's
mission, despite repeated requests.

But Massie's major problem was the intense American anger over British
Dissent's unwillingness to champion the North. In New Haven he was attacked
because "more than six thousand . . . in the ministry of the voluntary
churches" had not subscribed his declaration. "Thousands of ministers have
not signed it," explained Massie, "because they were under the impression that
you in the North were not really and earnestly engaged in the struggle for the
abolition of slavery." A Yale professor expressed bitter animosity because of help given the Confederate raiders, the Alabama and the Florida. The United States, he vowed, would be avenged for the depredations which the British had condoned. In Saratoga another minister delivered a similar attack on British "piracy." To these attacks Massie replied that he and other friends had succeeded in setting up a vigilance committee in British ports to monitor any shipbuilding and provisioning that might be used to assist the South. Often Massie had to handle attacks on Britain's aristocracy who were said to be aligned with their Southern "bastard progeny." Americans widely supposed that Britain's upper class, hating republicanism, was eager to witness the failure of the American experiment. Massie was diplomatic, pointing out that the Duchess of Sutherland and the Duke of Argyle were Northern sympathizers, while the aristocratic Baptist Noel was the greatest Baptist preacher for the North. And the British working class and Nonconformity, he insisted, constantly prayed for Northern victory.

The tour may have been successful in restoring some transatlantic trust. Newspaper accounts and reviews were friendly, and Massie personally won general credit. However, the many criticisms reflected the great damage done to the evangelical overseas partnership. Moreover, Americans were well aware that the tour was not an authorized denominational mission but the venture of dissidents who, not able to win action from their denominations, had been forced to work through the Emancipation Committees. Consequently, the resolution of the two thousand Chicagoans assembled at Bryan Hall to hear Massie on August 30 may have been a disturbing omen. While welcoming the support of British brethren, they also formally resolved that "this nation neither asks nor needs the sympathy or aid of any other people. [It] is able to vindicate the justice of its cause . . . by the success of its arms under the favour of Almighty God."

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Attempts of the Nonconformist churches to re-establish an Atlantic fellowship were to be difficult, and the results largely formal. And for Congregationalists, the backbone of the historic overseas partnership, the
very effort was to be nullified and marked by fresh disasters. In the outcome connections between Nonconformists and the American churches in the later nineteenth century were to be more ceremonial, polite, and superficial. Transatlantic ties could not be restored in any vital sense comparable to the fellowship of the 1840s.

The conventional approaches were made. A Methodist delegation crossed the Atlantic to the United States in 1864. It sought to restore a fellowship disturbed by the fact that the British Wesleyan connexion had included sympathizers with both the North and South in the conflict. In August of the following year an American deputation was received at the Wesleyan conference at Birmingham, at which R. W. Dale was an interested observer. The Baptists, less troubled by a Southern connection, also were able to re-establish their transatlantic communion. The Free Church had more serious difficulties. Candlish announced in the General Assembly his delight in refounding a connection with American Presbyterians which, he said, he had been partly responsible for severing. Probably the visit of James McCosh to America in 1866 was helpful, since the future president of Princeton had been unambiguously supportive of the North throughout the war.

But most important was the attempt of the Congregational Union of England and Wales to re-establish fellowship. The assassination of Lincoln in April, 1865 called forth expressions of shock and sympathy from leading Independents. At the Congregational Union in 1865 both R. W. Dale and Robert Halley made speeches on the loss to America and the world by the murder of the American president, and speakers urged that "severed friendships should be severed no longer." Noting that the first National Council of Congregational Churches would be meeting in Boston in June, Thomas Binney proposed that the Union send delegates to assure Americans of their sympathy and common dedication to the struggle against slavery. The Union's choice fell on George Smith, Alexander Raleigh, and Robert Vaughan.

Since Congregationalism had virtually no presence in the American South the work of reconciliation might have been less difficult than for other British connexions. Yet the British Congregational deputation of 1865 was
little short of disastrous. The mission was uninvited; the initiative came
only from London. The selection of delegates was impolitic. Little attention
was paid to Smith, who visited Canada, and to Raleigh who represented Welsh
Congregationalists. But the choice of Vaughan—urbane, cultivated, and
certainly the most prominent member of the delegation—is difficult to
understand. He had been a frequent critic of all parties in the American
struggle in his British Quarterly Review. In Boston a letter from London
critical of Vaughan by an English Congregational opponent was published in
religious newspapers before the opening of the Council. When Vaughan appeared
before the meeting all the delegates had been supplied with a printed pamphlet
of quotations from the British Quarterly that were certain to inflame the
Americans. In contrast, Theodore Monod, representing French evangelicals,
was given enthusiastic welcome. And lastly, J. W. Massie, though holding no
credentials from home, was also inexplicably present. He was hailed by
Leonard Bacon as "our staunchest friend in times of trial" and seated as an
honorary member. After he returned home, Vaughan reported that a member of
the English Congregational Union then in Boston—probably Massie—had
conducted a private campaign of calumny against him.

Vaughan's introduction and speech were politely accepted. He testified to
universal joy at the extinction of slavery and noted that while English
Congregationalists "did not all see what policy was best for your country in
the war," all were strong friends of America. On the following day, however,
Beecher surprised the British delegation by moving that the official American
reply should consider that "the attitude of various religious bodies in
Europe toward the United States ... requires a careful discrimination."
Subsequently, a committee of five, including Bacon, Sturtevant, and Beecher,
drafted a reply based on an outline supplied by Beecher.

Bacon's presentation of the statement was the occasion of stinging
rebukes to Vaughan and his colleagues. The delegates must not return to
England, he warned, without knowing American displeasure. America had
expected unequivocal support from British Congregationalists, but instead "the
dominant influences in the Congregational Union, and the ostensible organs of
Congregational opinion in England were against us." Referring to Sturtevant, he noted that "brethren who went from us to them, for the purpose of explaining our position, and asking for their sympathy and their prayers, were refused a hearing."

The following discussion was equally unpleasant. Alonzo Quint, editor of the Congregational Quarterly and fiery author of The Christian Patriot's Present Duty (1861), began by expressing his pain at the polite applause given to the English visitors. In his following diatribe he observed that England was "always ready to crush the weak; robbing in India, plundering in Ireland, and in connection with our affairs worse than that." British "pirates" had destroyed American ships and British bullets had killed American soldiers. England must repent and pay reparations or face war. Some members agreed. More temperate, Beecher professed that he was ready to shake hands with the English Congregationalists, though he could not acquit England or the Congregational Union of guilt. Vaughan refused to submit silently to the Council's censure. The North's commitment to black liberation, he pointed out, was long unclear, and the Congregational Union had a tradition of carefully avoiding divisive issues that might destabilize it. While admitting his earlier scepticism about the war, he noted that conquest of the South had seemed impossible or, if possible, too costly in blood. Vaughan also stressed that of three Congregational publications in Britain, two had strongly supported the North.

The dispute did not end with adjournment of the Council. Following the meeting the official Report continued to scold British Congregationalists in sorrowful but indignant tones. Less restrained, the American Congregational press maintained the attack with more outspoken accusations. Why, complained the New Englander, did the Union not send Massie, Newman Hall, or Robert Halley instead of Vaughan? Nor were the British silent. Raleigh's report to the Congregational Union at Bristol candidly noted details of the cold reception. But the most complete rebuttal appeared in a sixty-four-page review in the British Quarterly. The English Congregational Union, Vaughan wrote, had wished to end differences, and "let past grievances be things of
the past." "It would have been well... if the Council of Boston had risen
to the same level." The American body should have displayed more dignity.
Its Congregational press, full of arrogance, boasting, and threats, had been
insulting. "We have no doubt erred in some things, but to a large extent it
is America herself that has caused us to err." Then he devoted thirty pages
to his own unhappy observations of the United States. Post-war American
society retained many grave defects. Repugnance to the black race still ruled
American culture, both in the North and the South. The nation still cherished
the myth that the late conflict had been "a grand war of emancipation." Many
Americans still endorsed the absurd phantasy that Britain craved the
extinction of American democracy. In sum, Vaughan feared for the crass
materialism, bigotry, and social persecution evident in American society.

Most ominously, Vaughan recalled a parting word from Leonard Bacon, as
reported by Joseph Parish Thompson: "Henceforth America will look no more to
England for precedent, for sympathy, for counsel, or for aid," Bacon had
announced. "You left us to tread the wine press alone and we have learnt to
do without even your moral support." Vaughan's conclusion was, "If the
language of our American brethren towards us in future is to be, we don't want
your sympathy--the simple result will be that they will not have it."