

## WHAT WAS THE CAUSE OF THE SOUTH?

*By Basil D. Childress*

I thank you for inviting me to speak this morning. I consider it an honor.

As I pondered what I would say today, I contemplated upon the fact that, despite all that's been written on the "American Civil War," I've never been satisfied with the explanations of the cause for which the South fought. To me, what has been lacking is the placement of the contest within its historical and philosophical context. So, if you'll forgive my egotism – I thought I'd write one myself. Understanding these matters is growing more and more important, so I ask your indulgence.

About 2000 years ago, Cicero (106BC to 43BC), one of the giants of his age and friend of the old Roman Republic and opponent of the tyranny produced at the end of the Roman Civil Wars, said,

"To know nothing of what happened before you were born is to remain ever a child."

1700 or so years later, Edmund Burke (1729-1797), English political philosopher said,

*"Society is an open ended partnership between generations. The dead, and the not yet born, are as much a part of society as the living. To dishonor the dead is to reject the relationship upon which society is built, the relationship of obligation between generations. Those who have lost respect for the dead, have ceased to be trustees of their inheritance."*

And, *"He alone deserves to be remembered by his children who treasures up and preserves the memory of his fathers."*

Finally, 19<sup>th</sup> century philosopher Karl Marx said, *"People separated from their history are easily persuaded."*

As heirs of our Southern ancestors' determination to defend the liberty their fathers had given them by striking out for independence, just as their fathers successfully had done against the British Empire - we are here today to remember and honor the patriot soldiers of the Confederate States of America, [by dedicating this new flag pole here in Louisville's Confederate section of Cave Hill Cemetery].

But many today would wish to deprive us of these ceremonies, because they say they find such offensive. After all, we're honoring soldiers who fought not for liberty but rather to keep human beings in chains, aren't we? Why, everyone knows the South fought for slavery! Any other explanation is held to be simply an invention to excuse the attempt to hold on to an evil, racist labor system. Or so the common wisdom goes. Our Confederate ancestors foreordained that such an opinion would come to hold sway. The Rev. James Henley Thornwell, pastor of a church in Charleston, South Carolina in a book called, *Our Danger*

*and our Duty*, written in 1862 just before his death in August of that year expressed the following:

“The civilized world will look coldly upon us, or even jeer us with the taunt that we have deservedly lost our own freedom in seeking to perpetuate the slavery of others. We shall perish under a cloud of reproach and of unjust suspicions, sedulously propagated by our enemies, which will be harder to bear than the loss of home and of goods. Such a fate never overtook any people before....”

Almost 50 years after Thornwell's prediction, in 1911, a book titled, *The Men in Gray*, was published written by a former Confederate soldier, who served in the 13<sup>th</sup> Virginia Infantry in Stonewall Jackson's Corps. The soldier was Robert Catlett Cave. Cave went on to become an accomplished clergyman who served for a time as president of Transylvania College (now University) in Lexington, Kentucky. Reverend Cave preached the funeral for Jefferson Davis on behalf of Tennessee in Nashville in 1889 and on 30 May 1894 he delivered the dedicating and unveiling speech for the Confederate Soldiers and Sailors Monument in Richmond, Virginia. That speech formed the core of the book just mentioned, published in 1911. In its preface Cave said,

“.It has been truthfully said that 'history as written, if accepted in future years, will consign the South to 'infamy'; and only by refusing to acquiesce in it as it is now written can we possibly prevent future generations from so accepting it.....By...reiterating the truth...we may possibly counteract ....some of ...the misrepresentations...and hand down [the story of the South's fight] to posterity so that their children's children will think and speak of them with pride rather than shame...”

Pay attention to and note Rev. Cave's comments. In 1911, not quite 50 years after Thornwell's words, Cave says, “As it [the war's history] is now written” --- so within the lifetimes of surviving Southern veterans, Thornwell's prophecy had been confirmed.

It is now not quite 100 years after Cave had his defense of the South published and things have grown much worse. And now, not just about the South's history, but the whole of the historical realm. This is what Clyde Wilson, emeritus professor in history at the University of South Carolina says in one of a collection of his essays titled “Recovering Southern History” written in 1982 included in a volume named *Defending Dixie*,

“By a “re-founding”...I mean ...that history has to be written to establish the new regime as the only legitimate possibility within the accepted social symbols. All this is what was long ago generally diagnosed as Whig history .....The losers must not only lose....they must be misrepresented as well..

.....Perhaps we now face the inevitable distortions of our Civil War “re-founding”, ... [which] necessarily involved a shift from tradition to ideology, and from history as a search for antecedents to history to things as one might have wished them to be, from the living community and its real experiences to a hypothetical community and its fictitious past.”

Long ago, Napoleon Bonaparte the new era’s first great empire builder said, “...history is a fable penned by the victors.” But as Prof Wilson hints, we’ve now surpassed even Napoleon’s cynicism. Despite the attempts of the last century to turn history into a science rather than the art it is, an attempt that has turned the study of history to that ideological rather than historical focus, the writing of history is really all about interpretation and not calculating formulae.

So let me share an interpretation that many from the view of their own interpretations are loath to hear. The world [today] is dominated by the idea that humans can be saved through proper politics – so everything has become politicized. But there is really nothing modern or enlightened about that stance – it’s the same as has been asserted throughout the pagan ages – bow at the feet of Caesar or face some kind of destruction. Opposing that spirit of coercion is exactly why Jefferson Davis said the cause of the South was sacred and would ultimately recur.

The idea that salvation is a matter of appropriate political arrangements owes to the appearance into the human story (history) of something called Modernity - the name of that new era. (And I remark so, fully knowing that there are many who now argue that we’ve already passed into a post-modern world). British historian Paul Johnson, in a book published in 1991 titled, *The Birth of the Modern – World Society 1815 to 1830*, argues that the modern world began after the battle of Jena in 1806, when French revolutionary arms crushed the Prussian Army. That army under Frederick the Great had been the best army in Europe and the Prussian State was perhaps the last great continental monarchical opponent of the change Napoleon attempted to advance at the point of the bayonet.

The events of 1806 and Napoleon’s armies carrying the ‘rights of man’ at the point of those bayonets was presaged by three revolutions; England’s in 1688, England’s American colonies’ in 1776 and France (eventually to come under Napoleon’s sway) in 1792. Those revolutions themselves owed their origins to the events of 500 years before when in the aftermath of the Christian Crusades, knowledge of ancient texts that had not been available to western Europeans for a thousand years became available again. These texts had been preserved by the still surviving eastern half of the old Roman Empire and by the Middle Eastern lands under the dominion of those who worshipped Allah and followed his prophet Muhammed. Had this competition between the Catholic Christian west, the Orthodox Christian east and the Islamic world not occurred – the world as we know it today and the political and cultural landscape we occupy within it would not exist.

It came to exist because of the ferment that came within a few centuries after those texts brought the spirit of criticism from the classical Greeks into Western Europe and its progeny that by the time of the three revolutions just cited, would dominate the world. That period of ferment can be divided into two segments - the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. Here is what Os Guinness, philosopher and religionist, says about the segments of that period of ferment,

“The Enlightenment has its own unmistakable identity, but at the same time it also has an affinity with the Renaissance. Both directly appealed to classical antiquity, deliberately opposed Christianity and consequently accelerated the forces of modernity. .... If the legacy of the Renaissance is humanism, then the contribution of the Enlightenment is paganism.

The eighteenth century came in on a wave of irony and satire, exalting the trivial, ridiculing the noble and attacking anything which previous centuries had been taught to believe, revere or love. ....As this occurred, the break between reason and revelation was finalized, and the battle was joined in terms of reason versus superstition, philosopher versus priest and men of realism versus purveyors of myth. .... They asserted their right to use reason to question anything.

As time went on the questions became more far-reaching and the criticisms more uncompromising.....Little wonder that it could be said that for men like David Hume “religion has lost all specificity and authority”... The eighteenth century went out amid wars of revolution and the nineteenth century was ushered in by the campaigns of Napoleon. ....Man was not only the measure of the world he knew but the measure of the world of which he dreamed. ....”

Now, two hundred some odd years later – those questions of authority and for what to dream have again become acute - and the attempts to answer them have greatly to do with these Confederate dead we're here to honor.

England's attempted answer to these questions grew out of its Civil War which saw a religious authoritarianism called Puritanism give England its first and last dictator Oliver Cromwell. The Revolution of 1688 returned England to its tradition (that is to say its older deeper religious sensibilities, rather than the new radical Puritanical variety). It turned it as well back to the Common Law, 1000 years in the making, and a monarchy constrained by that lawful tradition – a solution which gave the world its first real political parties.

Not quite one hundred years later, in 1775, when the England of that day would not give its American colonies due treatment under its own laws, those colonies, the Southern ones lead by the ancestors of these once gray clad dead, began a successful war to secede from the British Empire. They were inspired by a Declaration in the following year that held that governments derive their right to govern [their authority] from the consent of the governed and that separation

from an old and creation of a new government was an inherent right of all men. Indeed they viewed such principle as the only protection for liberty, by providing a way in law to prevent the consolidation of power into the hands of potential dictators such as the Puritan Oliver Cromwell in England's experience.

But the American Republic to be founded under that principle arose just as France's Ancien Regime was in its death throes. It was so because of by then a lethal fight between the rationalists and anti-rationalists, (the latter being the Romantic Naturalists), who sprang out of Enlightenment intellectual speculation. France's revolution would introduce a radicalism into the world never before seen as a product of the ferment of that lethal fight - a ferment with which we are still dealing and which is still shaping our world even as I speak to you. Indeed, such is true precisely because that early American Republic found itself caught between the aftermath of the worldviews of its fellow revolutions, the English and the French - and eventually was forced by Lincoln, America's Cromwell, [Napoleon and Bismarck], and his cohorts to choose between them in the 1860s. The new "re-founded" entity eventually would dominate its own domestic politics and affect not only England and France, but today the whole world.

In the introduction to his book *Ideas Have Consequences*, an important, but insufficiently known Southern philosopher named Richard Weaver said,

"Every man participating in a culture has three levels of conscious reflection: his specific ideas about things, his general beliefs or convictions, and his metaphysical dream of the world..... Without the metaphysical dream it is impossible to think of men living together harmoniously over an extent of time. The dream carries with it an evaluation, which is the bond of spiritual community..... We do not undertake to reason about anything until we have been drawn to it by an affective interest. In the cultural life of man, therefore, the fact of paramount importance about anyone is his attitude toward the world. Reason alone fails to justify itself. .... We have no authority to argue anything of a social or political nature unless ... we approve some aspects of the existing world. .... We begin our other affirmations after a categorical statement that life and the world are to be cherished.

It appears, then, that culture is originally a matter of yea saying, and .....a developed culture is a way of looking at the world through an aggregation of symbols, so that empirical facts take on significance.....There is no significance to the sound and fury of this life, as of a stage tragedy, unless something is being affirmed by the complete action.....the philosophically ignorant vitiate their own actions by failing to observe measure. ... The darkling plain, swept by alarms, which threatens to be the world of our future, is an arena in which conflicting ideas, numerous after the accumulation of centuries, are freed from the discipline earlier imposed by ultimate conceptions. The decline is to confusion:.....and we accept contradiction because we no longer feel the necessity of relating thoughts to the metaphysical dream....."

France's Ancien Regime's metaphysical dream was founded in Middle Age Christian Romanticism. But in the spirit of questioning everything and dreaming the world anew, its revolutionaries were intent on destroying that dream. But just what were they trying to destroy? The Old Order the French Revolution sought to overthrow was invented in Mesopotamia (modern Iraq) around 6000 years ago and is why so often one hears in political literature of prior eras the mention of "oriental tyrants and despots", whether named Sargon or Saddam....that early version lasted from roughly 4000 BC until the Middle Ages and one might call it Conservatism with a capital C. Prior to the Middle Ages the ancient world's religion, its Gnosticism, its metaphysical dream - their sense of the order of things - was founded on mythical mystical belief structures that found God in nature, in the elemental forces of the Cosmos - which was the ground of the idea that the world is really an illusion. These forces, unless properly appeased, tended toward chaos, then a reversion to animal existence and then to an end to the human dream. To assure the revision to chaos would not occur, that the ancient romantic illusion, aka life itself, persisted - the existing order had to be maintained by allegiance to the state and its gods, who ruled through King and Priests, and their oversight of civic life through public rituals and worship. And in what did that ancient power equation result? - an authoritarian if not totalitarian demand to enforce the "correct view of nature" on its subjects to avoid the collapse of the human social order.

For the French Revolutionaries, Christianity (and in France that meant the influence of the Catholic Church, but indeed, all religious sentiment) had simply stepped into this power equation and had to be overthrown. ....Those holding these political views were said to be "of the left" or The Left, a term originated to describe those opposed to the Ancien Regime in pre-Revolutionary France, who sat on the left of the crown's seat in the French national assembly.

The Left, as France's monarchy moved toward its extinction, eventually came to be dominated by a group called the Jacobins. As soon as they gained control, they established something called the Committee for Public Safety, composed of twelve members, but lead by one Maximilien Robespierre. Robespierre was a disciple of a philosopher named Jean Jacques Rousseau, as were many of those seeking to end the existence of the French Monarchy. Rousseau himself had been influenced by the English philosopher Thomas Hobbes. Hobbes wrote *The Leviathan* in 1651, in which he posited the idea that humans in the dog eat dog of nature had to create a Sovereign who could protect the weaker dogs from the stronger. Karl Marx remarked of Hobbes that he was the 'father of us all', meaning political speculators.

The Jacobin's ideals were embodied in the French Declaration of the Rights of Man, dating the Jacobins' rise to power by just a few years. The Left's proposed answers to the questions of authority and the human dream or project was to consolidate power in such a nation [that Hobbesian Sovereign - now referred to often as Leviathan] -- The French Declaration introduced this new invention in the history of the world through the third claim of the Declaration of the Rights of Man> to wit: "The principle of all sovereignty resides essentially in the nation. No body, or individual may exercise any authority which does not proceed directly from the nation."

The result of the rise of this radical, revolutionary mindset, with great irony has simply been a return to a modern form of paganism.....To understand that assertion one must recognize the atheistic ideals of the French Revolution. Such ideals in short, were those meant to end evil in the world (as newly defined). What the French revolutionaries put in place to effect the overthrow of the biblical world view they had inherited and wanted to transform, was precisely that invention – the nation – the modern unitary state, whose job it was to exterminate the political orders founded on ancient superstitions and establish a new order based on reason and focused on humanity's creating its own material paradise. And the state founded on the basis of such a project was the enemy of religious traditions and all then existing traditional governments. Or as Robespierre proclaimed in his statement on the Republic of Virtue – “Subdue the enemies of liberty through terror and you will be right as founders of the Republic. The government of revolution is the despotism of liberty against tyranny.” It should be no surprise that nearly immediately after its formation, the Committee on Public Safety began what has come to be called ‘The Terror’, a wave of assassinations, executions and murders, which ultimately consumed its own when Robespierre himself was executed on 28 July 1794, little more than a year after the rampage had begun

During the 60 or so years after Robespierre's execution, as in the fledgling united States, the north lurched toward adopting the French revolutionary principles rather than the one that had founded the country, that government derives its just powers from the consent of the governed, Confederate President Jefferson Davis said as the War of Northern Aggression loomed,

"If this action is once tolerated, where will it end? Where is constitutional liberty? What strength is there in bills of rights-in limitation of power? What new hope for mankind is to be found in written constitutions, what remedy which did not exist under kings or emperors? If the doctrines [of a unitary state origin of the country] thus announced by the government of the United States are conceded, then look through either end of the political telescope, and one sees only an empire, and the once famous Declaration of Independence trodden in the dust of as a "glittering generality," and the compact of the union denounced as a "flaunting lie". I love the Union and the Constitution, but I would rather leave the Union with the Constitution than remain in the Union without it. Those who submit to such consequence without resistance are not worthy the liberties and rights to which they were born, and deserve to be made slaves. Such must be the verdict of mankind."

These comments were founded on the English constitutional heritage of the early united States and stood in direct opposition to the French Sovereign unitary state model and were a plea to conserve the true founding principle of the country..

What today is called conservatism ....(however much that movement is now confused), opposed the Jacobin program. That opposition was founded by Edmund Burke's criticism of Rousseau's radical program in his 1790 *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. Burke ,who from the beginning was among a few

who thought the English Crown ought to let its American Colonies go in peace), inspired Burkean conservatives, also called Classical Liberals (or conservatism with a small c), whose conception of liberty was founded in the English Common Law solutions to the political ferment of the age and involved the constraining of the arbitrary use of government power (the ability to coerce in the name of whatever noble or ignoble cause whether carried out by king and religious authority or through the philosopher Thomas Hobbe's Sovereign) by preventing its consolidation, quite to the contrary of revolutionary France.

That style of liberty grew up in England in the aftermath of its Glorious Revolution of 1688 and Virginia, the mother of the South, invented this country initially on its basis. Its hallmarks were free trade, property rights [the main principle of the political Right] and religion's necessary influence bubbling up from the people rather than being coerced from the rulers. The cultural attitudes that allowed that decentralized dealing, were those that grew from Middle Age European Christian Romanticism, informed by Protestantism (in the South, the Scots Irish Celtic bunch through the Presbyterian church as it came to be affected by Pietistic traditions), without which informing Grace the founders knew the republic would be lost - and they were indeed correct. Only that Christian Romantic tradition allowed for a true tolerance and shared authorities, rather than one "Sovereign"- with the power to enforce one correct view.

As the mortal enemy of the utopians' coercive social agenda, the South came under and is still under attack and through the point of its prime vulnerability- the errors in logic concerning race and culture and the existence of slavery in a society claiming to stand for liberty. Those difficult and emotional issues have gotten tremendously confused. That confusion, I would argue has been deliberately engendered in order to bring off the attack on that utopian agenda's last remaining opponent, the South. We are confused by it, because we don't understand ..... the human story in terms of a competition between different metaphysical dreams or Gnosticisms.

A Gnosticism is the set of beliefs that define what a people believe to be ultimately important and therefore foundational in answering the age old and unavoidable questions: What is reality? What are human beings? And what is the job of humans in that reality? The stories that answer those questions form our religious perceptions, from which comes culture (that "system of sentiments") from which grow the particular ways in which a particular people behave toward and with one another and other peoples..... Those sentiments and behaviors found legal systems (where such get codified). This progression is simply unavoidable. Those who argue that we've got to "get religion out of politics" are arguing for the impossible. It's akin to arguing that we humans have got to find a way to breathe without an atmosphere.....

In the introduction to Richard Weaver's *The Southern Tradition at Bay*, published in 1968 but written in the years surrounding 1945 you will find:

"In its battle for survival the South has lost ground, but it has kept from extinction some things whose value is emphasized by the disintegration of the modern world...If asked to tell why in these days Southern history is entitled to thoughtful consideration, I should list

first of all the fact that the South, alone among the sections, has persisted in regarding science as a false messiah. This by itself indicates that the Southern tradition has a center of resistance to the most powerful force of corruption in our age.....We must confess that the highest sources of value in life are ethical and aesthetic conceptions with which our imagination invest the world...Civilization is a discipline, an achievement in self-culture and self-control and the only civilizing agent is a spirit manifesting itself through reason, imagination and religious inspiration and giving a sort of mintage to acts which would otherwise be without meaning.....Civilized man carries a sense of restraint into his behavior both toward nature and his fellow beings. The first of these is piety, the second ethics.”

Continuing from the same work in the chapter “The Testimony of the Soldier”,

“...[but] people remain civilized by acknowledging bounds beyond which they must not go.....The alteration [which allowed no bounds]...was modernism, with its urgency, impatience, truculence and its determination to strip aside all concealing veils and see what is behind them. When the men of the new order did strip aside these veils and found there was nothing behind them, but that the reality had existed somehow in the willed belief, or the myth [story], they marked the beginning of the modern frustration....

The indictment of the northern revolution drawn up by Southern politicians, clerics and soldiers parallels in many interesting particulars Edmund Burke’s indictment of the French Revolution, of which, in truth, it was the continuation....Thus a part of the tragedy which brought about the moral collapse of the twentieth century was acted on the stage of America..... It required the dislocations of the First World War to show how extensive the internal ravages had grown; and how thin the security of civilization had worn. When the Second World War brought the barbarian into open conflict with civilization, it could no longer be doubted that the systematic destruction of ancient ideals and sentiments leads to the revolution of nihilism.”

Weaver’s reference to that which was acted out upon the stage of America - the northern victory in the “American Civil War”, was in fact the pivotal event in world history as it has developed since what is known as the Enlightenment. And I would argue to you is exactly why we cannot see modern political controversies accurately even when they stare us in the face. Indeed, that revolution of nihilism is exactly why some argue we’ve already moved into a post modern era.

America, being idealistic and almost completely uninterested in philosophy, even that which inspired its own creation, is blissfully ignorant of the history (that conflict of cultures) into which it dares step to rectify ancient error. .... Today any talk of the South’s defense is immediately dismissed as racist because its idea of liberty has been tied to a defense of slavery and segregation by modern Jacobins – the sand in our eyes if you will- and we have played into their hands on far too

many occasions through our own ignorance. That destruction has gotten so nearly complete that it has become our atmosphere and I believe is the reason that [modern Americans] cannot see clearly how their answers to some of these issues are shaped by that secular religion and not by those of Christianity.

Indeed, ...cultural conflict is.... the crux of the matter. ... it is the competition between Gnosticisms ..... which drive history, and that competition creates different human communities and the conflicts arising among those human communities. The challenge has been how to manage those inherent conflicts. The utopians seek the end of those inevitable conflicts, not to manage them....and that by rooting out religious superstition and the creation of "the perfect Politics". American history (which is largely Southern history before Lincoln injected French radical utopianism into our blood veins) is precisely a target because it was potentially the most successful model for controlling those conflicts humanity has ever invented (because the South knows humans are not capable of perfection) and as such stood in the way of the utopian project of ending them....Modern Jacobins claim their desired outcome is cultural preservation and diversity (an impossible result given their assumptions about national authority) and is the background for that new paganism.

And that is the fundamental intellectual dishonesty. The social utopians want us to believe they have a replacement for that progression of religion to culture to law. In fact, because they view that equation as having yielded by its very nature the sorry record of human mistreatment of one another, they define it as inherently racist and in fact it is, if one answers those questions, what is reality? What are humans? And what is the job of humans in that reality? the way the social utopians desire them to be answered. The Left's holding such contradictory impossible results up as the solution to the human propensity for conflict, is the height of corrupting the intellect by placing it in an ideological box. Indeed, the South is vilified precisely because it refuses to accede to the utopian's demand for abject surrender to these falsehoods and is why Richard Weaver called the South "the last non-material society in the world".

The Left's answers then become simply a new totalitarian demand to enforce their new and improved "correct view of nature" which is to say the new and improved version of what humans are and how they ought to behave - through a 51% direct democratic vote. A government created on that principle inevitably eventually becomes as totalitarian as what was to be overthrown. This result must pertain because the nation, as a democracy of French revolutionary character, puts morality up to that 51% vote, mandating for the other 49% coerced compliance with its new found dictates. That fact is why modern governments have such trouble with the issue of the proper ground of authority. This is why I say The Left wished to and is on the verge of simply creating a modern paganism – democratic in method but all powerful in affect.

Indeed, this is the very issue that caused Southerners to insist on the kind of Constitution we had – and is why folks such as South Carolinian John C. Calhoun in his *A Disquisition on Government*, discussed methods to protect such minorities in our post revolutionary government era. In fact, it is precisely why state sovereignty (or States Rights) was so strenuously defended. The north strayed from the founding American faith, seeking the idol of nationalism, but the

South saw that founding faith through the prism of their historically rooted, more ancient societies, and considered therefore their state's sovereignty as being the very heart of the system the founders north and South had created as a countervailing influence against consolidationists -- and the support for the practice of governing only at the consent of the governed.

The South has never believed any of the ideas growing out of the fights inspired by these rival philosophies which would negate that principle of the consent of the governed. But in the intervening years since the South lost its struggle to separate itself from these modern philosophical poisons, it has become the target of what is now called the revolutionary secular left or Cultural Marxism....the names change, the motive remains the same. And, despite taking on some of the practical results of the assumptions of modern philosophy, the South does not believe in its central proposition, that being the faith in human reason and the ability to save ourselves by proper political arrangements seemingly evident from that modern philosophical faith. (Such forms the core of the modern idea of progress). To the degree the South holds the more ancient faith and not the new philosophy, it is also Romantic, but its Romanticism is Christian and not the new radical naturalist Romanticism, preaching a new vision of tolerance masquerading as reason. As the English man of letters, G.K. Chesterton said, "[Modern] Tolerance is the virtue of men who no longer believe in anything....."

The modern Jacobins, unlike us, understand the nature of the fight far more than we -- and from the very nature of the Jacobin worldview, they must attack the South's history, symbols, monuments and commemorations- and not just attack them, but seek to extinguish even their memory. That truth is why they mis-cast the whole of the matter with the red herrings of race and slavery.

A few years ago I made these comments to a young communist email correspondent concerning these matters.

"...Criticizing Rousseau and the pernicious affects of his thinking, of which socialism, communism and fascism are the modern "scientific" results, mixed with other influences, (the northern victory in the War of Northern Aggression being one of the most important), does not make one a racist or one unmindful of how badly we humans can and have treated one another. To assert so is either intellectual dishonesty, evidence of muddy thinking, or [a]..deliberate obfuscation ...Moreover, the rise of totalitarian states, the existence of which are necessitated by The Agenda Rousseau helped shape, is a direct consequence of that Agenda gaining ascendancy. The South's political philosophy was the mortal enemy of that Agenda, so as one who believes the South was correct in its opposition to it, I have nothing good at all to say about Hitler's brownshirts. To the contrary, the South fought with every fiber of its being against the ideas that eventually became, through a complex and inadequately understood set of inter-relationships between opposing camps of Enlightenment philosophy, played out over a few hundred years of history, the

breeding ground for the Hitlers and Stalins of the world. ...The racial supremacy stuff is also part of that overall confusion, but as a hint for now - the modern emphasis on and political use of race is also a direct outgrowth of Rousseau. There is only one human race, but there are many human cultures. To confuse the two, yields fertile ground for the kind of race based demagoguery to which your argument falls victim and precludes dealing with very difficult issues by mixing them all up into what has become a stinking stew, all for the maintenance of the political utility that mixing has for the purpose of maintaining certain folks and their world view in power. Your pounding on slavery and race is the perfect example. ....”

This is what I wrote last year to my older daughter trying to explain some of all of this:

“.....Lincoln ignorantly inspired the events that brought the ideals of the French Revolution into the lead of the American experience..... New England’s own religious brand of this kind of spirit [[Puritanism](#)] morphed into the Jacobin secular version, in no small measure aided by America’s own romantic naturalist philosopher, Ralph Waldo Emerson of Walden Pond, Massachusetts fame (and came to be called [American Progressivism](#), founded on ..... what Kentuckian Robert Penn Warren called ‘the treasury of virtue’ stored up by fighting one of those traditional governments, The Southern Confederacy),

Indeed, I would argue that the South’s defeat opened the door to the entire world’s adopting or being forced to react to some version of a Jacobin inspired ism. After the northern victory in 1865 and the century between then and 1965, the world experienced the bloodiest 100 years known in all human history as all those isms began to fight one another. The world was fractured asunder between 1776 and 1918. Where we end up living among the fragments is still in process.....

Because modern political entities are founded on a revolutionary ethic-they themselves are subject to revolutionary re-arrangement. Many are familiar with Lord Acton’s quote, “Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely”. Few are familiar with the whole quote which reads, “And remember where you have a concentration of power in a few hands, all too frequently men with the mentality of gangsters get control. History has proven that all power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely.”

Acton was Sir John Dahlberg, one of the nineteenth century’s pre-eminent political philosophers and heir to Edmund Burke’s tradition. What is almost wholly unknown about Acton is that he exchanged letters with Robert E. Lee after the northern victory. In that correspondence Acton said to Lee, “..... ...Therefore I deemed that you were fighting the battles of our liberty, our progress, and our civilization; and I mourn for the stake which was lost at Richmond more deeply than I rejoice over that which was saved at Waterloo.”

...And just how many Peoples Republics of this and that exist today? And in the name of a given political entity’s power, consolidated in the claim to act in its

peoples' will and for their benefit, just how many slaughters have occurred? The north's piece of this story is daunting to see, because we're blinded by New England's explanation of the country's founding and purpose in the world. We do not understand that our first experience with terrorism inspired by revolutionary fervor was John Brown's raid into Virginia to affect the violent overthrow of Southern governments- funded and inspired by that cooperation between New England's Puritans and Jacobins. It is significant that after many years of talking about separation, the South did so only after John Brown's raid revealed the true nature of where matters were headed....

We know the end of that story- we're living in it. And where have matters been brought? We have witnessed all over the globe as Lee put it governments "sure to be aggressive abroad and despotic at home" which claim to act in the name of their people to accomplish their particular vision of political perfection-..."

And now we've nearly rounded the circle. The Islamic world helped preserve those texts which gave exposure to ancient Greek and Roman thinking- which inspired the reappearance into the world of the spirit of criticism that has in turn lead to the development of our modern secular age and its focus on spreading the salvation of its materially focused politics across the planet.

That object of spreading secular salvation though has as its opponent that very Islamic world which helped preserve what began the matter. And that world has never made the accommodation Christianity, for good or ill made with modernity around 1900 – an accommodation that perhaps not surprisingly was followed shortly thereafter by the slaughters of the battlefields of WWI – and the beginning of the slow suicide of Western Culture.

It is not an accident that our early conflict with Islam was religious -but that today's looming if not already started conflict with same is over the life-blood of the modern machine age – and the coerced political solutions deemed necessary to protect our access to it.

This country is divided in these matters and it is so precisely because it houses within its governmental structure really two countries within its confines: One conservative and one revolutionary. No where is that fact better demonstrated than in our current troubles in Iraq. Please allow me to get you to consider some observations.

I ask you to recall what President Bush said in his 2<sup>nd</sup> Inaugural speech of January 2005. In that speech he said, "The survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands. The best hope for peace in our world is the expansion of freedom in all the world,... It is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in the world." On other occasions, our purpose has been described as 'ending evil in the world' and our object to create in the Middle East a democratic society rather than the sorts that have grown out of the mixture of Islamic and socialist Gnosticisms. Indeed, the famous speechwriter for Ronald Reagan, Peggy Noonan, in her criticism of that speech and policy described it as too Jacobin for her and that,

“...To the extent our foreign policy is marked by a division [which has been] defined as a division between moralists (modern Jacobin romantics if you will) and realists (small c conservatives, if you’ll allow)--the moralists taken with a romantic longing to carry democracy and justice to foreign fields, the realists motivated by what might be called cynicism and an acknowledgment of the limits of governmental power--President Bush sided strongly with the moralists....”

New York native Noonan ends her criticism with the statement that, “[One wishes for] a sense that there are [a] few legitimate boundaries to the desires born in the goodness of their good hearts. One wonders if they shouldn't ease up, calm down, breathe deep, get more securely grounded. The most moving speeches summon us to the cause of what is actually possible. Perfection in the life of man on earth is not.” That for which Noonan’s words plead is for that lacking sense of measure.

Do we have a severe challenge facing us from a religious totalitarian view that has come to be called radical Islam (they being Islam’s own ‘Puritan Element)? – yes, we do. Is the solution what has been chosen; a United States that has not yet lost its own puritanical, revolutionary fervor - it freed the slaves, fights racism, sexism, homophobia, etc etc. [the list will be ever unending] and now radical Islam through its export of democracy? We shall see. But indeed, I ask you to consider that .....today those who have taken Lincoln global by unleashing a war against Iraq (and all the rest to follow) which will be unending and deadly because it seeks unobtainable goals against an enemy that will not do as the Christian Robert E. Lee did in 1865 isn’t the wrong path?

I would caution that Islam has the same (religious not secular) thing to say in return to the Jacobin assault I’ve just reviewed- the world should be Muslim and we have the right to slaughter to accomplish that vision – that clash is about to bring the world to its next round of catastrophe. We’re either going to get these matters straight in our minds – and get the sand out of our eyes, thrown in them now for over a century, or we’re going to face an apocalypse that will make the 20<sup>th</sup> Century’s wars seem small in comparison.

The soldiers of the Confederacy fought with every ounce of their being to prevent converting our founding from one where people worked out their future cooperatively and not out of the barrel of a gun for the purpose of overthrowing all that had come before, at the hands of governments given radical power to effect that overthrowing. They owed it to their family, both those long dead and those yet to be born, to fight such a revolutionary and dangerous development. And I would assert, the motive I just described is intimately bound up in the Confederacy’s choosing as its motto *Deo Vindice* – God Vindicates.

To honor them properly we must again become familiar with our real past – and not the version presented to advance the madness and blood-thirst of the modern political arena. And perhaps with that understanding we can better be able on days such as today – to truly appreciate the foresight and spirit of sacrifice with which they offered up their lives in defense of real liberty and humanity.