Randolph H. McKim: Lost Cause Conservative, Episcopal Liberal

Steve Longenecker

On the evening of 1 July 1863, Lieutenant Randolph H. McKim and his unit, the Second Maryland, CSA, marched into Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, and took a position southeast of the town at the base of Culp's Hill. As the Marylanders waited for battle—the pause was almost twenty-four hours—McKim led them and another unit in worship. Then, when battle began, McKim and three enlisted men replenished dwindling ammunition by emptying several boxes into blankets attached to fence rails and lugging the configuration up the hill under the July sun. Four bullets struck the pious lieutenant, but he was not seriously injured.[1]

One year after the brush with death on Culp's Hill, McKim became a military chaplain, and when peace returned, he enjoyed a successful career as an influential Episcopal rector. As a veteran and former chaplain, McKim spoke frequently and published often to defend what he and the Second Maryland sought to accomplish at Culp's Hill and beyond. In fact, McKim became a prominent promoter of the Lost Cause, a romantic, unapologetic defense of the Confederacy, and in this role McKim was conservative with the past central to his worldview.

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[1] Randolph H. McKim, *A Soldier's Recollections: Leaves from the Diary of a Young Confederate* (New York., 1910), 184-85, 194-95, 201. McKim says that "one of our staff" led worship at the foot of Culp's Hill, but elsewhere he stated that he led services "on the battlefield" (210) and the assumption is that he did it. McKim's *Recollections* includes quotations from his wartime diary, but much of the work is summarization of the diary, vii-viii.

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But other times McKim was a liberal eagerly anticipating the future. As a popular preacher and published theologian, he assumed that humans could be agents of positive change, that knowledge of God improved with time, and that improvement was the natural order of things, all standard liberal signposts. When swathed in Confederate gray, McKim looked to the past, but in his vestments he looked to the future.

Randolph McKim combined impeccable Confederate *bona fides* with a very successful post-war career as an Episcopal priest. A confirmed secessionist and then Lost Cause activist, he provided spiritual leadership for influential parishes in northern Virginia, New York City, New Orleans, and Washington, D. C.

Born in Baltimore, Maryland., on 16 April 1842, McKim was raised on an estate called "Belvidere." His parents were wealthy; the 1860 census lists his father, John, as "gentleman" with $400,000 of real estate wealth and a household that included two female immigrant servants from France and Ireland, an Irish gardener, an eighteen-year old black waiter, and a twelve-year old black child laborer. John McKim held Northern sympathies and consequently no slaves, but Randoph's mother, Catherine Harrison, was well-connected to influential Southern families, including the Harrisons and Carters,[2] and twenty-four of his first cousins on her side served in the Confederate Army.[3]

Like many young men, McKim became zealous during the secession crises. In 1860 as a student at the University of Virginia, he enrolled in a student military company, and when Virginia seceded, authorities assigned these student-soldiers, including McKim, to Winchester and then Harpers Ferry. After several weeks of duty they returned to the academical village.[4]

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[2] The Harrisons included past-president William Henry Harrison and future president Benjamin Harrison although this branch of the family had moved from Virginia by the Civil War. The most famous Carter is Landon, a wealthy colonial-era planter.

[3] *Soldier's Recollections*, 8-9, 70, 124; United States Census, 1860; "Rev. Randolph H. McKim, D.D." *Confederate Veterans Magazine* (1920), accessed on Confederatevets.com, 28 August 2013.

[4] *Soldier's Recollections*, 7-8.

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The nineteen-year-old scholar graduated in late June 1861, and soon enlisted in the First Maryland regiment. Only ten days later he saw action at Bull Run, not much time for acclimation to his comrades-in-arms. When enlistments for the First Marylanders expired, some, including McKim, reenlisted and formed the Second Maryland. In June 1862, he received promotion to lieutenant and became an aide-de-camp to General George H. Steuart. In this role McKim participated in numerous battles and campaigns, including Gettysburg, Chancellorsville, and Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson's 1862 Shenandoah Valley operation. The young lieutenant also found a wartime bride, Agnes Gray Phillips, a minister's daughter, whom he met in Staunton, Virginia.[5]

In Fall 1863, McKim resigned his commission to prepare for the Episcopal priesthood. Leaving the army in its hour of need gave him pause, but he was convinced that a chaplaincy better served the cause. Often he had spoken during camp worship services, and frequently he had led General Steuart's staff in prayer; hence, he pursued ordination.[6]

In 1864 now-chaplain McKim joined the Second Virginia Cavalry. He directed services, created a choir, which would have been all male, and organized a chapter of the Young Men's Christian Association. Battles became more difficult because duties had kept him occupied as an officer, but now he merely sat on his horse, drew fire, and waited for wounded to tend. A fellow-chaplain described him as a "very striking young man, physically, intellectually & religiously."[7]

After Appomattox, McKim returned to Baltimore—his first visit home since enlistment—and assisted as a deacon in Immanuel Church, then he received ordination and became rector of St. John's Church in Portsmouth, Virginia, a small congregation with

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[5] Ibid., 10, 24-26, 90-116, 117, 126-32.

[6] Ibid., 110, 117, 133-37 184-89, 209-12, 219. McKim also discussed his experience at Gettysburg in 192-208, which is a reprint of an article, "Steuart's Brigade at Gettysburg: A Narrative," *Southern Historical Society Papers* (June 1878).

[7] "very striking young" in William Porcher DuBose to Anne Barnwell "Nannie" Peonneau [wife], Winchester [Va.], 12 September 1864, in W. Eric Emerson and Karen Stokes, eds., *Faith, Valor, and Devotion: The Civil War Letters of William Porcher DuBose* (Columbia, 2010), 308. See also *Soldier's Recollections*, 219, 221, 226, 238.

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only forty-one communicants. One year later he assumed leadership of Christ Church in Alexandria, Virginia.[8]

Christ Church was prestigious but struggling. As the worship place of George Washington and antebellum Robert E. Lee, it boasted impressive bloodlines, but the war was hard on Christ Church. Just across the Potomac from the nation's capitol, federal troops marched into Alexandria the day after Virginia seceded, and eventually many residents fled, including the Christ Church pastor and numerous parishioners. Those remaining lived under martial law.[9] Union authorities assumed control of Christ Church, dismissed the vestry, appointed their own, evicted the pastor from the parsonage, and replaced him with a military chaplain.[10]

When peace returned in April 1865, the nuts and bolts of Reconstruction occupied the Alexandria parish for several years. It took the Christ Church vestry until August 1866 to hire a minister, who only stayed a year.[11] McKim replaced the departing priest, but he was the vestry's third choice; apparently this war-torn pulpit was difficult to fill.[12] But soon congregational reconstruction gathered momentum. The vestry pondered the addition of a recess to the chancel and expansion thirty feet to the east, ordered the church whitewashed and cleaned, raised the chancel floor, and hired a sexton and choir master/organist. The women received permission to carpet and refurnish the building but only if they did their own fundraising.[13]

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[8] *Soldier's Recollections*, 157-58; *Journal of the Seventy-First Annual Council of the Diocese of Virginia, Held in St. Paul's Church, Alexandria* (Richmond, 1866), 21, 96.

[9] [Randolph H. McKim], *Washington's Church: An Historical Sketch of Old Christ Church of Alexandria, Virginia, Together with a Description of the Centenary Services Therein* (Alexandria, 1888), 27. James G. Barber, *Alexandria in the Civil War* (Lynchburg, 1988), 12-13, 13-16, 22-27, 34-36, 88-89, 94, 103; George G. Kundahl, *Alexandria Goes to War: Beyond Robert E. Lee* (Knoxville, 2004), 14, 15, 16.

[10] Church Book, Christ Church, Alexandria, Virginia, 18 May 1866, typescript copy.

[11] Ibid., 24 August 1865; undated, 1866; 1 August 1866; and 4 September 1867; *Washington's Church,* 27. The 24 August entry is dated 1866 but is an obvious copying error.

[12] Ibid., 17, 24 September and 5 October 1867.

[13] Ibid., 17 September, 5 October, and 17 December 1867, 3 January 1868.

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In 1875 McKim accepted the rectorship of Holy Trinity, Harlem, in New York City. Holy Trinity was a new congregation, founded in 1868 by Stephen Tyng as an evangelical outpost against high church sentiments. One hundred and fifty families worshipped at Holy Trinity, a strong congregation that participated in the institutional church movement by training seamstresses to make and sell clothing at discounted prices. Trinity called this program its "sewing school." Under McKim's leadership the parish donated 318 articles of clothing and bedding for victims of a yellow fever epidemic and added a day nursery, temperance society, Bible reader for the poor, and chapel with a mission house in another neighborhood. A fire that badly damaged the church was merely a temporary setback, and within a year the congregation returned to its building. Perhaps the most distinctive aspect of McKim's time at Holy Trinity was conflict over music. Holy Trinity employed a quartet—soprano, alto, tenor, and bass—that McKim wanted to replace with a "chorus choir," i.e., a full choir. He told the vestry that the larger ensemble would provide a more meaningful worship experience, was the trend in other congregations, and, especially important, was less expensive than the quartet. The vestry nevertheless resisted. McKim then requested complete control over the music, citing church canon, but the vestry again pushed back, asserting that the music, including Gregorian Chants, had the full support of the congregation and would remain under the control of it and the music committee. The chants must have struck McKim as a high church foot in the door. Soon he resigned. Rather than refer to substantial membership growth or spiritual leadership, the Holy Trinity vestry praised its departing priest for "untiring energy" in reducing the debt by at least $5000. A Manhattan parish might seem like an odd placement for an unrepentant Confederate, but neither the congregational history nor the vestry minutes have the slightest mention of McKim's Civil War politics.[14]

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[14] Minutes, Holy Trinity Church, Harlem, New York, New York, 24 January 1881, 2 April 1883, 14 June, 21 July, 23 July 1884, 2 February 1885, 16 October 1886; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Ninety-Fifth Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of New York* (New York, 1878), 110-11; id., (1881), 120; id., (1885), 194; Patricia Francis Cholakian and Rouben C. Cholakian, *On This Rock: Holy Trinity Episcopal Church Inwood; A History* (New York), 6-9, 10-11. 1886https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8hypy3hYEctSUtvUDlUaWFQek0/view?pref=2&pli=1 accessed 27 May 2016.

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In 1886 McKim moved to a pulpit in New Orleans. Perhaps frustrations over the music motivated McKim to move half a continent away, but his new home, Trinity Church, was a large parish with almost one thousand communicants and another 420 children, a step up from the Harlem church. The energetic new rector promptly organized a temperance society and a Sunday School for black children taught by whites. The Diocese of Louisiana gave the newcomer modest leadership, electing him to the Standing Committee and appointing him to a committee to find a permanent location for its archives, which had accumulated in the Trinity Church vestry room. The forty-four-year-old rector was middle-aged and enjoyed professional status.[15]

His New Orleans pastorate was brief. In 1888 McKim accepted a call from the Church of the Epiphany in Washington, D.C., located just blocks from the White House and with approximately 1800 communicants, including many who were rich and famous and veterans of both Civil War armies. Perhaps Epiphany's best-known communicant was William C. Gorgas, the army doctor who successfully battled yellow fever and malaria during the construction of the Panama Canal, but an admiral, a Cabinet secretary, other generals, and many other well-placed members of Washington society also sat in the pews. One prominent example of McKim's high place occurred in 1916 when he was scheduled to perform the wedding of a German baron to Catherine Weld Birney, a descendent of abolitionist James G. Birney and whose mother with Phoebe Hearst co-founded the national Parent-Teacher Association, aka PTA. (The aristocrat was posted in the German embassy, and when McKim demanded the expulsion of German diplomats in the aftermath of the *Lusitania*, the embassy

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[15] *Journal of the Forty-Ninth Annual Council of the Diocese of Louisiana* (New Orleans, 1887), 15-16, 31, 38, 66-67. The number of child attendees is based on Sunday School attendance. McKim's membership reports to the Diocese of New York variously mentioned families, communicants, and souls, creating from year to year an apples-and-oranges comparison. In 1876 he counted 150 families, and in 1885 he mentioned 1600 souls, a substantial increase. The assumption is that the New Orleans church was larger because its membership gathered in one place while by 1885 the New York parish consisted of two meeting places, Holy Trinity and the chapel. *Diocese of New York* (1876), 140; (1885), 194.

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vetoed McKim's role in the nuptials.) While at Epiphany, McKim's colleagues twice elected him as president of the House of Deputies, a national body, and throughout his career he published extensively, mostly collections of his sermons. McKim remained in the nation's capitol until his death, a very successful ministry of thirty-two years.[16]

Simultaneously, McKim became a prominent Lost Cause advocate. In 1878 he published a defense of Steuart's Brigade in Gettysburg, and in 1886 he re-climbed Culp's Hill to contribute a prayer at the dedication of the Second Maryland monument. In the first decade of the next century the influential preacher became particularly active in remembering the Civil War. In 1904 he spoke to a large United Confederate Veterans reunion at Nashville, Tennessee. In 1906 he delivered the main oration at the dedication of memorial tablets at the University of Virginia for students who enlisted in the Confederate army. On 20 January 1907, the one hundredth anniversary of Robert E. Lee's birth, McKim gave the sermon in the Lee Memorial Church, Lexington, where the general worshipped after the war. In 1909 McKim was the orator when the Second Maryland presented a battle flag to the statehouse in Maryland. The next year he defended General J. E. B. Stuart's role at Gettysburg before the Lee Camp Confederate Veterans in Richmond, Virginia, and he also published his memoir of the war. In 1912 he wrote a lengthy analysis of Confederate manpower to document that Lee did not make

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[16] "Rector Offended Embassy: Dr. McKim Barred from Performing von Schoen Wedding Ceremony," *The New York Times* (3 December 1916), 20; "National Opportunity and Responsibility: A Sermon Delivered in the Church of the Epiphany" (Washington, D. C., 1915?), 6; McKim, "In Memoriam: Wm. D. Baldwin," and n.a., "Tribute to the Memory of Major General William C. Gorgas, by the Vestry of the Church of the Epiphany," clippings found in the Church of the Epiphany Church Book, 17 December 1900. Other luminaries included General John Grubb Parke, a Civil War Union general and career military man, and William D. Baldwin, a prominent patent lawyer whose clients included Guglielmo Marconi, of wireless fame. The Admiral was Mordeai T. Endicott, who commanded the Washington Navy Yards. See Church Book, 17 December 1900; 17 June 1913; 9 March 1915; "John Parke" and "Camp Endicott," Wikipedia, 10 July 2015. The Cabinet officer was Secretary of the Navy Hilary A. Hubert, Church Book, 17 April 1919.

For the number of communicants see a clipping in the Church Book, dated 1891, which apparently is from a diocesan report.

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mistakes but was simply swamped by a blue horde. In 1914 McKim issued a small biography of Lee and wrote the inscription for the Confederate Memorial in the Arlington National Cemetery. McKim's output on behalf of the Lost Cause was prolific.[17]

Successful priest Randolph McKim, then, was Bonnie Blue through and through. His military service and chaplaincy credentialed him as an authoritative Lost Cause preacher, and in postwar life he prominently embraced the nostalgic warm tribute to Confederate times of yore. Historian Charles Reagan Wilson has identified former chaplains as among the most prominent advocates of the Lost Cause movement, and McKim fits Reagan's description perfectly.[18]

As a Lost Cause publicist, McKim recalled an exultant version of the past. In his retelling of the Confederate story, the Lost Cause represented noble concepts and great American values, and those who fought for it demonstrated heroism on a level rarely seen.

In the immediate aftermath of Appomattox, public expressions of Confederate sympathies remained largely limited to cemetery ceremonies, typically organized by women. Reconstruction governments and Union occupation troops distrusted anything more overt than female-led Decoration Days. But by 1870

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[17] "Steuart's Brigade at Gettysburg"; "2nd Maryland Confederate Monument," *Gettysburg Compiler*, (9 November 1886), 3; "The Motives and Aims of the Soldiers of the South in the Civil War: Oration Delivered before the United Confederate Veterans at their Fourteenth Annual Reunion at Nashville, Tenn." (United Confederate Veterans, 1904); "Io Victis!" *University of Virginia Bulletins* 6 (May, 1906): 14-30; "Lee: The Christian Hero" (Washington, D.C., 1907; reprinted, Staunton, Virginia, 2007); "The Second Maryland Infantry, An Oration," ed., Elaine H. Patterson (Fruitland, Maryland, third ed., 2013); "General J.E.B. Stuart in the Gettysburg Campaign," reprinted in *Soldier's Recollections*, 337-62; *Soldier's Recollections*; *The Numerical Strength of the Confederate Army; An Examination of the Argument of the Hon. Charles Francis Adams and Others* (New York, 1912); *The Soul of Lee: By One of His Soldiers* (New York, 1918; reprinted, 2012). McKim also published his defense of Stuart at Gettysburg in *Journal of the Military Service Institution* (May, 1910).

[18] Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920* (Athens, 1980), 11.

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many occupation troops and Republican politicians were gone from the South, and Robert E. Lee's death that year unleashed a flood of public Southern sentiment.[19]

McKim participated in this new outburst of Lost Cause emotion. He draped the Christ Church, Arlington, sanctuary in black, and then from the pulpit the day after Lee's funeral, the rector of the great Southern hero's home parish explained that he clothed the church in mourning for Lee's devout faith, "pure and stainless" patriotism, and moral superiority. He pointed out that on the previous day the nation had mourned Lee's passing, and so it was appropriate that on this day, Sunday, the church lament the loss of the great "hero of the faith." McKim titled his sermon, "good men are a nation's strength," and, indeed, he found much goodness in the deceased hero: Lee was devoted to his mother (a longtime Alexandria resident), used alcohol moderately, avoided profanity, lived humbly despite a life of success, exhibited strength in defeat, and always possessed steadfast faith. McKim concluded that the key to Lee's life, the "secret to his transcendent greatness," was that "he was a sincere and devout Christian." The young preacher lavished praise on the great general.[20]

The Christ Church vestry was so impressed with McKim's eulogy that almost immediately it urged publication, and several weeks later they accepted a suggestion from the "ladies of the church" to place two memorial tablets in the building, one to George Washington and the other to Lee. Lee's inscription was "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright," (Psalm

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[19] Gaines M. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South* (New York, 1987), 36-46; 50-53; Caroline E. Janney, *Burying the Dead but Not the Past: Ladies' Memorial Associations and the Lost Cause* (Chapel Hill, 2008), 69-107; Daniel W. Stowell, *Rebuilding Zion: The Religious Reconstruction of the South, 1863-1877* (New York, 1998), 39-48, 100-29.

[20] Randolph H. McKim, "'Good Men a Nation's Strength': A Sermon Preached on the Occasion of the Death of Gen. Robert E. Lee" (Baltimore, 1870). McKim's text was II Kings 13:14, "O My father, my father! The chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof." Lee's funeral was Saturday, 15 October 1870.

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37:37); no subtlety here.[21] Following Lee's death, the Lost Cause movement gathered steam, and McKim became one of its most prominent exponents. In orations and essays, he struck many of the popular Lost Cause notes.

McKim began his defense of the Lost Cause by asserting that the Confederacy sat squarely atop a foundation built by the American Revolution. This placed Confederates in the mainstream of American democracy, established by the Anglo-Saxons, proclaimed by the Declaration of Independence, and won by George Washington and his Continental Army. Moreover, founders and Confederates displayed identical bravery, steadfastness, and high character, and both understood that the central government had no right to coerce a "Sovereign State." In McKim's version of American history, the Confederacy was heir to America's greatest generation.[22]

But leaving the United States seemed inconsistent with the supposed affinity between the founders and Confederates, and, consequently, McKim worked hard to justify secession. For Marylanders like himself, he explained that decisions at the Federal level compelled withdrawal from the nation. In particular, President Abraham Lincoln's call for troops after Fort Sumter cast the die, and if not for this coercive act, McKim predicted that the upper South, including Maryland, almost certainly would have remained loyal. But, McKim added that Maryland surely would have seceded after Lincoln's announcement had not the president sabotaged its democracy with military intervention. Finally, Confederate Marylanders needed to leave their home state, else the Union would have drafted them to

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[21] Church Book, Christ Church, 17 October and 11 November 11 1870. [Randolph H. McKim], *Washington's Church: An Historical Sketch of Old Christ Church of Alexandria, Virginia, Together with a Description of the Centenary Services Therein* (Alexandria, 1888), 3. The vestry met on the same day as the sermon was preached, perhaps immediately after the service.

Recently, Christ Church decided to remove the two plaques; see Alexa Epitropoulos, "Christ Church Announces Plans to Relocate Washington, Lee Plaques," *Alexandria Times* (29 October 292017). https://alextimes.com/2017/10/christchurch/ Accessed 17 May 2018.

[22] "Sovereign State" in "Second Maryland," 21. See also id., 9, 27-28; "Io Victis!" 16. The pages are not numbered; the pagination is mine.

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suppress the South. In brief, Federal force had replaced consent of the governed, forcing freedom-loving Marylanders to secede.[23]

All Southerners, however, not just Marylanders, were warranted in seceding. In the first place, according to McKim, when Southerners seceded, it was Constitutional. For a long time even New Englanders had acknowledged the Constitutionality of withdrawal from the Union, albeit by the Civil War they had changed, and, moreover, Southern founders, including some who helped write the Constitution, had planted the legitimacy of secession in Southern intellectual soil.[24] Secondly, McKim insisted that the Lost Cause stood only for liberty, meant no harm to the Union, and, in the end, strengthened, not damaged, democracy. In McKim's words, Confederates favored "Liberty without Union to Union without Liberty." He bristled at the accusation that secession and war on the Union undermined freedom, and instead he maintained that the Confederacy empowered the spirit of liberty and that secessionists went to war in 1861 only to defend the right of self-government. Secessionists owed no apologies.[25]

McKim defined liberty and self-government—his *raison d'être* of secession—as states rights. By the 1890s and early twentieth century his American patriotism knew no limits—in the aftermath of the *Lusitania* he was a big hawk—and he claimed that the Confederate movement essentially benefitted the United States. One of his favorite phrases was that "the armies of the North saved the union from dissolution; the armies of the South saved the rights of the States within the Union." He acknowledged that walking out on the Union was difficult, but as James Madison and Alexander Hamilton had asserted (so he claimed), states were sovereign and their coercion by the central government was unconstitutional. Confederates, then, were loyal patriots: "patriots as pure, as true, as loyal, as ever drew a sword, or shouldered a musket." True, Confederates were also rebels, but rebel, McKim averred, is a high form of patriotism. After

[23] "Second Maryland," 20-21; *Soldier's Recollections*, 155-57.

[24] "Motives and Aims," 8-20; *Soldier's Recollection*, 11-17, 156.

[25] "Liberty without..." in "Second Maryland," 21, and *Soldier's Recollections*, 157. See also "Second Maryland," 20-22; "Aims and Motives," 17. McKim asserted that Lee choose the Confederacy to protect liberty and freedom; *Soul of Lee*, 29, 34-35.

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all, George Washington (another connection to the founders) was a rebel, yet not a traitor, because he fulfilled his duty as he understood it. Likewise, secessionists performed their duty, which made them rebellious patriots. In the long run these secessionist-patriots triumphed because the entire nation and world heard their cry for liberty, and, in fact, by the late nineteenth century the nation's judicial system had largely accepted their states rights position. The cause of liberty had advanced; Confederates did not die in vain. In McKim's perspective, secession actually strengthened liberty and the nation.[26]

Slavery, which might be considered the antithesis of liberty, barely appeared in McKim's rear view mirror. McKim claimed that the South's institution was a low priority for Southerners and that he had always opposed it. As McKim described Southern history, slavery was not distinctively Virginian or even Southern. Instead, he blamed the English for planting bondage in colonial Virginia over the protest, no less, of white Virginians, and he further pointed out that originally the Northern colonies and states were also slave states. McKim maintained that economic considerations eventually ended Northern bondage, and he suggested that early nineteenth-century Virginia was similarly on the brink of emancipation until a rising abolitionist tide forced abandonment of freedom. But if not for the fanatics, Virginia "certainly" would have ended slavery, and then the rest of the South would have, too. McKim also explained away the bitter contest over slavery in the territories by asserting that it was actually an argument about equal Constitutional rights for all states. "We cared little or nothing" about slavery, the rector reminded veterans at a reunion. Was the Civil War caused by slavery? "No. A thousand times no!" he thundered.[27]

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[26] "armies of the North…" in "Second Maryland," 28; "Confederate Soldier," 43; "Io Victis!," 18; *Soul of Lee*, 190; "patriots as pure…" in "Io Victus!," 16. See also "Second Maryland," 22-28; "Motives and Aims," 17-18, *Soldier's Recollections*, 17; "Io Victus!," 17-18. For McKim's patriotism see "Io Victis!" 9, 22; "Motives and Aims," 4, 28, 29; *Soldier's Recollections*, ix.

[27] "certainly" in "Motives and Aims," 25; "We cared little…" in *Soldier's Recollections*, 22; "No. A thousand times no!" in "Second Maryland," 27. See also "Confederate Soldier," 20-27; *Soldier's Recollections*, 17-22, 247-48; *Soul of Lee*, 30-34, 35-36.

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McKim added more glow to the Confederate past with high praise for the faith, perseverance, and martial skills of those who soldiered for states rights. McKim was certain that noble Christian soldiers filled the Confederate army. His personal account of the war frequently mentions prayer, preaching, and distribution of Bibles and devotional literature. The bravery of these devout warriors was unsurpassed, and their endurance of low pay, hunger, ragged clothing, poor weather, fatigue, peanut coffee, and other hardships was second to none. McKim quoted Union General Joseph Hooker—nicknamed "Fighting Joe," to add to his source's value—who avowed that his army had tried but failed to imitate the effectiveness of Lee's men, and author William Swinton, who concluded that the Southern infantry "equaled any soldiers that ever followed the eagles to conquest." In McKim's memory, Confederate soldiers were superior.[28]

Consequently, McKim was convinced that superior numbers rather than deficiencies, such as mistakes, low morale, or a divided home front, defeated his virtuous and gallant men in gray. At Culp's Hill, for example, where Lt. McKim came under fire, Confederates faced an "overwhelming force" of Federal infantry and constant artillery fire without a single piece in reply, and at Cold Harbor McKim's unit of three hundred Marylanders withstood a surprise attack by thousands of Yankees, albeit successfully but nevertheless confirmation of the great built-in Southern disadvantage. McKim was so committed to the doctrine of overwhelming numbers that he published a seventy-two page treatise to document that conventional wisdom placed the number of uniformed Confederates far too high and that, instead, Confederates faced "superior numbers and resources," "vast odds of numbers and resources," and "vast hosts." Although the Lost Cause embodied a "self-sacrifice never surpassed in any age, in

[28] Hooker and Swinton quoted in "Motives and Aims," 6-7; "Second Maryland," 19; *Soldier's Recollections*, 271; and *Soul of Lee*, 117-18. See also *Soldier's Recollections*, 95, 137, 160, 163-64, 184, 210, 215, 220-22, 235, 238-40; *Soul of Lee,* 117-18.

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any cause," there were just too many Yankees for the brave, devout Southerners.[29]

The heroic embodiment of the Confederate past was Robert E. Lee, a theme that McKim first developed in his Alexandria eulogy of the fallen leader. McKim found no faults in Lee, literally. Lee's military leadership was beyond question—he was a "tactical genius"—although inept subordinates surrounded him, most prominently at Gettysburg but also elsewhere and in the civilian branch of the Confederate government. According to McKim, Lee was "one of the finest products of American life," and history would recognize him as the greatest American of the nineteenth century, on par with George Washington. Lee was the greatest Anglo-Saxon soldier ever.[30]

But the great hero was more than a remarkable American and Anglo-Saxon; he was Christ-like. As McKim portrayed the hero in gray, for his entire life Lee served his fellow man rather than himself. He was humble; he knew that he sinned but trusted that Christ would save him from his flaws. He was man of peace who hated war. He was forgiving; after the war he absolved the North and prayed for his former adversaries every day. He resembled Moses by refusing high place and instead elected to "suffer affliction with his people." (McKim used "his people" frequently to refer to the relationship between Lee and Southerners.) In McKim's retelling, when the war began, Lee knew that overwhelming resources would grant the North victory, and if he had accepted a Union command, success and fame would have followed. Yet Lee chose the Southern cause "because he

[29] "Overwhelming force" in "Second Maryland," 13; "superior numbers. . .," "vast odds. . .," and "vast hosts" in "Motives and Aims," 5, 6, 32, respectively; "self-sacrifice never. . ." in "Second Maryland," 26. See also "Second Maryland," 12-14, 16-17, 18, 25-26; *Soldier's Recollections,* 159, 269; *The Numerical Strength of the Confederate Army; An Examination of the Argument of the Hon. Charles Francis Adams and Others* (New York, 1912), passim.; "Io Victis!," 15, 17, 24, 25, "Motives and Aims," 30, 34; *Soldier's Recollections,* 81-83, 270 ; "Lee, the Christian Hero," 7; *Soul of Lee,* 62-64, 90, 155-73.

[30] "tactical genius," *Soul of Lee,* 50; "one of. . . "Motives and Aims," 1. See also "Motives and Aims," 30; *Recollections,* 159, 172-73, 175-76, 237, 257, 267-68; "Lee, the Christian Hero," 10, 21; *Soul of Lee,* 57-61, 87, 91, 100-06. McKim also termed Lee a "genius" in *Soul of Lee,* 55, 65, 66, 70, 87, 89.

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loved his people." After Appomattox he could have retreated to a comfortable life in England but became president of Washington College, a small, struggling school, in Lexington, Virginia, a "little mountain town" where he remained with "his people." McKim added that Lee could have been the president of a "great insurance company, with a princely salary and practically nothing to do," but instead opted for humble life. Thus, Lee "chose to suffer affliction with his people. . . . He would share their sorrows. He would bear their burdens with them." Lee stuck by the impoverished South under the yoke of Reconstruction oppression. He "interpose[d] his heroic figure as a shield between the South and her invaders" and "he bore on his heart the burden and the sorrows of his people." Lest doubt arise about Lee's resemblance to the son of God, McKim preached that the great general "led a life without spot or stain or flaw." He was "pure and blameless."[31]

Finally, McKim sacralized not just Lee but the entire Confederate past by sprinkling it with the language of faith. The Confederacy was a "holy cause," a "sacred theme," and a "holy obligation." Confederate patriots fought for a "sacred right" and walked "holy ground." The Stars and Bars was a "consecrated emblem," a "sacred memento," and a "sacred relic," and the memories of veterans were "holy." For those who died for the cause, McKim cited Jesus: "He that loseth his life shall find it."[32]

Of course, most of this is wrong. McKim may have been correct that some (not all) of the Founders considered secession Constitutional, but otherwise his Lost Cause version of history contained numerous distortions. Hamilton as a states rights enthusiast is

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[31] "suffer affliction…," 7, 20; "because he loved…," 9; 'little mountain town," 9; "great insurance…"; "chose to suffer…" 8; "interpose[d] his heroic…," 18; "he bore…," 20; "pure and blameless …" and "led a life…," 12—all in "Lee, The Christian Hero." See also 6-31. McKim also pronounced Lee "stainless" in "Motives and Aims," 3. "Little mountain town," also in *Soul of Lee*, 185; "his people" also in *Soul of Lee*, 188, 197. See also id., 195-211.

[32] "Holy cause" in "Io Victus!," 16, 30; "sacred theme," id., 23; "holy obligation," id., 29; "sacred right" id., 18, 20; "holy ground" in "Confederate Soldier," 32;; "consecrated emblem" and "sacred memento" in "Confederate Soldier," 4, and "Second Maryland," 6; "sacred relic" in id., 5; "holy" in id., 6; "He that loseth…" in "Io Victus!," 17.

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a big stretch. McKim's claim that slavery was foisted on unwilling white Virginians is creative, at best. Civil War scholars enjoy general consensus that slavery, not states rights, caused the war and that as the conflict dragged on, slavery and race grew in priority. Overwhelming numbers and resources did not foreordain the Confederacy to defeat, but, rather, Jefferson Davis' government came fairly close to victory. George Washington's Continental Army won under similar circumstances, of which Confederate strategists were well aware. Had the South won one or two of the toss-up battles (Vicksburg, Antietam, and Gettysburg), Lincoln probably would have lost re-election, and the new government would have opened negotiations for peace. While McKim was correct that the Southern rank-and-file fought well under difficult circumstances, the Lost Cause embellished Southern heroism, dismissed Confederate flaws, and ignored the comparable courage and ability of Northerners. Lee's supposed stainlessness speaks for itself.[33]

Nevertheless, McKim's version of the past was standard Lost Cause fare. Constitutional secession, superior soldiers, fervent Christians, overwhelming numbers, and valiant Lee: all were party line Lost Cause in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It was also very conservative. On one level, the Confederacy itself embodied conservatism. In fact, historian Stephanie McCurry calls it reactionary for its underlying assumption that all persons are not created equal, a defiance of the spirit of the age. But the Lost Cause was also conservative for its reverence of bygone days. Although McKim claimed that he was not pre-occupied with the past, he nevertheless held that the war was the high point in the lives of Confederate veterans; the "best of our life and work lies behind us." As the influential rector published, participated in dedications, and spoke to veterans groups, he stood squarely in the Lost Cause mainstream:

[33] Alan T. Nolan, "The Anatomy of the Myth," eds. Gary W. Gallagher and Alan T. Nolan, *The Myth of the Lost Cause and Civil War History* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 2000), 19-34.

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a warm, misty, romanticized, distorted, and conservative view of the past.[34]

Randolph McKim of the church had a much different, more forward-looking perspective. His disclaimer about not fixating on the past is far more convincing in his church life than in his Lost Cause role. His religious writings, which appeared simultaneously with his Lost Cause advocacy, reveal a nuanced, moderate-liberal theologian.

On the great question of the Episcopal day, however, the Oxford Movement, McKim looked to the past. The Oxford Movement, also called Anglo-Catholicism, sought to make the church more like the Catholicism of the patristic and medieval periods. Doctrines included apostolic succession (bishops obtain their authority as direct descendents of the apostles), baptismal regeneration (baptism is not symbolic but actually creates spiritual rebirth), and the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the elements at the Eucharist. In practice, these beliefs led to a much higher concept of the church, the sacraments, and the clergy. Specific changes were priestly absolution, church architecture that emphasized the altar rather than the pulpit, which was consistent with the greater role of the Eucharist, and more elaborate ceremony, including grand processions by vestment-clad clergy, scented by incense and accompanied by large retinues of acolytes, banner-bearers, candle-bearers, cross-bearers, and the like. Crucifixes and stone altars (instead of wooden tables) became important. Bishops acquired copes and mitres. Although the Oxford Movement eventually moved all of American Episcopalianism in its direction, the movement was highly controversial, and nonstop quarrelling

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[34] *Soldier's Recollections*, ix; Stephanie McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning: Power and Politics in the Civil War South* (Cambridge, 2010), 1-10, 357-61; Caroline E. Janney, *Remembering the Civil War: Reunion and the Limits of Reconciliation* (Chapel Hill, 2013), 136-37, 143-48; Nolan, "The Anatomy of the Myth," 11-19.

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over it consumed the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century church.[35]

McKim detested Anglo-Catholicism. He charged that it undid the Protestant Reformation, which had stripped the church of "errors" and restored "great truths," and he developed a long list of specific criticisms of the new movement. He opposed incense, penance, the concept of the seven sacraments, the assumption that saints interceded for humans, prayers to the Virgin Mary, and fasting ordered by priests (voluntary fasting was acceptable). He rejected the elevation of priests (a "sacerdotal class") to the level of mediators or intercessors because humans have direct access to God. Regarding the Eucharist, he did not believe that the elements were anything more than a symbolic representation of Christ and his presence or that sins are forgiven as the priest sacrifices the body and blood. He also disagreed with Eucharistic adoration (exposure and admiration of the elements), and reserved sacrament (storing a portion of the consecrated elements, often in a locked tabernacle made of precious metals, for use by the ill, housebound, or dying). As he fought the Oxford Movement, McKim referred to history, averring that his side epitomized the true doctrine of the early Christian church, but both sides made this claim. McKim refused to cede to his adversaries the label "Progressive" and, in fact, he called them "Reactionary," but mostly in this great Episcopal struggle McKim comes off as firmly in the Broad Church movement, i. e., as a tolerant rationalist opposed to the narrow personal piety of evangelicals (described below) and the narrow ecclesiology of Anglican Catholics.[36]

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[35] David Hein and Gardiner H. Shattuck Jr., *The Episcopalians* (New York, 2004), 91-94; David L. Holmes, *A Brief History of the Episcopal* Church (Harrisburg, 1993), 103-11; Robert W. Prichard, *A History of the Episcopal Church* (Harrisburg, 1991), 139-55.

[36] "errors" and "great truths" and 97; "sacerdotal caste," 10; "Reactionary" and "progressive" 88, 116: all in *The Proposal to Change the Name of the Protestant Episcopal Church, Considered in the Light of True Catholic Principles* (New York, 1913). See also *passim*; Hein and Shattuck, *Episcopalians*, 86-87; Holmes, *Brief History of the Episcopal Church*, 117-20.

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McKim also had a traditional streak in other parts of his religious life. His salvation process, for example, was straightforwardly evangelical. Although he said little about dramatic moments of conversion, he believed in choice, availability, and the new life and that Christ's forgiveness was "perfect and complete." New life was available "if you will only receive" and was accessible "not for a chosen few; it is for all." In a skillfully employed metaphor, McKim proclaimed that light from God's love is "as free as the air" and "is flooding the world." Only those who "are keeping the windows shut" did not have it. This was classic evangelicalism.[37]

Though free as the air, salvation was nevertheless a difficult choice, and the resultant new life required effort. "Seize the oars and pull for our lives," McKim instructed. He used the famous story of Lot to underscore the importance of effort and decisions in daily life. In McKim's interpretation of the great tale of the razed cities, Lot gradually drifted towards Sodom rather than making one great, life-changing decision. Lot was a shepherd—McKim called him a "great sheik" with a "simple life"—and Lot's big mistake was his initial decision to "[pitch] his tent *toward Sodom*" [emphasis McKim]. Although Lot did not renounce his faith, he made a choice based on worldly factors, including ambition, the allure of the city, and the promise of prosperity. The decision, of course, led to disaster. McKim encouraged his congregation to avoid being Lot when doing business, to consider carefully attendance at the theater, and to organize their homes according to their faith with a family altar and a family Bible. "We cannot pitch our tent toward Jerusalem on Sunday and toward Sodom on Monday," he warned. Choice and effort counted heavily.[38]

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[37] "perfect and complete," *Bread in the Desert and Other Sermons* (New York: Thomas Whittaker, 1887), 104-05; if you. . .," "not for. . ., "is flooding. . ." and "are keeping. . ." in *The Gospel in the Christian Year and in Christian Experience: Practical Sermons for the People, Advent to Trinity* (New York, London, and Bombay, 1903, second ed.), 66; "as free...," id., 67. See also *Bread in the Desert,* 89-108; *Gospel in the Christian Year,* 70, 114, 139, 222.

[38] "seize the oars. . .," in *Bread in the Desert,* 100McKim's version of Lot, including the quotations, is in *Gospel in the Christian Year,* 193-200, 201, 203. See also *Bread in the Desert,* 121; *Gospel in the Christian Year,* 144, 168-74, 217.

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McKim's highway to heaven, then, merged faith and works. Those who considered themselves saved through faith and did not pull on the oars were wrong, as were those who assumed salvation through rowing but ignored God's boundless love and Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. Faith that saves creates works—the two are inseparable—and those who enjoyed new life made important choices in daily life. This was very mainstream religion.[39]

Other aspects of McKim's faith were also traditional. Divine judgment, for example, occupied a prominent place in his thought. McKim believed in a great reckoning and a "separation into two great classes" when the "unfruitful branches will be cut off and cast into the fire." This grand culling would be based on the "inner nature," that is, on faith and commitment, and "tested by the X-rays of impartial truth," an interesting reference to new technology.[40] He also endorsed the virgin birth[41] and the resurrection.[42] McKim detested Roman Catholicism, and he forcefully attacked Rome for intolerance and opposition to democracy, science, and progress. Papal infallibility was beyond McKim's Pale.[43]

McKim also targeted traditional Protestant targets of immorality. Trashy novels and sensational journalism were immoral, ballet was "immodest," and Christians were to avoid dance halls and "so-called variety shows." He denounced gambling, including horse-racing, gaming tables, pools, the numbers, and "gilt-edged and refined methods" on Wall Street. McKim was a temperance man.[44] In 1919 he contributed to the Red Scare with an anti-communist sermon.[45] In lifestyle choices McKim was a time-tested Protestant.

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[39] *Bread in the Desert and Other Sermons,* 108-27*; Gospel in the Christian Year,* 30-42, 125-36, 270-88.

[40] "unfruitful branches. . .," *Gospel in the Christian Year,* 146; "inner nature" and "tested by. . .," *Gospel in the Christian Year,* 22; see also 141-42.

[41] *Gospel in the Christian Year,* 55.

[42] Ibid., 247-48.

[43] *Gospel in the Christian Year,* 68, 309-19; *Romanism in the Light of History* (New York, 1914), 3-21.

[44] "so-called variety shows" and "immodest" in *Gospel in the Christian Year, 106.* See also id., 105, 107, 109, 110-11; *Bread for the World,* 169-88.

[45] "The Peril of Bolshevism and the Duty of America: A Sermon Delivered in the Church of the Epiphany, Washington, D.C. on Sunday, April 6, 1919" (Washington, D.C., 1919).

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Finally, the traditional side of McKim cautioned against higher criticism, a method of Biblical interpretation that applied modern scholarship and scientific methods to sacred texts. McKim thought that far too often higher-criticism scholars were anti-Christian who assumed that Jesus was not divine and that everything, including revelation and the supernatural, had a rational explanation. Indeed, higher criticism itself was unscientific for beginning with assumptions not based on fact. He also disagreed with higher criticism scholars who claimed that some sections of the Bible were mythic, had been fabricated by later generations, or had evolved piecemeal over time. He questioned the ability of experts to dissect Bible stories with precision and to identify their various authors verse-by-verse. Rather, he proposed that only through divine action could a wide variety of literary forms written over centuries produce an inspirational, unified message like the Bible. In one of the great battlegrounds between higher criticism and traditionalism, the authorship of the Pentateuch (was it all Moses or did these books have multiple authors?), McKim thought that the evidence refuted the higher criticism assertion that later generations of prophets (Amos, Hosea, and Ezekiel) had manufactured the supposedly earlier texts. He dismissed this stance as turning the Bible "topsy-turvy." Instead, McKim believed that the Pentateuch was authoritative because it was a precursor to the Prophetic books; in other words, the chronology of authorship was vital. McKim disliked much about higher criticism.[46]

But in many other ways McKim's religion contrasted with his backward-looking Lost Cause perspective. Once, for example, he omitted Lee from a list of men who relied on God's support while facing great tasks. This might be surprising because on another occasion McKim asserted that the key to the General's character was his "meek and lowly trust in Jesus Christ," but from the pulpit he conspicuously left Lee off his list of all-stars who relied on God

[46] "Topsy-turvey" in *The Problem of the Pentateuch: An Examination of the Results of the Higher Criticism* (New York., 1906), 50-51. See also id., 26, 31, 54-57, 74, 78-80, 89, 108-31, 134-36, 172-74; *Gospel in the Christian Year,* 126, 161; *Present-Day Problems of Christian Thought* (New York, 1900), 77; *Problem of the Pentateuch* was three lectures delivered at the Virginia Theological Seminary in 1905.

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in difficult times: Moses, Martin Luther, Christopher Columbus, George Washington, Henry M. Stanley, and David Livingstone. No Lee.[47]

McKim was also much more intellectual in his religious life than in his Lost Cause advocacy. In a 1903 sermon, for example, he presented a far more complex version of the Trinity than he did a few years later (1907) in his comparison of Lee with Christ. In the Sunday morning sermon McKim tackled the dilemma of the Trinity—is it one god or three?—and told his congregation that God was one person with three characteristics, similar to the human threefold: body, soul, and spirit. In the natural world, the higher the order, the more complex, without sacrificing unity, and, thus, the Trinity could be the most complex being, yet still one. This sophisticated explanation contrasts with the simple notion of a stainless Lee, who bore the burdens of his people.[48]

Progressive religious thought particularly separated McKim from his died-in-the-wool Confederate nostalgia. His hesitation about higher criticism notwithstanding, his full thoughts on it were centrist, if not progressive. Here McKim moderated his qualms by identifying positives in the blend of modern scholarship with the Holy Scriptures. He rejected a rigid doctrine of inspiration as at odds with free inquiry or reason and thought that the Bible could withstand the scrutiny of modern scholarship. Higher criticism would leave the sacred text "unscathed" and might improve understanding of the Bible, at least in small ways, as exemplified by the Revised New Testament. He admitted that Deuteronomy probably underwent a few changes along the way, albeit small. He also praised the "great company of scholars" at work on Biblical interpretation and commended their ability to explain the language, society, and geography of the Bible. "Devout scholars," not those hostile to the faith, would "lead to a clearer light," and out of the great controversy generated by higher criticism, the Bible would "come out of

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[47] *Gospel in the Christian Year,* 63-64; "Lee, the Christian Hero," 13.
[48] *Gospel in the Christian Year,* 331-43.

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the furnace unharmed . . . brighter and more resplendent than ever."[49]

Perhaps we should note what McKim did not say about higher criticism. By the time he put sermons into print, the counter-attack on modernism that evolved into fundamentalism was well underway, but McKim never joined this conservative backlash. He never, for example, used the phrase "biblical inerrancy," much less endorse it. True, McKim had reservations about higher criticism, but he did not reject the concept and he spoke from the center rather than the right. This was not quite old time religion.

Neither was McKim's optimism about the future religion old-time. In fact, he accepted the liberal assumption that each age develops its own version of the faith. True, the gospel does not change from age to age—truth is truth—but McKim thought that comprehension of it does. Just like natural science, basic truths never alter but understandings of them do, and, consequently, the various systems of theology were part human, part divine; "part clay and part gold." Each age has a piece of the truth, but none has the whole. He suggested that the best representative images of the church were not cathedrals done by a single generation in one architectural style but rather the "even grander piles," a hybrid of styles representing different ages and architects, all of whom labored to express the faith in their individual fashion. As with change in architecture, each age creates its own variation of the church yet remains true to the faith.[50]

But all ages were not created equal, and McKim thought that future times would have fuller knowledge of God. Theology, he concluded, was not a "stagnant pool, but a river . . . widening and deepening in its onward progress." Just as Jesus increased in wisdom, so the church knew more about God as the ages rolled on. Scholars removed walls erected by past generations, reopened windows, and added new stones to the "Cathedral of

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[49] "unscathed," *Present-Day Problems of Christian Thought,* 78; "great company . . ." in id., 185; "devout scholars," and "lead to. . .," 187; "come out. . ." in 188. See also id., 75-7; *Problem of the Pentateuch,* 51, 124.

[50] "part clay and part gold," in *Present-Day Problems of Christian Thought,* 91. See also 63-64, 91-92.

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Truth." "Fresh investigation" of the Bible—more McKim acceptance of higher criticism—uncovered new truths, and surely Jesus had yet more to say to the church. The light grows brighter and the morning mist gradually disappears as Jesus becomes more visible and God reveals to one age "what the preceding age perhaps could not bear." Even core principles, such as the atonement, Biblical inspiration, and divine judgment, require restatement as understanding increases. Thus, in understanding the faith, McKim believed in growth, progress, and the future.[51]

As doctrine varied from age to age, so it differed from society to society. This had implications for overseas mission. McKim suggested that no single society—read Western—had the faith totally correct. Also, sometimes doctrine arises to correct problems resulting from longstanding controversies specific to only one society. Because each society (or age) thinks a little differently, attacks on the faith vary and defenders correspondingly adjust, but their defense is alien to other societies. McKim likened the situation to eyeglasses, which correct specific problems but are useless for others. Consequently, individual societies had parts of the truth, and doctrine varied from society to society without losing validity. From this, McKim concluded that mission had too much European thought and that his Anglicanism was a "partial expression" of the faith, best suited for Europeans but perhaps a poorer fit for non-Western societies. He cautioned against transplanting Anglicanism and trying to create Anglican denominationalism in non-western locations. He also favored the use of indigenous evangelists over European missionaries and approved of Jesuits telling the Chinese that Jesus was Chinese. McKim's mission philosophy differed in striking ways from conservative West-centric strategy.[52]

Evolution, the epitome of growth and progress, added to McKim's optimism about the future. On one hand, McKim simply

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[51] "stagnant pool..." and "what the preceding ..." in *Present-Day Problems of Christian Thought*, 92; "Cathedral of Truth," and "fresh investigation," id., 95. See also 94-95.

[52] "partial expression," in *Present-Day Problems of Christian Thought*, 61. See also id., 48, 51-52, 53, 53-54, 61-63, 93; *Christ and Modern Unbelief* (New York, 1893), 3-9, 51.

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liked evolution, if theistic, i.e., shaped by God. Although most Southerners rejected evolution, well-educated, urban worshippers at Epiphany likely agreed with their pastor about the joint efforts of Charles Darwin and God, and McKim often used evolution as a teaching point. He taught, for example, that the Bible resembled evolution of the physical universe because the various books of the Bible—rich in diversity; sonnets, odes, hymns, prayers, parables, proverbs, sermons, and more—all contribute to the revelation of the whole, just like the universe evolved in many phases that are all part of one organism. McKim was especially fond of the natural world's progression from simple to complex. He suggested, for example, that as matter evolves from inorganic to organic and from animal to human, so revelation progresses from flawed humans to the perfect Christ. Moreover, as organisms become more complex, their level of mystery increases, just as the incarnation is complicated and hard to explain. If rejecting the existence of sophisticated organisms is irrational, so is discarding the incarnation because of its difficulty. Christ's ascension resembled evolution because he gradually adapted his body for the spiritual world; it was not a single momentous action. Finally, individuals, like Christ, also evolve spiritually and will ascend in the final days. Perhaps ironically, Darwin, a great atheist, had many applications to Randolph McKim's faith.[53]

But evolution was more than a metaphorical device, and Darwin's great theory was another reason why McKim anticipated the future. He preached that like natural evolution, history was not static but moved towards an end that was better. As examples McKim cited the conversion of the Roman Empire, the conquest of North European barbarians, the Protestant Reformation, the Great Awakening, and the nineteenth-century missionary movement, all moments when Christ returned, not in person but in "spirit and power." (McKim still believed in a Second Coming, but he also allowed

[53] *Bread from the Desert*, 35, 52-59. *Present-Day Problems of Christian Thought*, 112-13, 169-72, 206-09; *Gospel in the Christian Year*, 51-52, 57, 117-19, 286; *Christ and Modern Unbelief*, 34-43; Ronald L. Numbers, *Darwinism Comes to America* (Cambridge, 1998), 58-75.

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that Christ had already returned frequently.)[54] McKim argued that since the woeful days of Rome, a Christian-inspired "gradual evolution from darkness to light" had occurred, making the nineteenth century the "most wonderful era in history" for its virtue, expanding human rights, and overseas mission. Likewise, Jesus guided humans into a higher life that was closer to God, broke down barriers of national rivalry, and led into the "era of the brotherhood of humanity." *Brotherhood of humanity* or *brotherhood of men* was a popular liberal signpost. At times McKim acknowledged living in a chaotic period of transition between old and new ages, but more often he expressed optimism about progress in the future. Christianity, he concluded, has "steadily transformed society." Things kept getting better.[55]

Things got better because of human ability, yet another marker of progressive optimism. To review McKim's salvation process, he believed that human choice and works contribute to salvation and that those who choose wisely and work hard for their faith improve society. Taken a step further, God relies on humans, their choices, and their effort to accomplish divine purposes rather than stunning displays of supernatural power. McKim pointed out that the story of the five loaves and two fishes illustrates that God uses individuals, even the "feeblest instruments." Everybody, including the most humble, can contribute to "saving the world" and "realizing the kingdom among men." True, progress comes slowly, but each person, like a tiny coral that adds to the great whole, can add to improvement and help prepare for the second coming of Christ and the "new earth." In an optimistic outburst, McKim called for "lightening the darkness, and lessening the suffering, and cleansing the

[54] "spirit and power," *Bread in the Desert and Other Sermons* (New York: Thomas Whitaker, 1887), 23. See also id., 19-47, 52-59; *Gospel in the Christian Year*, 7, 51-52, 57, 117-19, 286.

[55] "gradual evolution . . ." and "most wonderful . . ." in *Gospel in the Christian Year*, 76; "era of the brotherhood. . ." in id., 48; "steadily transformed society," *Christ and Modern Unbelief*, 99. See also *Christ and Modern Unbelief*, 89-106; *Gospel in the Christian Year*, 47-48, 7-80, 87, 92, 182, 263; *Present-Day Problems of Christian Thought*, 83-84. McKim used "brotherhood of men" in *Christ and Modern Unbelief*, 99.

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defilement of the world," a tall order for humans. "Saving the world" and "realizing the kingdom" as human achievements were liberal concepts; conservatives believed that only Christ could save the world and that the kingdom would only appear with the Second Coming.[56]

Finally, progress included social justice. McKim complained about overcrowding, poorly paid labor, sweatshops, filthy tenements, and child labor. He condemned false advertising, the use of the judicial system to oppress, the influence of corporations and lobbyists over state legislatures and the U.S. Congress, and "dishonest tricks" employed against labor. "Social inequality and industrial wrongs," he wailed, "cry aloud in the streets." He deplored individualism and "cold and calculating competition" and, instead, urged the inclusion of all, including, "our domestics, our servants, our employees," in the brotherhood of Christ. All members of society belonged to a "great organism," and living in isolation from it was impossible. Jesus, McKim pointed out, thought about the poor, the weak, and prisoners, and he gave them sympathy, justice, and charity. "All life and conduct has a 'social aspect,'" and all Christians should be concerned for "how the other half lives," a conspicuous citation of Progressive crusader Jacob Riis. In his call for the church to address social ills, McKim lined up with the Open and Institutional Church League, which enjoyed considerable Episcopal support. To be sure, in the great economic controversies of the late Victorian period, the former Confederate chaplain leaned left.[57]

In the twilight of his career, McKim even shook the Church of the Epiphany with reform, further testament to his progressive side. In 1920 the seventy-seven-year-old cleric roiled the waters of his parish

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[56] "lightening the darkness..." in *Bread in the Desert,* 269; "saving the world" and "realizing the kingdom" in *Gospel in the Christian Year,* 206; "new earth," *Bread in the Desert,* 47. See also *Bread in the Desert,* 46; *Gospel in the Christian Year,* 204-13.

[57] "dishonest tricks ..." 108; "social inequality ..." and "cry aloud ..." 75; "cold, calculating competition" and "our domestics..." 99; "great organism," "all life and ...," and "how the ...," 100: all in *Gospel in the Christian Year.* See also *Gospel in the Christian Year,* 92-101, 107-08, 110-12, 264-65; J. Michael Utzinger, *Yet Saints Their Watch Are Keeping: Fundamentalists, Modernists, and the Development of Evangelical Ecclesiology, 1887-1937* (Macon, 2006), 34-47.

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by proposing that it become a "free church," i.e., that it eliminate pew rents. To replace the income lost from the change, members would voluntarily donate the amount of their rent. Rent revenue had been dropping—it was down by one-half—but becoming a free church was nonetheless a big change for Epiphany. The proposal was socially leveling by allowing equal seating to all regardless of wealth and social standing, and it was popular with the institutional church movement, which had attracted McKim in New York. Thus, on the advent of the Jazz Age, free churches were hardly cutting edge; reformers elsewhere had encouraged them for decades. But important people populated Epiphany; in 1876 the vestry had informed a new rector, William Paret, that the parish had no poor members because all the pews were rented. McKim sought to change this, but it must have been a tough sell in this fashionable parish. He made a lengthy presentation to the vestry and shared his thoughts with the congregation in a sermon, "The Free Gospel," which, interestingly, was not published. Although pew holders voted six-to-one for a free church, the vestry nevertheless declared a sizeable minority and proceeded cautiously by allowing holders to retain their seats as long as they wished. Only when a pew was relinquished would it become free. The suspicion is that the weighty vestrymen (all male) were reluctant to surrender their own status, but Epiphany nevertheless became a free church, if slowly. The septuagenarian had delivered innovation to a parish, albeit decades behind the times.[58]

In the pulpit, then, McKim preached moderate liberalism. His strong distaste for Catholicism and demon rum were traditionally Protestant, and his theistic evolution and reservations about higher criticism were centrist, if not conservative. Moreover, many in the Broad Church movement had begun in evangelicalism, and McKim's straightforward thoughts about new life and choice reflected these old-fashioned roots. But his passion for social justice and for saving the world resembled Walter Rauschenbusch, and

[58] Church Book, 16 January, 6 February, and 27 March 1920; "Dr. McKim's Thirtieth Anniversary," clipping in the Church Book.; Holmes, *Brief History of the Episcopal Church*, 126.

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his openness to aspects of higher criticism, acceptance of theistic evolution, tolerance for religious variation over time, mission philosophy, free church sympathies, expectation of progress, and confidence in human ability—all standard for the Broad Church movement—mark McKim left of center, in stark contrast to his Lost Cause perspective.[59]

Randolph Mckim never retired. His life ended in 1920, aged seventy-seven, while playing golf at a Pennsylvania resort. He died with his spikes on.[60]

Throughout his long and productive life, McKim, the Lost Cause/liberal rector, planted himself firmly in two mainstreams that flowed in opposite directions. On one hand, he was standard Lost Cause. This romantic and exaggerated view of the increasingly hazy past looked backwards for inspiration, heroism, and wisdom. McKim, an influential Lost Cause spokesperson, told veterans that their greatest lifetime work was the Lost Cause, and perhaps he thought that about himself, too.

But as an Episcopal rector, preacher, and theologian, McKim was different. Wearing this hat, he was a moderate liberal who cautiously, if not completely, accepted evolution and higher criticism, who believed in progress, and who thought that wisdom and faith increased as time progressed. As a Confederate, McKim looked to the past, but as an Episcopalian he looked to the future.

Charting McKim's two-channel system is easier than explaining it. Mostly he embodied contradictions. On one hand, his passionate vindication of the Confederacy indicates that Southerners revered their Lost Cause into the twentieth century rather than letting it fade with time. For decades, the Lost Cause was psychic balm for a traumatized Southern consciousness. But McKim's theological liberalism demonstrates that former

[59] Hein and Shattuck, *Episcopalians*, 86-88, 96-97; Holmes, *Brief History of the Episcopal Church*, 117-20, 129; Prichard, *History of the Episcopal Church*, 173-202

[60] "Rev. Dr. R. H. M'Kim Dies on Golf Course," *The New York Times* (16 July 16 1920).

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chaplains were more than backward-looking nostalgists and suggests that further study of them might reveal more than uncomplicated "ministers of the Lost Cause." Furthermore, the moderate-liberal side of McKim indicates that clinging to the Lost Cause of the past did not prevent Southerners from anticipating future progress. McKim supports scholars who think that the Lost Cause remained prominent on Decoration Day but otherwise became peripheral as the South moved into modernity.[61]

On another plane, McKim teaches that even sophisticated thinkers, even leading preachers, sometimes contradict themselves or simultaneously balance competing assumptions. His learned treatment of theology contrasts with his simplistic explanation of the politics of secession, and his reverence-for-the-past/anticipation-of-the-future reveals a Janus-faced system of thought. Put another way, McKim kept his religious perspective out of one important part of his life. Even the most thoughtful preachers can be intense compartmentalizers.

[61] Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, 7, 8, 163-79; Zachary Woods Dresser, "The Theology of Reconstruction: White Southern Religious Leaders in the Aftermath of the Civil War" (Ph. D. diss., Rice University, 2013), i-ii, 178-304.

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