A Northern Presbyter with Southern Principles:

President Nathan Lord's Defense and the Politics of Slavery at Dartmouth College

Bradley Edington

Historical Accountability Student Research Fellowship

Morgan Swan, PhD

4 September, 2026

Introduction

In December 1833, when delegates gathered in Philadelphia to found the American Anti-Slavery Society, the name of Nathan Lord—Congregational minister and, since 1828, president of Dartmouth College—stood among its vice-presidents.[1] Writing publicly a few weeks later, Lord proceeded to call slavery "a moral evil" and "a violation of the law of love," pronouncing colonization "an inadequate remedy," and describing emancipation as "a return to the law of love."[2] As late as 1839, he still declared, without qualification, "I am an abolitionist," insisting that he was "as truly for abolitionism as for Christianity."[3]

Two decades later, the same man had become one of New England's most determined and prominent defenders of slavery. By 1854 and 1855, writing as "A Northern Presbyter," he was publishing pamphlets that defended slavery as a positive institution of divine right, a "*jus divinum*."[4] During the Civil War he told the readers of the *Boston Courier* that "abolitionism is the causative antecedent of the war," traced the nation's ruin to the "glittering generalities of the Declaration of Independence," and in 1863 resigned the Dartmouth presidency rather than submit to the political influence of abolitionism.[5] The president who had lent his name to the abolitionist cause had become, in the words of one hostile wartime editor, "a moral

---

[1] *The Liberator* (Boston, MA), December 21, 1833.

[2]Nathan Lord, letter of January 7, 1834, printed in *The Liberator* (Boston, MA), January 25, 1834; reprinted in the *Vermont Chronicle* (Bellows Falls, VT), February 7, 1834.

[3] "Clerical Arrogance Rebuked," *Vermont Chronicle* (Bellows Falls, VT), July 10, 1839, and *The Liberator* (Boston, MA), July 26, 1839.

[4]Nathan Lord, *A Eulogy on the Honorable John Quincy Adams: Delivered March 24, 1848, at the Request of the Students of Dartmouth College* (Hanover, NH: Dartmouth Press, 1848); Lord, *A Letter of Inquiry to Ministers of the Gospel of All Denominations on Slavery* (1854); and Lord, *A Second Letter to Ministers of the Gospel of All Denominations on Slavery* (1855).

[5]Nathan Lord to the editor of the *Boston Courier* (1862), reprinted in the *St. Louis Republic* (St. Louis, MO), December 24, 1862.

phenomenon… incapable of discriminating between right and wrong in their most elementary exhibitions."[6]

The distinct transition which this Northern college president undertook, from the officer rolls of the American Anti-Slavery Society to the pulpit of proslavery Christianity, and the resulting nationally covered exit from office, has been written about mostly by Dartmouth historians writing complete histories of the college. The secondary literature—most notably books by Baxter Perry Smith (1878), John King Lord (1913), Leon Richardson (1932), and Ralph Nading Hill (1966)—all maintain a straightforward narration of Lord's views: stating his early tie to abolitionism, his later defense of slavery, and a more in-depth retelling of his resignation. However, the sources agree on little more than this and interrogate no more than the general labels of "abolitionist" or "proslavery." Writing by other Dartmouth community members in *The Dartmouth*, *The Dartmouth Review*, and *The Dartmouth Alumni Magazine* has also evaluated Lord's history as the focus of or background for historical articles, but maintains a similar depth to the institutional historians.[7]

Lord does not fit any of the period's neat oppositions: North against South, slavery against freedom, Christian against abolitionist. He called slavery a divine ordinance while keeping Dartmouth's doors open to Black students; he rested his proslavery case on a literal reading of Scripture rather than racial contempt; and his own undergraduates remembered a man

---

[6] "Dr. Nathan Lord," *The Era* (New Orleans, LA), February 11, 1864.

[7] See *The Dartmouth*: "College Rowdyism," *The Dartmouth* (1877): 260; Charles E. Stevens, "Fifty Years Ago," *The Dartmouth 6* (1885): 246–48; Matthew Joyner, "The Green in Gray," *The Dartmouth*, October 16, 1980; Jon Walcoff, "Lord Leads College Through Early 19th Century.," *The Dartmouth*, October 27, 1980; and Will Bryant, "A Correction Regarding Our Anti-Abolitionist President Nathan Lord," *The Dartmouth*, April 10, 2026. See also the *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine*: Edward Connery Lathem, "Mr. President, L.L.D.," *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine*, October 1953; and Arthur H. Lord, "Even Disagreeing with Him Was Pleasant," *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine*, May 1955. See also *The Dartmouth Review*: Jason Ceto, "A History of Opposition," *The Dartmouth Review*, October 10, 2016. See also Deborah K. King, et al, "The Ties That Bind: Slavery and Dartmouth," Dartmouth Libraries, Dartmouth College, 2019, https://exhibits.library.dartmouth.edu/s/TiesThatBind/page/home.

personally gentle toward the people his doctrine consigned to bondage. There is no stage in which Lord can be perfectly confined to a single label, for Lord always wrote cautiously, with constant qualifications and frequent reservations, never lunging to a position he could not ground in Scripture. Through the combination of personal correspondence, manuscripts, and publications authored by Lord and written about Lord, and supplementation of Dartmouth and American historical background, this research produces a nuanced history of Nathan Lord's perspectives on slavery. By contextualizing Lord's own unique role in nineteenth-century American politics, this paper expands upon and challenges the narratives of former institutional historians.

1828–1839: "I am as Truly for Abolitionism as for Christianity" —Nathan Lord, 1839

Born November 28, 1792, in South Berwick, Maine, Lord attended Bowdoin College at the age of twelve. After graduating from Bowdoin at sixteen, Lord taught for three years at Phillips-Exeter Academy, attended Andover Theological Seminary, and finally settled for twelve years, from 1816 to 1828, as the pastor of the Amherst, New Hampshire, Congregational Church. In 1821, Lord was elected to Dartmouth's board of trustees and assumed the presidency of the college in 1828.[8] A thoroughgoing Calvinist, he held to the plenary and literal authority of Scripture: the Reformed conviction, common to Congregationalists and Presbyterians alike, that the Bible was the final arbiter of every question of faith and conduct, and the principle on which his defense of slavery would one day rest. His theology belonged to the conservative, Edwardsean wing of Congregationalism, a tradition that produced both ardent antislavery men and, among the ministers born between 1775 and 1800, a cohort of reactionaries and cautious gradualists wary of reform that ran ahead of Providence.[9] Lord belonged to that cohort by birth and by temperament. He distrusted enthusiasm, prized order, and understood the minister's task as the cure of souls rather than the reformation of the state.

The first public record of Nathan Lord's opinions on slavery is also, characteristically, a record of his reluctance to give one. In December 1833, when the American Anti-Slavery Society published the roster of officers elected at its founding convention in Philadelphia, Lord's name appeared among the vice-presidents for New Hampshire.[10] Within weeks Lord moved to correct the impression the listing created. In a letter to the editors of the *New Hampshire Observer*—reprinted in William Lloyd Garrison's *Liberator* on January 25, 1834, and in the

---

[8] John King Lord, *A History of Dartmouth College, 1815–1909* (Hanover, NH: Rumford Press, 1913), 2:218–225.
[9] Kenneth P. Minkema and Harry S. Stout, "The Edwardsean Tradition and the Antislavery Debate, 1740–1865," *Journal of American History* 92, no. 1 (June 2005): 47–74.
[10] "Anti-Slavery Convention," *The Emancipator*, reprinted in *The Liberator* (Boston, MA), December 21, 1833, 2.

Vermont Chronicle two weeks later—Lord explained that he had not actually attended the convention and only agreed to have his name included on the condition that the Society would take ground different from that of "a class of excited journalists," namely, the radical Garrisonian wing of the abolitionist movement, and that, this condition having failed, he could not let the appointment stand without explanation. Lord qualified this reluctance by stating that, if it were not for this misrepresentation in the paper, then Lord "should not obtrude my private opinions concerning slavery before the public."[11]

And yet Lord's opinions, despite his careful public self-defense, were unmistakably antislavery. In the same letter Lord called slavery "a moral evil" and "a violation of the law of love"; he judged colonization "an inadequate remedy" that had "operated as a blind" to Christian duty; and he defined emancipation, plainly, as "a return to the law of love." He looked toward a day when the nation might "resolve itself into a 'total abstinence society'" on the temperance model, and he ranked the antislavery cause with "protestantism, missions, temperance, or any other form of Christian enterprize." Whatever his misgivings about the men who led it, Lord in 1834 held that slavery was sin and that its removal was a Christian duty.[12]

The secondary literature has only retold this early abolitionist period in passing. Leon Burr Richardson allowed that "in his early days he was an anti-slavery man";[13] John King Lord, Nathan Lord's grandson, held that Lord "continued in active sympathy with the cause till about 1847";[14] and Ralph Nading Hill reported, more loosely, that Lord's "early views were

---

[11]Nathan Lord, "Letter from Nathan Lord," *The Liberator* (Boston, MA), January 25, 1834, 2–3; reprinted as "Dr. Lord's Letter," *Vermont Chronicle* (Bellows Falls, VT), February 7, 1834, 3.
[12]Lord, "Letter from Nathan Lord," 2–3.
[13]Leon Burr Richardson, *History of Dartmouth College* (Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College Publications, 1932), 2:475.
[14] J. K. Lord, *History of Dartmouth College*, 2:255.

Abolitionist" and that he had "attended the first anti-slavery convention in Philadelphia."[15] These accounts agree that Lord began as an abolitionist and treat the fact as simple. None ask what kind of abolitionist he was, if he chose to publicize it, or how much of his later position was already latent in the earlier one. Hill's detail is itself a small example of the imprecision: Lord did not attend the Philadelphia convention. He was named a vice-president in absentia and at once qualified the honor nearly to the point of declining it.

Lord presided over a college where the slavery question was very much alive, and where the divisions of the country were reproduced in miniature among his students. For example, in February 1837, the student David Youngman wrote to his father that "about half of the present members of college" had come to "believe it a sin, for one man to hold another in slavery," and that they had "formed ourselves into a society" to that end.[16] Writing the next year, another student, William Frederick Wallis, described putting his name "to the constitution of an Abolition society" and stated it was not a feeble debating club "accomplishing nothing," but "one which labors, which acts, and which has some efficiency in the great cause of Emancipation." He went on to say that "The soc[iety] numbers about 150 and they are decidedly the most influential and best portion of the students." Wallis then added that "the Pres [president, Lord] gave 10 dollars" to a visiting agent of the American Abolition Society.[17]

The same letter records the college's open door in the person of a Black classmate: a young man "by the name of Paul," son of the Boston Baptist minister Thomas Paul, "a person of most amiable qualities," who had been refused admission by Brown University "from motives of

---

[15]Ralph Nading Hill, *The College on the Hill: A Dartmouth Chronicle* (Hanover, NH: Dartmouth Publications, 1966), 76.

[16] David Youngman Jr. to David Youngman Sr., February 13, 1837, Youngman Family Papers, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.

[17] William Frederick Wallis to Lewis Sawyer, October 4, 1838, Mss 838554, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College

expediency" but was received at Dartmouth. Of Brown's refusal, Wallis wrote with disgust: "A person of the same Christian denomination, good enough to sit with them at the table of God, but not good enough to enter their institution! And why? Because he was 'guilty' of possessing a dark skin!"[18] Black antislavery voices were heard on the ground itself: in June 1840 another student, G.P. Hadley, wrote to his brother and described "an abolition lecture in the true sense of the term … delivered by a black, whose name was Lewis," who "took the fairest ground of any one I ever heard."[19]

Against this current ran an equally organized colonizationist one. A rival Colonization Society formed within the college in 1839—"Abolition & Colonization," the student William Porter wrote, "a mighty breeze of each from opposite quarters meeting around th[e] Halls of Old Dart[mouth]"—and beyond the campus the Hanover and New Hampshire colonization societies, of exactly the moderate kind Lord had pronounced "an inadequate remedy," solicited the same New England ministers Lord knew.[20] The colonization program was avowedly separate from abolition: the objective of the Hanover society, its constitution declared, was "the Colonization on the Coast of Africa, with their own consent, of the free people of Color of the United States"; the removal of free Black Americans, not the emancipation of the enslaved.[21]

The colonization appeal reached Hanover through community members like Dorus Clarke, an American Colonization Society agent who canvassed New Hampshire in 1841 for twelve thousand dollars to buy a ship for Liberia; or the Massachusetts philanthropist Oliver

---

[18] William Frederick Wallis to Lewis Sawyer, October 4, 1838, Mss 838554, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College

[19] G. P. Hadley to his brother, June 27, 1840, Mss 840377, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.

[20] William Porter to Mr. Townsend, September 17-24, 1839, Mss 839521, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.

[21] Ebenezer Adams, Sr., "Constitution of the Hanover Colonization Society," undated, box 1, folder 21, Ebenezer Adams Papers, MS-420, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.

Smith who left the Society ten thousand dollars in his will for the transportion "persons of color" abroad for "the relief and elevation of that degraded class"; or Dartmouth student Henry Clay who professed the "gradual emancipation" and colonization creed while doubting "the public mind is… yet ripe" for it.[22] This was the divided house over which Lord presided, in which students participated in both the abolitionist and colonization causes, where a handful of Black students attended, and within which his name on the abolitionist rolls carried notable weight.

The college's connection to slavery was not merely a matter of campus debate; it ran through the lives of its graduates, many of whom went South to teach, preach, and trade. Their letters home show how quickly proximity bred accommodation. Writing from Murfreesborough, Tennessee, in 1834, alumnus Amos Merrill told a Dartmouth friend that he had been "greatly deceived with regard to the treatment of these animals," the enslaved people around him, who were, he now thought, "in a much better condition than I expected to find them," and reported the local hostility to "the abolition Societies of the North."[23] Isaac Fletcher, a sitting congressman who had graduated from Dartmouth in 1808, judged abolition "an exciting topic and a very unfortunate one" from which "no good can result to the north and an immense injury to the south," warning that the South was "determined if their rights are invaded to secede from the Union, speedily, and forever."[24] By the late 1840s the Southern correspondents of Dartmouth men were writing of rupture: from Charleston in 1848, W. E. Bennett reported "a feeling

---

[22] Dorus Clarke to Samuel Fletcher, January 7, 1841, Mss 841107.1, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College; "Last Will and Testament of Oliver Smith, Esquire" (Northampton: Trumbull & Gere, 1859), box 1, folder 10, Hunt Family Papers, MS-1173, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College; Henry Clay to Thomas Speed, August 23, 1831, Mss 831473, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.

[23] Amos Merrill to Edmund B. Dearborn, October 24, 1834, box 1, folder 5, Edmund B. Dearborn Letters, MS-1290, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.

[24] Isaac Fletcher to Samuel Fletcher, January 24, 1838, Mss 838124, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.

springing up amongst us" so "exclusive, if I may not say hostile," that "the abolition question must soon devide us," and looked toward "the separation which is at hand."[25]

With such a split among proslavery, abolitionist, and colonizationist within the Dartmouth community, Lord's public views were of serious consequence. In an 1877 article in *The Dartmouth*, an alumnus, reflecting on his time at the college during the late 1830s, wrote that at the time, "Dr. Lord was understood to be an abolitionist, and one of only two then known among the College Faculty who entertained these views."[26] Being an open abolitionist was, however, far from a respected part of the Northern consensus in the middle 1830s; it was a small, mistrusted, and frequently mobbed movement, and to be publicly enrolled among its officers was to court the notoriety which Lord was statedly uneasy about attracting. On October 21, 1835, a Boston mob of about one and a half to two thousand men, self-described "gentlemen of property and standing," seized William Lloyd Garrison, tied a rope around his waist, and dragged him through the streets toward the Common, threatening to hang him.[27] However, the violence which some abolitionists or anti-segregationists faced was not limited to slave-holding states or radicals. That same summer, some three hundred townsmen in Canaan, barely twenty miles from Hanover, used teams of oxen to drag the newly opened Noyes Academy, an integrated school founded by reform-minded Congregationalists, off its foundations and down the road.[28] Thus, for Lord to be publicly counted an abolitionist in 1834 was, in its way, nearly as startling a thing for Dartmouth as his defense of slavery would be thirty years later.

---

[25]W. E. Bennett to Capt. A. Partridge, December 11, 1848, Mss 848661, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.
[26] "College Rowdyism," *The Dartmouth* (Hanover, NH), 1877, 260.
[27] Henry Mayer, *All on Fire: William Lloyd Garrison and the Abolition of Slavery* (New York: St. Martin's, 1998), 200–207.
[28] Trussell, Jacob. "Colored School at Canaan," The Liberator (Boston, MA), September 5, 1835.

The incident at Noyes Academy further illustrates Lord's resistance to the publicizing of Dartmouth's own policy of racial inclusion. In 1840, Amos A. Phelps, who was named as a manager in the same 1833 article on the founding members of the American Anti-Slavery Society as Lord,[29] wrote a letter to Lord inquiring about the college's practice of racial inclusion. Phelps, a Yale-trained Congregationalist minister, was one of New England's leading clerical abolitionists and the recording secretary of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society. Like Lord, he grew estranged from William Lloyd Garrison: in May 1839 he resigned from the Society, protesting that it had ceased to be "an Anti-Slavery Society simply" and had become "a woman's rights, non-government Anti-Slavery Society" shouldering "the peculiar and ultra doctrines of William Lloyd Garrison." This rift—Garrison's anti-clericalism, his rejection of political action, and the "woman question"—is what drove the split within the abolitionist movement in 1839–1840 and sent the clerical and political abolitionists into rival bodies; the Tappanite wing formed the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society in 1840, and its leaders helped launch the political-abolitionist Liberty Party the same year.[30]

In his response to Phelps, Lord confirmed: "the usage of this College in the equal admission of students, without respect to nation or complexion." The college had, he noted, begun as a school for the education of Native Americans and had "almost uninterruptedly had some Aborigines on our lists" and as for Black applicants, "an African has never been refused,

---

[29] "Anti-Slavery Convention," *The Emancipator*, reprinted in *The Liberator* (Boston, MA), December 21, 1833, 2.

[30] On personal background, see Maverick Congregational Church (East Boston, Mass.), *Condensed History and Manual of Maverick Congregational Church, East Boston, Mass., from Its Organization, May 31st, 1836 to June 30th, 1894* (Boston: Maverick Congregational Church, 1894), 9. On Phelps' resignation as recording secretary of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, see "Resignation of Amos Phelps," *The Liberator* (Boston, MA), May 10, 1839, 2. On Garrison's anti-clericalism and the clerical abolitionists' break with the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society in 1837–1839, see William L. Van Deburg, "William Lloyd Garrison and the 'Pro-Slavery Priesthood': The Changing Beliefs of An Evangelical Reformer, 1830–1840," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 43, no. 2 (1975): 231–34. On the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (led by Lewis Tappan) and the founding of the Liberty Party in 1840, see Manisha Sinha, *The Slave's Cause: A History of Abolition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 463, 466.

because he was an African." He could point to particular men: Edward Mitchell, of the class of 1828, "received to an equality of privilege with all other students," who had "graduated honorably" and become a Baptist minister; and, then in the junior class, Paul, the same son of the late Reverend Paul whom William Frederick Wallis had named in his letter, whom Lord called "a very unexceptionable young man, having the confidence & kind regards of the Faculty & his fellow students."[31]

Characteristically, Lord asked Phelps not to advertise the college's liberality: "the less observation the College attracts to itself, in this respect, the more advantage it will have… in correcting the public prejudice." The same letter records his contempt for the abolitionist who wanted the opposite—"our well meaning but delirious neighbour, N. P. Rogers," the New Hampshire editor who, Lord complained, had branded the college "traitorous to God & man" for declining to proclaim its open door to the world.[32] Lord preferred to do the thing quietly and let the proclamation go, the same instinct that kept him from "obtruding" his opinions on slavery before the public.

That quiet practice did not spare him the hostility of students who did not share his early abolitionism. The alumnus who had described Lord as "one of only two then known among the College Faculty who entertained these views" recounted of an instance of "college rowdyism," in which "the boys," "mainly to see what he would do about it," hung "a frightful effigy representing a negro" over the door of the chapel where the college gathered for morning prayers. Lord entered early, took his place, waited for the students to settle, raised his colored glasses to his forehead, and said only, "Gentlemen, you perceive that one of our rowdies is

[31]Nathan Lord to Amos A. Phelps, July 15, 1840, Internet Archive.

[32]This is the same Nathaniel P. Rogers whose reported "down with the Bible" outburst Leon Burr Richardson would later credit with driving Lord toward his defense of slavery.

suspended!" The effigy came down, and the alumnus added, "the boys indulged in no more jokes upon the President during the current year."[33] The story is told as comedy, but the prank was a racial jeer aimed at an abolitionist president, and his deflection, treating a hanging "negro" effigy as mere "rowdyism," disciplined the pranksters while letting the racial provocation itself pass unanswered. When the college buried Lord in 1870, the author of his obituary in *The Dartmouth* felt the contradiction plainly and tried to resolve it in his favor: "whatever may have been his views theoretically, practically he was a much better friend to the black man, and treated him more like a 'man and a brother,' than many of those, whose philanthropy was so noisy." His, the memorial insisted, was "the only college in the country, for a long time, where a colored student could be admitted, or even tolerated"; and when a Black congregation in Troy, New York, wanted a minister ordained, it was Lord they sent for, and he went as "the only white clergyman present."[34]

Lord did not volunteer his antislavery convictions; he was drawn into stating them. The 1834 letter was written, he said, "in answer to your inquiries," and published only to set right the record of his connection with the Society. Its argument, moreover, was as much about the manner of reform as about its substance. Reform must proceed by moral suasion and Christian persuasion, not by agitation: "all proposing of political action, and ecclesiastical interference in reference to the contemplated reform, should be discouraged," Lord wrote, so that in the end "the reform would govern political action, not political action the reform."[35] The same letter that condemned slavery as sin insisted that the pulpit and the party be kept clear of one another, a conviction about the proper boundary between religion and politics that Lord would hold, and act

---

[33]"College Rowdyism," *The Dartmouth* (Hanover, NH), 1877, 260.
[34]"In Memoriam," *The Dartmouth* 4 (1870): 337–39. On the Troy ordination see also Richardson, *History of Dartmouth College*.
[35]Lord, "Letter from Nathan Lord," 2–3.

upon, for the rest of his life. Even the emancipation he urged came carefully bounded: he set aside "all question as to the precise relation which should be constituted between the black and white population." He warned against reformers whose zeal "savor[ed]… of radicalism." His antislavery, in short, was hedged from the beginning, by his distrust of the movement's leaders, by his refusal of political means, and by his reluctance to speak at all.

Pressing his case, he paused over the very doctrine that would become the cornerstone of his proslavery writing. He had "yet to learn," he wrote, "that despotism and slaveholding… obtain by a '*jus divinum*'" to which Christianity owes "passive obedience."[36] Moses, he argued, had only "suffered" slavery—that is, allowed it—"because of the hardness of men's hearts," and Scripture disclosed "an essential incongruity between slavery and Christianity." In 1834, the "*jus divinum*" of slavery was a claim Lord named in order to reject it. Within fifteen years he would build his public reputation upon affirming it.

The reception of Lord's early statements confirms how ill his temperament fit the movement that claimed him. William Lloyd Garrison used his paper, *The Liberator*, to disown him. Lord's "long half-and-half Letter," Garrison scoffed, discussed the sufferings of millions "as if he were discussing the merits of an apple-pudding"; the president had even refused to publicize an antislavery address at Hanover; and as for his place on the officer list, "there has been a great mistake committed."[37] The moderate antislavery press, by contrast, embraced Lord for the very qualities Garrison despised. The *Vermont Chronicle* praised him for grounding emancipation not on "the Jacobinical doctrine of the 'rights of man'" but "from the law, 'thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,'" and reprinted Garrison's attack chiefly to display "the rod

[36] Lord, "Letter from Nathan Lord," 2–3.
[37] "President Lord," *The Liberator* (Boston, MA), February 1, 1834, 3.

with which Mr. Garrison chastises refractory Vice Presidents."[38] Lord stood, in 1834, in a narrow space: too pious and too cautious for the Garrisonians, and congenial to the conservative Congregationalists who wanted an antislavery that threatened neither Scripture nor social order.

If the American Anti-Slavery Society was not the vehicle for Lord's convictions, another soon presented itself that suited him better. In January 1835 a moderate convention met in Boston to organize the "American Union for the Relief and Improvement of the Colored Race," a body conceived as a moderate alternative to Garrisonian abolition; its constitution proposed to work "by disseminating information, and exerting a kind moral influence, to convince all American citizens, that the system of slavery in this country is wrong, and ought to be universally abandoned." Among the vice-presidents it elected was "Rev. Nathan Lord, Dartmouth Coll. N.H.," seated alongside Z. C. Barstow of Keene, later one of the Dartmouth trustees who would sit in judgment on Lord in 1863.[39] The union asked exactly what Lord thought antislavery ought to ask, that slavery be acknowledged a wrong and abandoned, while disclaiming the agitation which was represented by Garrisonian unions.

The gap between Lord's abolitionism and Garrison's is clearest in a four-year-later exchange of letters, in the spring of 1839. The Reverend Zenas Bliss of Quechee, Vermont, wrote to ask whether Lord's abolitionism authorized lay and itinerant activists to agitate the slavery question inside a settled pastor's parish and against the pastor's wishes.[40] Lord's reply, published that July in the *Vermont Chronicle* and reprinted in *The Liberator*, contains an uncharacteristically blanket and bold claim from Lord: "I am an abolitionist… I am as truly for

---

[38] "Dr. Lord's Letter," *Vermont Chronicle* (Bellows Falls, VT), February 7, 1834, 3.

[39] "American Union for the Relief and Improvement of the Colored Race," The Liberator (Boston, MA), January 17, 1835, 3. For the American Union as a clerical, moderate counter-organization to Garrisonian abolition, see Van Deburg, "Pro-Slavery Priesthood," 231.

[40] Zenas Bliss to Nathan Lord, April 16, 1839 ("Letter I"), in "Clerical Arrogance Rebuked," *Vermont Chronicle* (Bellows Falls, VT), July 10, 1839, and *The Liberator* (Boston, MA), July 26, 1839.

abolitionism as for Christianity, believing them to be essentially related." However, Lord's commitment is hedged in a heavily insulated and carefully drafted letter. Lord said his views were unchanged since 1834 "except that the convictions, then expressed, of the evils, moral and political, of slavery, and of the duty, practicability, and expediency of immediate emancipation, have been confirmed and settled by time."[41]

On the abolitionist movement itself, he pulled back at every step. He was "not a member of any Abolition Society"; his work had given him no "active influence" in the cause; he had long expressed "distrust of some leaders of abolition" whose "subsequent course" had confirmed his low opinion; and he refused to endorse any particular measure, saying it was not "my errand to engage in the public strife." His one assertive point was not a defense of abolition but a defense of laymen's right to discuss any subject "without a license from the spiritual courts," and against Bliss he called the clergy's claim to control such discussion "an unwarranted and dangerous usurpation."[42]

That point, not Lord's abolitionism, is what *The Liberator* wanted. The paper reprinted the exchange under the heading "Clerical Arrogance Rebuked," which names the clerical-authority quarrel, not slavery. A college president denying that ministers could police what their congregations debated was perfect for the moment Garrison's paper was fighting the same clerical faction. The paper used a college president's words as a weapon in the movement's quarrel with the clergy and let the label "abolitionist" stay attached to his name because the name was useful. Bliss saw how little it now meant. Men like Lord, he complained, "perhaps are not and would not willingly be members of any abolition society, but still bear the name," a name

---

[41]Lord to Bliss, May 30, 1839 ("Letter II"), in "Clerical Arrogance Rebuked," *Vermont Chronicle* (Bellows Falls, VT), July 10, 1839, and *The Liberator* (Boston, MA), July 26, 1839.

[42]Nathan Lord to Zenas Bliss, May 30, 1839 ("Letter II"), in "Clerical Arrogance Rebuked," *Vermont Chronicle* (Bellows Falls, VT), July 10, 1839, and *The Liberator* (Boston, MA), July 26, 1839.

that “to most minds at least implies membership in full,” and the agitators traded on it: “the very tone with which they declare from house to house that ‘President Lord is an abolitionist’ shows the double use which they would make of it.”[43]

By the end of the 1830s, Nathan Lord was still an abolitionist but a reluctant, orthodox, and thoroughly hedged one. He had lent his name to the cause and then spent five years explaining the terms on which he had done so: no societies, no politics, no radicalism, no obtruding of private opinion, and, above all, no surrender of the Scriptural question he held prior to all the rest. The disposition that kept him from “the public strife” in 1839 was not indifference; it was a conviction that a minister and a college president ought not to make the pulpit an instrument of party, and that reform must follow conscience rather than compel it.

[43]Zenas Bliss to Nathan Lord, June 3, 1839 (“Letter III”), in “Clerical Arrogance Rebuked,” *Vermont Chronicle* (Bellows Falls, VT), July 10, 1839.

1840–1849: "I may feel called upon to say something of the '*Jus divinum*.'" —Nathan Lord, 1848

It was during the 1840s that Lord pivoted from supporting abolitionism to defending slavery. However, this important crux maintains the thinnest direct evidence of Lord's beliefs. The secondary literature agrees on little more than the rough decade in which Lord changed his mind. Writing in 1932, Leon Burr Richardson set down no year at all, describing instead a gradual movement in which the "utterances of the abolitionists shocked him by their apparent impiety"—one utterance above all, the declaration ascribed to the New Hampshire abolitionist editor Nathaniel P. Rogers and endorsed by Garrison, that "If the Bible sustains the principle of Slavery and justifies Slavery either in the Old or New Testament, then down with the Bible. As between Anti-Slavery and the Bible, I accept Anti-Slavery." This, according to Richardson, drove Lord to the Scriptures and to the conclusion that slavery was divinely warranted.[44] The two histories written within Lord's own family are more precise and less disinterested. John King Lord held in 1913 that Lord "continued in active sympathy with the cause till about 1847," when he became "an upholder of slavery," a change to which, "it is said, he was brought in a large degree by a pamphlet, published anonymously, but written by B. F. French of Lowell, maintaining the divine origin of slavery."[45] Ralph Nading Hill, in 1966, supplied a third cause and the least evidence for it: "following a visit to the South," he wrote plainly, Lord "changed his mind."[46]

---

[44]Leon Burr Richardson, *History of Dartmouth College* (Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College Publications, 1932), 2:475–78.
[45]John King Lord, *A History of Dartmouth College, 1815–1909* (Hanover, NH: Rumford Press, 1913), 2:255.
[46]Ralph Nading Hill, *The College on the Hill: A Dartmouth Chronicle* (Hanover, NH: Dartmouth Publications, 1966), 76.

According to John King Lord, Nathan Lord cast a vote in 1841 for the Liberty Party, the moderate abolitionist political party. Whatever befell his convictions, it befell them after he had, as late as 1841, still voted for political antislavery—which places the turn in the middle and later 1840s and lends weight to John King Lord's "about 1847." On the cause of the change, however, they diverge completely, and each of the three causes proves, on inspection, difficult to stand upon.[47]

Lord himself, however, left two retrospective documents which described his reinterpretation of slavery's divine authority. In an unpublished treatise on slavery he wrote that "the confounding of them [abolitionist beliefs] by such reasoners as Channing, Wayland, Barnes… first led me, when a teacher of moral philosophy, to reconsider my opinions," whose "false arguments… after a while awakened my distrust."[48] In a letter of October 1863 to his successor, Asa Dodge Smith, he located the same process institutionally: it was "for some years while I performed the duties of the then vacant Professorship of Theology & Moral Philosophy" that he was "called to study those branches more attentively" than his earlier ministry had allowed.[49] By Lord's own account, in other words, he changed his mind not because he read one book but because, in the classroom, he spent years arguing with the antislavery moral philosophers he had once followed and came to reject their reasoning.

Lord's account is corroborated by Richardson's writing, in which he establishes that Dartmouth's chair of divinity fell vacant in 1830 and remained unfilled until the Reverend Daniel J. Noyes assumed it in 1849, and that throughout that vacancy the teaching of theology

---

[47] John King Lord, *A History of Dartmouth College, 1815–1909* (Hanover, NH: Rumford Press, 1913), 2:254–255.
[48] Nathan Lord, "Slavery," Nathan Lord Family Papers, MS-510, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.
[49] Nathan Lord to Asa Dodge Smith, October 2, 1863, Mss 863552.1, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.

and moral philosophy fell to the president himself.[50] Lord's stated trigger, reconsidering his views "while I performed the duties of the then vacant Professorship," therefore maps onto the years 1830 to 1849, and the "some years" of gradual reconsideration onto the 1840s, ending just as Noyes relieved him of the chair.

In John King Lord's account of Nathan Lord's views on slavery, he stated firmly that "they were never obtruded upon the students, and, as far as they were known, were regarded as 'peculiarities' which had little to do with the President's official and personal relation to the students."[51] However, among Lord's unpublished papers is a 52-page-long undated address headed simply "Slavery," delivered to a class of undergraduates.[52] It opens by disclaiming partisanship and pressing on the students the stakes of getting the question right: "What a few young men think now may become the opinion of hundreds in the next generation," and so they should "attentively consider the subject on all sides of it, not to be partizans, but [to] meditate." Then it stakes out the philosophical move on which his whole later argument would rest. Slavery as popularly defined—"the holding of men as property… a compelled servitude… for an indefinite time"—was, Lord told them, "a mere physical state, or act," and "what is merely physical is neither good nor bad." Only the *quo animo*—the spirit and intention—could make it right or wrong, exactly as the compulsion exercised by "the Father… the master… the State" over children, apprentices, and citizens was neither good nor bad in itself. The moral question, he concluded, "can never be settled" on the physical fact alone; it turned wholly on whether the

[50]Richardson, *History of Dartmouth College*, 2:455.
[51] John King Lord, *A History of Dartmouth College, 1815–1909* (Hanover, NH: Rumford Press, 1913), 2:321–322.
[52]Nathan Lord, "Slavery," Nathan Lord Family Papers, MS-510, folder 32, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.

master acted *mere arbitrio*, for his own ends, or "in obedience to the will of God, and for the good of mankind."[53]

That blankness is itself worth pausing over. Between the purported ballot which he had cast for the Liberty Party in 1841 and the spring of 1848, the public record of Nathan Lord on slavery is very nearly empty—no letters to the press, no addresses, no pamphlets. This absence of content may result from missing, unlocated, or unarchived documents. However, this gap may be explained by Lord's aversion to participation in politics. Lord held that a minister and a college president ought not to "obtrude" his private opinions or bend the pulpit to partisan use, and he regarded slavery as, in its public dimension, a political question. As long as no one asked him to speak and no crisis pressed him, a change of private conviction created no occasion for public speech. The national ruptures that would later leave silence looking like complicity—the Compromise of 1850, the Fugitive Slave Act, Kansas–Nebraska, Dred Scott—still lay in the future; in the middle 1840s the question, though agitated by the annexation of Texas and the Mexican War, had not yet become the all-consuming national rupture it soon would be. A private man of Lord's temperament could reconsider his views in these years without feeling any obligation to announce them.[54]

When the silence broke, it did so from an unlikely direction: the death of an antislavery hero. John Quincy Adams—sixth president of the United States and, in a remarkable second career, representative from Massachusetts from 1831 until his death—had spent his last years as the most conspicuous congressional enemy of slavery's defenders. At Dartmouth, the students

---

[54] James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), chaps. 3–4.

resolved to mark the death with a formal eulogy, and they asked their president to deliver it. Their choice of Lord, and his response to it, are preserved in the recollection of one of the students who extended the invitation. Writing in *The Dartmouth* in 1884, a member of the class of 1848 recalled that he, J. W. Patterson, and a classmate named Folsom had been chosen to wait upon the president. Lord, he wrote, "looked us directly in the face for such a length of time that it began to be painful." He hesitated to accept, Lord told them, "because in speaking of this 'Old Man Eloquent,' and his later public services, I may feel called upon to say something of the '*jus divinum*,' which designing persons may wish to construe into a justification of… the abomination of Slavery as it exists in this country at the present time." He asked for time to consider, and when the committee reached back out to him once again, Lord accepted.[55] Lord's resistance to delivering the speech reflects his calculated and principled understanding of his role as a college president and minister; he understood the duty of eulogizing such an important man, but knew it to be wrong to praise Adams without commenting on his abolitionist views. Warning the students that he would be obliged to speak on the subject, and with their unwavering request, Lord was forced to speak out publicly about his views.

What Lord then said during the eulogy, on March 24, 1848, has the same double character. For most of its length the eulogy is warm and even admiring. It praises Adams' piety, his integrity, and above all his defense of the right of petition, which Lord called "the citadel of civil and religious liberty." It grants, without cavil, that Adams "tried the institution of slavery simply in the lights of essential and preceptive morality," and that "in those lights he saw cause to condemn it as a moral evil." But at the close Lord turns, gently and devastatingly, upon the

[55]"President Lord," *The Dartmouth* 5 (1884): 251.

ground his subject had stood on. Adams, he says, though "firm, erect, sublime" where he stood, had not seen that the ground itself "was doubtful":

> But the true issue is not, whether slavery, assumed to be a human institution, is contrary to justice and benevolence.… The issue has respect both to the basis of slavery and its character. It is whether slavery is not a positive institution of God, and whether, being a positive institution, it is not morally and politically bad, only as it is unrighteously or imprudently administered. That is the issue of slavery; viz. its *Jus Divinum*. We cannot safely proceed a step till we have gained a foothold by settling that original and fundamental question of the Divine Right.[56]

With that, before an audience of his own undergraduates gathered to honor an abolitionist, Lord announced the framework of the proslavery argument he would spend the next fifteen years elaborating. In 1834 he had named the "*jus divinum*" of slavery precisely in order to reject it, declaring that he had "yet to learn" that slaveholding obtained by any such divine right.[57] In 1848 he named it in order to install it as "that original and fundamental question" prior to all others. The eulogy did not yet make him a pamphleteer; it was a single, occasional, carefully hedged address, wrung from him by the students' request and framed, even in its delivery, as something he had been reluctant to give.

Little evidence of the student reaction to Adams' eulogy has been found, but four months after Lord delivered it, a squib in the undergraduate publication *Old Grimes* offered a "Sketches of the Faculty. No. 5. President Lord ('Old Prex.')"—a page of cheerful abuse cataloguing his "green goggles" and his "fox skin wig," and what it called his union of "the deepest hypocrisy with the grossest superstition," a "man of ONE idea" who "thinks that all but himself and family are going straight to hell."[58] The lampoon says nothing of slavery, but its mocking

---

[56]Nathan Lord, *A Eulogy on the Honorable John Quincy Adams: Delivered March 24, 1848, at the Request of the Students of Dartmouth College* (Hanover, NH: Dartmouth Press, 1848), 11–13.

[57] Lord, "Letter from Nathan Lord," *The Liberator* (Boston, MA), January 25, 1834, 2–3. See chapter 1.

[58] "Sketches of the Faculty. No. 5. President Lord ('Old Prex.')," Old Grimes (Hanover, NH: Kimball's Dartmouth Press), July 27, 1848, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.

characterizations of Lord's sanctimony may be a reflection of the students' perspectives of such beliefs.

1850–1856: "Slavery… is essentially an ordinance of the God of Nature and Revelation." — Nathan Lord, 1854

The 1850s made the slavery question inescapable in a way the 1840s had not. The Compromise of 1850, with its Fugitive Slave Act, drew the free states into the machinery of slaveholding; Harriet Beecher Stowe's 1852 *Uncle Tom's Cabin* put the moral case before millions of readers; and in 1854 the Kansas-Nebraska Act threw open to slavery territory the Missouri Compromise had reserved for freedom, touching off a Northern fury that would soon give rise to the Republican Party. It was in the middle of that fury that Nathan Lord finally returned to print. Characteristically, it was not a political act, but a clerical participation, which drew him to express his views on slavery; in the winter of 1854 more than three thousand New England ministers signed a protest against the Nebraska bill and sent it to Congress.[59] For Lord, these were exactly the abuses which he had warned about, even during his time as an abolitionist: seeing such a mass of clergymen bend the pulpit to party was heretical and could not stand unanswered.

This turmoil caused by the Nebraska bill is what inspired him to write, in 1854, a pamphlet published anonymously as "A Northern Presbyter": *A Letter of Inquiry to Ministers of the Gospel of All Denominations, on Slavery*. Its form was nearly as revealing as its content. "A Minister of New England," it began, "humbly addresses this letter to his brethren, of all denominations," who, "in view of the excitements of these difficult times," "feels impelled to suggest a few inquiries." Even now, entering the fray, Lord cast himself as reluctant and deferential—drawn out, not volunteering—and he chose the least assertive of forms: not a treatise but an "inquiry," eleven numbered sections composed almost entirely of rhetorical

[59] "Q", "A Northern Presbyter with Southern Principles," *The Liberator* (Boston, MA), October 27, 1854; Samuel May, *The Liberator* (Boston, MA), February 2, 1855.

questions, each beginning "Whether." The humility was partly a pose, for a man does not print a pamphlet he does not wish read; but it was also of a piece with the temperament traced in the earlier chapters. Lord approached the public arena sideways, as a questioner rather than a proclaimer, even while advancing the most radical of claims.[60]

The claims themselves were, by 1854, fully formed. The first inquiry set the frame: ministers should treat slavery "as a question of Divine right, rather than of prudence, policy, or economy," and should "withdraw the public mind from the disagreeable attitudes and ungracious political movements of slavery, to its providential design." By nature, he argued, slavery was nothing less than a divine necessity—God's chosen means of restraining a wicked and "degraded" humanity:

> Whether … slavery may not only be consistent with the perfections of God, as the universal, providential, and moral governor, but absolutely required by them for the best, if not the only possible ordering of the refractory world … a wholesome ordinance, on the whole, for the punishing and restraining of vice, and the encouragement of virtue, to the more certain attainment of the ends of God's natural and moral providence?[61]

By revelation the same institution was woven into the order of things: the curse of Ham, the slaveholding of the patriarchs, the Mosaic law that "required and regulated" bondage, and the silence of Christ and the Apostles, who "never abrogated, annulled, or questioned the original institution." The law of love, far from forbidding slavery, touched only "the spirit and intention with which" it was carried on; and the abolitionist reading of that law Lord traced to a "wide-spread humanitarian philosophy," a heresy sprung from "the outbreaks of the modern illuminated and atheistical philosophies." Beneath the language of Providence lay a racial hierarchy. Lord

---

[60] Nathan Lord, *A Letter of Inquiry to Ministers of the Gospel of All Denominations, on Slavery* (Boston: Fetridge and Company, 1854), Nathan Lord Family Papers, MS-510, folder 27.
[61] Lord, *Letter of Inquiry* (inquiry II).

read Noah's curse on Canaan in Genesis 9 as a standing divine decree: the three races descended from Noah's sons were fixed in permanent stations—Shem in covenant, Japheth in dominion, and the "race of Ham" in servitude. In this reading, Africans, who were descendants of Ham, were born degraded and divinely fitted for bondage, and slavery was the ordinance that kept them in their appointed place. Lord's argument was not built on personal contempt—he professed, indeed, to act from benevolence toward the enslaved—but its substance was unmistakably a doctrine of racial subordination.[62]

At the pamphlet's heart, though, was the church-and-state conviction that had provoked it. The seventh inquiry turned directly on the Nebraska bill and the ministers' protest, and its very form, a question rather than a claim, shows Lord straining to keep his own intervention from looking like the political act he was condemning:

> Whether these matters, however grave and momentous, are sufficient, independently of the lawfulness of slavery itself, to draw out ministers of the Gospel, or the churches of Christ, as such, in formal resolutions or other overt measures in virtual opposition to the government of the country? … Whether ministers or churches would be likely to honor Christianity … more by political action, or by inculcating upon the whole nation … the principles and spirit of the Gospel?[63]

The clergy's business, he insisted, was "the preaching of righteousness, temperance, and judgment alike to all," not political agitation. And in the eleventh and last inquiry he drew his own portrait: a minister "honestly convinced that slavery is not, of itself, a moral evil… but is essentially an ordinance of the God of Nature and Revelation," one who "would now hold slaves in his own right… if a natural necessity or convenience should require," yet who asked "the

---

[62] Lord, *Letter of Inquiry* (inquiries III–V).
[63] Lord, *Letter of Inquiry* (inquiry VII).

forgiveness and charity of his brethren, though he differ from them."[64] The reluctant abolitionist of 1834 had become, twenty years on, a man who could imagine owning slaves with gratitude.

The North did not extend the charity. The pamphlet's authorship was an open secret, and the reply that fixed Lord's reputation came within weeks, in the *Liberator* of October 27, 1854. Its author, possibly Edmund Quincy, reviewed the pamphlet under the heading "A Northern Presbyter with Southern Principles," and wrote the title "would have been his true description, had his modesty permitted him to claim his deserts." The review is a small masterpiece of irony. It mocked the interrogatory form, turned the Ham argument inside out—"whether it is not about time for Ham to have his turn"—and skewered the scriptural method by observing that "an ingenious Mormon… by the simple substitution of Polygamy… would have a perfect Bible Argument." Beneath the wit lay a serious charge: that a Christian minister "occupying a high place of influence" was working "to darken counsel, and make the worse appear the better reason."[65]

Rather than retreat, Lord answered his critics. In 1855 he published *A Northern Presbyter's Second Letter to Ministers of the Gospel of All Denominations, on Slavery*—this time under his own name.[66] His first letter, he noted, "appear[ed] not to have been generally acceptable" and had been "sharply criticized"; *The New Englander*, the leading Congregationalist quarterly, had "call[ed] down upon the writer the censure of the church" and undertaken "to set forth, at large, his alleged errors." Where the first letter had "humbly" offered its "inquiries," the second was a sustained rebuttal of that review, opened in a register of studied defiance: whether what he now wrote would prove "more convincing or acceptable, he has no

---

[64] Lord, *Letter of Inquiry* (inquiry XI).
[65] "Q", "A Northern Presbyter with Southern Principles," *The Liberator* (Boston, MA), October 27, 1854, 2..
[66] Nathan Lord, *A Northern Presbyter's Second Letter to Ministers of the Gospel of All Denominations*, on Slavery (Boston: Little, Brown and Company; New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1855), title page and opening.

concern to inquire. It is in his mind to write it, and he leaves it to produce whatever results it may please an infinitely wise Providence to appoint." His self-described most important audience, God, allowed Lord to speak out about the subject, while maintaining his distance from "politics." Lord was not driven, like others, to speak out in a desire for political influence or reform, but by a divine obligation.

The Second Letter also pressed the argument onto harder, more technical ground. Where the first had raised slavery as a question of "Divine right," the second fixed the definition with great precision: slavery was "a state of bondage in which one man becomes, by law, the property of another man, and subject to the master's will"; the slave was "a chattel personal," "the master's money," owing service "to his master's will alone." The question, Lord insisted, was not whether slavery was abused, "that question would be absurd," but whether, so defined, it was forbidden by God at all. To that end he added the philological case for which the pamphlet is best remembered: that the Hebrew *'ebed*, the Greek *doulos*, and the Latin *servus* all denoted, precisely, chattel slaves, so that the "servants" of Scripture were its slaves.[67]

Yet the heart of the Second Letter was not exegesis but the same church-and-state conviction that had provoked the first. Its most sustained figure was Samson: the church that let a "political philosophy" corrupt it was Samson shorn, "grinding in the prison" of the state it had embraced. "Christianity cannot lay its head in Delilah's lap," Lord warned, "without being shorn of its strength, and losing its eyes." The apostles, he argued, had converted the nations at Pentecost "not to revolutionize, but to convert," and the minister's business was the same: not "political agitations and revolutions," which "are not for the church of God," but the patient infusion of a Christian spirit. On that reasoning Lord staked a prophecy the next decade would

[67] Lord, Second Letter (1855)

test. "The war of abstractions has brought the nation almost to its crisis," he wrote; the "principle of liberty and equality" had been "arrayed against slavery, till our social edifice is shaken to its foundations; and ruin must ensue if the strife be carried on."[68] The agitation he condemned would, he was certain, end in "civil and servile war"—a forecast he would repeat, with mounting vehemence, until the war arrived.

The public reception of the two letters split almost exactly along the North-South divide. In the South, Lord was prized. The *New Orleans Delta*—reprinted in the *Home Journal* of Winchester, Tennessee, in February 1856—hailed Lord and the Second Letter in every capacity:

> The letter is said to be remarkable for its logic, and its premises lead to inevitable conclusions that cannot but shock the nerves of the white cravats and black coats of New England, that have so long been addicted to depicting the horrors of slavery, and the dreadful and godless character of slaveholders… Prof. Lord has a fearful account to render for setting up the morality of Christ and Paul against the philanthropy of the infidel Garrison and the slave-stealer Williams; and, of course, he will become the victim of such rashness. He would not risk his popularity by the expression of such detestible sentiments in Massachusetts without being sincere, and such sincerity is worthy of a distinguished martyrdom. Let him be taken to Salem and offered as a holocaust at once.[69]

A year later, the *Charleston Daily Courier* reprinted the Second Letter, telling its readers that "we submit whether ample space should not now be assigned to a consideration of the author's views, and whether his very words should not find place in the columns of the Courier":

> But there seems to be a providence in it—a special providence in the work. At the very time, when the strong arm and the stout heart of such a man was most wanted—at a time when new political organizations were taking place—when a new party was forming upon unhallowed sectional principles, for the purpose of controlling the Presidential election, over-riding the Constitution, and de facto destroying the Union—at a time, when his influence was most needed and would be most felt—that such a

---

[68] Lord, Second Letter (1855).

[69] "The Gospel and Slavery," *New Orleans Delta*, reprinted in *The Home Journal* (Winchester, TN), February 16, 1856, 1. The "slave-stealer Williams" is almost certainly Passmore Williamson, secretary of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society, jailed in 1855 for aiding the escape of Jane Johnson and her children from John Hill Wheeler; the Southern press routinely styled him a "slave-stealer." The source's "Williams" appears to be a shortening or error.

> man should be raised up and nerved for the battle—seems to be the work of an Almighty hand! God's providence is over all his works.[70]

In the North, meanwhile, he was held up as a specimen. The *Liberator's* "Pres. Lord's Defence of Slavery" from November 1856 reduced the first letter to eleven blunt propositions—"Slavery is an institution of God"; "Christians, instead of opposing slavery, ought to oppose anti-slavery men and measures"; Lord "would himself own or hire slaves, if it were convenient"—and did so, it noted pointedly, "mostly in his own words and his own order, lest our readers should think that we had misrepresented or exaggerated them."[71] The same words that made him a hero in Tennessee and South Carolina made him a monster in Massachusetts. A Northern college president reviled at home and reprinted with delight in the slave states: the geography of his reception is itself one of this paper's arguments.

That reception was not only sectional but local, and on his own campus it was merciless. In July 1855, the front page of the student paper *The Dartmouth Oestrus* gave itself over to demanding his removal. Under the heading "A few words to the trustees," the students called "the attention of the Trustees to the deleterious influence Prex. Lord is now exerting upon the College" and urged "the propriety of a change of Presidents," offering, in mock helpfulness, to secure the old man "a situation… as overseer of a cotton plantation." Later in the paper ran a listing for an auction on the Green in which three of Lord's twelve kids would be sold, along with 300 copies of his first pamphlet. The notice is signed by the pseudonym "Nero Legree." Nero is likely a reference to the tyrannical Roman Emperor Nero; Lord sat parsing ancient languages and engaging in an abstract theological debate as the country tore itself apart over

---

[70] Nathan Lord, "A Northern Presbyter's Second Letter to Ministers of the Gospel, of All Denominations, on Slavery," *The Charleston Daily Courier* (Charleston, SC), January 13, 1857, 4.
[71] "Pres. Lord's Defence of Slavery," *The Liberator* (Boston, MA), November 14, 1856, 1.

slavery, like Nero fiddled while Rome burned. And Legree is a reference to Simon Legree, the plantation owner in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.[72]

The satire is worth more than its wit, for it records two things the rest of the record only implies. First, that Lord had been teaching these views to undergraduates for years: "so long as his eulogies on slavery were confined to the College walls," the students wrote, "we cared not a snap," for "the antiquated old lectures were read to each succeeding class, only to occasion laughter"—a detail that flatly contradicts John King Lord's later claim that Lord never raised slavery with his students, and that confirms the classroom origins of the argument traced in the previous chapter. Second, that what had changed was publicity: "of late it has got abroad what an old fogy he is," and now "honest fathers… are beginning to hesitate about sending their… scions" to a college whose president promulgated "such damnable doctrines… on the slavery question." The students claimed to speak for "four fifths of the College." On his own ground, as in the Northern press, the pamphlets had made Lord not a sage but an embarrassment.

The weight and influence of the paper are not just measured in the volume or content of its reviews, but are also displayed in the longevity of its criticism. In 1864—a decade after the first letter, with the war that Lord's argument helped to rationalize well underway—Stephen M. Vail, professor of biblical and oriental literature at the Methodist General Biblical Institute in Concord, New Hampshire, published a book-length answer, *The Bible Against Slavery*. Its title page names its three targets: the *Bible View of Slavery* of John H. Hopkins, Episcopal bishop of Vermont; "X" of the New Hampshire Patriot; and "A Northern Presbyter's Second Letter to Ministers of the Gospel," by Nathan Lord. Vail did not treat Lord as a crank but as one of the three most formidable proslavery exegetes in New England, worth answering point by point. He

---

[72] "A few words to the Trustees," *The Dartmouth Oestrus* 1, no. 3 (July 1855), Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.

met the philology head-on: if *ebed* and *doulos* meant "chattel," one would have to render Romans 1:1 "Paul, a slave of Jesus Christ," and Isaiah's prophecy "Behold my slave," renderings no Christian would accept. He challenged the arguments from Ham and Canaan, and complained that Lord and his fellows offered "lordly assertion enough, but an infinitesimal amount of proof."[73]

Lord's campaign was not confined to print; he pressed the same fight inside the institutions of the church. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) was an American missionary society which ran missions both abroad and among the Indian nations of the South, some of whose Cherokee and Choctaw converts held slaves. When the Board, at its Hartford meeting of 1854, moved against slaveholding among the converts of its Choctaw and Cherokee missions, Lord answered with a long remonstrance. The Board, he charged, had let itself be "driven" by "the popular will, "by "a 'root & branch' spirit of reform" that, once it discovered "influence may be sufficiently accumulated to prevail," would never be satisfied: "the horse leech has two daughters crying give, give." To make so "grave a company of learned & pious men" the "mere instrument of executing a popular will" was, he wrote, to "submit to a Slavery worse than that which it opposes." Should the board yoke its missions to antislavery, its missionaries would end by preaching "to the heathen … anti-slavery, & anti-caste" in place of the Gospel, and the great corporation would cease to be "American & Christian" and become "sectional, denominational & political."[74]

---

[73]Stephen M. Vail, *The Bible Against Slavery, with Replies to the "Bible View of Slavery," by John H. Hopkins … and to "A Northern Presbyter's Second Letter to Ministers of the Gospel," by Nathan Lord … and to "X," of the New-Hampshire Patriot* (Concord, N.H.: Fogg, Hadley & Co., 1864), 7–8, 18, 53.

[74] Nathan Lord to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (undated; occasion: the Board's Hartford meeting of 1854), Nathan Lord Family Papers, MS-510, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.

By the middle of the 1850s, the man who in the 1830s would not “obtrude” his private opinions was now the author, through a prophetic and conscientious duty, of the most notorious Northern defense of slavery of the decade. Yet even here his argument remained, in form, a defense: of Scripture, of the ministry’s apolitical calling, of an institution he called God’s, offered with a plea for his brethren’s charity.

1857–1862: "Abolitionism is the Causative Antecedent of the War."

In the years that followed Lord's first and second letters, as the country slid toward war, both the content and the reach of his writing changed. The Supreme Court's Dred Scott decision of 1857 had declared that Black Americans possessed no rights a white man was bound to respect; the fighting in Kansas, the caning of Charles Sumner in the Senate, and, in October 1859, John Brown's raid on the federal arsenal at Harper's Ferry drove the sections toward rupture; and after Lincoln's election in 1860 seven states seceded, until in April 1861, Fort Sumter opened the Civil War.[75] Against that darkening background, Lord's writing shifted in two ways. Its content moved from a defense of slavery as a divine institution to a prosecution of abolitionism as the nation's ruin. These were two different projects: defending slavery meant protecting what he took to be a divine institution, while attacking abolitionism meant indicting men who upheld an anti-Christian movement through Christian means.

The turn is clearest in a letter Lord wrote in late 1859. A former Dartmouth student named J. M. Conrad, then living in Virginia, had written to ask his former president what Northerners made of John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry. Lord's reply, dated December 1 and printed two weeks later in the *Richmond Whig*, is the first of his writings addressed not to New England but to the South.[76] He condemned the raid itself without reservation—Lord was unsure, he wrote, "whether it should be treated with a strait-jacket for its madness, or a rope for its method"—but he refused to consider it in isolation. It was "complicated with all the questions of slavery… which, as I sometimes fear, will not be settled without a servile and civil war."

---

[75] On the Dred Scott decision (1857), see James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 170–81; on Kansas and the caning of Sumner, ibid., 145–69. For John Brown's Harper's Ferry raid, secession, and Fort Sumter, see McPherson, 202–213, 234–259, 273–274.

[76] Nathan Lord to J. M. Conrad, December 1, 1859, printed as "The Harper's Ferry Conspiracy and Northern Sentiment—An Able and Sound Letter from President Lord, of Dartmouth College," *Richmond Whig* (Richmond, VA), December 16, 1859.

What followed in the letter was a map of Northern politics as Lord saw it, divided into three classes: the sound men who, like himself, read slavery "in the lights of moral government as reflected from natural and revealed religion"; the "wild men" of abolitionism, "a knot of burglars and incendiaries"; and the confused mass of the people, held together only by "the constitution and the laws." Of the first class, his own, he wrote:

> They are looked upon with distrust, are frequently maligned, and their conciliatory influence is opposed. Their reasonings are often condemned without examination, criticized without judgment, or misrepresented for bad popular effect. For that reason they retire, for the most part, to their secret places, and wait to be justified by the providence of God.[77]

It is a revealing self-portrait that would prove, in the coming years, to be prophetic one. The letter's most striking argument, though, was its assault on the Declaration of Independence, which Lord traced to Jefferson and to the revolutionary "Illuminism" of the eighteenth century. He set it out at length:

> We owe it mainly to your own Jefferson. … He was caught by the Illuminism and Cosmopolitism of his times, and embodied his chimera in the "glittering generalities" of the Declaration of Independence. That gilded falsehood has betrayed us. Your inherited slavery, whatever evils may attend it, was a merciful antidote to the atheistic poison which has crept through all our veins. It virtually enthrones humanity. It makes every child a man, every man great, and every great man God.[78]

The equality of men, on this account, was not a self-evident truth but a "fantastic image" and "the political Gospel of New England," an idol before which the nation had "reverence, and [would] go away drunk with the wine of her spiritual fornication." From that premise, Lord made another startling claim: that the North would one day re-enslave, that "slaves will yet be called

---

[77] Lord to Conrad, *Richmond Whig*, December 16, 1859.
[78] Lord to Conrad, *Richmond Whig*, December 16, 1859.

for in New England, and by New England men," once Irish and other immigrant servants grew too independent to do the country's menial work.[79]

The *New-Orleans Commercial Bulletin* reprinted Lord's letter under the heading "A Patriarch, a Philosopher and a Patriot," ranking Lord among a handful of other Northern conservatives who might yet bring the masses "back… to the conservative opinions and conduct which marked the era of good feelings."[80] The *Macon Weekly Telegraph* praised his "cogency," his "vigorous expression," and "the fearlessness and courage with which he maintains the right."[81]

The war made his argument at once more urgent and more extreme. When Lincoln issued the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation in September 1862, binding the Union cause to the destruction of slavery, Lord published once again.[82] In the *Boston Courier* of November 22, 1862, he published the essay *A True Picture of Abolition*.[83] Its central claim inverted the abolitionist case. Where the abolitionist held that slavery was the cause of the war, Lord answered that "abolitionism is the causative antecedent of the war." An antecedent, he granted, "is not necessarily and morally a cause"—but abolitionism, he insisted, was both. And the mechanism of the catastrophe was the one he had warned against his whole life: the mixing of religion and politics.

> That was our original mistake… the common mistake of all countries, as virtue declines—of essaying, wittingly or unwittingly, to bring together what God requires us

---

[79]Lord to Conrad, *Richmond Whig*, December 16, 1859.

[80]"A Patriarch, a Philosopher and a Patriot," *New-Orleans Commercial Bulletin* (New Orleans, LA), December 31, 1859, 1.

[81]"Dr. Lord on Slavery," *The Weekly Telegraph* (Macon, GA), January 3, 1860, 1.

[82] James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 490–510, 557–58.

[83]Nathan Lord, *A True Picture of Abolition* (Boston: Press of the Daily Courier, 1863), originally published in the *Boston Courier*, November 22, 1862; reprinted as "Powerfully Written—The Character of Abolitionism…," *St. Louis Republic* (St. Louis, MO), December 24, 1862. Nathan Lord Family Papers, MS-510, folder 27, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.

> to keep asunder—the Church and the State. Till we made that blunder the country was united, prosperous, and happy.[84]

The nation, on this account, had enjoyed half a century of "union, peace, and prosperity" until abolitionism "introduc[ed] a moral element—slavery—into the reckoning of politics," and so "brought Church and State together down to that lower level." Abolitionism itself Lord painted as an "idolatry" bred of "the airy pantheism of France and Germany," embodied once again in the "glittering generalities" of the Declaration, and given to labeling the Constitution "a league with death." Even John Quincy Adams and William Ellery Channing—Adams, whom he had eulogized in 1848, and Channing, whom he had cast as one of the three abolishinist philosiphers who had changed his mind—he now named as men who had lent the "dangerous idolatry" their "encouragement if not patronage."[85]

Yet, characteristically, Lord stopped short of endorsing the Confederacy in his letter. Lord wrote that "though abolition be wrong, secession is not therefore right," but left the question "to those whom it more especially concerns." In bringing up the question of rebellion, but refusing to answer it and delegating it to others, Lord cleverly maintained his distance from partaking in politics while also implying his beliefs through open-ended and unanswered questions, as he did in his pamphlets on slavery.[86]

---

[84]Lord, *A True Picture of Abolition*.
[85]Lord, *A True Picture of Abolition*.
[86]Lord, *A True Picture of Abolition*.

1863–1870: "I hold myself responsible only to God." —Nathan Lord, 1863

By the summer of 1863 the war had turned. The Emancipation Proclamation had taken effect on the first of January, and at the beginning of July the Union victories at Gettysburg and Vicksburg broke the back of the Confederacy.[87] A Northern college could no longer comfortably keep a president who called abolitionism the cause of the war and emancipation a crime, and the pressure to be rid of him came, fittingly, from the churches. In June the Merrimack County Conference of Congregational Churches, a regional association of New Hampshire Congregational clergy and their churches, passed resolutions that, while professing "a sincere regard for [the college's] venerable President," "deeply regret[ted]" that its welfare was "greatly imperilled by… a popular prejudice" arising from "some of his peculiar views… tending to embarrass our Government in its present fearful struggle," and urged the trustees to consider "whether its interests do not demand a change in the Presidency."[88]

When the trustees gathered at the president's house for their annual meeting on July 22, 1863, the Merrimack resolution was carried to the table by Amos Tuck. Tuck, who was precisely the sort of "radical politician" Lord had spent his career, as an abolitionist and proslaver, openly criticizing, was a member of the Dartmouth class of 1835 and an Exeter lawyer. He had broken with the Democratic Party over slavery, won a seat in Congress as an independent antislavery man, where he befriended Abraham Lincoln and later became a founding member of the Republican Party.[89]

---

[87] On the latter half and end of the Civil War, see McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, chapters 18–22.

[88] Dartmouth College, Board of Trustees Records, Bound Meeting Minutes, vol. 3, July 1863 (manuscript pp. 318–33), DA-1, box 2117, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.

[89] Amos Tuck, *Autobiographical Memoir of Amos Tuck* (n.p., 1902), Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College, MMS ID 991022941469705706.

Tuck moved that the Merrimack County Conference resolutions be referred to a committee on which Tuck himself sat and chaired. The surviving "Suggestions for Trustees" and the committee report in his papers show him working out the very language by which the board would disavow Lord's views.[90] However, Tuck's notes and a later letter from Lord reflecting on the meeting record a final test of Lord's commitment to his views which anteceded the consideration of the Merrimack resolutions. On a struck-through page among Tuck's papers was a motion "that the honorary degree of L.L.D. be conferred on Abraham Lincoln, and on no other person at this time." After "discussion … respecting the political bearing of this motion," the vote came to a tie—"four voted in the affirmative and four, including the President, in the negative. So the motion did not prevail." Amos Tuck "protested against the right of the President, as Moderator, to vote."[91] Lord reflected on the vote in a letter to his nephew days later, writing that "It was proposed, in the board that but one Honor should be conferred, this year, and that the Degree of L.L.D. on Abraham Lincoln. Resolved that the College should not be so disgraced while I lived in it, I joined Judge Eastman strenuously in opposing it. My vote made a tie and spoiled the trick."[92] Thus, the last of Lord's conspicuous acts as president was to cast the vote that denied Abraham Lincoln an honorary degree from Dartmouth in the middle of the war.[93]

It seems as if this action was the final antagonizing blow to the abolitionist movement, and once the vote was finished, Tuck brought forth the Merrimack resolution and a report drafted

---

[90] Amos Tuck, report of the committee on the resolutions of the Merrimack County Conference, July 22-24, 1863, Mss 863940, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College; see also Dartmouth College, Board of Trustees Records, Bound Meeting Minutes, vol. 3, July 1863, DA-1, box 2117.

[91] Motion to confer an honorary L.L.D. on Abraham Lincoln, recorded on a canceled leaf of the Tuck committee papers, Mss 863940, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.

[92] Nathan Lord to John Lord, July 29, 1863, Mss 863429, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.

[93] The vote is only recorded in Tuck's meeting notes and Lord's letter to his nephew, not in the official meeting minutes of the Dartmouth Board of Trustees. This may be the result of a post-meeting/post-Lord redaction.

by the self-elected committee of Tuck, Nathaniel Bouton, and Ira Eastman. The committee declined to recommend removal, resolving instead that "neither the trustees nor the Faculty coincide with the President… in the views which he has published touching Slavery and the war," pledging the college's support to "the Government… the only power by which the rebellion can be subdued," and hoping that "American Slavery, with all its sin and shame,… may find its merited doom."[94] The board adopted the resolutions, five votes to two.

Lord later wrote that, "in the hope & expectation that such would be Mr. Tuck's game," he had drafted his letter of resignation a week earlier "setting forth that the Prest. [president (Lord, himself)] would not consent to be even implicitly curtailed of his constitutional right of opinion & speech, nor carry on a college given up by its Trustees to the abolition ministry & the policy at Washington. The Prest [president] of the College did not choose to command such a ship, on such a voyage, & accordingly, without ifs or ands, resigned."[95]

The board of trustees meeting minutes reflect such a testimony. Lord stood in front of the trustees and read his prewritten resignation letter, stating:

> For my opinions and expressions of opinion on such subjects, I hold myself responsible only to God, and the constitutional tribunals of my country… believing it to be inconsistent with Christian charity and propriety, to carry on my administration while holding and expressing opinions injurious, as they imagine, to the interest of the College… I hereby resign my office as President.[96]

Lord protested the trustees' "right to impose any religious, ethical or political test" upon a college officer and asked that the college be "kept true to the principles of its foundation."[97] The board had passed a statement of loyalty, not a vote of removal; Lord chose to read that statement

---

[94] Board of Trustees, Bound Meeting Minutes, vol. 3, July 1863 (pp. 327–30).
[95] Nathan Lord to Joseph Leland Lord, July 1863, Mss 863440.1, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.
[96] Board of Trustees, Bound Meeting Minutes, vol. 3, July 24, 1863 (pp. 331–32).
[97] Board of Trustees, Bound Meeting Minutes, vol. 3, July 24, 1863 (pp. 331–32).

as a test of his opinions and to resign rather than submit to it. The reluctance to "obtrude" the views that had marked him in 1834, the refusal of "ecclesiastical interference" in 1854, and the insistence that his opinions answered "only to God" now cost him the office he had held for thirty-five years. He gave up the presidency rather than the principle.

How the resignation was received depended entirely on the audience. In public the verdict was mixed. The *New Hampshire Statesman*, reporting the event, granted Lord "the profound regard of all who have respect for… firmness of purpose coupled with kindness of spirit," judged him "surpassed by no other College President" as an administrator, and credited him with "the utmost sincerity of purpose in whatever he has written."[98] The hostile press was blunter: *The Era*—reporting, of all things, the annuity Boston friends had raised for him—pronounced him "a moral phenomenon," "positively incapable of discriminating between right and wrong."[99]

But in private a remarkable countercurrent formed. Within days the Harvard law professor and former chief justice Joel Parker, lately off the Dartmouth board himself, congratulated Lord on being "well out of the concern" of an institution now handed to "radical politicians, and radical ministers." Parker guessed that "Tuck probably moved the reference of the resolutions to a Committee, when they were not in fact regularly before the Board," and dismissed him as "an ambitious party politician … and a very coarse man besides."[100] From Canada an admirer named Benjamin Douglass wrote to "honor your determination to stand fast

---

[98] "Resignation of President Lord," *New Hampshire Statesman* (Concord, NH), July 31, 1863, 2.
[99] "Dr. Nathan Lord," *The Era* (New Orleans, LA), February 11, 1864, 5.
[100] Joel Parker to Nathan Lord, August 4, 1863, Mss 863454, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.

by God's truth," enclosing money and reporting that friends were arranging "to free you from pecuniary cares."[101]

The support soon organized itself around the most eminent of his defenders. In November 1863 former president Franklin Pierce solicited contributions to a life annuity for the Lords, calling him "the only eminent and aged clergyman" who had "firmly withstood the onslaught of that fanaticism which had brought ruin upon our country": "a shining mark for abolition insolence and detraction," and, in Pierce's phrase, a "Brave, unselfish, venerable Man."[102] That January a Boston committee presented the Lords with an annuity of twelve hundred dollars, raised, its organizers wrote, "with remarkable cheerfulness and hearty good will."[103]

Lord received it all as vindication. To his nephew he wrote that he was "as free and happy as a bird, except for regret at seeing Dartmouth prostituted to a vile idolatry."[104] In other words, according to his 1859 letter on Harper's Ferry, it was time for Lord "to retire to [his] secret places, and wait to be justified by the providence of God."[105] Writing to Asa Dodge Smith, Lord's successor, he described his reversal without rancor—he had "lost their confidence as a safe guide of youth," but was "not particular on that point" and did "not think it wise to quarrel about it"—and framed his whole offense as a matter of principle: "My heresy has consisted mainly in refusing such alliance" between Church and State. "For that," he wrote, "I am 'in bonds.'"[106]

---

[101] Benjamin Douglass to Nathan Lord, August 6, 1863, Office of the President (1828–1863: Nathan Lord) Records, DP-6, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.

[102] Franklin Pierce, letter on Nathan Lord [to Samuel F. B. Morse], November 17, 1863, Mss 863456.1, Nathan Lord Family Papers, MS-510, folder 43, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.

[103] Matthew Harvey, F. Skinner, and A. Peirce Jr. to Nathan Lord, January 4, 1864, Nathan Lord Family Papers, MS-510, folder 43, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.

[104] Nathan Lord to John Lord, July 29, 1863, Mss 863429, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.

[105] Lord to Conrad, Richmond Whig, December 16, 1859.

[106] Nathan Lord to Asa Dodge Smith, October 2, 1863, Mss 863552.1, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.

What Lord argued in print he pressed, in the same terms, upon his own family. Even before the war he was needling his nephew, the Dartmouth lecturer John Lord, for having caught the "patriotic" fever of "New Haven, Boston, & the Capital of New Hampshire," and for mistaking abolitionism for Christianity; the "Great Rebellion," the old man wrote in 1862, was being read as though it were "Satan in heaven against the Almighty."[107] By 1863 his letters to the same nephew were consumed by the essay on "the Biblical Idea of Antichrist" he was then composing, tracing the "Protestant" antichrist through "our realms of theology, ethics, science… & especially our politics."[108]

To a minister named Campbell, in 1864, he set out the whole scheme in miniature—slavery as the "ordained instrument" of Japheth's enlargement that had "substituted Washington for Dahomeys… & the worship of Jehovah for the… rites of Fetichism," and the North's "greater wrong" in "denouncing that as sin which God has not made sin" and calling for "an antislavery Bible, an antislavery Church & an antislavery God."[109] And in an unfinished letter to a ministerial "brother" he distilled the principle that governed all of it: a minister may hold and "utter" political opinions "temperately, as citizens," but "we have no right to make those secular differences themes for the club, the congregation, or the convention… We should keep the sanctuary… for the God-man, and not prostitute it to the man-god."[110] The private record also quietly confirms how his friends meant the annuity: writing to his sons in January 1864, Lord

---

[107]Nathan Lord to Rev. John Lord (his nephew), January 21, 1862, Nathan Lord Family Papers, MS-510, folder 36, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.
[108] Nathan Lord to Rev. John Lord (his nephew), April 9, 1863, Nathan Lord Family Papers, MS-510, folder 36, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.
[109] Nathan Lord to Rev. R. Campbell, December 1864, Nathan Lord Family Papers, MS-510, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.
[110] Nathan Lord, manuscript letter to a "brother" (undated, c. 1864–65), Nathan Lord Family Papers, MS-510, folder 28, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.

relayed Franklin Pierce's insistence that the gift be pitched as "a graceful recognition… of… moral courage," not "pay for services rendered," lest he "be… vilified as mercenary."[111]

Lord's last and most direct intervention in the politics of slavery came as the institution itself was being abolished. In about February 1865, weeks after Congress passed the Thirteenth Amendment, Lord drafted a letter to an undisclosed congressman who had sent him a speech defending it, "with great sorrow, for you advocate a policy which, in my judgment, must prove… ruinous to the country." The letter argues, page after page, that the amendment was unconstitutional usurpation—that "the States, not the people," made the government, and that "the vote of partizan majorities cannot legitimate unconstitutional legislation"—and traces the whole crisis, once more, to the abolition agitation rather than to slavery: "we had no troubles, and were likely to have nothing but prosperity, till the antislavery agitation was stirred." But its most revealing passages concern the freedpeople. Emancipation, Lord predicted, would bring them "disappointment, starvation, disease, debauchery, abuse, and ultimate extermination"; "bad as slavery may have been to some of them, the liberty which we propose to give them is infinitely worse to far greater numbers." He closed by warning of "terrible reckoning… when God calls us into judgment for the violation of plighted faith."[112]

The War of Northern Aggression, as Lord saw it, ended two months later in April 1865 with abolition triumphant, and one might suppose he fell silent. He did not, but the content of his writing changed once more. He no longer focused on the righteousness of slavery directly, for the victory of the Union had settled that, and turned instead to three related claims: that the old

---

[111]Nathan Lord to his sons, January 10, 1864, Nathan Lord Family Papers, MS-510, folder 38, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.

[112] Nathan Lord to a member of Congress, on the proposed Thirteenth Amendment, Hanover, N.H., undated, Nathan Lord Family Papers, MS-510, folder 28, item 7, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College. This item is an undated manuscript to an undisclosed member of the United States congress, which is likely dated around February 1865.

biblical order still barred the freedman from citizenship, that, as he had foreshadowed in his letter on the Thirteenth Amendment, the North's victory was a crime for which retribution was coming, and that the world itself was near its end. The first he pressed in an undated manuscript which likely fell between the years of 1865 and 1866, "The Right Way," written against a newspaper of that name that held "the Declaration of Independence and the golden rule one and inseparable." There Lord extended his biblical case from the direct defense of slavery, now moot, to the denial of Black citizenship, with the "*jus divinum*" of slavery as its evidence: the paper's real object, he wrote, was "negro suffrage—the next stage of progress towards the… millennium of the philosophers," and against it he set the Decalogue, which by forbidding a man to covet "his neighbor's slave" proved slaveholding compatible with the law of love, and God's own ordering of "the races of Shem and Japhet" above the "degraded." The golden rule and the Declaration could not be joined: "the one is Div[ine], the other is human; the one is moral, the other is political… the one is heavenly law, the other a philosophical fiction."[113]

The second claim, retribution, he set down in a private letter reprinted in *The Richmond Times* in 1867. He would not justify the South's methods, he wrote, but he blamed the North for its "irrepressible conflict" with slavery, "carried on, hatefully… after a Mahometan fashion"; "as we have done it in unrighteousness, our retribution, some time, somehow, will come, perhaps to general dissolution." Reconstruction he met with open contempt: the nation, he wrote, was "calling upon the negro," "a brutified, shiftless and licentious people," to do the work of self-government—proof, to him, of "an approaching catastrophe of all the nations."[114]

---

[113] Nathan Lord, "The Right Way" (undated, c. 1865–66), Nathan Lord Family Papers, MS-510, folder 29, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.
[114] "A Prophecy of Retribution—Gloomy Reflections," *The Richmond Times* (Richmond, VA), February 6, 1867, 2.

The third claim, that the world was near its end, became, in these years, the center of everything he wrote. Its fullest exposition is a long letter from about 1865 or 1866 to the Reverend J. C. Bodwell. In the letter, which Lord read aloud to the editors of *The Boston Review* and *The Recorder*, he set his "old school" premillennialism against the reigning liberal confidence: where his brethren expected the world to be converted and improved "before Christ's return," he expected "a more widespread apostasy, a taller incoming antichrist, social demoralizations… and a destructive end." The engine of that apostasy was the "modern speculative philosophies" of "rationalism, spiritualism, pantheism, fanaticism, radicalism," which had substituted "the inner light, the higher law" for "the everlasting principia of moral government," installing in politics "the impossible abstraction of liberty, equality, fraternity & the rights of man" in place of "the rights of God."[115]

The institution, in turn, moved on with startling speed. In September 1864, scarcely a year after Lord's resignation, the students of the United Fraternity chose their commencement orator "by acclamation," and the man they chose was Henry Ward Beecher, the most famous abolitionist preacher in America, with Caleb Cushing, Anna Dickinson, and William Lloyd Garrison named among the substitutes.[116] *The New-York Tribune*, reporting the 1864 commencement, pronounced Lord's "departure from the Presidency… a happy event," the old halls "consecrated anew to sound Christianity and learning and true patriotism."[117]

---

[115] Nathan Lord to Rev. J. C. Bodwell, October 1865 (with an addition at Lowell, March 1866; read to the editors of the Boston Review and Recorder, 1866), Office of the President Records, DP-6, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.

[116] United Fraternity, Meeting Minutes, September 26, 1864, DO-4, box 6256, folder 1, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.

[117] "Commencement at Dartmouth," New-York Tribune, July 21, 1864, Rauner Vertical Files, DA-857, Dartmouth College.

It is clear that, despite all that had occurred in Lord's final years of office, the college still maintained a sincere respect for him. At the commencement of July 1864, the same board of trustees who passed a resolution denouncing their own president bestowed an honorary Doctorate of Law, the same degree which Lord had prevented Abraham Lincoln from receiving, upon "Rev. Nathan Lord, D.D."[118] In 1867 the student paper noted with plain affection that Lord, who had "awarded diplomas to thirty-five successive classes," still stood "in his old accustomed place" to address the students, "the ripe old age of a philanthropist and scholar."[119]

Nathan Lord died at Hanover on September 9, 1870, in his seventy-eighth year. The *New York Times* noticed his passing with restraint, recalling that he had "appeared as an earnest champion of slavery" and that the course had "greatly impaired his popularity," but allowing that he was "undoubtedly, earnest and conscientious."[120] At Hanover the mourning was unreserved. The *Boston Journal*'s account describes a town in grief—the college bell tolled, exercises suspended, the chapel draped in mourning—and a funeral whose pallbearers included United States Senator J. W. Patterson, who as a student in 1848 had asked Lord to eulogize Adams, and whose eulogy was delivered by Daniel J. Noyes, the man who in 1849 had relieved Lord of the divinity chair. Noyes praised his "loyalty to principle… his loyalty to God," and observed that Lord had "lived to see a false philosophy advance and grow strong in the very line of his prediction." In turn, Smith, who had known Lord since his own student days, made the man's faith the "central principle, the key note of his whole life": "God's Word, whether plain or mysterious, was ever final with him," and "Against it all the fine sophistries of a vain philosophy

---

[118] Dartmouth College, Board of Trustees Records, Bound Meeting Minutes, vol. 3, annual meeting of July 19, 1864 (manuscript p. 353), DA-1, box 2117, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.
[119] The Dartmouth (Hanover, NH), October 1867, 356, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.
[120] "Obituary: Nathan Lord, D.D.," *New York Times*, September 10, 1870.

were as the idle wind."[121] *The Dartmouth*'s "In Memoriam," printed that autumn, drew the contradiction the whole institution felt, while also maintaining a jab at the Garrisonian wing of abolitionists which Lord himself may have greatly enjoyed: "whatever may have been his views theoretically, practically he was a much better friend to the black man, and treated him more like a 'man and a brother,' than many of those, whose philanthropy was so noisy, and whose indignation against the President was so great."[122] The man the nation remembered as a proslavery apologist, in the most and least positive lights, was buried by his college as a saint.

[121] "Eulogies by President Smith and Rev. Dr. Noyes," *The Boston Journal* (Boston, MA), September 1870, Nathan Lord Family Papers, MS-510, folder 49, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.
[122] "In Memoriam," *The Dartmouth* 4 (1870): 337–39.

Conclusion

Throughout his career, Lord resisted the titles and oversimplifying connotations of "abolitionist" or "proslavery." He was named an officer of the national antislavery society who became one of the most assured defenders of slavery the North produced; a college president who admitted Black students to Dartmouth while teaching that their bondage was God's own arrangement; a man his students remembered as kind, whose doctrines were anything but. Laid out as a list of positions, his life looks like one long contradiction.

However, his core convictions—the same strict Calvinism, the same literal interpretation of the Bible, and above all, the same conviction that religion and ministers must stay out of politics—held firm from 1828 to 1870. What moved was a single conclusion he drew from them. Made to choose between his plain sense of the text and the moral confidence of reformers, Lord stayed consistent with the values he had developed early in life. His turn toward slavery was not a change of character but the same character reaching a verdict it had earlier refused.

The change came by stages. In his first decade in office he allowed the American Anti-Slavery Society to enroll him as an officer, then spent five years narrowing what that meant—joining no society, holding its radical wing at a distance, and conceding only that slavery was wrong and ought to end. Through the 1840s he fell silent, and while teaching moral philosophy to Dartmouth's seniors he reasoned his way to the opposite view, breaking that silence in an unlikely place: a eulogy for John Quincy Adams in 1848. In the mid-1850s the reversal became open and unmistakable. Writing as "A Northern Presbyter," he issued two pamphlets defending slavery as an institution God had established and Scripture nowhere condemned. The response divided sharply by region—Southern editors reprinting him with thanks, Northern reviewers savaging him, and his own students turning the front page of the campus paper, in 1855, into a

demand for his removal. As the decade closed, he shifted his aim from the institution to its enemies, holding abolitionists to blame first for the sectional crisis and then for the war, and finding his readiest readers in the Southern press. The argument was over; what remained was bitterness. "I find myself almost alone," he wrote in 1867, confessing the weariness of an old man who had lost his life's most outspoken battle: "my day is past. What can one at three-score and fifteen do but to repose, and prate, and lament?"[123] In the last year of his life, his writing settled deeper into despair; he then could only "prophesy" for the punishment of national ruin "with tears in secret… with sad forebodings, as of Cassandra when Troy was overthrown."[124]

[123] "A Prophecy of Retribution—Gloomy Reflections," *The Richmond Times* (Richmond, VA), February 6, 1867, 2.
[124]Nathan Lord, "President Lord's Letter," [unidentified newspaper], c. August 1869, Nathan Lord Family Papers, MS-510, folder 49, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.

Bibliography

Abbot, Joshua. Letter, 1822. Mss 822128.1. Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College. https://archives-manuscripts.dartmouth.edu/repositories/2/resources/9475.

Adams, Ebenezer, Sr. "Constitution of the Hanover Colonization Society." Undated. Box 1, folder 21, Ebenezer Adams Papers, MS-420. Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College. https://archives-manuscripts.dartmouth.edu/repositories/2/archival_objects/594306.

"American Union for the Relief and Improvement of the Colored Race." *The Liberator* (Boston, MA), January 17, 1835, 3. https://www.newspapers.com/image/1038162964/.

"Anti-Slavery Convention." *The Emancipator*. Reprinted in *The Liberator* (Boston, MA), December 21, 1833. 2. https://www.newspapers.com/image/35040024/.

Barrows, John S., and Anna A. Barrows. Letters to John Stuart and George Bradley Barrows, 1839. Box 1, folder 3, George B. Barrows Letters, MS-767. Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College. https://archives-manuscripts.dartmouth.edu/repositories/2/archival_objects/471575.

Bennett, W. E. Letter, 1848. Mss 848661. Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College. https://archives-manuscripts.dartmouth.edu/repositories/2/resources/13353.

Bliss, Zenas, and Nathan Lord. "Clerical Arrogance Rebuked." *The Liberator* (Boston, MA), July 26, 1839, 1–2. https://www.newspapers.com/image/34599871/.

———. [Correspondence on abolition and clerical authority.] *Vermont Chronicle* (Bellows Falls, VT), July 10, 1839. https://www.newspapers.com/image/489365266/.

The Boston Journal (Boston, MA), September 1870. Nathan Lord Family Papers, MS-510, folder 49. Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.

Bouton, Nathaniel. Letter to Asa Dodge Smith, September 22, 1863. Mss 863522. Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College. https://archives-manuscripts.dartmouth.edu/repositories/2/resources/14878.

———. Letter to Asa Dodge Smith, January 21, 1864. Mss 864121.2. Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College. https://archives-manuscripts.dartmouth.edu/repositories/2/resources/15004.

Bryant, Will. "A Correction Regarding Our Anti-Abolitionist President Nathan Lord." *The Dartmouth*, April 10, 2026. https://www.thedartmouth.com/article/2026/04/bryant-a-correction-regarding-our-anti-abolitionist-president-nathan-lord.

Ceto, Jason. "A History of Opposition." *The Dartmouth Review*, October 10, 2016. https://dartreview.com/a-history-of-opposition/.

Church, John Hubbard. Letter, 1838. Mss 838372. Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College. https://archives-manuscripts.dartmouth.edu/repositories/2/resources/11639.

Clarke, Dorus. Letter, 1841. Mss 841107.1. Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College. https://archives-manuscripts.dartmouth.edu/repositories/2/resources/12079.

Clay, Henry. Letter, 1831. Mss 831473. Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College. https://archives-manuscripts.dartmouth.edu/repositories/2/resources/10487.

"College Rowdyism." *The Dartmouth* (Hanover, NH), 1877, 260. Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College. https://search.library.dartmouth.edu/nde/fulldisplay?docid=alma991000375579705706&vid=01DCL_INST:NDE01&context=L.

"Commencement at Dartmouth." *New-York Tribune*, July 21, 1864. Rauner Vertical Files, DA-857, Dartmouth College. https://archives-manuscripts.dartmouth.edu/repositories/2/archival_objects/726069.

Conrad, J. M., and Nathan Lord. "The Harper's Ferry Conspiracy and Northern Sentiment—An Able and Sound Letter from President Lord, of Dartmouth College." *Richmond Whig* (Richmond, VA), December 16, 1859, 1. https://www.virginiachronicle.com/?a=d&d=RWH18591216.1.1.

The Dartmouth (Hanover, NH), October 1867, 356. Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College. https://search.library.dartmouth.edu/nde/fulldisplay?docid=alma991000375579705706&vid=01DCL_INST:NDE01&context=L.

Dartmouth College Abolition Society. Letter from the Corresponding Committee, Middlebury, VT, 1842. Mss 842526.2. Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College. https://archives-manuscripts.dartmouth.edu/repositories/2/resources/2742.

Dartmouth College. Board of Trustees Records. DA-1. Box 2117 (Bound Meeting Minutes, vol. 3, 1841–1867). Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College. https://archives-manuscripts.dartmouth.edu/repositories/2/archival_objects/5534.

———. Office of the President (1828–1863: Nathan Lord) Records. DP-6. Box 6625 (Student Records, Correspondence, Invoices, and Receipts, 1830–1865). Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College. https://archives-manuscripts.dartmouth.edu/repositories/2/archival_objects/107.

The Dartmouth Oestrus 1, no. 3 (July 1855). Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.

https://search.library.dartmouth.edu/nde/fulldisplay?context=L&vid=01DCL_INST:NDE01&search_scope=MyInst_and_CI&tab=All&lang=en&docid=alma991001196919705706.

Dearborn, Edmund B. Letters, 1834–1838. Box 1, folder 5, Edmund B. Dearborn Letters, MS-1290. Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College. https://archives-manuscripts.dartmouth.edu/repositories/2/archival_objects/452951.

"Dr. Lord on Slavery." *The Weekly Telegraph* (Macon, GA), January 3, 1860, 1. https://www.newspapers.com/image/823219002/.

"Dr. Lord's Letter." *Vermont Chronicle* (Bellows Falls, VT), February 7, 1834, 3. https://www.newspapers.com/image/489178921/.

"Dr. Nathan Lord." *The Era* (New Orleans, LA), February 11, 1864, 5. https://www.newspapers.com/image/1319854450/.

Fletcher, Isaac. Letter, 1838. Mss 838124. Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College. https://archives-manuscripts.dartmouth.edu/repositories/2/resources/11547.

"The Gospel and Slavery." *New Orleans Delta*. Reprinted in *The Home Journal* (Winchester, TN), February 16, 1856, 1. https://www.newspapers.com/image/144087757/.

Hadley, G. P. Letter, 1840. Mss 840377. Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College. https://archives-manuscripts.dartmouth.edu/repositories/2/resources/11968.

Hill, Ralph Nading. *The College on the Hill: A Dartmouth Chronicle*. Hanover, NH: Dartmouth Publications, 1966.

Historical Accountability Student Research Program. "Abolition and Dartmouth." Digital exhibit. Dartmouth College Libraries.

https://exhibits.library.dartmouth.edu/s/HistoricalAccountability/page/abolition-and-dartmouth.

"In Memoriam." *The Dartmouth* 4 (1870): 331–40. Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College. https://search.library.dartmouth.edu/nde/fulldisplay?docid=alma991000375579705706&vid=01DCL_INST:NDE01&context=L.

Joyner, Matthew. "The Green in Gray: Story of Dartmouth's Rebels." *The Dartmouth*, October 16, 1980. Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College. https://search.library.dartmouth.edu/nde/fulldisplay?docid=alma991000375579705706&vid=01DCL_INST:NDE01&context=L.

King, Deborah K., et al. "The Ties That Bind: Slavery and Dartmouth." Dartmouth Libraries, Dartmouth College, 2019. https://exhibits.library.dartmouth.edu/s/TiesThatBind/page/home.

"Last Will and Testament of Oliver Smith, Esquire." 1859. Box 1, folder 10, Hunt Family Papers, MS-1173. Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College. https://archives-manuscripts.dartmouth.edu/repositories/2/archival_objects/234663.

Lathem, Edward Connery. "Mr. President, L.L.D." *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine*, October 1953. https://archive.dartmouthalumnimagazine.com/article/1953/10/1/mr-president-lld.

Lord, Arthur H. "Even Disagreeing with Him Was Pleasant." *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine*, May 1955. https://archive.dartmouthalumnimagazine.com/article/1955/5/1/even-disagreeing-with-him-was-pleasant.

———. "Nathan Lord: Summary of Slavery." Typescript, 1953. Dartmouth College Affiliates Files Collection, DL-15, box 11802, folder 48, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College. https://archives-manuscripts.dartmouth.edu/repositories/2/archival_objects/308356.

Lord, John King. *A History of Dartmouth College, 1815–1909*. Vol. 2. Hanover, NH: Rumford Press, 1913. https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.b4498504.

Lord, Nathan. *A Eulogy on the Honorable John Quincy Adams: Delivered March 24, 1848, at the Request of the Students of Dartmouth College*. Hanover, NH: Dartmouth Press, 1848. https://archives-manuscripts.dartmouth.edu/repositories/2/resources/11702.

———. "Letter from Nathan Lord." *The Liberator* (Boston, MA), January 25, 1834, 2–3. https://www.newspapers.com/image/35040958/.

———. *A Letter of Inquiry to Ministers of the Gospel of All Denominations on Slavery*. Boston: Fetridge and Company, 1854. 4th ed., 1860. Nathan Lord Family Papers, MS-510, folder 27.

———. Letter to Amos A. Phelps, July 15, 1840. Internet Archive. https://archive.org/details/lettertomydearsi00lord.

———. Letter to Asa Dodge Smith, October 2, 1863. Mss 863552.1. Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College. https://archives-manuscripts.dartmouth.edu/repositories/2/resources/14889.

———. Letter to David Tyler, February 12, 1855. Mss 855162. Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College. https://archives-manuscripts.dartmouth.edu/repositories/2/resources/14267.

———. Letter to John Lord, 1863. Mss 863429. Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College. https://archives-manuscripts.dartmouth.edu/repositories/2/resources/14835.

———. Letter to Joseph Leland Lord, July 1863. Mss 863440.1. Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College. https://archives-manuscripts.dartmouth.edu/repositories/2/resources/14838.

———. Letter to Nathaniel Bouton, August 6, 1863. Mss 863456. Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College. https://archives-manuscripts.dartmouth.edu/repositories/2/resources/14843.

———. Letter to Nathaniel Bouton, August 17, 1863. Mss 863467. Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College. https://archives-manuscripts.dartmouth.edu/repositories/2/resources/14848.

———. "A Northern Presbyter's Second Letter to Ministers of the Gospel, of All Denominations, on Slavery." *The Charleston Daily Courier* (Charleston, SC), January 13, 1857, 4. https://www.newspapers.com/image/604521019/.

———. "Powerfully Written—The Character of Abolitionism Portrayed by the Eminent President of Dartmouth College, New Hampshire, Nathan Lord, Esq.—A Letter All Should Read." *The St. Louis Republic* (St. Louis, MO), December 24, 1862, 1. https://www.newspapers.com/image/666822716/.

———. *A Second Letter to Ministers of the Gospel of All Denominations on Slavery*. New York; Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1855. Library of Congress. https://www.loc.gov/resource/gdcmassbookdig.northernpresbyte00lord.

———. *A True Picture of Abolition*. Boston: Press of the Daily Courier, 1863. Originally published in the *Boston Courier*, November 22, 1862. Nathan Lord Family Papers, MS-510, folder 27.

Maverick Congregational Church (East Boston, Mass.). *Condensed History and Manual of Maverick Congregational Church, East Boston, Mass., from Its Organization, May 31st, 1836 to June 30th, 1894*. Boston: Maverick Congregational Church, 1894. https://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.ah4mam.

May, Samuel. "Annual Statement of the General Agent of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society." *The Liberator* (Boston, MA), February 2, 1855, 3. https://www.newspapers.com/image/34589307/.

Mayer, Henry. *All on Fire: William Lloyd Garrison and the Abolition of Slavery.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998. https://archive.org/details/allonfirewilliam00maye.

McPherson, James M. *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988. https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb00677.0001.001.

Minkema, Kenneth P., and Harry S. Stout. "The Edwardsean Tradition and the Antislavery Debate, 1740–1865." *Journal of American History* 92, no. 1 (June 2005): 47–74. https://doi.org/10.2307/3660525.

Nathan Lord Family Papers. MS-510. Boxes 1–2 (48 folders). Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College. https://archives-manuscripts.dartmouth.edu/repositories/2/resources/1730.

Noll, Mark A. *The Civil War As a Theological Crisis*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006. EBSCOhost.

"Obituary: Nathan Lord, D.D." *New York Times*, September 10, 1870. https://www.nytimes.com/1870/09/10/archives/obituary-nathan-lord-d-d.html.

Old Grimes. Hanover, NH: Kimball's Dartmouth Press, 1848. Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College. https://search.library.dartmouth.edu/discovery/fulldisplay?context=L&vid=01DCL_INST:01DCL&search_scope=MyInst_and_CI&tab=All&docid=alma991001547559705706.

Parker, Joel. Letter to Nathan Lord, August 4, 1863. Mss 863454. Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College. https://archives-manuscripts.dartmouth.edu/repositories/2/resources/14841.

"A Patriarch, a Philosopher and a Patriot." *New-Orleans Commercial Bulletin* (New Orleans, LA), December 31, 1859, 1. https://www.newspapers.com/image/1316841036/.

Phelps, Amos A. "Resignation of Amos Phelps." *The Liberator* (Boston, MA), May 10, 1839, 2. https://www.newspapers.com/image/34599828/.

Pierce, Franklin. Letter on Nathan Lord, November 17, 1863. Mss 863456.1, item 1, Nathan Lord Family Papers, folder 43. Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College. https://archives-manuscripts.dartmouth.edu/repositories/2/resources/14844.

Porter, William. Letter, 1839. Mss 839521. Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College. https://archives-manuscripts.dartmouth.edu/repositories/2/resources/11844.

"Pres. Lord's Defense of Slavery." *The Liberator* (Boston, MA), November 14, 1856, 1. https://www.newspapers.com/image/34576399/.

"President Lord." *The Liberator* (Boston, MA), February 1, 1834, 3. https://www.newspapers.com/image/35041158/.

"President Lord." *The Dartmouth* 5 (1884): 251. Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College. https://search.library.dartmouth.edu/nde/fulldisplay?docid=alma991000375579705706&vid=01DCL_INST:NDE01&context=L.

"A Prophecy of Retribution—Gloomy Reflections." *The Richmond Times* (Richmond, VA), February 6, 1867, 2. https://www.newspapers.com/image/604981916/.

"Q." "A Northern Presbyter with Southern Principles." *The Liberator* (Boston, MA), October 27, 1854. https://www.newspapers.com/image/34589250/.

Rauner Vertical Files: Commencement, 1864–1868. DA-857. Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College. https://archives-manuscripts.dartmouth.edu/repositories/2/archival_objects/726069.

"Resignation of President Lord." *New Hampshire Statesman* (Concord, NH), July 31, 1863, 2. https://lccn.loc.gov/sn84022932.

Richardson, Leon Burr. *History of Dartmouth College*. 2 vols. Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College Publications, 1932.

Sinha, Manisha. *The Slave's Cause : A History of Abolition*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016. EBSCOhost.

Smith, Baxter Perry. *The History of Dartmouth College*. Boston: Houghton, Osgood, and Company, 1878.

Stevens, Charles. "Fifty Years Ago." *The Dartmouth* 6 (1885): 246–48. Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College. https://search.library.dartmouth.edu/nde/fulldisplay?docid=alma991000375579705706&vid=01DCL_INST:NDE01&context=L.

Trussell, Jacob. "Colored School at Canaan." *The Liberator* (Boston, MA), September 5, 1835. https://www.newspapers.com/image/1038164196/.

Tuck, Amos. *Autobiographical Memoir of Amos Tuck*. [N.p.], 1902. Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College, MMS ID 991022941469705706. https://search.library.dartmouth.edu/permalink/01DCL_INST/1rgt674/alma991022941469705706.

———. Report on the Resolutions of the Merrimack County Conference. Mss 863940. Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College. https://archives-manuscripts.dartmouth.edu/repositories/2/resources/14959.

———. Suggestions for Trustees. Mss 863423. Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College. https://archives-manuscripts.dartmouth.edu/repositories/2/resources/14831.

United Fraternity Records. DO-4. Box 6256 (Meeting Minutes, 1860–1870). Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College. https://archives-manuscripts.dartmouth.edu/repositories/2/archival_objects/10274.

Vail, Stephen M. *The Bible against Slavery, with Replies to the "Bible View of Slavery," by John H. Hopkins, D.D., Bishop of the Diocese of Vermont; and to "A Northern Presbyter's Second Letter to Ministers of the Gospel," by Nathan Lord, D.D., Late President of Dartmouth College; and to "X," of the New-Hampshire Patriot*. Concord: Fogg, Hadley & Co., 1864. https://www.loc.gov/item/12005914/.

Van Deburg, William L. "William Lloyd Garrison and the 'Pro-Slavery Priesthood': The Changing Beliefs of An Evangelical Reformer, 1830-1840." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 43, no. 2 (1975): 224–37. http://www.jstor.org.dartmouth.idm.oclc.org/stable/1461621.

Walcoff, Jon. "Lord Leads College Through Early 19th Century." *The Dartmouth*, October 27, 1980. Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College. https://search.library.dartmouth.edu/nde/fulldisplay?docid=alma991000375579705706&vid=01DCL_INST:NDE01&context=L.

Wallis, William Frederick. Letter to Lewis Sawyer, October 4, 1838. Mss 838554. Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College. https://archives-manuscripts.dartmouth.edu/repositories/2/resources/11686.

Youngman, David, Jr. Letter to David Youngman Sr., February 13, 1837. Youngman Family Papers, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College. https://archives-manuscripts.dartmouth.edu/repositories/2/resources/11380.

Youngman, David, Sr. Letter to David Youngman Jr., April 1837. Youngman Family Papers, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College. https://archives-manuscripts.dartmouth.edu/repositories/2/resources/11397.