

PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt / Egyptology

Slavery Issues of the United States in the 19th Century: A Case Study on How Cultural Prejudice Misinterprets Slavery in the Bible

Moo-Jin Jeong¹, In-Seok Seo², Sang-ho Seon³, Dae-young Kang⁴, Jun-ki Chung⁵

^{1,2,3,4,5} Kwangshin University, South Korea

Email: ⁵junkichung@gmail.com

Prerna Pravesh Salve, Vanishree Pabalkar, Tushar Kumar Roy: Slavery Issues of the United States in the 19th Century: A Case Study on How Cultural Prejudice Misinterprets Slavery in the Bible -- PalArch's Journal Of Archaeology Of Egypt/Egyptology 18(4). ISSN 1567-214x

Keywords: Civil War, Presbyterian Church, Dabney, Hodge, slavery

ABSTRACT

The issue of racial discrimination in the United States is still ongoing. Why does not this impersonal and destructive racism end? We stipulate that the fundamental problem is the lack of sufficient understanding between humans. If humans do not comprehend enough rationally, spiritually, and emotionally, their ability to accept the other person is significantly reduced. This study attempts to reveal how this lack of understanding appeared in the 19th century American slavery problem by studying two Presbyterian leaders, Robert Dabney and Charles Hodge. Both discussed that the liberation of slaves should take place someday at a future point in time. However, when the American Civil War broke out, they took radically different position. In this study, we will argue that without genuine understanding, everyone will not bend their arguments in their own culture and eventually fall into the contradictions and ironies of self-justification.

1. Introduction

Robert Dabney (1820-1898) and Charles Hodge (1797-1878) were very influential theologians of the American Presbyterian Church in the 19th century. Dabney worked as a professor of systematic theology at the Union Theological Seminary (UTS) in Virginia, a representative theological school of the southern Presbyterian Church. He was elected as the Moderator of the Southern Presbyterian Church's General Assembly in 1870. Dabney was praised and respected as a prophet of the southern Presbyterian Church, and his book entitled *Lectures in Systematic Theology* was used as a teaching material for many seminaries until the mid-20th century (1985). Hodge was also a systematic theology professor at the Princeton Theological Seminary, a representative theological school of the northern Presbyterian Church. His

famous book, *Systematic Theology*, is still used as a text in countless evangelical theological seminaries in the world (1878).

Dabney and Hodge communicated with each other right before the American Civil War (1861-1865) and worked closely together to form a coalition of the Presbyterian Church of the United States. The two feared that American religions would be liberalized by the thoughts of European enlightenment and social Darwinism. Therefore, the two attempted to protect Calvinism in America, a tradition of Puritanism, by forming a coalition of Presbyterian churches in the North and South. Both insisted that the Westminster Confession and Catechism should be preserved in their historic sense. When the American churches began to divide over the slavery, the two opposed the immediate abolition of slavery in order to prevent the division of the churches. They believed that the gradual abolition of slavery over time helped the unity and harmony of the churches. But in the end, the American Civil War broke out and most churches of North and South were divided. The main cause of this cleavage was clearly slavery issues without question. Thus, the aim of this study is to investigate the thought and response of Dabney and Hodge regarding these issues. We will discuss their Biblical interpretation on slavery first. After that we will look at other social and political factors that were closely inter-related to the life of Dabney and Hodge. At the end of this study, we will argue that true communication and understanding are possible when we embrace universally valid ‘truth’ beyond ourselves and our own culture

1.1. Dabney’s Thought and Response to American Slavery

Robert Dabney was born in 1820 in Louisa County, Virginia (Johnson, 2005). He studied at the Hampden-Sydney College (BA in 1840), the University of Virginia (MA in 1842), and the UTS (M.Div in 1846). From 1853 to 1869 he taught church history and systematic theology at the UTS. The theology he learned and taught at both the UTS and the southern Presbyterian Church represented the views of slavery at that time.

1.2. Dabney’s Theology on Slavery

Dabney understood slavery is “the obligations of the slave to labor for life, without his own consent, for the master” (2005: 58). The slave is supposed to offer his service, namely, his labor, to his master without his free will involuntarily. In the course of this labor, he can be treated as his master's property. Yet Dabney insisted that the slavery is neither his soul or person, but only his labor: “A certain right of control over the person of the slave is incidentally given to the master by his property in the bondsman's labor, that is, so much control as is necessary to enable him to secure the labor which belongs to him” (2005: 58). The soul or personality of the slave belongs to God, and therefore no master has right to articulate its ownership. If the master tries to control its ownership, he is destroying his moral responsibility by way of dehumanizing the slave. Dabney said: “The words for bondsman and bondsmaid here used are, in every case, *ebed* and *shippheh*, which are defined

by every honest lexicon to mean actual slaves” (2005: 66). Accepting Genesis story of chapter nine literally, Dabney understood that Ham was cursed by Noah and therefore his children were inherited this sin by becoming slaves. The origin of the slavery appeared in human history as a result of the sin of Ham (2005: 64). The descendents of Ham were becoming a morally and spiritually inferior race. They were destined to limit their lives as servants who could not enjoy cultural equality. Although they were born as humans having common humanity and love that are derived from God, their sins could not allow these privileges. God was more than clear in condemning human sins. Since God permitted the slavery, it could not be any sin. Dabney reasoned that if the slavery was regulated by God, who on earth could argue with Him?

Dabney emphasized that a continued practice of slavery is seen in the life of Abraham, the exemplary father of faith in the *Old Testament* (OT). When his nephew Lot was captured, Abraham mobilized his slave servants to rescue Lot. The sons of Abraham also run a large slaves to maintain their families. This Biblical records supported the slavery; it was not at all a kind of human operation (2005: 65-70). The five books of Moses, particularly Exodus 21: 5-6 clearly explained: “But if the servant declares, I love my master and my wife and children and do not want to go free, then his master must take him before judges. He shall take him to the door or the doorspot and pierce his ear with an awl. Then he will be his servant for life” (RSV). The slave in this case would be forced to work without mentioning his free will or thought (2005: 73). Later, Elisha had Gehazi and others as his slaves in 2 Kings 5:20-6:15 (2005: 89). Besides these OT Bible verses, there are too many stories about slaves, and therefore the slavery system was God's recognized ordinance and a form of life at least for certain periods of human history, Dabney argued.

Dabney also justified slavery using the *New Testament* (NT) texts. He carefully elucidated the word, servant: “Apostles are called God's *douloi*, servants, to express God's purchase, ownership and authority over them, and their strict obedience” (2005: 93). 'Servant' is '*doulos*' which comes from the word '*deo*,' meaning 'bind' (2005: 92). This 'bind' is neither a metaphor or a parable, but an actual slave (2005: 93). Jesus in Matthew 8: 5-13 healed a servant of the Roman centurion and praised his faith. The word 'servant' in Matthew 8 is '*fais*' in Koine greek. The story of the same servant is illustrated in Luke using the koine word, '*dulos*.' Here Jesus recognized the slavery system as a working social and political culture in his period, Dabney insisted (2005: 97). The disciples of Jesus never brought a charge against the slavery system itself. They only forbade any unhuman manners--physical violence and similar cruel attitudes (2005: 99). According to Dabney, The NT allows the two structures, that is, master and slave; yet it only directs to prevent possible abuses of the powers of the master over their slaves (2005: 100). In his letter dated 22 January, 1840, Dabney wrote: "Whatever may be the influence of slavery on the happiness of the negroes, it would most effectually destroy that of the master. . . . If we had hastened on to give the slave his liberty at once. . . we might have done irreparable injury” (Johnson: 67-68). In his subsequent letter

dated 15 January, 1851, he raised more stronger voice: "Here is our policy, then, to push the Bible argument continually, to drive abolitionism to the wall, to compel it to assume an anti-Christian position" (Johnson: 129). Here Dabney pointed out that the slavery system should be maintained in order not to hinder their masters' happiness. Without the aid of the slaves, the masters could not enjoy their social status. Dabney believed that slavery is an essential and necessary part of the human institution in so far as the masters keep the following ground: "We must come out and grant that our right to hold slaves to labor does not include a right to make a husband guilty of the sin of separation from his wife" (Johnson: 120). For Dabney, denial of the slavery system is not Biblical and therefore those who do not accept this God-ordained system are regarded as anti-Christians.

1.3. Dabney's Other Pro-slavery Reasons

Dabney discussed the legitimacy of pro-slavery for other reasons besides the Biblical interpretation. There were two kinds of important reasons: politics and economics (Lucas, 2005). Politically, Dabney insisted each State's autonomy in the US. He accepted the well-operated political ideology of the South at that time, namely "loyalty to one's State." In the early history of the US, sectionalism or localism was strong enough so that each individual had the tendency to love one's State more than one's Nation. This 'strange' loyalty often did not accept the ideal loyalty to one's country. Before and right after the Civil War, the Southerners did not think that the Federal Union was their country but viewed it as a federal company. Southern patriots such as Dabney feared that a strong central government, that is, the Union, might interfere with the sovereign autonomy of their States which kept slavery system as a normal social and political order. In 1860 the situation was explosive. Because Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865) was elected as President of the US. Lincoln was thought by the South as a dangerous threat to destroy the slavery system. During the American Civil War, Dabney served briefly as a chaplain in the Confederate Army. General Stonewall Jackson, one of the most able military strategists in the Confederate Army, offered him the Major rank as chief of staff in 1862 (White: 448-449). After the Civil War, Dabney returned to the UTS, teaching systematic theology until 1883. His racial views and strong Southern localism, continued in his speeches just like other Southerners. Obviously Dabney was a good citizen; he was a sincere and dedicated Christian leader with a warm heart. Personally, he treated black slaves around him with tender kindness and mercy. Yet no matter how this personal goodness was bestowed upon the black slaves, he could not transcend his public political ideology, that is, his loyalty to the Southern States

Dabney supported the economic system of the South. The people in the Southern eleven States, so-called the Confederacy, heavily depended on slavery to maintain their farm-based economy. Southerners used slave labor to produce crops, especially cotton. By 1860, cotton was the chief economic resource of the South. The South was not yet ready to be industrialized, hence

she maintained an agrarian society. Dabney viewed this southern society based on agricultural economy as a kind of 'heaven.' So he stated: "This slaveholding South was the true conservative power of the American Government, the most solid type of old English character, the greatest social stability and purity, and above all, the very fountain of international commerce and wealth" (2005: 3). He was deeply skeptical of laissez-faire capitalism of the North and the social side effects of an economy based on excess consumption. When the capitalists used the workers as a tool for profit-seeking, the workers were to be treated as mere machines. There was hardly conscientious moral responsibility of the capitalists here. This immoral behavior eventually would lead to corruption in society. Against this greed and exploitation of the Northern economic culture, Dabney glorified the Southern agrarian society. According to Dabney, the slaves in the South were living as true human beings who experienced harmony and unity by sharing affection with each another, breaking away from inhumane lives that dried blood by competing in capitalism and commercialism in the North.

1.4. Evaluation of Dabney's Life and Thought on Slavery

Dabney's interpretation of the Bible on slavery can not be justified. Dabney argued that white people should be located at the top of American society, and that black people as a inferior race should work as slaves under the guidance of the white race. This interpretation was very wrong. Of course, the Bible allows certain cultural institutions such as slavery. For instance, Ephesians 6: 5-9 states:

Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord . . . And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him" (NIV).

This text was written by Apostle Paul in recognition of slavery in the first century historical atmosphere. The slaves here were Christian servants who worked in the Roman Empire and its colonies. Most of them were taken as war prisoners in various illegal ways. The main focus of Paul on these verses was not to justify slavery, but to tell Christian slaves, who were serving Christian masters in Roman society where the slavery system had already been firmly established, to work with integrity and honesty. At the same time, Paul demanded the Christian masters to treat their Christian slaves warmly as colleagues. Because both the slaves and the masters were the very spiritual sinners to be redeemed by Christ. At that time, Paul could not destroy the slavery system, which had been sustained as one of the fixed cultural norms throughout the Roman Empire. Thus he recognized the existence of this system. Yet he never showed that this system was right and should be continued. In Philemon 1: 15-16, Paul asserted: "Perhaps the reason he [a slave

named Onesimus] was separated from you [a slave master Philemon] for a little while was that you might have him back forever--no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother. He is very dear to me but even dearer to you, both as a fellow man and as a brother in the Lord" (NIV). Here Paul made it clear that slavery is never God's will or the authentic teaching of the Bible. Slavery is a man-made evil in history. All means that bind human freedom are in violation of God's holiness.

If we carefully investigate several principles regarding slavery, we easily come to the conclusion that a slave as a person is equally created by God with His image and legal rights (Ge. 1:26-27. Ex. 12:49). Also the Bible allows slavery when the poor agrees to work in exchange for essential needs--food and housing. Astonishingly, even the Scripture affirms the right of a slave not to be free--the slave can be a permanent slave due to his sacrificial love toward his master (Deut. 15:16). In this case, the important principle is that the slaves become slaves only voluntarily, and they were regulated by laws to be set free every seventh year (Deut. 15:12-14). Since the Presbyterian Church in the South always identified herself as a Bible believing community, it would be impossible to hold such a superiority complex of the white race. It is very hard to agree with the idea that the Bible supports the permanent status of slavery.

Dabney asserted that blacks have absolute dependence on their masters, the whites. His negative belief, 'dependence' gives no hope of change. It was a contradiction of his Christian theology, for he did not believe the transforming power of the Gospel. His understanding of slavery presupposed the inherent inferiority of blacks. They were destined to be servants; no concrete leadership role of the black was described in Dabney's writings. Although his public theology in the fields of economics and education prophetically addressed the cultural dangers of his day, his racial discrimination denied the fundamental messages of the Gospel: human dignity and equality. Instead of challenging the evil system of slavery, Dabney undergirded the time-honored Southern cultural norm of inequality.

Dabney's glorification on the South's economic system had his own discriminated understanding. He thought that the blacks could establish the best agricultural society under the direction of the Southern whites who could supply the most comfortable and healthy life to the southern population including the slaves. Dabney proclaimed: "The South not only delivered itself from [North's evil capitalism], but civilized and Christianized this people, making them the most prosperous and comfortable peasantry in the world" (2005: 190).

The philosophy of the agricultural society pursued by Dabney should not be condemned by his fault. This is because he personally had the right to live freely and admire such a society. Nor can it be said that he was all wrong to talk about the evils of capitalism in the North. Dabney properly pointed out the selfishness of the infinite competition and profit-seeking way of life created by capitalism. The real problem of Dabney's economic view was that this

agricultural society was bound to be achieved by associating it with black slavery. For him, black slavery was indispensable for the survival of his ideal agrarian society.

2. Hodge and American Slavery

Charles Hodge was born in Philadelphia on 27 December, 1797 (Hodge, 1987). In 1812, Hodge entered the Princeton College and graduated in 1815. His education was continued in the Princeton Theological Seminary and eventually he became one of the most distinguished Calvinist theologians in his day. Like Dabney, Hodge did his best to preserve the orthodox Calvinism.

2.1 Hodge's Theology on Slavery

Hodge was not troubled in holding slavery. This was the general manner of both North and South American culture before the Civil War. He and his friends defined the term 'slavery' in *Cotton is King, Pro-slavery Arguments*:

The true definition of the term, as applicable to the domestic institution . . . is as follows: Slavery is the duty and obligation of the slave to labor for the mutual benefit of both master and slave, under a warrant to the slave of protection, and a comfortable subsistence, under all circumstances. The person of the slave is not property, no matter what the fictions of the law may say; but the right to his labor is property, and may be transferred like any other property (Elliot, 1860: vii).

The above argument clarifies that Hodge and his contemporary theologians justified the use of slave labor, not the soul or personality of the slaves. They had no sense of guilt when they materialized the labor of their servants. They also developed the idea of mutual benefit; the slaves could offer their labor services in response to their masters' protection in the forms of supplying shelter, food, and clothing. This protection should include the responsibility of the masters to offer medical treatment to their slaves. Then this mutual system could promote supportiveness and interdependence between the masters and the slaves, minimizing social brutality and injustice. Hodge addressed various brutal injustices to be avoided by slaveholders in *The Princeton Review* (April 1846):

Slavery is a heinous crime; it degrades human beings into things; it forbids marriages; it destroys domestic relations; it separates parents and children, husbands and wives; it legalizes what God forbids, and forbids what God enjoins; it keeps its victims in ignorance even of the Gospel; it denies labor its wages, subject the persons, the virtue, and the happiness of many to the caprice of one; it involves the violation of all social rights and duties, and therefore is the greatest of social crimes. It is as much as any man's character for sense, honesty or religion is worth, to insist that a distinction must here be made; that we must discriminate between slavery and its separable adjuncts; between the relationship itself and the abuse of it; between the possession of power and the

unjust exercise of it. Let any man in some portions of our country, in England, in Scotland, or Ireland, attempt to make such distinctions, and see with what an outburst of indignation he will be overwhelmed. It is just so in the present case.

For Hodge, slavery itself is not a problem if white people do not commit the above-mentioned cruel acts to black slaves. It is impossible to condemn white people who own slaves with good hearts and deeds. In his article, "Bible Argument on Slavery" written in 1860, Hodge did impeach the abolitionists for inciting the masses by treating slave owners as if they were murderers or pirates. Hodge argued that the way of their agitation was swaying the people with only emotion, not cool reason: "They addressed themselves to the feelings of the people; they portrayed in the strongest colors the misery of the slaves; they dilated on the gratuitous crime . . . and did all they could to excite the passions of the public" (1860: 842). Accordingly, Hodge stressed the need to obey the Word of God with rational reason, not human emotional impulses, in order to solve the slave problem wisely. Hodge claimed that the Bible supported slavery, referring to slavery shown in the OT and NT. He specifically justified his argument, showing the OT examples of Abraham and Moses: "Abraham had servants in his family who were bought with his money (Ge.17:13) . . . Moses, finding this [slave] institutions among the Hebrews . . . did not abolish it (Deut. 15:18)" (1860: 859). Above all, Hodge argued that Jesus, the founder of Christianity, never mentioned the abolition of slavery, and that his disciples also took slavery for granted. Hodge said:

It is on all hands acknowledged that, at the time of the advent of Jesus Christ, slavery in its worst forms prevailed over the whole world . . . How did [Jesus and his disciples] treat it? Not by the denunciation of slaveholding as necessarily and universally sinful. Not by declaring that all slaveholder were men-stealers and robbers, and consequently to be excluded from the church and the kingdom of heaven. Not by insisting on immediate emancipation. . . . If the present course of the abolitionists is right, then the course of Christ and the apostles were wrong (1860: 848-849).

Hodge uttered that Jesus Christ never attempted to stop any slavery system. Therefore we as disciples of Christ had no right to abolish the system (1860: 847). Both Jesus and his apostles met all forms of terrible slave customs in Israel and its neighboring countries. Yet they did not look at these wicked social practices as universal sins. Neither did they cast out the slave holders from the local churches. Jesus never cried that the slaves should be freed immediately. Instead, Jesus instructed his followers that they should develop justice and love, showing true personality, that is, a genuine spiritual equality. This equality was not based on social class, but based on spiritual freedom in Christ. Hodge suggested that the slaves must respect Christian masters. The masters at the same time must not squander their servants because they also were nothing but the slaves of the Master in heaven (1860: 848). In the end, Hodge was opposed to confusing society by having problems with slavery itself because the Bible has acknowledged slavery. But Hodge did not agree

that countless sufferings of human beings in slavery was right. It was his main idea that slavery should one day disappear because it had been inhumane in most cases of world history.

In this frame of thought, Hodge himself owned black persons as slaves before the American Civil War (Torbett, 2006: 69-73). Through the various labors of the slaves, he managed his gardens and other menial works. Several evidences prove this: in his letter written on 12 December 1828, he wrote that “he paid 75 dollars to Henrietta, a slave, who served him for five years. [Another letter indicates] that Hodge named John, Cato, Hetti as his slaves”(1829). Hodge treated them generously, never showing physical violence and raising yelling voice. He provided them with modest food and clothing as their reasonably good shelters. This kind of slavery holding was seen in the lives of Samuel Miller (1769-1850) and Archibald Alexander (1772-1851), the Princeton Theological Seminary professors.

2.2 Reasons of Hodge’s Support to Anti-slavery

First, the change of his theological position after the Civil War. In his *Systematic Theology*, Hodge wrote:

Whenever we meet a man, no matter of what name or nation, we not only find that he has the same nature with ourselves; that he has the same organs, the same senses, the same instincts, the same feelings, the same faculties, the same understanding, will, and conscience, and the same capacity for religious culture, but that he has the same guilty and polluted nature, and needs the same redemption. Christ died for all men, and we are commanded to preach the Gospel to every creature under heaven. Accordingly, nowhere on the face of the earth are men to be found who do not need the Gospel or who are not capable of becoming partakers of the blessings which it offers (1878, 2: 90-91).

Here we can see Hodge's changed position regarding his anthropology (Hodge, 1959: 148). He asserted that every human being is the same in terms of universal character: emotion, understanding, and physical body. Hodge even recognized that religious tendencies of humanity are the same. There is hardly any indication that blacks are inferior and whites are superior at all. Unlike Dabney, Hodge did not claim that the blacks as descendants of Ham should serve the whites. Humans are universal beings with the image of God. Since each individual has the same image of God, no one is supposed to be a slave. Slavery system is not made by God, but it is a product of sinful humanity. This idea is very different from Hodge's understanding of slavery in the past.

Second, the economic and political reasons. Comparing with Dabney’s South, Hodge’s North was firmly established as an industrial society. Due to enormous immigrants from Europe, slave labor was not crucially required in the North. The European immigrants provided enough labor forces, working in factories, building the railroads of the North, and settling the West. Very few rich Northerners sought their residence in the South. Hodge found himself

comfortable in a rapidly developing industrial Northern society. Since Lincoln won the Civil War, Hodge had enough reason to cherish the united federal government.

2.3 Evaluation of Hodge's Life and Thought on Slavery

It is clear that Hodge took a similar position that Dabney took regarding slavery. He believed that the Bible allows slavery, so there is no reason to oppose it. Yet Hodge did not examine the fundamental spirit of the Bible enough. The God and Jesus in the Bible do not attack slavery that had already been firmly settled. This permission was reluctantly allowed because of the low ethical awareness of civil society at the time. The existence of slavery is not God's will. The God of OT in principle do not want a slave civilization in which anyone in His image is deprived of freedom. Jesus and Apostle Paul never supported the shortcomings of destructive and demonic slavery system. Jesus declared: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28, NIV). In John's Gospel, Jesus again promised that he will give us abundant life (Jn. 10:10). For Jesus, sufficient rest and abundant life are the premises of honorable freedom. Any rest without freedom is not freedom at all. In a similar vein, life without freedom is not a full life. Thus, Apostle Paul interpreted freedom to the same effect that the Spirit of the Lord is in the midst of freedom (1 Cor. 3:17).

Fortunately Hodge changed his view on slavery when President Lincoln engaged in the Civil War. He and his fellow Princeton theologians belonged to the North, and therefore it would be very difficult to side with the South. As a social and political being, Hodge was limited in time and space just like a fish that could not bear the raging gale and the swift current in a river. Besides this, Hodge had another reason against the slavery. He perceived President Lincoln like the prophet Moses in the Exodus story. Although God allowed the slavery, He was not happy to see the sufferings of His chosen people, Israel. Thus, he sent Moses to Egypt to liberate His people. Hodge compared this Biblical story with the emergence of Lincoln. Just as God permitted the long bondage of His people under the rules of Egypt. So too God destined the black American slaves under the care of the American whites in certain times. No one knew this time of slavery liberation until President Lincoln appeared. Since Lincoln was ordained by God, to free the black slaves, it would be wrong to oppose him. In this perspective, Hodge claimed, "the insane purpose to dissolve the [Lincoln's] Union and overthrow the general government in favor of this [slavery] system have led to its sudden overthrow" (1865: 440).

3. Conclusion

Dabney and Hodge were the representative American Presbyterian leaders, who greatly influenced the Southern and Northern Christians in the nineteenth century. Before the American Civil War, they took a moderate political position, hoping that the War might be prohibited. Yet once the War broke out,

they identified themselves as sectionalists, defending the sovereignty of the South or North and criticizing each military force as an aggressive invader.

In many realms of Dabney's and Hodge's life, several ironies and contradictions are clearly grasped. The conservative theology of the Southern or Northern Presbyterian Church in their time was doctrinally oriented toward Reformed theology which embraced Calvinism and the Puritan tradition. The leaders of this Church utilized their Calvinist position to define and justify the division of church and state as well as the slavery system. On an individual level, their pious spirituality was commendable; yet on a social and political level, they failed to prove that they were Calvin's students. Indeed, Dabney, who embraced Southern localism, as we have investigated, was different from Calvin, who wanted to make every effort to unite the Protestant division that had occurred between Zwingli and Luther in the 16th century. Although Dabney was esteemed as an excellent pastor and teacher who cared for and reared his flock and students following his Reformed spirituality and disciplined living, his public theology in regard to the nature of civil society was not at all similar to that of Calvin. The theology of Calvin in connection with civil society would be neither localism nor race-oriented political ideology. The social theology of Dabney and Hodge was too often conservative and therefore it frequently resided in their own ideological-political localism.

Also, in most cases, their understanding on slavery was not Biblical. Rather it was ironically very similar to the idea of social Darwinism or the eighteenth century Enlightenment thought, which advocated the gradual human progress by way of developing human mind and efforts. Of course, Dabney and Hodge vigorously attacked both ideas as adulterous and sinful rebellion against God in their dogmatic theology. Yet because of their denial of the equality among the races, they became immersed in their own self-contradiction. Their localism and mild view of the American slavery system did not transcend their own cultural binding. They loved Jesus and Saint Paul, who do not show discrimination on race, but they insisted superiority of the white over the black. They knew that Jesus never engaged in any military wars and therefore the American Civil War was not good no matter what. Yet their pens boldly glorified the side of the South or the North. Their distorted localism failed to properly communicate each other by rejecting a higher and more broad national integrity and harmony. Dabney even seriously thought of migrating to other countries in order not to encounter the blacks and the Yankee Northerners.

References

- Dabney, Robert. (1985). **Lectures in Systematic Theology**. Grand Rapids: Baker.
- Dabney, Robert. (2005). **Defence of Virginia**. Colorado Springs: Portage Publications.
- Elliott, E. N. Ed. (1860). "Introduction," **Cotton is King, Pro-slavery Arguments**. Pritchard, Abbot Loomis,
- Hodge, Charles. (1828). "A Letter to Hugh Hodge," written on December 12.

- Hodge, Charles. (1829). "A Letter to Hugh Hodge," written on March 18.
- Hodge, Charles. (1859). "Unity of mankind," *The Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review*. (January).
- Hodge, Charles. (1860). "Bible Argument on Slavery," in **Cotton is King, Pro-slavery Arguments**. Pritchard, Abbot & Loomis.
- Hodge, Charles. (1865). "President Lincoln," *The Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review*. (July).
- Hodge, Charles. (1878). **Systematic Theology**, 3vols. London: Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd.
- Hodge, Charles. (1987). **The Way of Life**. Mahwah: Paulist.
- Johnson, Thomas. (1977). **The Life and Letters of Robert Lewis Dabney**. Carlisle: Banner of Truth.
- Lucas, Sean. (2005). **Robert Lewis Dabney**. Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing Co.
- Phillips, Douglas. Ed. (2006). **Robert Lewis Dabney**. San Antonio: Vision Forum.
- Smith, Morton. (1987). **Studies in Southern Presbyterian Theology**. Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co.
- Torbett, David. (2006). **Theology and Slavery**. Macon: Mercer University Press.
- White, Henry Alexander. (2000). **Southern Presbyterian Leaders 1688-1911**. Carlisle: Banner of Truth.