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**Satanic Spiders in Atlanta:
Rev. J. B. Hawthorne, the New Woman, and
the Lost Cause**

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On May 6, 1885, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) opened its annual meeting in Augusta, Georgia, with the singing of “Rock of Ages,” the reading of Psalms 133 (“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!”), and the offering of a prayer. Official business began with the roll call, which came to a sudden stop when the secretary read the names of two women from Arkansas. Several delegates, led by Virginia’s J. Williams Jones, opposed seating the women. Among those who spoke was J. B. Hawthorne, who had accepted the pastorate of Atlanta’s First Baptist Church less than a year before. The *Atlanta Constitution* reported his actions in two sentences: “Dr. Hawthorne opposed the admission of ladies. He thought it was an error and wrong in principle.” The *Tennessee Baptist* was more complete in its coverage: Hawthorne ended his comments by saying, “I love the ladies, *but I dread them more.*”¹ This study will

¹ “Baptists in Bulk,” *Atlanta Constitution* (hereafter, *AC*), 7 May 1885; *Tennessee Baptist*, 16 May 1885 (original emphasis),

examine how Baptist theology and the Lost Cause influenced Hawthorne's views of women during his years in Atlanta.

Rev. James Boardman Hawthorne was born in 1837 in north Alabama. He attended Howard College (later known as Samford University), practiced law for a short time, and then entered the ministry. A series of brief stints at small Baptist churches was interrupted in 1863 when he entered the service of the Confederate army as a chaplain. After the war, he led churches in Selma, Baltimore, Albany (New York), Louisville, New York City, Montgomery, Richmond, and, in 1884, Atlanta. Hawthorne moved frequently because his star was rising—he was smart, effective, a good orator—and the dozen years he spent at Atlanta's First Baptist church (his longest pastorate) marked the peak of his career. In 1896 he accepted a church in Nashville, and then a smaller one in Richmond, where he died in 1910.²

The First Baptist church of Atlanta had begun about 1850 as a plain wooden building on the corner of Forsyth and Walton Streets. The church was heavily damaged during the Civil War, and members of the congregation decided to raze the old building and construct a new one on the same site. The second building, finished in 1869, was an impressive structure made of brick and topped with "a spire that dominated the entire downtown section of that

quoted in J. Michael Raley, "'On the Same Basis of Men': The Campaign to Reinstall Women as Messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention, 1885–1918," *Journal of Southern Religion* 7 (2004), <http://jsr.fsu.edu/Volume7/Raley1.htm>.

² Biographical sources for Hawthorne include George Braxton Taylor, *Virginia Baptist Ministers, Fifth Series, 1902–1914* (Lynchburg, VA, 1915), 253–67; *The Baptist Encyclopaedia*, ed. William Cathcart (1881; reprint, Paris, AR, n.d.), 511–12; "Dr. Hawthorne Dies at Richmond," *AC*, 25 February 1910.

period.” When Hawthorne arrived in 1884, the church included among its members some of Atlanta’s most prominent citizens.³

In Atlanta and elsewhere, Hawthorne was a strong champion of the historic Baptist tenet of the separation of church and state, arguing against the tax-exempt status of American churches, the appointment of chaplains to the U.S. Senate, and the American Protective Association’s anti-Catholic campaign for religious tests for office-holders.⁴ He was progressive (in the late-nineteenth-century meaning of that word) on a number of social issues. At a time when many southern ministers either supported or were silent on the issue of lynching, he spoke out against it.⁵ He supported labor and insisted that the march of un-

³ *First Baptist Church, Atlanta, Georgia, 1848–1930* (Atlanta, 1930), 18–19; see also *One Hundred Years of the First Baptist Church, Atlanta, Georgia: Centennial Celebration, 1848–1948* (Atlanta, 1948). In 1989, First Baptist Church Atlanta (as it is now called) moved to Dunwoody, a suburban community in the northern Atlanta area, with Dr. Charles Stanley as senior pastor, <https://www.fba.org/>.

⁴ See, for example, “Baptist Divines Hitch: Drs. Hawthorne and Marshall Divide on the Taxation of Churches,” *AC*, 19 February 1895; “Church and State: Dr. Hawthorne Talks about the Relations They Should Bear to Each Other,” *AC*, 3 December 1894; “Religious Liberty: An Attack in the A.P.A. Persecution of Catholics,” *AC*, 20 April 1894. Religious liberty was the biggest “thing” Hawthorne discussed in his last major address, *Some Things on Which It Behooves Baptists of This Generation to Put Supreme Emphasis: Address . . . Before the Southern Baptists Convention, Richmond, Va., May 16th, 1907* (N.p., n.d.). David B. Parker, “Controversy Over Government-Sponsored Chaplains Is Nothing New,” <http://time.com/5274075/house-chaplain-controversy>.

⁵ “Takes Mrs. Felton to Task for Speech: Dr. Hawthorne Criticises the Lady’s Advocacy of Mob Law,” *AC*, 19 December 1898. This was in response to Rebecca Felton’s famous 1897 Tybee Island speech before the state’s agricultural society in which she said, “If it

employed men who made up Coxe's Army should be respected.⁶ Given this, Hawthorne's views on women might seem contradictory at first: he said women should not speak in public (especially in church) or otherwise step out of the role that God had assigned to them.

In their history of American Baptists, Thomas S. Kidd and Barry Hankins noted that Baptists have been a diverse lot. They share a belief in adult ("believer's") baptism, an emphasis on religious liberty (both for individuals and for congregations), and a dependence on the authority of the Bible, but beyond that, "they can be Calvinist or Armenian, fundamentalist or liberal, liturgical or nonliturgical, premillennial or postmillennial, church-state separatists or accommodationist, individualist or communitarian, and a million other things."⁷ Baptist churches, which can vary as much as do individual Baptists, often join into groups (called associations, conventions, conferences, fellowships, and the like) in order to facilitate missionary ef-

takes lynching to protect women's dearest possession from drunken, ravening beasts, then I say lynch a thousand a week." Also see Hawthorne, *An Unshaken Trust and Other Sermons* (Philadelphia, 1899), 117–18.

⁶ J. B. Hawthorne, "Ethical Features of the Tariff and Labor Questions," in *Paul and the Women and Other Discourses* (Louisville, KY, 1891), 140–51; "Today's Problems: Dr. Hawthorne Preaches on the Army of the Unemployed," *AC*, 18 June 1894.

⁷ Thomas S. Kidd and Barry Hankins, *Baptists in America: A History* (New York, 2015), 250–52.

forts, publication of Sunday School materials, and in general “the good of the cause of Christ.”⁸ The Southern Baptist Convention was established in 1845 in Augusta, Georgia, when southern Baptists split from those in the North over the issue of slavery.

The Southern Baptist Convention did not come out officially against the ordination of women until 1984:

Resolved, That we not decide concerns of Christian doctrine and practice by modern cultural, sociological, and ecclesiastical trends or by emotional factors; that we remind ourselves of the dearly bought Baptist principle of the final authority of Scripture in matters of faith and conduct; and that we encourage the service of women in all aspects of church life and work *other than pastoral functions and leadership roles entailing ordination*.⁹

But for a century and more before that, there had been a strong consensus, contested at times, that women should not be ordained. Among the authorities cited by Southern Baptists, both historically and in the 1984 resolution, were two letters in the New Testament written by Saint Paul. First was Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians: “Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under

⁸ *Minutes of the Twenty-Fourth Anniversary [1863], Shiawassee Baptist Association* (n.p., n.d.), 5. Shiawassee was a Michigan Baptist association, but the phrase was not uncommon in association literature.

⁹ Emphasis added. SBC resolutions can be easily searched at <http://www.sbc.net/resolutions/search/>.

obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.” Second was Paul’s first letter to Timothy: “Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.”¹⁰

The notion that women should not preach is not unique to Southern Baptists, of course, but not all Baptist groups have interpreted and enforced the scripture in this way. Freewill Baptists ordained a woman as early as 1876; Northern Baptists (now American Baptist Churches, USA) did so in 1882; Seventh Day Baptists in 1883; and then there was apparently a lull in “first” ordinations of women until 1962, with the National Baptist Convention. The Southern Baptist Convention does not recognize ordination of women, but in good Baptist fashion, the SBC does not dictate policy to individual congregations, and several SBC-affiliated churches have ordained women, the first in 1964. Women preachers in SBC churches are still extremely rare.¹¹ So Hawthorne’s notion of gender roles, memorably described in the opening story of this article, was based at least partly on Southern Baptist theology.

¹⁰ I Corinthians 14:34–35 and I Timothy 2:11–12, both King James Version.

¹¹ Pamela R. Durso, “Baptists and the Turn toward Baptist Women in Ministry,” in *Turning Points in Baptist History: A Festschrift in Honor of Harry Leon McBeth*, ed. Michael E. Williams Sr. and Walter B. Shurden (Macon, GA, 2008), 275–87. For more on the historical context, see Norman H. Letsinger, “The Status of Women in the Southern Baptist Convention in Historical Perspective,” *Baptist History and Heritage* 12, no. 1 (January 1977): 37–51, and Harry Leon McBeth, “The Role of Women in Southern Baptist History,” *Baptist History and Heritage* 12, no. 1 (January 1977): 3–25.

We can certainly see this in 1891, when Mattie Gordon, an evangelist from Nashville who worked with the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), came to Atlanta for several speaking engagements. On Wednesday, May 14, she spoke at the First Baptist church to the local WCTU. The *Atlanta Constitution* described her talk as "most interesting and instructive, and . . . enjoyed by all present."¹² The church's Young People's Society invited Gordon to speak the following week, and she accepted. When he heard of this, Hawthorne ordered that the church be locked and kept dark that evening. About a hundred of the young people, "determined to have the meeting," gathered at the church, but were unable to get in through the door. According to the *Constitution*, "one of the young men climbed in through a window, lighted the gas and the audience assembled inside, where Miss Gordon took her place on the rostrum and led the meeting."¹³

In recording the event, the newspaper mentioned Paul's epistolary admonition against women preachers and noted that "that verse still has a place in the Bible used at the First Baptist Church." The *Constitution* also noted that "older members of the church, as a rule, believed in a literal compliance with the words of St. Paul; the younger members were more liberal." Hawthorne told the reporter that "those words were inspired of God. St. Paul was right. It has been the invariable custom of the Baptist church, from

¹² "Miss Gordon to the W.C.T.U.: The Brilliant Evangelist Addresses an Appreciative Audience," *AC*, 15 May 1891. An interview with Gordon as she began her stay in Atlanta is Maude Andrews, "The Story of One Woman's Life," *AC*, 24 May 1891.

¹³ "Hawthorne Talks," *AC*, 25 May 1891.

time immemorial, to discountenance female public speakers.” Rev. Hawthorne announced that he would preach on this question the next Sunday morning.¹⁴

And he did. For his sermon, titled “Paul and the Women,” Hawthorne used as his text the two selections quoted above. After a few introductory remarks, he got to the question of women speaking in the church: “What do the Scriptures teach upon this subject? The discussion must be limited to this single question.” So he answered the question as soon as he read the text. “Your feelings, the opinions of men, and the spirit of the nineteenth century cannot be admitted into this controversy,” he said. “It is a subject upon which God has spoken, and we cannot array human opinion or human feeling against his truth without aligning ourselves with Robert Ingersoll and his followers.”¹⁵

On the following Wednesday night, members of First Baptist church had “a lively meeting” at their monthly conference. A proposed resolution “endorsed the doctrine of [Hawthorne’s] sermon and the teaching of God’s word that it is not permitted a woman to preach in mixed assemblies of men and women.” Benjamin F. Abbott, a long-time member of the church (as well as a prominent attorney and one of the leaders of Atlanta’s post-war growth) opposed the resolution and spoke against it. Paul was speaking to a troubled church in a turbulent time, Abbott said, not to the church in Atlanta almost two thousand years later. Hawthorne responded that Paul’s word had been followed ever

¹⁴ “Church Controversy,” *AC*, 26 May 1891; “Before Pure Women,” *AC*, 28 May 1891.

¹⁵ *Paul and the Women and Other Discourses*, 1–31, quotations on 1, 5. This sermon was originally published in the *AC* as “Women Preach?,” 1 June 1891. Ingersoll was the speaker and writer known as “The Great Agnostic.”

since; women preaching were “unheard of until the last quarter of a century, when it was promulgated by the Unitarians, who were semi-infidels.” Hawthorne carried the day; the vote was 42–14. Someone suggested that the vote be made unanimous, but “Col. Abbott said he could not stultify himself in that way.” As the meeting broke up, Abbott and Hawthorne met in the church lobby. According to the newspaper account the next day, “A war of words ensued until the minister was induced to leave by his wife.”¹⁶

What Paul said about women keeping silence in church might also be applied to women’s activities elsewhere. In November 1893, when a number of women spoke at the annual conference of the International Christian Workers’ Association, meeting that year in Atlanta, Rev. Hawthorne preached on his opposition to women speaking anywhere in public, especially to a gender-mixed audience. “If husband and wife would serve and honor God,” he said, “they must recognize and obey the law which so clearly defines their respective spheres of labor and authority. When the wife goes to the ballot box and votes, or to the courtroom to practice law, or on to the platform to make a political speech, she is not only disloyal to her sex, her husband and her children, but she is practically an infidel.” Such a woman “repudiates the authority of divine revelation, perverts her own nature, and sows the seeds of social discord, anarchy and ruin.”¹⁷

In 1895, Elizabeth Cady Stanton published her *Woman’s Bible*, a re-writing of the scriptures from a feminist perspective. When Hawthorne reviewed the book for

¹⁶ “Should Women Speak,” AC, 4 June 1891.

¹⁷ “Silent Women,” AC, 20 November 1893. This sermon was reprinted in full in *The Lutheran Witness* 12, no. 13 (7 Dec. 1893): 102–3.

the *Atlanta Constitution*, he said that Stanton was “an uncompromising infidel” who believed

that the starting point in the battle for the emancipation of woman is to strike down the masculine God of the Bible, and set up one whose being represents both sexes. She is confident that woman’s right to vote, to make political stump speeches, to run for congress, to wield a policeman’s club, [and] to wear men’s clothes . . . will not be established until all nations and all tribes of the earth are taught to say in their worship to God ‘Our Father and Mother in Heaven.’

As one historian aptly described it, Hawthorne “declared that the very foundations of the social order were threatened” by such defiance to scriptural authority.¹⁸

While Southern Baptist theology was certainly important, there might have been other things that shaped Hawthorne’s views on women. In 1892, a year after he encountered Mattie Gordon, Hawthorne had to deal with Mary Elizabeth Lease, the “Kansas Firebrand” who urged her fellow Midwesterners to “raise less corn and more hell.” Lease was touring Georgia to raise support for the Populist party in the presidential election of 1892. She was scheduled to speak in Atlanta in September. On the Sunday prior to her talk, Hawthorne asked how Populists could “believe in the Bible” when they “employ a woman to

¹⁸ “The Woman’s Bible,” *AC*, 8 December 1895. For *The Woman’s Bible*, see Kathi Kern, *Mrs. Stanton’s Bible* (Ithaca, NY, 2001). “Harvey K. Newman, “The Role of Women in Atlanta’s Churches, 1865–1906,” *Atlanta Historical Journal* 23, no. 4 (Winter 1979): 17.

stump the state and tussle with men in wordy contests before excited, howling and drunken multitudes.” But to this Pauline objection, he added a sectional argument, blaming “New England infidels . . . , inspired mainly by unbelief in the eternal verities of the word of God,” for creating an atmosphere that led to women like Lease.¹⁹

He continued this theme later in a sermon on “The Ideal Woman.” The woman who anointed Jesus’ head with oil, he said, was a “woman in her divinely appointed sphere, and in her highest estate This woman served and honored Christ in a true and womanly manner. She did not mount a rostrum and make a speech.” Hawthorne again used Mary Elizabeth Lease as a counter-example: “Who would call the notorious Mrs. Lease, of Kansas, a servant of God? Where is there a decent, and self-respecting man or woman in Georgia who saw her going through this state making stump speeches for a political party that did not feel humiliated and ashamed?”²⁰ Here Hawthorne developed the sectional theme a bit differently: we in Georgia know an “ideal woman” when we see her, and Lease is clearly not one.

Sectionalism trumped the scriptural argument in July 1893, as Hawthorne began his tenth year at Atlanta’s First Baptist church, when he again criticized the North: “The saints of the Boston Unitarian school have attempted to make a new gospel by denying the divinity of Christ and the inspiration of the scriptures, and accepting so much of the morality of the old gospel as does not conflict with their own creation.” Here he offered Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of the Christian Science movement, as an example. “Mrs. Eddy rises up in that same city, so prolific of new

¹⁹ “A Red-Hot Roasting,” AC, 19 September 1892.

²⁰ “The Ideal Woman,” AC, 11 December 1893.

religion[,] and offers a gospel which says that sin, and disease, and pain, and death, are not real, but imaginary. This latest of the new gospels is not apt to make much progress so long as the world can furnish three witnesses—a man with a conscience, a man with a toothache, and a man in a coffin.”²¹ Eddy represented a double threat to Hawthorne; not only was she an outspoken woman, she had established a new religion that might threaten the South’s old-fashioned faith.

While scriptural authority was certainly important in explaining Hawthorne’s views on women, the above examples, with their comparisons of New England and Georgia, suggest an explanation that goes beyond Paul’s letters: the sectionalism of the Lost Cause. The Lost Cause was a re-telling of southern history that defended the society of the Old South, justified secession and war, and explained the Confederacy’s military defeat. Historian Alan T. Nolan identified the most important “claims” of the Lost Cause: slavery had not been the cause of the war; slaves had been happy, faithful, and well-treated; secession was legal and justifiable; abolitionists were troublemakers; and so forth. Undergirding the Lost Cause was the idea that the South’s cause, though lost, had been noble and correct; southern civilization was superior to that of the North, and it should be remembered and revered.²²

In his history of Southern Baptists in the late nineteenth century, Rufus Spain noted that while “Baptists accepted the restoration of the Union [after the Civil War] in good faith, they were not prepared to repudiate the Lost

²¹ “Tenth Anniversary,” AC, 3 July 1893.

²² Alan T. Nolan, “The Anatomy of the Myth,” in Gary W. Gallagher and Alan T. Nolan, eds., *The Myth of the Lost Cause and Civil War History* (Bloomington, IN, 2000), 15–19.

Cause and its heroes.”²³ Hawthorne occasionally spoke of those heroes—“The Great Men of the South,” to use the title of his commencement address at Emory College in 1886. “Monuments should be erected in their memory,” he said, “not only as a debt of justice to them, but to keep alive pure and patriotic sentiments in ourselves, and to serve as an inspiration to posterity.”²⁴

But for Hawthorne, the Lost Cause was more than just honoring southern “heroes.” He was much more likely to speak of it in terms of old and new, then and now, continuity and change—in general, looking back to a time before the Cause was Lost, emphasizing tradition, including “that old-time religion.” “We are living in an age in which there is a fierce conflict between the old and the new,” Hawthorne said. “There are men who are attempting to lead us away from the faith and practice of our fathers, and to commit us to a view of Christianity which contradicts every great fundamental doctrine of the Bible.” He complained of “new religionists” who “assert that a new era has dawned upon the world, and that new forces have come into the lives of men to take the place of the old faith. They tell us that we have outgrown the conditions which made the old faith a necessity.”²⁵

²³ Rufus B. Spain, *At Ease in Zion: Social History of Southern Baptists, 1865–1900* (Nashville, 1967), 21.

²⁴ “Our Colleges,” AC, 25 June 1886. He gave the same (or similar) talk to the Woman’s Christian Association of Atlanta a few months later. “Dead Heroes,” AC, 24 September 1886.

²⁵ Hawthorne, “The Old and the New in Religion,” in *An Unshaken Trust and Other Sermons* (Philadelphia, 1899), 221, 222, 224. Hawthorne originally preached a sermon with this title Atlanta in 1890 and again in 1892. “Church Services,” AC, 9 February 1890; “The Day for Thanks,” AC, 13 November 1892.

One manifestation of the Lost Cause was the idea that the South was the more Christian section; in fact, for many, Confederates were God's chosen people, while the North had wandered away from America's Christian tradition. In "Paul and the Women," Hawthorne asked where the New Woman—"self-willed, contentious, arrogant, noisy, combative, . . . a hideous monstrosity"—originated. His response: "It comes from the same region where every 'ism' that has cursed the country for the last century had its birth It comes from the birthplace of the New Theology, whose liberality is only another name for infidelity." Hawthorne notes that "this sunny Southland has been singularly free from that latitudinarianism in religious belief, and that irreverent spirit towards God's word, which have been the blight and mildew of other sections. There has been nothing in our Southern soil and atmosphere to give nutriment to these noxious weeds."²⁶

Hawthorne sometimes expressed admiration and respect for New England. In 1898, a couple years after he left Atlanta, he was invited to speak at the Boston Baptist Social Union. "Though I first saw the light of day beneath Southern skies and was brought up in a school of politics that looked with suspicion upon every movement and idea which emanated from this latitude," he began, "I cannot remember the time when I did not recognize and appreciate the energy, the thrift, the culture, the patriotism, the courage, and the unflinching moral integrity of the men and women of New England." Hawthorne's words were reminiscent of Henry Grady, the leading spokesman for the

²⁶ "Paul and the Women," 27, 28–30. For a discussion of various aspects of the term and image of the "New Woman," see Martha H. Patterson, *Beyond the Gibson Girl: Reimagining the American New Woman, 1895–1915* (Urbana, IL, 2005).

“New South,” who had brought a similar message of love and reconciliation to Boston nine years earlier.²⁷

But despite his occasional praise of New England, Hawthorne harbored a prejudice against the North, and while he sometimes sounded like Henry Grady, more frequently he echoed the sentiments of the *Biblical Recorder*, a Baptist newspaper published in North Carolina—“We are a different people, a different blood, a different climate, a different character, different customs, and we have largely a different work to do in this world.”²⁸ The last bit of that quotation reminds us of another Baptist whose work might shed light on Hawthorne’s views. Isaac Taylor Tichenor “envisioned Southern Baptists on the forefront of a spiritual battle being waged for the soul of the country and the world,” in the words of his biographer; in Tichenor’s own words, “From this land of ours shall go forth to the furthest nation the gospel’s joyful tidings, and the redemption of our own country becomes the redemption of the world.”²⁹

²⁷ “Hawthorne Speaks in Boston,” *AC*, 20 Oct. 1898; Hawthorne, *Present Feeling in the South toward the Federal Union and the People of the North* (N.p., n.d.), 2. Henry Grady’s speech to Boston’s Bay State Club in 1889 is in *Joel Chandler Harris’ Life of Henry W. Grady, Including His Writings and Speeches* (New York, 1890), 199–207. Hawthorne’s line about “[first seeing] the light of day beneath Southern skies” echoes the words that Hawthorne said at Grady’s memorial service: “Henry Grady was a southerner and a Georgian. But while he knew best and loved most that section where he first saw the light of day . . . , he was the child of the American republic . . . and the friend and brother of every man, woman, child on American soil.” “The Memorial Service,” *AC*, 30 December 1889.

²⁸ *Biblical Recorder*, 12 July 1899, quoted in Paul Harvey, *Redeeming the South: Religious Cultures and Racial Identities Among Southern Baptists, 1865–1925* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1997), 17.

²⁹ Michael E. Williams Sr., *Isaac Taylor Tichenor: The Creation of the Baptist New South* (Tuscaloosa, AL, 2005), 165–66. For Hawthorne’s relationship with Tichenor, see 150–52, 156.

Tichenor and Hawthorne believed in a regional version of American exceptionalism; they saw the South as a shining city on a hill, with Southern Baptists responsible for saving the rest of the nation and even the world.

Colin Chapell offers another layer to this understanding of the Lost Cause in his wonderfully titled book on southern religion and gender identity, *Ye That Are Men Now Serve Him*. In a discussion of muscular Christianity (the vague movement that sought to bring masculinity back to religion after the feminization of the mid-nineteenth century), Chapell quoted a sermon that Hawthorne preached in 1892 at Howard College, his alma mater, on the occasion of the school's semi-centennial celebration. The topic of his address was John the Baptist, "a *man* in the noblest sense, before he was a *preacher*," Hawthorne said; "This is God's order, and our disregard of it has let into the pulpit thousands of ecclesiastical parvenus, dudes and dead-beats." It is easy to imagine a connection in Hawthorne's mind between the decline of the Old South's manhood and the rise of the aggressive and northern-inspired New Women. As he said in this sermon, "Oh, that there were more muscularity in the manhood of our parvenus ministers!"³⁰

We can see these Lost Cause sectional ideas playing out in Hawthorne's biggest attack on the New Woman,

³⁰ Colin B. Chapell, *Ye That Are Men Now Serve Him: Radical Holiness Theology and Gender in the South* (Tuscaloosa, AL, 2016), 44 (emphasis added). The title is a line from the old hymn, "Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus." Hawthorne's sermon was reprinted in *Memorial Catalogue: Fiftieth Annual Catalogue and Register of Howard College* (Birmingham, AL, 1892), 57, 56. For muscular Christianity in the South, see Ted Ownby, *Subduing Satan: Religion, Recreation, and Manhood in the Rural South, 1865–1920* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1993). Ann Douglas's *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York, 1998) describes the context for the rise of Christian masculinity.

which came in 1895 when he campaigned to get women off bicycles and out of bloomers. It began with a sermon on July 21. We do not have the text of the sermon, but the *Constitution* provided a summary the next day. Hawthorne's text was from the Lord's Prayer: "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." He offered as an example a hypothetical young woman who sees a bicycle race and wishes to participate. "Swayed by this feeling," Hawthorne said, "she mounts a bicycle." Then, "she realizes her disastrous mistake and begins to suffer from the unenviable notoriety of her indelicate and unwomanly conduct She says that it was her love of exciting pleasure that tempted her to take the false step. She is mistaken. It was not the love of pleasure, but a personal devil." "The 'new woman' movement was born of infidelity and it will end in a repudiation of the God of the Bible by every woman in sympathy with the movement," he explained; "the same women who are at the forefront of the battle against the Bible are the champions of the 'new dress and bicycle craze.'"³¹

Before the week was over, Hawthorne said that he would preach again and more explicitly on the issue on July 28, the next Sunday. "The public appetite has been given a keen edge by the newspaper controversies of the past week," the *Constitution* reported, and it predicted that "a large congregation will gather to hear him."³² He did not disappoint. His title was "Satanic Spiders Who Weave Webs for Human Flies." "Many satanic spiders in Atlanta have spun beautiful webs in which to catch and destroy unsuspecting flies," he said. Those webs could be so tempting—and so dangerous.

³¹ "Summer Sermons," AC, 22 July 1895; "Shall Women Ride?" AC, 26 July 1895.

³² "All's Well," AC, 28 July 28 1895.

The characteristic weakness of the new woman is to covet the prerogatives, honors and pleasures of men, and just so far as she yields to this temptation she degrades herself, and becomes despicable in the eyes of all people of virtuous sensibilities. If there is any object on earth which makes jubilee in the realm of unclean sprits it is a 'society woman' in masculine habiliments straddling a bicycle, and preparing to make an exhibition of her immodesty on the thoroughfares of a great city.

Hawthorne had to take on the battle, he said, because the newspapers wrote nothing of "the morality and the modesty of the practice," nothing of "husbands . . . who are tired of putting their children to bed and of waiting until the noon of the night [i.e., midnight] for their bicycle riding wives to come home." Hawthorne blamed "the old Boston spider, who is more responsible for this mischief than any other creature."³³ In this sermon, Hawthorne joined his anti-northern sentiment (satanic spiders!) with a desire for a more masculine Christianity, one in which husbands would not enable their bicycle-riding wives.

Not everyone in Atlanta welcomed Hawthorne's efforts to save women from those satanic spiders. A group of women rode their bicycles up and down the street in front of the preacher's residence in protest for several weeks, and a number of newspapers weighed in on the matter, most saying that Hawthorne should leave the women alone.³⁴

³³ "Bad Side of Cycling," *AC*, 29 July 1895.

³⁴ "Rode for the Doctor," *AC*, 26 July 1895. The *Constitution* frequently reprinted excerpts from other newspapers under headlines

Among Hawthorne's supporters was the president of the Woman's Rescue League, who praised Hawthorne and submitted a resolution "condemn[ing] bicycle riding by young girls and women" because "thirty per cent of the 'fast girls' that have come to the Rescue League for aid were bicycle riders at one time."³⁵ Hawthorne kept at it. On August 11, he preached a sermon titled "The Christian Minister and His Critics," which the *Constitution* described as "a defiant stand in the matter of his opposition to the 'new woman,' her fads and foibles." A month later, he asked the *Constitution* to reprint an excerpt from a speech by Dr. Forbes Winslow, "the famous London alienist" (psychiatrist), who had argued that both bicycle and horseback riding "are too violent for the physical construction of women, and produce such conditions as lead to abnormal appetites and desires."³⁶ Hawthorne's campaign against women on bicycles has been remembered from time to time, usually to ridicule or criticize it, but without reference to satanic spiders (or Hawthorne's sectionalism in general).³⁷

such as "Dr. Hawthorne's Crusade" and "Bicycles and Bloomers"; see, for example, 5, 8, 12, 15, and 19 August 1895.

³⁵ "Extinguishing the Race," *AC*, 6 August 1895. The Woman's Rescue League tried to help "fallen women" (unwed mothers and other women who had engaged in sex outside of marriage). Ironically, the group was based in Boston.

³⁶ "He Does Not Care," *AC*, 12 August 1895; "Women and Wheels," *AC*, 9 September 1895.

³⁷ See, for example, Autumn Stanley, *Raising More Hell and Fewer Dahlias: The Public Life of Charlotte Smith, 1840–1917* (Bethlehem, PA, 2009), 167–68; "Women on the Move: Cycling and the Rational Dress Movement," <https://cyclehistory.wordpress.com/2015/01/30/women-on-the-move-cycling-and-the-rational-dress-movement/>; Jim Harmon, "The Devil Rode into Missoula on a Bicycle and Women Took Flight," <https://missoulacurrent.com/opinion/2019/>

In *Baptized in Blood*, Charles Reagan Wilson described J. William Jones, the Baptist minister who led the opposition to seating women in the 1885 SBC meeting mentioned at the beginning of this article, as the “Evangelist of the Lost Cause.” Jones, like Hawthorne a chaplain in the Confederate army, served for a dozen years after the war as secretary of the neo-Confederate Southern Historical Society (and editor of its *Papers*, “the most important publication of the Lost Cause”) and was an officer of both the United Confederate Veterans and the Confederate Memorial Association. In the pulpit and with his pen, Jones was one of the best-known and influential apologists for the Lost Cause. Unlike Jones, Rev. J. B. Hawthorne has been largely forgotten, though with his emphasis on that old-time religion, the New Woman that he so dreaded, and gender roles in the sectional context of Boston’s satanic spiders, he is a good example of the persistence and pervasiveness of the Lost Cause.³⁸

04/harmons-histories-women-bicycle. Michael Taylor discusses the larger issue of the bicycle in Protestant thought of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in “Rapid Transit to Salvation: American Protestants and the Bicycle in the Era of the Cycling Craze,” *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 9, no. 3 (July 2019): 337–63.

³⁸ Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865–1920* (Athens, GA, 1980), 119–38 (quote on 123). Hawthorne and Jones both wrote introductions for Rev. J. L. Underwood’s Lost Cause-infused *The Women of the Confederacy* (New York, 1906).