

## The Battle for Truth and Southern Heritage

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By Mike Scruggs

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The statue of Robert E. Lee still stands unshrouded in Charlottesville VA. It is currently protected by Virginia State law, but liberal politicians and activists are suing to remove it. Public opinion polls

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in 2017 favored keeping the statue in place. The media coverage of protests to stop its removal in 2017 was sickening in its willful ignorance and dishonesty.  
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### The American Iliad Continues

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On April 9, 1865, a gallant Union officer went out of his way to honor the surrendering Confederate troops at Appomattox. To his great and everlasting credit, Union Lieutenant General Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, the heroic defender of Little Round Top at Gettysburg, a brave, honest, and compassionate Christian soldier, had his Union troops give a salute of arms to the surrendering Confederate regiments as they passed in final review before the Union victors. They had been their adversaries in war, but now these Union soldiers, who had made blood sacrifices of their own, saluted the courage and honor of the defeated Confederate soldiers. The Confederate soldiers believed in the justice and righteousness of their cause, and when the surrender at Appomattox came, they gave up their regimental banners with tears and weeping.

How different that day from the present, when many, both Northern and Southern politicians, stand by while ignorant mobs destroy Southern monuments, and they themselves respond with ignorant virtue-signaling and defamations without knowledge of the history, causes, and heroes they slander. False narratives about the Civil War, slavery, and Reconstruction are prevalent in American academia and media. Even conservative Fox News commentators and guests sometimes ignorantly offer outrageous distortions of Southern history and viewpoints. Ambitious political demagogues on the Left continually use these false narratives to advance their campaign of lies, disorder, and hatred against not only the South but American symbols and culture as well.

Our own honor demands that we respect and revere the memory of our fallen heroes and all who served in that great struggle beneath the Southern Cross. These words from South Carolina journalist and poet Henry Timrod (1829-1867) should move our hearts to resolve:

**“Sleep sweetly in your humble graves, sleep martyrs of a fallen cause,  
Though yet no marble column craves the pilgrim here to pause.**

**In seeds of laurel in the earth, the blossom of your fame is blown,  
And somewhere, waiting for its birth, the shaft is in the stone.**

**Meanwhile, behalf the tardy years, which keep in trust your storied tombs,  
Behold! Your sisters bring their tears, and these memorial blooms.**

**Small tributes! But your shades will smile, more proudly on these wreaths today,  
Than when some cannon-moulded pile shall overlook this bay.**

**Stoop, angels, thither from the skies! There is no holier ground  
Than where defeated valor lies, by mourning beauty crowned.”**

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To Southern soldiers and their families the Confederate Battle Flag symbolized their Christian heritage and resistance to tyranny. They were fighting for the right of Southern States and their people to determine their own political destiny.  
By Mike Scruggs

The Confederate Battle Flag, sometimes called the Southern Cross, is held in disfavor by many who are unfamiliar with its origin and true symbolism. Many have been taught to treat it as an object of moral horror and political infamy. But all this is based on ignorance perpetuated to cover up the real and most important political and economic Northern motivations for war and the deplorable conduct of many Union generals against Southern civilians.

Tariff revenue and trade issues drove the Lincoln Administration and Northern commercial interests to prevent the lawful secessions of Southern States at all costs. British political leaders, newspapers, and writers saw this clearly. The war was about unjust tariffs that served Northern majority interests but terribly exploited the South.

Karl Marx, like most European socialists of the time favored the North. In an 1861 article published in England, he articulated very well what the major British newspapers, *the Times*, *the Economist*, and *Saturday Review*, had been saying:

**“The war between the North and South is a tariff war. The war, is further, not for any principle, does not touch the question of slavery, and in fact turns on the Northern lust for power.”**

There had been extreme tension between the Northern majority and Southern minority in Congress at least since the 1824 Tariff. The Tariffs of Abominations in 1828 and 1830 resulted in South Carolina's vote for Nullification of the tariffs as unconstitutional in 1832 because of the outrageous disparity of the tax burden on Southern States. President Andrew Jackson then ordered Federal troops to enforce the tariffs in South Carolina. Federal troops and South Carolina militias came very near armed conflict before a compromise tariff was worked out in 1833 by Senators John C. Calhoun of South Carolina (formerly Jackson's VP) and Henry Clay of Kentucky. The Morrill Tariff of 1860-1861 would more than double the tax burden on the South, which was paying over 80 percent of the U.S. tax burden while receiving less than 25 percent of the benefits. The cotton producing Southern states felt they had no honorable political and economic choice but to secede.

Writing in December of 1861 in a London weekly publication, the famous English author, Charles Dickens, who was a strong opponent of slavery, said these things about the war going on in America:

**“The Northern onslaught upon slavery is no more than a piece of specious humbug disguised to conceal its desire for economic control of the United States.”**

According to President Woodrow Wilson, among other things, one of the great scholars of

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American history, the role of slavery become distorted and exaggerated as a cause of the “Civil War because:  
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**“It was necessary to put the South at a moral disadvantage by transforming the contest from a war waged against states fighting for their independence into a war waged against states fighting for the maintenance and extension of slavery...”**

William Miles, the designer of the Confederate Battle Flag indicated its underlying symbolism in an 1861 letter:

“The flag should be a token of humble acknowledgement of God and be a public testimony to the world that our trust is in the Lord our God.”

This meaning was widely understood by Confederate soldiers and the Southern people.

More recent attacks on Southern heritage, including not only its famed banners, but also its heroes, monuments, and literature are part of a widespread Cultural Marxist campaign of defamation and virtue-signaling to gain the favor of minority and younger voters at the expense of truth. This distortion of the truth for political purposes also resonates well with the politically correct captives of academia, the mainstream media, and secularized clergy.

Shortly before his death at the Battle of Franklin (Tennessee) on November 30, 1864, Irish-born Confederate Major General Patrick Cleburne warned his Confederate troops of the consequence of defeat:

**“Surrender means that the history of this heroic struggle will be written by the enemy; that our youth will be trained by Northern school teachers; will learn from Northern school books their version of the War; will be impressed by all the influences of history and education to regard our gallant dead as traitors, and our maimed veterans as fit subjects for derision.”**

In 1882, the Rev. Robert L. Dabney, renowned scholar, former Confederate chaplain, and a former Chief of Staff for Stonewall Jackson, warned the graduating class of Hamden Sidney College in Virginia:

**Will you bury true history whose years are those of the God of Truth?”**

The Reverend James Power Smith, the last surviving member of Stonewall Jackson’s staff warned us in 1907:

“No cowardice on any battlefield could be as base and shameful as the silent acquiescence in the scheme which was teaching the children in their homes and schools that the commercial value of slavery was the cause of the war, that prisoners of war held in the South were starved and treated

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with barbarous inhumanity that Jefferson Davis and Robert E. Lee were traitors to their country and false to their oaths, that the young men who left everything to resist invasion, and climbed the slopes of Gettysburg and died willingly on a hundred fields were rebels against a righteous government.

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Ludwell H. Johnson titled his book on the Civil War, *The American Iliad*. Several more recent authors have recognized that comparison in cultural status.

In 1867, Robert E. Lee received a Special Translation of the *Iliad* from British writer, Philip S. Worsley. Confederate Memorial Day is coming on May 10, so I offer two of Worsley's stanzas that capture the spirit of his comparison.

*Thy Troy is fallen—thy dear land*

*Is marred beneath the spoiler's heel—*

*I cannot trust my trembling hand*

*To write the things I feel.*

*The widow's moan, the orphan's wail,*

*Come round thee; but in truth be strong!*

*Eternal Right, though all else fail,*

*Can never be made wrong.*

William Cullen Bryant (1794-1887), a New England writer, eloquently phrased thoughts similar to that of Dabney and Worsley:

“Truth crushed to the ground will rise again. The eternal years of God are hers.”