A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF GONE WITH THE WIND
and UNCLE TOM'S CABIN: part I...WAR AND RELIGION

by Dorothy Dufour

introduction

The all time best selling American novel of the nineteenth century was Uncle Tom's Cabin or, Life Among the Lowly by Harriet Beecher Stowe. It appeared in serialized form in the "National Era", an abolitionist newspaper, prior to it's publication in book form. In the first half of the nineteenth century, abolitionists were considered a slightly lunatic fringe. Nevertheless, when Uncle Tom's Cabin was published in 1852 it was an immediate success. It sold so well that eight new power presses kept running day and night were hardly able to keep up with the demand.

Gone With the Wind by Margaret Mitchell was the best selling American novel for two decades after its publication. There have been twenty some odd million copies sold. First published in 1936, it was purchased for the movies by MGM in 1937. As a movie it grossed record breaking box office proceeds. It has been seen by well over a quarter of a million people. Winner of ten Academy Awards, "Gone With the Wind" is said to be unsurpassed.

Both Uncle Tom's Cabin and Gone With the Wind were stupendous economic successes. They sold well. They achieved international renown. But neither is considered a critical literary success. These novels are not on the lists of literary merit.

This in itself generates many interesting questions: Why aren't they considered to be of literary merit? Who does the judging? What are the criteria of literary merit? etc.

But it will not be within the scope of this work to answer these questions.

I would like only to point out that the two novels received similar treatment from the reading public on the one hand, and again similar, though opposite, treatment from the literary establishment on the other hand.

- 5 -
Harriet Elizabeth Beecher was born in Connecticut in 1811. She was the daughter of Reverend Lyman Beecher, a well known minister. And she was the sister of Henry Ward Beecher, also a man of the cloth. The family went to Cincinnati to live when Harriet was eighteen. It was there that she married Calvin Ellis Stowe. He was a professor in the Lane Theological Seminary. She lived there eighteen years, just across the Ohio River from the slave state of Kentucky.

Harriet Beecher Stowe was the mother of eight children, five of whom were born in the first seven years of marriage. She had just had a new baby when she was writing Uncle Tom's Cabin. One of the recurrent themes in that novel was the forced breaking up of Negro families, and especially the forced separation of mother and child, which she felt to be a very inhumane practice. Her novel was an attack on the practice of slavery.

Margeret Mitchell was born in 1900 in Atlanta, Georgia. She went North for her college education to Smith College, the second oldest women's college in the country. She worked as a newspaper reporter until she married in her mid-twenties. Her family disapproved of her first marriage. She got a divorce. She married again to a Mr. Marsh. She had been a success at writing short pieces of fiction, but it wasn't until she sprained her ankle and was forced to stay in a lot that she decided to attempt her epic novel, Gone With the Wind.

She did not, herself, experience the slavery system or the Civil War, but she heard a lot about it from the people of her parents' and grandparents' generations. Her novel was, in a way, a defense of slavery. She did not say she wanted to reinstate slavery, but one of her recurrent themes was that the Negro was better off under slavery than he was in the years that followed the Civil War.

A back to back reading of these two novels, Gone With the Wind and Uncle Tom's Cabin, is a very interesting experience.

Much of what is said in one is diametrically opposed in the other. If the cloth of life were of simple weave, when one standpoint was right the other would have to be wrong and vice versa. But whether it be elegant brocade or knobby homespun, the cloth of life is neither simple nor flat...or at least, if it's going to be the best selling novel of its time, it isn't.

The most interesting discovery to be made in a comparative reading of these two novels is
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF GONE WITH THE WIND and UNCLE TOM’S CABIN: part I---WAR AND RELIGION

that diametrically opposed standpoints can both contain very large portions of truth. Truth as seen by the author. But it is always the responsibility of the reader to interpret rather then to swallow whole. And it is in this sense that comparative readings can be very informative. This paper is incomplete, however, because it only gives the views of white people and not black.

Part I
WAR and RELIGION
or
Why Men Fight as Seen in Uncle Tom's Cabin and Gone With the Wind.

Dr. Meade’s brows were thunderous. “Nothing may be sacred to you, young man,” he said, in the voice he always used for making speeches. “But there are many things sacred to the patriotic men and ladies of the south. And the freedom of our land from the usurper is one and States'Rights is another and—”

Rhett looked lazy and his voice had a silky, almost bored, note.

“All wars are sacred,” he said. “To those who have to fight them. If the people who started the wars didn’t make them sacred, who would be foolish enough to fight? But no matter what rallying cries the orators give to the idiots who fight, no matter what noble purposes they assign to wars, there is never but one reason for war. And that is money. All wars in reality are money squabbles. But so few people realize it. Their ears are too full of bugles and drums and the fine words of stay-at-home orators. Sometimes the rallying cry is ‘Save the Tomb of Christ from the Heathen!’, sometimes it’s ‘Down with Popery!’ and sometimes ‘Liberty!’ and sometimes ‘Cotton, Slavery, and States’Rights!’”

(Rhett Butler’s ideas on war in the novel Gone With the Wind. Italics mine.)

“So, you are the little woman that wrote the little book that started the Civil War.”

(President Lincoln’s words to Mrs. Stowe upon being introduced to her.)
The Civil War can be described as the most characteristic religious episode in the whole of American history since its roots and causes were not economic or political but religious and moral. It was a case of a moral principle tested to destruction—not, indeed, of the principle, but of those who opposed it. But in the process Christianity itself was placed under almost intolerable strain.

(A History of Christianity by Paul Johnson. 1976 Italics mine.)

...it is impossible to speak of purely economic factors as the main causes behind the war, just as it is impossible to speak of the war as mainly a consequence of moral differences over slavery. Slavery was the moral issue that aroused much of the passion on both sides. Without the direct conflict of ideals over slavery, the events leading up to the war and the war itself are totally incomprehensible.

(Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy by Barrington Moore Jr. 1966. Italics mine.)

The novel Uncle Tom's Cabin is held to be of great historical importance. It gave a religious impetus to the Civil War. To paraphrase Rhett Butler, it made the war sacred.

Mrs. Stowe published her now world famous novel in 1852, nine years before the war. Could she have foreseen the war or the injustices of the reconstruction period that followed? Perhaps all she could see was that slavery was unjust and that freedom would be better.

Margaret Mitchell's heroine in Gone with the Wind argues that the Negro people were better off under slavery and that the freedom given them during the reconstruction period was not at all beneficial but rather destructive to their well being.

To trace the intellectual struggles of principle vs. practice in regards to slavery and the Christian ethic in the North and then to trace the results of the moral descisions made in the North and how they were imposed on the South is to witness an important watershed in
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF GONE WITH THE WIND and UNCLE TOM'S CABIN: part I—WAR AND RELIGION

American history.

The most historically correct way to go about this would be to follow in the footsteps of historians and read their analyses of the situation. But the emotions of the people who lived these hard times, the pulse, the heartbeat, can also and perhaps best be seen through the novels, diaries, or letters of the time.

Moreover, Abraham Lincoln's words to Mrs. Stowe upon being introduced to her are now famous. He told her that it was her book that started the Civil War. This impromptu comment was of no little importance.

But what, then, was the main theme of Uncle Tom's Cabin? In short Mrs. Stowe said that keeping slaves was a sin and that the responsibility of that sin fell not only on the slaveholders, but on all the citizens of the Nation in as far as everyone was responsible for the laws of the Nation.

Let us linger for a few pages upon Mrs. Stowe's view of slavery as a sin.

Upon hearing that Tom, the loyal foreman of Mr. Shelby's farm, and Henry, the five year old son of Eliza, are to be sold South and thereby separated from their families:

Mrs. Shelby stood like one stricken.

"...I was a fool to think I could make good out of such a deadly evil. It's a sin to hold a slave under laws like ours,—I always felt it was,...I thought, by kindness, and by care and instruction, I could make the condition of mine better than freedom—fool that I was!

"... you know, I never thought slavery was right—never felt willing to own slaves."

Mrs. Shelby is portrayed as a good Christian lady of the South. The implication is that if one is good and if one is Christian, one will disapprove of slavery even if one is a Southern.

Eliza, the much favored slave of Mrs. Shelby, has decided to flee with her son, Henry, in order to avoid the separation that his sale to the slave trader, Haley, implies. Haley pursues them with bloodhounds. Meanwhile, back at the Kentucky farm, Mr. Shelby chides Mrs. Shelby.

"...you are all cold and in a shiver; you allow yourself to feel too much."

"Feel too much! Am I not a woman,—a mother? Are we not responsible to God for this poor girl? My God! Lay not this sin to our charge."

— 9 —
“What sin, Emily? You see yourself that we have only done what we are obliged to do.”

“There’s an awful feeling of guilt about it though,” said Mrs. Shelby, “I can’t reason it away.”

And what is the penalty for such a sin? Who shall be made to pay for this sin?

For the answer to this we can contemplate the Bible with August St. Clare, Uncle Tom’s new master in New Orleans, as he reads the following passage from Matthew for Tom:

“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all his upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats.” St. Clare read on in an animated voice, till he came to the last of the verses.

“Then shall the king say unto them on his left hand, ‘Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not, I was sick, and in prison and ye visited me not.’ Then shall they answer unto Him, ‘Lord when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison and did not minister unto Thee?’ Then shall He say unto them, ‘Inasmuch a as ye did it not to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it not to me’”

(Matthew 25:31-46)

St. Clare goes on to give his opinion of the text.

“What a sublime conception is that of a last judgement!” said he, “a righting of all the wrongs of ages!—a solving of all moral problems, an unanswerable wisdom! It is, indeed, a wonderful image!”

“It is a fearful one to us,” said Miss Ophelia.

“…One should have expected some terrible enormities charged to those who are excluded from heaven, as the reason; but no, —they are condemned for not doing positive good, as if that included every possi-
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF GONE WITH THE WIND and UNCLE TOM'S CABIN: part I—WAR AND RELIGION

ble harm.”

“Perhaps,” said Miss Ophelia, “it is impossible for a person who does
no good not to do harm.”

In Uncle Tom’s Cabin, who is being accused of this sin of neglect? Miss Ophelia, the Ver-
mont cousin of August St. Clare, most certainly does judge her southern cousin to be “shift-
less”. (i.e. lazy and without the guts needed to do the right thing.) For Miss Ophelia, a woman
who never lets anything stand in the path of duty, “shiftlessness” is the great sin.

On the other hand, however, Miss Ophelia is judged by Topsy, the Negro girl whom St.
Clare has put in her charge. Miss Ophelia does her duty. She tries to teach Topsy to be a
Christian. She loves Topsy in principle. But “She can’t bar me,” Topsy cries, “cause I’m a nigger!—she’d ‘s soon have a toad touch her!” Miss Ophelia can’t bare to have Topsy touch her.

And, as an aside, it must be added that in Gone With the Wind a similar accusation is
brought against Northerners by Big Sam, the “best foreman Tara ever had”. After he returns
from his stay in the North, he tells Scarlett that no Yankee woman would be likely to nurse
him if he ever got pneumonia. He wants to return to Tara where he knows from experience
that Scarlett’s mother, the mistress of the plantation, will nurse him with her own hands.

And so it goes, back and forth: Who’s doing right and who’s doing wrong? The Northerners
point fingers at the Southerners and the Southerners point fingers at the Northerners.

In Mrs. Stowe’s novel there was an honest attempt to show many sides of the picture: to
portray some of the Southerners as good Christians (i.e. Mrs. Shelby, etc.), and to point out the
failings of some of the Northerners (i.e. Miss Ophelia, etc.). So much so in fact that a friend of
Mrs. Stowe’s wrote her a letter telling her that the Southerners would most probably acknow-
ledge her book, wheras, the abolitionists would be sure to disapprove of it as being too mild
in its dealings with slave holders. The outcome was, however, just the opposite. The extreme
abolitionists accepted it. The entire South rose up against it.

After reading about the last judgement, St. Clare goes on to say:

“My view of Christianity is such that I think no man can consistent-
ly profess it without throwing the whole weight of his being against
this monstrous system of injustice that lies at the foundation of all our
society (that is to say, slavery); and, if need be, sacrificing himself in
battle. That is, I mean that I could not be a Christian otherwise, though

- 11 -
I have certainly had intercourse with a great many enlightened and Christian people who did no such thing; and I confess that the apathy of religious people on this subject, their want of perception of wrongs that filled me with horror, have engendered in me more scepticism than any other thing.” (Italics, mine.)

In other words, a true Christian would even go to war to crush the system of slavery. Moreover, people who call themselves Christian, but do nothing to stop slavery, in effect cause people like St. Clare to doubt Christianity, and are, the thereby, guilty of yet another sin.

Is Mrs. Stowe, thereby a war monger?

It must be observed that this “sacrificing himself in battle” idea is proposed by St. Clare, a fallen away Christian. He proposes it for Christians to do. If one is really a Christian one will fight for what one believes in. In St. Clare’s own words, however, “One can see, you know, very easily, how others ought to be martyrs.”

Compare this statement with Rhett Butler’s on page 3 of this paper. He says “the rallying cries” are made by “stay-at-home orators.”

But to repeat my question, is Mrs. Stowe advocating war?

In order to answer this, let us now examine the role of the pacifist Quakers in Uncle Tom’s Cabin. And let us note again in passing that it is part of the genius of her work that she presents several different sides to every question.

At one point George Harris, a run away slave, and Simon, his Quaker host, discuss the use of violence . . . whether killing is or isn’t sometimes justifiable. Simon pointing to George’s pistols says:

“…be not over hasty with these,—young blood is hot.”

“I will attack no man,” said George. “All I ask of this country is to be left alone, and I will go out peaceably; but ... am I going to stand by and see them take my wife and sell her, when God has given me a pair of strong arms to defend her? No, God help me! I’ll fight to the last breath, before they shall take my wife and son. Can you blame me?”

…Would not even you, sir, do the same in my place?”

- 12 -
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF GONE WITH THE WIND and UNCLE TOM'S CABIN: part I—WAR AND RELIGION

"I pray that I be not tried," said Simon; The flesh is weak."

In the person of Simon, we witness an example of the Quaker non-violence belief and the Quaker belief that prayer is important in counteracting the weakness of the flesh...which in this case is the desire to kill. George Harris presents another position: A man, in order to protect his wife and child, must sometimes commit murder ... and in a case such as this, as in the case of self-defense, homicide is justifiable.

Mrs. Stowe's portrayal of the Quakers and their belief in pacifism is based on her obvious respect for them. She certainly respects and sympathizes with George Harris' views as well. His views are pre-christian, or, if you will, universal, in that they are basic to people of all faiths.

Historically, Mrs. Stowe's book acted as a lightening rod. It took up various aspects of slavery. Argued them to be sinful. And placed the responsibility for this sin on all the citizens of the Nation. Her book was an important spark...a catalyst to the Civil War and is historically recognized as such. It put God on the Yankee side.

The position on slavery expressed by Margaret Mitchell's heroines and heroes was, of course, quite different. But for the Southerners too the war was sacred. Or it was made to be sacred. "All wars are sacred to those who have to fight them. If the people who started the wars didn't make them sacred, who would be foolish enough to fight them?"

Now to reiterate my question: Was Mrs. Stowe a war monger? Definitely not. But why, then did Lincoln say upon meeting her for the first time, "So you are the little woman that wrote the little book that started the Civil War."

The answer to that question, I believe lies in the very definition of a literary work, in the definition of the novel genre itself. At the time Uncle Tom's Cabin was published, abolitionists were considered to be radical, too outspoken, and a little crazy. In other words, the newspaper articles, public speeches or abolitionist pamphlets they were putting out did not get across to the minds and hearts of the populace.

In a novel, however, the human drama comes to center stage. In Uncle Tom's cabin not only were the arguments for and against slavery presented from many angles, but they were given the blood, sweat, and tears of classical tragedy and were, moreover, interlaced with the hearty laughter of comic relief. This book is funny. The reader will laugh as well as cry. Many people bought the book and read it. It became the best selling American novel of the nineteenth century.
No one can question the fact that Mrs. Stowe’s motives in writing this novel were deeply rooted in her religious beliefs. Some criticize her for having too much religion in the book. But no one will deny that this book influenced the minds and hearts of many people. Even a rapid reading of this novel will show that it portrays the system of slavery as sinful. Thereby making the emancipation of the Negro a holy cause, sanctioned by God in heaven.

Let us now turn our attention to Margaret Mitchell’s Gone With the Wind.

The Civil War and its aftermath are the stage for this epic drama. The point of view is Southern, not Northern.

If the Northerners had God on their side, what could the Southerners do? Weren’t they, after all, Christians too?

The South Carolina Baptist Association produced a biblical defense of slavery in 1822, and in 1844 John England, Bishop of Charleston, provided a similar one for standard biblical texts on negro inferiority, patriarchal and Mosaic acceptance of servitude, and of course St. Paul on obedience to masters. Both sides could, and did, hurl texts at each other. ... But ... the bulk of Christian opinion and teaching had been anti-slavery for more than a millenium, ... Christianity was the one great religion which had always declared the diminution, if not the final elimination, of slavery to be meritorious; and that no real cause for slavery could be constructed in good faith, from Christian scripture. The fact that Southerners from a variety of Christian churches were prepared to do so, in the second half of the nineteenth century, was a shocking and flagrant stain on the faith.

(A History of Christianity by Paul Johnson, 1976)

Rhett Butler said: “All wars are sacred ... to those who have to fight them. If the people who started the wars didn’t make them sacred, who would be foolish enough to fight?”

But how was this achieved then on the Confederate side? Does being “sacred” necessarily have to be in reference to God or religion?

— 14 —
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF GONE WITH THE WIND and UNCLE TOM'S CABIN: part I—WAR AND RELIGION

The answer to this is: No, not always.

The trappings of religion can sometimes be called into play. The heros of the war can wear the gowns, so to speak, of religious righteousness. They can be venerated at the altars of justice.

(Gone With the Wind chapter IX) In Atlanta, a bazaar is being held to raise money for the Cause (note the capital "C"). Scarlett dressed in widow’s black, is helping out by tending to a little inconspicuous booth at the end of the hall. At the other end of the hall “hung large pictured of President Davis and Georgia’s own “Little Alec” Stephens, Vice-president of the Confederacy. Above them was an enormous flag and beneath them, on longtables ... (were) ferns, banks of roses ... gladioli ... nasturiums ... hollyhocks ... Among (the flowers) candles burned serenly like altar fires.

But Scarlett, a fallen away Catholic who prided herself on her common sense “sat and looked glumly around the room. Even the banked flowers below the pictures of Mr. Davis and Mr. Stephens displeased her.”

“It looks like an altar, “she sniffed. “And the way they all carry on about those two, they might as well be the Father and the Son!” Then smitten with sudden fright at her irreverence, She began hastily to cross herself by way of apology but caught herself in time.

“Well, it’s true, “she argued with her conscience. “Everybody carries on like they were holy and they aren’t anything but men, and mighty unattractive looking ones at that.”

The use of the above mentioned flowers and candles give a religious allure to the pictures of President Davis and Vice-President Stephens. People didn’t really believe them to be gods as Scarelett insinuates, but many seemed to have believed that their words were “Truth” and anything else was heresy. Scarlett is well aware of this fact and resolves not to express her real ideas for fear of reprisal. But she does experience a moment of doubt before she can make this resolution. She does for an instant think that her heresy might be “sinful”.

After the rendition of the confederate war song “Bonnie Blue Flag” Scarlett turned to see Melanie standing “with her hands clasped to her breast, her eyes closed, and tiny tears oozing from the corners.”

There was a deep almost fanatic glow in her eyes that for a moment lit up her plain face and made it beautiful.

— 15 —
The same look was on the faces of all the women as the song ended. ...

They loved their men, they believed in them, they trusted them to the last breaths of their bodies. ... Had there ever been such men as these since the first dawn of the world, so heroic, so reckless, so gallant, so tender? How could anything but overwhelming victory come to a Cause as just as theirs? A Cause they loved as much as they loved their men, ... A Cause to which they would sacrifice these men if need be, and bear their loss as proudly as the men bore their battle flags.

...

Every woman present was blazing with an emotion (Scarlett) did not feel. It bewildered her and depressed her.... the white heat of devotion to the Cause that was still shining on every face seemed-why, it just seemed silly!

In a sudden flash of self-knowledge that made her mouth pop open with astonishment, she realized that she did not share with these woman their fierce pride, their desire to sacrifice themselves and everything they had for the Cause. Before horror made her think: "No—no! I mustn’t think such things! They’re wrong—sinful," she knew the Cause meant nothing at all to her and that she was bored with hearing other people talk about it with that fanatic look in their eyes. The Cause didn’t seem sacred to her. The war didn’t seem to be a holy affair, but a nuisance that killed men senselessly and cost money and made luxuries hard to get....

She looked furtively around her, as the treacherous, blasphemous thoughts rushed through her mind, fearful that someone might find them written clearly upon her face. Oh, why couldn’t she feel like those other women! They were whole hearted and sincere in their devotion to the Cause. They really meant everything they said and did. And if anyone should suspect that she—No, no one must ever know! She must go on making a pretense of enthusiasm and pride in the Cause which she could not feel.

The other women were simply silly and hysterical with their talk of patriotism and the Cause...
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF GONE WITH THE WIND and UNCLE TOM’S CABIN: part I—WAR AND RELIGION

She, Scarlett O’Hara Hamilton, alone had good hard headed Irish sense. She wasn’t going to make a fool out of herself about the Cause, but neither was she going to make a fool out of herself by admitting her true feelings.

( Italics, mine. Gone With the Wind, choppes IX)

As we have seen the trappings of religion are used to enshrine Mr. Davis and Mr. Stehpens on their altar. Scarlett, the heretic, experiences pangs of conscience about her lack of devotion to the Cause. But what is it really that makes the Cause “sacred”? For the “silly” women that Scarlett feels so distant from, the answer is entwined with their love for the men who were fighting. One might conclude that if the men be noble and worthy of the love of their women, then the Cause they fight for must be “sacred” and thereby deserving of the “devotion” of said women.

But if this is how Melanie and many other Southern women felt about the Cause, how did the men feel, and why did they fight? Was the war sacred for them too?

“Oh, Rhett, why do there have to be wars? It would have been so much better for the Yankees to pay for the darkies—or even for us to give them the darkies for free of charge than to have this happen.”

“It isn’t the darkies, Scarlett. They’re just the excuse. There’ll always be wars because men love wars. Women don’t, but men do—yea, passing the love of women.”

This reason, “men love wars”, comes from the mouth of the cynic Rhett Butler. He, as is the case with Scarlett, however, doesn’t feel that wars are “sacred”. He credits that sanctification to the stay-at-home orators and politicians. And he, Rhett Butler, doesn’t, until the last few months of the war, partake in the fighting. When he finally does join the Confederate Army, he credits his irrational behavior to a sentimentality basic to all Southerners.

It is really Ashley Wilkes, the man whom Scarlett is secretly in love with, who captures the thoughts most basic to all soldiers of all times. In his letter to his wife, Melanie, he writes about what it is that is “sacred” to him ... about what it is that he loves enough to fight for.

Dear Wife,

... heavy thoughts lie on my heart and I will open my heart to you.

These summer nights, I lie awake, long after the camp is sleeping, and I look up at the stars and, over and over, I wonder, ‘Why are you here, Ashley Wilkes? What are you fighting for?’

— 17 —
Not for honor and glory, certainly, War is a dirty business and I do not like dirt. I am not a soldier and I do not like dirt. I am not a soldier and I have no desire to seek the bubble reputation even in the cannon's mouth. Yet, here I am at the wars—whom God never intended to be other than a studious country gentleman. For Melanie, bugles do not stir my blood nor drums entice my feet and I see too clearly that we have been betrayed, betrayed by our arrogant Southern selves, believing that one of us could whip a dozen Yankees, believing that king Cotton could rule the world. Betrayed, too, by words and catch phrases, prejudices and hatreds coming from the mouths of those highly placed, those men whom we respected and revered—’King Cotton, Slavery, States’ Rights, Damn Yankees.’

And so when I lie on my blanket and look up at the stars and say ‘What are you fighting for?’ I think of States’ Rights and cotton and the darkies and the Yankees whom we have been bred to hate, and I know that none of these is the reason why I am fighting. Instead, I see Twelve Oaks and remember how the moonlight slants across the white columns, and the unearthly way the magnolias look, opening under the moon, and how the climbing roses make the side porch shady even at the hottest noon. And I see Mother, sewing there, as she did when I was a little boy. And I hear the darkies coming home across the fields at dusk, tired and singing and ready for supper, and the sound of the windlass as the bucket goes down into the cool well. And there’s the long view down the road to the bottom lands in the twilight.

And that is why I’m here who have no love of death or misery or glory and no hatred for anyone. Perhaps that is what is called patriotism, love of home and country. But Melanie, it goes deeper than that. For, Melanie, these things I have named are but the symbols of the thing for which I risk my life, symbols of the kind of life I love. For I am fighting for the old days, the old ways I love so much but which, I fear, are now gone forever, no matter how the die may fall. For, win or lose, we lose just the same.
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF GONE WITH THE WIND and UNCLE TOM'S CABIN: part I—WAR AND RELIGION

I should not write those words. I should not even think them. But you have asked me what was in my heart, and the fear of defeat is there. Do you remember at the barbecue, the day our engagement was announced, that a man named Butler, a Charlestonian by his accent, nearly caused a fight by his remarks about the ignorance of Southerners? Do you recall how the twins wanted to shoot him because he said we had few foundries and factories, mills and ships, arsenals and machine shops? Do you recall how he said the Yankee fleet could bottle us up so tightly we could not ship out our cotton? He was right. We are fighting the Yankees' new rifles with Revolutionary War muskets, and soon the blockade will be too tight for even medical supplies to slip in. We should have paid heed to cynics like Butler who knew, instead of statesmen who felt—and talked. He said, in effect, that the South had nothing with which to wage war but cotton and arrogance. 'Our cotton is worthless and what he called arrogance is all that is left. But I call that arrogance matchless courage.

(Gone With the Wind chapter XI)

As we see here, another reason for fighting is love of home and country. But Ashley sees beyond this. He realizes that he is fighting to preserve a way of life, but understands that this way of life has ended. So, for him, whether the victory fall to North or South, he knows that he will lose.

And now we are lead to an interesting question: if the Southerners are fighting to preserve a way of life, for home and hearth, for love of country, does this not transcend the intellectual principles for which the Northerners fight? Aren't the Northerners fighting for a Christian principle, a democratic principal that has nothing to do with their daily lives? ... an ideal far removed from their day-to-day existence? Losing cause though it may be, isn't the Southerners fight more valiant?

One may conclude from a reading of Uncle Tom's Cabin and Gone with the Wind that for the Northerners the emancipation of the Negro slave was a sacred cause and that for the Southerners, King Cotton, States' Rights, and Slavery were the rally cries. In Gone with the Wind reasons are given for believing the war to be sacred. They are wound up with Southern women's love of their men and of Southern men's love of their homes and the old way of life.
This type of reason can not be called a Christian reason. It is pre-Christian, if you are looking at things chronologically. But all people of all times will agree that this type of reason is very basic as to why wars are "sacred". This type of reason could, therefore, be called super-Christian, in that it is more universal, more basic.

The Southerners were protecting their homeland from invaders who wanted to crush their way of life. They claimed, therefore, their Cause to be sacred.

Both Uncle Tom's Cabin and Gone With the Wind describe the South. So a comparison of those two novels will not tell us very much about the Northerners' defense of their homeland. The war was declared by the North. The North sent Union troops into the Confederate States and attacked them. So at first glance the North is 100% on the offense and the South is on the defense. But this is not exactly the way it was. The Northerners, too, can claim to have been defending their homeland from invasion.

How can this apparent contradiction be valid?

The answer lies in the history of the Fugitive Slave Law. It was passed in 1850 by the Congress of the United States of America. It was the enactment of this law which caused Harriet Beecher Stowe to write the novel Uncle Tom's Cabin. If that law had not been passed, she would probably not have written that novel.

The North and the South, the free states and the slave states, had been living together in the same union for many years... Their attitude seemed to be one of "I'll leave you alone, if you leave me alone."

But in the 1830's there was a severe depression. The crop, in boarder line Southern states, did badly because after years of planting only tobacco, the soil had become depleted. The price of a good field hand dropped from $1000 to $500. Farmers in states like Maryland, Virginia, and Kentucky run into debt. They sold slaves South to pay their debts. The tragedy of the breaking up of families, repetitively portrayed in Mrs. Stowe's best seller, was an important factor in causing thousands of slaves to run away. This represented a financial loss of millions of dollars in property (ie. chattel=Negroes) to the South.

The result was the enactment of the Fugitive Slave Law in 1850. This is the law that made Mrs. Stowe feel that the Northern states could no longer be called free states. Previously, Negroes who escaped to a northern state, were home free. But now, there was no rest for them until they reached Canada. Even a free Negro, if he was away from home, could be claimed to be a run away by any slick talker of the Marks or Harris type seen in Uncle Tom's Cabin. And
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF GONE WITH THE WIND and UNCLE TOM'S CABIN: part I...WAR AND RELIGION

then he could be dragged South by force.

The biography of Hariette Tubman, the famous conductress on the Underground Railway, gives a vivid description of the frenzied crowds of Boston indignant at seeing fugitive slaves dragged off before their very eyes under the sanction of the law and the protection of the police and army.

The famous Dred Scott ruling of the US Supreme Court upheld the forced removal of runaways and thereby, their certain sale to the chain gangs of the deep South. Dred and the Dismal Swamp, another of Mrs. Stowe's novels, takes up the plight of the runaway and the recaptured Negro.

In the pre-Civil War days, the U.S.A. was divided into three parts. The North, the South and The West. There was hot debate every time a western territory became a new state as to whether it should be a slave state or a free state. This was nothing new. But the forced removal of runaway negroes from the North was something new. And any northerner who helped the runaways was held to be a criminal in the eyes of the law.

* The threat of being sold South struck fear in the hearts of the Negro, because it was equated not only with separation from family, but with a severe life and probable death.

In Uncle Tom's Cabin the extremist, Simon Legree, is a symbolization of what was to be feared.

But even in Gone With the Wind, Scarlett uses the threat of being sold South, seemingly out of habit, on the young servant girl Prissy. This is ironic because, for one thing, Atlanta is already far south, and, for another, Scarlett uses this threat several times even at the very fall of Atlanta itself ... at the very end of the Civil War, when no one is either buying or selling slaves and when Confederate money isn't worth the paper it is printed on.
In the novel Uncle Tom's Cabin a man named Senator Bird and his wife argue the necessity and the inherit evil of the Fugitive Slave Law. Senator Bird admits having voted for its enactment, but, in the end, he follows his wife’s example and violates the very law he voted for by helping the cold and hungry Eliza and Harry in their escape to Canada.

"Now, John, I want to know if you think such a law as that is right and Christian?"

"You won't shoot me, now, Mary if I say I do!"

"I never could have thought it of you, John; you didn't vote for it?"

"Even so, my fair politician."

"You ought to be ashamed, John! Poor, homeless, houseless creatures! It's a shameful, wicked, abominable law, and I hope I shall have a chance, I do! Things have got to a pretty pass, if a woman can't give a warm supper and a bed to poor, starving creatures, just because they are slaves, and have been abused and oppressed all their lives, poor things!"

"But, Mary, just listen to me. Your feelings are all quite right, dear, and interesting, and I love you for them; but, then, dear, we mustn't suffer our feelings to run away with our judgment; you must consider it's not a matter of private feelings, — there are great public interests involved, — there is such a state of public agitation rising, that we must put aside our private feelings."

"Now, John, I don't know anything about politics, but I can read my Bible; and there I see that I must feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and comfort the desolate; and that Bible I mean to follow."

"But in cases where your doing so would involve a great public evil — "

Obeying God never brings on public evils. I know it can't. It's always safest, all round, to do as He bids us."

"Now, listen to me, Mary, and I can state to you a very clear argument, to show—"

"O, nonsense, John! you can talk all night, but you wouldn't do it. I put it to you, John, — would you now turn away a poor, shivering, hun-
gry creature from your door, because he was a runaway? Would you, now?"

Now, if the truth must be told, our senator had the misfortune to be a man who had a particularly humane and accessible nature, and turning away anybody that was in trouble never had been his forte; and what was worse for him in this particular pinch of the argument was, that his wife knew it, and, of course, was making an assault on rather an indefensible point. So he had recourse to the usual means of gaining time for such cases made and provided; he said "ahem", and coughed several times, took out his pocket-handkerchief, and began to wipe his glasses. Mrs. Bird, seeing the defenceless condition of the enemy’s territory, had no more conscience than to push her advantage.

"I should like to see you doing that, John—I really should! Turning a woman out of doors in a snow-storm, for instance; or, may be you’d take her up and put her in jail. Wouldn’t you? You would make a great hand at that!"

"Of course, it would be a very painful duty," began Mr. Bird, in a moderate tone.

"Duty, John! don’t use that word! You know it isn’t a duty—it can’t be a duty! If folks want to keep their slaves from running away, let ’em treat ’em well, —that’s my doctrine. If I had slaves (as I hope I never shall have), I’d risk their wanting to run away from me, or you either, John. I tell you, folks don’t run away when they are happy; and when they do run, poor creatures! they suffer enough with cold and hunger and fear, without everybody’s turning against them; and, law or no law, I never will, so help me God!"

"Mary! Mary! My dear, let me reason with you."

"I hate reasoning, John, — especially reasoning on such subjects. There’s a way you political folks have of coming round and round a plain right thing; and you don’t believe in it yourselves, when it comes to practice. I know you well enough, John. You don’t believe it’s right any more than I do; and you wouldn’t do it any sooner than I."

— 23 —
There is a fundamental rule that is taught to beginning lawes: in order to win a case: If the law is on your side, argue the law. If it isn’t, argue the facts. The former, of course, being the stronger position. In the above passage, it should be clear that the law Mrs. Bird is arguing is the law of the Bible. Whereas, her husband is arguing the Fugitive Slave Law, which is a law of the land, but this law itself is a weak law because it is contrary to the laws of God taught in the Bible. Moreover, it is based on a bunch of facts that are in and of themselves contestable: i.e. The Negro is chattel. The North must be a good neighbor and help the South recover its millions of dollars worth of lost property ... that is to say chattel ... Negroes.

Mrs. Stowe’s novel has been claimed to be of only mediocre literary quality because, for one thing, it has so much religion in it. But, if one views religion as law and Mrs. Stowe as a lawyer, hers is a remarkably well laid, well documented, well argued case. In judging the quality of a novel, repetition, recurrence of similar situations and redundancy may be sometimes regarded as faults. But the ability to do such things with clarity, humor and wit are what make a great lawyer.

Northerners came to believe that they were being made to bow to the dictates of the South, that the South wanted to make the North into semislave states. The South feared that the North wanted to emmancepate all the slaves of the South.

Now, let us return to the “defense of home and hearth” as a reason for fighting a war. Undoubtedly, the South has the most obvious claim to this rational for war, because, after all, when the South seceded from the Union, if it had been just left at that, the North could have abolished the Fugitive Slave Law and refused, as Canada had, any requests from the South to turn over runaway slaves.

But, nevertheless, throughout the 1850’s after the enactment of the Fugitive Slave Law, the North did feel that it was being gradually turned into something that it didn’t want to be turned into. That its ideals of freedom and democracy were being violated. So there was in the North as in the South the motivation of defense of one’s way life. For the North this defence of hearth and home was not the most evident reason for war, but it was one of the reasons, nevertheless. And, in fact, though it is not within the scope of this paper to prove it, it may be said that Lincoln’s famous statement: “United we stand, Divided we fall.” is an extrapolation of that idea.

In conclusion, let us return to the quotations with which we began:

- 24 -
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF GONE WITH THE WIND and UNCLE TOM’S CABIN: part I...WAR AND RELIGION

"All wars must be made sacred, otherwise who would fight them ..."

"All wars are in reality money squabbles."

"So your the little woman that wrote the little book that started the Civil War."

The Civil War ... its roots and causes were not economic or political, but religious and moral.

... it is impossible to speak of the (Civil) war as mainly a consequence of moral difference over slavery.

An examination of these quotations will show one thing: that people are not in agreement as to what the main cause of the Civil War was.

In this work, we have seen in what way wars can be made "sacred": (1)by defining the enemy’s actions as sinful and one’s own as "sacred", (2)by making heroes of men, treating their words as doctrinal truth and conflicting ideas as heresy, (3)and by elevating the hearth and home and the old way of life to the status of something so wrapped up with one’s own identity that one would rather die than live without it.

These are the kinds of things that make wars holy. And the reading of Gone With The Wind and Uncle Tom’s Cabin, especially a back-to-back reading, can be very interesting because the reader can not help but realize that both sides believed their sides to be righteous.

“All wars must be made sacred. Otherwise who would be foolish enough to fight them.”

In as much as people perceive things differently, so will their definitions of “Truth” be different.