CHAPTER FIVE

The Election of 1864

The Union party was seriously divided during the winter of 1863-64. To a great extent the division was caused by the dissatisfaction of the Radical Republicans with the emancipation policy and the moderate program of Reconstruction of the Lincoln administration. Chase had submitted suggestions in writing to Lincoln when the Emancipation Proclamation was being considered. In November 1863, he suggested to Lincoln that the principles of emancipation should be incorporated in the constitutions of the reconstruction states. Chase added: "Permit one again most respectfully to urge on you the expediency and duty of making the Proclamation itself complete within the States in which it operates by revoking the exceptions of certain parts of two of them from its operation." But Lincoln did not heed Chase's suggestion when he issued his "Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction" on December 8, 1863. Lincoln's proclamation offered a full pardon to most Southerners if they would swear an oath of allegiance to the United States. When in any state the number of voters taking the oath reached 10 percent of the number who voted in the 1860 election, this loyal nucleus could reestablish a state government, which Lincoln promised would be recognized. Many ultraradical Christians, who were guided more by the Old Testament than by the New, opposed Lincoln's measure. They favored a Radical Reconstruction and contended that only Congress could organize the secession states. Reverend John G. Fee of Kentucky considered the amnesty proclamation "all wrong . . . and a great error." Whitelaw Reid, a radical Calvinist journalist, asserted that the proclamation of December 1863 represented a "dangerous conservatism" to which the radicals should not acquiesce.[1]

A broad group of antislavery Christians felt that the country should move quickly to abolish slavery throughout the land by civil law. They believed that emancipation was a military necessity and that abolition would permanently end sectional strife by removing slavery, the cause

of the war. Some antislavery Christians believed that the nation was still suffering from divine retribution intended to punish the North for harboring slavery and that the curse would be lifted only when slavery had been completely abolished. Lincoln himself voiced this belief when he wrote to a Kentucky editor: "If God now wills the removal of a great wrong, and wills also that we of the North, as well as you of the South, shall pay fairly for our complicity in that wrong, impartial history will find therein new causes to attest and revere the justice and goodness of God."[2]

When the Thirty-eighth Congress convened in December 1863, the Radical Republicans launched a drive to secure complete abolition. The drive received new energy as a result of the president's proclamation of December 8. On December 14, Congressman Owen Lovejoy, a radical Episcopal clergyman, introduced a bill in the House of Representatives to free all of the slaves. Congressman James Ashley and James F. Wilson, a Unitarian and a Calvinist layman, respectively, introduced proposals to submit a constitutional amendment to the states that would abolish slavery throughout the whole nation. In the Senate debate on the amendment, Trumbull argued that only prohibition in the form of an amendment would ensure that no state or Congress could ever restore slavery in the future. He reported a resolution from the Senate Judiciary Committee in March 1864 to abolish slavery by amending the Constitution.[3] On March 19, Senator Wilson expressed the sentiments of the antislavery Christians when he explained in the House: "Providence has opened up the way to that higher civilization and purer Christianity which the Republic is to attain. Our Red Sea passage is to be as propitious as that of God's chosen people when the waters parted . . . for their escape from the hosts upon whom those waters closed and effected the burial appointed by Him who declared, 'Let my people go.' "[4]

In the eyes of some Radical Republicans, the road to Radical Reconstruction entailed replacing Lincoln as president in 1864. At the same time, critics of Lincoln, including Henry Winter Davis and Benjamin Wade, attacked the president's Reconstruction. The discontented radicals found a willing replacement for Lincoln in Salmon P. Chase. Chase wrote to his son-in-law on November 26, 1863: "I think a man of different qualities from those the President has will be needed for the next four years." Favored by several antislavery editors and many clergymen, Chase was truly a deeply religious man.[5] In the 1840s Chase was the superintendent of a Cincinnati Episcopal Sunday school. He would arise before six o'clock in the morning and read religious

tracts and memorize pages of Bible verses.[6] Ambition and religion were the driving forces in Chase's life. In 1850 he wrote Sumner: "Sometimes, I feel as if I could give up—as if I *must* give up, and then after all I rise and press on. . . . God in heaven . . . orders all things well, and will not suffer those who trust Him through Christ to be utterly cast down."[7]

When Chase entered the cabinet, he promised himself not to let "the question of Slavery" influence his actions in one way or another.[8] Yet Chase was not neutral on the slavery question. A story made the rounds in Washington that after Lincoln's election in 1860, he expressed grave doubts about pursuing the policy of emancipation, which caused Chase to threaten to join forces with the radical leaders of Congress.[9] The core of Chase's support was a group of antislavery laymen that he had gathered in the network of the Treasury Department and his ties with the antislavery Christians from the Liberty and Free Soil days. A committee waited upon Chase and urged him to be a candidate. On February 15, 1864, Welles wrote in his diary: "There are indications that Chase intends to press his pretensions as a candidate and much of the Treasury machinery and special agencies have that end in view."[10]

Chase considered Lincoln "greatly wanting in will and decision . . . and clear well-defined purpose." Beecher agreed with Chase's view of Lincoln. He wrote to the secretary that Lincoln's mind "seldom works clearly or cleanly." John Jay, an Episcopal abolitionist, complained that the most earnest supporters of the emancipation policy were convinced that the president leaned toward an unscrupulous clique whose members were lukewarm supporters of his stand on emancipation or secretly opposed it. Cheever's opinion was that Lincoln was "the choice of war up to exhaustion and compromise in the end." Cheever counseled Tilton concerning the election of 1864: "We are bound to pray God it may not be Mr. Lincoln."[11]

After praising Lincoln early in February for a policy that was "generally right-minded and straight-forward" on the question of human freedom, two weeks later Tilton wrote an editorial calling for the nomination of Chase for president.[12] On February 26, the *Boston Commonwealth* carried an editorial entitled "Our Candidate for the Next Presidency," in which the qualifications were detailed and no choice was named. The article was a full copy of an editorial from the *Independent*: "The man . . . who comes bearing in his hand credentials for the next presidency, must demonstrate, as his first token of fitness, a sublime allegiance to God, Liberty, and Human Rights."[13] The im-

plication was that Lincoln did not fully measure up to the standard. Goodell opposed the election of Lincoln in the pages of *Principia*. He informed his readers that Lincoln should be replaced "by a successor of radically different convictions." Garrison disagreed with Goodell. He privately wrote to James McKim near the end of February that Lincoln's renomination was in the best interests of antislavery forces because the Copperheads would urge rival Republican candidates to split the Republican vote. In March, Garrison warned in the *Liberator* against dividing the party by opposing Lincoln. He acknowledged that Lincoln was not perfect, but after all, the president had freed millions of slaves. Garrison's editorial was widely reprinted.[14]

Lincoln had the support of the majority of the Christians of the nation. Schuyler Colfax, a Reformed Church layman who kept abreast of opinion in the Christian community, wrote to Sydney Gay that the praying people considered Lincoln "the instrument with which our God intends to destroy Slavery."[15] A Presbyterian layman from Illinois advised his congressman that the administration was acting as the agent of "almighty God." In February the Allentown, New Jersey, Union League found that the struggle was in the hands of the Creator, who was guiding mankind to universal freedom with Abraham Lincoln as the chief instrument to accomplish it. The league declared, "We cannot repudiate him [Lincoln] without repudiating the great principle which he has initiated." The president and vice president of the league were prominent laymen.[16] Others made public statements or testified to their congressmen that Lincoln was the choice of Christians and the masses. The president was aware that the Christian masses considered him an agent of God, and repeated exposure to this view had led him to believe it himself. Professor Jonathan Turner, a Calvinist layman, had observed as early as 1863 that Lincoln "seems to imagine that he is a sort of half way clergyman; and even our people . . . have the same confused and paralysing ideas." Several religious associations and conferences, in their state-of-the-country reports, were convinced that the president had been chosen by God as His special agent. The American Baptist Home Mission Society met in Philadelphia in the spring, passed resolutions in support of Lincoln, and endorsed his administration on the slavery policy. Almost a hundred delegates went to Washington to hear the chairman read the report to the president. The chairman addressed Lincoln as the representative of a million Baptists who "believed fully that God had raised up His Excellency for such a time as this."[17]

Alfred Gilbert, a Disciple clergyman serving in the legislature of

Connecticut, told his colleagues in January that he would "rather lie down and die" in his tracks that day than see any restoration of the Union as it was. He insisted that Lincoln should be retained. Samuel Plumb, an Oberlin antislavery Calvinist layman, was also sure Lincoln "had been converted to the doctrine of Equality." Joseph R. Hawley, the son of an abolitionist Congregational preacher and an antislavery layman who edited the *Hartford Evening Press*, advised a friend, " 'Uncle Abe' must be our next President."[18] William M. Dickson, an antislavery Episcopalian, assured a correspondent that Lincoln had the inside track. Dickson added: "He is my choice."[19]

In February, Senator Samuel C. Pomeroy, chairman of the National Executive Committee of the Republican party and supporter of Chase, brought out the so-called Pomeroy Circular, a document opposing Lincoln's reelection and declaring for Chase. The circular, which was mailed to Republicans, was franked by John Sherman, and the Senator and Chase were censured by many Republicans.[20] Although Pomeroy explained to the Senate that Chase had not participated in writing the circular, many Republicans believed that Chase had made an unfair and base attack on Lincoln. Welles confided to his diary: "The circular will damage Chase more than Lincoln." The editor of the *Pittsburgh Gazette* declared that the circular would "make no friends for Mr. Chase among honorable men."[21] R.C. Parsons, a Western Reserve Presbyterian layman who had been one of the early leaders in the drive to draft Chase, informed Chase that he was strong enough to defeat Lincoln but that Lincoln's supporters would challenge Chase in the end and a contest between Lincoln and Chase would be fatal to both.[22]

A Cincinnati supporter warned Chase that more than one Republican candidate would "be a public disaster."[23] Chase's old friend James Freeman Clarke, a Boston Unitarian clergyman, dashed off a letter to the secretary. "Your friends who are bringing you forward for the President at this time are not doing you any service. Unless some change takes place, . . . Lincoln is sure to be re-elected . . . ; if I were to vote tomorrow, I should vote for Lincoln. Why? Because we cannot afford to . . . experiment, to run any risks. . . . This is the feeling of seven-tenths of the people." He urged Chase to "come out and decline to be a candidate."[24] The Unitarian layman George L. Stearns believed that the impending contest damaged the great cause. "We must trust in God, and the great heart of our people that never goes far wrong," he wrote to his wife. Stearns considered Lincoln "unfit by nature and education to carry on the government for the next four years," but he took no active part in publicly advocating Chase or Frémont. The

radical Quaker abolitionist Miller McKim informed John Hay, the president's private secretary, that he and other abolitionists were entirely satisfied with Lincoln.[25]

Late in February a Union caucus of both houses of the Ohio legislature voted to favor the renomination of Lincoln. Many of the Radical Republicans were satisfied with the president's antislavery progress and considered opposition to his reconstruction steps premature. They agreed with Giddings that Lincoln's "worst sins" were keeping Seward and Blair in office and that Lincoln could be attacked effectively only on this ground.[26] Seeing that a contest to unseat the president might mean losing the election to the Democrats, Chase asked Ohio state senator James C. Hall to withdraw his name from the contest before the state legislature. "All our efforts and energies should be devoted to the suppression of the rebellion," Chase urged. "Allow nothing to divide" the Republican counsels "while this great work . . . remains unaccomplished."[27]

Newspapers throughout the country carried Chase's letter asking that his name be withdrawn. Thereafter Chase was no longer considered an active candidate, and this fact was reflected in the communications of leading radicals. In April, Lydia Maria Child, a Unitarian abolitionist, wrote Gerrit Smith: "God is doing a great work in this nation, but the agents by which He is accomplishing it are so narrow, so cold! The ruling motive of this administration, from the beginning to the present time, seems to have been how to conciliate the Democratic party." A month later Tilton also expressed the belief that the developing events were being shaped by Providence. He informed Parker Pillsbury, an abolitionist clergyman who opposed Lincoln, that, in his opinion, God meant Lincoln to be president. Beecher spoke out for Lincoln. In a letter to a distinguished Indiana politician that was made public, Beecher insisted that Lincoln should be the next president because of "his moral purity" and because of the past record of his administration. Failure to nominate him, Beecher concluded, would be interpreted as a "rebuke of his policy." Pillsbury, Cheever, and Goodell remained unconvinced. The irreconcilable ultraabolitionists, however, did not constitute a significant number of Christian antislavery men. John Hay recorded in his diary on May 14 that Ashley had reported having written to all Ohio counties urging the endorsement of Lincoln. On June 1, William D. Kelley, the radical Unitarian Congressman from Pennsylvania, informed Hay that he and other radical abolitionists were completely satisfied with Lincoln. Since some observers still had a question in their minds concerning Chase's status, the secretary

of the treasury addressed a letter to Governor William Buckingham of Connecticut, a leading Congregational layman and vice president of the AHMS, affirming that Chase had withdrawn his name because leading men had attacked him and that he would have divided the party if Lincoln did not withdraw.[28]

To many antislavery Christians, the emancipation of all slaves was more important than the controversy about the nomination of a Republican presidential candidate. Joseph Hawley informed Sherman that Chase was his first choice, but he was willing to submit to the will of the majority. "One thing that is more precious . . . than making Presidents is the alteration of the Constitution to make this country forever free. Don't let Congress adjourn until you make a law giving the people the privilege to act. . . . Let us associate this with the Presidential canvass."[29] An Illinois antislavery man explained to his congressman: "What we in northern Illinois deem of vast importance to our distracted country [is] the passage of a law by Congress of universal emancipation."[30]

Some of the Methodist Episcopal annual conferences met in April 1864, and the congressional debate on the constitutional amendment was the focus of their attention. The New York east conference considered it the duty of Congress to pass the amendment abolishing all slavery. A resolution proclaimed: "We trust that our entire Church, ministry and laity with all the organs and representatives of her opinions, will throw her whole moral force upon the side of truth and freedom until the victory is won and not a slave treads the soil of our United Republic." A petition signed by all the members was sent to both houses of Congress urging that the amendment be speedily adopted. Three other Methodist Episcopal conferences met in the spring and early summer and adopted similar state-of-the-country reports. The General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church met in May and quickly adopted measures favoring the passage of the amendment.[31]

The Tri-Annual Convention of Congregational Churches of the North-West, which represented all of the Congregational churches in the northwestern states, met in Chicago in April and adopted strong measures in favor of an amendment. Three state Congregational associations met in the spring and early summer and approved the amendment before Congress.[32] The Progressive Friends of Chester County, Pennsylvania, met in yearly meeting and sent a memorial to Congress in support of the amendment. The Central Association of Seventh Day Baptists declared it the duty of the people to see that

Congress adopted the amendment. Even in the border states, the General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church recommended that Cumberland Presbyterians, both North and South, "give countenance and support to all constitutional efforts . . . to rid the country" of slavery. The Rock River (Illinois) Baptist Association and the General Reformed Presbyterian Synod were decidedly in favor of the amendment. Although the Church Anti-Slavery Society insisted that the spirit of the Constitution already prohibited slavery, the society urged that a declaratory amendment be adopted.[33]

Even with Congress debating the question of an amendment to the Constitution, a few religious bodies preferred to address their appeals for universal emancipation to the president. The Primitive Methodist Conference of Wisconsin addressed a memorial to the chief executive earnestly praying that the time would soon come when universal emancipation would be adopted. The Reformed Presbyterian Synod of New York "demanded in the great name of . . . God" the immediate emancipation of all slaves in the United States. The antislavery delegates of the Protestant Episcopal Convention of Pennsylvania tried to put their church on antislavery grounds by resolving that "the National Government, whether executive, legislative or judicial is, in our judgment, solemnly bound to use all its power and employ every authorized Constitutional means for the speedy and total abolition of slavery throughout the land." The majority rejected the measure for a substitute that expressed "unfaltering allegiance to the Government."[34]

In spite of all efforts, the constitutional amendment was voted down. Although the Senate passed the amendment resolution on April 8, the lower house did not bring the resolution to a final vote until the middle of June. Congressman Thomas Williams, a Presbyterian layman from Pennsylvania, in a speech in the House on the amendment, told his colleagues that "God's justice demands it, and the heart and conscience of the American people will say, Amen." Congressman Isaac N. Arnold, an antislavery Episcopal layman from Illinois, in a speech on the amendment pleaded with the House on June 15: "Let the lightnings of God transmit to the toiling and struggling soldiers of Sherman, and Hunter, and Butler and Grant the thrilling words, 'slavery abolished forever,' and their joyous shouts will strike terror into the ranks of the rebels and traitors fighting for tyranny and bondage."[35] The next day the House voted down the amendment resolution. The antislavery Christians were disappointed but did not admit defeat. The presidential convention would soon select a candidate and draw up a platform that they intended to try to make antislavery in character.

Some antislavery Christians were occupied solely with efforts to secure an amendment prohibiting all slavery. When Senator Sherman informed Francis D. Parish, an elder in a Congregational church and vice president of the antislavery AMA, that he planned to amend the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 by reenacting the law of 1793, Parish opposed Sherman's plan because it was "inconsistent" with the objective of the proposed constitutional amendment. An antislavery constituent informed his congressman that he was astonished that men could be found to vote down an amendment abolishing slavery at such a late date, but he was consoled by the repeal of the odious Fugitive Slave Law.[36]

By March, public attention was being focused more on the presidential election of 1864, and some of the religious conferences were concentrating on instructing their members concerning the election. The Methodist Episcopal Conference of Pittsburgh pledged to condemn emphatically any ministers or members of the church who gave or may give "just cause of suspicion as to their loyalty" to the federal government. The Methodist Episcopal Conference of Troy considered members who embarrassed the government in the conduct of the war "as in the last degree criminal."[37] The Brownmansville (New York) Conference of the United Brethren in Christ declared it was "unitedly opposed by our words, our prayers, and our votes to the disloyal spirit manifested here in the North."[38]

Anna Dickinson and Theodore Weld played important parts in the election of 1864, as they had in 1863. In Lynn, Massachusetts, and at the Cooper Institute in New York, under the auspices of the Loyal Women's League, Weld gave a lecture entitled "The Work, the Times, and the War" and took a radical stance. Dickinson spoke on January 16, 1864, in the U.S. House of Representatives at the invitation of the vice president and the Speaker. Her lecture was full of patriotic sentiment, and she was sharply critical of the president's Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction, but her attack focused sharply on the Democrats. Dickinson's criticism of Lincoln appeared to be less harsh when she called the president his own successor and boldly declared that the people would insist on Lincoln for a second term.[39] In Washington, Dickinson spoke in Grover's theater and bore down hard on the administration, on Lincoln, and on General Banks while praising General Butler and Frémont.[40] Radicals Whitelaw Reid, Kelley, Tilton, and B.F. Prescott, chairman of the Republican party of New Hampshire, tried to persuade Dickinson to refrain from favoring personal political

choices, but she persisted, lacking faith in Lincoln's ability and integrity.[41]

After the collapse of the Chase nomination, the hopes of the anti-Lincoln radicals focused on John Frémont. A Frémont convention met in Cleveland on May 31 and nominated Frémont for president on a platform calling for a constitutional amendment to "secure to all men absolute equality before the law."[42] Only a few ultraradical ministers represented the clergy at the convention. *Harper's Weekly* reported that the convention represented the feeling of Pillsbury and Stephen S. Foster. The Anti-Slavery Church Society was represented by two clergymen and a layman. The majority of the delegates were war Democrats and radical German-Americans.[43]

Elizabeth C. Stanton, a social and religious reformer, publicly announced that she was supporting the Radical Republican party (Frémont) because it had "lifted politics into the sphere of morals and religion," but Edwin Cowles, a Presbyterian antislavery editor of the *Cleveland Leader*, a Radical Republican organ, told a correspondent that the Cleveland convention consisted of "sore-heads, Garrisonians and Copperheads." No prominent Republican endorsed Frémont. Referring to the convention, Tilton informed Anna Dickinson that he would "not be a party to any alliance with Copperheads—they are not to be trusted." Prescott wrote to her that he had lost all confidence in Frémont because the men supporting the Pathfinder were among "the vilest Copperheads." In his letter of acceptance, Frémont violently criticized the Lincoln government and offended many antislavery Christians, who associated such bitter denunciation with Democrats.[44]

The Republican convention met in Baltimore on June 7. Robert Breckinridge, an Old School Presbyterian clergyman and unconditional Republican, was selected to be the temporary chairman. In naming Breckinridge, the convention departed from tradition in choosing a clergyman and "one of the most eminent divines in the union." The choice reflected the supremacy of the moral issue in the mind of the Republican party. The convention drew up a platform calling for unconditional surrender, no compromise with the Rebels, and an amendment to the Constitution abolishing slavery forever. In his speech nominating Lincoln, Robert Breckinridge declared slavery contrary to the spirit of the Christian religion and incompatible with the natural rights of man. "I join with those who say, 'away with it forever,' " he thundered.[45]

Before the Republican convention, Samuel Aaron, an abolitionist

Baptist minister, wrote with some truth to a friend, "Fremont's progressive platform . . . will compel the adoption of an advanced position at Baltimore," but one of the reasons for offering a plank abolishing slavery by amending the Constitution was the persistent demands of the antislavery Christians.[46]

In April, Susan B. Anthony, the Quaker reformer, had labeled Lincoln's communication of April 4 that he could not immediately free all the slaves a "canting lie." Five days after the Republican convention, Anthony wrote to Elizabeth C. Stanton: "I hope Fremont will just hold on in patience to the day of election. Already the desired effect is apparent. Baltimore gave us a better platform and old Abe a more explicit letter of acceptance." Six days later Oliver Johnson, the Quaker editor of the *Anti-Slavery Standard*, sharply attacked the Frémont movement and put the organ of the American Anti-Slavery Society on the side of Lincoln. The liberal Christian Giles B. Stebbins echoed Johnson's sentiments. He insisted that "the resolve of the Cleveland Convention for 'equal rights for *all*' is looked upon as vague, and of no meaning. *That Convention has no moral power.*" Gerrit Smith, a cousin, disagreed with Elizabeth C. Stanton's letter of May 14. He had no favorite and would postpone a choice until September, when events and time would determine his vote. Above all, he stressed, the party should not divide. By the middle of September, Smith and the old Congregational abolitionist Reverend John Keep decided to sustain Lincoln; doing so seemed the only way to "save the nation." Early in October, Smith wrote to Elizabeth C. Stanton again, regretting that "neither Wendell Phillips nor you can favor Lincoln's re-election. I am spending a great deal for the election of Lincoln," he wrote, "I see safety in *his* election." Lydia Maria Child in turn disagreed with Smith about the wisdom of waiting to decide whom he would support. Lincoln "is an honest man, conscientiously hates Slavery. Fremont . . . is a selfish unprincipled adventurer," she argued in July. After Lincoln was elected, Child confided to a friend that Lincoln "has his faults . . . but . . . I have constantly gone on liking him better." Speaking at the annual meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society, Lucretia Mott, a Quaker member of the society, also had mixed feelings. "I wish we could hold up Fremont a little more for the act he did," she reasoned, "but I am glad to hear Abraham Lincoln held up . . . for the many things he has done."[47]

The summer of 1864 was a critical and depressing time for conscientious antislavery religious radicals. George Tuthill, an antislavery Congregational minister, in his diary on June 30 registered uncertainty

that many shared: "Sec. Chase . . . resigns. . . . July 7 has seen President Lincoln renominated. . . . While Fremont and John Cochran[e] head another ticket. The fearful fighting before Petersburg makes the nation feel sober and the party spirit is in full blast. Copperheads hiss and bite and spit out the venom. God is trying us sorely."[48]

On July 2, 1864, Congress passed the Wade-Davis Bill, which provided for Radical Reconstruction, and Lincoln issued a statement on July 8 that he intended to pocket veto the bill because he wanted to be committed to no single plan of Reconstruction.[49] The ultraradicals responded to the veto with increased hope and vigor. Henry Cheever, brother of George Cheever and a clerical member of the Church Anti-Slavery Society of Worcester, Massachusetts, formed the Freedom Club to give "tone to public opinion." Although Senator Henry Wilson, who had recently joined the Congregational church, "deeply regretted" the veto of the Wade-Davis bill, he refused to address the Freedom Club because he could not endanger the cause "by participating in any movement that tends to bring back to power the 'Slave Democracy.' " Henry W. Davis was sure the veto would "destroy what little confidence" remained in the president's "good sense and good faith." Amasa Walker, a former professor at Oberlin College, maintained that the nation must have "a change of management of national affairs or face utter ruin."[50] The *Principia* became one of the chief organs for the Frémont party. George Cheever became the most important clerical spokesman writing in its pages. Cheever argued that the country could not wait for an amendment because "God's command was not amend your constitution! but 'amend your morals.' " William Goodell's three long letters to Lincoln, published in the *Principia*, argued that the administration did not measure up to the antislavery standard.[51]

Early in 1864 George Julian was firmly identified with the Chase movement because he opposed the moderation of Lincoln's reconstruction program, but when Chase withdrew from the contest, Julian decided to "let the presidential matter drift" for a while. Shortly after Lincoln's nomination, Julian repudiated Frémont and came out for Lincoln.[52] Nathan Brown, editor of the abolitionist *American Baptist*, came out for the Cleveland convention because "the platform offered something more than accidential freedom and partial liberty." After much hesitation he announced for Lincoln.[53] The majority of antislavery religious people favored Lincoln. They were in harmony with an Episcopal layman who informed his senator: "We can unite more strength on Lincoln" than anyone else. Giles Stebbins wrote to the *Anti-Slavery Standard* from the West, where he had been lecturing for

more than a month: "I have not seen an abolitionist, or heard of one, who is satisfied, or feels any earnest zeal to support the Fremont Movement." The movement "has no moral power," he added.[54]

The Democratic party had been holding local peace conventions for several weeks, some under the Democratic label and others advertised as nonpartisan citizens mass meetings. Democratic district conventions in the Midwest adopted resolutions calling for an armistice and a negotiated peace. Democratic Congressmen also introduced resolutions favoring a negotiated peace which Republicans voted down. Many religious conferences and associations held annual meetings during the summer and condemned any peace without the abolition of slavery, urging unconditional surrender.[55]

As public opinion began to register war weariness, some Republicans despaired of victory for the party in the election. Horace Greeley reflected the prevailing mood when he wrote the president on July 7: "Our bleeding, bankrupt . . . country . . . longs for peace." There was a widespread conviction that the government was not anxious for peace. "It is doing great harm now," he added, "and is morally certain, unless removed, to do far greater harm in the approaching election." A month later he warned the president that if something was not done to meet the yearning for peace, "We shall be beaten . . . next November." Lincoln assured Greeley that he would consider any negotiated peace that embraced the restoration of the Union and the abandonment of slavery. Greeley arranged a Niagara conference with unofficial representatives after Lincoln, in a letter dated July 18, stated that peace could be restored on terms embracing "the integrity of the whole Union, and the abandonment of slavery." The conference came to nothing. On August 5, after the Democratic convention, Greeley published Lincoln's July 18 letter and other correspondence at the suggestion of the *New York Times*.[56] Rumors had been spreading about secret peace negotiations before the letters were made public. The antislavery religious men were depressed about the developments. When Lincoln's July 18 letter, addressed "To Whom It May Concern," was published, Lincoln's position among the antislavery religious forces was strengthened, but extremists distrusted him more than ever. The *Christian Advocate and Journal* printed the letter and called it "one of the most dignified and appropriate acts in the records of the war."[57]

Lincoln had called for a day of Thanksgiving and prayer on August 4. The fast day coincided with the publication of Lincoln's letter. All over the country pulpits rang with sermons proclaiming "Purity must

go before peace." Dr. Tyng told the members of St. George Church that "if a compromise was effected every death in our armies has been an unprincipled murder." Jacob Manning assured the congregation of Old South Church in Boston that "Lincoln had exactly struck the pulse-beat of the nation in his note 'to whom it may concern' which so effectually demolished some would-be negotiators." Other ministers throughout the North preached against a compromise peace and supported the Republican position. Lincoln's position was made more secure with antislavery Christians. Harriet Beecher Stowe, the sister of Henry Ward Beecher, fully supported the president in an article in the Baptist *Watchman and Reflector* of Boston. "When we were troubled, and sat in darkness, and looked doubtfully toward the Presidential Chair, it was never that we doubted the good will of our pilot," she explained; "Almighty God has granted to him that clearness of vision which he gives to the true-hearted . . . to set his honest foot in that promised land of freedom which is to be the patrimony of all men, black and white."[58]

The editor of the *Christian Advocate and Journal* observed that it was one of the remarkable facts of the campaign that while "nearly every pulpit gives its utterances in favor of war, the cry from the dram shops and all the purlieus of vice is peace! peace!" The *Pittsburgh Christian Advocate* informed its readers that in almost all denominations the clergy were unanimous in urging the suppression of the rebellion by military power and opposing a compromise peace. "Let us, then, by our vote, place men in office who . . . will vigorously prosecute the war." The editor of the *American Presbyterian* called the idea, advanced by Lincoln's supporters, of a peace without abolition weak and shortsighted. The truce, he said, would be short-lived.[59]

The Democratic party met in Chicago, August 29, and nominated George McClellan. The peace platform drawn up demanded the immediate restoration of the Union and called for a peace convention at which negotiations could begin in "a spirit of conciliation and compromise." After the Democratic National Convention met, religious conferences and associations attacked the Democratic platform in strong language for proposing a compromise peace and peace before slavery had been completely abolished. Seven Methodist Episcopal annual conferences and the general conference condemned a compromise peace as unchristian and sinful.[60] Eleven Baptist associations remained determined opponents of a compromised peace or of peace before slavery had been completely abolished.[61] The Free Methodist Church,

some Wesleyan Methodist conferences, the Seventh Day Baptist Church, and the Universalist Church went on record in favor of an unconditional peace after emancipation throughout the country.[62]

The editor of the *Christian Advocate and Journal* informed readers in September that "the highest moral and religious interests . . . demand the prosecution of the war to the extinction of the rebellion and the extirpation of slavery." J.M. Reid, the new editor of the *Western Christian Advocate*, insisted that "we must conquer peace." The editor of the *Zion's Herald* wrote, "Our voice is still for war; not for the sake of war, but for the sake of peace." I.W. Wiley, editor of the Methodist *Ladies' Repository*, told readers that the Union party motto was "To conquer a peace," while the Democratic motto was "Peace by compromise."[63]

The Methodist and the Baptist conferences and associations were more prone to instruct their members to vote for the administration. Some pronounced it a religious duty to vote for the party waging the war. Congregational associations, Presbyterian synods, and the New School and Old School Presbyterian general assemblies instructed their members to support the government. Stanley Matthews, a Cincinnati abolitionist, drew up the Old School General Assembly report on the state of the country. Some of the smaller church bodies also instructed their members to vote for the Republicans as a patriotic and religious duty.[64] The Seneca (Ohio) and the French Creek (Pennsylvania) Baptist associations unanimously agreed that any minister who passed a Sunday service without reference to the perils of the crisis was too disloyal or indifferent "to be tolerated in a Christian pulpit."[65]

The *Western Christian Advocate* bitterly condemned the Democratic platform and urged each voter to ask which side God was on before casting his ballot. The Methodist *Repository* reminded Christians of their solemn duty to vote in the fear of God, with a pure conscience, and "in the spirit of true and honest loyalty to our government. "The New School *American Presbyterian* fully supported the administration. "To embarrass and seek to overthrow the Government in the very crisis of the awful struggle . . . , to seek to baffle and confound it by sowing discord, discontent and despondency among the people," explained the editor, "—What is this but *Disloyalty!*" As late as October the Old School Presbyterian *New York Observer* commended a New York Episcopal clergyman who, when asked by some parish members to deliver a political sermon, had preached against political preaching. The Old School *Presbyter* of Cincinnati took the opposite stance. When the Old School Presbytery of Cincinnati voted

"that any person teaching and maintaining that American slavery is not a sin, and is justified by the word of God, is justly liable to censure," the *Presbyter* defended the position and urged support of the Republican party.[66]

As the weeks dragged on, the war took on the character of a stalemate. Deep depression and defeatism led a group of Republican statesmen to oppose Lincoln politically. They planned to persuade Lincoln and Frémont to withdraw and to call a convention that would choose another candidate on whom all could unite. Greeley had reversed himself and had joined in the opposition to Lincoln. When he listed for James Gilmore, an antislavery journalist, the statesmen who opposed Lincoln, it was "a fearful revelation," Gilmore remembered later, and he "went away with a heavy heart forgetting that 'one with God is a majority.' " The faction that wanted a new candidate included David D. Field, H.W. Davis, George Opdyke, John A. Stevens and Greeley. A new convention was scheduled for September 28 in Cincinnati.[67]

On September 2, three important New York editors—Greeley, Tilton, and Parke Goodwin, representing the *Tribune, the Independent*, and the *Evening Post*—wrote joint letters to Northern governors, seeking to promote the movement to discard Lincoln for a new candidate. On the same day the whole political spectrum suddenly changed. The military defeats and stalemate ended with the capture of Atlanta. By the beginning of September the Republicans were exposing and attacking the Copperhead peace platform. The views of the journalists began to change. The religious support for the Republicans became stronger. The liberal lawyer George T. Strong, a vestryman of the Trinity Episcopal Church in New York, anticipated the changes that would result from the military victories and from the publication of the Democratic platform. On September 5, he wrote in his diary: "Thank God the fall of Atlanta is fully confirmed. . . . The general howl against the base policy offered . . . at Chicago is refreshing. Bitter opponents of Lincoln join in it heartily, and denounce the proposition that the country should take its hands off the throat of half-strangled treason."[68]

George Stearns informed Garrison in a letter published September 12 that the plot to induce Lincoln to withdraw had been brought to a halt by the victory of Atlanta and the "traitorous character of the Chicago platform." On the same day, John Gulliver, the pastor of the Congregational church in which Governor Buckingham of Connecticut was a deacon, wrote to Lincoln: "A most healthy reaction is now taking place in the public mind in regard to the coming election."[69] The military and naval successes won by William T. Sherman, Philip Sheri-

dan, and David Farragut ended the dilemma in the minds of many radical Christians and forced Lincoln's opponents to unite in support of the choice of the Baltimore convention. The victories of Atlanta and Mobile Bay encouraged people to believe that God had chosen Lincoln to carry out His purpose. The journalist Gilmore, after a conversation with Lincoln, concluded that the president had been imbued with the idea that he was an agent of God and was being "led infallibly in the right direction." More and more the religious people believed that the hand of God was directing the war and that Lincoln was "His selected leader."[70] Zachariah Chandler had become thoroughly convinced that he should help win radical support for Lincoln by urging the withdrawal of Frémont and securing the removal of Blair from the cabinet. After much effort Chandler saw both objects accomplished, and the radicals worked harmoniously to secure the election of Lincoln.[71]

Meeting the day after the fall of Atlanta, the Mad River (Ohio) Baptist Association urged the administration to accept no compromise with traitors because "we recognize the hand of God in the success of our arms . . . around Richmond and Atlanta." The Congregational associations of New York and New Jersey called for "fervent gratitude to Almighty God" for the signal victories coming after "a season of darkness and humiliation."[72] The New School Presbyterian Synod of Peoria regarded the victories of the army and navy as increased evidence that Providence was directing the country in the "only path that leads to a righteous and lasting peace."[73] The Michigan Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church also recognized "the hand of God in the recent military victories," and its members promised to support Lincoln. The National Universalist Convention felt duty bound to express gratitude to God for victories at Mobile Bay and Atlanta and urged people of all parties to support the administration.[74]

Lincoln did not fail to see the political value of an official day of Thanksgiving and prayer for the military victories when he issued a proclamation on September 3 for a fast day on the next Sunday.[75] The Republican press praised Lincoln's proclamation as evidence of a firm trust that God was the arbiter of all human events. Lincoln's trust cheered "the heart of every Christian," wrote one editor. The *New York Tribune* urged every minister to read the proclamation from the pulpit, calling a prayer for a righteous peace a "Christian duty." The Democratic press considered the proclamation a cheap political effort to excite the clergy to more pulpit politics.[76]

A Methodist minister in Pittsburgh preached a fast day sermon in

which he averred that the nation was entering upon a stage of the struggle in which God approved the new objectives and the victories achieved came not from human ability "but by the great strong right arm of Him who brought Israel out of Egypt." The antislavery Methodist minister Gilbert Haven preached a fast day sermon in Boston in which he interpreted the military victories as evidence that the nation's principles were at last in harmony with God. "The Church should unite as one man in this exigency," he urged. "Let her . . . march to the ballot-box as an army of Christ." A Presbyterian clergyman told his congregation that God had so ordered events that they thundered in the ears of the nation: "It is vain to trust in wrong: without justice there is no power!"[77]

Joseph P. Thompson, a New York Congregational minister, delivered a speech entitled "Peace through Victory." He carried his message to common people and rural areas of eastern New York and printed a campaign tract so that he could influence voters even when he could not appear in person. The military victories had such effect on Roswell Hitchcock, a professor at the Presbyterian Union Theological Seminary, that he wrote to Gerrit Smith: "The hand of God is to me so conspicuous in this struggle, that I should almost as soon expect the Almighty to turn slaveholder, as to see this war end without the extinction of its guilty cause."[78]

Reaction to the Democratic platform and the military victories led to a truce during the last three months of the political campaign between the conservatives and Radical Republicans. A few ultraradical Christians withheld any endorsement of Lincoln because of his veto of the Wade-Davis bill and because of the fear that conservatives in the cabinet would dominate the executive department. The difficulty became more acute when Secretary of State William Seward, on September 3, 1864, in a speech at Auburn, New York, claimed that when peace came "all the war measures then existing, including those which affect slavery," would cease. The antislavery Christians insisted that Seward could not speak for the president. They cited Lincoln's letter "To Whom It May Concern" against Seward's position. But Henry Cheever, secretary of the Church Anti-Slavery Society and the Worcester Freedom Club, was not satisfied to let the matter rest with Lincoln's letter. Cheever asked John D. Baldwin, a Congregational minister and editor of the *Worcester Spy*, to publish a letter to Seward from the Freedom Club asking specifically whether emancipation would cease after peace had been restored. It was later decided to send the letter directly to Seward. The secretary of state refused to clarify his position,

and a few ultraradicals maintained their neutrality.[79] The great majority of antislavery Christians continued to support Lincoln because, in his reply to the convention in which he accepted the nomination, he had endorsed the amendment abolishing slavery, and he insisted on making the amendment a campaign issue.[80]

Anna Dickinson, who had been silent since Lincoln's nomination, was urged by many antislavery Christians to lecture in support of Lincoln. Most of the people who urged her to back Lincoln assumed that she was for Frémont, but on August 29 in a letter to a correspondent she denied that she had ever been for Frémont; she had, she said, never uttered a word in public that would have permitted anyone to draw that conclusion.[81] On September 3, Dickinson wrote to the *Independent* that she would lecture for the Republican party. She explained that she had tried to influence the party to select a better man than Lincoln, but she denied that she had favored the Cleveland nominee. Dickinson's letter was printed in almost all antislavery newspapers, and she was soon touring the country lecturing for the Republican candidates.[82]

The radical movement to replace Lincoln as the 1864 Republican party presidential nominee was endorsed by Dickinson, Tilton, and other radicals, but the September march of the radicals back to the Lincoln banner carried almost all of the radicals into the Lincoln camp. Oliver Johnson, who had never taken a part in any anti-Lincoln movement, wrote to a friend that of all the political abortions the opposition to Lincoln had produced, "the Fremont movement has been the worst." The antislavery Christians threw themselves into the campaign and mounted the stump to ensure that no radical stayed away from the polls. Tilton spoke in the East, Henry Wright campaigned in Illinois and Michigan, and Giles Stebbins lectured in Michigan and Ohio for Lincoln. The New Hampshire Methodist abolitionist Reverend Andrew T. Foss was recruited by the National Republican Committee to campaign for Lincoln and delivered some forty addresses. Gerrit Smith covered upstate New York in a speaking tour that lasted more than a month. Marius R. Robinson, former editor of the *Anti-Slavery Bugle*, Theodore Weld, and Ichabod Codding—all Lane Rebels of the 1830s—hit the campaign trail for Lincoln.[83] Calvin Fairbank, the Presbyterian minister who had been imprisoned for aiding fugitive slaves, Sallie Holley, the daughter of one of the founders of the Liberty party, and Reverend John A. Rogers, an Oberlin College graduate, spoke for the Republican party at every opportunity.[84]

Early in September, the *Independent* appealed to the clergy to coun-

sel citizens from the pulpit whenever possible on the duty of Christians to vote against the Chicago platform: "If pew-holders refrained from attending church, the pastor should immediately visit them at home, in their stores or work-places." The editorial was reprinted widely in the Republican press.[85] The Republican secular press took the cue. Many writers reminded the ministers of the gospel that it was their highest duty to instruct, counsel, persuade, advise, and command their flock to vote for Union candidates. Sydney H. Gay unequivocally endorsed Lincoln's reelection on September 6 in an editorial in the *New York Tribune*. Clergymen responded to the appeals of the religious and secular press, and many wrote to the president. One clergyman wrote Lincoln: "We . . . are doing what we can for you and the country." He reminded the president that he had been put in office "by the Providence of God."[86]

During the last two months of the canvass, many clergymen were active participants and speakers at ward political meetings, Republican rallies, and mass meetings. Clergymen took the most active part in Republican meetings in the Boston area[87] and were influential and active members of almost every Republican gathering in the last few weeks of the canvass in the Pittsburgh area.[88] The Ohio clergy were probably the most active in politics of any state in the North. Granville Moody, a Methodist preacher, gave political lectures throughout Ohio and western Pennsylvania that were skillfully interlaced with religion. James A. Garfield and J.H. Jones, Disciples of Christ ministers, covered the Western Reserve with political addresses for the Republican party.[89]

Henry Ward Beecher was engaged by the National Republican Committee to speak on behalf of the party during the last weeks of the campaign. The *New York Journal of Commerce* condemned him at length because he rendered greater service to the Republican party than did any other clergyman.[90] Bishop Matthew Simpson spoke widely throughout the North in addresses that revealed more patriotism than radicalism.[91] Robert Breckinridge influenced many along the borderlands with a radicalism that promised to accomplish the will of God without revolutionary effects.[92] Ministers in Chicago, New York, Detroit, and hundreds of other communities were more active in politics than they had been in any other political campaign.[93]

The AMA missionaries and colporteurs distributed tracts by the thousands as campaign literature. Lewis Tappan's *The War: Its Cause and Remedy* and *Immediate Emancipation: The Only Wise and Safe Mode* were probably the most effective. Not all the religiously oriented

political literature circulated on the Republican side. The more than three dozen campaign tracts that the Democratic National Committee circulated included three religious pamphlets: Bishop John H. Hopkins's *Scriptural, Ecclesiastical, and Historical Views of Slavery*, Sidney E. Morse's *Ethical View of the American Slave-holders' Rebellion*, David Christy's *Pulpit Politics*, and an anonymous tract arguing that emancipation everywhere had been a failure. Hopkins was an Episcopalian, and Morse and Christy were Old School Presbyterians.[94] The antislavery clergy made extensive use of agricultural fairs and festivals as an institution to draw potential voters who might not frequent churches. At one fair during the fall of 1864 at least four preachers gave political addresses.[95]

The clergy and the churches were indisputably important in influencing the election of 1864. James Moorhead concludes in his study that the churches, for the most part, "contributed to the blurring of lines between dissent and disloyalty." There is some truth to the charge that the clergy oversimplified the problem of disloyalty, but all efforts to shape public opinion reflect oversimplification. Count Gurowski expressed confidence in the political insight of the clergy. He wrote in his diary during the campaign that the religious press "at times appreciate the events and men from a standpoint by far higher and clearer than that of the common press; . . . these preaching and writing divines . . . are the genuine apostles of the spirit of our age"; and "generally the immense majority of reverends from all Christian denominations are patriots, and . . . enlighten the people about its duties in the struggle." Count Gurowski evaluated the clergy realistically. Many of them, for example Beecher, drew on informed scholars and documents for their sermons.[96]

The editor of the *Elmira Advertiser* the week before the election correctly observed: "If McClellan is elected he must breast and overcome almost the entire ecclesiastical and ministerial force of the land. . . . These are the men, together with those who are found in the house of God on the Sabbath and who countenance the spiritual gatherings of the week time." It did not go unnoticed that McClellan joined the Episcopal Church before the Democratic convention of 1864. As the election results began to come in, the *New York Express* ascribed the Republican victory in Maine to the electioneering of the clergy on Sunday and declared Maine "hopelessly priest-ridden."[97]

The Republicans carried the election of 1864 because the tide of the military conflict had turned in favor of the North. The soldiers' votes in certain states were crucial. Lincoln carried the vote of the

soldiers by a large majority, and the chaplains were probably as influential as the clergy back home. "I . . . watch and pray for the Union cause in the interest of . . . the reelection of our God given President," wrote one soldier who was reasonably representative. The Republicans carried almost all of the evangelical votes. The great majority of Baptist, Methodist, Congregational, Presbyterian, Quaker, and pietist votes went for Lincoln, and there was a substantial increase in Unitarian and Universalist support for Lincoln in 1864. While Dale Baum found that the Republicans in Massachusetts did not run particularly well in areas where the antiforeign, anti-Catholic Know-Nothing party received disproportionately high levels of support in the 1850s, the Republicans carried a portion of the Episcopal and Old School Presbyterian votes. The Old School Presbyterian General Assembly in 1864 had abandoned its silence on slavery and expressed full and frank opposition to the institution of slavery and all that it stood for. A large majority of the Old School Presbyterian votes going for Lincoln were from the Northwest.[98] The clergy and the religious press were important in the conspiracy issue. They drew attention to the dangers of conspiracies, assassinations, and the burning of cities and aroused the electorate.[99]

The election of 1864 was a referendum on the war and emancipation, and the antislavery religious people kept the issue before the public even though many moderate Republicans were silent on the slavery question. Theodore Tilton and other antislavery Christians noted in public addresses that the constitutional amendment had not received due attention in public meetings of Republicans. Lincoln and the Republican party, however, had gradually been persuaded to accept the radical Christian views. The election victory sealed the commitment to emancipation.[100]

In his annual message to Congress in December 1864, Lincoln recommended a constitutional amendment abolishing slavery because "it is the voice of the people now." He reaffirmed that the Emancipation Proclamation would stand. "If the people should . . . make it an Executive duty to re-enslave such persons," he warned, "another, and not I must be their instrument to perform it."[101]