

Our Comfort in Dying: Civil War Sermons by R. L. Dabney, Stonewall Jackson's Chief-of-Staff, edited by Jonathan W. Peters. Destin, FL: Sola Fide Publications, 2021. 346 pp. \$24.99.

One of the challenges for Christian students of history is the human failures of the figures they study. Sometimes even notable Christians of the past held views that are abhorrent to those living in the present. One thinks, for instance, of Martin Luther's comments on Jews. The Civil War presents similar difficulties, particularly with those figures who sided with the Confederacy's defense of slavery. A good example is Robert L. Dabney. He was a leading minister and noted southern Presbyterian theologian. However, he also served in the Confederate army as chief of staff to General Stonewall Jackson and was a zealous defender of the Confederate cause. The key problem, however, is not just that Dabney defended the South but that after the war he denounced the freed slaves in what can only be called severely racist terms. Scholars who have approached the career of Dabney have had to distinguish his theological and pastoral contribution from the racial views he expressed. See, e.g., Sean Michael Lucas, *Robert Lewis Dabney: A Southern Presbyterian Life* (P&R, 2005); and Lucas, "'Old Times There Are Not Forgotten': Robert Lewis Dabney's Public Theology for a Reconstructed South," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 81 (2003): 163–77. Lucas concludes that Dabney's views are obviously problematic but that he is still an important topic for historical study.

This volume contributes to a fuller understanding of Dabney's contribution by providing insight into other aspects of his career. Editor Jonathan Peters has compiled sermons by Dabney taken from both archives and previously published works, sermons that provide examples of his ministry during the war years. In fact, beyond Dabney's own story, the book provides material for a better understanding of religious life during the Civil War. The sermons are a picture of religious life in the army on a basic level.

One aspect likely to strike the reader is that the war takes a relatively minor role in most of the sermons. Generally, they are expositions of Scripture likely to be edifying to any Christian regardless of their context. Of course, notes about the war are present but not dominant. One sermon we are told was published as a tract at Stonewall Jackson's request. Dabney also preached a funeral sermon for one fallen soldier and gave a commemorative sermon on General Jackson after his death. Despite such instances, the appeal and application of the sermons is usually broad.

However, although most of the sermons are not overtly political, Dabney at times reflects the Confederate viewpoint. He rails on what he calls an "unprovoked war" and accuses the United States of violating oaths and compacts while himself remaining oblivious to the moral challenges of slavery. (One curious note is that Dabney refers to "the Confederacy" in a sermon dated November 1, 1860, before even South Carolina had seceded. Perhaps southerners were already bandying about

the term “Confederacy,” or it is a later edit by Dabney.) Yet one should note that he does criticize some aspects of Southern culture. Dabney condemns, for example, the practice of dueling and the supposed “code of honor” that produced it. He alludes to Representative Preston Brooks’s physical attack on Charles Sumner in the halls of the Senate, not only condemning the attack itself but also the “insane, wicked, and insulting justification” that many southerners offered for the incident.

In short, the editor has provided a useful primary source for studying not just Dabney but also aspects of Civil War religious life, such as the work of chaplains. Peters also provides numerous helpful footnotes for general readers who may not catch all of Dabney’s historical or literary allusions. It is a valuable primary source for study of this era.

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Moore, Christopher C. *Apostle of the Lost Cause: J. William Jones, Baptists, and the Development of Confederate Memory*. Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 2019. 300 pp. \$50.00

J. William Jones (1836–1909) was a well-known Baptist minister and southern historian of the nineteenth century. Jones studied at the University of Virginia and the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Greenville, SC, before taking a pastorate in Louisa County, VA. He felt called to become a missionary to China, but the American Civil War erupted, prompting him to join the 13th Virginia Infantry, first as a private and then as the regimental chaplain. He eventually became a missionary chaplain to the Third Corps of the Army of Northern Virginia (ANV) and also helped form the Chaplains’ Association in the ANV. During his time in the service, he participated in several interdenominational revivals, preaching the good news of salvation by faith alone in Christ alone.

After the war, Jones took up pastorates and chaplaincies in Virginia and North Carolina and served as the secretary of the Southern Historical Society (1875–1887), the Assistant Corresponding Secretary of the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention (1887–1893), and the chaplain-general of the United Confederate Veterans (1890–1909). He also published two biographies of his former commander (*Personal Reminiscences, Anecdotes, and Letters of Robert E. Lee* and *Life and Letters of Robert Edward Lee: Soldier and Man*), a history of the wartime revivals (*Christ in the Camp, or, Religion in Lee’s Army*; later revised and republished with the subtitle *Religion in the Confederate Army*), and a classroom textbook (*School History of the United States*).

Christopher C. Moore evaluates Jones’s legacy in his recent dissertation turned book, titled *Apostle of the Lost Cause: J. William Jones, Baptists, and the Development of Confederate Memory*. Taking a cue from