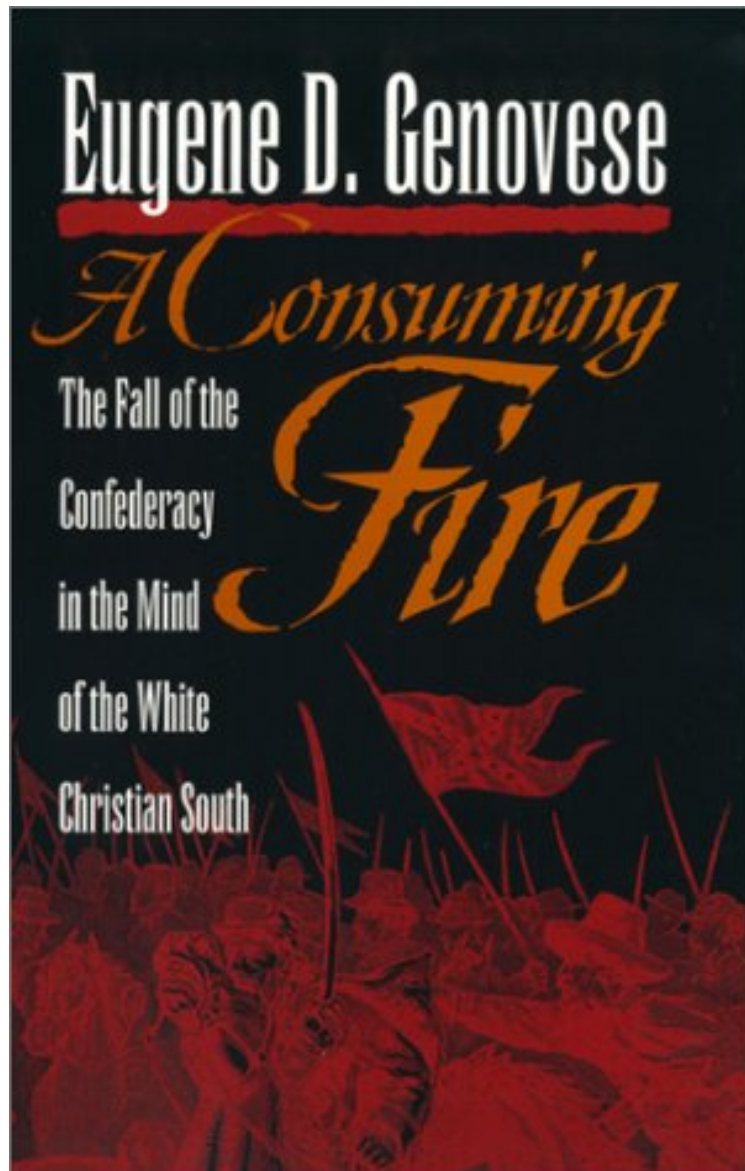


[Pdf free] A Consuming Fire: The Fall of the Confederacy in the Mind of the White Christian South (Mercer University Lamar Memorial Lectures Ser.)

A Consuming Fire: The Fall of the Confederacy in the Mind of the White Christian South (Mercer University Lamar Memorial Lectures Ser.)

Eugene Genovese

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Eugene Genovese : A Consuming Fire: The Fall of the Confederacy in the Mind of the White Christian South (Mercer University Lamar Memorial Lectures Ser.) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would

be worth my time, and all praised *A Consuming Fire: The Fall of the Confederacy in the Mind of the White Christian South* (Mercer University Lamar Memorial Lectures Ser.):

0 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Three Stars By Garrett Smith was ok not a home run by any means.
5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Haunting Look at the Mind and Soul of the Slaveholders By Kevin M. Derby Eugene Genovese offers another excellent contribution to understanding the Old South in "A Consuming Fire." Genovese takes the slaveholders seriously instead of just condemning them and, in this work, he takes a look at their religious thought. Across all denominations, clergymen from the South defended slavery as sanctioned by God and the Bible and presented their cases articulately. They went beyond "the curse of Ham" and offered detailed accounts of how the Bible supported their views. Genovese also looks at how some slaveholders, again using the Bible and their faith, opposed harsh treatment of slaves and fought to preserve slave families and have services and churches. Genovese also shows how Southerners viewed the results of the war and how they attempted to preserve their faith in God despite the collapse of the Confederacy. If you are looking for a simple condemnation of the slaveholders, you are not going to get it from Genovese. But if you are looking to understand how a people dedicated to republican government and the Christian faith could embrace a wicked institution like slavery then you can do no better than looking at this excellent study.
23 of 31 people found the following review helpful. Excellent source about the southern viewpoint of slavery By A Customer There are innumerable controversies between the vast schools of thought in American history. Perhaps one of the largest is that of slavery in the United States. Throughout their years of public education, students are taught that slavery is immoral and wrong. Eugene Genovese, on the other hand, shows the side that students are not often taught. He tells of the reasons why slavery was so strongly supported and gives his interpretations and support of slavery in his book, *A Consuming Fire*. According to Genovese, the slave owners of the South didn't believe that slavery was inhumane. In fact, they believed that it was God's will that slaves be owned. Southern pastors found many Biblical passages which convinced Southerners not only to own slaves, but how to treat them and what rights to give them, or not give them. Genovese says that many slave holders were torn between politics and Christianity by saying, "The efforts to recognize slave marriage, to keep slave families intact, and to repeal the literacy laws confronted slave holders with an uncomfortable choice between their religion and their political and socioeconomic interests," (pg. 23). One of the arguments Genovese makes is that since God wants people to own slaves, He would allow them to win the war. The first few battles of the Civil War supported this side, since the Confederacy seemed to be winning against such impressive odds. Later, when the South lost the war and slavery was non-existent, the Christian South claimed that it was because they did not live according to God's commandments of being good slave owners. Genovese's work, *A Consuming Fire*, is an excellent portrayal of the system of slavery in Southern eyes. This book is filled with interesting facts, and the reader learns that the laws created by the Southern government were often opposed by slave owners themselves. Stated on the cover is, "The Fall of the Confederacy in the Mind of the White Christian South." Nothing better summarizes Genovese's theory than this statement.

The fall of the Confederacy proved traumatic for a people who fought with the belief that God was on their side. Yet, as Eugene D. Genovese writes in *A Consuming Fire*, Southern Christians continued to trust in the Lord's will. The churches had long defended "southern rights" and insisted upon the divine sanction for slavery, but they also warned that God was testing His people, who must bring slavery up to biblical standards or face the wrath of an angry God. In the eyes of proslavery theorists, clerical and lay, social relations and material conditions affected the extent and pace of the spread of the Gospel and men's preparation to receive it. For proslavery spokesmen, "Christian slavery" offered the South, indeed the world, the best hope for the vital work of preparation for the Kingdom, but they acknowledged that, from a Christian point of view, the slavery practiced in the South left much to be desired. For them, the struggle to reform, or rather transform, social relations was nothing less than a struggle to justify the trust God placed in them when He sanctioned slavery. The reform campaign of prominent ministers and church laymen featured demands to secure slave marriages and family life, repeal the laws against slave literacy, and punish cruel masters. *A Consuming Fire* analyzes the strength, weakness, and failure of the struggle for reform and the nature and significance of southern Christian orthodoxy and its vision of a proper social order, class structure, and race relations.

From Kirkus *s*A lucid investigation of the ideology of pro-slavery Southerners. In this book, derived from a series of lectures delivered at Mercer University, noted historian Genovese (*The Southern Front: History and Politics in the Cultural War*, 1995, etc.) examines the ways in which many Southerners convinced themselves that God was on their side while, of course, many Northerners held that the Lord of Hosts was with them. Clerics and church officials of many denominations had been strongly pro-Union until Lincoln's election, Genovese maintains, but most of them stood by secessionist politicians when war broke out. All "readily acknowledged that the South was fighting to uphold slavery," he writes, and only when the war ended did they allow that slavery may have in fact been morally wrong. Until that time, some of the more inventive clerics sought legitimacy for slavery by appealing to biblical authority, arguing that Abraham and other key figures in the Old Testament had owned slaves without drawing down God's

wrath. That God had indeed visited his anger upon the slaveholders, these clerics insisted, was simply a test of their faith as they stood firm in "working out a great thought of Godnamely the higher Development of Humanity in its capacity for Constitutional Liberty." Not all Southerners, Genovese notes, shared these notions. Quoting from letters written by front-line soldiers, he shows that many of them in fact believed that their people had become corrupt thanks to slavery, and that the war itself was "entirely at variance with the commands given for our guidance." After the Confederacy fell, Genovese writes, the ardent clerics turned their attention to other matters, seeing the time "as a new era in which the white race would take up the burden of civilizing the colored races of the world." Genovese's careful scholarship yields another book of importance to students of the Civil War era. -- Copyright 1998, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. A remarkable and important contribution to southern history during its most critical period . . . Written with intellectual rigor and impressive scholarship . . . [This] book belongs on the required reading list of all seriously interested in southern history. (Civil War Book)Always a superb essayist, [Genovese] develops a crisp and powerful argument about the religious strand in the pro-slavery argument, before, during, and after the war. (Times Literary Supplement)Thoroughly researched and cogently argued . . . Gives historians of the pro- and antislavery causes much to think about. (American Historical)Genovese makes a convincing, well-documented case that, although southern ministers supported the war for a slaveholding republic, they did not do so uncritically and repeatedly warned southerners that they had to conform to God's word on the treatment of their slaves if the Confederacy were to benefit from God's support and achieve victory. (Gaines M. Foster Civil War History)Genovese has again essayed important questions that scholars need to address in more depth as they probe the many effects of the Civil War upon the South. (Journal of Southern History)Tests the rhetoric of slave-holding as stewardship against a fearful reality many argued to reform. Both challenging and complementary to works by Drew Gilpin Faust, Mitchell Snay, and Jack P. Maddex, this book is characteristic Genovese--informative, insightful, and provocative. (Library Journal)It should be viewed as a challenge to us all to try to understand the Old South in all its contradictory complexity, and especially to try to comprehend those southerners earnestly argued that slavery was a God-given trust. (Southern Cultures)What seems most laudatory about Genovese is his attempt to try to see the white antebellum South in all its complexity and richness and to reaffirm the importance of religion in the region during the nineteenth century. (H-CivWar)From the Inside FlapThe fall of the Confederacy proved traumatic for a people who fought with the belief that God was on their side. Yet, as Eugene D. Genovese writes in *A Consuming Fire*, Southern Christians continued to trust in the Lord's will. The churches had long defended "southern rights" and insisted upon the divine sanction for slavery, but they also warned that God was testing His people, who must bring slavery up to biblical standards or face the wrath of an angry God. In the eyes of proslavery theorists, clerical and lay, social relations and material conditions affected the extent and pace of the spread of the Gospel and men's preparation to receive it. For proslavery spokesmen, "Christian slavery" offered the South, indeed the world, the best hope for the vital work of preparation for the Kingdom, but they acknowledged that, from a Christian point of view, the slavery practiced in the South left much to be desired. For them, the struggle to reform, or rather transform, social relations was nothing less than a struggle to justify the trust God placed in them when He sanctioned slavery. The reform campaign of prominent ministers and church laymen featured demands to secure slave marriages and family life, repeal the laws against slave literacy, and punish cruel masters. *A Consuming Fire* analyzes the strength, weakness, and failure of the struggle for reform and the nature and significance of southern Christian orthodoxy and its vision of a proper social order, class structure, and race relations.