

of footnotes is particularly distressing because *Kings* is clearly built on prodigious research. As is, it is a work that readers must use only with the greatest of care.

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When Slavery Was Called Freedom
Evangelicalism, Proslavery, and the Causes of the Civil War

By John Patrick Daly

(Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2002. Pp. ix, 207. Notes, selected bibliography, index. \$45.00.)

In this concise monograph, John Patrick Daly presents a dramatically revisionist assessment of antebellum southern religion's role in the ideological debate over slavery. Drawing inspiration from such scholars as Eugene Genovese, Daly contends that the South never diverged from the nation's fundamental cultural unity, especially its faith in divinely guided material progress. Both northern and southern evangelical religion celebrated individualism and moral self-discipline and preached that economic reward was the providential reward for moral virtue.

Evangelicalism began to assert its hold over the southern mind in the first third of the nineteenth century. It was not the rise of abolitionism, Daly contends, but the triumph of this theological outlook linking moral with material progress that fueled proslavery ideology. Evangelical religion conditioned southerners to per-

sonal independence and self-control. Ministers preached that individuals could master their passions and attain wealth and power. Economic prosperity was not a matter of luck or chance, because God ruled all human affairs. Southern prosperity generated through slavery was therefore viewed as proof of that institution's divine sanction.

Combing through the sermons, correspondence, and published writings of church leaders, Daly finds that southern proslavery advocates rarely claimed that slavery was an ideal institution or that it would survive forever. He sees George Fitzhugh and James Henry Hammond as unrepresentative of regional thinking—most southern proslavery arguments were not in contradiction to the nation's free-labor ideology. Southern evangelicals, in contrast, argued that slaves were not involuntary laborers and that they had the same opportunities

open to them as any moral agents. Southerners boasted that the slaves freely accepted labor discipline as a means to instill both moral self-restraint and a superior work ethic. Slavery was viewed as a free labor system and therefore would generate great prosperity for all.

Racist assumptions underlay evangelical proslaveryism. Advocates argued that God had permitted the enslavement of the Africans on account of their moral debasement. Slavery would move slaves in moral paths through the inculcation of internal mechanisms of control. Slavery therefore was part of a divine plan for the redemption of the African race. Southern evangelicals looked forward to the eventual end of slavery and the colonization of the blacks back to Africa on a divinely controlled timetable.

Debating the abolitionists convinced southern evangelicals that they were the true orthodox Christians. They charged abolitionists with doubting God's moral ordering of the universe. Such faith allowed south-

ern church leaders to employ apocalyptic and prophetic rhetoric to rally their region behind the Confederacy. Defeat in the Civil War did not end southern whites' belief in their moral superiority, but it did cause them to lose optimism and diverge from the national faith in progress. Postbellum southern religion retreated into pessimism and otherworldliness, recovering its love of progress and laissez-faire capitalism only when regional prosperity returned in the last decades of the twentieth century. By placing proslaveryism within a persistent ideological mainstream, Daly challenges historians to acknowledge that for the past two centuries national elite groups have used religion to justify their own prosperity and to rationalize racial and economic inequalities as consequence of the underclass's character failings.

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The Spirits of America
A Social History of Alcohol

By Eric Burns

(Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004. Pp. 336. Notes, select bibliography, index. \$29.00.)

Eric Burns has given us an enjoyable but rather enigmatic book. It is beautifully written and it purports to address a serious subject—America's

long and frequently controversial experience with beverage alcohol. But for all of the promise of its title, the book has a hard time defining itself.