

Book Review

REVIEWED BY PATCH BLAKEY

Many are familiar with the well-used quote by George Bernard Shaw: “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” But what if the problem isn’t a failure of personal memory, but rather a lack of information? Of course, some things seem just too difficult or painful for us to want to dig into. However, Jesus also made a statement that has some bearing on the matter, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). In the context, Christ was referring to those Jews who continued in His word, and in so doing, proved to be His disciples. Yet, I believe the application of Jesus’ words is broader than the immediate context. It is important for Christians to be truth-seekers.

By faith, we reign with Christ; we are fellow kings with Christ. The author of Proverbs, himself a king, taught, “It is the glory of God to conceal a thing; but the honour of kings is to search out a matter” (Proverbs 25:2). It is to our credit to seek out the truth, no matter how thorny or agonizing. Some aspects of history can be much the same, and John Dwyer’s book presents just such a morally and intellectually troubling but significant topic.

What a person calls something often gives away their biases, and no man alive is without bias. Yet regardless of an individual’s personal persuasions about who was right and who was wrong in the Civil War or the War Between the States, John Dwyer’s *The War Between the States* is an in-depth presentation of the complex and problematical issues which led up to and caused the war, and the subsequent restoration of the defeated states to the Union. He provides an abundance of quotes from key figures from both the North and the South, and in some instances, even from

abroad, on all aspects of the war. He not only manifests the wickedness of the South towards blacks in the institution of slavery, but also the common and less well-known harshness towards blacks in the North. A case in point: how many slave-states fought for the North? When were the slaves in these states emancipated?

Dwyer also provides some valuable insight into the effect of the war on the spread of the gospel, both in the North and the South. Whereas this is a positive consequence of the war, one is still overwhelmed and almost numbed by the breadth of human wickedness that was also prevalent on both sides throughout the war. The book also contains numer-

Pepperdine, and ultimately California State University-Northridge. He is the author of several historical books and articles, and has been a frequent history expert on several television documentaries. Dr. McGrath made the following comment about this book, “*The War Between the States* by John J. Dwyer, et al., is the best textbook for the high school, preparatory academy, or junior college I’ve ever read. Moreover, it covers far more than its title suggests.” (For the complete review by Dr. McGrath, visit the ACCS website at www.accsedu.org > CLASSIS 2006).

Many American Christians may wonder, how did this nation of ours ever get to be like it is today? Without understanding what preceded our contemporary situation, it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to adequately answer this question. Reading John Dwyer’s *The War Be-*

The War Between the States: America’s Uncivil War

John J. Dwyer, et al.

Denton, TX: Bluebonnet Press, 2005, 682 pages, \$40

ous paintings, prints and photographs of many key figures and scenes, all of which are accompanied with ample historical documentation to help the reader appreciate the significance these people or places played at particular points in the tragic drama.

Between 600,000 to 700,000 men lost their lives as a result of this war. This fact alone should move us to know what was of such importance that both sides would be willing to make such phenomenal sacrifices in human lives. A related question: how many women, children, elderly and infirm died as a result of General Sherman’s march through Atlanta to the sea? Was such an action biblically supportable?

This book is historically thorough and captivantly written. Roger D. McGrath, Ph.D., was a former professor of history at UCLA for 15 years, before teaching at

tween the States provides an abundance of information that most of us have never been made adequately aware of. Reading this book was so intensely captivating that it was difficult to put it down. Indeed, I found that it was the first thing I grabbed in the morning when I awoke, and the last thing I set down before falling asleep at night. John Dwyer has done all Americans a great service by shining a bright light on this dark, disturbing, and maybe even suppressed portion of our nation’s history. Reading this book can be a sobering experience, but nonetheless a very worthwhile and beneficial one. “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

The War Between the States: America’s Uncivil War is available through Bluebonnet Press, P.O. Box 51661, Denton, Texas, 76206; phone (214) 538-3863; or via their website at www.bluebonnetpress.com.