



Stonewall Jackson in the Shenandoah Valley Campaign: An Excerpt from Life and Campaigns of Stonewall Jackson

Robert Lewis Dabney

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Robert Lewis Dabney (March 5, 1820 – January 3, 1898) was an American Christian theologian, a Southern Presbyterian pastor, and Confederate Army chaplain best known for being chief of staff to General Thomas Jonathan “Stonewall” Jackson during his famous Valley Campaign and the Seven Days Battles. **He also wrote *Life and Campaigns of Stonewall Jackson*, an invaluable biography of the general that was published in 1866, just a year after the Civil War had ended.**

Stonewall Jackson needs no formal introduction, being one of the most famous generals of the Civil War, revered throughout the South for his extremely successful military skill. At the same time, Jackson’s pious Christianity and seeming eccentricities have continued to fascinate historians, scholars and readers, who often still argue why he would hold his left arm up with his palm facing outward while in battle.

Jackson earned his famous “stonewall” moniker at the Battle of First Bull Run, when Brigadier-General Bee told his brigade to rally behind Jackson, who was standing like a stone wall. General Bee was mortally wounded shortly after giving the order, so it’s still unclear whether that was a compliment for standing strong or an insult for not moving his brigade, but the nickname stuck for the brigade and the general itself.

Stonewall Jackson in the Shenandoah Valley Campaign is an account of Jackson’s amazing campaign from Dabney’s biography of Jackson. The biography is invaluable not just as a contemporary source but as a study of Lost Cause ideology, coming even before the phrase itself took hold. Dabney’s hatred of the Yankees is evident throughout the book, as is his adulation of Jackson, who comes off as nearly perfect in this book. Slavery is depicted as a benign institution, and the Yankees are treated as inferior in every respect to Southerners. The frequent Lost Cause argument that the South lost only because of inferior manpower and resources can be found in this book, much of which was written before the Confederacy had been defeated. At the same time, Dabney wrote the book to demonstrate the importance of Christianity and its influence on Jackson’s generalship, helping create the image of Confederates as dignified, Christian fighters. The biography will be of interest to anyone interested in Southern attitudes toward the North and the war in the 1860s.

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