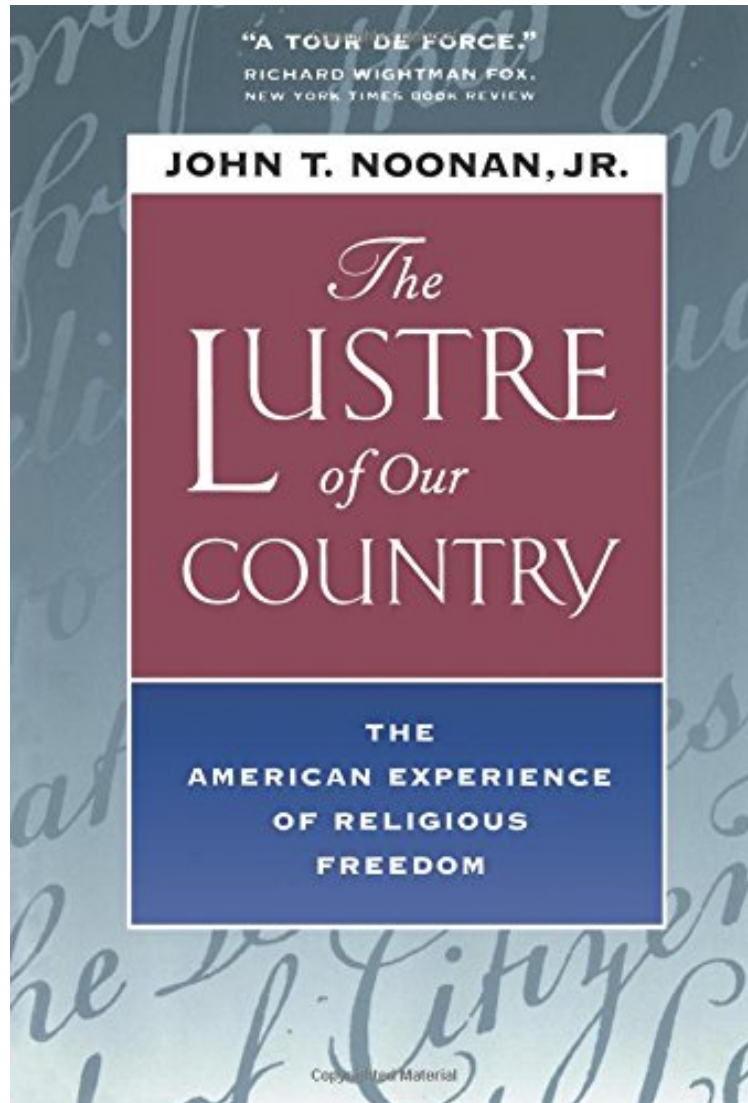


The Lustre of Our Country: The American Experience of Religious Freedom

John T. Noonan Jr.

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#1719161 in Books John T Noonan 2000-03-08 2000-03-08Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.00 x 1.00 x 6.00l, 1.33 #File Name: 0520224914436 pagesThe Lustre of Our Country The American Experience of Religious Freedom | File size: 19.Mb

John T. Noonan Jr. : The Lustre of Our Country: The American Experience of Religious Freedom before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Lustre of Our Country: The American Experience of Religious Freedom:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Paul JohnsonJust what I was looking for and expected.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A must read for anyone concerned with this topicBy

Michael Sweeney This is an excellent treatment of a vitally important issue by one of the great jurists and intellectuals of our generation. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Contains Some Fine Distillations of The Ultimate Nature of Religious Freedom By Peter P. Fuchs Religious Freedom is all about balance, or perhaps a societal equilibrium. It is a matter of emphasis that speaks to a deeper philosophical attitude. Such balance is as distant from religion despising tropes as it is from cryptic ambitions for theocracy, often thinly disguised. It is a manly approach of respect for your fellow human being, whether with men OR women. Since it involves the virtue that descends from the masculine side of human nature, namely that of respect for boundary and territory, it is ultimately grounded in a philosophy that is based in an experience of fraternity qua the universal human experience of the fraternal -- and that includes women. That to my mind is the real background on a broad level for reflections just as are contained in a book like this. And the proof of this assumptions is that it contains a great line which encapsulates this very attitude: "Public argument is not the same as personal conviction. But public argument that employs religious belief for its own ends, that makes 'an Engine' of religion, precisely parallels the exploitation of religion by government that JM denounced in the memorial as wickedness." It does not seem that the author desired to focus on the broad background for such thinking. It is a frankly Masonic balance that is described in that excellent line. And the considerable presence of Masons amongst the Founding community is the likely genesis of the assumptions, whether the writer was attracted to actually joining the fraternity or not. It is an attitude, and it had a source. Freemasonry, plain and simple.

A New York Times Notable Book This remarkable work offers a fresh approach to a freedom that is often taken for granted in the United States, yet is one of the strongest and proudest elements of American culture: religious freedom. In this compellingly written, distinctively personal book, Judge John T. Noonan asserts that freedom of religion, as James Madison conceived it, is an American invention previously unknown to any nation on earth. *The Lustre of Our Country* demonstrates how the idea of religious liberty is central to the American experience and to American influence around the world. Noonan's original book is a history of the idea of religious liberty and its relationship with the law. He begins with an intellectual autobiography, describing his own religious and legal training. After setting the stage with autobiography, Noonan turns to history, with each chapter written in a new voice. One chapter takes the form of a catechism (questions and answers), presenting the history of the idea of religious freedom in Christianity and the American colonies. Another chapter on James Madison argues that Madison's support of religious freedom was not purely secular but rather the outcome of his own religious beliefs. A fictional sister of Alexis de Toqueville writes, contrary to her brother's work, that the U.S. government is very closely tied to religion. Other chapters offer straightforward considerations of constitutional law. Throughout the book, Noonan shows how the free exercise of religion led to profound changes in American law he discusses abolition, temperance, and civil rights and how the legal notion of religious liberty influenced revolutionary France, Japan, and Russia, as well as the Catholic Church during Vatican II. *The Lustre of Our Country* is a celebration of religious freedom a personal and profound statement on what the author considers America's greatest moral contribution to the world.

.com "Christ tells his followers to do unto others as they would have others do unto them," writes Judge John T. Noonan in the introduction to *The Lustre of Our Country*, his expansive study of religious liberty and its relationship with American law. "From such sayings a deduction in favor of religious freedom seems obvious; but such sayings have been contained in cultural contexts that made the deduction imperfect." Enter James Madison, whom Noonan argues, found the perfect phraseology to theoretically transcend cultural context and effectively circumvent lawful coercion, ultimately making him "the man primarily responsible for religious freedom becoming the first of our liberties." Noonan thoroughly and artfully examines how the Madisonian ideal has been tested and assimilated over the years through various court cases, and how the First Amendment has influenced the struggle for religious freedom elsewhere, from revolutionary France to post-WWII Japan and Russia after the cold war. Noonan avoids becoming too dry, writing several chapters in a disparate voice (a brief autobiographical sketch, a letter from the sister of Alexis de Toqueville, and a chapter in the form of a catechism are highlights), illustrating how the notion of religious liberty has imbued every segment of our society. Noonan himself professes that freedom of religion is America's greatest contribution to the world. From Publishers Weekly Noonan travels America's long and uncertain road to religious tolerance in this book. Although religious freedom is often taken for granted as an integral part of the American experience, Noonan, a judge on the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeal for the Ninth Circuit, argues that this liberty has never been, and may never be, unthreatened. Through an examination of the history of the ideal of the separation of church and state, Noonan concludes that, despite efforts to the contrary, government affects religion and religious belief inevitably informs civic decision making. Wide-ranging chapters include an account of James Madison's struggles to see religious rights protected by the Constitution and an examination of the ways that Durkheim's assertion that any society must worship itself conflicts with the notion of the separation of church and state. An imaginative and thoroughly researched volume, Noonan's book demonstrates that government has influenced religion in America as surely as spiritual belief has shaped government. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. From

Library Journal
The United States stands out among nations in its experience of religious freedom. A freedom, argues Noonan, that is unique among nations, though other countries like Japan and France have learned from it. A U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals judge with a Ph.D. in philosophy who is also an award-winning author, Noonan surveys the history of religious freedom and the struggle to ground it in America, then takes on the constitutional questions it inevitably raises. Based on good scholarship but clearly written for all audiences, this book will help readers both understand and appreciate religious freedom as a treasure to be guarded. Highly recommended for both public and academic libraries.
A John Moryl, Yeshiva Univ. Libs., New York
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