promises to change how all readers think through their own trips to the checkout.

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This important work is a comprehensive survey of elite, southern white attitudes towards slavery in the early national period of American history. It analyzes white southern roles in and responses to nearly every major event, movement, and development concerning slavery in the early American republic from the drafting of the Constitution of 1787 through the challenges posed by the Abolitionist movement in the 1830s. The book's main focus is on southern white efforts to address the “slavery question,” or more precisely, a series of contentious and divisive questions about the proper place, size, importance, and “configuration” of slavery in southern society. Ford’s main thesis is straightforward and familiar. Elite southern white attempts to address the “slavery question” revealed that upper and lower South whites possessed significantly different answers to the slavery question. In developing this thesis, Ford examines in considerable detail “the varied and sometimes contradictory ideas and attitudes held by groups of white southerners as they debated the slavery question among themselves.” Consequently, the book focuses on “the political, intellectual, economic, and social thought of leading white southerners.” (4)

Though this is elite, intellectual and political history, it is nonetheless valuable to historians interested in the social and cultural history of slavery and slave societies.

Disagreements over the slavery question stemmed primarily from regional differences in the racial make-up of society and the overall economic importance of plantation agriculture and staple production. In the upper South discussions of the slavery question were animated by the declining importance of tobacco production, convictions that slavery served as an economic drag on the region, fears of slave rebellion, and lingering republican and religious convictions that slavery was wrong. The upper South’s answer was to seek a “demographic reconfiguration” of slavery that would reduce both the importance of slave labor in the region's economy and the proportion of free and enslaved blacks. The internal slave trade would transfer a large portion of the enslaved population to the expanding cotton fields of the lower South. Emancipation would speed the process, while colonization would eliminate the region’s substantial free black population. Upper South whites, then, sought the slow but sure “whitening” of their region.

The upper South’s preference for gradually eliminating slavery created frequent conflicts with elite whites in the lower South. Beginning in the 1790s, the massive expansion of plantation agriculture across the lower South meant
that whites there had no pretensions about ever ending slavery. Accordingly, they sought an “ideological reconfiguration” of slavery. Ideologically reconfigured, slavery would be defensible to outside critics, palpable to the region’s non-slaveholding whites, more manageable for planters, and acceptable to slaves. An ideologically reconfigured institution would also negate the near-constant specter of slave rebellion. Though it was hardly pre-ordained, paternalism and the domestication of slavery emerged as the preferred means for reconfiguring the place of slavery in the lower South. In turn, the bulk of the chapters on the lower South are devoted to charting paternalism’s halting, often contested march from an “insurgent ideology” (153) at the turn of the century to a “traditional and often defensive cultural world view” (152) that was widely accepted by whites in the lower South by the 1830s.

This oversimplified summary does little justice to the Ford’s subtle, detailed analysis of internal southern debates about slavery. Though the book is grand in scope, Ford pays careful attention to contingencies and the specifics of time and place, emphasizing how “different moments and different constellations of interests” produced differing policies, responses, and ideologies. (301) White responses to the slavery question changed considerably in reaction to economic changes, white evangelicals’ challenges to slavery as an institution and planter treatment of slaves, real and imagined slave rebellions and conspiracies, and northern criticisms of slavery. His long analysis of paternalism and the domestication of slavery is a case in point. Ford engages the voluminous and often contentious literature on paternalism with skill. He then adds his own analysis of the emergence and character of paternalism that is worthy of a book in its own right.

Deliver Us from Evil has many other strengths. First, Ford treats the early national period of southern history as unique and significant in its own right. Unlike so much other work examining the South and slavery, Ford neither tries to interpret the early national period through the lens of antebellum America, nor does he write in anticipation of antebellum sectional conflict, disunion, and the Civil War. Second, though this is unapologetic elite, intellectual and political history, Ford incorporates African Americans into his narrative, demonstrating that planters, officials, and intellectuals constantly found themselves reacting to the actions and aspirations of slaves and free blacks. For example, the massive flight of slaves during the American War for Independence convinced upper South whites that slavery was more trouble than it was worth while it convinced lower South whites that they had to devise more effective methods for controlling the region’s growing slave population. Unfortunately, non-elite whites—with the exception of evangelicals—receive considerably less attention. This is a significant omission, as Ford contends that in large measure the slavery question revolved around non-slaveholding upper South whites’ concerns that slavery served as a drag on economic growth and non-slaveholding lower South whites’ fears of slave rebellion.

This is a wide-ranging book that covers the most important events and developments related to white actions regarding slavery in the southern states over a roughly fifty year period. While Ford’s analyses of particular events, movements, and developments is sometimes conventional, they are more often novel. The book’s length and detail makes it unlikely that anyone except for the most devoted graduate students will read it from cover to cover. Nonetheless,
historians of the American South, African American history, and slave societies more generally will be able to employ, challenge, and modify its many interpretive points with great value.

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Prior to the advent of modern medicine, many newcomers to the Caribbean islands and the tropical lowlands of the American continents died of *vomito negro* (yellow fever), malaria, and dengue fever after having been bitten by *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes. Death swept away great numbers including new settlers, cantoned military forces, seamen, and slaves. Wherever yellow fever struck, the population suffered from terror and panic. On islands such as Jamaica that is the subject of Vincent Brown's path-breaking study, there was no remedy or escape from the omnipresent threat of death. After Spanish Jamaica fell to the British in 1655, the island became a major sugar producer dependent upon the importation of African slave labor. These unfortunate people faced the horrors of capture and shipment to the African coast and incarceration in coastal trading establishments, followed by the ordeal of the trans-Atlantic voyage under the most appalling conditions imaginable. Although contemporary writers and Jamaican slave owners such as Bryan Edwards wrote their versions of history intended to sanitize the slave trade and the unspeakable conditions suffered by the Africans, it was difficult to escape the mortality rate owing to extremely cruel treatment, dysentery, dehydration, poor provisions, and sometimes the outbreak of epidemics of cholera and yellow fever. In 1780, toward the end of a long voyage to Jamaica, the captain of the slave ship *Zong* ordered the massacre of 132 sick slaves who were thrown overboard with their hands tied to collect the insurance money.

Many slaves who arrived in Jamaica with family members faced new emotional trauma when they were sold off individually—separating them permanently from their relatives. Weakened by the voyage, many slaves contracted smallpox or other diseases. Brown estimates that women were ill sixty percent of their working lives and men about forty-eight percent of the time. Confronted by hard labor in the cane fields and fed a diet lacking in adequate nutrition, many slaves suffered from starvation and died from dysentery, respiratory ailments, bowel diseases, depression, and influenza. Child mortality was often over fifty percent—caused by lockjaw, measles, smallpox, yaws, intestinal parasites, and many other diseases. The high death rate among slaves in Jamaica served as a stimulus to maintain the trans-Atlantic trade. As was common in Spanish and Portuguese American possessions, miscegenation involving white men who forced themselves on defenseless black women and girls produced a significant mulatto population. Unlike the experience of Spanish America, only some