

death in 1756. Family connections through this uncle and through his marriage to the daughter of the earl of Gallaway and his sister's to the earl of Gower won him a seat in the House of Lords and three colonial governorships. In all these appointments Murray provoked resentments by attempted self-enrichment, a tendency toward personal arrogance, drunkenness, rowdy behavior, and sexual indiscretions. In Virginia, anti-Scottish animus and white colonists' rage following his emancipation offer to slaves who fought for the Crown further contributed to his portrayal as overconfident, blustering, and foolish, and encouraged allegations that he provoked Dunmore's War in 1774 to enrich himself and other land speculators and even that he facilitated the Shawnee attack on Virginia forces at Point Pleasant during that conflict. These circumstances, along with his daughter's illegal marriage to the son of George III, ended his New World career.

Acknowledging all this, David constructs a more complex and satisfactory portrait. Certainly Murray was given to bad decisions and a lack of self-control, as his most devoted English backers recognized. On the other hand, his often-brash actions were on behalf of the oppressed and underprivileged as well as himself, most conspicuously in his 1775 emancipation proclamation. Moreover, he was far from stupid. He owned a substantial library and participated in learned societies. Seemingly he realized that in this fluid colonial society, where London officials could not control provincial assemblies; provincial authorities could not control land speculators, dissident settlers, or Native Americans in the West; and loyalty to monarchical authority was broad but shallow, decisive unauthorized actions could be necessary for order and stability to prevail. More specifically he realized that the greatest asset of a governor seeking local support was his ability to grant land. These insights would guide and misguide him as he navigated trans-Appalachian conflicts in 1774, confronted the revolution of 1775, and plotted to gain control of southeastern North America in later decades.

David overstates his case in contending that this sheds substantial new light on Dunmore's American world. That colonial governors and royal authority were weak is no surprise to any-

one familiar with Bernard Bailyn's early work. That the trans-Appalachian West was a contested middle ground where European and Native Americans contended for control and created hybrid societies is a major conclusion of the last generation of scholars. That enslaved and poorer Virginians could differ from their "betters" and act on their behalf is central to the work of Woody Holton, Michael A. McDonnell, and others.

David has not sketched out a "new world" but rather has shown how an important and misunderstood actor fit into that world as we now know it. And that is no mean accomplishment.

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*Sacred Scripture, Sacred War: The Bible and the American Revolution.* By James P. Byrd. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013. xii, 243 pp. \$27.95.)

What was the role of the Bible in the American Revolution? Surprisingly, historians have never satisfactorily answered this straightforward question. James P. Byrd's excellent and trailblazing monograph, *Sacred Scripture, Sacred War*, tackles this question and significantly advances our knowledge of the Revolution's Bible. The Bible was the most read and respected book in the colonies as well as in the new nation, and Byrd and others observe that biblical authority was more important than any other source in endowing the Revolution with meaning. But until now we did not know which texts revolutionaries cited and how or when they used those texts. In other words, our knowledge about the ways the Bible functioned during the Revolution has been tentative at best. Spreading an impressive net across the colonies-turned-states, Byrd demonstrates for the first time through numerous and diverse sources exactly how the Bible operated, specifically in making the patriotic case for war.

The Bible was omnipresent in the pre-secularized colonial North American societies

of the late eighteenth century and was accordingly read as a universal drama that was ever relevant and available for interaction with the present. *Sacred Scripture, Sacred War* underscores the extent to which the Bible was seen as a fathomless assemblage of war stories and how the Bible helped instill republican (and thus martial) virtue, the ideal of sacrifice, and the idea of sacred revolutionary warfare for liberty. Such use may have initiated in New England, but it spread throughout the Atlantic Seaboard, mainly but not exclusively through sermons. Byrd effectively demonstrates that while the Revolution may not have been a religious revolt, the Bible was a central channel for inspiring revolutionary sentiments.

It is impossible to do justice to the richness of the book's findings and insights in a short review. It is noteworthy and revealing, however, that patriots scoured both the Old and the New Testaments for their wartime needs. In the Old Testament they found themes such as the Exodus (underscoring the escape from bondage to freedom), the obscure curse of Meroz (chastising neutrality as sinful cowardice), and the character of King David (the warrior psalmist) to endure and even endorse the atrocities of war. In the New Testament they struggled with loyalist claims that Peter and Paul condemned rebellion against civil authority, and they read the apostles through a republican prism. They also read the apocalyptic book of Revelation, focusing less on America's millennial future (as past historians assumed) and more on its immediate burning matters, mainly the need to equate the Revolution with a militantly chiliastic Christianity.

Byrd demonstrates how the Bible effectively inspired patriotism in revolutionary America, underscoring the interconnected relationship between religion and war. This fascinating, important, and insightful book identifies and analyzes for the first time the biblical texts that were instrumental in instilling militant patriotism during the war years and should be read by all serious students of the American Revolution. Fortunately, by outlining the broad biblical sources of the American Revolution Byrd has also turned our attention to the beginning

of a long-standing American tradition of sanctifying war.

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*For Liberty and Equality: The Life and Times of the Declaration of Independence.* By Alexander Tsesis. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012. 397 pp. \$29.95.)

Countless works explore the origins of the Declaration of Independence, but few consider its influence in the subsequent politics of the nation it heralded. With *For Liberty and Equality* Alexander Tsesis seeks to redress this imbalance.

Oddly, the book stumbles at the start when recounting the Declaration's well-chronicled beginnings. Tsesis ably summarizes the maneuverings both in and out of the Continental Congress. He also provides a useful account of the Declaration's commitment to natural rights and the corollary right to alter or abolish any government that systematically violates them. Overlooked, however, is the case the Declaration made based on at least the American understanding of British constitutional law, a brief that takes up the document's bill of particulars, helps explain the focus on the king, and was central at the time.

From here Tsesis hits his stride. The central theme of the book maps the halting yet insistent expansion of the Declaration's self-evident truths of human equality in the enjoyment of basic liberties that go beyond the Revolution's elite, white male leadership. The volume makes a distinct contribution in showing how the Declaration, and those who used it, contributed to this process.

The Declaration played its most important role in confronting race. Tsesis demonstrates that opponents of the slave trade, abolitionists, Reconstruction Republicans, and the civil rights movement consistently deployed the document's natural law tenets to expand the nation's founding commitments to African Americans. Expected figures such as Frederick