

This is to say that the focus of this book is fairly narrow. It will serve specialists in Edwards and mid eighteenth-century New England well. It also sets the stage for other scholars to draw the intellectual implications of the data helpfully assembled by Yeager.

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Unity in Christ and country. American Presbyterians in the revolutionary era, 1758–1801.

By William Harrison Taylor. (Religion and American Culture.) Pp. xii + 186.

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Historians have long recognised the meaningful roles that individual American Presbyterians played in the American Revolution, but William Harrison Taylor ably reveals that the Revolution had a significant impact on American Presbyterians as well. In this book Taylor makes a compelling argument that, starting in 1758, the American Presbyterian Church commenced a conscience turn toward interdenominationalism, but that in the process the Presbyterians ultimately contributed to the widening of divisions within their own Church and sectional rifts in the country, rifts that eventually resulted in the Civil War. The research underlying the book's claims is largely dependent on the records of the various levels of Presbyterian governing bodies. Through this lens we see how the imperial crisis with Great Britain and the prolonged public debate over the proposals to appoint an American bishop created sizeable obstacles to the efforts of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia to strengthen Christian ties across denominational lines. These efforts were hindered further between 1775 and 1783 by the Revolutionary War, which, according to Taylor, caused many Americans 'to place political concerns above the welfare of Christendom' (p. 7). In the decades that followed the war, the Church's newly-created General Assembly responded to this trend by directing the synods and presbyteries to repackage interdenominationalism as nationalism by preaching that in strengthening the fledgling American nation Presbyterians were bolstering Christendom. Through such efforts, American Presbyterians were fairly successful in building enduring relationships with Congregationalists in northern states, but their weakness in numbers and influence in the southern states ultimately led to schisms in those places. Furthermore, sectional debates over the politics of slavery contributed to division and secession within the Church, just as it did outside of it. As Taylor states, by 1861 'The sectionalism fostered through open-ended definitions of proper national spirit espoused by the Presbyterian Church had finally torn the veil of national rhetoric' (p. 129). Taylor's prose is clear and to the point, making his arguments particularly accessible to readers. *Unity in Christ and country* is an important contribution to the resurgent study of religion in Revolutionary America and essential reading for those seeking to understand the place of Presbyterians therein.

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