

## BOOK REVIEWS

STEVENS, S., *Quakers in Northeast Norfolk, England, 1690–1800* (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 2012), pp. ix + 411. ISBN: 978-0-7734-2909-3, Hardback, £104.95, \$159.95.

Even now, around a century after the publication of Rufus Jones' and William Braithwaite's seminal histories, we know surprisingly little about the nuanced experience and lives of Quakers; still less of the 'middling sort' in the eighteenth century. Sylvia Stevens' impressively researched examination of Lammas Monthly Meeting in Northeast Norfolk between 1690 and 1800 is therefore a valuable addition to the historiography.

The text is divided into seven chapters, two of which are the introduction and conclusion. Chapters 2 (the first conventional chapter) and 3 are designed to establish context, which includes allusion to other dissenting religions. Chapter 2 aims to describe Lammas Monthly Meeting and its place in local Quaker cultures; here and throughout, Yarmouth and the Gurney family, bankers of Norwich, are used as reference points. Stevens' range and discussion of sources—the challenges presented by patchy survival; potential failures in writers' memory; corporate interference in the publishing process; the shifting effectiveness of record-keeping—also punctuate the section and the book as a whole. Chapter 3 aims to provide the backdrop to later discussions of Quaker travel and publication. Various journeys to and from Lammas Meeting 'in the Service of Truth' (p. 87) are considered, including representation to London Yearly Meeting. Travelling for ministry is explored through local figures, Richard Ransome, Mary Kirby and Edmund Peckover, and the written genres by which journeys and ideas were disseminated. The hosts of travelling ministers are framed as active in Quaker service. The chapter demonstrates that during the eighteenth century—a period, according to received wisdom, marked by introspection and the tempering of female members—female Friends continued to cross the British Isles and Atlantic in missionary and ministry work.

The on-going activism of women, with male and corporate sanction, is also a hallmark of Chapter 4. Three types of ministry are conceptualised—'spreading of reinforcing doctrine', enthusiastic prophesy, and pastoral ministry (p. 170)—though the evidence and discussion do not always divide so neatly. Instances of women's

very public ministry in streets and marketplaces are portrayed: in Norfolk through the figure of Mary Kirby; and in London through Ann Mercy Bell, whose supporters included Joseph Phipps—an active Friend who later moved to Norwich. Yet this is only part of a wide-ranging chapter. Earlier discussions centre on several public theological debates in Norfolk and Quaker access to texts. Stevens suggests that Quakerism was shaped by the attacks of other denominations, and harboured a fluidity of belief. The chapter therefore presents a rich tapestry of the inner and outward lives of belief of Norfolk Friends, and in places contextualises them against instances from elsewhere in Britain.

Chapter 5 deals with the lynchpins of Quaker historiography: oaths, non-payments of tithes, and peace witness; the latter ensuring the inclusion of regional, national and international politics and warfare. Stevens also incorporates local administration and Quaker involvement in it, particularly as Overseers of the Poor. Northeast Norfolk Friends are thus portrayed as pragmatic, many negotiating tax and legislation in a way that avoided contravening faith or law. Such pragmatism is evidenced in Chapter 6. Stevens' research suggests that the corporate discipline of impropriety was only more rigorously enforced from the 1730s/40s. The first part of the chapter therefore rests on key aspects of Quaker life, including marriage practices, which are considered as part of the landscape of networks and isolation of Quaker families. Aside from the familiar aspects of Quaker history, Chapter 6 contains two gems of the study: the writings of ex-sailor and shopkeeper, John Secker, and his relative Daniel Boulter, retailer and museum proprietor. Secker's travels form the crux of his memoir and we learn that he detailed the flora, fauna and encounters with Muslim and Catholic cultures from his stops in Yemen, Portugal, India and elsewhere. His belief in providentialism (a thread stitched throughout the book) is discussed briefly. Boulter's reflections, we are told, are shorter; these are supplemented by several sources which whisper a sense of the museum—part-collection, part-shop.

Chapters 5 and 6 affirm the very best of the book, which is the product of solid knowledge, thorough research, and a doctoral thesis. The latter is indicative of the issues inherent in the text. It would have benefitted significantly from an extensive rewriting and editing process, thus reorganising the text into a more logical and coherent format, enhancing its findings, inserting greater context and identifying the demands of its various potential readerships. Those unfamiliar with Norfolk, or even British, geography will find it difficult to appreciate the connotations of the study. Nuance is also lost in the need for context throughout, with the exception of events which impacted directly on Quakerism. The aim to embed eighteenth-century Friends in their neighbourhood therefore often slips, despite opportunities presented by the sources. Abiah Darby's writings, for instance, are used. Her husband was Abraham of Coalbrookdale, Shropshire, a pivotal enabler and a cradle of industrialisation—but the Industrial Revolution and its implications for travel are largely absent; so too the Enlightenment. The book presupposes familiarity with Quaker origins, controversies, faith and practice. Aside from direction to a useful appendix incorporating worship and corporate administration (pp. 335–38), much of the value bedrock of Quakerism only emerges in Chapter 6. The importance of education, for example, is first examined here, which means that earlier discussions of theological pamphlets,

text availability, the written communication of faith and discipline, and source limitation are missing their foundation and therefore their full implications; this is perhaps one reason for the oversight of analysis at pertinent points in the text.

Nevertheless, for specialists this is an important study. It complicates the stereotype of 'a peculiar people' and brings into view overlooked Quakers. The book is thick with detail and rich in sources—some fresh, others underused—adding to the patchwork of local studies which are developing ideas about space and place in the history of Quakerism, and of wider Nonconformity. The text will also promote the ideal of historiographically reconnecting Friends to the vibrant, changing world in which they participated, thereby nuancing the dominant narrative of quietism.

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CAMBERS, A., *Godly Reading: Print, Manuscript and Puritanism in England, 1580–1720* (Cambridge Studies in Early Modern British History; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. xiii + 304, illus. ISBN: 978-0-521-76489-6, Hardback, £60.

The association of Protestantism with the development of individuality and interiority has long persisted in accounts of post-Reformation England. Andrew Chambers here takes issue with the legacy of Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* to argue instead for the centrality of communal and collective endeavour among godly readers. Ranging across the period to connect early puritans with post-Restoration nonconformists, he finds continuities in reading practices. Puritanism, he argues, was a religious culture characterized at least as much by communal reading as by solitary engagement with the book. Such social, collective and often public ways of reading resulted in a comradesly cohesion among those who shared these traditions of reading. At the same time, these shared practices served to identify puritans as a distinct group in the eyes of their less godly contemporaries.

Chambers takes issue with the methodology of those such as Ian Green, whose influential *Print and Protestantism in Early Modern England* (2000) constructed a canon of godly reading from his detailed study of the books most often reprinted in the period. By contrast, and drawing his evidence principally from diaries and spiritual autobiographies, Chambers starts from the *where* and *how* of reading, rather than what was read. Using the physical sites of reading to structure his investigation, he leads us through the variety of places in which a godly reader might at different times encounter printed (and sometimes handwritten) texts. Beginning with the domestic spaces most associated with interiority and private reading (the closet, the bedchamber and the study) and broadening into the wider household or 'family'—meeting in hall, parlour and kitchen—he counters the assumption that internal silent reading lay at the heart of Protestantism. He finds communal reading going on in the bedchamber, for example, and identifies the household's reading and praying together as the origin of the conventicle. Subsequent chapters continue the trajectory outwards into

the public sphere, through libraries (personal, parish, town, school and college), the town (church, pulpit, coffee house, bookshops) and ending with prisons.

Anyone with an interest in getting closer to how, as well as where, the godly read their books will find an accumulation of sometimes surprising evidence here. Interestingly, for example, many of the private libraries sold off in early book auctions were those of nonconformists; and godly parish libraries were established early, pre-dating the Anglican parish libraries which flourished after the Restoration. The focus on godly reading sometimes slips, however, especially in the chapter on the town. The section on coffee houses has, unsurprisingly, little to say about the godly reader, and similarly much of the section on bookshops discusses the London book trade in general rather than specific acts of reading. Cambers' account of bookshops is altogether odd. To claim that bookseller 'was not a recognized occupation' is nonsense. His description of the book trade is at times misleading, relying as it does on a few secondary sources (most frequently by James Raven and Adrian Johns) inadequately digested. For example, contrary to Cambers' assertion that 'Very few records survive which tell us how booksellers displayed their books in windows', there is in fact good evidence of what bookshops looked like (much of it gathered by Giles Mandelbrote) and which in the early period indicates the use of trestles, lock-up stalls, or shops with shutters and book-boards for display, not 'windows'.<sup>1</sup> The reader's confidence in Cambers is here further undermined by minor inaccuracies: 'foul-poysons' is surely a misreading of Baxter's view of Giles Calvert as purveyor of 'soul-poysons' (the long 's' in the 1653 text being misread as an 'f'). Disappointingly, this whole section remains unfocussed and tells us more about distribution than reading.

The final site of reading discussed in the volume is the prison. Although prisoners were sometimes deliberately deprived of reading-matter, Cambers offers much evidence of books (and sometimes whole collections) being acquired by prisoners, and of their acquiring writing materials. A strong case can be made, of course, for the way in which imprisonment became central to godly identity, notably among Quakers after the Restoration, and the importance of prison as the origin of much writing by godly authors—most famously Bunyan—is well-established. But Cambers argues convincingly that the solitary nature of imprisonment has been overstated and demonstrates the strength of prison fellowship, stressing the continuity of religious practice between household and prison: 'the preference of the godly was for sociability in prayer and reading rather than for solitary confinement'. The case would in fact be strengthened by more attention to Quakers: their experience of prison often seems to have been a communal one, as represented in prison narratives and as shown by the multiple names so often appended to epistles from prison.

Particular groups are not the focus here, however, and though specific sects are occasionally mentioned the emphasis throughout is on building a broader picture of a

1. Mandelbrote, G., 'From the Warehouse to the Counting-house: Booksellers and Bookshops in Late 17th-century London', in R. Myers and M. Harris (eds.), *A Genius for Letters: Booksellers and Bookselling from the 16th to the 20th Century* (Winchester: St Paul's Bibliographies; Delaware: Oak Knoll Press, 1995), pp. 49-84.

godly reading culture. Analysis of some well-chosen illustrations—for example from Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, and the title-page (not, as stated, the frontispiece) of Lewis Bayly's *The Practise of Pietie*—suggest the author's keen eye for visual detail. Indeed, more evidence from contemporary prints and portraits would be welcome in demonstrating the association of reading with puritanism: an image partly self-fashioned by puritans themselves and partly constructed and caricatured by their less godly contemporaries. Overall, this is a book which offers a systematic tour of the various places and circumstances of puritan reading. Most importantly it offers, if somewhat unevenly, a refreshing view of godly reading as a shared, rather than solitary, experience.

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JOSEPH, F., *Beatrice: The Cadbury Heiress Who Gave Away her Fortune* (Birmingham: Foxwell Press, 2012), pp. 245. ISBN: 978-0-957-09340-9, Paperback, £12.99.

Joseph's research into the life of Beatrice Boeke (née Cadbury) contributes to the growing body of biographical scholarship which explores the lives of Quaker women during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as a means of uncovering the contribution which such women made towards social reform in this period. Joseph's examination of Beatrice's extraordinary life is set within the context of her identity as a Cadbury, yet moves beyond her association with this renowned Birmingham Quaker family to examine her life with her husband Cornelis Boeke and their social activism in Holland.

Beatrice Boeke (née Cadbury) (1884–1976), Betty Boeke, or Beatrice Boeke-Cadbury, as she appears named on her 1956 memoirs, was the youngest daughter of Richard Cadbury (1835–1899) and Emma Jane Cadbury (née Wilson) (1846–1907). Following her education, Beatrice engaged in Quaker philanthropic activities with a particular interest in humanitarian outreach work and peace campaigning. Through her involvement with the Friends' Foreign Mission Association (FFMA) she met her husband Cornelis (Kees) Boeke and the couple eventually settled in Bilthoven, Holland. Here the Boekes became involved in humanitarian work and political activism promoting pacifism. They chose a radical lifestyle with the aim of 'building a new and exciting alternative society' which centred on encouraging people 'to give love and service to others' (p. 158). The Boekes became renowned as educationalists following their development of an innovative school—The Werkplaats School—in the late 1920s. As this brief overview indicates, Beatrice's fascinating life forms a strong foundation for an intriguing biography. This is enhanced by Joseph's narrative craftsmanship which takes this book beyond being a useful resource for researchers to a compelling read for a much wider audience.

The central event in Joseph's interpretation of Beatrice's life was her decision in 1922 to transfer the income from her shares in the Cadbury family's chocolate

business to the Cadbury workforce for the purpose of promoting social reform. This event forms the starting point of Joseph's book which begins with a 'Prologue' contextualising her exploration of Beatrice's life with detail about the Cadbury family, their Quakerism and social values. By beginning her biography in this way, Joseph enables the reader to engage more effectively with its central figure and the religious and social influences which shaped her life. For the purposes of this review I have chosen to focus on aspects of Joseph's biography which relate more closely in their subject matter to the interests of scholars exploring Quakerism. Indeed, Beatrice's Quaker upbringing and her 'spiritual faith' (p. 237) are a driving force in Joseph's interpretation of her life. It should be noted that, while the Boekes resigned from the Religious Society of Friends in the 1920s, Joseph concludes that Beatrice 'felt Quakerism was her true spiritual home' and returned to Quaker Meeting later in her life (p. 237).

Part One of Joseph's biography explores Beatrice's parents with reference to their religious identity and the contribution of George and Richard Cadbury towards the development of the Cadbury family business during the nineteenth century. She refers to the Cadburys' Quaker philanthropic work, including Richard Cadbury's involvement with the Gospel Temperance Mission and the Adult School Movement. One particularly interesting aspect of the first part of Joseph's book is the insight which she provides into the education of Quaker girls during the nineteenth century. This draws on the experiences of Beatrice and her contemporaries in the Cadbury family and includes detail about Edgbaston High School for Girls and The Mount School. Joseph focuses on the way in which Beatrice's educational experience, particularly her time at the Westfield College in London in the early 1900s, contributed to her growing social awareness.

Joseph's exploration of Beatrice's early work may be particularly useful for researchers examining international Quaker humanitarian endeavours as it provides an overview of her involvement in the work of the Friends' Foreign Mission Association (FFMA) and the work of Quakers to spread the Gospel message and promote peace overseas. Joseph's analysis of the response of British Quakers to the First World War through a focus on the Cadbury family is especially interesting, as are her references to Kees Boeke's collaboration with German anti-war campaigners. Joseph situates her research into the Boeke family's 'active role in peace campaigning' (p. 94), such as Beatrice's support for the Friends' War Victims' Committee, in the wider context of the Conscientious Objection and anti-war movements which may be of interest to readers researching Quakerism during this period.

In her analysis of Beatrice's decision to rescind her shares in Cadbury in the early 1920s, Joseph remarks on Beatrice's increasing awareness of a conflict between her peace campaigning and the benefit of private capital which she received from her Ordinary Shares. Joseph situates Beatrice's decision in the context of wider social energies which motivated the investment of personal wealth in charitable causes focussed on re-building society following the First World War. This is followed by an extremely detailed but accessible account of the response of the Cadbury Firm to Beatrice's decision and the establishment of the Boeke Trust. Quaker scholars may find Joseph's exploration of the Quaker approach to business in Cadbury's response

particularly useful, such as her consideration of the ways in which Friends' approach to Church business was taken by Quaker families into their wider business lives (p. 133).

One of the most valuable aspects of Joseph's narrative is her effort to present a subjective interpretation of the Boeke family's activities and lifestyle choices. Joseph considers different interpretations of Beatrice's decision and its wider implications for the Boeke family and the Bournville Works' Council, and draws attention to different responses from the Cadbury family, Bournville workers and the press. By acknowledging wider interpretations of Beatrice's decision, Joseph resists creating a narrative tribute which pays homage to her central figure and presents a more well-rounded assessment of the contemporary perception of her actions. This subjectivity is present throughout Joseph's narrative of the Boekes' radical lifestyle choices, such as their 'non-violent resistance to all state activities' (p. 158) and their refusal to acknowledge property ownership which culminated in the family being forced from their home. Indeed, Joseph acknowledges that the Boekes' 'idealistic way of living' (p. 171) alongside their peace activism 'attracted derision and suspicion', as well as leaving them 'increasingly isolated' (p. 169). Her narrative of the family's activities is interspersed with accounts of the ways in which the committee of the Boeke Trust, which was established to oversee Beatrice's shares, secretly intervened to support the welfare of the Boeke family.

The latter part of Joseph's book explores the Boekes' focus on enacting social change through educational work from the 1920s onwards. Identifying that both Beatrice and Kees Boeke recognised the importance of education in 'achieving harmony and peace in the world' (p. 173), Joseph explores the development of The Werkplaats School in 1929. She refers to the support of the Boeke Trust for The Werkplaats and the practicalities of its establishment, as well as exploring the school's educational ethos within its contemporary context. Joseph provides insight into progressive educational innovations introduced at The Werkplaats which contributed to Beatrice and Kees Boeke being 'regarded in educational circles as two of the most original and exceptional educators of the twentieth century in Holland and around the world' (p. 235). Her references to Beatrice's shaping influence over the development of The Werkplaats contribute a valuable dimension to the narrative, particularly for those scholars interested in the role of Quaker women in educational work during the twentieth century.

In the later sections of her biography Joseph considers how the Boekes re-evaluated their social outlook and moved away from their radical lifestyle choices towards a greater engagement with the wider world. Joseph explores the Boekes' continuing socioreligious work in the context of the couple's acceptance 'that sometimes it was better to compromise, to work from within, rather than setting themselves outside society' (p. 232). A particularly intriguing part of Joseph's narrative relates to the Boekes' activities supporting education during the years of the Second World War. She remarks on the programme of music and theatre at The Werkplaats, noting that Beatrice had been prohibited from participating in concerts and theatrical performances in her youth owing to the views of her Quaker parents concerning such

activities. Joseph identifies that the experiences of war shaped Beatrice's response to the work of *The Werkplaats*, writing 'no-one, least of all Beatrice, could deny the importance of performing music together as a way of building spiritual fellowship during the dark times of the war' (p. 218). Joseph's insight into the experiences of the Boekes during the Second World War includes a fascinating account of their response to the persecution of Jewish residents by the German forces who occupied Holland in the 1940s. Her focus on the ways in which Beatrice and Kees Boeke supported the welfare of Jewish families may be of particular interest to scholars undertaking research into the work of Quakers during this conflict. Indeed, Joseph notes that the Boekes' work sheltering Jewish children during the German occupation of Holland is commemorated in the Yad Vashem Museum in Jerusalem.

Joseph's biography is supported in places by extracts from Beatrice's personal reflections and references to primary material. This reviewer found Joseph's analysis of family photographs as a means of describing changes in the Boeke family over the decades of the twentieth century an innovative technique of engaging the reader in her narrative (p. 215). As identified earlier in this review, Joseph's book appeals to a wide readership and does not appear to have been intended solely as a scholarly text for use by academic researchers. At times her biography is written in the style of a dramatised narrative in which she describes events with reference to the emotional responses of the individuals involved. While scholars approaching the text as a research resource may find this atypical of a secondary source, it is a notable feature of the book's appeal to a wider audience.

In the concluding section of her biography, Joseph remarks on Beatrice's desire to perpetuate the legacy of her parents through her writing of a book entitled *Emma Richard Cadbury, 1846–1907* in which 'she stressed the importance of keeping her mother and father's story alive for future descendants' (p. 238). Beatrice's endeavour to preserve her family's legacy in this way reflects the efforts of other Cadbury women who collected personal correspondence and created family memoirs as a means of preserving and promoting the heritage of their family among future generations. Through her compelling narrative of Beatrice's life, Joseph makes her own contribution to this shared endeavour by ensuring that Beatrice's work promoting peace and supporting education forms part of the Cadbury family's legacy of religious and social work during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

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LARSEN, T., *A People of One Book: The Bible and the Victorians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 336. ISBN: 0199570094, Hardback, £36.

In a cartoon from an American Evangelical newspaper of the 1950s, a bright young minister fresh from Bible college strides confidently towards the top of a staircase leading down into shadow. At the bottom, the same man, now a cynical, raddled old academic in a dirty raincoat, shuffles away, sad and drawn. The top step is inscribed,



'The Bible not infallible', and each step down proclaims another doctrine cast aside: no miracles, Jesus not divine, and so on to the dismal ending. Timothy Larsen's book on the Bible in the hands of various notable nineteenth-century British readers repeatedly brought this cartoon to mind. In one very important respect, all the individuals he discusses reflect a similar attitude to the Bible, whether they resolutely make their stand at the top of the stairs, dash confidently to the bottom, or halt part of the way down. Biblical inspiration and infallibility are explicitly or implicitly most of all associated with—even simply identified with—historical accuracy.

This inheritance from aspects of the religious and intellectual culture of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the grip it held on Victorian piety and anti-piety, is surely important for understanding the Bible in British culture and thought of the period, to say nothing of what happened in the next century. But it never emerges as a guiding thematic concern, and my difficulty with this book is that not much else does, either. There's plenty of good material, but structured evaluation is rather scattered. Dr Larsen's stated aim is to offer 'detailed, textured accounts of the lives, words, and thought of a range of Victorians' to explore the 'extent of the Bible's dominance, presence and reach' in Victorian thought and culture. This is rather vague, and accordingly his chapters tend to lack any overall purpose beyond showing how well the Victorians in question knew their Bible. I'm not sure that anyone ever doubted the extent of the Bible's dominance, presence and reach in Victorian culture generally; though Larsen does a good job of pointing out biblical influence where some might not expect to find it, and others have managed to miss or ignore it. The book is a mine of information, has lively portrayals of its subjects, and contains some welcome challenges to a few widely held assumptions and prejudices, but rarely gets much beyond describing the deep familiarity of its subjects with the Bible, and into any more extensive or profound analysis.

Larsen's book is principally a survey of certain individuals, treated as case studies of various denominational positions (rather than as necessarily representative of those positions), the attention they paid to the Bible and the influence it had on them. His discussion includes the Anglican Edward Pusey and the Roman Catholic Nicholas Wiseman, the sceptics Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant, William and Catherine Booth, Florence Nightingale, the Unitarian educational reformer Mary Carpenter, T.H. Huxley, the campaigner Josephine Butler and the influential preacher, C.H. Spurgeon. In a way it works as a kind of biblically focussed and much more sympathetic version of *Eminent Victorians*. Half of Larsen's case studies are women—still often overshadowed relative to their prominence in many areas of Victorian public life.

Larsen's Quaker case study is Elizabeth Fry—as Larsen says, the nineteenth-century Friend most likely to be recognised by someone in England today. He shows how Fry used the Bible for personal inspiration, reflection, comfort, wisdom and various kinds of ministry to others; none of which should occasion much surprise, but worth bringing out in their particular manifestations. I suppose some might prefer to see Fry, and Mary Carpenter, as not very interested in the Bible, or their faith as little related to scripture, since Fry was a Quaker, and Carpenter a Unitarian. Larsen shows that such a view is untenable. But he uses his material in a rather

unsystematic way. An impression of the role the Bible played for Fry does emerge from it—aspects of the mentality and motivation behind the prison work, for example—but it lacks structured exposition to any purpose beyond highlighting Fry's familiarity with scripture. There is some allusion to how Fry handled problematic passages of various kinds; to be fair to Larsen, she doesn't seem to have had a very consistent approach, but he doesn't actually point that out, which perhaps sums up the general problem with the book: that it seems to be structured around 'look how significant the Bible was for these people' and nothing more.

In all cases one is left with a sense that Larsen has done little more than emphasise the biblical knowledge of his case studies and its importance in their lives, without much analysis of the implications of these things in broader terms. Perhaps this was not his purpose, but simply pointing out that various Victorians, mostly deeply religious, knew their Bible, spoke and wrote in language redolent of it, worried a lot about things connected with it, denounced or praised their society in terms derived from it, and had a marked tendency to inflict it on others, doesn't tell us a great deal. This isn't all that Larsen does, but it is most of what he does. It seems a bit of a missed opportunity.

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MORTON, V. (ed. and intro.), *Travelling towards War: John Ashford's Journeys from Norfolk to Central Europe, 1938 and 1939* (Kibworth Beauchamp: Matador, 2011), pp. xviii +154. ISBN: 978-1848-76771-3, Paperback, £7.50

John Ashford was a Quaker convert and a smallholder from Norwich, Norfolk (England). At Woodbrooke College, the Quaker adult education centre in Birmingham, he met his wife Kathleen and many f/Friends that he would encounter on his travels to visit disparate pockets of Quakers in Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia. In what is, principally, a popular history book, the text pivots around the diary and many letters related to Ashford's two relatively brief journeys; these are reproduced (partly edited) and generate a sense of communities living with the rise of Nazism and Europe holding its breath on the eve of the Second World War, and then for news of f/Friends behind enemy lines. The documents are themselves interesting, but Vanessa Morton's research, description and endnotes enliven and contextualise the texts, making sense of lists of names and initials. Indeed, this is essentially how the book is organised: split into sections on the two journeys, the pause between and time after, and then into chapters mainly dealing with stops at particular places; the extracts, present in most chapters, are prefaced by Morton's introduction to the events described by Ashford.

The first section draws on Ashford's diary of a four-week 1938 journey prompted, the author suggests, by his personal desire to reconnect with international f/Friends, his pacifism as a member of the Peace Pledge Union, and his faith in reaching out to other Quakers just as they needed support (pp. 6-7). Morton, however, does not

frame Ashford's travels as originating as part of Quaker service, despite his activity on Friends Service Council; this may have nourished the understanding of readers unfamiliar with the faith. Nevertheless, Ashford's fleeting visits to Berlin, Dresden, Prague, Vienna and the Swiss–German border convey something of the tensions created amid Friends in their approaches to coping with political change and its human fallout. Yet the diary is also a travelogue of sorts, detailing times, travel, scenery and local life and customs.

A year's pause in Ashford's travels—with events in Norfolk and Central Europe covered by Morton's interim chapter—and he set out again, supported by Monthly and Quarterly Meetings, Friends House and Friends Service Council. This journey, through Berlin, Leipzig, Dresden and Prague, is followed through letters and postcards, mainly between John and Kathleen. The book acquires a more domestic feel of 'ordinary' people caught up in extraordinary events. John's stay in Prague—where he helped to advise refugees unable to gain assistance elsewhere (mainly 'non-Aryans')—was interrupted by Nazis marching into the city and invading Czechoslovakia in March 1939. Through Ashford we learn of little-known Quakers like Jarmila Linkova, alongside the more recognisable figures of Emma Cadbury and Tessa Rowntree. In the final section of the book, we discover what became of key players during the War.

With the co-operation of John Ashford's daughter, Yvonne Fuller, Morton has presented documents otherwise unavailable to scholars. The text would not be one central to a nuanced understanding of history, or to gain a depth of knowledge; it does not pretend to be. The documents may be useful to those studying the history or social implications of Quaker service, expanding religions, unconventional travel, pacifism, domestic life, and the impact of Nazism on faith, conscience and everyday life. Nevertheless, with Morton's training in creative writing, the book is a small pearl of enjoyment and may inspire readers to discover more.

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POLZONETTI, P., *Italian Opera in the Age of the American Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 396. ISBN: 978-0-521-89708-2, Hardback, £66.

Surprisingly, Quakers often appeared as stage characters in late eighteenth-century European theatre. The Viennese censorship actually had rules on how Jews and Quakers might be presented onstage. Pierpaolo Palzonetti's delightful book explains why this was so.

Though opera and court theatre was financed by royalty and the aristocracy, it appealed to a very diverse audience and sometimes carried radical messages in a coded form (witness *The Marriage of Figaro*). Stories of family conflict, or even space travel, could be ways of commenting on the political *status quo* without falling foul of the censors. North America, widely though not always accurately reported across

Europe, was an ideal means of depicting an alternative society: exotic, revolutionary, and yet based on recognisably European values. It also provided three admired stereotypes: the Quaker, praised by Voltaire for his equality, honesty, simplicity and pacifism, but also depicted as slightly ridiculous; the Native American, admired by Rousseau for his noble and uncorrupted nature; and the liberated woman.

The author devotes two long chapters to operas in which Quakers are main characters. *Amiti and Ontario* (1772) are native American slaves of Mr Dull, a Quaker landowner. The paradox of a Friend owning slaves is the mainspring of the plot. Eventually Mr Dull is persuaded both by the principles of his faith and (as he admits) his fear of a slave revolt to free them and allow Amiti, whom he fancied for himself, to marry Ontario whom she loves. A passionate aria from Amiti convinces him. This happy but paternalistic outcome disgusts Dull's Anglican sister-in-law, Mrs Bubble. Although he owns black slaves, whose voices are heard in the opera, their freedom is not proposed; the concept of the 'noble savage' did not yet embrace negroes. But Raineri de' Cazalbigi's libretto wrestles with the problem it proposes, and reflects the shock in Italy that our egalitarian sect, in the land of liberty, should be slave-owners—overtaken by the spreading news of Quaker abolitionist endeavours. Unfortunately Scarlatti's music is lost.

Palzonetti also focuses on *La quakera spiritosa* (*The Spirited Quakeress*) of 1783. It reflects the Italian reaction as news arrived of Friends bearing arms during the revolutionary war. The Quaker heroine Vertumna comes to Italy to fulfil a marriage contract to an aristocrat, but breaks it to pursue a poor winemaker with whose picture she fell in love as a girl. Unfortunately he is openly gay, and only accepts her when she threatens him with her six-shooter; he then agrees to go to America with her to father 'venti o trenta quakerelli' (twenty or thirty Quaker kids)! It may not sound Quakerly to modern ears, but Palzonetti points the reader to the Quaker values of sexual equality, especially in marriage, women's freedom to take the initiative, the rejection of marriage by contract, disregard for social deference, and being true to one's real self. The libretto was by Guiseppe Palomba, and the first setting by P.A. Guglielmi. Modified versions were re-composed, including a pastiche version to which both Haydn and Mozart contributed.

Palzonetti has used 'philology, musical and textual analysis, cultural and literary studies, gender studies, sociology and history of ideas' (p. 6) to pursue his theme. The result is a book which is both entertaining and informative.

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BEBBINGTON, D.W., *Victorian Nonconformity* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2011), pp. 70. ISBN 978-0-7188-9269-2, Cloth, £7.

This is an attractively produced second edition of a work originally published in 1992: while 'updated', its earlier origins still predominate when it comes to sources. Nevertheless, it is a very accessible introduction to the remarkable phenomenon of

British nonconformity in the nineteenth century. Comprised mainly of evangelical Protestants, with the notable exception of the Unitarians, and united in their opposition to the domination of the Established Church and its privileges, this set of dissenting groups gradually overcame their differences to form a coalition of mutual interest. By 1901, 15% of the British population claimed an allegiance within nonconformity even after its members had finally been allowed a university education and entrance to the professions in 1870.

Bebbington mentions the Friends two or three times. He wrongly claims that 'marrying out' always led to disownment but does give due emphasis to the ministry of women among Quakers. What is interesting is that Chapel sittings were increasing at a rapid rate at the very same time that Quaker membership reached its lowest point to date in the 1860s. As John Punshon has stated, Quakers were never again, after the first decade, open to becoming mass movement and their continuing sectarianism into the 1850s meant that they lagged behind groups like the Baptists and Primitive Methodists in reaching out to the working classes. When Friends did do this, they segregated their morning unprogrammed and evening programmed Meetings and kept the masses from the doors to silent worship. This book, then, is a thought-provoking and very useful and accessible introduction to the wider nonconformist context in which Victorian Quakerism transmuted at least twice in fifty years.

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HESSAYON, A., and FINNEGAN, D. (eds.), *Varieties of Seventeenth- and Early Eighteenth-Century English Radicalism in Context* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), pp. xiv + 271. ISBN: 978-0-7546-6905-0, Hardback, £65.

The papers collected here developed from a conference entitled 'Rediscovering Radicalism in the British Isles and Ireland, c. 1550–c. 1700', which attracted an international and stimulating set of speakers. As the editors make clear in their Introduction to the collection, the definition and usage of 'radical' and 'radicalism' was a central theme. Their discussion of the ways in which historians have defined, identified and interpreted radicalism sets up the terms of a debate: a challenge which some contributors take up more directly than others. Students of radical movements and sects will find this introductory discussion of terminology helpful, and the following section, in which the editors offer a historiography of seventeenth-century English radicalism, is sure to inform and even provoke. By their account, the revisionist turn which saw a backlash in the 1990s against Marxist historians (such as Christopher Hill, A.L. Morton, Rodney Hilton and E.P. Thompson) has now modulated into something less strident and, possibly, more convincing. Consequently the editors and some of their contributors eschew (sometimes uneasily) the idea of an unbroken English tradition of radicalism, favouring instead a definition of radicalism which is more 'functional' and 'situational'. Context is now dominant, and radicalism—being contingent in a variety of ways—is 'of the moment', no longer assumed

to reside in specific texts, ideas, persons or actions. It is cheering, however, that the volume ends with a strong chapter on the radicalism of William Hone in which Jason McElligott voices reservations about his editors' ditching of the idea of a radical canonical tradition. His image of radicalism as a 'baton' passing from hand to hand over time is refreshing, not least because it values and maintains some sense of the continuities across generations while allowing for differences in culture, politics and place.

Students of the Civil War period will find plenty here to inform and enlighten. Here are chapters, chronologically arranged, on Richard Crashaw and John Saltmarsh, by Nicholas McDowell; on Royalist pamphleteering in the 1640s, by Jason Peacey; on Giles Calvert and the Black Spread Eagle bookshop, by Mario Caricchio; on Gerrard Winstanley, by Ariel Hessayon; and on Abiezer Coppe's Biblical prophecy, by Noam Flinker. Warren Johnston discusses apocalyptic ideas in the late seventeenth-century; and Sarah Hutton argues for the political engagement of the Cambridge Platonists. Taking us beyond the seventeenth century are contributions by Sandra Hynes on the letters sent (from Amsterdam and Dublin) by the Presbyterian minister Joseph Boyse to his friend Ralph Thoresby of Leeds; by Giovanni Tarantino on the free-thinker and book-collector Anthony Collins (1676-1729); and by Jason McElligott on the fascinating William Hone (1780-1842). The international scope of the volume is made clear not only in its specific chapters on 'Empire-Building: The English Republic, Scotland and Ireland' (by Jim Smyth) and 'Seventeenth-Century Italy and English Radical Movements' (by Stefano Villani) but also by the inclusion of material on the English abroad.

It is a real pleasure to read Mario Caricchio's contribution to the volume. His book *Religione, politica e commercio di libri nella Rivoluzione inglese. Gli autori di Giles Calvert 1645-1653* (Genoa, 2003) deserves a wider circulation among those, like me, who cannot read Italian, so his summary here of its main arguments is most welcome. Caricchio's study of Giles and Elizabeth Calvert's shop at the Black Spread Eagle describes the overlapping networks represented by those associated with the shop: both the authors who used the Calverts' publishing and bookselling expertise and the many more who used the Black Spread Eagle as meeting-place and *poste restante*. The importance of the Calverts' shop as a node in the complex interactions of a variety of radical groups is already well known. Here, Caricchio uses the letters collected in *News from the New Jerusalem* (1649) to offer a window onto this formative moment of an English radicalism he describes as 'embodying diversity and difference'. Also likely to be of particular interest to *Quaker Studies* readers are Ariel Hessayon's chapter on Winstanley and Noam Flinker's on Abiezer Coppe. Here—as elsewhere in this volume—the interaction of English radical thought with Jewish tradition is noticed. Flinker's central argument is that Coppe's biblical rhetoric can be understood in relation to the rabbinic reading practice called 'midrash', while Hessayon identifies the ways in which Winstanley's ideas incorporated aspects of Mosaic law and Judaism.

Villani's chapter on Italian attitudes to English radicalism includes a section on Quaker missions to Italy, offering a refreshing perspective from abroad. Interestingly, the Italian response to the upheavals of the English radical sects seems to have been

one of amusement rather than outrage. English radicals were hardly taken seriously at all by Italians, except as demonstrating the Babel resulting from the rejection of Catholicism. English sectarians were reported as being mad rather than dangerous, and—rather disappointingly—Villani sees the Quakers' missionary activity in Italy as a lost opportunity, finding no evidence of its resulting in the conversion of a single Italian. Quotations from the governor of Livorno's correspondence give a lively picture of how Perrot and his companions struck him: well-versed in the Bible but otherwise 'ignorant, not even knowing how to speak Latin, other than a very little'.

Sadly, the price of this volume puts it beyond the ordinary reader; but anyone working on this period—its history, politics, religion, writing, print culture, and intellectual ideas—will surely find it well worth a trip to the library to look it out.

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GUISTON, G., *The Early Quakers and the 'Kingdom of God'* (San Francisco: Inner Light Books, 2012), pp. xv + 506. ISBN: 978-0-983980-2-5, Hardback, \$45.00, 978-0-983980-3-2 Paperback, \$25.00.

This is a difficult book to review for *Quaker Studies*, a journal intended for professional academics and academically inclined amateurs who are not themselves necessarily Quakers. A warning light flashes up when one reads, in the Preface, 'A principal aim of this book... is to examine the early Quaker experience of living in the Kingdom [of God] and its implications for us today'. *Quaker Studies* is not the appropriate publication for examining and commenting on 'implications for us today'. This review will therefore attempt to disentangle the academic virtues of the book, which are considerable, from the lack of objectivity which is a risk in any 'insider' study, when authors' academic interests are closely connected with their personal beliefs.

In many ways this is a good work on early Quaker theology. It is comprehensive, well-written and very thoroughly researched. The author shows a wide knowledge of both primary and secondary printed sources, and the notes and bibliography are themselves a valuable resource. The first part of the book is a study of the religious establishment in Britain at the time when Quakerism arose, a Britain divided by civil war, with more detail than is usually found in books on early Quakerism. The second, and main, part consists of ten chapters covering the main aspects of early Quaker language and ideas, including a look at the opposition. There is little which is not in general familiar to students of the period, but there is a wealth of information not readily available in print.

But Guiston's intention of edifying and instructing Quakers in their faith leads to emphases that stretch academic accuracy. There are failures to grapple with those aspects of early Quakerism which do not fit comfortably with his wish to show its relationship to the form of Christian Quakerism in which he believes. One example is his choice of the term 'Kingdom of God' for the new dimension in which the first

Quakers understood themselves to be living. Contrary to what the author suggests in his preface, a grasp of this fact is to be found in most recent writing on early Quakerism, but the terminology varies, and for good reason. It is perfectly true that the phrase 'Kingdom of God', or of 'the Lord' is common in early Quaker writings as a phrase describing their new life, but it is not the most common. 'Light' language, in one shape or another, is far the commonest, and needs a more thorough discussion than it gets here. Moreover, emphasis on 'kingdom of God', which is a New Testament term, leads to a neglect of Quaker descriptions of their new life as a return to prelapsarian innocence. The term 'Kingdom of God', however, suited Guiton for his purpose of linking Quakers to their biblical roots, and an assumption runs through the book that the early Quakers were living, or attempting to live, in the Kingdom of God in the same sense as this concept is found in the teaching of Jesus. This is by no means self-evident, and needs an excursus into New Testament theological studies which is not to be found here. In addition, in a number of places Guiton uses the phrase 'the Jesus way' to describe the life the early Quakers were trying to lead. Maybe so, but the phrase is incongruous, for early Quakers rarely referred to Jesus by name, nor quoted the synoptic gospels except in support of their specific teachings on oath-taking and a paid ministry.

Guiton's wish to show early Quakerism as a model for modern Quakers leads to some exaggeration of their characteristics and occasionally to error, as when he ascribes to early Quakers a belief in universal suffrage (p. 330). In particular, Guiton's support for the modern Quaker Peace Testimony leads him to play down the evidence for its slow development in the seventeenth century. Certainly, its foundations were there from the beginning, and much of what Guiton says about the figurative nature of the Quaker language of violence is correct, but he does not confront the most awkward texts, of which the extreme example is probably Burrough and Howgill's pamphlet *A Visitation of the Rebellious Nation of Ireland*, which implicitly, perhaps explicitly, approves Cromwell's Irish campaigns.

Overall, this is a book with considerable merits having much information useful to students of the period, but as a work of academic theology it must be used with caution.

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