

## BOOK REVIEWS

RIDARSKY, C.L., and HUTH, M.M. (eds.), *Susan B. Anthony and the Struggle for Equal Rights* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2012), pp. x + 245. ISBN 978-1-58046-425-3. Hardback, \$75.

These seven lively papers were first presented at a Rochester University conference (New York, 2006) to commemorate the centenary of the death of Susan B. Anthony; the range of essays reflects the diversity and complexity of women's involvement in nineteenth-century reform and suffrage movements. There are comprehensive biographies of Anthony; this useful book paints a multi-faceted picture of the wider context of Anthony's work.

Admirers of Susan B. Anthony may perceive the first chapter by Lisa Tetrault as undermining and critical, reciting a litany of Anthony's faults. Anthony produced 5,000 pages of history (particularly the *History of Woman Suffrage*), and worked with Ida Husted Harper to produce a three-volume authorised biography (*Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony*). Tetrault claims Anthony used history writing to further her own ambitions, and that she 'portrayed her leadership as benevolent, natural, constant, and acclaimed...as she wanted it to appear, not as it was' (p. 40). The chapter mirrors some of the bitter political attacks encountered by individuals such as Anthony as they campaigned for women's suffrage. Tetrault's forthcoming book is *The Myth of Seneca Falls* (May 2014). The revisionist approach suggested by the title is something that Quaker and feminist historians need to tackle.

Laura Free's chapter covers Elizabeth Cady Stanton's 1867 address to the New York Constitutional Convention. The Convention rejected female suffrage because of concerns that it would undermine the 'natural authority' of men as heads of households, and transform the 'natural organisation' of both politics and gender. The paper shows how much resistance there was towards change at state level, which was the pragmatic political reason why Anthony, and subsequently Alice Paul, campaigned so strongly for a Federal amendment to achieve female suffrage.

Kathy Kerns' analysis of the religious foundation of Anthony's work is astute. She writes that Anthony had a directness and clarity unmatched by other nineteenth-century reformers, because her actions were motivated by deeply seated beliefs, a theology born of radical Quakerism, and a commitment to social justice. Anthony saw inequality as the chief sin in the world. Kerns quotes Anthony "I don't know what religion is; I only know what work is, and that is all I can speak of, this side of

the Jordan” (p. 88)—that work was fostering equality through effectuating women’s suffrage. Kerns identifies that Anthony’s Quakerism gave her the tools to challenge evangelicalism, but also the space in which to imagine genuine religious conviction. This enabled her to befriend and work with the anti-clerical Elizabeth Cady Stanton, author of *The Woman’s Bible*, and the evangelical Francis Williard, leader of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), to further women’s suffrage. Prior to her immersion in the suffrage movement, Anthony was involved with the Temperance movement in Canajoharie, New York. There she recorded that she encountered resistance from the clergy, and found the ‘Mohawk-Dutch’ people very conservative (p. 93). An out-of-context footnote incorrectly explains Anthony’s ‘Mohawk-Dutch’ reference as ‘an extinct language’ (p. 110 n. 30).

Melissa Ryan connects ‘The Indian Problem’ with ‘The Woman Question’, outlining the contradictions and the development of thinking on the subject by Anthony and Stanton’s colleague, Matilda Jocelyn Gage. Initially, middle-class white women saw Native Americans as ‘savages’ in need of ‘civilisation’. Gage came to the conclusion that ‘primitive’ people had matriarchal societies, and that nineteenth-century activists were looking for old rights, not new privileges. She wrote that ‘government by the people of the people for the people’ should be changed to read: ‘government of rich men, by rich men, for rich men’, recognising, as Gage eventually did, the common marginalisation of women and Native Americans (p. 138).

Alison Parker described the work of Francis Watkins Harper, an African-American woman who was involved in anti-slavery activism, and the WCTU. Harper worked to build women’s interracial alliances, sought prohibition on alcohol, federal intervention in social problems, federal funding for education, and civil rights protection for black people. Harper described many southern white women as scornful, haughty and elitist. In an 1876 publication Harper dismissed applying the tactic of ‘persuasive influence’ in favour of using strong laws to close saloons. Parker seems incorrectly to link Harper’s comments with the denigration of the ‘moral suasion’ used by Angelina and Sarah Grimké, white abolitionist sisters from a South Carolina slaveholding family. I believe that the criticism is flawed, as most of the Grimkés’ public anti-slavery and equality campaigning occurred in a different context, forty years earlier, between 1835 and 1839. They were brave and effective pioneers for abolition and women’s rights, and they deserve to be honoured in the history of the struggle for equal rights.

Tara McCarthy’s paper on the Ladies’ Land League and the ‘Labor Question’ indicates that between 1820 and 1920, five million Irish men and women settled in America, with two million leaving Ireland during the Famine in the late 1840s. Irish-American Catholic women were not generally involved in reform movements, until the 1880 founding of the Ladies’ Land League in New York. Some of the Catholic hierarchy condemned women, to the point of excommunication, as they were considered to have strayed beyond their ‘proper sphere’, but these women held their ground, and became involved in wider reform movements when the Land League was disbanded in 1883. These Irish-American Catholics were working-class women with first-hand experience of poverty and the perils of industrial life. They brought

gritiness to the suffrage campaign, along with an interest in worker organisation and factory inspection laws to better protect women of their communities and class.

The book concludes with a chapter by Ann Gordon, which presents a balanced and learned assessment of Anthony's life's work, analyses some useful biographies of Anthony, and identifies the limitations and agenda of Husted Harper's biography of Anthony. Gordon points out that some contemporary opposition to secular individualism seeks to reverse the effects of women's suffrage, which eroded the male-headed family and granted women representation in government. This agenda forms the context of some of the current debate on the history of women's rights. Similarly, Gordon makes it clear that anti-abortionists, led by researcher Mary Krane Derr, have fabricated a connection to Anthony, to create for themselves a history, to undermine Anthony's real importance, and to revise the history of women's rights. Gordon's final chapter thus answers the challenge of the opening chapter.

*Susan B. Anthony and the Struggle for Equal Rights* is a rich, rounded book, depicting the context for Anthony's work, portraying many of her co-workers and the political and interpersonal challenges of the time which Anthony's remarkable leadership embraced.

Julianna Minihan,  
Cork City, Republic of Ireland

PLANK, G., *John Woolman's Path to the Peaceable Kingdom: A Quaker in the British Empire* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), pp. 304. ISBN 978-0-8122-4405-2. Hardback, £26/\$39.95.

Historian Geoffrey Plank's *John Woolman's Path to the Peaceable Kingdom* is an essential resource for understanding British North American colonial Quaker John Woolman (1720-1772), eighteenth-century mid-Atlantic Quakerism, and colonial American religion. While this is the third biography of Woolman published since 1999, Plank's book makes substantive improvements on previous efforts and helpfully moves modern research on John Woolman forward considerably. *John Woolman's Path to the Peaceable Kingdom* is both easy to read and full of original research, making it accessible to both the lay person and the academic.

Rather than a chronological biography, Plank organises his book into thematic chapters to emphasise 'Woolman's community life, the influences that worked on him, and the problems that animated him' (p. 4). *John Woolman's Path to the Peaceable Kingdom* begins with Woolman's understanding of history (Chapter 1), then proceeds to address Woolman's understanding of revelation (Chapter 2), and the centrality of Quaker practice and discipline (Chapter 3). These three chapters form the foundation for Plank's analysis of Woolman's conception of work (Chapter 4), slavery (Chapter 5), war (Chapter 6), moral behaviour (Chapter 7), sea traffic and trade (Chapter 8), and death (Chapter 9). Plank notes that Woolman understood all these issues to be inter-related, and so Plank has organised these themes with the intention of illuminating the 'evolution' of Woolman's thought and action (p. 5).

One of Plank's chief aims is to demythologise Woolman, who has been described as a 'saint' and is noted by some as the most important of the early anti-slavery proponents. However, Plank suggests that such 'effusive praise' has encouraged a view of Woolman as a solitary figure disconnected from the relationships 'which gave meaning and structure' to his reforms and the broader social currents of his day (p. 5). Plank accomplishes this task by weaving into his analysis the efforts of other Quaker reformers, as well as accounts of Woolman's activities from the perspective of those outside the Quaker fold, like Moravian missionary David Zeisberger's muted appraisal of Woolman's endeavours among Native Americans (pp. 165–66).

Another important contribution is the way Plank frames Woolman's reforms around such concepts as empire, the kingdom of God, and millennial hopes. This way of considering Woolman's diverse social and moral reforms gives structure to what would otherwise appear to be disparate concerns. Contrary to Plank, this reviewer feels that Woolman was neither a millenarian (pp. 169, 213) nor was he waiting for the millennium (p. 11), but is best understood as an amillennialist with a realising eschatology in which God's eternal will was immediately realisable, as Woolman said in his *Journal*, 'on earth as it is done in heaven'. However, that being said, Plank's assessment of Woolman's motivation to 'establish that kingdom foreseen by the prophet Isaiah' is a crucial advancement in Woolman studies because it identifies a strong eschatological impetus, and clearly names Woolman's vision as a religious one that consisted of a 'detailed and sweeping critique of the material culture and economy of the British Empire' (p. 3). Indeed, Plank's assessment of Woolman as an overtly religiously motivated individual corrects some hagiography that considers Woolman to be someone attuned to modernist sensibilities. As Plank characterises: 'His ideas may have carried radical implications, but at heart, from his childhood forward, he was conservative. Woolman's vision of the ideal social order was modeled not only on Eden but also on the way of life he knew as a boy on his father's farm' (p. 32).

This religious vision, which was both eschatological and this-worldly, was an alternative ordering that rejected British imperial and economic policies. Thus, Plank rightly frames Woolman's concerns in terms of economics: 'Economics played a central role in Woolman's understanding of history and his sense of God's plans for the world' (p. 82), citing, also, how Woolman and other reformers attempted to integrate conviction and consumer practice through boycotts (pp. 152–53). In this way, Plank helps readers see a cohesion in Woolman's reforms and concerns for living faithfully.

However, while Plank adequately situates Woolman within the important relationships that no doubt shaped his ideas and reforms, one does wonder if other Quakers shared his religious vision of God's kingdom on earth, or if within the group of Quaker reformers there were various theological motivations that led to common, outward expressions. For example, both Anthony Benezet and Woolman were vigorous anti-slavery proponents critical of the slave economy, but Benezet did not articulate his concern in the eschatological language Woolman did. While there are still more avenues of research on Woolman open to future scholars, Plank has

successfully demythologised the ‘Quaker saint’ in a way that demonstrates the best of academic inquiry and honesty. Plank’s *John Woolman’s Path to the Peaceable Kingdom* is an invaluable contribution and immediately becomes the authoritative history of Woolman’s life.

Jon Kershner  
University of Lancaster, England

ANGELL, S.W. and DANDELION, P. (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Quaker Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. xix + 644. ISBN 978-0-19-960867-6. Hardback, £95.00.

Most users of this volume will not do as a reviewer must—sit down and read it from beginning to end. Because it is a reference work, it will be dipped into to find the answer to a specific question. Turning the pages, a reader may encounter an unlooked-for topic and perhaps become engrossed enough to end up spending much more time than intended, before putting it back on the shelf until another question arises. And our reader might even be tempted to explore her own topic or the one she stumbled on by looking in the excellent bibliography. The Handbook should thus serve as a fine research guide.

Let the user spend much time with the volume, and a different problem will emerge as it did with me. What are ‘Quaker Studies’? What is the difference between Quaker history or Quakerism and ‘Quaker Studies’? Is the book to survey how Quakers have looked at themselves, a kind of Quaker historiography—that rarefied and special word professional historians use to describe the history of historical writing? If so, few will find it useful. In short, what does the book’s title mean?

Our editors, both noted for historical research, seek to reassure us, writing, ‘This book charts Quaker history and the history of its expression as a religious community’ (p. 1). Then one wonders why it was not simply entitled ‘Handbook of Quaker History’—according to the back flap, its renowned publishers produced also the more aptly titled ‘Handbook of Methodism’. That their website mentions no such volume may point to some sort of disconnect in the central offices of Oxford University Press otherwise unknown to ordinary users. So the title remains something of a puzzle.

But the book’s most glaring shortcoming, one that cannot be explained away by invoking its trendy ‘global coverage’, is that it leaves out the overwhelming majority of living Quakers. According to the book itself, nearly three-quarters of the world’s Friends reside in Africa, South America, and the Asia-Pacific region (p. 550). Except for an isolated sentence or paragraph or two in some of the thirty-seven chapters, they are entirely absent from the work; not a single contributor to the book is from Africa or Latin America, and only one is from the Pacific region. ‘Quaker Studies’, as here presented, is all white, produced by English-speakers, and situated in the ‘First World’. Yet Friends have been in the Global South for well over a century and established a theological college in Kenya for over half that, but apparently no one

there is qualified to write their history. One is reminded of that damning query about German missionary and surgeon Albert Schweitzer who spent decades in Gabon: How many Africans did he train to do surgery?

More than half a century ago, the English historian E.P. Thompson pioneered what is today called 'history from the bottom up', cogently insisting in his *Making of the English Working Class* that mostly unknown people near the bottom of the social heap make history. This volume's editors never learned this seminal truth, and we readers are the poorer for it, not to mention the rightfully chagrined nameless Africans and South Americans who are cavalierly passed over—and I chose that adverb purposely.

In any volume like this one, there are varying depths to the topics covered. Undoubtedly following the editors' instructions, almost all the forty-two authors approach theirs historically—which may have made Carole Spencer's chapter on theological context uncommonly sparkle for this usual despiser of theology. An occasional one, like Arthur Roberts's on Evangelical Friends, tracked his own personal experiences so closely that he missed the larger picture. J. William Frost and Gregory Hinshaw ploughed new ground with their chapters on Modernist Friends and modern Gurneyites, respectively. (For relatively new Friendly users who may be mystified by that last noun, check the book's fine index.) And I soared with two Canadians, Jeffrey Dudiak and Laura Rediehs, in their essay on 'Quakers, Philosophy, and Truth', which brimmed with insights.

Nearly every article has a memorable portion. Charles Cherry reminded his readers that First Friend George Fox sparked off treatment of the mentally ill when he saw that a person with a mental disability still had a heart. And Petra Doan and Elizabeth Kamphausen's section on sexuality, always an explosive issue among Friends, particularly those in the Global South, made a plea for the revitalisation of the Foxian (and biblical) concept of 'helpmeet'; may their tribe increase. Even though I maintained doubts about how Part III, 'Quaker Witness', differed from Part IV, 'Quaker Expression' (except the latter being something of a catchall), I learned something from each, especially Margery Abbott's concluding attempts to peer into the future.

A glaring example of inattention to the majority of Quakers in the South occurs in Mark Freeman's essay on 'Quakers, Business, and Philanthropy'. Otherwise quite valuable, Freeman's article is uninformed by familiarity with day-to-day commerce in Africa—he does address issues like food sustainability and environmental problems, but such abstract matters are of interest to a well-read Quaker in the industrial North and far removed from the average Kenyan Friend, such as the dilemmas associated with buying and selling in traditional markets. This section cries out for an addition by someone on the ground itself.

With shifting degrees of success, the writers of separate sections sometimes argue their pet interpretations, as when Gerald Guiton offers a biblical exegesis of the concept of the Kingdom of God and tries to make it central to the earliest Friends' understanding by enumerating the number of tracts they issued between 1652 and 1663 containing some variant of his definition of that notion. This reader is simply not convinced that George Fox's mentioning of 'Light', 'Life', and 'Love' in the

early parts of his *Journal* ‘draws our attention to the Kingdom’ or, inexplicably, to its opposite (p. 226). I have long since learned to be wary of those who parade their ability to count as indicating serious scholarship.

Hence the *Handbook of Quaker Studies* must be used with care. It is a good place to start and to get one’s bearings, but, even in the best sections, it is not the place to end. (And to be fair: books like this are not designed to be ending points.) The problem is that there are no red flags to warn readers where dangers lurk. They will be obvious for anyone seeking information about Quaker business practices in Kenya or Quaker education in Bolivia or Quaker assertions of women’s rights in Nepal—no such sections exist, so no danger. As problematic are meaningless sentences like this one from Lonnie Valentine’s section on peacemaking: ‘For Quakers the collapse of the spiritual and political revolution they sought was not at the restoration of Charles II in 1660, but the failure of those leading the revolution to be pure enough in faithful commitment’ (p. 364). An alert copy editor, recognising that, as Valentine had just averred, Friends themselves were seeking just such a revolution, should have blue-pencilled that one on seeing it. Finally, typos abound: double commas, two words elided, misplaced question marks, so many that there must be at least one on every other page—I lost count.

The *Handbook* will be a must for libraries, but few meetings can afford its hefty price tag, and fewer individuals—a reality much to be deplored. And it will be long used, but remember: handle with care.

H. Larry Ingle  
Professor Emeritus, History  
University of Tennessee–Chattanooga, USA

MEGGITT, J.J., *Early Quakers and Islam: Slavery, Apocalyptic and Christian–Muslim Encounters in the Seventeenth Century* (Studies on Inter-Religious Relations 59; Uppsala, Sweden: Swedish Science Press, 2013), pp. 130. ISBN 978-91-89652-43-9. Paperback, 149 kr.

The Quakers were the first missionaries to the Ottoman Empire. Soon after the founding of the movement in the early 1650s, a few men and women made their way to preach to the ‘Grand Turke’. There is no evidence that they succeeded in gaining converts in Istanbul or Jerusalem, but their encounters inaugurated an engagement with the Islamic Levant that has continued till today—in the form of schools that stretch from Lebanon to Palestine.

This little book by Justin J. Meggitt is dense with information about the first decades of Quaker activities, mainly informed by the texts and experiences of England. The bibliography is extensive, both in the primary and secondary sources, and can well serve as an up-to-date record of the major writings about Islam in England in the early modern period. Also relying on archival research, Meggitt opens with a short introduction about early Quakerism, and then moves to one of the encounters that was unfortunately not uncommon in the seventeenth century: ‘Barbary Slavery’. Like other Europeans sailing the Mediterranean, Quakers were



taken captive by pirates, and kept in enslavement until they were ransomed by their highly dedicated and efficient brethren in London. George Fox frequently wrote to his captured followers, strengthening them in their faith by alerting them to the equally horrid conditions that Quakers faced in the 'Great Persecution' of Restoration England. When he later learned of the suffering of his followers, he addressed a pamphlet to the Ottoman Sultan, the 'Great Turke', reminding him that the violence inflicted on the captives went against the teachings of the Qur'an. Fox criticised the Sultan for the misdeeds of the captors (although by then, the Sultan had little clout in Algiers) by citing him chapter and verse from the first English translation of 1649. Fox was the first English writer to invoke the Qur'an as a source of divine revelation that his Muslim counterpart was ignoring.

Meggitt's research extends our knowledge of captives by presenting biographical information about them collected from a wide range of sources. The captives no longer remain names but become individuals with a history. Meggitt also brings Islam into the discussion of Quaker Apocalypticism, at a time in England when writers and visionaries were imagining the world's end. In such writings, the Turk (and the Pope) figured prominently, and it is significant that Quakers, small and persecuted as they were, saw themselves as participants in converting the Ottomans, thereby hastening the eschaton.

While the book is focused on the Quakers, it includes numerous discussions of non-Quaker captives and travellers and some of the polemical literature of the period. All these writings support Meggitt in his argument for 'Anglophone anomalies' in the early modern English views of Islam. While the majority of English views were hostile to Islam, it is important, Meggitt notes, to recognise difference and alternatives.

The book is elegantly written and covers a subject that has long been awaiting scholarly attention. Henceforth any discussion of England and Islam in the seventeenth century would have to take serious account of the Quakers and their unique early encounter with Islam.

Nabil Matar  
Professor of English  
University of Minnesota, USA

MORGANS, J.I., *The Honest Heretique: The Life and Work of William Erbery (1604–1654)* (Talybont: Y Loifa Cyf, 2012), pp. 415. ISBN 978-184771-485 5. Paperback, £14.95.

The 'Seeker' William Erbery is a fascinating character and important precursor of the early Quaker movement. In 2000, Douglas Gwyn introduced him to a wider audience in his book *Seekers Found: Atonement in Early Quaker Experience*.<sup>1</sup> In *The Honest Heretique* John I. Morgans provides an introduction to Erbery's life and work and selects passages from 31 of Erbery's writings, penned between 1639 and 1654. In

1. Gwyn, D., *Seekers Found: Atonement in Early Quaker Experience* (Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 2000), pp. 115–24.



addition, he includes a subject index of Erbery's works and eighteen pages of endnotes. As a student in the 1960s, Morgans studied Puritanism and became fascinated with the figure of William Erbery. However, it was not until his retirement, after many years as a minister of the United Reformed Church, that he had the time to return to this subject. Morgans' collection of Erbery's writings is clearly a labour of love and he is 'eager to rehabilitate this maligned thinker' (p. 32). This book represents Morgans' attempt to bring Erbery's writings to wider attention and allow his words to speak for themselves.

The trajectory of Erbery's life appears to have been similar to many seventeenth-century Puritan dissenters and seekers. He was born in Cardiff in 1604, the son of a wealthy merchant. After being educated at Oxford and Cambridge, he became an Anglican priest of the Puritan tendency. Inevitably he fell afoul of the authorities and he left the established Church to become an Independent. Like many other radical Puritans, the experience of serving as a Parliamentary Army chaplain during the Civil Wars seems to have transformed his theology. By the late 1640s his religious ideas were almost identical to those of the emerging Quaker movement. He was tried and acquitted of blasphemy in 1653 and died in 1654, just as the Valiant Sixty, a group of early Quaker ministers, unleashed their preaching campaign across the country and beyond. Following his death, his works were neglected and he was denigrated as mentally unstable. An anonymous tract of 1685 concluded that 'Mr Erbery was taken ill of his Whimsies... Mr Erbery's disease lay in his Head, not in his Heart' (p. 11).

Ebery's tract *The Great Mystery of Godliness*, written in 1639, is firmly rooted in the orthodox Calvinism of seventeenth-century Puritanism. However, by the late 1640s his writings demonstrate that he had reached a position almost indistinguishable from that of the early Quakers. Erbery's tract, *The Children of the West* (1653), indicates that he was aware of the emerging Quaker movement and viewed it positively. He wrote:

What is the meaning of those honest men and women in the North, that so many of them are taken with that power, that they can do nothing else but quake and tremble? For my part, I look upon it as a sign of something both to you and to me; that when God shall roar in us, and speak forth himself with glory in us, God shall make our flesh to shake, quake, and tremble; that is he will make our most heavenly enjoyments and attainment, peace and power, he will make it all to shake and tremble before him. (as quoted on p. 263)

The possibility of a direct connection between Erbery and the early Quaker leadership, and in particular James Nayler (given that both served in the Parliamentary Army under Colonel Lambert), is a tantalising but unproven one. We do know that, following his death, Erbery's widow Mary and his children, Dorcas, Lydia, and Mordecai, all became Quakers. Mary and Dorcas were both followers of Nayler between 1654 and 1656. Lydia married Henry Fell and served as a Quaker missionary in Barbados. Mordecai married a prominent Cardiff Quaker. Morgans concludes, 'It seems that Erbery's children reached the destination of Erbery's journey' (p. 30). Indeed, like early Friends, Erbery viewed history in terms of three distinct ages or dispensations. The first age of the Hebrew Law and of outward forms was ended by the incarnation and the coming of the Gospel. The Gospel, however, was lost in the

apostasy when the Church turned back to the ways of the first dispensation. But Erbery believed that the apostasy was about to end with the coming of the age of the Spirit and the New Jerusalem. For him, God was both 'immanent' (directly present as an indwelling power) and 'imminent' (about to establish his kingdom on earth). In this sense, it might be argued that during the mid-1650s, the emerging Quaker movement saw itself living out what Erbery had predicted in the extremely assertive but nonviolent preaching campaign that came to be known as the Lamb's War. As well as the Quaker connection, there are also clear similarities between Erbery's theology and that of the Spiritualists and Anabaptists of the European Radical Reformation.<sup>2</sup> In addition, Morgans suggests that Erbery's ideas might also be seen to foreshadow both Methodism and Pentecostalism (p. 43).

This book offers a fascinating insight into the life and writings of a neglected figure of seventeenth-century Welsh and English religious life. Morgans has provided a much-needed and accessible introduction to the development and overall shape of Erbery's thought, which will be of great value to both the scholar of the period and the interested observer. Readers of this volume may feel prompted to search out unabridged versions of Erbery's tracts, since these now appear to be available online; they might also find that exploring his writings in more depth will enrich their understanding of the origins of the Quaker movement and the religious milieu out of which it emerged.

Stuart Masters  
Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre  
Birmingham, England

JOHNS, D.L., *Quakering Theology: Essays on Worship, Tradition and Christian Faith* (Farnham: bAshgate, 2013), pp xvi +165. ISBN 978-1-4094-5616-2. Hardback, £50.00.

In this collection of essays, suitable for a theologically literate readership, both academic and non-academic, David Johns seeks to make a constructive contribution to Christian theological and ecumenical dialogue. He does this not by attempting to outline a systematic Quaker theology, but rather by offering Quaker insights to the wider discussion. He calls this 'Quakering theology'. Johns operates within an explicitly Christian framework and agrees with Elton Trueblood that Quakerism is at its most vital when it accepts its place as an 'order within the Church catholic' (p. 136). This implies an interesting interpretation of the status of Friends as a separate and distinct Christian 'religious society'. Most of the essays (twelve out of fifteen) have been published elsewhere previously, though taken together the papers may be divided into three categories, as suggested in the three following paragraphs.

2. See McLaughlin, E., 'Spiritualism: Schwenckfeld and Franck and their Early Modern Resonances', and Dipple, G., 'The Spiritualist Anabaptists', in J.D. Roth and J.M. Stayer (eds.), *A Companion to Anabaptism and Spiritualism, 1521–1700* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), pp. 119–61 and 257–97.

Six essays challenge Friends to undertake a critical re-evaluation of a number of long-standing peculiarities of the Quaker tradition, which Johns believes often function as unhelpful barriers to open and positive joint exploration and dialogue with other Christians. In Chapter 1, Johns considers how narrative theology represents a challenge to Quakers, given its emphasis on the way language shapes experience. Quakers have tended to give priority to experience and regard language as a rather inadequate tool for explaining this experience. In Chapter 2, he suggests that the Quaker focus on silence and inwardness has tended to ignore the voice of the human body. He argues that Quakers should reconsider the role of physical expression in worship and spirituality. In Chapter 3, Johns notes that the silence creates an awareness of God's absence as well as God's presence. He suggests that a key function of liturgy is to enable a community to manage this experience of presence and absence; Quakers should therefore regard silence and liturgy as potentially complementary, rather than incompatible. In Chapter 5, Johns advocates a reevaluation of the outward sacraments. He argues that the traditional Quaker view is based on an unrealistic claim to unmediated experience, which neglects the deep symbolism of the sacraments and their role in forming community identity and cohesion. Chapter 9 looks at how the Quaker way is based on the 'Christ-textured life': a life lived in fellowship with the risen and present Christ. Johns asserts that Friends risk losing their vitality when Quaker practice is limited to the shared customs of a behavioural creed, rather than focused on the experience of divine intimacy. When form is raised over content, God is often domesticated. Quakers also need to recognise that the proclamation 'Christ is come' is the truth of Easter and Pentecost and, therefore, not a possession of Quakers only but of all Christianity. Finally, in Chapter 11, by drawing on Friedrich Von Hügel's sympathetic critique of Quakerism, Johns argues that Friends need to take seriously the dangers of spiritual naïveté (in particular, the belief that revelation can be completely unmediated) and of an ungrateful attitude to the wider Christian tradition out of which Quakerism emerged. He suggests that a balance needs to be achieved between tradition and experience and between the spiritual and the physical.

A further six essays represent an attempt to offer a 'Quakering' of Christian theology. In Chapter 4, Johns asks if Quakerism has a place for sainthood. He concludes that it does, since 'lives of heroic virtue have provided and do provide for Friends a narrative for structuring community life and initiating new-comers into the faith' (p. 28). He illustrates this with reference to the example of the seventeenth-century Quaker martyr Mary Dyer. In Chapter 8, Johns writes about what he feels was an overly swift and predictable response to '9/11' by both the hawks and the doves. He uses the example of 'Holy Saturday' (the in-between time after the crucifixion, but before the resurrection) to assert the importance of periods of ambiguity, waiting, and listening, as practised in Quaker worship and discernment. In Chapter 12, Johns addresses Reinhold Niebuhr's accusation that 'utopian movements' (those that assert sin can be overcome in this life) inevitably lead to 'monstrous evils'. Against this view, he argues that, while it is important to recognise the reality of evil (we are all people of unclean lips), it is also necessary to hold on to the hope that the presence of God's grace makes possible. This has enabled Quakers to proclaim that

sin is not the complete truth about humanity and that evil will not have the final word. In Chapter 13, Johns argues that, if the Church is in the world, of the world, and for the world, then metaphorically it should be surrounded by transparent glass, rather than stained glass. The Church needs to be able to see the world and be seen by the world. In the conditions of postmodernity, the Church is well-placed to act as a visible sign of what it proclaims, but to do this it must resist the temptation to maintain purity by separating itself from the world. In Chapter 14, Johns rejects both the 'relativist-pluralist' and the 'absolutist-credalistic' understandings of the early Quaker vision in favour of what he calls 'convictional-noncredalism' (p. 132), which seeks to hold together both the 'particularistic' and 'universalistic' dimensions of the Quaker way. Such an approach is firmly rooted in Christianity, but confines itself to modest declarations in order to avoid setting limits to God's revelation. In Chapter 15, he argues that modern Quakerism fails to display sufficient unity to make the production of a contemporary Quaker apology either meaningful or viable. Instead, he suggests that Quakers should enter respectfully into theological conversation with others, offering a particular 'Quaker texturing' to this dialogue. Freed from the burden of seeking self-preservation, this would enable Friends to look beyond sectarian preoccupations towards a post-Quaker Christianity.

Finally, a set of three essays provides more general theological reflection. In Chapter 6, Johns notes that in opposition to the cruel fatalism implicit in the worldview of Shakespeare's *King Lear*, C.S. Lewis' character Edmund in *The Narnia Chronicles* offers a more positive and redemptive vision, which reflects Lewis' theology. In Chapter 7, he suggests that the vision of God represented by the lion in the *Narnia Chronicles* is one that is untamed and upsetting, since it levels and remakes people. God cannot be tamed, because God is not made in the image of humanity. In Chapter 10, Johns explores the experience of parenting and argues that it can lead to spiritual growth by nurturing the virtues of hope, humility, and hospitality.

There is much to admire in these essays and a good deal to be gained from a serious engagement with them. Johns' determination to work within 'a more expansive and ecumenical space' requires a finely balanced approach (p. xi). He is clearly right to caution against an arrogant sectarian assertion of denominational identity, but equally he needs to avoid the temptation simply to jettison Quaker distinctives in order to achieve his ecumenical objectives. In this collection, Johns largely succeeds in maintaining such a dynamic tension. Although he expends at least as much effort on challenging Friends about their Quaker peculiarities as he does on 'Quakering' Christian theology, it might be argued that this sort of honest self-criticism is essential when a tradition is seeking to influence wider theological discourse with authenticity and integrity. Consistent with his commitment to 'convictional-noncredalism' (p. 132), Johns' questioning of Quakerism and his Quakering of theology are tentative and modest in scope. This combination delivers a subtle and nuanced approach which it feels, at times, is achieved at the expense of a sense of passion and conviction. In addition, as Pink Dandelion notes in his preface, Johns is 'a thinker sitting between the academy and the bench' (p. x)—and so, in some places, he addresses Christian theologians in a formal and objective way, whereas in others he talks more informally to his own community and uses the word 'we'.

Given that the early movement saw itself as the restoration of the one true Church following some 1600 years of apostasy, it is not surprising that Quakers have been accused of adopting a rather ungrateful and dismissive attitude to the wider Christian tradition. In this sense, Johns' attempt to change this mindset is helpful. Friends can make a positive contribution to Christianity by Quakering theology, but equally they have much to gain from drawing on the rich and diverse heritage of the Church. Quakerism was not formed *ex nihilo*. It inevitably drew on an existing body of belief and practice, even if this was not explicitly admitted. In particular, there are potentially valuable insights to be gained from a Quaker engagement with other Christian traditions, particularly those with which there is some shared dimension. This might include the spirituality of the Catholic mystics, the pneumatology of Eastern Orthodoxy, the peace–Church witness of Anabaptism, the 'heart religion' of Methodism, and the charismatic experience of Pentecostalism.

Johns' warnings about the dangers of dualism within the Quaker tradition and, in particular, the way in which this may engender a negative attitude towards material existence (including bodily and artistic expression), the sacraments, and liturgy are well-made. However, this raises important questions about the origins of such a tendency. Was it simply built into the very essence of early Quaker experience and understanding, merely a residue of Puritan religious culture, or does it have its roots in a fundamental reorientation of early Quaker theology that took place in the second generation when charismatic enthusiasm was suppressed in favour of quietism and respectability?<sup>3</sup> My sense is that the latter hypothesis demands further exploration. Although the language of early Friends is often strongly dualistic, with frequent use of Pauline categories such as 'flesh' and 'spirit', the early Quaker proclamation that 'Christ is come to teach his people himself' implies that in Christ a bridge has been established that links the physical and the spiritual realms, and reconnects heaven and earth. For early Friends, a new creation was realised when the Spirit indwells the physical and transforms it. In this sense, it is the fallen state that is characterised by dualism, whereas with the renewal of all things, separation is overcome by holistic unity. Can we recover the creation-affirming and embodied incarnational spirituality and practice of our founding mothers and fathers and offer this 'Christ-textured life' as a Quakering of theology and practice? In his tract *The Lamb's War against the Man of Sin* (1657), James Nayler presents a very clear explanation of this vision when he writes:

The Lamb's quarrel is not against the creation, for then should his weapons be carnal, as the weapons of the worldly spirits are: 'For we war not with flesh and blood', nor against the creation of God; that we love; but we fight against the spiritual powers of wickedness, which wars against God in the creation, and captivates the creation into the lust which wars against the soul, and that the creature may be delivered into its liberty prepared for the sons of God. And this is not against love, nor everlasting peace, but that without which can be no true love nor lasting peace.<sup>4</sup>

3. See, for example, Bailey, R., *New Light on George Fox and Early Quakerism: The Making and Unmaking of a God* (San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, 1992).

4. Naylor, J., and Kuenning, L. (eds.), *The Works of James Nayler*, vol. IV (Farmington, ME: Quaker Heritage Press, 2003), p. 15.

The space that Johns has carefully constructed, in which Quakerism can be sensitively challenged and Christian theology respectfully Quakered, offers a potentially most fruitful dwelling place for Friends and others who wish to listen deeply and dialogue openly, whether their interest is in a post-Quaker Christianity or a post-Christian Quakerism.

Stuart Masters  
Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre  
Birmingham, England

BRADSTOCK, A., *Radical Religion in Cromwell's England: A Concise History from the English Civil War to the End of the Commonwealth* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co., 2011), pp. xxvi + 189. ISBN 978-1-84511-765-8. Paperback, £15.99.

In *Radical Religion in Cromwell's England* Andrew Bradstock aims to provide a concise and accessible history of the most notable radical religious groups of the English Civil War and Commonwealth periods. In addition to an introduction and conclusion, the book is divided into seven chapters, one dedicated to each of the following groups: Baptists, Levellers, Diggers, Ranters, Quakers, Fifth Monarchists, and Muggletonians. Bradstock's clear and comprehensible style makes the book suitable for students, general readers, and the more serious scholar. In handling the content, the author has achieved a good balance between the big picture and smaller-scale detail and, because each chapter stands alone, the book can be used selectively by those who wish to fill specific gaps in their knowledge. Bradstock clearly has a real affection for the radical religious groups he writes about, but he does not allow his obvious enthusiasm to detract from the need to offer balanced profiles. Throughout the book, a particular effort is made to address the role of women within each movement, presumably in order to rectify omissions in previous introductory texts.

The book offers a wide range of fascinating insights into the hopes, fears, excitement, and disappointment of this turbulent period. Established structures of social control had broken down, apocalyptic expectations abounded, and the prospect of further revolutionary change was very real. First and foremost, the radical religious groups under consideration here were regarded as dangerous to those in power because they were intent on dismantling the very basis of social order within a Feudal society: the church-state power block, which was often considered the root of the country's ills. Within this system, established religion functioned as the principal agent of social control. Bradstock quotes Charles I, who said that 'people are governed by the pulpit more than the sword in times of peace' (p. xv). Not surprisingly, dissenting radical religious groups faced persecution of one form or other at the hands of the authorities. They were portrayed as what Stanley Cohen has called 'folk devils' and were linked in particular with the violent Anabaptists of Münster from a century or so before.<sup>5</sup>

5. Cohen, S., *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* (London: Harper Collins, 1973).

Bradstock's depictions of the various dissenters provides a useful overview of the radical thought in the period. In many ways, the first three sects considered (Baptists, Levellers, and Diggers) reflected the radical optimism generated by the Civil Wars of the 1640s, whereas the latter four groups (Ranters, Quakers, Fifth Monarchists, and Muggletonians) represented a variety of responses to disappointed hopes. In particular, the crushing of the Levellers and the Diggers in 1649 appears to have set the scene for the development of the four radical groups that emerged in the 1650s. Of the 1640s' groups, the Baptists were 'free church' pioneers, the Levellers were reformist proto-democrats, and the Diggers utopian anarcho-communists. Of the 1650s groups, the Ranters were nihilists raging against the system, the Quakers offered an inward path to spiritual and social transformation, the Fifth Monarchists were violent revolutionaries (the 'paramilitary wing' of the radical Baptists and Independents), and the Muggletonians provided an undemanding, if slightly eccentric, path to assured salvation.

Given Bradstock's previous research interests and publications, it is not surprising that the chapter dedicated to the Diggers and their spokesman Gerrard Winstanley is the strongest. He provides a clear and detailed explanation of the Digger vision, in which the fall of humanity was understood as coinciding with the emergence of private property, causing violence, inequality, and injustice. It is interesting to note that, apart from the belief the earth should again become a 'common treasury for all', most other Digger ideas reappeared in the emerging Quaker movement. This included a belief in Christ's return inwardly and spiritually, a commitment to non-violence, and the rejection of social graces such as hat honour.

Having outlined the many strengths of the book, it has to be said that it contains a number of weaknesses. The level of theological analysis offered for each group is quite variable; that of the Diggers, for example, is both rich and detailed, but Quaker theology is somewhat neglected in favour of their political impact and its ramifications. Bradstock notes that Quaker distinctives were not entirely new, which may explain the limited attention he gives to their theology. However, one might argue that it was the unique combination of beliefs and practices and the way they were lived in the world that made the early Quaker movement innovative and influential. The Levellers receive the least theological attention and, although Bradstock debates the point, he does seem to accept that this group was essentially a forerunner of secular democratic movements. In his treatment of this period, Bradstock appears to neglect the influence of socio-economic factors, arguing that the English Civil Wars were essentially wars of religion (p. xiv). However, in seventeenth-century England, religion and politics were inextricably bound together and could not be separated in any meaningful way. Bradstock's perspective is somewhat surprising, given the obvious influence of Christopher Hill and other Marxist historians on his thinking. Some consideration of the impact of the transition from Feudalism to Capitalism on the emergence and development of these groups would have been useful. Bradstock debates the appropriateness of applying the term 'radical' to the groups outlined in the book. The etymology of the word 'radical' suggests a 'return to the root'. In the case of both Baptists and Quakers, it is clear that the desire to return to the purity and simplicity of the apostolic church was a key preoccupation. Unfortunately, he



pays little, if any, attention to the 'Christian primitivism' evident in many of these movements.

Bradstock's treatment of the Quakers also raises a number of concerns. His profile of the group relies too heavily on Barry Reay's account in *The Quakers and the English Revolution*, and his guidance on further reading is not well-balanced.<sup>6</sup> Although he lists valuable texts by Catie Gill and Phyllis Mack about Quaker women, he excludes essential works on early Quakerism, such as those of Douglas Gwyn and Rosemary Moore.<sup>7</sup> Surprisingly, Bradstock accepts uncritically the traditional account of James Nayler's re-enactment of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem at Bristol in 1656, asserting that his behaviour confirmed people's worst fears and brought the Quaker movement into disrepute (p. 111). This explanation ignores political repression, the internal leadership struggles of Quakerism, and that Nayler's conduct was non-violent and in line with the early-Quaker use of outward signs to represent inward spiritual experiences. Consequently, Bradstock adopts a perspective that appears to blame the victim for the persecution he suffers. Finally, one or two questionable assumptions are evident. In his description of Fox's Pendle Hill vision, Bradstock suggests that this convinced him of his calling to found a new church (p. 96). However, it is clear that Fox's outlook at this time was far more eschatological than denominational. Bradstock also refers to Quaker belief in the 'inner light', a term that Rosemary Moore argues was not used by early Friends.<sup>8</sup>

Nevertheless, Andrew Bradstock presents a valuable introductory book for anyone interested in discovering more about these intriguing groups and the turbulent religious and political circumstances in which they emerged. As Christians begin to come to terms with the circumstances of post-Christendom where the Church no longer finds itself at the centres of power, the stories of radical religious groups such as these provide valuable insights into the experience of living as disciples at the margins of society.<sup>9</sup> This book will whet the appetites of many readers who, in addition to exploring the author's recommendations for further reading, will want to seek out more comprehensive bibliographies.

Stuart Masters  
Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre  
Birmingham, England

6. Reay, B., *The Quakers and the English Revolution* (London: Temple Smith, 1985).

7. Gill, C., *Women in the Seventeenth-Century Quaker Community* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005); Mack, P., *Visionary Women: Prophecy in Seventeenth-Century England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); Gwyn, D., *The Covenant Crucified: Quakers and the Rise of Capitalism* (Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 1995); Moore, R., *The Light in their Consciences: The Early Quakers in Britain, 1646–1666* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000).

8. Moore, *The Light in their Consciences*, p. 81.

9. Murray, S., *Post-Christendom: Church and Mission in a Strange New World* (Bletchley: Paternoster Press, 2004).