

Book Reviews

Stephen W. Angell and Pink Dandelion (eds), *Early Quakers and Their Theological Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. xvii + 360. ISBN 978-1107050525. Hardback, \$120.

Early Quakers and Their Theological Thought presents an overview of early Quaker theology from 1650 to 1700 through the profiles of 16 Friends central to the emerging movement. The profiles, forming 14 of the 16 chapters, provide new research on figures like George Fox and Robert Barclay, who have been well studied by scholars, and explore some rarely considered, such as Elizabeth Bathurst, John Perrot and George Keith. In the Introduction, editors Stephen Angell and Pink Dandelion argue that because early Friends rejected creeds and focussed on the immediacy of revelation, early Quakerism was characterised by a range of theological voices, especially in the first two decades. They seek to offer a picture of Quaker theology by displaying this range, rather than reducing it to a single account of what early Friends believed. The afterword, by Rosemary Moore and Richard Allen, draws out the important themes and historical shifts as seventeenth-century Friends faced external detractors and tried to balance the Quaker emphasis on direct access to the divine with developing a corporate expression of the faith. Other figures might have been included in the volume, and Moore suggests William Smith has been overlooked. Yet the editors select a good representation of the most prolific and influential writers of the period.

The opening chapters by Douglas Gwyn and Betty Hagglund are not profiles of early Friends, but locate early Quakerism within the religious and political context of the English Civil Wars and the expansion of pamphleteering that helped drive those conflicts. Gwyn describes Quakerism as an epistemological break from Puritanism, which defined truth in literalist, biblical terms, in favour of reliance on the immediate experience of Christ, as Seed or Light, in the heart of the believer. The inward experience of Christ was understood eschatologically, as Friends reinterpreted the apocalyptic hopes that fuelled other forms of radical Protestantism. In contrast to Puritan theology, which stressed human depravity,

they held out the possibility of perfection through the purifying presence of the Inward Christ. Early Quakers were caught in the theological quarrels that seethed in print, and much of their writing was either polemical disputation or careful apologetics aimed at critics of the movement. Richard Farnworth (discussed by Michael Birkel and Angell), Edward Burrough and Francis Howgill (discussed by Dandelion and Frederick Martin) were among the early apologists. Gwyn does not address the philosophical milieu, but several authors look beyond the Puritan and Pietist influences, which have been more widely examined, to explore the influence of the Enlightenment on Quaker epistemology.

The scholars vary in approach, although each chapter provides biographical details and explores the theological and social background. This contextualisation is essential to understanding Quaker origins and makes the book accessible to a variety of readers. Some authors attempt to cover the entire body of work written by their subjects, while others focus on a particular text or experience. For instance, Hilary Hinds' discussion of George Fox, who has been studied extensively, focusses on the soteriology implicit in Fox's journal, rather than exploring his discursive writings. She describes his journey from Calvinist dualism to a theology of a unified self, found by standing still in the Light. Most of the authors work with the primary sources and do not review the scholarship on their subjects, which would have been useful, especially for the more focussed chapters, had the editors been able to expand the book.

Several shared themes emerge from the chapters. Early Quakers claimed a certain, even infallible, grasp of truth imparted by God, which raised questions of epistemology, scriptural hermeneutics and the relationship of the inward Christ to the man Jesus. Angell argues that Samuel Fisher, who was familiar with early historical criticism, was central in developing the Quaker hermeneutic, but most early apologists agreed with him that scripture must be confirmed by inward experience. Other Friends, influenced by the Cartesian search for certain knowledge, attempted to articulate how inward experience could be a reliable source of truth. Isaac Penington (according to Mel Keiser) proposed that all outward forms have a perfect inward form, which is known mystically through abiding in the Light. Both George Keith and Robert Barclay (discussed by Hugh Pyper) argued that knowledge of eternal truth requires receptivity to the Seed of Christ. They accepted Puritan ideas of human depravity, and proposed a substance, the *Vehiculum Dei*, which protected the Seed from human sin, and thus allowed the possibility of certain knowledge. William Penn (according to Melvin Endy) raised similar questions, but emphasised growth in holiness and the development of Right Reason through the purification of natural reason. Christology and soteriology are discussed by several authors. Early Friends did not minimise the depth of human sin, but their experience suggested that sin is overcome by waiting in the Light. For instance, both Elizabeth Bathurst and James Nayler (discussed by Mary Garman and Carole Spencer) understood Christ as the Inward Word, who would overcome sin and transform those receptive.

Spencer argues this incarnational theology underpinned Nayler's controversial ride into Bristol in imitation of Jesus. Keith's interest in Kabbalah led to a theology of Christ as the 'heavenly man' whose soul extended throughout the entire universe (according to Birkel).

Tensions over authority within the movement, and the desire to avoid persecution, led to a more cohesive theology by the end of the seventeenth century. Sally Bruyneel notes the importance of Margaret Fell in this shift, but argues Fell's organisation should not overshadow her contributions to eschatology. For early Friends, the Second Coming was first inward, in the heart of the believer, but then outward as the transformed community gathered. Friends understood themselves as heirs to the apostolic church, renewed after centuries of apostasy. The enthusiasm of figures like James Nayler and Dorothy White was rooted in this expectation. Public controversies, such as Nayler's imitation of Christ on the streets of Bristol and the Perrot hat debate, led to the marginalisation of Friends who had been central to the movement. Chapters on Nayler, John Perrot (by Carla Gardina Pesta) and Dorothy White (by Michele Lise Tarter) suggest their theology was consistent with that of the wider body. Yet their writing was excised from Quaker history because of the conflicts over authority and the dampening of enthusiastic expressions of the faith. White was the most prolific female writer of early Quakerism, with the exception of Margaret Fell, yet her work was rarely read. George Keith left Friends because of theological disagreement, although his early apologetics were consistent with that of other Friends. The apocalyptic fervour decreased over time, as is evident in the work of George Whitehead, who lived into the early eighteenth century. Robynne Healy argues that Whitehead's mature theology, while holding out the possibility of perfection, was characterised by a deferred eschatology.

Angell and Dandelion have compiled another important contribution Quaker theology and history, which will be essential to academics and accessible to other readers.

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Brandon Marriott, *Transnational Networks and Cross-Religious Exchange in the Seventeenth-Century Mediterranean and Atlantic Worlds: Sabbatai Sevi and the Lost Tribes of Israel* (Farham: Ashgate, 2015), pp. xiii + 167. ISBN 9781472435842. Hardback, £65.

In this detailed and interesting book, Brandon Marriott attempts to trace the transmission of news and rumours across Europe, the Levant and the Americas between 1648 and 1666 in the context of heightened Jewish messianic and Christian apocalyptic expectations. He shows how these stories and rumours were

often transformed as they were transmitted, and how their reception and interpretation differed in specific geographical locations and religious communities. Marriott notes that 'historians know a good deal about the global flow of trade, but are just beginning to consider the global circulation of information' (p. 134). His work seeks to contribute to this emerging research and 'responds to the calls by historians for the study of history from a larger perspective' (p. 8). The book is written in a dense but accessible style and is primarily addressed to an academic audience. It will be of particular interest to scholars of history, religious ideas, interfaith relations and print culture within the early modern period.

The book includes an introduction and conclusion, four main chapters, one of which focusses explicitly on a Quaker theme, a concise index, an extensive bibliography of archival, primary and secondary sources, and a helpful parallel timeline covering each of the main regions considered (the Americas, Iberia and Italy, Northern Europe and the Levant). The four central chapters of the book all deal with a specific case study. Chapter 1 explores claims emerging in the late 1640s that the lost tribes of Israel had been discovered hidden in the jungles of South America. Chapter 2 focusses on the story which circulated in the late 1650s about the 'Quaker messiah', James Nayler. Chapter 3 considers the rumour that spread widely during the mid 1660s that Mecca had been sacked by the lost tribes of Israel. Finally, chapter 4 addresses the story of Sabbatai Sevi, a Sephardic rabbi living in the Ottoman Empire who claimed to be the Jewish messiah, but later converted to Islam.

Marriott's careful plotting of information transmission during this period reveals a number of important insights. He notes how a vigorous print culture, the emergence of a news industry and the development of global mercantile and scientific networks enabled a major expansion of the production, transmission and circulation of information. Indeed, this seems to have resulted in a bewildering experience of information overload, where a deluge of news and rumours often proved disorientating for its recipients. The circulation of misinformation was particularly pervasive at this time and could link individuals and groups across national, religious and continental divides. This included 'the intertwining of Jewish, Christian and Islamic eschatological beliefs against the background of an increasingly global exchange of news and rumours' (p. 132). However, the directions of travel and influence were not symmetrical. Marriott concludes that, while news from the Ottoman Empire spread across Europe, news from Europe and the Americas was less likely to travel in the other direction. Similarly, he concludes that events in the Jewish world often had a strong impact on Christian communities, whereas Jews appeared to have been relatively unaffected by news coming from the Christian world. In addition, the way information was received and interpreted depended to a large degree on the characteristics of local religious cultures. Amsterdam was a place of religious toleration, and so information could be discussed openly by Jews and Christians and such cross-religious interactions promoted millenarian and messianic ideas. In Italy, on the other hand, such

information was interpreted quite differently because Italian Catholicism was not inclined to apocalyptic speculation. In Germany, instead of generating excitement, messianic Jewish rumours provoked great fear, due to the spectre of the 'Red Jews' within German culture, who were regarded as an epochal threat to Christendom.

A key benefit of conducting history from a larger perspective is that it enables us to see connections and trends that are not necessarily discernible at the micro-level. However, such a 'big picture' perspective can also mean that the nuances and complexities of a particular situation are neglected. Marriot's treatment of the James Nayler story reveal this limitation. He helpfully demonstrates how the story spread more widely within Europe and the Americas than had been previously thought. However, he tends to take the version of events that was formulated and circulated by anti-Quaker sources at face value. Indeed, he suggests that the messianic claim made in Bristol in 1656 may well have been prompted by the impact of Rosicrucian and Fifth Monarchist ideas on Nayler and his followers. His justification for this claim is the connection that existed between Martha Symonds, one of Nayler's followers, and Giles Calvert, who published tracts by these groups. This proposition fails to take account of a number of important factors. First, it underestimates the fiercely sectarian nature of radical religion in the 1650s. Quakers defined themselves very clearly over and against such groups. Secondly, it disregards the fact that Calvert was the principal publisher of tracts by a whole range of radical religious groups, including those of Friends. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, it ignores a crucial feature of early Quaker theology: the belief that Christ had returned in Spirit, was available to all, and would be revealed in anyone who turned to his inward teaching and transformative power. Friends proclaimed that Christ was now appearing in his people and was mobilising them in the Lamb's War. The idea of an individual messianic claim was therefore inconsistent with the early Quaker witness. That said, such a detailed analysis of one particular event is beyond the scope and purpose of Marriott's research. For Quaker historians and theologians, this work offers a valuable insight into the complex cultural and religious context in which early Quaker apocalypticism developed. In particular, it should prompt further research into the cross-religious exchange that took place between Quakers and Jews in the seventeenth century.

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Maurice Jackson and Susan Kozel (eds), *Quakers and their Allies in the Abolitionist Cause, 1754–1808* (London and New York: Routledge, 2015), pp. xi + 218. ISBN: 9781848935419. Hardback £95.

The story of Friends' involvement in the abolition of slavery has come under renewed scrutiny in recent years, with a spate of publications that uncover the origins, development and internal tensions of Quaker antislavery being joined by several biographies of prominent Quakers, including Anthony Benezet and John Woolman, seen in the context of their opposition to slavery. Our understanding of Quaker antislavery has been much enriched as a result, but recent scholarship has, if anything, revealed how little we know about the fine detail of day-to-day abolitionist activity in Quaker circles. *Quakers and their Allies in the Abolitionist Cause, 1754–1808*, a collection of scholarly essays by both leading and emerging historians in the field, accordingly offers a range of fascinating new insights into the abolitionist activism of American Quakers in the years in between the decision of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting to take an antislavery stance in the 1750s to the end of the Anglo–American Atlantic slave trade in 1808, with the intention of filling in some of these gaps in our knowledge as well as raising new questions about Quaker contribution to the abolitionist cause.

Many of the contributions are essentially biographical sketches. Gary Nash, for example, tells the life story of Warner Mifflin, whose efforts to commit the US government to antislavery in the closing decades of the eighteenth century, though today largely forgotten, set the stage for the larger conflict of the following century. Geoffrey Plank outlines a biography of Sarah Woolman, whose activity within both her extended family and the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting went well beyond mere support for her husband and, argues Plank, 'contributed directly to the rise of a bolder form of female Quaker activism in the nineteenth century' (p. 38). Julie Winch attempts from very limited evidence to reconstruct the life of Ann Elizabeth Fortune, a free black woman of Philadelphia who left considerable property in a will executed by Anthony Benezet in 1768. Richard C. Allen assesses the life of Samuel Meredith, businessman and prominent figure in the Welsh Society of Philadelphia, to show that Quaker philanthropy did not necessarily equate to antislavery activism in this period, while Susan Kozel recovers the lives of brothers Richard and Nicholas Waln to show that small-scale and personal action against slavery in Pennsylvania was a necessary adjunct to the broader work of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society.

Other contributions move beyond biography to reassess the contributions of already well-known figures or to weigh up the impact and operation of Quaker antislavery more broadly. Maurice Jackson, the acknowledged authority on Anthony Benezet, considers Benezet's reputation and legacy, both in the years following his death in 1784 and in more recent times, to confirm that Benezet indeed exerted a powerful influence on the course of future antislavery movements on both sides of the Atlantic. Jon R. Kershner revisits John

Woolman's theology to argue that his abolitionist thought emerged not merely from the broader currents of Quaker antislavery, but rather from a profound apocalypticism that 'made claims on every aspect of British society' (p. 96). Woolman's abstention from goods produced by slaves is explored in detail by Julie L. Holcomb, who shows that his example, alongside other Friends such as Joshua Evans, marked the start of a more widespread economic protest against slavery that culminated in the boycotts of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. James J. Gigantino II explores the tensions that saw New Jersey abolish slavery significantly later than neighbouring Pennsylvania, despite both states having significant Quaker populations, while Louisiane Ferlier, in the essay that concludes this collection, argues that Benjamin Franklin, often hailed as a prominent opponent of slavery, was more of a facilitator of Quaker antislavery thought and activism than an originating abolitionist himself.

Taken together, these essays attest to the richness and complexity of antislavery activism in late eighteenth-century America, and add substantially to our knowledge of Quaker abolitionism in this region at this time. It should be noted, however, that despite a title that sounds more wide-ranging, this collection is about *American* Quakers and their allies; in fact, it is almost entirely about Friends in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. The efforts of British Quakers in this period are mentioned merely in passing, even though there was a great deal of co-ordination across the Atlantic both before and after American independence, and little is said about Friends in New England, Virginia, the Caribbean and elsewhere. A title that made the book's regional focus clearer would have been welcome. There is likewise a tendency to assume a familiarity with Quaker history and Quaker terminology, as well as with the details of local history in New Jersey and Pennsylvania that may make some essays difficult to follow for readers outside of those communities. A few of the essays went the other way, offering well-established contextual material that is familiar from other sources. These inconsistencies are perhaps inevitable in a multi-authored volume such as this, but one is left feeling that the editors were not always certain which audience they hoped to address. The book also had more than its fair share of typographical errors. Both the presentation of the book, and its overall argument, might have benefitted from more careful and assertive intervention from its two editors.

Nevertheless, despite these shortcomings, *Quakers and their Allies in the Abolitionist Cause* is a welcome and timely addition to the literature concerning Quaker antislavery. While the book as a whole does not attempt to explain the entire edifice of Quaker abolitionism in this period, its ten essays shine light into some of its many rooms and reveal that ordinary Quakers played as important a role in hastening the end of slavery as did the movement's more celebrated figures. The book also offers important and sometimes provocative reassessments of well-known abolitionists, such as Benezet, Woolman and Franklin, which raise important questions about our understanding of their

lives and work. Scholars and general readers interested in Quaker antislavery, and early American history more generally, will find much to admire in this collection of essays.

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Mark Reinberger and Elizabeth McLean, *The Philadelphia Country House: Architecture and Landscape in Colonial America* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015), pp. xvii + 430. ISBN: 1-4214-1163-6. Hardback, \$69.95.

This is a beautiful produced and lavishly illustrated book that focusses on Philadelphia country houses, including those of Quakers in the years of the ‘Holy Experiment’, the Quaker formation of Pennsylvania. It encompasses architectural design history as well as the political and social contexts of the properties featured and is perfectly ordered into three sections. Part I looks at the English cultural heritage that was drawn on by New World designers and how that played out in the colony. Part II looks at the continuities of design and function across the colonial period. Finally, Part III catalogues the houses in detail.

The Quaker content, particularly in Part I, is not inconsiderable given its Philadelphia focus between the 1680s and 1776 and also given that Pennsbury Manor, William Penn’s country seat, is one of the properties featured in detail. Penn’s own semi-rural background and his design of Philadelphia as a green country town is presented as one of the ways in which colonial culture in Pennsylvania favoured the concept of a rural gentry. Penn’s ‘First Purchasers’ were given land in town, as well as considerable country lots. Penn ensured his own family retained more country land than anyone else and never built in the town.

One of the central hinges of the book is the ancient Greek debate over what the function of a ‘villa’ is: whether it represents a place of pleasurable pursuit and self-improvement or a site of agricultural labour. The Quaker emphasis on the plain and function over the vain and superfluous tended to favour the latter interpretation of villa life, or at least justify the country homes of some of the wealthy Philadelphia Quaker merchants. When all space is equally sacramental and when all of life is accountable to the Meeting, seeming extravagance needs to be rationalised. By the mid eighteenth century, Reinberger and McLean claim, Americans had developed their own version of the English country seat, especially around Philadelphia (p. 3). It is upon these houses that the book focusses.

Penn began work on Pennsbury Manor in 1683, but it disappeared in the eighteenth century. Penn’s Quakerism, the authors claim, worked against him living as Lord of the Manor, but Penn still idealised the country life and claimed that rural retreat could help cultivate frugality and plainness: Penn did not live extravagantly, according to surviving inventories (p. 59). Penn’s

emphasis was agricultural, and Reinberger and McLean claim that his country house acted as a metaphor for his vision of the whole of Pennsylvania: a place of peace and tranquillity, of labour and creation, of co-operation and care. Pennsylvania as a holy experiment was undone by the sheer number of those holding more mercantile priorities, drawn too by universal religious toleration. It prospered commercially but not in the ways Penn had hoped for. By 1783, Quakers, however individually wealthy, were a marginal group. Nevertheless, from the early eighteenth century, wealthy Quakers, especially when trade was good, built country seats, many moving out of town life altogether. By this time, Anglicans, with different sensibilities concerning outward expression, were building more worldly houses and adopting the ideal of the villa as about 'retirement' over labour, refinement over agriculture, self-improvement over collective creation. The blend of this mix of sensibilities meant, the authors claim, that the houses in the Philadelphia area were less grand than those close to their urban competitors along the eastern seaboard. Fluctuating trade conditions meant that houses changed hands often as fortunes changed and few were dynastic seats. Furthermore, it is argued, in the comparisons the wealthy made between their houses, different groups operated different value systems and whether you were winning or losing would be subjective. If anything, the houses tell us most about those who commissioned them. However, the authors claim, all pointed to the aspiration of a different life.

The whole book is fascinating and a delight to the eye. It is well organised and clearly and accessibly written without skimping on referencing. It is competitively priced and whether a reader is interested in Philadelphia colonial history or the houses that became the landmarks on the local maps, this is a very worthy contribution to an under-researched side of Quaker material culture.

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Margaret A. Coombs, *Charlotte Mason: Hidden Heritage and Educational Influence* (Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 2015), pp. 376. ISBN 9780718894023. Paperback, £25.

The subtitle of this meticulously researched and engagingly written book about an outstanding personality—*Hidden Heritage and Educational Influence*—accurately describes its contents: to solve the mystery of the background of Charlotte Mason (1842–1923) and to trace the development of her educational ideas and practice. How far these two aims are integrated into a coherent whole is another matter.

The sound and detailed archival research that has gone into tracing Charlotte's Quaker antecedents through four generations as they spread out from

Westmoreland to Ireland in pursuit of economic opportunities, is truly impressive. By exploring the family members' fluctuating fortunes and position in their religious community, changes within the wider social context and the Quaker milieu are illuminated. The family tree at the front of the book is an essential aid to understanding the familial network, especially when the narrative reaches her father, Joshua Mason, who married three times, siring thirteen children, of whom Charlotte was the youngest.

These early chapters, comprising five of the total of sixteen, will particularly delight Quaker genealogists, but the extent to which the sheer amount of detailed information sheds a light on the development of Charlotte's personal philosophy is not clear. While a sustained and commendable effort is made to connect Charlotte's educational ideas with her Quaker heritage, Charlotte's own suppression of her background, compounded by the determination of her first biographer to guard her privacy, makes drawing a definite link between the two almost impossible. It is intriguing to learn that many of her family were teachers (including four half-sisters) and that her great grandfather, John Gough, had written a number of widely used educational textbooks in the late eighteenth century, but to claim, therefore, that Charlotte's ideas sprang from her genes seems somewhat overblown. Moreover, the author is unable to offer any evidence that Charlotte was even aware of her 'inheritance'. The picture constructed from fragmentary evidence of her early life may be plausible, but all too often assumption becomes assertion and speculation is presented as 'fact'.

The author is on surer ground in mapping out and analysing the development of Charlotte's promotion of a flexible, wide and liberal curriculum. In contrast to the mechanical school teaching of the time, this would be delivered through, for example, observation of the natural world, 'real' books (not primers), imaginative play and exercise, in order to engage children's interest and form the desired habits. Her early career in education is tracked, starting out as a 12-year-old pupil-teacher, through training college and to her engagement as a school mistress, yielding fascinating material about teacher training and educational institutions in the second half of the nineteenth century. Charlotte's progress in teaching was blighted by a debilitating illness that was to return at intervals throughout her life. Thanks to support (including financial) from a succession of enthusiastic female devotees she was able to capitalise on these periods of physical inactivity in order to cultivate and expound her educational philosophy, through her copious publications and the creation of the body with which her name is most associated, the Parents' National Educational Union (PNEU). The twists and turns in the growth of the PNEU are scrupulously documented, from an original plan to guide parents' oversight of the home schoolroom, to the establishment of the House of Education in Ambleside, where governesses were trained in the Charlotte Mason method, and the movement to take liberal education into elementary schools. The text is also beautifully supported by copious black and white illustrations and a comprehensive bibliography is included.

Charlotte became a guru-like figure to her many followers and she continues to inspire educationists and parents today, particularly advocates of home-schooling, but this book is no hagiography. A convincing case is presented in the final chapter for the continuing relevance of Charlotte's ideas, but as an inspiration rather than a complete, unifying philosophy. A further qualification is that her methods need to be adapted in response to our increasingly complex world. Factors which may have contributed to Charlotte's beliefs are thoroughly explored: her background and early experiences as a teacher, as well as the context of other educational thinkers of the time. Although the Quaker belief of 'that of God in everyone' could conceivably have inspired her central message, that children are born neither good nor bad but with possibilities for either, the author demonstrates with clarity how her ideas were also shaped by those of Locke, Rousseau, Wordsworth, Arnold, Ruskin and Pestalozzi. But if Charlotte's thoughts were not entirely original, as well as lacking in detail and consistency, this book reveals her charisma and ability to galvanise loyal disciples into developing the ideas into practical schemes.

In many respects, Charlotte Mason remains an enigma. The circumstances of her birth, to a Quaker father and a young Roman Catholic woman 38 years his junior, who did not marry until two years after their daughter was born, explain why she was so careful to draw a veil over her origins, and it is a remarkable achievement by the author in managing to uncover so much about her family origins. The illness which confined her to a couch for so many years remains largely unexplained. It added to her almost mythic status amongst her followers and allowed her graciously to accept prolonged trips to continental spas at the expense of wealthy supporters, but seems to have mysteriously cleared up in 1920. However, there is much of interest here, not only to historians, but also, in the light of recent attempts to narrow the curriculum in English schools, to anyone interested in the continuation of a liberal, child-centred education.

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Jen Llywelyn, *Pilgrim of Peace: A Life of George M. Ll. Davies, Pacifist, Conscientious Objector and Peace-maker* (Talybont: Y Lolfa, 2016), pp. 287. ISBN 9781784612405. Paperback, £12.99.

This volume ends on a strange but very personal note, as the author describes one of several vivid dreams she had with the subject of her book. In the dream he asks her to ensure that people do not forget him. By now, for most in Wales, he is largely forgotten, remaining as memory primarily amongst the older generation or those involved in the peace movement, or those familiar with early twentieth-century Wales. The author's admiration and love of her subject is palpable; perhaps, at times, sentimental. But then biography is far from simple and, as Virginia Woolf

reminds us, biographies are many-sided and the biography 'never returns a single and simple answer to any question that is asked of it'. This fifteen-chapter volume is then more easily located as a 'popular' and celebrity biography—life writing; some will find its indexing inadequate and the referencing infuriating.

Up to the summer of 1914, then aged 34, George Davies was but one amongst many, a Liverpool-born Welshman, former bank manager, officer in the Territorial Army, trust administrator. But as the grandson of the Rev. John Jones, Talysarn (1796–1857), recognised as one of Wales' most powerful and forceful preachers whose memory would resonate into the twentieth century (a personal hero to the late Rev. Ian Paisley), George would have derived prominence and status because of his family background. He was also well connected, particularly with the wealthy and influential Davies family of Llandinam.

In 1915, following a Damascene experience and a period of mental ill-health, he resigned his paid employment and by year's end was the poorly paid secretary of the newly founded Fellowship of Reconciliation (FoR), and thus began a firm linkage with the Religious Society of Friends. With the introduction of conscription in 1916 he sought exemption and went to work on the land in North Wales, but continued to speak out for peace, as a result of which he was imprisoned. The chapter on his experiences in prison is an important contribution to our understanding of how conscientious objectors were treated (pp. 106–35). Released in 1919, he continued his work on reconciliation, and Chapter 9 outlines his role, and that of the FoR, in seeking to promote peace and better understanding between Irish nationalists and the British government in what was to be a convoluted and often unsuccessful process. In December 1923, he was elected to parliament for the then University of Wales seat, as a Christian Pacifist, winning with a majority of ten, which he subsequently lost in the October 1924 election. But he was never a politician, more a gentle polemicist who wrote extensively. Early in 1926, he was ordained a minister in the Presbyterian Church of Wales, from which he had resigned in 1919, although the book does not touch on this nor as to how he regained membership in his grandfather's old denomination. His time as minister in Tywyn, Merionethshire was never happy and by 1931 he had resigned, becoming more heavily involved in relief work in the South Wales mining districts, working alongside many Quakers and others. In 1946, he retired to Dolwyddelan in North Wales. Plagued by severe bouts of mental ill-health throughout his life, he tragically committed suicide in December 1949 at the specialist hospital where he was being treated.

This book complements a fine two-volume biography published in 1967 and 1968, written in Welsh, by the Rev. E. H. Griffiths, and originally submitted as the winning script to a competition at the Swansea National Eisteddfod in 1964, which the author of this book strangely dismisses as being written, 'with a Welsh chapel readership in mind' (p. 39). This new volume has, however, been able to rely on fresh material not available to Griffiths and he was able to consult with Davies' widow. The analysis in this book is also more modern, highlighting,

for example, questions concerning Davies' sexuality, his relationship to and the influence of his mother, the state of his marriage and his capacities as a father.

This is not the place to highlight factual errors in the book, some of which should have been avoided: they are not perhaps so vital, and do not diminish its principal thrust and thesis. As elsewhere, the role of individual Quakers in the South Wales valleys during the Great Depression is confused with the official actions of London Yearly Meeting; the settlement at Maes yr Haf, Trealaw was never an official Quaker concern, even if heavily supported by Quakers, and, similarly, the oft-quoted experiments at Brynmawr. There seems also to be a lack of appreciation for the role of Friends and Woodbrooke in Davies' life and the contribution of Quakers to work in South Wales. Moreover, no reference is made to Davies' biography of a man he described as his 'constant friend', the Quaker, Joseph Rowntree Gillett, who was a prime mover with Davies in the establishment of the FoR and worked alongside him in South Wales.

Davies was an icon for many people, a saint, but he was by no means unique, and this book might in some respects be seen to touch on hagiography, but his absolutism during the First World War was not unique in Wales, and some of his reconciliation efforts not perhaps as successful as he might have hoped. He was primarily an individualist who connected with people. He left a 'fragrance' in his wake, but he lacked the charisma to establish a movement.

The book is engagingly written and a valuable addition to our broader understanding of Welsh life especially for those researching the First World War and the dilemmas of the Great Depression in Wales. Many, perhaps for the first time, will also have an opportunity to meet a man of great physical presence who sought solutions through friendship and force of personality.

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David Boulton, *Objection Overruled: Conscription and Conscience in the First World War* (first published by MacGibbon & Kee Ltd., 1967; new edition, Dent: Dales Historical Monographs, in association with Friends Historical Society, 2014), pp. xl + 319. ISBN: 978-0-9511578-7-9. Paperback, £12.

For all historians of this last, most violent, century some concern with matters of war and peace has been unavoidable.¹ However, a cursory glance at the shelves of any bookshop, whether on the High Street, the Imperial War Museum or the National Archive, and a flick through the pages of the Pen and Sword catalogue

1 Elements of this review first appeared in a much lengthier review of the literature of Britain's 1914–18 anti-war movement published online by the Institute of Historical Research under the title *Writing about Britain's 1914–18 War Resisters* (number 1779) and again, with some revisions, in *The Spokesman* in May 2015 as *Britain's 1914–18 War Resisters*.

would leave the very strong impression that most writers' concerns, and their readers' too, have been about war rather than peace.

Yet the antithesis of all this has not gone unexplored. Indeed, for a minority, frequently ignored or banished to the margin and dismissed as 'cranks', the men and women who made up Britain's 1914–18 anti-war movement, have not wanted for historians.

The work of John W. Graham (1859–1932) established the narrative which has informed much of what has followed. A prominent member of the Religious Society of Friends, Principal of Dalton Hall, Manchester University, a writer on Quaker Theology and a very public peace advocate and supporter of Conscientious Objectors (COs) during the First World War, his *Conscription and Conscience: A History, 1916–1919* (first published in 1922 by George Allen & Unwin, reprinted in facsimile by Augustus Kelly in 1969 and more recently by Forgotten Books in 2012) was dedicated to the young men who refused to fight and to the organisations that supported them. It was, arguably, the first authoritative account of the history of Britain's 1914–18 anti-war movement, its organisation, its leading figures and the stories of the Conscientious Objectors.

For almost fifty years, Graham's work was the starting point for all subsequent writing about Britain's 1914–18 war resisters. However, in 1967, during the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the First World War, a combination of Dick Clements, then editor of the socialist weekly *Tribune*, Michael Foot and publishers MacGibbon & Kee, persuaded David Boulton to write a new history of these war resisters. While drawing on what had gone before, Boulton brought new material to bear on the familiar story. An appeal by Bertrand Russell and Fenner Brockway, both veteran 1914–18 anti-war activists, encouraged many COs and their families to come forward and offer their own contributions to a new version of their story. At the time the use of such personal testimony and reminiscence was innovative. However, the result, *Objection Overruled: Conscription and Conscience in the First World War* (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1967), vindicated the methodology and contributed significantly to the emergence of what became known as Oral History. Well written, passionate and with the addition of those personal perspectives, alongside Graham's work, it became one of the twin pillars supporting the history of Britain's 1914–18 war resisters.

As the centenary of the First World War approached and, as in 1967, the prospect that the voices of those who opposed the war would not be heard, Boulton was persuaded to revisit *Objection Overruled*. In 2014, in partnership with the Friends Historical Society, Dales Historical Monographs published a revised and updated edition of the 1967 classic. Such things are not always successful, but in this case the revisions and additional features vindicate the work. The original text remains at the core of the book. It establishes the British anti-war movement in its political and religious context. In particular, it explores the roles of both the Religious Society of Friends and the many fragments of British anti-war socialism. His account of the stand taken by the young men, Conscientious Objectors, who

refused to fight, is detailed and exhaustive. The British authorities, both military and civil, do not escape his principled and critical scrutiny.

In the 2014 edition, that original 1967 text is sandwiched between two new features. At the beginning, after a Foreword from David Rubinstein, 2014 President of the Friends Historical Society, there is a valuable review of the literature on Britain's war resisters which has appeared since 1967. In this, among much else, Boulton takes the opportunity to confound his earliest critic, John Rae.² Rae's apologia for government policy and army practice, and scepticism about Boulton's claims of army brutality towards COs, in particular the practice of 'crucifixion', is thoroughly refuted. At the same time, Boulton acknowledges the emergence of new approaches to the study with the ending of 'closure orders' on wartime documents and their rapid digitisation and the growth of online access. New insights into the contribution made by women to the anti-war cause are acknowledged, as is the emergence of Family History and Local Studies. He also compensates for an oversight in the 1967 edition by giving due concern to the contribution of the less-well-known Christian denominations—the International Bible Students, now known as Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists, Plymouth Brethren and Christadelphians.

The final piece of the sandwich, the last fifteen pages, headed 'Appendix 2014: Conspiracy or Cock-up?', deals with the dramatic story of the 35 COs sent to France in May and June 1916 and sentenced to death for disobedience—sentences immediately commuted to ten years' penal servitude. Did the army really intend to make examples of these men? Was it another and most extreme manifestation of the brutality of the military mindset trying to drive government policy towards a more severe handling of opposition, or was it all confusion and bungling? Boulton's judgement that it was probably both is dispassionate and probably right. He also argues that, whatever the real explanation, for both government and the military, the unintended outcome was most unwelcome.

The conspiracy failed, and the cock-up ensured that the 35 young men who heard the death sentence... would be recognised, even a hundred years later, as emblematic icons of those who maintained their conscientious objection to war, whatever the consequences to themselves and their families. (p. xxxvi)

Of all the massive outpouring of writing to mark the centenary of the 1914–18 War, this work is probably the most necessary. It points the way, as did its 1967 edition, to a necessary counterweight to those prevailing preoccupations with the bloody business of war. It reminds us that not everyone supported the war and conscription, and that those who were prepared to make a stand on grounds of conscience showed a different but nonetheless remarkable sort of bravery.

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2 Rae J., *Conscience and Politics: the British government and the conscientious objector to military service, 1916–1919* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970).

Cyril Pearce, *Comrades in Conscience: The Story of an English Community's Opposition to the Great War* (London: Francis Boutle, 2014), pp. 303. ISBN: 978-1-903427-82-8. Paperback, £15.

The conscientious objector of the First World War was once thought of, if at all, as a marginal figure. When the BBC produced its landmark 1960s documentary *The Great War*, little mention was made of those who resisted. Since then, aside from scattered but important historical attention, the story of those who had said no has been sustained by their descendants. Until, that is, the publication of Cyril Pearce's landmark local study in 2001, which has been updated and reissued as part of the centenary commemorations. Set in Huddersfield, a textile town that did very well out of the conflict, not least because it stepped into the gap in the market left by the loss of German dyes, *Comrades in Conscience* reorients our understanding of conscientious objection. Far from being marginal figures, these men were often politically active with links to the Labour Party, radical Liberalism, working-class education circles, Quakerism, the New Theology and the winds of political and social change sweeping across industrial Britain.

The book comprises three broad sections detailing the months leading up to the outbreak of war, the period prior to the introduction of the Military Service Act in 1916 and finally the period thereafter, when the British state turned its strength onto war resisters. Replete with personal testimony, Pearce's sensitive narrative considers the human cost of standing up for one's beliefs. Huddersfield largely escaped the violence and intimidation that occurred elsewhere, such as the police raids that took place regularly in Glamorgan, suggesting that the town was more tolerant of dissent than elsewhere (p. 177). Although nowhere was without its jingoistic elements, here 'they seldom had their own way for long' (p. 176). This makes for a fascinating case study.

Of the 117 men that Pearce identifies as conscientious objectors, 45 were active in the labour movement, 44 came from religious contexts, chiefly nonconformist, with around 30 afforded that status for other reasons. Thirteen belonged to the Religious Society of Friends, the third largest grouping in the town after active socialists and Christadelphians. Most were granted non-military exemptions and worked for humanitarian organisations such as the Friends' Ambulance Unit or the Friends' War Victims' Relief Committee. Quakers also took an active role in the town's No-Conscription Council. But, as Pearce pointed out in his article for *Quaker Studies* in 2002, these were not radicals, their objection was to fighting not to the purpose of the war. This is a useful nuance. As historians of pacifism, and of Quaker involvement in political radicalism, it is sometimes tempting to merge the two, however motivations were much more complicated – faith, as well as, and often more than, fervour.

Comrades in Conscience is, in this way, two books for the price of one; for as well as being a discrete analysis of conscientious objection and its reasons in the West Yorkshire textile district, it is an effective study of the rise of Labour in

that region. Pearce reminds us that the rise of Labour was a consequence not merely of political and trade union activity, although the establishment of the Independent Labour Party in Bradford in 1893 certainly hints at the importance of the new politics to the area, but of a constellation of related activities, religious and secular. Socialist Sunday Schools, the Labour Church, socialist clubs, Clarion clubs, cycling groups, brass bands, co-operative societies, newspapers, working-class education circles, ethical societies, the Quaker Socialist Society and the New Theology all contributed to the emergence of radical alternatives to the status quo. Conscientious objectors were often steeped in this process of reasoning otherwise, as the military service tribunal testimony cited serves to illustrate.

This does mean that certain facets of Huddersfield's war service are neglected—which do help to nuance our understanding of what was going on in this 'hotbed of pacifism'. Not the least of which is the role played by the town's technical college (the forerunner of today's university). By the end of the 1914–15 academic year, over two hundred students and half a dozen staff had volunteered for service in the army; by the following year, that had risen to over three hundred students and nearly twenty staff. The college was also an active participant in the town's chemical dye industry, expanding its chemistry department significantly to enable the town's factories to dominate production in Britain during the war. The expansion even encouraged the college authorities to seek university status in the early 1920s, albeit unsuccessfully. There is no doubting that Huddersfield's changing political environment did result in a significant number of conscientious objectors, and those who were ambivalent about the conflict itself, but there is surely more to be said of the town's war record before we conclude, definitively, that this was 'a community largely unenthusiastic about the war'.

Comrades in Conscience is, setting such caveats aside momentarily, a remarkable book that has contributed enormously to our understanding of the complexities of the First World War and the politics of the period. There can be no doubt, in Huddersfield and elsewhere, that conscientious objection during the First World War was a significant episode in the emergence of the Labour Party as a national force after 1918. Indeed, it is often said that Labour owed more to Methodism than to Marx, but—as this book implies—it also owed something to Military Service Tribunals and the anti-war voices they gave a platform to. This handsome new edition, which serves the photographic materials especially well, is therefore a welcome renewal affording another opportunity to consider and debate the Pearce thesis. It remains a shining example of what history from below can achieve and there can be no finer compliment paid by the wider historical community than to replicate the model in other contexts to appreciate fully the strength of faith required to say no to war.

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Mark Derby, *Petals and Bullets: Dorothy Morris New Zealand Nurse in the Spanish Civil War* (Brighton: Cañada Blanch Centre for Contemporary Spanish Studies/Sussex Academic Press, 2015), pp. xvii + 194. ISBN 9781845196844. Paperback, £19.95. Susan Pares, *Displaced by War: Gertrude Powicke and Quaker Relief in France and Poland, 1915—1919* (London: Francis Boutle Publishers, 2015), pp. 264. ISBN 9781903427927. Paperback, £14.99.

For four years, Gertrude Powicke worked for the Friends' War Victims' Relief Committee (FWVRC) in and about the small French town of Bar-le-Duc. She was part of an effort to bring succour and hope to the population living in the pocket of land that had been caught between the lines of German advance and retreat in the first six weeks of the First World War, and which existed subsequently in the French military zone just behind the front. A resourceful, capable woman, her days were spent organising relief for refugees who had settled in the town from the German occupied lands further north. In *Displaced by War*, Susan Pares, Gertrude's great-niece, uses Gertrude's letters and diaries to reconstruct this work, including a brief mission to post-war Poland, where she contracted and died of typhus in 1920. In Bar-le-Duc, Gertrude spent much of her time overseeing the *ouvroir*, the Quaker-run workroom designed to provide occupation for the women refugees and produce garments for use and sale. Diligently, she tended its administration, managed the accounts, purchased supplies and supervised the cutting-out of clothing. It is with similar meticulousness and eye for detail, that Pares documents in minute and contemplative fashion Gertrude's surroundings, her relationships with colleagues, and her sheer hard work, and it is over this small canvas that the reader pores to learn more about the quotidian struggles of a relief worker in the midst of dreary domestic chaos. In contrast to Gertrude's restricted movements, hedged in by both military and civilian administrations, New Zealand nurse Dorothy Morris' experiences of a moving front and a civilian population in flight during the Spanish Civil War (1936–39) are vigorously recounted by Mark Derby in *Petals and Bullets* as a series of gruelling expeditions and constant improvisation. Here, through letters to her family, we learn of the challenges of working for the George Young Ambulance Unit in advanced positions behind the front, and of caring for refugee populations in temporary hospitals and camps, including the supervision of the Quaker-funded children's hospital in Murcia. Later, she worked with evacuated children in Britain during the Second World War, and as a relief worker for the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration in Egypt and Germany.

In both books we encounter middle-class women for whom relief work in war provided independence and opportunities unheard of only half a century before. Both women seemed to have seized these openings and revelled in these freedoms, and this surely was a large appeal of such work. Perhaps nothing symbolises this freedom more than a photograph of Gertrude's beloved 'Huppy' (her 1914 Model 32 Touring Hupmobile), which she drove unchaperoned behind the French lines

(p. 84). In their letters, they are forthright and unapologetic about the rewards of such practical, gritty work, and exude none of the meekness of the 'ministering angel'. By this time, relief work had assumed a semi-professional status and women such as Gertrude and Dorothy could no longer be classed as unconventional. They had both taken advantage of openings for women in higher education and the professions, Gertrude as one of the first female graduates of Manchester University and teacher at Manchester High School for Girls, Dorothy as a product of newly professionalised nursing training in New Zealand. In Spain, Dorothy was able to observe significant innovations in emergency wartime medicine in which the wounded underwent surgery as close to the front as possible (rather than being evacuated to base hospitals as in the First World War). Although neither Gertrude nor Dorothy were Quakers, they seem to have felt an affinity with Quaker beliefs and methods, and to have made friends among the band of prominent Quaker women active at this time, such as Edith Pye and Francesca Wilson. Quakers' early initiatives in nineteenth-century war had by now developed into a set of relief conventions, which influenced not only the approach of the FWVRC but also many of a new generation of international relief agencies, such as the Save the Children Fund. It is noticeable how much attention both Gertrude and Dorothy paid to the mental well-being of refugees, and their emphasis on the importance of productive activity and handiwork had a long tradition in Quaker social work. Tasked with looking after Republican families who had fled across the border to France after Franco's victory, Dorothy described collecting carpentry equipment, needles and thread as well as being 'extremely busy procuring all kinds of text-books etc... their minds must, we feel, be occupied' (p. 104).

Read together, these accounts provide a powerful sidelight on the fate of civilians in twentieth-century war and illuminate continuities and changes in humanitarian response. Gertrude, in Bar-le-Duc, a garrison town not far from Verdun, recorded the 'swish' and 'roar' of the early days of air warfare as the Germans conducted bombing raids over the town using Zeppelins and Taube and Gotha aeroplanes (p. 115). The town's residents at first treated such sorties as 'air shows' (p. 115). Several were killed. Gradually, civilians and relief workers learned to take cover in purpose-built concrete bomb shelters and in cellars. By the Spanish Civil War, aerial warfare had developed in intensity and strategic import. Dorothy recorded the devastating consequences for civilians deliberately targeted in bombing raids. By the light of the moon, 'good bombing light', she noted, 'a Fascist aeroplane flew over. They usually come swooping down with guns firing at cars, especially ambulances' (p. 49). The question of how best to protect children had become a major preoccupation. After the First World War, in which women, including relief workers, were active participants, the child had emerged as the only true innocent capable of appealing to universal sympathy, and as a locus of hope for the future. This was also an era of advances in paediatrics and greater knowledge of child nutrition, such that Dorothy was able to record a high success rate in treating typhoid cases and the emaciated 'starvelings' in

her care (p. 199). Separation of children in specialist hospitals, of the sort run by Dorothy in Murcia, and in schemes for evacuation, were proposed for both medical and political reasons (Spanish refugee children were sent to rural colonies in farmhouses close to their families, and later to distant safe areas or countries), something that did not feature in Gertrude's experiences in the First World War, where families were treated as an entity and where the ability of refugee women to maintain their households was prioritised. From observations made in the Spanish Civil War, child welfare professionals increasingly understood that children were especially vulnerable to developmental disturbances in times of conflict and to the trauma of aerial bombardment. But children also felt distress when separated from parents for long periods. Gradually, and by no means uniformly, awareness of complex psychological need was coming, by mid century, to inform approaches to aiding children in war, including those separated intentionally or otherwise from their families. Glimpsed in these books, we see an emergent body of humanitarian expertise in the physical and emotional requirements of bombed and refugee populations, ranging from occupational therapy of the sort practised in Gertrude's workroom, to infection control and specialist child nursing.

These books are both well-written, and Derby is a skilled stylist. The richness of the picture of wartime life that emerges provides a trove of detail on the bureaucracy and invention that comprised the life of a relief worker in modern war. These books ought not to be read for engagement with the historiography of humanitarian relief, for this the reader might turn to others in the Cañada Blanch/Sussex Academic Press stable, such as the trilogy on Spanish relief written by Linda Palfreeman.¹ Rather, these are documentary histories, staying close to the source material of diaries and letters, and their value rests in their contribution to the social history of relief work. Nevertheless, in exposing some of these two women's aspirations, they demonstrate Palfreeman's conclusions on the need to be attentive to the spectrum of relief workers' motivations and of the dangers of too arbitrary a separation of humanitarianism from politics. Gertrude and Dorothy's accounts show the contingencies of daily practice—Gertrude and her Quaker colleagues felt drawn to provide a canteen for soldiers, which was not quite according to FWVRC custom—and demonstrate that the Red Cross model of neutrality was one only of a range of humanitarian positions. Dorothy's aid work, for example, was an act of political solidarity with the Republican cause, and she was contemptuous of the British government's policy of non-intervention for upholding an unjust status quo. Had she been aware of it, she may well have

1 Palfreeman, L., *Salud!: British Volunteers in the Republican Medical Service During the Spanish Civil War*, Eastbourne: Cañada Blanch Centre for Contemporary Spanish Studies/Sussex Academic Press, 2012; Palfreeman, L., *Aristocrats, Adventurers and Ambulances: British Medical Units in the Spanish Civil War*, Eastbourne: Cañada Blanch Centre for Contemporary Spanish Studies/Sussex Academic Press, 2014; Palfreeman, L., *Spain Bleeds: The Development of Battlefield Blood Transfusion During the Civil War*, Eastbourne: Cañada Blanch Centre for Contemporary Spanish Studies/Sussex Academic Press, 2015.

castigated the impartiality of the British Red Cross Society, which made a grant to the medical services of each side of the conflict but declined to intervene. These books can also be read for the light they shed on the growing specialisation of relief work in war, and for an insight into women's adoption of such new professional roles, fashioned both in word and deed.

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Jeffrey Dudiak (ed.), *Befriending Truth: Quaker Perspectives*. Quakers and the Disciplines series, volume 2 (Longmeadow, MA; Friends Association for Higher Education, 2015), pp. xxii + 222. ISBN 099-6003363. Paperback, \$19.95.

This is the second in the Friends Association for Higher Education series, designed to present Quaker perspectives on subjects relevant to the academic disciplines. The target audience is thus both Quakers within higher education and a wider constituency within the relevant academic discipline. In this particular volume, the focus discipline is philosophy—but, rather than discussing Quakers and philosophy in general, the editor has wisely chosen to concentrate on a single issue that is both of pressing concern for contemporary thought and of central importance to Quakerism. Indeed, as John Punshon suggests, 'One could make a good case for saying that "truth" is the central interpretive idea in the Quaker tradition' (p. 36). The challenge, however, as Jeff Dudiak notes in his own essay, is that although truth is central to Quaker thought, it is 'anything but a philosophically qualified term' (p. 56). The authors, then, face the challenge of speaking about Quaker truth in a way that is both true (as it were) to Quakerism and relevant to wider debates.

Through a very diverse collection of twelve essays with disparate foci—coming, as Dudiak explains in his introduction, from different 'Quaker perspectives'—a picture does in fact emerge of how this central interpretive idea from Quaker tradition might inform current debates. Taken together, the essays present a cumulative Quaker case for not 'giving up on truth' (as Richard Miller puts it)—but also a cumulative response to the challenges of postmodernity. Emphases on the relational and personal character of truth (as in Laura Rediehs' essay), on truth as 'useable' and liveable (Corey Beales), on humility and openness to question (for example, in Stephen Angell's discussion of the so-called 'peace testimony') are all shown to be deeply rooted in Quaker tradition and also capable of resourcing current conversations. Doug Gwyn's essay, in particular, presents a very creative and plausible 'mapping' of how Quaker approaches to truth in practice draw together correspondence, coherence, pragmatic and operational accounts of truth—in a way that invites wider application and discussion beyond Quakerism. In complementary fashion, and pointing back to the title of this book series, Paul Anderson invites academic readers, particularly Quakers in higher education,

to reflect on their own practices of truth-seeking as spiritual and not merely academic ‘discipline’.

There are several fascinating and understated threads of debate running through the book. One of the most important concerns Quakers’ relationship to tradition, as it bears on the question of truth. Although the book is divided into historical and contemporary sections, in practice almost all the contributors seek their ‘Quaker perspectives on truth’ in Quaker tradition. Several essays call—explicitly or implicitly—for Quakers to ‘reclaim’ an earlier vision, taken to exemplify a more robust and prophetic commitment to truth (Gwyn, p.161—and see also the essays by Gerard Guiton and John Punshon). Pink Dandelion, in a characteristically bold portrayal of changes in Quaker theology across the centuries, argues that while an ‘attitude to truth’ is central to contemporary Quaker identity it is an attitude ‘wholly opposite’ to early Quakers’ claims (p. 104). Other essays, such as those by Angell and C. Wess Daniels, engage directly with the dynamic movement, in Quaker readings and appropriations of tradition, between historical givens and ‘usable’ contemporary claims. Daniels develops the extended metaphor of a ‘remix’, to give an account both of Quaker origins—as a reparative ‘remix’ of a shattered Christendom—and of the potential for contemporary Quaker renewal.

At times I felt that the book reflected an uneasy tension, rather than a fully successful ‘bridging’ operation, between pieces clearly about and for Quakers—such as Gwyn’s, which contains numerous specific suggestions for the reform and renewal of Quakerism—and pieces about truth directed mainly at a wider philosophical audience—such as Miller’s, which contains very little discussion of Quakerism specifically, although it is clearly shaped by Quaker perspectives. Rediehs’ essay on truth and non-violence is to my mind one of the most successful ‘bridging’ pieces in the book, establishing a dialogue between Gandhian and Quaker philosophy and practice that makes the case for the wider relevance of the latter—demonstrating in detail how it can challenge contemporary philosophy by drawing attention to specific relational, practical and embodied implications of claims about truth.

The discussion questions at the end of each essay, supplied by Dudiak, are a really valuable addition; they are invariably pertinent, searching and clear, and would make the individual essays much more accessible to student groups. It might have been possible to use these questions—or even an editor’s afterword—to draw out more of the points of connection and contrast between the essays, and hence to make the collection more than the sum of its parts. In any case, though, this is a welcome collection that should be of particular interest to Quakers trying to navigate the bewildering landscape of truth in what has been called a ‘post-truth’ era.

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