

Editorial

Welcome to our 25th volume year. Last year in June, the Quaker Studies Research Association (QSRA) and the Centre for Research in Quaker Studies (CRQS) hosted an anniversary conference to mark the 25th QSRA conference and 20 years of CRQS. Now we have our own quarter-century anniversary, and, fittingly, this issue contains a fine selection of scholarship across disciplines and periods symbolising well the original aim of the journal to cover all aspects of the study of Quakerism.

Erica Canela's article on Humphrey Smith also focusses on a lesser known Quaker, using Smith and his written work as a lens on the Quakerism on the 1650s and the way it chose to present itself within and outwith the movement. When his son published his complete works in 1683, twenty years after Smith's death in prison aged 39, even the manner of his death is presented in idealised Quaker terms. Smith was a prolific writer and ardent missionary and it is wonderful to have such a complete account of his life and work.

Stuart Masters explores the Christology of early Quaker leader, James Nayler. Much has been written about Nayler, his fateful entry into Bristol in October 1656 that nearly cost him his life, his subsequent imprisonment, and his admission to other Quakers that he may have followed his own inspiration rather than being led by God in his actions, but less attention has been focussed on his theology. Here Masters outlines in systematic detail the work of Christ and the ten roles of Christ in Nayler's thought. He explores how these fit with reformed Protestantism and wryly notes that 'It is ironic that, given its roots within a Reformed Puritan context, early Quaker soteriology, at times, looks more like an internalised and spiritualised form of Catholicism than an expression of mainstream Protestantism.' It is the Quaker understanding of the covenant in mystical and spiritual terms, Masters argues, that most separates Quakers from mainstream Protestants.

Ann-Marie Akehurst explores the architecture of the Quaker mental asylum, 'The Retreat', founded in 1792, in terms of both its place in the history of medicine and its medicinal ideology as well as its relation to Quaker aesthetic,

or plain style, of the eighteenth century. She considers the nature of the design in relation to other non-Quaker asylums but carefully argues that the stylistic intention at the Retreat was distinctive in that it attempted to create a place of worship, drawing on Quaker culture, within the setting of a private home. It is a fascinating article.

Christy Randazzo explores Liberal Quaker Christologies through an analysis of Swarthmore Lectures in two ways, chronologically offering insights into the development of Liberal Quaker thinking and thematically to offer a framework in particular for considering the relationship between Christology and Pneumatology. Randazzo argues that there is an inconsistency and ambiguity in the Christologies that reflects its apophatic nature and accommodates Liberal Quaker diversity. As with the other articles in this issue, Randazzo's scholarship breaks new ground in its subject matter and scope.

The final article in this issue is by Steven Baumann and focusses on Quaker responses to the Bengal Famine in 1942–46. Baumann explores the work by the Friends' Ambulance Unit and the American Friends' Service Committee as a good example of transnational co-operation between relief agencies and also of how relief agencies could work alongside governmental efforts. It is part of a growth of interest in twentieth-century Quaker relief work and adds a highly useful addition to that area of scholarship.

The volume ends with a series of book reviews, for which, as ever, I am grateful to Rebecca Wynter for commissioning and curating.

I wish you well in all your scholarly endeavours.

'Ben' Pink Dandelion
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