Meredith Baldwin Weddle, *Walking in the Way of Peace: Quaker Pacifism in the Seventeenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. xvi + 348. £45. ISBN 0-19-513138-X.

The reader who is looking for a comprehensive and systematic account of Quaker pacifism in the (second half of the) seventeenth century may be disappointed since, despite the subtitle, s/he will not find that here. What this stimulating book does provide is a case study of Quaker pacifism located in Rhode Island and its environs during King Philip's War of 1675–76. The topic is discussed on an extensive background; in these preliminary chapters Meredith Weddle deals with various aspects of the emergent Quaker peace testimony from the early 1650s on and, in particular, its working out in New England before the outbreak of King Philip's War. The final pages of the book sum up the results of the author's research with some historiographical comments in an appendix. At the end Weddle also prints the full texts of three basic documents in her story: the English Quakers' declaration of 1660–1661 'against all plotters and fighters in this world', which became 'the normative expression of the peace testimony' (p. 7), and two Rhode Island documents of 1673 and 1675 respectively.

The book originated in a Yale University PhD dissertation (1993). Its structure, with most of the original chapter headings, remains the same but the text has been revised in many places. The work is based on a formidable documentation; her research equipment is indeed impressive. The listing of unpublished primary sources from a variety of locations on both sides of the Atlantic covers nine pages of the book's bibliography while published primary sources occupy over eleven more pages. As one would expect, Weddle in addition has consulted virtually all the relevant secondary materials, including some recondite local history monographs and articles. She has also included a number of interesting illustrations—seventeenth-century manuscripts, woodcuts and maps—which help to enliven the text.

The main impression left by Weddle's research is the complexity of early Friends' attitude to war; and she chides some previous writers for failing to realize this. Throughout the seventeenth century from Quakerism's emergence in the early 1650s and on into the next

century, she detects on the part of Friends a 'continuum' of attitudes towards violence ranging from its unabashed approval—in a good cause—through various middle positions to unconditional rejection of war and even the magistrate's sword. The Quaker peace testimony was forged in an atmosphere of creative tension which continued for many decades. Of those people now 'in scorn called Quakers', she writes, 'their style was provocative, their language on fire with military images, their method confrontational. Yet crucial substantive elements of their religious belief were in tension with this style, for from the earliest days *many* Quakers renounced violence as incompatible with the Kingdom of God' (p. 3). The key word in this passage is 'many'.

For here Weddle takes issue with the revisionist school, represented by historians like W. Alan Cole, Christopher Hill and Barry Reay, who have denied the existence of Quaker pacifism before 1660—except possibly among a few scattered and unrepresentative individuals. For this school the official adoption of pacifism in 1660–1661 was motivated primarily by political considerations. Though clothed in religious language, it was a 'post-revolutionary' pacifism (to use the term employed by the sociologist, David A. Martin) that now emerged for the first time as a collective Quaker position. Pacifism, Cole has argued, was forced on Friends at this juncture 'by the hostility of the outside world'. Weddle concedes in generous terms the importance of the fresh insights and 'groundbreaking' research of the revisionists as well as the correctness of their critique of some—though by no means all—earlier writers who regarded pacifism as 'an integral aspect' of Quaker practice throughout the 1650s. But she boldly challenges what she calls the 'new orthodoxy' (p. 245), which has consistently minimized Quaker pacifism before 1660.

She points out, for instance, that naval gunner Thomas Lurting's story around 1654 ('How if I had killed a man') 'does not fit within the parameters of pacifism as a self-defensive, strategic choice... Lurting's case also demonstrates the insufficiency of the political explanation for [Quaker] pacifism; it is too narrow to encompass Quaker heterogeneity' (pp. 62-63). Perhaps the most convincing evidence Weddle cites in support of her view is drawn from New World records of the late 1650s, which show that many—though not all—Quakers in New England and in Maryland refused on grounds of conscience to serve in the militia. Some of these militia objectors had recently emigrated from England, thus implying that pacifism already existed fairly extensively among Friends in the home country (pp. 92-96, 272). Moreover, in the American colonies Quakers, while becoming increasingly pacifist, did not either withdraw from government or become politically quietist during the years ahead. 'The colonial experience', she concludes, 'does not fit the analysis of the new orthodoxy. The political interpretation, however valid in England, does not explain the behavior and beliefs of Quakers in America. Thus the American experience serves to cast doubt on the validity of the explanation even in England itself' (p. 253). I may note that Rosemary Moore in her recent monograph, *The Light in Their Consciences: Early Quakers in Britain 1646–1666* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), pp. 12, 123, 124 has also drawn attention to the pacifist utterances in the mid-1650s of such leading Friends as William Dewsbury and the Leveller turned Quaker, John Lilburne. And Weddle accepts George Fox's basic pacifism throughout that decade.

Moving on to the post-Restoration period, Weddle continues her challenge to the new orthodoxy—and to some traditional interpretations as well. A large part of her book is devoted to proving that the Quaker attitude to war and violence remained pluralistic for many decades

after the pacifist declarations of 1660–1661 as it had been before that date. In fact, the new scholarship, which had minimized Quaker pacifism before 1660, was, she argues, now 'in danger of ... taking [it] for granted thereafter' (p. 246). But, instead, a wide spectrum continued to exist in the Quaker community with regard to these issues down to the present.

In elucidating the character of the Quaker peace testimony as it evolved during the last four decades of the seventeenth century Weddle has made an important and original contribution to Quaker history. (I wish I had had at hand the results of her archival researches when I was writing my survey of the Society's pre-1914 peace testimony!) 'To insist that in order to be deemed pacifists', she warns, 'these early Quakers had to conform to modern ideas of pacifism is to impose an entirely different set of assumptions on the past and to dishonor and misunderstand the foundations of other beliefs' (p. 252). A similar danger, I may interpose, exists with regard to the early Christian Church's attitude to war, which has sometimes led modern scholars to misunderstand the precise nature of their stance.

Early Quaker pacifism, Weddle argues, was essentially a personal pacifism which sought to guard the purity of the individual soul in its obedience to God. Jesus had commanded love of enemies and rejected use of the sword on the part of his followers. True, there were some eminent exponents of Quakerism, like Robert Barclay and William Penn, who already recognized humanitarian reasons for refusing to handle 'carnal' weapons. But, she maintains, at that date they were exceptional.

For early Quakers, pacifism was vocational. Their duty was to obey, and God ordained love for enemies. Quakers did not muse about *why* God thought killing was sinful. Obedience for its own sake was enough; revelation was its own reason... The dominant strain of early Quaker pacifism was that of individual renunciation, negative in character, essentially turned inward toward one's own soul. Quakers concentrated on removing 'the occasion' of wars and fighting from their own hearts... Gradually the circle of duty expanded, with an increased focus on the potential victims of violence and on the consequences of violence on the bodies of others... Accompanying this awareness was a heightened conscientiousness about not abetting other people's violence, a reluctance to act even on the periphery of violence. Finally, pacifism became predominantly more actively assertive... Quakers began to encourage all people to renounce war (pp. 226, 229, 230).

Weddle provides some interesting illustrations of this personal pacifism; in fact it forms the core of her analysis of the conduct of Rhode Island's Quaker magistracy during King Philip's War (see below). At home, the story of Henry Pitman the Quaker surgeon towards the end of the century is particularly illuminating (pp. 67-70). 'He did not himself wear a sword or carry weapons.' At the same time, however, he encouraged and aided his associates in defending themselves with such weapons as blunderbusses and cutlasses. 'Pitman,... absorbed in his own goodness, felt no responsibility for the goodness of others.' Weddle's explanation of this personal pacifism has indeed helped me to understand an incident that hitherto always puzzled me. In 1690 Quaker carpenters working in the naval shipyards at Chatham on the construction of men-of-war had refused to drill when, on alarm of a French invasion, the authorities ordered them to do so. They were subsequently dismissed 'without their wages... because they could not bear arms'. (Incidentally, this kind of narrowly personal pacifism is found in twentieth-century wars, among Christadelphians who, while rejecting service in the armed forces, have been ready to work in munitions factories, their pacifism being 'essentially turned inward toward one's own soul'.) In fact, most early Quaker pacifists

thought 'they might fulfill the scripture solely by refraining from personally using weapons to kill another' (p. 97).

I think Weddle is generally correct in her interpretation of what she designates as the 'vocational' pacifism of seventeenth-century Quakers. But still, I do not feel altogether at ease here. If this 'negative' variety of pacifism was indeed based on the divine command to love enemies, surely such love of enemies had to include a positive aspect embracing concern for the victims of war that matched concern for the individual soul? Weddle perhaps points towards an answer when she states that 'early Quakerism was an experiential religion' (p. 39) and that the peace testimony resulted from 'an ongoing inquiry into the implications of gospel principles of peace' (p. 36).

This testimony was in fact shaped by 'changing historical circumstance'. One must distinguish, too, between what early Quaker leaders declared about peace and violence and how individual Friends reacted in a given historical situation. It is here that we may observe most clearly both the variety of attitudes among those Quakers who were united at least in their belief that on grounds of conscience 'a killing instrument we may not bear', and the continued existence of some Friends who did not regard pacifism as a necessary aspect of the Friendly persuasion. Weddle has chosen to study this situation in depth by examining the response of the New England Quaker communities, and of the Quaker magistracy in the colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations in particular during King Philip's War and the years leading up to that 'terrible' conflict that left 9,000 dead and widespread damage to both New England towns and Indian settlements.

Weddle discusses perceptively in this context the early Quaker view of the magistracy. 'Like other seventeenth-century Christians', she writes, 'Quakers believed that God appointed and installed all public officials, ...however imperfect they might be, to further the righteousness of man and that God entrusted them with powers to accomplish their task' (pp. 25-26). As Paul proclaimed in Rom. 13.1-4: 'Every person must submit to the supreme authorities. There is no authority but by act of God, and the existing authorities are instituted by him... For government, a terror to crime, has no terrors for good behaviour...it is not for nothing that they hold the power of the sword, for they are God's agents of punishment' (NEB). Unfortunately Weddle fails to consider why, in view of this text, the non-resistant Bible-centred Mennonites, drawing inspiration from the Anabaptist Swiss Brethren's Schleitheim Confession of 1527, rejected participation in office for those, like themselves, 'within the perfection of Christ' while still respecting the magistracy as God appointed for those outside their faith, whereas pacifist Quakers, on the other hand, accepted office and themselves wielded the sword as 'a terror to crime'. I think the answer lies in the differing historical circumstances that produced these movements and accompanied their subsequent evolution. But it would have been interesting to have had her observations on the subject.

As Weddle points out, 'The implications of believing in the godly sponsorship of government were a source of complications for Quakers'. Where precisely does police action end and war begin? 'Does the maintenance of a defensive army fall within the definition of the police function of the state?' (p. 26). Questions such as these could easily be bypassed in Britain where Friends were excluded by law from government. But in Rhode Island during the Indian wars, and in the next century in Pennsylvania, they could not be ignored. During King Philip's War, since Quakers controlled the colony's administration, the problem became particularly acute. Weddle, therefore, has done a great service to historical scholarship

by her painstaking research into this rather obscure period in the Society's history and for her judicious and finely nuanced conclusions. She admits the meagreness of the archival records for the war period but she does not rush into unsubstantiated guesses, instead leaving a question mark where the evidence—or lack of it—seems to demand this.

Quakers in government did not constitute a new phenomenon in Rhode Island when they became its predominant element as a result of the elections of 1 May 1672. Quaker magistrates there, though as yet a minority in government, had already had to face various dilemmas in connection with Quaker peace principles. In 1667, for instance, Deputy Governor Nicholas Easton, a Quaker in good standing, had felt unable 'to consent as to command' the mounting of cannon while at the same time approving the raising of war taxes and other measures to place the colony on a war footing. But, Weddle points out, these were 'tasks presumably to be carried out by others' whereas Easton felt 'unable to be directly involved with those weapons whose only purpose was to kill people' (p. 116). While his mindset is not easy to unravel, his behaviour provides a striking example of Weddle's category of vocational (or personal) pacifism.

The colony's Quaker rulers, who were clearly aware of Quaker peace principles, left no record of the ways in which they squared these principles with their active participation in war preparations. As Weddle remarks (p. 121), little difference can be detected in principle between the way Rhode Island's Quaker magistrates now mobilized for war and that of the other New England colonial governments or of Rhode Island's non-Quaker rulers before or afterwards. But there was 'one remarkable exception', she continues:

> This exception was an extraordinary provision in Rhode Island's August 1673 acts: this assembly wrote into law measures exempting men from training or fighting for reasons of religious belief; such men were to suffer no penalty. While Quaker magistrates could apparently accommodate their duties as legislators with the pacifist demands of their faith, in the 1673 Exemption they used their power to accommodate those of their faith who could not comply with the very military activities the government itself mandated. Indeed, the Exemption itself was an essential element in the reconciliation between pacifism and magistracy. In a time of motion and danger from without, the [Quaker] Rhode Island government moved to protect liberty of conscience from the danger of its suppression within.

In the course of a careful examination of the 1673 Exemption, based on a reading of an original manuscript version, Weddle reveals that the General Assembly granted unconditional exemption to those unwilling to accept alternative civilian service, which was also an option. Thus the consciences of absolutist militia objectors could be accommodated: we know that unconditionalism *vis-à-vis* the draft became the official position of the Society of Friends on both sides of the Atlantic until the militia ultimately fell into disuse. 'This generous provision has been overlooked', writes Weddle, because the printed version, used hitherto by all scholars, omitted a brief—but crucial—phrase, 'leaving the impression that all of those excused from fighting must perform alternative service' (p. 125). 'The act in fact excused some from both military and alternative service' (p. 280 n. 9). To the best of my knowledge such generosity with regard to conscientious objection, modified temporarily, though, in June 1676 while Quakers were still in power, remained unmatched until Britain's Military Service Act of January 1916.

Another important discovery made by Weddle in the course of her analysis of the 1673

Exemption answers fairly conclusively, though the evidence in the act is indirect, the question whether Rhode Island's Quaker rulers, for all their support of war measures and military preparations, regarded themselves 'personally' as pacifists—or, better put, supporters of their Society's peace principles. 'When they acted as civil officers, as magistrates...they not only were able to prepare for war and to defend [the colony] with weapons but were positively obliged to so' (p. 177). For had not Paul shown Christ's followers that God had instituted the magistracy to be 'a terror to crime'? And were not Indians now rebels against constituted authority? (Weddle shows that most Quakers then shared this belief.) Indeed during his visit to Rhode Island in the summer of 1672 George Fox himself had approved enthusiastically of Quakers in office; by his silence on the subject he had indeed given his assent to their war measures, including the provision of 'powder, shot and ammunition'. (The third Anglo-Dutch war had broken out in March of that year.)

Weddle not only discusses the wartime stance of Rhode Island's Quaker magistrates; she also surveys the wartime behaviour of ordinary Quakers in that colony as well as in the other New England colonies: Massachusetts, Plymouth and Connecticut. And once again she comes up with some novel conclusions. When in chapter 13 she surveys Quaker non-combatants during King Philip's War, she finds them a mixed bag, ranging from the staunchly pacifist authors (or just possibly only approvers) of a Testimony directed against Friends supporting 'use of carnal weapons...and wars...either offensive or defensive' (printed on pp. 242-44) to unarmed folk ready to spend their nights in fortified garrison houses hopefully safe there from 'these bloody Indians' (the Quaker missionary, Alice Curwen's phrase). The number of Quakers refusing to train seems to have varied from place to place. For instance, Quaker COs were fairly numerous in Sandwich (Plymouth colony), whereas at Hampton (in present-day New Hampshire) and at Kittery (in present-day Maine) most Friends seemed to favour attendance at militia musters. The situation in each case may have depended on the views of leading Quakers in the area. 'Different meetings did show distinctly different levels of interest in peace issues, some clearly demanding more scrupulous behavior than others' (p. 305 n. 13).

Weddle has even uncovered an instance of a non-Quaker CO. We know of a few Baptist pacifists in Rhode Island in this period. But this Wright, a Providence man, was 'of no particular professed sect'. 'He was a man of...great knowledge in the Scriptures' and, at the same time, her sources tells us, 'one that derided watches, fortifications, and all public endeavours...for the common safety... He refused...to shelter himself in any garrison but presumed he should be safe in his house' (p. 203). However, one night the Indians killed him. Weddle indeed takes issue with a number of (mainly) Quaker writers from the seventeenth century to the present, who have stated that in wartime the Indians spared Quakers if they remained unarmed and did not attempt to leave their dwellings for a fortified place. 'The Quakers', Weddle concludes, 'were not immune from the violence around them', and she furnishes evidence in support of her thesis. 'Those Quakers', she comments, 'who were more strict with themselves and stayed clear of garrisons were more courageous or fatally foolish, depending on who was making the judgment' (p. 218). At this point she provides us with the intriguing possibility of a disagreement between Quaker Governor William Coddington and his wife, also of course a Quaker, who seems to have overborne her husband's hesitations to fortify their dwelling and insisted on having 'a pallisaded fortification' set around their house.

With respect to Quakers who served as soldiers during the Indian wars, Weddle is able to list a number of Friends who defied Quaker peace principles and did this. She has gone out of her way to establish that the person in question actually was a member of the Society: in view of the paucity of the records not always a simple task. She concludes that in this period 'the Quaker meetings [in New England] spoke with no collective voice about violence; the choices were still a private matter' (p. 212). Disownment for bearing arms had not yet been established; this came only in the next century (and, even then, non-pacifist Friends, like Penn's secretary, James Logan, might escape censure of any kind if they kept quiet and were never faced either with a summons to muster with the militia or with such problems as the arming of a vessel they owned). By the time of King Philip's War:

> The expectation of outsiders that Quakers did not bear arms suggests that the peace testimony in this limited sense was dominant among the Quakers. But more peripheral aspect of the testimony's implications were uncertain, to outsiders and to Quakers alike... Often, in a preference for purity later Quakers and other observers have defined out of the Society of Friends those early Quakers who chose paths inconsonant with later understandings of the peace witness (pp. 221-22).

Thus we are back again at the major theme of Weddle's book: the coexistence inside the Quaker meetings of the American colonies throughout the seventeenth century of diversity of thought and practice on the issue of violence and war. Many of the problems she raises remain unsolved while some of her arguments are without doubt controversial. But the author has indeed pushed forward the frontiers of knowledge in this area. Let me end my review with Weddle's own concluding words: 'the study is barely begun; our current understandings are as vulnerable to revision as the old, and new thoughts are eagerly anticipated' (p. 253).

Peter Brock
University of Toronto, Canada

David Sox, *Quakers and the Arts: 'Plain and Fancy': An Anglo-American Perspective* (York: Sessions, 2000), pp. viii + 127. Paperback £12.00. ISBN 1-85072-245-5.

The dispositions of Quakers toward the visual and performing arts are complex and changing. In a normative gesture, Solomon Eccles, a contemporary of Fox and a member of a distinguished musical family, renounced music and smashed his viols because it diverted him from divinity[1]. Time was when the only illustrations to be found in a Quaker home were a picture of William Penn's treaty with the Indians, an instructive diagram of a slave ship drawn by Thomas Clarkson and the plan of Ackworth school. The functions of the ethic of plainness, of the aversion to 'cumber', of the proper stewardship of time and of the vanity of sitting for portraits have occupied the authors of various secondary accounts of which one of the more scholarly is Elizabeth Isichei's *Victorian Quakers*.[2] Similarly, Frederick Nicholson[3] traces the constraint of a Quaker ethic upon the practice of those inclined to artistic expression and while

1. K.C. Barnes, *Integrity and the Arts* (York: Sessions, 1984), p. 8.
2. E. Isichei, *Victorian Quakers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970).
3. F.J. Nicholson, *Quakers and the Arts* (London: Quaker Home Service Committee, 1988).