

EDITORIAL

As usual, we have put together an issue which covers different centuries of the Quaker past and present and different disciplines. In this issue, we have two pieces on James Nayler, one historical, the other theological, historical articles on Anna Deborah Richardson and Bertram Pickard and a sociological paper on the phenomenon of Buddhist Quakers. The book reviews are similarly mixed.

David Neelon draws out a picture of the militaristic republican James Nayler. Working with the limited evidence available, Neelon constructs Nayler's military career prior to his joining the Children of the Light in the early 1650s once the republic was secure. As Neelon points out, this aspect of his life has not been adequately discussed in any of his biographies. Neelon fills that gap while opening the way for alternative interpretations of his later career. Forthcoming work from Susan Bell will argue that Nayler was the leader of military wing of Quakerism which only died out after the failure of the Kaber-Rigg plot in 1663. Other scholars have seen the Quaker movement of the 1650s as more of a singular entity.

Carole Spencer continues the Nayler theme towards the back of this issue in an extended review article on Leo Damrosch's book 'The Sorrows of the Quaker Jesus: James Nayler and the Puritan Crackdown on the Free Spirit.' She critiques Damrosch's picture of early Quakerism as individualistic and antinomian, in Damrosch's terms bound by an inward law rather than an outward one. She suggests instead that Friends followed the rule of Christ and that Nayler was bound by the law of perfection, of living out holiness in imitation of the faith of Christ. Contrary to all previous interpretations I have come across, she banishes the idea of a misguided Nayler being horribly punished by a uncharitable State and suggests that his greatest pain came from the fact he was spared execution and thus perfect identification with Christ. His ride into Bristol was not just the enactment of a sign to the world but was a personal spiritual strategy in line with mystics before him and Pauline mystical teaching. This is fascinating and original material and we can look forward to future scholarship from Carole

Spencer as she completes her doctoral studies on the Holiness/Perfection thread of Quaker history.

Elizabeth O'Donnell has published in 'Quaker Studies' before and those who know her work on nineteenth century Quaker women in the North East of England will be aware of its meticulous nature. This article is no exception. Taking the life of Anna Deborah Richardson as an example, she suggests that instead of the Society nurturing proto-feminists among its women members as much previous scholarship has suggested, those who were more involved in feminist activities often felt freer to pursue those activities outside of it. Rich data provide a fascinating article as well as a cogent and compelling one.

Maureen Waugh writes on Bertram Pickard from her field in politics and international studies. This twentieth century peacemaker was particularly involved in conflict resolution and was a firm supporter of the League of Nations, even in its use of force. In this he needed to attempt to dissipate the mistrust of the League held by other Quakers such as Carl Heath and latterly found himself taking pragmatic positions unpopular with more idealistic Friends. This article highlights the decisions those in world-rejecting or world-ambivalent sectarian groups face in their daily and professional lives. It shows too how in liberal sects such as the British Quaker one, those decisions are left to the individual, yet with the potential for consequent political isolation.

Klaus Huber touches on another feature of the liberal nature of British Quakerism, the ability for its members to construct spiritual identities from a range of sources. In his article, Huber draws on his recent research into Buddhist Quakers, locating within this constituency two forms of identity, what he terms 'Quaker Buddhists' and 'semi-Buddhist Quakers.' Quaker Buddhists have stronger links with Buddhism, a greater familiarity with Buddhist teaching, are more likely to adopt specifically Buddhist mediation techniques and are less likely to attend Meeting for Worship than their semi-Buddhist Quaker counterparts who are more identified as Quakers in the continuum of dual identity. In his wider work not yet published, Huber shows that this sub-constituency of British Quakerism, while accommodated and supported by the postmodern approach to spiritual truths of the group, and thus characteristic of what is perceived to be a problem amongst traditionalists, are actually less postmodern in their own treatment of faith and practice. Again, lovely scholarship.

This issue is completed by book reviews by Douglas Gwyn, Kenneth Mullen, and Peter Pick on Rosemary Moore's 'The Light in their

Consciences', Jim Pym's 'The Pure Principle' and Douglas Gwyn's 'Seekers Found', all three fitting well with the assorted themes of this issue.

I hope you enjoy it.