

Book Reviews

John Coffey (ed.), *The Oxford History of Protestant Dissenting Traditions, Volume I: The Post-Reformation Era, c.1559–c.1689* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), pp. xxi + 519. ISBN 9780198702238. Hardback, £110.

Bringing together an impressive international group of contributors, *The Oxford History of Protestant Dissenting Traditions, Volume I: The Post-Reformation Era, c.1559–c.1689* is the first of five volumes examining the history of protestant dissenting traditions. The 21 chapters of this volume are divided into four sections: Traditions Within England; Traditions Outside England; Dissent and the World; and Congregations and Living. Quaker scholars of this period will take particular interest in chapters six and twelve, which look at the origins of early Quakerism in England and colonial Quakerism, respectively.

Ariel Hessayon's chapter, entitled 'Early Quakerism and its Origins', provides an introductory overview of the period. He rightly states that early Quakerism must be situated within the wider context – something this entire volume does quite successfully. Hessayon provides a thorough, yet very concise background of the political landscape in the 1640s and 1650s. He guides the reader through the early Quaker journey and summarises their relationships with other dissenting groups, including Behemists, Familists, Gridletonians and, of course, Seekers, Levellers, Diggers and Ranters. Hessayon discusses early Quaker beliefs and their behaviours, including symbolic actions, prophetic behaviours and refusing hat honour. The chapter closes with brief sections on Quaker writing, discipline and organisation. Hessayon's overview of the historiography particularly highlights the work of Geoffrey Nuttall, Barry Reay, Alan Cole, Douglas Gwyn and Gerald Guiton. The citations and select bibliography demonstrate a curious reluctance to engage with more recent scholarship, but this does not critically detract from the content of the chapter.

In 'Colonial Quakerism' Andrew R. Murphy and Adrian Chastain Weimer deftly tackle the Quaker story in New England, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, New Netherland (the first Dutch colony that encompassed parts of what are now the states of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Connecticut and Delaware), Virginia, Barbados and Jamaica. Considering the

breadth of the content, Murphy and Weimer's chapter is succinct and accessible, taking full advantage of contemporary studies in the field to support their arguments. In examining the dichotomy of insurgent Quakers and Quakers in positions of established authority, they have highlighted how the Quaker experience varied widely from colony to colony.

There are numerous references to early Friends throughout the volume. R. Scott Spurlock's chapter on Scotland describes how Quakers 'became a permanent fixture of the religious landscape' (p. 195) and how James, Duke of York used his connections to support Friends in Scotland and Scottish Friends in the colonies. In 'Ireland', Crawford Gribben takes note of Quaker networks in the country, but the focus of the chapter is largely on Presbyterians. In 'Wales', Lloyd Bowen looks at the relationship between Quakers and Welsh Puritans Morgan Llwyd and Vavasor Powell. Bowen provides a comprehensive summary of Welsh Quakerism to 1689. In 'Dissent in New England', Francis J. Bremer explores Quaker persecution and executions, including that of Mary Dyer. W. J. Sheils' chapter 'Dissent in the Parishes' explores dissent from the Lollards in the fourteenth century to the 1689 Act of Toleration. Naturally, Sheils also examines Quakerism and persecution in the post-Restoration period. In 'The Bible and Theology', John Coffey looks at the anti-formalism of Quakerism and focuses on Quaker theology as expressed by Robert Barclay. It is encouraging to see that early Quakerism is well represented by this anthology.

This volume of *The Oxford History of Protestant Dissenting Traditions Volume I* is essential reading for all early Quaker scholars, but its prohibitive price is deeply unfortunate and will undoubtedly serve as a barrier to the students who would find this anthology most helpful. This volume highlights how dissenters permeated not only politics and religion but wider society as well. Early Quakerism is framed within the wider context of other dissenting traditions, demonstrating how intertwined these traditions could be, and also within the context of the transatlantic world. It will help scholars appreciate the impact and influence of dissent in this period. This is an important contribution to both early modern history and early modern Quaker history.

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Robynne Rogers Healey (ed.), *Quakerism in the Atlantic World, 1690–1830* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2021), pp. ix + 277. ISBN 9780271089409. Hardback, \$89.95.

The early Quaker movement has been the subject of much scholarly interest over the past 25 years. Yet the treatment of its history has tended to focus on its first two periods, with the eighteenth century traditionally regarded as a period of decline and stagnation. This collection of essays, edited and part-authored by

Robynne Rogers Healey, marks the culmination of renewed scholarly interest in the eighteenth century as a period of significant import in the movement's history, a time of transition and transformation.

Quakerism in the Atlantic World picks up many of the themes explored by Richard C. Allen and Rosemary Moore in their edited collection on the early growth of Quakerism. Together, they form part of *The New History of Quakerism*, a historical series published by the University of Pennsylvania Press that seeks to revise and update earlier studies of the movement, especially those by William C. Braithwaite and Rufus Jones. The volume serves as the first full-length study of Quaker history in this period, and thus stands as an important and necessary addition to the vibrant field of Quaker studies. Combining perspectives on aspects of Quaker thought and culture that have received only limited attention in the current literature, this book does not set out to provide a comprehensive narrative of the movement's history and evolution over this period. Instead, it adds new perspectives and fresh insights by exploring the evolution of Quakerism across the Atlantic world with the intention of complicating 'a number of traditional interpretations of this period in Quaker history' (p. 2). It assesses a range of important developments in Quaker faith and practice by showing how the Society adapted and responded to challenges from both within and without.

The volume is divided into three parts. The first, 'Unique Quaker Testimonies and Practices', underscores the distinctive nature of the Society and its members at this time. Much of this section is focused on Quaker hierarchy and structure, especially examining how Quakers found ways to offer a coherent and unifying message for their diverse membership scattered across the Atlantic world. How Friends attempted to manage behaviour and demonstrate collective piety in their everyday lives is the subject of Erica Canela and Robynne Rogers Healey's insightful chapter on Quaker memorial testimony writing, and Andrew Fincham's chapter on the role of Quaker discipline and advices in shaping the movement's identity and culture. Quakerism, as a non-hierarchical movement, faced many challenges to its survival over the eighteenth century, especially as it expanded across the British Atlantic. While Friends sought to emphasise equality among all their members in a spiritual sense, inequality and hierarchies of difference were built into eighteenth-century culture. This is illuminated in Elizabeth Cazden's provocative chapter on the inequalities entrenched into New England Quakerism, where she observes a narrow set of interests and ideals being pursued by a small male-dominated Quaker elite. The social and political outlook of a transatlantic movement focused on London resulted in a disciplinary structure with an embedded 'resistance to social mobility' (p. 55). Jon Mitchell's chapter on three distinct modes of Quaker worship is the most theologically orientated in this collection, showing how eighteenth-century Friends adopted and adapted contemplative practices from other Christian traditions, especially Puritanism.

The chapters in the second part of this volume collectively explore how eighteenth-century Friends engaged with the world that surrounded them. Erin

Bell's study of representations of Quakers in London criminal cases provides some interesting material on the connections their critics made between Friends and members of Jewish community. The survival of Quakerism in the wake of the 1689 Act of Toleration placed a double burden on its members, as they were expected to integrate with the society that surrounded them while also maintaining their distinctive culture and testimonies. Both Rosalind Johnson's and Emma Lapsansky Werner's chapters explore how Quakers sought to achieve this balance. Johnson focuses on the central role of the Meeting for Sufferings in lobbying and supporting their members' interests over marriage rights, while Lapsansky Werner emphasises the place of the family and the role of "“intervisitation”" in regularising and stabilising 'Quaker theology and practice' (p. 158).

The final three chapters explore how local circumstances in different parts of the British Atlantic shaped expressions of Quakerism. The Quaker reputation for abolition, pacifism and gender equality is well known. How patterns of Quaker colonisation affected indigenous peoples and culture has been discussed less. Geoffrey Plank's chapter goes some way to addressing this historiographical omission. Like Cazden's chapter, its conclusions complicate how we understand Quaker attitudes towards equality in this period. He argues that Quaker reverence for the English landscape, especially pastures and gardens, affected how they related to the North American wilderness. This also shaped how they interacted with the Indigenous people who inhabited it. Overseas expansion and colonisation provided the Quaker community with a variety of challenges and dilemmas. Sydney Harker and Robynne Rogers Healey's chapter shows how Quaker settlements in the frontier environments of Upper Canada after the American Revolution struggled to retain members while also pursuing a strict policy of endogamy (marriage within the faith). Richard C. Allen's chapter closes the book with a case study of the industrial empire of the Harford family in Wales, whose enlightened approach to the moral and social welfare of their workers came at a high cost and ultimately resulted in their demise.

This engaging volume offers a valuable contribution to a number of historiographies. It is particularly successful in showcasing the eighteenth century as a vibrant and formative era in Quaker history, and in showing the continued connections and dialogues between Quaker centres in London and the peripheries of the British Atlantic, especially between the Yearly Meeting in London and the meetings and settlements in British North America. The exchange of ideas, information and people flowed both ways. As Healey underscores in her helpful conclusion, the peripheries were just as important in shaping and influencing Quaker unity over this period. Although the volume sets out to approach the history of the Atlantic Quaker community through a 'transatlantic' and 'cisatlantic' framework (p. 5), this was not fully realised within many of the chapters themselves, especially those focused on particular case studies. The volume nevertheless worked well to incorporate material from across the British Atlantic and to consider the effects of English colonisation projects on different groups and peoples.

The long chronological arc of the volume provides a comprehensive account of how Quakerism became embedded in and transformed different localities across the British Atlantic world. As with any edited collection of this sort, it is necessary to prioritise some topics over others. I would have liked to have seen chapters that explored Irish Quakerism and the evolution of communities beyond the North American colonies, such as the West Indies. Some consideration of the Quakers' relationship to politics and their engagement with the political culture of this period would also have been welcome, but the volume is entirely successful in achieving its ambition of opening up 'space for further research and dialogue' (p. 259). This book encourages us to reconsider Quaker identity and culture at a time when many aspects of life were rapidly being transformed by processes of change within and beyond the Quaker community. Although many of the topics and subjects here will be of interest primarily to Quaker scholars, there is plenty about the volume that will appeal to non-specialist readers whose expertise is in fields other than Quaker studies.

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Max Longley, *Quaker Carpetbagger: J. Williams Thorne, Underground Railroad Host Turned North Carolina Politician* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company Inc., 2020), pp. viii + 210. ISBN 9781476669854. Paperback, \$39.95.

Andrew Waters, *The Quaker and the Gamecock: Nathanael Greene, Thomas Sumter, and the Revolutionary War for the Soul of the South* (Philadelphia, PA: Casemate Publishers, 2019), pp. xviii + 222. ISBN 9781612007816. Hardback, \$34.95.

Amateur historians have long participated in the writing and production of history, contributing to the field's vibrancy and diversity. In recent years, the growing number of 'independent' publishers have ensured that outlets for historians outside the academic (and non-peer reviewed) universe continue to exist. Max Longley's *Quaker Carpetbagger* and Andrew Waters's *The Quaker and the Gamecock* fall firmly within the tradition of amateur historians pursuing passion projects. For those concerned with Quaker history, however, Longley's study will hold the most interest. Despite Waters's decision to include 'Quaker' in his title, his study focuses primarily on a small slice of Revolutionary War military history and command. Indeed, Waters flippantly suggests that he chose his title because it possesses greater 'zing' than a more appropriate alternative such as the *Deist and the Gamecock* (p. vii). Moreover, the author offers an unpersuasive analysis of the influence of Quakerism on Revolutionary War General Nathanael Greene, while his claim that Green and South Carolina militia officer Thomas Sumter represented a broad and ongoing cultural and political divide in the United States is unconvincing. In contrast, Longley provides a detailed account of the

life of Progressive Friend J. Williams Thorne, though one that could use some of Waters's interpretive ambition. Together, both books reveal the richness but also the problems associated with the proliferation of non-academic historical writing.

Waters's study examines the Continental Army's southern campaign, focusing on the fractious relationship between Greene and Sumter between December 1780, when Greene assumed command, and February 1782, when Sumter resigned. Drawing primarily on the correspondence between Greene and Sumter (p. 211), Waters largely excludes central events of the southern campaign, including the March 1781 Battle of Guilford Courthouse, concentrating instead on events in South Carolina. He also offers copious praise for Sumter, noting the Southern Carolinian's 'obvious charisma', 'keen understanding of backcountry psychology' and ability to incite 'his constituents' with his 'appeal and kinetic energy' (p. 177). Unfortunately, Waters offers little evidence to sustain these claims. Sumter's primary effort to raise troops in 1781, Sumter's Law, offered recruits the captured slaves of Loyalists. Sumter promised Greene that the policy would raise five regiments, but instead it 'only ever raised three, and those undersized, many of their soldiers of dubious character' (p. 183). Meanwhile, the plunder of property contributed to the chaos and internecine violence that plagued the southern backcountry. Water also describes Sumter as a 'relentless and industrious spymaster', but he offers no evidence of Sumter's 'vast' intelligence network, noting only that a book on the subject 'is yet to be written' (p. 178). Waters's account of the southern campaign instead supports his conclusion that Sumter 'was a bad field commander' and 'lousy at camp discipline and security' (p. 178). Sumter also proved deeply undependable in supporting Greene's Continental Army, failing to appear as ordered at key engagements such as Hobkirk's Hill in May and Eutaw Springs in September. On the basis of scant evidence, Waters attributes Sumter's command failings to an undiagnosed case of 'bipolar disorder' (p. 52), but incompetence seems a more likely explanation.

Waters's discussion of Greene is hardly more convincing. He credits Greene's command skills in part to Quaker '*discernment*', which 'enabled listening and speaking with discipline and circumspection' (p. viii). But his portrait of Greene emphasises the 'petulant, pedantic, insecure, and self-serving' nature of the man (p. 32). As Quartermaster General of the Continental Army between 1778 and 1780, Greene regularly feuded with Congress and twice offered his resignation, convinced only by George Washington, a key mentor, to withdraw it. Likewise, his business affairs reflected a penchant for risk that Quakers, encouraged to avoid speculation by Friends' discipline, avoided. Moreover, Greene demonstrated little '*discernment*' in his frequent critiques of Sumter's conduct in his correspondence, a public record that prompted Sumter to oppose a congressional plan to reimburse Greene's widow after her husband's 1786 death. And, whatever Quaker values Greene retained after his 1773 disownment, he abandoned them when he moved to the South in early 1781. He tacitly approved Sumter's Law and became a slaveholder in 1783 when he purchased a plantation and enslaved people valued at over four thousand dollars. Unlike other southern Quakers, who either left the region or sought to uphold

their values, Greene assimilated into southern culture, undercutting Waters's most outlandish claim, that Greene and Sumter represented conflicting political cultures – 'egalitarian Federalism' and 'libertarian populism' (p. xiii) – that continue to divide the United States. Revolutionary War military historians may usefully read *The Quaker and the Gamecock*, but those interested in Quakerism will find little to commend it, a fact they will discern when Waters refers to 'the Quaker doctrine of passivism' (p. 22).

If Waters claims too much for his limited evidence, Longley's more deeply researched *Quaker Carpthagger* offers readers little in the way of interpretation. His study of Thorne, a Progressive Friend who lived in Chester County, Pennsylvania, until 1869, when he moved with most of his family to Warren County, North Carolina, offers a chronicle of Thorne's life and radical political and social convictions. But readers learn little of Thorne's motivations and personality and Longley's strict chronological organisation undermines his ability to develop key themes that might have helped readers make sense of Thorne's choices. Instead, Longley suggests that Thorne's engagement in politics, agricultural improvement and antislavery and his frequent impracticality and hostility to evangelical Protestantism 'embodied Thomas Jefferson's ideal of the virtuous patriotic yeoman farmer better than Jefferson himself' (p. 1). The comparison provides little insight into the Jeffersonian yeoman ideal and even less into the motives of Progressive Friends, who in the 1840s and in the 1850s split from the Hicksite branch of the Society of Friends to establish a faith that rejected formal creeds, believing that Christians could best express their faith through social reform. In 1852 Progressive Friends in Pennsylvania, including Thorne, split from the Hicksite Philadelphia Yearly Meeting and established the Longwood meeting, endorsing a wide-ranging reform agenda that included temperance, pacifism, feminism, animal welfare and opposition to capital punishment and tobacco.

But abolitionism lay at the core of Progressive Friends' reform efforts. With his Chester County farm only a few miles from Maryland, Thorne witnessed firsthand what historian Stanley Harrold has called the 'border war' over slavery in the 1840s and 1850s, as enslaved people seeking freedom fled north and southern slavecatchers aggressively pursued them, particularly after the passage of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law.¹ The resulting violence radicalised many white northerners and Longley argues that by 1850 Thorne had transformed his farm into a stop on the Underground Railroad. Indeed, border violence personally touched Thorne. In 1851 one of his in-laws, Castner Hanway, was indicted for treason (though later acquitted) for his involvement in the Christiana Resistance in neighbouring Lancaster County and Thorne actively participated in the rescue of his Black tenant, John Brown, kidnapped illegally by slavecatchers. In retaliation, one of the kidnappers, Frank Wilson, burned down the barn of

1 Stanley Harrold, *Border War: The Battle over Slavery before the Civil War*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010.

Thorne's award-winning farm. Thorne actively supported the Republican Party in the 1856 and 1860 elections, though by spring 1862 Progressive Friends had become exasperated with Abraham Lincoln's failure to 'abolish slavery without delay' (p. 60). Thorne also established a boarding school on his land in 1856, overseeing it for over a decade.

After the war Thorne decided, apparently for economic reasons, to move his family to North Carolina, to a Black majority district far from the Orthodox Quaker community in the state. He purchased a farm and ran for the state assembly as a Republican, winning in a special election in late 1874. However, Thorne's radical ideas soon draw the ire of the state's conservative Democrats, who accused Thorne of atheism, a violation of the state constitution. Democrats had obtained a 12-page pamphlet Thorne composed in 1873 attacking established religion and defending radical free-thinkers. Longley implies that the Democrats cared less about Thorne's religious beliefs than his defense of racial equality, but they used the pamphlet to justify ejecting the only 'carpetbagger' – a northern migrant to the postwar South – in the statehouse. An indefatigable Thorne won election both to a state constitutional convention and the state senate in 1876, but his racial equalitarianism and efforts to protect Black voters had little chance of success in the Democratic-dominated state. Meanwhile, Republicans' embrace of nativism and hard money in the late 1870s pushed Thorne toward the Greenback Party. He also earned election to the executive committee of the National Liberal League, an organisation committed to free speech and the separation of church and state. By the early 1880s, however, Thorne faced economic difficulties and an 1885 family crisis prompted his return to Pennsylvania, where he resided until his death in 1897. The Longwood meeting eulogised him as 'a man sui generis', committed throughout his life 'to the cause of human progress' and 'the struggle for freedom from every form of bondage, physical, social or ecclesiastical' (p. 154). In a short epilogue, Longley notes that many of the causes that Thorne advocated now enjoy broad support, but such a conclusion tells the reader little about the origins, nature and impact of these progressive causes within Thorne's own lifetime – or about the reasons he remained so optimistically committed to them. In the end, Longley can only pronounce Thorne 'a gadfly' (p. 161) whose 'life is worth reading about' (p. 162).

Longley is certainly correct. Thorne's life is worth reading about, as is the relationship between Greene and Sumter. But making sense of these stories entails more than recounting the events of a life in chronological order or making unsupported interpretive claims. Instead, it requires identifying meaningful historical contexts that help the scholar explain the values, motives and actions of the individuals they study. As British historian H. P. R. Finberg noted, historians need to consider their historical subjects as 'a series of concentric circles', in which the topic at hand is understood 'with constant reference to' the circle that surrounds it.² For Longley, placing Thorne's life more fully in the context of the

2 H. P. R. Finberg, 'Local History,' in Finberg, ed., *Approaches to History: A Symposium*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962, 121–22.

rise of the Progressive Friends – not simply recounting his participation in yearly meetings – would have enabled him to make better sense of his subject’s life. For Waters, a fuller account of how the racial, ethnic, religious and economic contours of the southern backcountry shaped the Revolutionary War would have provided a more satisfying explanation of the conflict between Greene and Sumter than the timeless cultural divide he imagines. Both books nonetheless explore terrain largely ignored by academic historians and thus will find specialised readerships, with Longley’s study most recommended for readers of this journal.

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Antony Barlow (ed.), *“An Exacting Mistress”: The Friends Ambulance Unit in WWII. As seen through the wartime correspondence of Ralph and Joan Barlow* (York: Quacks, 2021), pp. xxv + 664. ISBN 9781912728350. Hardback, £20.¹

This collection is a son’s labour of love to piece together his Quaker parents’ letters of love. The correspondence ran from December 1940 to September 1943, and from Wolverhampton and the Midlands to London, the Middle East, Africa, India and China and back again. At almost 700 oversized pages this is not a book to read from cover to cover, in part because the exchanges were languorous, with letters lost and arriving out of sequence in a world interrupted. But what it offers to the patient reader is submersion in a loving family kept apart by war. In the Editor’s words, and central to his motivation for the book, the correspondence is also ‘an incomparable historical archive of a relatively untapped insider’s view of the [Friends Ambulance] Unit’ (or FAU, p. v), with Ralph Barlow, in peacetime an unassuming, shy man, rising up the ranks to become Officer in Charge of the Middle East.

The book is split into numerous sections and 42 chapters. It contains virtually everything you can think of: maps, photographs of family, friends, colleagues and people mentioned in the letters, images of the places visited, and of some of the illustrated letters (both from Ralph and his eldest child, David, born 1937); family trees, timelines, appendices of short biographies and the Unit’s finances; and pieces written by Ralph for official reports, for *The Friend*, for the *Birmingham Post*, and pertinent sections from his unpublished memoirs. While not referenced or footnoted in an academic style, the contents offer plentiful evidence of careful and thorough research, not only in the Editor’s chasing down of leads and mentions in the letters, with plenty of evidence that he was in touch with families known and previously unknown to him, but also in the careful configuration of the letters

1 Another version of this review will be published in the *Journal of the Friends Historical Society*. Many thanks to Chris Skidmore, Reviews Editor, for permitting me to publish this here.

back into their approximate sequence of writing. The presentation of the text is ingenious, with the Editor's thoughts always written in italics and the letters always begun with a small photograph of who is writing – this, along with the text being in different colours (black for Ralph's letters and grey for Joan's), helps the reader navigate.

Joan comes across as a lively, good-natured person, raising two sons, supported by close friends and a relatively recently convinced-Quaker family. Her letters offer a window into emotions and families during the war, but are also invaluable for insights into life on the home front and outside the cities most heavily targeted by bombing. The theatre, cinema and books are frequent topics of conversation, alongside, for example, mentions of wartime publicity drives, such as Wings for Victory fundraising, rations and 'a new gas mask for Antony, which is enormous and difficult to carry, especially on a crowded bus' (p. 554). The longing for her husband that courses through Joan's letters is palpable.

The focus of the book's attention, though, is Ralph and his activities, demonstrated as much through the subject and framing as it is by the use of black text to denote his writing. He was from one of the oldest Quaker families and seems to have been an unsure person, yet managed to push that aside. He volunteered for the Auxiliary Fire Service in 1938. Two years later, and having registered as a conscientious objector, Ralph was dismissed from the Fire Service and granted exemption from armed war service by a Tribunal, so long as he joined the FAU. September 1940 saw his attendance of a Training Camp at Manor Farm, Birmingham, from whence he arrived in London, working at the hospital in Poplar, in the East End. From there, Ralph went to Cheveley, near Newmarket, helping to establish a refuge for London evacuees. He then led a Training Camp of the sort he himself attended only nine months before. From heading the London Relief Section between 1941 and 1942 Ralph became Deputy Director and in Charge of the Middle East, being based at Cairo, Egypt. Taking over some of the duties of the head of the FAU, Tom Tanner – who, along with numerous others, was lost in 1942 when his transport ship sank – Ralph travels not only to Iran but also to Ethiopia, becoming ill on his way to India, recuperating, and finally travelling to China. Ralph, still unwell, returned to London before being invalidated out in December 1944.

From this listing of his activities it should be clear that Ralph's letters do indeed offer an 'insider's view' of the FAU, but they present the reader with more than that. For historians of Quakers they give an insight into the negotiation of conscience, relations and attitudes to elderly Friends, and the cohesion offered by shared faith, as well as the problems caused by it and by working with outsiders. For historians of the war, the correspondence reveals life on the Home Front and a lens onto the much-mythologised 'Blitz spirit' as much as it does the North African theatre and the flight of Polish refugees into Tehran. For historians of medicine there is the organisation of the blood transfusion service around the fighting in Egypt (one of the most important of the FAU's roles), hospitals from

England to India, and recovery and recuperation from encephalitis. For Quakers and others, especially at the moment, the activities and writings of Ralph lend something precious: a sense that there is a future and that it is imperative to hope and plan for one better than what seems possible right now.

There are certainly issues with the book, in particular the editorial interjections between the letters, which often detract from their flow and add little. Yet nor can this review do the contents justice, with the relay of dates and places and lists of contents and uses. Antony Barlow has meticulously researched the correspondence, re-forming the world around it and creating something invaluable to interested readers and scholars alike.

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Cherice Bock & Stephanie Potthoff (eds), *Quakers, Creation, Care and Sustainability. Quakers and the Disciplines*, Volume 6 (Philadelphia, PA: Friends Association for Higher Education, 2019). ISBN 9781733615211. Paperback, \$19.95.

Over the course of the last decade there has been a substantial growth of scholarship devoted to the present ecological crisis through the lens of Quaker thought, worship and witness. This literature, although ranging in style and scope, has been largely prompted and sustained by the grassroots activism of Quakers at the level of Meeting communities. In Britain, two landmark Swarthmore Lectures, *Costing Not Less Than Everything: Sustainability and Spirituality in Challenging Times* (2011) and *On Earth as it is in Heaven: The Kingdom of God and the Yearning of Creation* (2019), provide powerful snapshots of this literature's present character. Both texts illustrate a desire to link environmental advocacy directly to historic Testimony and God-language from much older Quaker traditions. Moreover, there is a profound trust that Quaker language and practice can and does give contemporary Friends the moral and symbolic resources to confront the dangers of an ailing planet. These commitments have borne fascinating fruit. In both lectures there is a characteristically Quaker mix of practical remedy and spiritual contemplation, a sense of urgent reckoning tempered with a notable humility of tone. But these postures provoke important questions. Where does contemporary Quaker environmentalism come from? And what might be its future? Excellent answers to these questions are provided by *Quakers, Creation, Care and Sustainability*. Comprising the reflections of Quaker historians, campaigners, scientists, theologians and educators, this volume of 24 chapters and nine appendices offers a rich survey of Quaker ecological thought and practice in both the premodern and modern periods. The collection's most notable strength lies in the sheer comprehensiveness of its theoretical, historical and theological engagement. The book spans the decades and the centuries, seeking out a distinctively Quaker approach to eco-theology, environmental ethics and earth

advocacy, using a range of tools, texts and approaches. The collection succeeds by avoiding excessive theorising or navel-gazing. Instead, we find accessible and compelling contributions that combine scholarly precision with sensitivity to the richness of lived experience. In this way, the present volume can and should be appreciated on multiple levels, as chronicle, as intellectual history, as narrative theology and (more Quakerly still) as Testimony.

The collection's usefulness is rooted in its generous interdisciplinary method. Careful historical explorations take place alongside a charitable and innovative engagement with diverse academic disciplines, including philosophy, ethics and environmental science. In the historical field, those seeking the cultural roots of contemporary Quaker environmentalism will find themselves abundantly provided for. This collection considers not only the ecological sensibilities of the likes of George Fox (p. 193) and John Woolman (p. 181) but also the work of the eighteenth-century Quaker naturalists John Bartman (pp. 205) and Thomas Say (pp. 208–13). In these latter inclusions we are offered a glimpse into neglected traditions not only of Quaker proto eco-theology but also of Friendly Nature Writing (p. 214). An excavation of these authors allows readers to better appreciate the diverse ways in which Friends have valued and protected wild and unbuilt spaces. Alongside these affirming explorations of Quaker Naturalism, however, several essays acknowledge the extent to which the Quaker past can be understood as a sorrowful tale of ecological abuse, colonial heartlessness and environmental degradation. There is a judicious avoidance in many contributions of romanticism or simplistic hagiography. Complex historical figures are treated methodically, permitting a balanced appreciation of flawed and complex Quaker communities both loving and despoiling the earth. In this respect, the present volume is not a record of holiness accomplished but a far deeper, more ambiguous exploration of a tradition on a journey of shared distress and shared discovery. Through challenging and thought-provoking inclusions we are offered surveys of the manifold ways in which Quakers have been complicit in patterns of ownership, consumption and empire that have contributed to the destruction of the living world. The degree to which this book explores what is evidently painful for its authors should be counted one of its virtues.

Alongside its historical value, this book displays a keen appetite for interreligious and philosophical dialogue, which helpfully places Quaker principles and concerns in insightful, unlooked for and unfamiliar contexts. Readers are repeatedly asked to consider key Quaker commitments through diverse cultural and philosophical lenses. The book includes generous explorations of the Process Philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead (pp. 157–70), the Teleological Evolutionism of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (pp. 189–99) and the traditional reverence of native peoples (pp. 152–53). In each of these conversations we are introduced to new ways of being Quaker in an increasingly fragile world. In Whitehead there is the generous unity of mind and matter, Spirit and nature, unities that radically undercut notions of human primacy. A similar insight is preserved by Teilhard and the

Maragoli people of Kenya (pp. 154–55). Such approaches are incredibly valuable for activists and scholars who wish to take seriously the cultural and contextual conditions of ecological work. Values and cosmologies shape conservation, as much as technical precision and scientific analysis. As these inclusions remind us, environmental activism cannot be explored in the abstract, but must involve communities, histories and memories.

Alongside this book's marked sensitivity to context is the corresponding preoccupation with interconnectedness. The present collection diligently eschews the treatment of environmental protection as an 'issue among others'. In uncovering diverse Quaker voices of earth-care, our contributors repeatedly confront the reader with the ways in which ecological attentiveness calls into question all our social, scientific, moral and social structures. Likewise, there is the repeated acknowledgment that such a radical interrogation of our civilisation requires ethical conceptions grand enough to meet the systematic challenge of ecosystem collapse. The collection not merely assists in the recovery of a Quaker history of nature but makes a significant and timely contribution to contemporary Quaker theological ethics. Deftly developed across the essays is a recurring assertion of a holistic moral vision that treats environmental justice as an integrated outgrowth of peacebuilding, equality and truthfulness. This unified model of ethical practice challenges contemporary Quaker theologians to develop a robust account of Quaker community that understands the interconnection of economic structures, human wellbeing and the welfare of the biosphere. These remarks make plain one of the guiding themes of this book. The ecological dilemmas we face are not merely technical matters of resource management but involve habits of the heart. There is no possibility of reaching beyond the barrenness of ecological crisis unless we can imagine our world, our land and ourselves afresh. Instead of rendering the earth a mere object for use, the contributors insist that we need to be aided by a deepening affection for the beauty, complexity and vulnerability of our planetary home.

Perhaps the most potent but less obvious contribution of this collection is its implicit exploration of what has been called 'climate grief'. Viewed psychologically, this book can be understood as a Quaker testament to the personal and emotional dimensions of ecological crisis. Despite the continual affirmation of a life-giving future, these essays disavow any hint of sugary optimism. The collection is repeatedly shot through with moments of profound distress and mourning. Many contributors remind us of how much we have lost and what we must be braced to lose in the future. A welcome subtext of the collection is an acute understanding of the sheer magnitude of the present environmental crisis in ways that acknowledge but also undercut the dual paralysis of fatalism and guilt. This collection's expertly woven answer to such common ills is to embrace an attitude of faith, a 'confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see' (Heb. 11:1). But in this posture of faithfulness we are confronted with the fact that defending nature is not without hardship, uncertainty or risk. In this

spirit, the present volume conscientiously escapes any sense of glib complacency. There is no suggestion that the past can be washed away by a few 'good' Quakers. There are no simple answers to the challenging task of walking more lightly on the earth, nor is there any single 'Benedictine option' of retreat that will magically put our civilisation on an equitable footing. We are creators and creatures of our technology. There is no going back to some simpler, more balanced past. There is only quickening movement into an uncertain future. Such difficulty is vividly evident in the collection's attitude towards the material sciences. While technical rationality is claimed as the source of nature's objectification, scientific inquiry also provides the means of better preserving our fragile planet (p. 248) and the necessity of working responsibly within these physical limits.

It is this final note of complexity that underscores the real value of this collection. The editors have assembled a diverse range of perspectives that intentionally break down habitual silos of disciplines, communities and practices. In combining history, philosophy, science, theology and biography, this ambitious volume will appeal to scholars, activists and curious non-specialists. Far from being an insular or sectarian contribution, this book constitutes a vital call to closer collaboration between the Religious Society of Friends, civil society, scientists, activists and other spiritual communities. In its scope and density, this book illuminates one of the most urgent realities of our age with sensitivity, nuance and rigour. In the years to come, more will be done and written, but this book makes an invaluable contribution to the ongoing Quaker engagement in ecological thought and environmental action. Its calls for holistic ethics and generous dialogue will doubtless prove enduring.

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