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Cumulative Nos. 119

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QUAKER RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

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Sponsored by the Quaker Theological Discussion Group

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Old: <http://theo-discuss.quaker.org/>)

The purpose of the Quaker Theological Discussion Group is to explore the meaning and implications of our Quaker faith and religious experience through discussion and publication. This search for unity in the claim of truth upon us concerns both the content and application of our faith.

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ABOUT THIS ISSUE

To understand well the shape of the modern Quaker movement, we need to listen to key figures who lived during some of the critical junctures in our common life. They open the way to insight as they witness to their own experiences and describe the changing landscapes of their times. This issue introduces key works that can help us hear three such witnesses in their own words: Elias Hicks, Allen Jay, and Maurice Creasey.

Elias Hicks (1748-1830) lived through a period of enormous change in American political and religious life as well as in the shape of American Quakerism. He is best known, of course, as a principal in the Great Separation of 1827 and following, a sharp schism among American Quakers that continues to be known as the Hicksite Separation. Due to the devoted work of Paul Buckley, we now have two updated volumes that show Hicks' life and ministry through this era, *The Journal of Elias Hicks* and *Dear Friend: Letters and Essays of Elias Hicks*. This issue includes Paul's introduction to these new resources as well his response to reviews of these books by Stephen Angell and Jim Le Shana. I believe this conversation may well entice readers to want to learn from these sources what Elias Hicks really said and did.

Allen Jay (1831-1910) was born as the Great Separation was still unfolding and also lived through great shifts in both American and Quaker religion and culture. He knew first hand the shifting tensions among Friends, the fight for the abolition of slavery, the Civil War and its devastating aftermath, the emergence of revivalism, the changes among Friends in patterns of worship and ministry, the growth of Friends educational institutions, and the challenges to faith brought by new scientific theories and the intellectual tides of the Enlightenment. In the *Autobiography of Allen Jay*, his story and insight as a witness to the tumult of the nineteenth century teach us with grace and wisdom. Joshua Brown's fine editing in making this century-old work newly available serves us all well. This volume of QRT offers responses by Carole Spencer and Howard Macy to Jay's *Autobiography*, and, in turn, a response by editor Joshua Brown.

Maurice Creasey (1912-2004) was a British Friend who served for 23 years as Director of Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre in Birmingham, England. He often wrote for Friends and was one of the leading Friends involved in the Christian ecumenical movement.

David Johns speaks highly of his work as a theologian and has recently edited the book *Collected Essays of Maurice Creasey*, to which several participants will respond at the meetings of Quaker Theological Discussion group this November. David Johns' article in this issue explores the question of how Quakers can relate to other groups, illustrating helpfully from the vigorous conversations and contrasting approaches of Maurice Creasey and Lewis Benson.

The next meetings of the Quaker Theological Discussion Group will be Friday, November 16, 2012 in Chicago, Illinois, preceding the meetings of the American Academy of Religion and the Society of Biblical Literature. In the 4:00 p.m. session, five respondents will respond to various theological themes found in the recently released *Collected Essays of Maurice Creasey*, edited by David Johns. The 7:00 p.m. session considers "Creation Care in the 21st Century" through the lenses of theology, Bible, and Christian spirituality. The sessions will be held at the Hilton Chicago, Conference Room 4C (4th floor), 720 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago. We invite all who can to participate in what will be stimulating sessions.

Jon Kershner has led in organizing a session about Quakers during the meetings of the AAR. That meeting, scheduled for 2½ hours, will begin at 4:00 p.m. on Monday, November 19. A similar session last year offered interesting papers and was well attended. You may want to attend this session as well.

— *Howard R. Macy*
Editor