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Milligan's "Biographical Dictionary of British Quakers in Commerce and Industry 1775-1920" - Book Review

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Furthermore, if everyone has a measure of the Light, then logically, everyone deserves equal respect. To live as if everyone deserves equal respect results in the Quaker testimonies of equality, truth-telling...simplicity...and peace (p. 61).

But to 'live as if' people are a certain way when actually they are not, or not found to be, is not to act truthfully, and not to act on the basis of experience. So something has gone amiss in the way Quakerism is being described. This could be prevented, I think, by paying closer attention to the basic experience of the Light, as this was understood by early Friends. Williams gets near to it:

In us, the Spirit does three fundamental things. First, it reveals itself... Second, the Spirit transforms us... Third, some transformed people carry the good news to others (pp. 136-37).

Yes, but it does these things by first showing people themselves. That is, it makes them aware of what they are doing and who they really are. This self-knowledge frees them from self-deception and false idols, which inflame desire, the 'four dispositions' (p. 137), which had led them to act wrongly. They are free to see reality as it is (as in Zen), to see 'the truth', as early Friends put it. It is a truth fundamental to their life, but they had previously turned a blind eye to it. So when the Light shows them the truth, and they accept it, it transforms their life. This is then the basis for their action in the world. They will act from the new understanding and the new desire that the Spirit has brought about in their hearts, without any need to consult doctrines or ethical rules.

This understanding would correct and complement Williams' work, I feel. It would not undermine it. As it stands, it is a strong and clear-headed presentation of what Quakerism today is, and can be.

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MILLIGAN, E.H., *Biographical Dictionary of British Quakers in Commerce and Industry 1775-1920* (York: Sessions Book Trust, 2007), pp. 606. ISBN 978-1-8507-2367-7, Paper, £30.

It is difficult to overstate the importance of Ted Milligan's authoritative reference work for students of late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British Quakerism and, more widely, for social, economic and family historians working on this period. The disproportionate importance of Friends (relative to their numbers) in the economic life of the British Isles at the time is well known so I believe there is a place for this book in every university and major public library in the English-speaking world. At the extraordinarily modest cover price there is really no reason not to buy it! Very many individual scholars and Friends will also want to own it and certainly the Woodbrooke Library copies are already well used.

There are approximately 2800 biographical entries and the period covered usefully extends and complements the 1860–1980 scope of David J. Taylor's *Dictionary of Business Biography* (6 vols.; London: Butterworths, 1984–86). The entries are largely based on the (unpublished) *Dictionary of Quaker Biography* which is accessible only in typescript form at Haverford and Swarthmore Colleges in Philadelphia and Friends House in London, with a further copy in the author's own possession. Typical of the author's attention to details are the indexes of illustrations, occupations, places, apprentice masters and schools attended. It is very useful to be able to 'disambiguate' identically named individuals (e.g. the five John Thistlethwaites) and trace family relationships.

Importantly, the author acknowledges the limitations of his work in the *Prologue*; for example, coverage is almost exclusively male, salaried employees are omitted, as are farmers and the professions. Thus the four sons of Emmanuel Cooper and Alfred Waterhouse's son Edwin, who founded the accountancy firms Cooper Bros and Price Waterhouse respectively, are mentioned only in passing in their fathers' entries. Loosely affiliated and disowned Friends are also beyond scope, thus excluding such personal favourites as Sampson Hanbury, gentleman brewer and Master of the Puckeridge Hunt in the 1820s, and James Humard, Colchester brewer and poet of the 1860s. The entries are heavily reliant on secondary sources, but as the author also says, the book is not so much an end product as a stepping-off point for further work.

The value of the book is considerably enhanced by the illustrations and accompanying essays and appendices on, *inter alia*, the Quaker background and calendar, Books of Discipline and local and regional structures.

Until the projected digital version of the full *Dictionary of Quaker Biography* becomes available, Ted Milligan's book must remain the standard work. It has 'broken the ice' and will provide a stimulus for research in Quaker Studies, as well as much enjoyment for readers, for many years to come.

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YOUNT, D., *How the Quakers Invented America* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), pp. 159. ISBN 978-0-7425-5833-5, Cloth, £12.99.

GUITON, G., *The Growth and Development of Quaker Testimony, 1652–1661 and 1960–1994: Conflict, Non-Violence, and Conciliation* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2005), pp. 520. ISBN 0-7734-6002-0, Cloth, £84.95, \$139.95.

These are two very contrasting books despite both outwardly dealing with the historical nature of Quakerism: one is an attempt to look at the 'essence' of the United States in relation to the nature of the Quaker faith; the other looks at the practical application of Quaker 'ideology' during two different periods of history. It might be expected that the scholarship in one is reflected in the reflective thought of the other