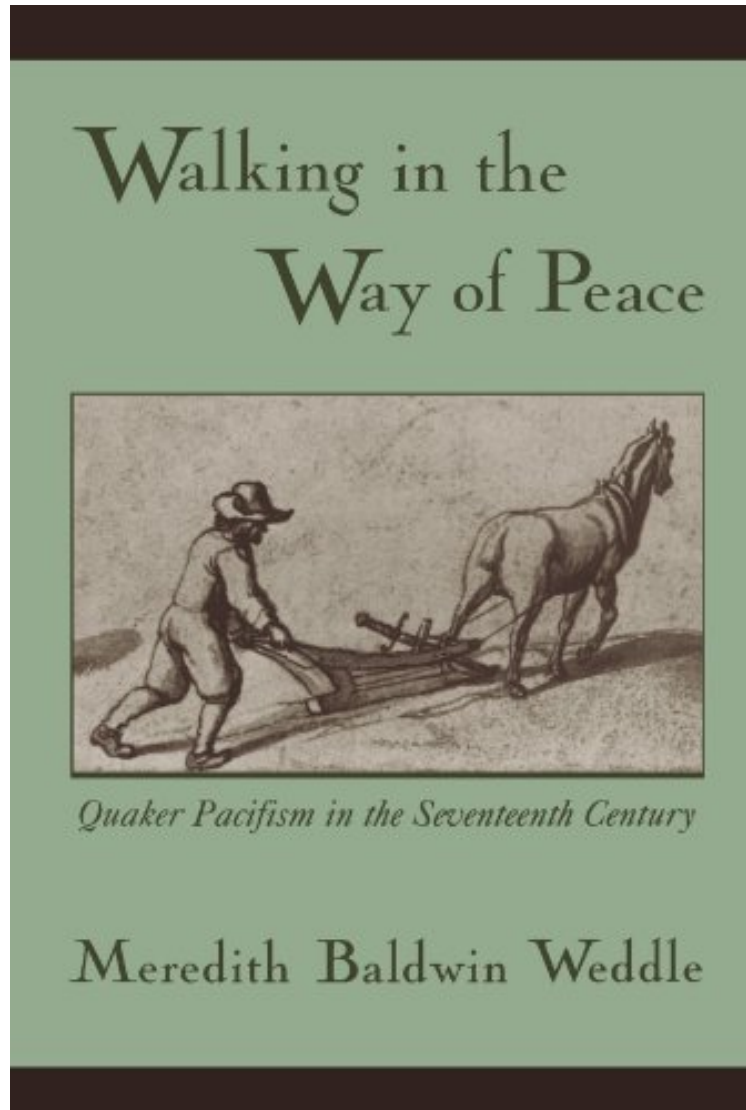


Walking in the Way of Peace: Quaker Pacifism in the Seventeenth Century

Meredith Baldwin Weddle

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Meredith Baldwin Weddle : Walking in the Way of Peace: Quaker Pacifism in the Seventeenth Century before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Walking in the Way of Peace: Quaker Pacifism in the Seventeenth Century:

9 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Walking In The Way of Peace is IlluminatingBy Susan

S. Impeccably researched, Ms. Weddle's book illuminates the unstudied area of the practice of pacifism, as it was in England, then on board ships to the New World but mostly as the Quaker leaders began to govern the colonies in 17th New England. The Quaker leaders had a huge dilemma as pacifists: on the one hand they faced danger constantly and needed to protect their settlements, on the other hand they had renounced war and fighting as part of their "Peace Testimony". Not unlike today, the leaders were forced into compromises at times while under tremendous pressure to practice their principles. A large focus of the book is King Phillip's War of 1675-1676 between the Indians and English settlers. Ms. Weddle is not only a brilliant scholar but an entertaining storyteller, the book is a feast of captivating stories. History, philosophy, and theology buffs should have this in their libraries, certainly, but any reader with an inquiring mind and a love for good story should read this book. Looking forward to Ms. Weddle's next work. One suggestion: take your time to savor it. A sparkling concatenation of insights will be the reward.² of 2 people found the following review helpful. Careful and considered review of Quaker Views By David Crosby The context is pretty much limited to 17th century Rhode Island, but the study profits from a tight focus and the reader can judge how much to extrapolate to other situations. Good summary of previous scholarship on Quaker peace witness.

This book investigates the historical context, meaning, and expression of early Quaker pacifism in England and its colonies. Weddle focuses primarily on one historical moment--King Philip's War, which broke out in 1675 between English settlers and Indians in New England. Among the settlers were Quakers, adherents of the movement that had gathered by 1652 out of the religious and social turmoil of the English Civil War. King Philip's War confronted the New England Quakers with the practical need to define the parameters of their peace testimony --to test their principles and to choose how they would respond to violence. The Quaker governors of Rhode Island, for example, had to reconcile their beliefs with the need to provide for the common defense. Others had to reconcile their peace principles with such concerns as seeking refuge in garrisons, collecting taxes for war, carrying guns for self-defense as they worked in the fields, and serving in the militia. Indeed, Weddle has uncovered records of many Quakers engaged in or abetting acts of violence, thus debunking the traditional historiography of Quakers as saintly pacifists. Weddle shows that Quaker pacifism existed as a doctrinal position before the 1660 crackdown on religious sectarians, but that it was a radical theological position rather than a pragmatic strategy. She thus convincingly refutes the Marxist argument that Quakers acted from economic and political, and not religious motives. She examines in detail how the Quakers' theology worked--how, for example, their interpretation of certain biblical passages affected their politics--and traces the evolution of the concept of pacifism from a doctrine that was essentially about protecting the state of one's own soul to one concerned with the consequences of violence to other human beings.

"This is not simply another book on Quaker pacifism. Meredith Baldwin Weddle makes a persuasive case for revisiting the birth of the Quaker peace testimony and offers clues to explain the unstable nature of the Quaker witness to nonviolence in the last two centuries.... Her work is more than an addendum to correct an imbalance in the work of earlier historians. It is a more faithful account of the origin of Quaker pacifism itself."--The Historian "[A] substantial, valuable addition to Quaker studies." Albion "A significant contribution to understanding the complexity of early Quaker theology, especially in a trans-Atlantic context."--The Journal of Religion About the Author Meredith Baldwin Weddle is an independent scholar who has taught at Yale, the State University of New York at Purchase, and Ahmadu Bello University in Nigeria.