

The Journal of Elias Hicks. Edited by PAUL BUCKLEY. (San Francisco: Inner Light Books, 2009. xxiv, 509 pp. Illustrations, bibliography, online resources, index. Cloth, \$50; paper, \$30.)

Pursuant to writing this review, I was sitting in a public place reading Paul Buckley's edited version of Elias Hicks's journal. A woman leaned and asked me "who was Elias Hicks?"

Who was he, indeed? I tried to explain, as succinctly and yet clearly as I could: "he was a nineteenth-century American religious figure for whom a schism in the Religious Society of Friends was named." I was careful not to actually *attribute* the schism to him, because anyone who has read his journal—and anyone who reads Buckley's wonderfully illuminating editing of his journal, may come to believe (as I believe) that if there had been no Elias Hicks, someone else would have assumed his catalytic role in Quakers' iteration of the early nineteenth-century religious turmoil that historians of early America term the Second Great Awakening. Buckley refers to Hicks as a "lightning rod."

It could be argued that Hicks did not set out to fracture the Friends. He was simply on a mission that might surprise many descendants of what has come to be known as the "Hicksite" tradition—the eschewing of evangelicalism, the downplaying of Biblical scripture, and the soft-pedaling of the importance of Christ and traditional Christian vocabulary. But far from a relaxed-about-doctrine "silent" worshiper, Hicks was out to actively convert "those not in profession with us," i.e., those whom he described as having been "under the power of great darkness . . . propagated by an antichristian ministry" (122). A "recorded" minister (Quaker-speak for a person whose spoken messages and daily demeanor indicate a firm grasp of things religious), Hicks preached on street corners and in various public meetings, and he worried about those who hoped to achieve "justification" without "sanctification"—two concepts that are central to the long tradition of Protestant (and Puritan) theology. What he wanted to do was call his listeners to a higher, more pure form of Christian devotion, and he was in-your-face about his mission.

Through careful and erudite, but highly accessible, footnotes, Buckley helps his readers see how effortlessly Hicks—who is best known for his insistence that the "Inward Light" should take priority over rote following of the scriptures—peppered his own conversation with passages from the Bible as he sought to "open to the people the superior excellency of the gospel . . . as set forth by the precepts, doctrines, example, and commands of our gracious lawgiver, Jesus Christ" (171).

Students of Quakerism—scholars and practitioners alike—generally "know" who Elias Hicks was. He was the troublemaker whose public antics help split asunder Quaker families, helped spark what H. Larry Ingle has brilliantly described as *Quakers in Conflict* (1986), and initiated bitterness that has yet to be fully healed almost two centuries later. But Hicks was also vehemently aboli-

tionist, and the list of his associates, which reads like a who's who of the dynasties of American abolitionists (Coffin, Mott, Lundy), helps us to understand how the Hicksites came to make "the Quakers" synonymous with antislavery activism. This conflation of Quakerism and abolitionism is, however, somewhat of a distortion, and so is the exceptionalism that leads many scholars to examine Hicks and the Hicksite schism outside of the context of similar religious unrest among Methodist, Baptists, and Presbyterians (to name a few). The question asked of me by the woman mentioned above and Buckley's very brief bibliography are indicative of the narrowness of the track on which Quaker history has been traveling for way too long. I highly recommend that scholars read this volume in which Buckley illuminates Hicks's life, travels, and theology. Then I recommend that someone (Buckley and Ingle together?) write a follow-up volume that places Hicks in the wider context of nineteenth-century religious and social and perfection seeking.

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Empire of Liberty: A History of the Early Republic, 1789–1815. By GORDON S. WOOD. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009. 800 pp. Maps, bibliographical essay, index. \$35.)

Gordon Wood's magnificent *Empire of Liberty* should be read as a prologue to Alexis de Tocqueville's masterpiece, *Democracy in America* (1835–40). The French visitor was astonished at the new world he discovered in his travels, and Wood helps us see how that world came into being. In 1805, Massachusetts conservative Fisher Ames warned that "we are sliding down into the mire of a democracy," a monstrous form of misrule "which pollutes the morals of the citizens before it swallows up their liberties" (303). Yet the new idea of equality did not lead to the licentiousness and disorder that Ames feared but rather to an extraordinarily dynamic, but surprisingly stable, new social order. Wood's *Empire of Liberty* shows us how "middling people" began to come together, popularizing American culture and developing a "sense of nationhood" (732). The genius for association that amazed Tocqueville in the 1830s grew out of the democratic "passions of ordinary people," a cacophony of libertarian, antiauthoritarian, self-interested impulses that so frightened the self-proclaimed better sort (602).

Wood defines democracy in broad cultural and ideological terms as the ascendancy of a radically new egalitarian conception of political society, not as a radical restructuring of the social order—and certainly not of the racial order. Slavery survived and prospered, and "most Americans, both Northerners and Southerners, were coming to think of the United States as 'a white man's country'" (542). But Wood, like Tocqueville, is less interested in the limits of