

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

democracy than in why it works within those limits. Both writers focus on the stabilizing roles of religion and the rule of law. One of Wood's most impressive achievements is to show how advocates of democratic self-rule came to terms with that putative bastion of "aristocratic" power, an independent judiciary. By protecting "minorities of all sorts," the Supreme Court "has become a major instrument for both curbing . . . democracy and maintaining it" (468). If lawyers and jurists preached the autonomy of law, thus sustaining the precarious balance between democracy and liberty, preachers in a dizzying array of "sects and movements" Christianized "American popular culture." Disestablished, democratized religion showed how centrifugal tendencies could serve homogenizing purposes, preparing Americans "for nineteenth-century middle-class respectability," legitimizing "freedom and individualism," and moralizing market participation (613).

There are, of course, conspicuous differences between Tocqueville and Wood, most notably on the "radicalism" of the American Revolution. For Tocqueville, Anglo-Americans' colonial experience was all-important: "aristocratic" institutions and practices—municipal institutions, courts, and churches—were already effectively democratized *before* the Revolution. Focusing instead on how independent Americans understood their world, Wood argues persuasively that the Revolution was critical for the emergence of a democratic culture. In the wake of their constitutional settlement, partisans divided bitterly over the meaning of the Revolution and the future of the federal republic. Seeking to perpetuate British-style mixed government under an "energetic" central government, Federalists evoked images of recrudescing "monarchy" and "aristocracy." Republican oppositionists, inspired by the French Revolution, conjured up an American "old regime"-in-the-making, rallying "all good republicans and liberal reformers" to destroy this cancerous, alien growth (216). Anathematizing "aristocracy," Thomas Jefferson and his followers enabled Americans to overcome "the traditional culture's aversion to the term 'democracy'" (718). That conceptual transformation made all the difference, valorizing a republican revolution and its democratizing consequences and giving shape to the way of life that Tocqueville found so extraordinary.

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*A Faithful Account of the Race: African American Historical Writing in Nineteenth-Century America.* By STEPHEN G. HALL. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009. 352 pp. Notes, bibliography, index. \$22.95.)

*A Faithful Account of the Race* charts the emergence of a genre that Stephen Hall identifies as African American historical writing. Importantly, though,