

AN ANGRY GOD OR A REASONABLE FAITH: THE BRITISH SOCIETY OF FRIENDS, 1873-1888

[It] seems at least tolerably certain that the Society of Friends must soon either cease to exist as a separate Christian sect, or put itself in harmony with the forces of Liberal opinion around it. - *The Manchester Friend*, 15 August 1873.

Late in 1872 the *Manchester Friend*, purporting 'to represent the Liberal party' in London Yearly Meeting, published a series of articles by Thomas H. Speakman (1827-1904), an American Hicksite, setting out Speakman's explanation for the continuing numerical decline of British Quakerism.¹ Speakman cited recent developments in London Yearly Meeting, including the disownment of two 'progressive' Friends, David Duncan and Edward Trusted Bennett², to validate his contention that British Friends had gone over to 'narrow-minded bigotry and sectarian intolerance.' Such uncomplimentary phraseology was thinly-veiled cipher for the evangelical wing of British Friends which, as Speakman saw it, was undermining the entire Society through its blind resistance to modern ideas and liberal thought. He was scarcely less critical of Britain's small but assertive body of Conservative Friends who, as Speakman believed, responded to the modern world by clinging with a death grip to outworn ideas and forms that were even less relevant than narrow evangelicalism. Thus, in Speakman's opinion, British Quakerism was an unhealthy combination of 'popular theology' drawn from the Evangelical churches and 'morbid conservatism' which turned local meetings for worship into tribal rituals consisting largely of empty silence. Speakman pictured Quaker ministers and elders, regardless of their theological stance, as persons of middle age or beyond who inevitably addressed younger Friends, especially those who expressed the slightest interest in 'the advancing intelligence of the age,' as if their very time of life was essentially evil, implying that spiritual understanding could only be acquired by those who had 'gotten over' the temptations of youth.³

Twentieth century Quaker historiography has generally supported

Speakman's characterization of Victorian Friends. There has also been a tendency, following the interpretation originally sketched by John Wilhelm Rowntree in the early twentieth century and more fully developed by Richenda Scott, to depict the free-thinking Manchester Friends Speakman was defending, especially their leader David Duncan, as forerunners of and spiritual soul-mates to the makers of the 'Quaker Renaissance' which transformed British Quakerism during the 1890s and early twentieth century. Duncan's disownment in 1871 has been portrayed as a particularly poignant and tragic illustration of the sort of narrow intolerance practiced by the rigidly evangelical faction which dominated London Yearly Meeting.⁴

Still, despite disturbing indications of righteous complacency or uncharitable bigotry among Duncan's evangelical foes,⁵ the 'Manchester Difficulty' was more than an exercise in narrow-minded intolerance. All manner of Friends, staunch evangelicals, hidebound Conservatives and some identified as 'moderates'⁶ believed, not without cause, that the ardent and aggressive Duncan and his followers were not only 'unsound' but effectively unChristian in their theological position, moving rapidly and unapologetically towards Unitarianism. The idea that the Quaker reformers of the 1890s would have been comfortable with David Duncan's theology is highly questionable and while the Duncan affair may be useful in revealing what views were *not* acceptable among the majority of British Friends in about 1870, but it is of small value in providing insight into the actual beliefs and practices of the 15,000 members of London Yearly Meeting. Not does it help to delineate, except in the most general way, battle lines in the theological struggle that gripped British Quakerism during the 1870s and 1880s.

Recently this question of belief has commanded the attention of a number of Quaker historians who, using various sorts of contemporary evidence, either for the first time or from a fresh perspective, have attempted to discover some spiritual consensus among mid- to late nineteenth century British Friends. While much of this work has been enlightening, the sometimes contradictory conclusions which have emerged also raise a number of new questions about the theological propensities of late Victorian Quakers.

Edwin Bronner's recent essay accepts the standard "liberal" view first advanced by Rufus M. Jones and generally adhered to by Elizabeth Isichei and others that a 'strong evangelical emphasis was the dominant force in British Quakerism,' but Bronner also makes the point that the real precursors to the late-Victorian purveyors of modern thought and liberal theology were not the Manchester rebels of the 1860s, but

moderate evangelicals 'who realized that London Yearly Meeting needed to change if it was to reverse the decline in numbers and regain the spiritual power which had been present in an earlier time.' Bronner sees the challenge to evangelical fundamentalism as slow and largely uncoordinated but cites certain events such as the establishment of *The Friends Quarterly Examiner* in 1867 as key developments in the gradual movement toward a more liberal consensus among late nineteenth century British Quakers.⁷

The work of the late Roger Wilson, especially his 1988 Presidential Address to the Friends Historical Society, *Manchester, Manchester and Manchester Again*, summarizes the evolution of Quaker religious and social thought between the *Beacon* controversy of the 1830s and the Manchester Conference of 1895, as seen from the perspective of one who regarded the triumph of liberal theology in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as necessary and efficacious. Wilson believed that Victorian Quakerism was in dire need of change since the compromise adopted by British Friends in the aftermath of the radically evangelical Beaconite schism was, in essence, 'a rejection of thought in the life of the Society.'⁸ This was the tacit agreement, adopted to avoid another serious row, which Duncan and his followers, spoiling for a fight, failed to observe. Wilson obviously viewed the Duncanite difficulty as a watershed for nineteenth-century Quakerism in the sense that the disownment of David Duncan was clearly a Pyrrhic victory for the evangelical faction which hastened its eventual decline. In his opinion, this deterioration was immediately reflected in the refusal of Yearly Meeting to endorse a 'Declaration of Some Fundamental Principles of Christian Truth' promulgated by the Yearly Meeting Committee which had recommended Duncan's dismissal and almost certainly written by its leader, Joseph Bevan Braithwaite, the most prominent evangelical Friend of his time. This defeat, Wilson concluded, 'indicated that the evangelical stream could no longer count on carrying the theological sense of Yearly Meeting.' Thus, he saw this incident as the beginning of the end of evangelical domination in London Yearly Meeting, an illustration of growing resistance to the evangelical 'presentation of Quakerism as if its life were encapsulated year by year in its Y. M. Epistles.'⁹

An interesting counterpoint to Wilson is provided in an essay by Mollie Grubb which infers that the annual General Epistles do, in fact, 'most accurately reflect changes in [Quaker] religious thought' during the nineteenth century. Grubb argues that, far from demonstrating that evangelicalism was 'almost universally accepted by the Society,' the Epistles, from the time of the *Beacon* Controversy until about 1870,

'reveal an almost desperate desire to find refuge from the traumatic years of the early part of the century in a return to the principles and practices of early Friends.' Only after 1870, she notes, do the Epistles begin to reflect 'the austere and earnest piety of late Victorian England.'¹⁰

On the one hand, Mollie Grubb's conclusions concerning the unwillingness or inability of mid-Victorian evangelical Friends to impose a rigorous evangelical doctrine on the annual 'pastoral letter' to Friends supports Wilson's judgment that (until the Duncanites) Victorian Friends of all persuasions bent over backwards to avoid theological conflicts.¹¹ At the same time, however, Grubb's systematic analysis of nineteenth-century Epistles also implies that the state of belief among mid-Victorian Friends was far more complicated, and evangelicals far less dominant, than Bronner, Wilson and most others since Rufus Jones have indicated. But Grubb's conclusions also present difficulties. The annual Epistles were drafted through a procedure that was idiosyncratic even by Quaker standards.¹² To accept the full implications of Mollie Grubb's thesis, one would have to agree that between 1837 and about 1870, the epistles not only lacked evangelical content but also most accurately reflected the drift of religious thought in London Yearly Meeting. Existing anecdotal evidence is not conclusive as regards the general standard of belief among Friends.¹³ Still, whether or not evangelical influence was as dominant as has been generally supposed in the period prior to the 1870s, it certainly can be demonstrated that during that decade and the next, evangelical Friends in Britain made repeated efforts to secure the support of London Yearly Meeting for a standardized doctrinal statement incorporating the chief tenets of evangelical theology. One purpose of this paper is to demonstrate why those efforts were unsuccessful.

Boyd Hilton's estimate that the Age of Atonement in Britain ended about 1870 somewhat misses the mark for Quakerism,¹⁴ if only because evangelical fervour arrived late among English Friends and made a tardy exit as well. Still, it was from about 1870 that Quaker evangelicals began openly to demonstrate their serious concern about the inroads of liberal theology. The ugly resolution of the Manchester Difficulty was the first fruit of this concern but certainly not its final expression. The suppression of the Manchester schism did not halt or even significantly slow liberal Quaker attacks on the ideas of the Age of Atonement. In one form or another, these assaults continued and seriously sapped the energy of ageing evangelical leaders who felt compelled to respond to them. For example, even before J.B. Braithwaite's attempt to gain Yearly Meeting endorsement for 'Declaration of Some Fundamental

Principles of Christian Truth,' Braithwaite had set out, apparently for private circulation, his *Thoughts on the Atonement*, perhaps with a view to adding these to a growing canon of 'sound' Quaker doctrine. For lawyer Braithwaite, the Atonement represented not simply the literal blood sacrifice of 'one altogether innocent' in propitiation for the sins of humanity but also a necessary revelation of God's wrath. Because Divine law had been violated through human sinfulness, Divine justice demanded that the atonement for such transgressions be accompanied by the shedding of blood, 'without which there was no remission.' This was not, Braithwaite contended, God's revenge but rather the 'active manifestation of that holiness wholly consistent with His Love....'¹⁵

The timing of this document is of interest, especially in light of Mollie Grubb's conclusion that it was exactly at this time that the yearly epistles become demonstrably more evangelical in tone and content. J.B. Braithwaite's *Thoughts on the Atonement* not only appeared in close proximity to the smashing of the Duncanite rebellion, but also about the time when, following the death in 1870 of Josiah Forster (who had been known as the 'Knight of the yearly epistle'), Braithwaite began, more or less independently, to exercise what Edward Milligan has called a 'tenacious grip' on the drafting of the annual General Epistle.¹⁶ The Epistle of 1872, for instance, contains language on the Atonement which parallels or paraphrases Braithwaite's *Thoughts* set out six weeks earlier.¹⁷ By 1879 the tendency toward strongly evangelical language had proceeded to the point of the epistle's rejection of 'any principle of spiritual light... inherent in the mind or heart of man' and pronouncement that Scripture was the only 'authentic record of the Truth of God'. This apparent repudiation of the traditional spiritual authority of the Inward Light and insistence upon Biblical inerrancy was followed by an admonition to beware of the snares of "advanced science" or "higher culture"... [pervading] so much of the popular reading of the present day.'¹⁸

The epistles of the 1880s follow a similar pattern. Indeed, that of 1881 not only saw the wrath of God as an integral part of the New as well as the Old Testament but also recalled nearly word for word the famous post-Beaconite Epistle of 1836, asserting that there was no appeal from the Scriptures 'to any other authority whatsoever' and 'that whatsoever any say or do contrary to the Scriptures, though under the profession of the immediate guidance of the Spirit, is to be accounted a mere delusion.'¹⁹

Such passages seem less indicative of a growing evangelical consensus among Friends than of a desperate, and ultimately unavailing, effort, orchestrated by J.B. Braithwaite and his allies, to construct an

unimpeachable doctrinal breastwork against the encroachment of “modern thought”. Manifestations of the apostasy that evangelical Friends feared so deeply were not limited to the ‘popular reading’ of the day; they could be detected in the summaries of Quaker conferences, the articles in Quaker periodicals and the personal interaction within local meetings. A Conference called in 1873 to consider ‘the State of the Society’ has been characterized as equivocal, meandering and even ‘waterlogged.’ But even amidst the waffling and drift there was, in the view of one participant, an increased striving against ‘timid submission to the power of routine and custom.’²⁰

These sentiments were expressed by William Pollard (1828-1893) of Manchester to protest against what he called the ‘sharply defined masses of dogmatic teaching’ portending a ‘gradual doctrinal drifting of the Society towards Evangelicalism.’²¹ Pollard was also a leader in resisting efforts to introduce Bible reading into Quaker meetings for worship. In 1874 his Monthly Meeting, Hardshaw East, which two years earlier had disowned David Duncan, addressed a Minute to Yearly Meeting cautioning against the reading of Scripture in Friends’ meetings, lest such practice ‘weaken our testimony to the spirituality and simplicity of true worship, and the right authority of Gospel ministry.’²²

As the text of yearly epistles became increasingly dogmatic and ‘Protestant’, William Pollard’s attacks on evangelical, and, in his view, unQuakerly practices expanded. One who joined Pollard in this endeavour was Francis Frith (1822-1898), a retired Liverpool merchant and one of the pioneers of Victorian photography.²³ In 1877 Frith published a pamphlet which aggressively sought confrontation between what the author defined as two ‘utterly opposed... perfectly irreconcilable’ beliefs. ‘Will you have Quakerism or Evangelicalism?’, Frith asked: ‘They are not both right. Unless the former has been throughout an utter delusion and mistake, the latter is so to a very serious extent.’²⁴

In addition to such outspoken opposition, there is evidence of a underlying if silent anti-evangelical strain among Friends. In 1897 the distinguished Quaker jurist, Sir Edward Fry (1827-1918) recorded his spiritual principles ‘from the watchtower of old age,’ revealing his long-standing sense of alienation from many of his co-religionists of an evangelical stripe:

it is no wonder that my religious life has been a solitary one: that I have often felt as if no one quite understood my... thoughts... I was unable to enter into the religious combinations of those by whom I have been surrounded.²⁵

Attacks on evangelical doctrine and its promulgation within the Society were also apparent in a growing sense of alienation from evangelical ministry, especially among younger Friends, considerable numbers of whom were for the first time being exposed to higher education. At about the time Frith published his anti-evangelical pamphlet, Caleb Rickman Kemp, among the most earnest and active of evangelical ministers, confided to his 'Journal' a concern about 'the want of unity with my doctrinal teaching' in the meeting where he ministered. Some Friends, Kemp noted, had vigorously objected to his insistence on denying the possibility of salvation to those 'without the household of faith.' Although deeply troubled by this 'divergence,' Kemp still believed that 'the Society at large' supported his view of the necessity for a conversion experience to ensure salvation and he was particularly relieved to discover that J.B. Braithwaite, a 'wise counsellor... who walked with God', was 'with me in doctrinal truth.'²⁶ Another example of open confrontation between young Friends and elder evangelical ministers is recorded by Edward Vipont Brown, a medical student at the University of London, who recounted how he and his contemporaries chafed under the ministry of Henry Hipsley, sometimes joined by J.B. Braithwaite, at Holloway Meeting in north London. Brown recalled being admonished there for refusing to believe in the fires of hell. 'It was not Quakerism that we listened to in Holloway meeting,' Brown concluded. During Yearly Meeting in 1880, Hipsley deplored the growing tendency among younger Friends to ignore the fires of hell which, in his view, reflected the spread of 'infidelity' among better educated Quaker youth.²⁷

Despite such admonitions, complaints and objections continued to trouble evangelical ministers. Shortly before Hipsley's statement at Yearly Meeting, the *Friends Quarterly Examiner*, which had just published a series of articles incorporating strong criticism of evangelical tendencies among Friends, noted the desirability of Quakerism bringing 'the inward principles upon which its outward actions are professedly based... more conspicuously... into view.'²⁸ Much has been made of the influence during this crucial period of *A Reasonable Faith* (1884) by 'Three Friends' (Frith, Pollard and William Edward Turner) and of Edward Worsdell's *The Gospel of Divine Help* (1886) in moving London Yearly Meeting toward a liberal consensus - and rightly so.²⁹ These two brief expositions of liberal theology clearly, intelligently, and not unkindly, captured at least the intellectual high ground from evangelical forces and seemed to validate many of the "progressive" theological principles upon which twentieth century British Quakerism was to be based. Both books, especially the more widely read *A Reasonable Faith*,

provided young Quakers with both support for their theological position and ammunition for their arguments against evangelicals, but the ideas embodied in these seminal works were not startlingly new doctrines which suddenly swept away a generation hitherto unenlightened or unaware. Rather they were part of a more general trend, addressing an audience that was prepared for and receptive to the message they propagated.

Thus, by the mid-1880s the lines were distinctly drawn for the struggle to determine the spiritual direction of British Quakerism. One of the most important issues upon which that struggle was fought was the question of "extension" or Home Missions. The first round of this contest began in 1875 with the appointment of a Committee on General Meetings. General Meeting was a Quaker euphemism for the sort of revival which had become popular among Midwestern Friends in post-Civil War America. In addition to an abundance of emotional sermonizing, such events inevitably included such unQuakerly innovations as Bible reading and hymnsinging. They were intended to provide British Quakerism with the same sort of spiritual outreach through which Revivalist Friends in America had garnered a considerable harvest of conversions.³⁰ By 1879 the General Meetings Committee, including such evangelical stalwarts as J.B. Braithwaite and Caleb Kemp, reported 'that numbers of people have been truly converted' through such General Meetings as had been held, but many of these newly rescued believers had either joined other denominations or 'gone back to the world' because of the lack of sustained Quaker ministry.³¹

In response to such pleas, the original Committee was eventually replaced by a smaller Home Mission Committee composed of the evangelical core of the previous body. Among the stated objectives of the new Committee was the provision of monetary and other support which would permit those 'having the gift of ministry' to devote themselves full time to evangelistic work on behalf of the Society. The first mission workers labouring under the supervision of the Home Mission Committee enjoyed sufficient success to justify an expansion of their numbers, but these were never as large as the enthusiasm of their evangelical supporters. On the other hand, there were Friends who questioned whether the separate identity of their religious Society was not in danger of being subordinated to the vision of an aggressive minority bent on dragging Quakerism into a welter of undistinguished and undistinguishable evangelical sects and justifying its continued existence, not on the spiritual insights of early Friends, but in the assumption of a leading role in the struggle to hold back the main

currents of modern religious and scientific thought. Opponents of the new thrust of Home Mission activities perceived an ominous determination to build up a new form of Quaker ministry, waiting not upon the Light but upon the fashions and fancies of a religious tradition alien to Friends. As Home Mission work expanded, it became 'a fruitful source of friction' within London Yearly meeting.³²

The chief concern of those opposed to the thrust of Home Mission activities was that they would result in the establishment of a professional Quaker pastorate in the American revivalist mould.³³ These critics believed that such a development denied their Society's historical rejection of hireling ministers while simultaneously presenting its message as a warmed-over version of mainstream evangelical Protestantism. This opposition, manifesting itself with growing size and confidence in successive Yearly Meetings,³⁴ was centered upon well-educated younger people who envisioned a modern Society of Friends able to incorporate the most up-to-date discoveries of science and history into a living faith precisely because it did not require adherence to sort of dogmatic creed that evangelicals demanded.³⁵ During the late 1880s the debate over the direction of Home Missions merged with the question of dogma to produce a decisive moment for British Quakerism, its rejection of the Richmond Declaration of Faith.

The Richmond Declaration had its origin in a crisis among American Friends precipitated by the radical or 'holiness' faction which not only welcomed a professional Quaker clergy but also sought to abolish traditional Quaker prohibitions against 'water Baptism' and the physical partaking of the lord's supper.³⁶ The challenge of this Ordinance or 'water party' to the leadership of the revivalist evangelicals who dominated Midwestern and Western American Yearly Meetings was met by an international Conference of Orthodox Yearly Meetings, including Dublin and London.³⁷ Held at Richmond, Indiana, stronghold of Midwestern Quakerism, in September 1887, these proceedings, although not free from controversy, had the desired unifying effect. While refraining from condemnation of any particular group, the Conference upheld traditional Quaker rejection of outward sacraments. Its crowning act was the decision to issue a Declaration of Faith, setting out the corpus of Quaker beliefs in the hope that this would halt the prevailing tendency towards dissension, division and, ultimately, perhaps even disintegration.

Seeking both weighty authority and broad consensus, the Conference turned to Joseph Bevan Braithwaite, one of the London delegates, to frame the statement. Swiftly and almost singlehandedly,³⁸ Braithwaite produced what he described as 'simply a gathering up from existing

authenticated documents of the testimony of Friends... to the fullness which is in Christ.' J.B.B. held that, far from being a novelty, such 'declaratory statements of Christian doctrine' had been issued even by the first generation of Friends.³⁹ A century later Quaker historians have attested to the validity of Braithwaite's view, characterizing his Declaration as 'a clear, scripturally based statement of belief... far more traditional... than its critics often allow' or as 'a monument to the impact of evangelical thought in the Society.'⁴⁰ Recently, one American Friend called the Declaration 'a valiant effort to bring unity among the then largest segment of Friends in America...', containing much that could be affirmed 'on sound historical grounds.'⁴¹ Contemporary critics were, however, likely to see it in a more partisan, less generous spirit. In his *Latter periods of Quakerism* Rufus M. Jones, who became the leading American spokesman for the New Theology, recalled the statement as 'a relic of the past...' which 'made no effort to interpret Christianity to this age... [and] reflected no sign of the prevailing intellectual difficulties over questions of science and history.' In England the distinguished Quaker historian Thomas Hodgkin called it a 'goody, goody, determined to be orthodox, vapid and diffuse confession of Faith.'⁴²

The Richmond Declaration was endorsed by most American Yearly Meetings,⁴³ but when J.B. Braithwaite brought his "creed," as critics immediately termed it, back to Britain for certification, he stirred up a nest of opposition which would eventually prove to be a decisive factor in the overthrowing of the evangelical oligarchy which had controlled at least the machinery of London Yearly Meeting for half a century.

Late in 1887, John William Graham, B.A., London, M.A., Cambridge, and at age 28, newly appointed tutor at Dalton Hall, Manchester, expressed concern to his parents about Braithwaite's 'trying to give us a *creed*.'

It would be a grievous calamity and would split the Society if carried; but *everybody* is against it, including Evangelicals such as W.S. Lean and J.B. Hodgkin, so I think there is not much fear. Still, the Y. M. should be strengthened by genuine Friends going up... It will mean a presidential defeat when Bevan returns.⁴⁴

Opposition to the Richmond Declaration was most obvious and vociferous among well-educated younger Friends like Graham and young Roger Fry, then a student at Cambridge, who expressed the opinion that 'the creed... would be a death blow to Quakerism in its present form...'⁴⁵ Certainly, the younger generation have subsequently been given considerable credit for finally convincing London Yearly

Meeting of the document's unacceptability. But it may be that a developing Quaker mythology, partly self-constructed, has given these younger people more celebrity and acclaim for the decisiveness of their contributions than they deserve, at least in so far as they have been depicted as leaders of a beleaguered minority rousing the forces of progress for a do or die struggle against evangelical reaction. In fact, resistance to the adoption of any sort of credo appears to have been broadly based from the beginning and to have included many older and at least moderately evangelical Friends.⁴⁶

The fate of the Richmond Declaration in Britain was decided by London Yearly Meeting in late May 1888 in a day-long session during which, according to one participant, '[n]ot one bitter or unkind word was uttered.'⁴⁷ John W. Graham provided his sister with a lively and detailed description of the proceedings.

The Creed Debate was a glorious success, and my mind is immensely relieved and really quite jolly! There were, on my own counting, 1100 people of both sexes, crowding every seat & aisle & doorway of the large Meeting House.

The debate lasted for five hours and over 60 individuals 'made definite speeches,' including Graham himself, who spoke for

about 10 mins... and felt intensely relieved & much backed up by feeling the sympathy of all the younger people in the galleries round. My voice seemed to fill the Meeting easily... At intervals the Clerk [Joseph Storrs Fry] stopped the men and asked some lady to speak. On the whole the women speakers helped us; & their presence certainly did. The minute was most satisfactory. It gave no shadow of sanction to the document & said why - (1) We had never decided before the deputation went [to Richmond] that we wanted a creed. (2) We are not allowed to change this. (3) Many Friends object to its contents.⁴⁸

Graham's exultation at his personal success and that of the Cause can obviously be contrasted with Joseph Bevan Braithwaite's disappointment and chagrin at the result:

there were some[,] to me, very *painful* exhibitions, from *W.S. Lean*, Jno. W. Graham, Edwd Grubb & some others, yet we were helped through better than might have been expected. The prejudice has been stimulated in a high degree against a "creed"; the Declaration is printed in the body of our proceedings, but no judgment is made upon it.⁴⁹

A judgment had of course been made and it changed the British Society of Friends forever. The Angry God of the Age of Atonement

had been ushered out of the Large Meeting Room at Devonshire House and been replaced by a kinder, gentler but infinitely more elusive Deity. The process by which this transformation took place was more gradual and less traumatic than has sometimes previously been depicted. It was natural rather than revolutionary, a product of changing social and educational standards among Friends, not of startling theological innovations. By the same token, the picture of an isolated and embattled youthful minority swaying their elders through the eloquence of their words and the depth of their sincerity also needs to be modified. The young women and men who opposed the Richmond Declaration may have been on shaky historical ground, but they were on the winning side, and, for the most part, they would continue to be in so far as the theological and social drift of British Quakerism was concerned. The tone of some British Quaker meetings may have remained strongly evangelical well into the twentieth century, but the successful struggle of liberal Friends against the imposition of a pastoral system, the expanding influence of 'modern thought' as illustrated by Manchester Conference of 1895 and the outspoken leadership of younger Friends such as John Wilhelm Rowntree, Edward Grubb, W.C. Braithwaite and others gave liberal Friends increasing assurance that they were not only in tune with the times, but with the future of British Quakerism as well.

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

- ¹ Speakman's articles were published between October 1872 and December 1873. By that time the membership of London Yearly Meeting had slowly begun to increase after reaching its low point of less than 14,000 members during the mid-1860s. Also see Edwin B. Bronner, *'The Other Branch': London Yearly Meeting and the Hicksites, 1827-1912* (London 1975), 32-33.
- ² The latest and most detailed discussion of the Duncan affair is Thomas C. Kennedy, 'Heresy-Hunting Among Victorian Quakers: the Manchester Difficulty, 1861-1873,' *Victorian Studies*, 34/2 (winter 1991), 227-53; for the E.T. Bennett case, see Edward H. Milligan, 'In Reason's Ear': Some Quaker and Anglican Perplexities', *Friends Quarterly*, 23 (1984), 384-96.
- ³ *Manchester Friend*, I/12, 15 Nov. 1872, 186. Speakman was not being entirely fair for this concern had not gone unnoticed among British Quakers. In 1868 the Yearly Meeting Epistle on Meetings for Discipline suggested that older Friends 'look all around and see if any... younger friends... in the freshness of religious feeling, may not perform much of the needed service.' See *Minutes and Proceedings of the Yearly Meeting of Friends, 1868*, (hereinafter *MPYMF*, with year), 40-1.
- ⁴ A copy of the outline for J.W. Rowntree's projected history of Quakerism in the Rufus M. Jones Papers at Haverford College includes an entire chapter on the

Manchester schism and David Duncan's role in it. Also see Richenda C. Scott, 'Authority or Experience: John Wilhelm Rowntree and the Dilemma of Nineteenth Century British Quakerism', *Journal of the Friends Historical Society* 49 (1960), 75-95. Rufus Jones did not even mention Duncan or the difficulty in Hardshaw East Monthly Meeting in his semi-official history of *The Latter Periods of Quakerism* (1921).

- ⁵ See, for example, Mary Hodgson's wrenching commentary to Elizabeth Green on Joseph Bevan Braithwaite's arrogantly uncharitable conduct as the dominant member of the Yearly Meeting Committee that recommended David Duncan be disowned by Hardshaw East Monthly Meeting, 12 August and 15 November 1871, Portfolio A 59 and 60, Library of the Society of Friends, London [hereafter LSF], and Braithwaite's privately enthusiastic response to Duncan's untimely death in his 'Journals and Commentaries [1865-76]', 197-201, MS Box 9.1 (6), LSF. Also see Kennedy, 'Heresy-Hunting', 242-51 *passim*.
- ⁶ See Edwin B. Bronner, 'Moderates in London Yearly Meeting, 1857-1873: Precursors of Quaker Liberals', *Church History* 59 (Sept. 1990), 356-71.
- ⁷ Bronner, 'Moderates', 357, 364.
- ⁸ Roger C. Wilson, 'Friends in the Nineteenth Century,' *Friends Quarterly*, 23/8 (October 1984), 356.
- ⁹ Roger C. Wilson, *Manchester, Manchester, and Manchester Again*, Presidential Address to the Friends Historical Society, 12 November 1988 (London 1990), 26, 29.
- ¹⁰ Mollie Grubb, 'Tensions in the Religious Society of Friends in England in the Nineteenth Century', *The Journal of the Friends' Historical Society*, Volume 56/1 (1990), 2, 10. Edwin Bronner takes issue with Mollie Grubb on the grounds of her failure either to appreciate evangelical use of early Friends to support Scriptural authority or to distinguish between the evangelical usage of Holy Spirit in the sense of a conversion experience and the traditional Quaker use of 'Inward Light' as consistent and universal Divine Indwelling. Unpublished comments seen by courtesy of Professor Bronner.
- ¹¹ There was a small group of Conservative Friends in Fritchley Meeting who, in 1870, protesting against evangelical tendencies in London Yearly Meeting, followed John G. Sargent in a separation which lasted well into the twentieth century.
- ¹² For a discussion of the appointment and composition of the so-called Large Committee which drafted the Epistle and was, in practice, very small, see Edward H. Milligan, 'To Friends Everywhere': Reflections on the Epistle in the Life of London Yearly Meeting', *Friends Quarterly*, 22/11 (July 1982), 724-36.
- ¹³ The handwritten 'Reflections' of Laura Jane Moore (1870-1955) would seem to support both points of view. Moore described the uncle and aunt who raised her as 'Friends of the prevalent type of the time, a mixture of old-fashioned Quakerism, inherited through generations from the time of George Fox, and then modern evangelicalism of the later years of the Evangelical Revival...' [5]. I am grateful to Henry Ecroyd for making this material available to me.
- ¹⁴ Boyd Hilton, *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1795-1865* (Oxford 1988).
- ¹⁵ J.B. Braithwaite, 'Thoughts on the Atonement', 11 April 1872, lithographic copy of handwritten original, MS Port. 8/126, LSF. An expanded version of these 'Thoughts' was published nearly 20 years later in the *Friends Quarterly Examiner*, 24 (1890), 103-120.
- ¹⁶ Milligan, 'To Friends Everywhere', 730-31.

- ¹⁷ The Epistle, for example, quotes Hebrews (ix, 22): 'without shedding of blood, there is no remission.' *MPYMF*, 1872, 26-31.
- ¹⁸ *MPYMF*, 1879, 39-41 and Grubb, 'Tensions', 12.
- ¹⁹ *MPYMF*, 1881, 36.
- ²⁰ Wilson, *Manchester*, 28-29; Bronner, 'Moderates', 370-71; and William Pollard, 'The Recent Friends Conference in London,' pamphlet in Box 414/22, LSF. Pollard's reflections on the conference were also published in *The Friends Quarterly Examiner* in 1874.
- ²¹ William Pollard, 'Thoughts for the Next Yearly Meeting', *FQE*, 5 (1871), 293 and *MF*, I/7, 15 June 1872, 109-110. Pollard believed that he brought a healing influence to Mount Street Meeting in the uneasy aftermath of the Duncanite division. See Pollard's entry in 'Dictionary of Quaker Biography', LSF and Wilson, *Manchester*, 30.
- ²² Pollard, 'Recent Friends Conference', 10 and Minute 3, 15-16 April 1874, Minutes, Lancashire and Cheshire Quarterly Meeting, Lancashire Record Office (LRO), Preston. Pollard was the head of the committee which recommended this minute. See Wilson, *Manchester*, 30.
- ²³ See Beryl Williams, 'Francis Frith (1822-1898)', *The Friends' Quarterly*, 23/8 (October 1984), 364-70. For Frith's work as a photographer, see Bill Jay, *Victorian Cameraman: Francis Frith's Views of Rural England, 1850-1898* (Newton Abbott 1973).
- ²⁴ Francis Frith, 'Evangelicalism' *From the Stand Point of the Society of Friends* (London 1877), 8, 27-8.
- ²⁵ Sir Edward Fry and Agnes Fry, *A Memoir of the Right Honorable Sir Edward Fry...* (London 1921), 165, 167.
- ²⁶ Caleb R. Kemp, 'Journals', IV, 31 Dec. 1876, 107-08, 16 Jan. 1877, 112-14 and 18 Feb. 1877, 116, MS Vol S7, LSF.
- ²⁷ E.V. Brown, 'The Renaissance of Quakerism,' *FQ*, 5/14 (Oct. 1951), 202-03. Also see Roger Wilson, 'Friends in the Nineteenth Century', *FQ*, 23/8 (Oct 1984), 359.
- ²⁸ *FQE*, January 1880, 1. William C. Westlake (1822-1887), listed by Bronner among the 'active moderates,' was editor of the *FQE* at this time.
- ²⁹ See the special centenary issue of *The Friends Quarterly* (1984) which was entirely devoted to a discussion of these works and their impact on British Friends over the past century.
- ³⁰ See Malcolm J. Thomas, 'The Committee on General Meetings, 1875-83' in *A Quaker Miscellany for Edward H. Milligan*, edited by David Blamires, Jeremy Greenwood and Alexander Kerr (Manchester 1985), 133-43 and Thomas D. Hamm, *The Transformation of American Quakerism, Orthodox Friends, 1800-1907* (Bloomington, Ind. 1988), 74-97.
- ³¹ Quoted in Thomas, 'General Meetings', 138.
- ³² See Minutes, Friends Home Mission Committee (FHMC), 1882-1884, LSF; Roger Wilson, 'The Road to Manchester 1895', in *Seeking the Light: Essays in Quaker History in Honor of Edwin B. Bronner*, edited by J. William Frost and John M. Moore (Wallingford and Haverford, Pa. 1986), 146; and Edward Grubb, *Quakerism in England* (London 1901), 15.
- ³³ In 1886 six Home Mission workers were receiving support; by 1892 their numbers had grown to 42 and their annual subsidy to £3,500. See *Is There Not a Cause?: The Society of Friends and the late Home Mission Conference* (London 1893), 29. This anonymous pamphlet, which was extremely critical of Home Mission activities, was probably written by John W. Graham.

- ³⁴ See, for example, reports of Yearly Meeting debates on Home Missions by John W. Graham to his parents, 26 May 1887 and 29 May 1888, Box 7, John William Graham Papers (JWGP), John Rylands Library (JRL), University of Manchester.
- ³⁵ Younger Friends who were most prominent in their opposition to the evangelical influence on the Home Mission Committee included two of J.B. Braithwaite's sons, J.B. Jr., a stockbroker and William Charles who practiced law in his father's chambers. Others were Silvanus P. Thompson, a physicist, teacher and future member of the Royal Society, E. Vipont Brown, a physician in Manchester, and his brother Alfred, as well as John William Graham, Alfred Neave Brayshaw, Edward Grubb and J. Rendel Harris. Each of the latter three were university educated or affiliated. See E. Vipont Brown, 'The Renaissance of Quakerism', *Friends Quarterly*, 1951, 204-06.
- ³⁶ The justification for supporting such 'Ordinances' was that these sacraments had Scriptural sanction. For the Ordinance controversy among American Friends, see Hamm, *Transformation of American Quakerism*, 130-37.
- ³⁷ Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, then dominated by Wilburite (Conservative) Friends, was not officially represented, but some Gurneyite (evangelical) members attended. No Hicksites were invited.
- ³⁸ A committee of 12 was appointed to draft the declaration, but J.B. Braithwaite, assisted by James E. Rhoads, President of Bryn Mawr College, and James Carey Thomas of Baltimore Yearly Meeting, did most of the work. It seems clear that the Declaration was largely written before the Conference began; it probably owed something to the document produced by J.B.B. and other members of the Visitors' Committee in the wake of the David Duncan affair. See Allen Jay, *Autobiography* (Philadelphia [1912]), 361-62.
- ³⁹ J. Bevan Braithwaite, 'Notes on the Richmond Conference, 1887', *FQE*, 22 (1888), 272-88, see especially 280, 285. H. Larry Ingle's provocative essay 'On the Folly of Seeking the Quaker Holy Grail', *Quaker Religious Thought*, 25/1 May 1991), 26n.1 notes various creedal statements published by George Fox: 'each one as time went on sounding more and more orthodox.'
- ⁴⁰ Punshon, *Portrait in Grey*, 203 and Hamm, *Transformation of American Quakerism*, 137.
- ⁴¹ Wilmer A. Cooper in *Quaker Religious Thought* no.78 25/4 (July 1992), 43. Also see Mark Minnear, *Richmond 1887: A Quaker Drama Unfolds* (Richmond 1987).
- ⁴² Jones, *Latter Periods*, II, 931; Hodgkin is quoted by Hope Hay Hewison, 'Human Progress and the Inward Light', *The Journal of the Friends' Historical Society* 56/2 (1991), 137.
- ⁴³ Ohio, Iowa and Western Yearly Meetings rejected it for varying and sometimes contradictory reasons; Philadelphia (Orthodox) would not even consider it.
- ⁴⁴ J.W. Graham to parents, 5 Nov. and 4 Dec. 1887, Box 7, J.W.G.P., JRL, Manchester. William Scarnell Lean (1833-1908), principal of Flounders Institute, 1870-1899 is listed as an 'active moderate' by Bronner, 'Moderates in L.Y.M.', 367; Jonathan Backhouse Hodgkin (1843-1926) was an influential evangelical minister and author, often associated with J.B. Braithwaite.
- ⁴⁵ Roger Fry to father [Sir Edward Fry], 6 May 1888, Temp. MSS. 587/1-2, LSF. Also see Fry to mother, 18 March 1888, *ibid*.
- ⁴⁶ W.S. Lean and Jonathan Backhouse Hodgkin are noted above. Also see Richard Westlake, 'The Richmond Conference', *FQE* 22 (1888), 148-49, an extremely critical article by the editor of the *Friends Quarterly Examiner* and Joseph Rowntree's *Memorandum on the Declaration of Christian Doctrine issued by the Richmond Conference*,

1887 (York: Privately printed, 1888), a point by point refutation of the 'Declaration' printed at the author's expense (and in a financially troubled time for his chocolate firm).

⁴⁷ Edward Grubb, *Quakerism in England*, 8.

⁴⁸ J.W. Graham to Agnes [Graham], 31 May 1888, Box 7, JWGP, JRL, Manchester.

⁴⁹ J.B. Braithwaite, 'Journals, 1883-1890', 21 June 1988, 289, LSF. Roger Wilson believed that Braithwaite and his evangelical allies were relatively unperturbed by the rejection of the Richmond Declaration because they were still confident of their influence over the majority of the membership in London Yearly Meeting. See Wilson, 'The Road to Manchester', 147.