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A QUAKER INHERITANCE: AN ANALYSIS OF FAMILY  
VALUES, RELIGION AND THE CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH  
OF GEORGE NEWMAN (1870-1948)\*

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ABSTRACT

This paper looks at the early life of George Newman, who became an influential figure in the public health movement in England and Wales. It establishes his acceptance and integration within the Quaker community, the adoption of Quaker ideals of mission and service and explores the thinking behind a career choice in public health. Newman was a product of the times in which he lived and it was these unique influences (especially those of individuals) that shaped his understanding and development of services for the education and welfare of school children and the advancement of public health and preventive medicine. Throughout his life Newman remained committed to Quakerism despite his public career in an increasingly secular state.

KEY WORDS

Newman, family, religion; Quakerism, public health, education

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### Introduction

George Newman was a major, yet understudied figure, in the British public health movement.<sup>1</sup> He was responsible for the drafting of the 1907 Act that provided for medical inspection and later medical treatment of school children; he established open-air schools for the delicate and introduced new ideas in physical education. He was influential in the establishment of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and wrote inexhaustibly on health related topics, including 26 reports to the minister of education and 15 to the minister of health. His Quaker views influenced his thinking behind the development of a public health system. In particular, the evolvement of the school medical service and the growth of medical education and research were closely intertwined with his Quaker outlook. The rationale behind many of these changes was nurtured in Newman's childhood and concurs with Milton's view, that 'childhood shows the man'.<sup>2</sup>

### Family and Formative Years

The influence of the home was personified in many of Newman's writings. In 1895, for example, he wrote that, 'the home is the real school-house of those, who, in their day and generation will rule the world for good or evil'.<sup>3</sup> The Quaker home that Newman was brought up in exemplified the traditions of public service and practical Christianity. It was these traits, which were shown through the work of his mother, father, sister and aunt that later influenced Newman's thinking as an adult.

1. George Newman was concurrently Medical Officer of Health to Finsbury and Bedford county councils from 1900 to 1907. He was appointed first Chief Medical Officer to the Board of Education in 1907 and was knighted for his services to child health in 1911. In 1919 he was made Chief Medical Officer to the new Ministry of Health. He retired in 1935. He was a prolific writer, producing twenty-six reports for the Board of Education, fifteen for the Ministry of Health and wrote twenty-two books. He was literary advisor to *The Friend*, editor of the *Friends Quarterly Examiner*, warden of Chalfont House, a member of the Frideswide Girls' Club and the Cromwell Club for men and a founding member of the Friends Ambulance Unit.

2. J. Milton, *Comus*, p. 220.

3. George Newman, *The Lilies of the Field: How They Grow* (privately printed, 1895), p. 16.

George Arthur Newman was born on 23 October 1870, at Leominster in the county of Herefordshire, England. Newman was the fourth child and second son of Henry Stanley Newman (1837-1912) and Mary Anna Newman (nee Pumphrey, 1835-1908).

Henry Stanley (Newman's father) was born at Gloucester Place, West Derby, Liverpool and worked in the family grocery business in Leominster. He had varied interests which included adult education, temperance work, home and foreign missions, the anti-slavery issue, orphans and fatherless children, Quaker literature and Quaker ministry. He was an enthusiastic reader and writer of Quaker literature, producing many articles and pamphlets including: *Foreign Missions Reviewed* (1865); *Christian Solidarity* (1887); *The More Effective Presentation of Spiritual Truth* (1895). He founded the Leominster Orphan Homes (1869), was one of the founders of the Leominster Adult School and was leader of the Leominster Men's School for 54 years. In 1869 he became a minister and took a prominent part in the local Tent Meetings and travelled overseas for the Ministry throughout India, Palestine and America. In addition he was editor of *The Friend* (1892-1912), honorary secretary of the recently formed Friends Foreign Mission Association (FFMA), secretary of the Leominster Tract Association and founder of the Orphans' Printing Press (1873). One of the best insights into Henry Stanley's life is in *The Friend*:

There was no cessation; no cancelling of appointments; no excuses given or taken; fatigue and personal inconvenience were set aside; it was one long, persistent, happy service, both for the Society and for the Kingdom of God.<sup>4</sup>

Mary Anna (Newman's mother) was born in Worcester and was the sister of Stanley Pumphrey, the Quaker Minister, who travelled extensively in America. Her commitment towards public works was evident prior to her marriage, when she visited infant schools, taught classes in a Women's Adult School and had the care of a Bible Society and Provident District. In 1863 she married Henry Stanley. Between 1865 and 1876 their six children were born, three daughters and three sons.<sup>5</sup> Mary had a great capacity for hard work. In addition to looking after a large

4. 'The Late Henry Stanley Newman', *The Friend* 44 (11 November 1912), pp. 709-15 (714).

5. Harriet Mary, 3 February 1865; Josiah, 27 September 1866; Lucy, 18 February 1869; George Arthur, 23 October 1870; Stanley Pumphrey, 1 December 1872; Caroline Elizabeth, 14 February 1876.

family she oversaw the day-to-day running of the grocery business with several living-in apprentices. Furthermore, she was an active worker in the FFMA, the local orphan homes and the local Tract Association. In 1878 the Hereford and Radnor Monthly Meeting recorded her as being a minister. In Leominster she visited the homes of the sick or those who were in difficulty; she gained local recognition by becoming the first woman member of the Leominster Board of Guardians. She was assistant clerk of the monthly meetings, clerk of the Women's Quarterly Meeting and the Monthly Meeting for Ministry and Oversight.<sup>6</sup>

Aside from his mother and father there were two further influential figures in Newman's early life, Aunt Caroline Westcombe Pumphrey (his mother's sister) and his older sister Harriet (the first of the Newman children). Caroline Pumphrey dedicated her life to the Newman family and to the Society. She was unmarried, and when not looking after the Newman and Eddington nephews and nieces, she worked effortlessly for the Corresponding Bible Class, the FFMA and was co-editor of *Our Missions*. The following extracts are indicative of Newman's relationship with his aunt:

I love you tremendously perhaps much more than you think and for all my life you will stand out as one of the central figures of my boyhood.<sup>7</sup>

With my mother she was enthroned in my heart—and life's allurements in the long years left them there, alone and untouched. At her side I learned of the wide world and of the duty of service.<sup>8</sup>

Together, Harriet Newman and Caroline Pumphrey looked after the younger Newman children. Newman referred to their influence as follows:

How often in life's story we forget the enduring influences of the governesses of our childhood...it was the first bending of the twig by gentle womanly hands that gave it direction and guidance.<sup>9</sup>

6. *The Bax Family* (Headley Bros, 1936), a collection of published Quaker histories, with several handwritten additions by Evelyn Whiting, by kind loan of John Whiting (cousin of George Newman). Personal communication with Margaret Lloyd (member of the Leominster Meeting), 22 November 1989.

7. George Newman, Letter to Caroline Westcombe Pumphrey, 9 May 1891, MS 6206 n. 60, Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, London (WIHM).

8. George Newman, *Caroline Westcombe Pumphrey* (Leominster: The Orphans' Printing Press, 1926), p. 4.

9. *Quaker Profiles* (London: Bannisdale, 1946), p. 66.

Harriet's reminiscences provide an interesting insight into family life when the children were small:

Life was a serious and strenuous business for the parents... The Orphan Homes became one of the absorbing occupations of the family. It was practical philanthropic work that appealed to Friends. Our homes began in a dull old house in Bridge St and I remember being set to make a selection of our own toys for the first children... There were gatherings at Broad St., which we much enjoyed—they took on a philanthropic flavour and were known as Bees. The object was to distribute the new Orphan Home Report and specimens of the new tracts. Most of the Friends came to help with this.

Life had a good many interests but there was a strong streak of Puritanism and we were hedged in with many taboos. There was no music or singing, no dancing, and certainly no acting. These were all thought of as 'worldly' and we must be kept from the world.<sup>10</sup>

From their earliest years the Newman children participated in public service and practical Christianity. More significantly, Newman remarked that this was an activity that 'they all enjoyed'.<sup>11</sup> The combination of living in a home that was also a business, together with the many religious-based activities that the children were encouraged to join in, meant that Newman was used to socializing—a talent which in later life was to prove extremely useful. It also provided him with an introduction to a network of people who were active in social affairs and gave him connections to be used in later life.

Newman, reflecting on his life, commented that, 'fate gave me a Quaker Home and upbringing, but I became a man before I appreciated it fully'.<sup>12</sup>

## Education

Nineteenth-century Quaker educational thinking was profoundly affected by the doctrine of the Inner Light.<sup>13</sup> Since anyone could pass on God's message, English as the medium of communication formed the basis of the Quaker curriculum. The belief in the Inner Light had two

10. H.M. Newman, 'Family Life at Home', MS notebook, additional notes added 1942, M4/120, pp. 8-10, Hereford and Worcester Record Office (HWRO).

11. E.S. Whiting, Biographical notes of Sir George Newman, M4/166, HWRO.

12. Autobiographical notes, August 1939, M4/168, HWRO.

13. W.A.C. Stewart, *Quakers and Education* (London: Epworth Press, 1953), p. 10.

further consequences. First, as both men and women received contact from God, both should be taught; and second, because everyone could receive messages, all people were equal and therefore their work, no matter how menial, was of equivalent status.

The belief that there is good in every person was reflected in the schools by the high priority given to character building and the reinforcement of positive behaviour. The three most prominent character traits were plainness, directness and probity. Honesty, both with oneself and with others, was also encouraged. The acquisition of these traits produced men and women of strong character. These characteristics, combined with the development of a strong service commitment, equipped those educated within the Quaker schools, to become useful members of society.<sup>14</sup>

Newman's experience of Quaker education reinforced many of the values that he had learnt at home, in particular, the importance of public service, and developed within him a love of writing that was to be seen in the extensive publications that he produced in later life.

In 1881 Newman was sent to Sidcot School, Somerset. Josiah (Newman's eldest brother) was a former pupil and various members of the Newman extended family lived in the Somerset area and had used Sidcot to educate their children. The school was co-educational, with boys and girls taught separately. Admission was open to all religious denominations. Newman was influenced greatly by the Christian teaching. In letters to his parents he stated his desire to be a missionary in India.<sup>15</sup> This was his interpretation of how he could best be of service to God and to the community. Newman's education at Sidcot, in addition to providing academic knowledge, stimulated a lifelong interest in world affairs and provided him with leisure time pursuits—travelling, walking and cricket—which later on afforded him respite from the tensions of public life.

In 1885 Newman left Sidcot to continue his education at Bootham School, York, where university entrance work featured prominently in the curriculum. Bootham was formed to provide the middle and upper classes of Friends with a liberal, guarded and religious education. The education was guarded in the sense that pupils rarely mixed with the

14. H. Brinton, *Quaker Education in Theory and Practice* (Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 1958), p. 8.

15. Letters to parents, 1883–86, MS 606 nn. 11–24, WIHM.

local community. Personal contacts were restricted to the teaching staff, who were dedicated Quakers, or to members of the York Meeting or to visitors from the wider circle of Friends. News from the press was selected by the teaching staff and carefully chosen visitors to the school kept students abreast of the political and social problems of the time. In addition, the school day was cemented with periods of silent worship before breakfast, at meal times and before bedtime. Bootham's sound academic reputation was well known and long-standing, particularly in the field of science.<sup>16</sup>

Bootham made a greater impression on Newman than Sidcot.<sup>17</sup> Bootham exemplified Quaker education policies by developing a sense of belonging to the Quaker community, which during Newman's time still resembled a large family in its interdependence. The special Quaker attitude to education, then as now, was based on the belief that all pupils were blessed with 'that of God within them' and therefore no pupil could be treated harshly or with sarcasm or as a hopeless case. This attitude was, of course, ideal: but it was the generally accepted approach of all members of staff. Newman, in his reminiscences, referred to the teachers who had, 'set before us the world of men and its needs and interests'.<sup>18</sup> One teacher in particular, Benjamin Bower LeTall, captivated his interest. LeTall was renowned for entering the classroom like a tornado. His brilliant literary and educational abilities were responsible for inspiring generations of children in his dramatic lessons of Quaker history.<sup>19</sup>

Bootham was also responsible for introducing Newman to Arnold Rowntree (1872–1951). Newman and Rowntree shared many interests. Both were keen cricketers and enthusiastic naturalists, but it was politics that held a keener passion for them and cemented their friendship: both followed the affairs of the Liberal party. Rowntree, in particular, would read out extracts from the newspapers and expound his views to his

16. J. Gathorne-Hardy, *The Old School Tie* (New York: Viking Press, 1977), pp. 220–30; C.J. Smith, Personal communication, 26 March 1990.

17. George Newman, Letter to Elizabeth Cadbury, 12 October 1919, MS 466/363/25, British Library of Political and Economic Science (BLPES). E.M. Cadbury, 'A Tribute to the Memory of George Newman', *Friends Quarterly Examiner* 2 (1948), p. 137.

18. 'A Quaker Centenary' (an address delivered at the celebration of the centenary of Bootham School, York; London: British Periodicals, 1923).

19. Bootham School Register 1935, p. 241.

schoolmates. He eventually went on to become the Member of Parliament for York. At school Rowntree was very popular with his peers, attracting friends like a magnet by means of his naturally good nature and his sense of fairness combined with an appealing sense of humour. Newman, in contrast, was the quieter of the two, less confident than the gregarious Rowntree, and by far the more studious. Rowntree has been described as 'something of a laggard' in the classroom.<sup>20</sup> The contrast in their personalities, together with the seriousness of their political outlook, forged a lasting friendship: 'My father, Arnold S. Rowntree was one of GN's closest friends, ever since their schooldays together at Bootham and he often stayed with us in York'.<sup>21</sup>

The recollections of Christopher Rowntree (Arnold's eldest child), also verify this: 'He and my father were very close friends and I can remember GN and his wife Ada staying with us in York and my sister Tessa and me being taken by the parents to the Newman family home near Harrow'.<sup>22</sup>

The effects of Newman's Quaker education are summarized best in his own words. The following statement also showed early signs of traits that were adopted by him in later life:

Quaker education and upbringing tends to develop men chiefly along two lines. In the first place it develops individuality rather than scholarship; and, secondly, it produces a type of prophecy. The first characteristic reveals itself in self-control, a sense of responsibility for endowment, and the development of each individual along the lines of his natural faculties. The second characteristic reveals itself in a conviction of the power of the unseen and spiritual forces, and in the possession and confession of high ideals.<sup>23</sup>

Newman's retrospective view of education at Bootham is interesting on several accounts. His comments are self-descriptive, for he developed more as an individual than as a scholar. There is evidence of this in an account by John Fizer (Newman's teacher) which outlined Newman's abilities and future prospects. Fizer described his pupil's conduct and character as being 'most satisfactory and very encouraging' and also of

20. E. Vipont, *Arnold Rowntree: A Life* (London: Bannisdale, 1956), p. 23.

21. T. Cadbury, Personal communication, 1 January 1990.

22. C.J. Rowntree, Personal communication, 17 December 1989.

23. 'The Result of Quaker Education', extracts from an address given to the Old York Scholars Association, Bootham School, York: Special Report 1915.

giving 'good promise for the future'.<sup>24</sup> Newman's academic achievements at Bootham were unremarkable despite his dedication to hard work. He had high standards and the importance of spiritual self-realization was never far from his thoughts. His love of writing and sense of history were clearly evident as his contributions to the *Bootham Observer* showed.<sup>25</sup> This collection is made up of essays written by the boys during their scholarship at Bootham. Usually there are only one or two pieces per pupil. Newman has seven listed, five of which focused on India.

Newman's interest in India and her problems is easily explained. He had been captivated by his Aunt Caroline's endless stories of the sub-continent. Caroline Pumphrey was an active member of the FFMA and had written extensively about foreign missions in the *Friends Quarterly Examiner*. She was also a stimulating raconteur to the Newman children. As Newman remarked, 'the great Indian and missionary heroes became our ideal', adding that he was 'perplexed whether to become another Levi Coffin, or a second John Lawrence of the Punjab, or a follower of David Livingstone'.<sup>26</sup> In addition the 'British in India' had remained near the top of the political agenda since the establishment of the East India Company in 1599. India had from time to time gained further prominence through the expansion of British interests that resulted in frequent conflicts. The problems of the Indian subcontinent were well publicized. During Newman's childhood India was ravaged by a series of famines; in 1877 it was estimated that between five and six million people died. The Afghan War (1879–1881) and the annexation of Burma in 1885 were also topical issues. Newman's father visited Quaker missions in India during 1880 and 1881 and on his return published two books. There was also a less altruistic reason for Quaker interest in India—many Quakers earned their living through trade, including the Newman and Southall families. Furthermore the reinforcement of Quaker concerns in India by the teaching staff at Bootham explained

24. J.F. Fizer, Letter to Henry Stanley Newman, 8 September 1887, MS 6205 n. 1, WIHM.

25. *The Observer*, second series, 18, pp. 427–523, Bootham School, York. Newman: —'Why we Stay in India', undated; 'War of the Indian Mutiny', 20 October 1886; 'Governorship of Sir John Lawrence', 2 March 1886; 'Indian Famines', 1886; 'Rays of Light from India', undated; 'York School—30 Years Hence', 6 October 1885; 'All the World's a Stage and All the Men and Women Merely Players', 1887.

26. Newman, *Caroline Westcombe Pumphrey*, p. 4.

why he devoted a good proportion of his writing to the Indian question. Newman had also stated previously that he was going to be a missionary in India.<sup>27</sup> Two years later, a comparatively long period for a young person, Newman's enthusiasm was still running high when he embarked upon the series of essays at Bootham.

The essays covered political and social concerns and underlined his preoccupation with public service. His ideas were practical but not original and were influenced by his father's experiences and views. The essays did, however, show a sound knowledge of the subject matter and an understanding of the political issues involved. Newman's essay entitled 'Indian Famines', for example, offered a solution to enhance the livelihood of Indians. His idea was to construct a system of dams and various drainage systems to provide a continuous supply of water, ensuring a steady supply of food to obliterate recurrent famines. He also noted the importance of clean water for general hygiene purposes. This solution, whether it was original or not, showed a practical approach towards problem solving and an interest in contemporary health issues.

The style in which the essays were written is noteworthy. The carefully penned sentences exhibited a dearth of metaphors and similes. The Quaker characteristic of beginning writing by reviewing previous knowledge was in evidence and was a device that Newman used throughout his life. Newman, like many other Quakers, believed that what had happened in the past bore a direct relationship to what was happening in the present. Therefore, before one could examine contemporary issues and arrive at any conclusions, knowledge of what had happened before was of the utmost importance. Newman's writing was also characterized by the frequent use of a repeated statement, in an altered form throughout a piece of writing, in order to make a point. Whether he lacked confidence in his own ability to make a point clearly enough the first time or whether he adopted this method as a stylistic device is not known. What becomes apparent later on in his life is that Newman employed many of these techniques in the writing of his annual reports for the Board of Education and the Ministry of Health.

By the time Newman left Bootham he was using a scheme of authorship that remained virtually unchanged throughout his lifetime. He loved writing and produced clear and logical pieces of prose. He was a disciplined and descriptive writer, though cautious in stating his own

27. Letter to Caroline Westcombe Pumphrey, 26 May 1883, MS 6206 n. 11, WIHM.

opinions. His love of writing did not stop at formal authorship, for he was a prolific letter writer. Although his letters were penned similarly to his formal writings, within them are glimpses of sensitivity and his commitment to Quakerism. He wrote to his mother, for example, that 'I am a Quaker born tis true [sic]. But I am a Quaker a hundred times convinced'.<sup>28</sup>

### Career Choice and University Education

Newman, in common with most children, had various ideas concerning career choice. His first serious intention had been to become a missionary in India. His ideas changed. Newman's ideas of endowment and service to the community held true, but the vehicle through which to realize these aims altered:

So I am going to be a doctor! Well I'm very glad that I have the support of the 'illustrious' Editor of the 'Friend of Missions'. And I hope that sometime she may have a doctor nephew... When I perhaps sometime am a successful and useful doctor I shall never forget to lay it all to him (God). Perhaps he by his decision has sent forth his hand into the medical field to save the lives of many.<sup>29</sup>

The letter substantiated the continued importance of Caroline Pumphrey to Newman. She was mentor and confidante to both Newman and his father. Her role was essentially non-critical and supportive, sprinkled with sagacity. The decision to study medicine was undoubtedly influenced by religious considerations but it was not one to which Newman was opposed. The tenor of the letter indicated that he was pleased that the decision had been made for him.

Newman's decision to read medicine at Edinburgh University followed the tradition of many Edinburgh trained Quakers, who over the last century were active in public service. In his words Edinburgh 'developed a purpose and public spirit'.<sup>30</sup> The university's teaching was influenced by the work of Herman Boerhaave who believed in the importance of the Greek tradition in medicine, that is the use of observation, experience and evidence of the senses, and also the need for bedside or

28. Letter to Mary Anna Newman, 1 May 1892, MS 6206 nn. 61, 65, WHIM.

29. Letter to Caroline Westcombe Pumphrey, 8 September 1886, MS 6206 n. 25, WIHM.

30. George Newman, notes, 'How I Went into Public Health', M4/160, HWRO.

clinical teaching.<sup>31</sup> His belief that the physician's role was to observe, record and to draw conclusions through inductive reasoning from ascertained facts was sympathetic towards the Quaker interpretation of science.<sup>32</sup> The influence of Boerhaave was such that many Edinburgh graduates, Newman among them, were proud to call themselves 'the disciples of Boerhaave'.<sup>33</sup>

Newman's undergraduate training in Edinburgh lasted for four years (1888–92) during which time he studied courses on anatomy, physiology, materia medica and therapeutics (pharmacology), pathology and bacteriology, midwifery, psychiatry, child life and health, surgery, and forensic medicine.<sup>34</sup> Newman was interested especially in bacteriology and forensic medicine. It was his curiosity in these subjects, together with other factors that will be considered later, that led him to pursue a career in public health.

Bacteriology (an offshoot of pathology) was very much 'in vogue' worldwide as a new science. In 1891 it was well represented under Lister's presidency at the International Congress of Hygiene. William Smith Greenfield and Sims Woodhead taught bacteriology at Edinburgh. Woodhead's teaching formed the basis of his manual *Practical Pathology* that brought considerable eminence to the medical school. The enthusiasm that prevailed for bacteriology within the school, together with the publicity given to the subject by the medical and general press, in all probability accounted for Newman's fascination with this area of medicine.

Newman's other interest, forensic medicine, developed from his contact with Sir Douglas Maclagan (1812–1900). Forensic medicine was a term that referred to the application of medicine to the regulation of

31. T.C. Albutt, *Greek Medicine in Rome* (London: Macmillan, 1921); A.E. Underwood, *Boerhaave's Men at Leyden and After* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1977).

32. George Newman, *Interpreters of Nature* (London: Faber & Gwyer, 1927).

33. Address entitled 'The Disciples of Boerhaave in Edinburgh', Edinburgh 1926, reported in J. Thin, *Bicentenary of the Faculty of Medicine, 1726–1929* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1926).

34. Newman's year was the first to qualify as MB ChB (previously the award was MB CM); and also one of the few remaining years to undertake four years of study, in 1895 the course was changed to five years with extra studies in clinical and practical classes. These changes were in response to the recommendations of the new Scottish Universities Commission which had been created by the Universities (Scotland) Act, 1889.

the general health of the community. Maclagan was Professor of Forensic medicine and also a well known figure in Edinburgh society. He was a devout Christian and an active participant of the Medical Student's Christian Association (MSCA). Newman met Maclagan through his academic studies and also through their membership of the MSCA. Newman cited Maclagan as being one of the key factors that influenced his decision to pursue a career in public health.<sup>35</sup> More significantly it was Maclagan's perspective on public health that influenced Newman's later work. Maclagan has been credited with establishing the concept of a positive relationship between medicine and the state.<sup>36</sup> The importance of a workable relationship between these two parties formed the basis of his belief in the development of a public health system. Newman went on to nurture this relationship in his role as Chief Medical Officer.

Newman's decision to embark upon a career in public health was gradual. Maclagan was a factor, but there were others of equal importance. The city of Edinburgh was a pioneer of public health, appointing the first medical officer of health, Henry Littlejohn, in 1862. The medical school, with its belief that the control of disease and the rectification of its causes could improve social conditions, was a prime influence. This was the basis of the sanitary idea that was developed by Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth (1804–77)—a former student at Edinburgh. There were also religious considerations. The university had a reputation for being religiously tolerant and was well known for its public spiritedness and participation in 'good works'. These attitudes were also in evidence within the medical school. The school was proud of its Christian character. It emphasized that in each generation there were 'notable examples of the chief varieties of Christian experience and Christian standpoint'.<sup>37</sup> Included in these experiences was the medical school's missionary society (of which Newman was a leading member). Through the missionary society Newman met, and was influenced by the work of several individuals. These included Marcus Dods (Presbyterian divine and biblical scholar); G. Adam Smith (Scottish biblical scholar); Dwight L. Moody (American evangelist); the Barbours (Robert W., academic and minister; Dr. Hugh F., gynaecologist); and Henry Drummond (Scottish evangelical theologian and biologist). None of these were members of

35. George Newman, notes, 'How I Went into Public Health'.

36. W. Taylor, Notes of Lectures on Forensic Medicine by Sir D. Maclagan, DK. 3.25, 1883 (Edinburgh University Library)

37. Thin, *Bicentenary*, p. 67.

the Society of Friends but wrote and spoke extensively on religious issues and broadened Newman's interest in religion.<sup>38</sup>

However, it was Henry Drummond (1851–97) who was most influential in determining Newman's future career. Drummond spent his life in the work of the Toynbee order and in scientific and other travel. He was the author of many books—one of his earlier works, *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, being published by Newman's father at the Orphans' Printing Press in Leominster (1882). Through his writing he strove to reconcile the differences between Christianity and Darwinism, for example in *Natural Law of the Spiritual World* (1883), *The Ascent of Man* (1894) and *Tropical Africa* (1888). Drummond saw no contradiction between science and the basic claims of the Bible in the field of the natural universe in which science worked. Furthermore, he recognized that within the historical origins of the Christian religion, the same method of evolution was at work. Darwin had discussed the latter in his studies of the growth of physical life. On Newman's part there was no tension or conflict in accepting these comparatively advanced beliefs.

Newman had a deep respect for Drummond's knowledge of political, social and religious affairs and for the way in which he related to people. He referred to a typical visit to Drummond's home as follows:

Park Circus is a most enjoyable place...one feels it very cosmopolitan. The conversation ranged widely over politics and social life and religion, he knows well of what he speaks and is silent where his knowledge is not standard or his work authority... He is a part of all he has met and seen: and carries you off to the South Seas or Central Africa where he set the chief on fire with a magnifying glass or shot crocodiles on the Ququa...eventually a caller came whom Drummond treated like a Prince as in fact he treats everyone.<sup>39</sup>

Newman cited Drummond and his book *The Dedicated Life* as influencing his career choice. The aspect of the book that caught Newman's attention was the arguments for and against foreign missions.<sup>40</sup> Drummond's book embraced the gospel of social service, and reinforced Newman's commitment to this area, though it did not help him with the decision of where he should practice medicine:

38. Newman considered Drummond a 'Quaker by religion'. Letter from Newman to Mary Newman, 21 March 1892, MS 6206 n. 61, WIHM.

39. Letter to Mary Anna Newman, 21 March 1892, MS 6206 n. 61, WIHM.

40. Autobiographical notes, August 1939, M4/168, HWRO.

Many things say India, some few things say China, many things say here at home. I am in an inextricable darkness as regards all that. Something may turn up which will cause me to go abroad or stay at home. I want to go where I can be of most use.<sup>41</sup>

A further consideration that influenced Newman's career choice was the first-hand experience of poverty that he acquired from his practical training in the dispensaries and the inner city area of Cowgate. Cowgate was an overcrowded working class district. Sanitation failed to meet population increase; poverty and insanitary conditions resulted in the speedy transmission of disease and general ill health among the inhabitants. Many of these people attended the public dispensaries for relief. It was here that Newman came across excesses of smoking and drinking; as he commented 'I have seen too much evidence of the over use of the latter'.<sup>42</sup> Newman upheld the Victorian sentiment of moderation—a term used by the middle and upper classes of English society which was directed at the life style of the working classes and in particular with reference to alcohol overuse. He felt that the health of the poorer classes could be improved by the limitation of alcohol and tobacco. He urged for 'moderation' as opposed to 'abstinence'. One may have expected, given his strong religious views that he would have been in favour of total abstinence. While considering that his views may have been to some extent class driven, his appraisal of the situation was realistic rather than altruistic. This demonstrated that he was capable of direct insight into a problem without his judgment being impaired by other issues.

The final months of Newman's undergraduate studies in Edinburgh were punctuated with doubts and misgivings: 'The session terminated on Friday—I trust my last in Edinburgh though that is highly doubtful perhaps...quite possible to be ploughed here'.<sup>43</sup>

This is an interesting appraisal when one considers that two months previously he gained distinctions in medicine, obstetrics, surgery and public health. Newman was equally cautious about his personal life. At the end of the course many of his peers were getting married. There is no indication of any form of relationship in Newman's life at this point. It was perhaps with a tinge of sadness, maybe envy that he wrote to his

41. Letter to Aunt Lina, 28 February 1892, MS 6206 n. 58, WIHM.

42. Letter to Carolina Westcombe Pumphrey, 9 May 1891, MS 6206 n. 52, WIHM.

43. Letter to Mary Anna Newman, 1 May 1892, MS 6206 n. 65, WIHM.

father: 'Perhaps it is best to be a bachelor, marriage multiplies the sorrows and difficulties of life by two: I suppose the joys as well'.<sup>44</sup>

Despite Newman's doubts he was awarded a bachelor of medicine degree in July 1892. He was pleased with his success and gave family and friends a copy of his graduation photograph. Among this circle were George (1839–1922) and Elizabeth Cadbury (1858–1951). Newman's admiration for Elizabeth Cadbury is well documented.<sup>45</sup> He respected her ideas on religion and social philanthropy, which were based on a 'broad and reasonable basis, not too hemmed in by creed and dogma'.<sup>46</sup> Elizabeth Cadbury viewed religion as being eminently practical and translated this concept into social philanthropy, which included youth and child welfare, civic and political duties, industrial relations and town planning. Newman wanted to be seen by her as follows: 'If at any time you look at it you may think not of degrees and doctors' hoods, but of a simple soul that has striven and striven often in much darkness to find truth'.<sup>47</sup>

Newman's contact with the Cadbury family was not exclusive to Elizabeth. He was on good terms with her husband, George, a prominent English businessman and co-owner of the Cadbury factory. Newman had many discussions with Cadbury concerning practical philanthropy. He was interested especially in the work that Cadbury was doing among the tenement dwellers in the poorer areas of Birmingham and his plans for housing schemes. In a letter to Elizabeth Cadbury, Newman referred to a meeting with her husband in which he stated that: 'Much that Mr Cadbury has told me has lingered in my mind and I hope more than anything else that somehow or somewhere I may find myself useful to the world and to the Quakers and to Christ'.<sup>48</sup>

The extract contains a prioritization of areas of service commitment. Newman described his service as being first 'to the world'. As he was not given to vagueness in relation to important issues it seems that he was utilizing a Victorian idiom to convey his ideas of service. Considering Newman's background, one may have expected him to have ranked Quakerism first, especially when writing to a fellow member, but one can detect the influence of the Cadburys who, like many members of

44. Letter to Henry Stanley Newman, 24 April 1892, MS 6206 n. 64, WIHM.

45. The Cadbury Collection, MS 466/363/1-31, BLPES.

46. R. Scott, *Elizabeth Cadbury 1858–1951* (London: Harrap, 1955), p. 151.

47. Letter to Elizabeth Cadbury, 23 September 1892, MS 466/363/1, BLPES.

48. Letter to Elizabeth Cadbury, 23 September 1892, MS 466/363/1, BLPES.

the Society of Friends, looked beyond their immediate welfare to that of the wider populace. His statement 'to the world and to the Quakers and to Christ' forms an accurate representation of his later life's work.

### Concluding Remarks

An assessment of cause and effect on an individual cannot be conclusive. However, this paper, based on primary evidence, suggests that the influences of Newman's childhood were longstanding and that his advancement of public health in England and Wales was woven closely with his Quaker outlook.<sup>49</sup> The strongest evidence to support this hypothesis is to be found in Newman's autobiographical notes, 'How I Went into Public Health'. Additional evidence, from family papers, highlights the importance of family values, religion, education and training. More specifically it was the tradition of service and practical Christianity combined with the skills and knowledge that he acquired in medicine that led him to pursue a successful career in public health. As Tessa Cadbury noted:

George Newman, in the years he spent as one of the leading English civil servants, knew his Quaker inheritance and saw his work as William Penn saw it, 'Government seems to me a part of religion itself; a thing sacred in its institution and end; an emanation of the same Divine power that is both Author and Object of pure religion'.<sup>50</sup>

49. H.K. Smith, 'Sir George Newman and his Role as Educator' (unpublished PhD thesis, Monash University, 1997).

50. T. Cadbury, 'George Newman', *The Friend* 7 (1948), p. 11.

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