

1-1-1999

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### Recommended Citation

Palmer, T. Vail Jr. (1999) "Some Issues from Nineteenth Century Quakerism," *Quaker Religious Thought*: Vol. 92, Article 2.  
Available at: <http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/qrt/vol92/iss1/2>

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## SOME ISSUES FROM NINETEENTH-CENTURY QUAKERISM

T. VAIL PALMER, JR.

For a long time I have thought of the nineteenth century as a low point in the history of Quakerism. Spiritual vitality seemed to be at a low ebb, with few fresh insights or creative movements. A series of splits within the movement left a heritage of bitterness and resentment.

Several years ago I read the journals of Elias Hicks and John Wilbur, leading figures in two of the branches of Quakerism, which emerged from the bitter “separations” of the nineteenth century. This reading did nothing to revise my general impression of the period. Both journals revealed a narrowness of vision and a pettiness of insight. I did not feel much motivation to go ahead and read writings of leading figures in other branches, such as Joseph John Gurney or David Updegraff.

In recent years, I have been enriched by Carole Spencer’s studies of nineteenth-century Quaker women. Her efforts have included an article in *Quaker History*<sup>1</sup> and a course at Reedwood’s Center for Christian Studies. These have emphasized for me one encouraging trend in that period. Individual Quakers did real pioneering in social movements such as prison reform and the antislavery, peace, and women’s rights movements; and much of this pioneering was done by strong Quaker women.

Yet even this pioneering was shadowed by the dark side of the century’s trend toward divisiveness. In addition to the major splits, there were minor splits over appropriate strategy to be used in the antislavery movement (such as the Underground Railroad). In the Civil War, antislavery zeal led many young Friends to join the Union army; Quakerism’s unity in adherence to the peace testimony was permanently lost. Two of the most influential Quaker women were Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Fry. Yet when Lucretia Mott went to England in hopes of taking part in an antislavery congress, Elizabeth Fry avoided more than a single casual contact with her, because she belonged to the wrong branch of Friends!<sup>2</sup>

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My understanding of the process by which Quakerism moved from its eighteenth-century Quietism through the nineteenth-century divisions to the complex of competing varieties and branches at the end of that century had been chiefly informed by my reading of Elbert Russell's *The History of Quakerism*. This was especially the case in connection with the origins of "pastoral" Quakerism in the 1870s. Russell wrote: "The revival movement led inevitably to changes in practice, in doctrine, in organization....So many of the converts were not birthright Friends or were inexperienced in new methods and fields of work that it appeared necessary to provide the new meetings with leadership, especially with a teaching ministry and pastoral care."<sup>3</sup> He described the initiative, in employing pastors, as coming from within meetings that had been affected by the revivals.

I had grown up as a Philadelphia Friend; my first significant contact with pastoral Friends came when, during a summer vacation from college, I took part in a Young Friends "caravan" that visited Friends in New England and in Indiana, Illinois, and Ohio. As I became acquainted with several Quaker pastors, I discovered sharp differences between "liberal" pastors, who considered themselves Christians and who were strongly influenced by the work of Rufus Jones and other leaders, and the evangelical "holiness" pastors who were fundamentalists in their understanding of the Bible and who insisted on the necessity for two specific Christian experiences: "salvation" and "sanctification"—experiences that typically occurred during revival meetings. It was also clear that in some yearly meetings a power struggle was taking place, or had recently taken place, between these two groups for control of the yearly meeting. I assumed that this opposition had its origin in the fundamentalist/modernist controversy of the 1890s and 1900s, in which Rufus Jones and his allies had been leaders among the modernists.

I found my assumptions about the origins of "pastoral" Quakerism and of the "holiness/liberal" opposition radically challenged last year when I read Thomas D. Hamm's *The Transformation of American Quakerism*.

#### THOMAS HAMM'S THESIS

Hamm chronicles the development of Orthodox Quakerism from the Quietist "peculiar people" of the eighteenth and early nineteenth

centuries to a form similar to that of other evangelical Protestants by the end of the nineteenth century. In part, this change was the result of social and economic factors, such as the railroads and the end of the frontier. In part, Hamm sees this change, at least until 1870, as the work of a succession of “reform” leaders, who desired to bring Quakerism into the modern world while retaining the distinctive values and emphases of traditional Quietist Quakerism. He pictures Joseph John Gurney as an early pioneer of this “reform” tendency. The minority of Orthodox Friends who remained loyal to the complete Quietist vision, and resisted any attempts at “reform,” found their champion in John Wilbur.

Hamm describes a “renewal” movement that carried forward these reforms during the 1850s and 1860s. Leaders of this movement held a variety of positions among Friends: minister, elder, yearly meeting clerk, college professor, editor. But, according to Hamm, “The renewal movement had its limitations. It was largely a movement of the elite.”<sup>4</sup> Most of these leaders were either wealthy or highly educated. Reform leaders were increasingly emphasizing the need for a specific conversion experience, and were developing new types of meetings—“general meetings,” even the beginnings of revival meetings—as a supplement to traditional Quaker worship.

Hamm draws a sharp contrast between the renewal movement and what followed:

To understand the whirlwind that swept through the Gurneyite yearly meetings during the 1870s, one must look to a small group of ministers and the experience that they shared: an instantaneous, post conversion sanctification that they believed, freed them from any desire or propensity to sin and filled them with the power of the Holy Ghost. They found this teaching on sanctification outside the society in the post-Civil War interdenominational holiness movement. They used it to transform first the general meeting movement and then the rest of Gurneyite Quakerism....The holiness revival movement among Friends was from the beginning one of ministers, one that exalted ministerial standing and stressed its prerogatives.<sup>5</sup>

Leading holiness ministers included Dougan Clark, Jr., Nathan and Esther Frame, John Henry Douglas, Luke Woodard, and, preeminently, David B. Updegraff.

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Unlike the renewal leaders, “the revivalists dismissed the value of the traditional Quaker plain life.”<sup>6</sup> Not surprisingly, further Wilburite separations took place in the 1870s, in response to the radical revivalist attack on many Quaker traditions. Most of the moderate renewal leaders remained within Gurneyite Quakerism, but found themselves increasingly opposing many of the holiness positions—particularly the insistence on a second, instantaneous “sanctification” experience and on biblical literalism.

But, according to Hamm, another significant, revolutionary result of the holiness revival was yet to come. “Perhaps no innovation of the last quarter of the nineteenth century did more to change Quakerism than the introduction of the pastoral ministry.”<sup>7</sup> In contrast to Elbert Russell, Thomas Hamm argues that the revival movement did not lead “inevitably” to the introduction of a paid pastoral ministry. Indeed, the moderate renewal leaders had their own program for dealing with the influx of new, inexperienced Quakers: “forming in each monthly meeting pastoral committees of elders, overseers, ministers, and other concerned members to see to the spiritual welfare of new Friends. The idea proved popular in the Gurneyite yearly meetings....But revival Friends had come to their own solution, and...effectively outmaneuvered the moderates by introducing the one-person pastorate that the moderates dreaded.

The revival’s commitment to pastors was inextricably linked to its views of the ministry. The revival centered on preaching, impossible without ministers. Furthermore, ministers were a divinely appointed class, “the noblest of the race, called of God to teach and lead the rest of us.” Luke Woodard was frank in undermining the older concept of the priesthood of all believers. “It is a dangerous abuse...to carry it to the extent of nullifying that respect, honor, and authority which God himself has assigned to the office of Gospel ministry,” Woodard wrote. “The very terms *pastor* and *shepherd* imply a position of leadership.”<sup>8</sup>

Reedwood Friends Church has recently gone through a process of corporately discerning our vision as a church. The definition of our vision that emerged was: “A Christ-centered Quaker community of ministers.” I am convinced that, without consciously aiming to do so, Reedwood in this definition recaptured the heart of the early Quaker vision of the church. If I am correct on this, and if Hamm is correct in his depiction of the revivalists’ emphasis on a separate, “divinely

appointed class” of ministers, “called of God to teach and lead the rest of us,” then *the introduction of the pastoral ministry by the holiness revivalists constituted not only a rejection of the Quietist tradition but a repudiation of the basic, original Quaker vision of the church.*

(Early Friends had, indeed, their charismatic “first publishers of truth” and then their “public Friends,” but these never became the sole leaders of the local meetings. There were also the elders and those whose preaching ministry arose within the local congregations. The distinction between “threshing meetings” and “retired meetings” echoes the early Christians’ distinction between *kerygma* and *didache*. This spreading out of ministerial gifts widely among the membership contrasts sharply with the late nineteenth-century pattern in which the holiness evangelists themselves became the first pastors of local congregations, in which all ministerial leadership tended to be concentrated in a single individual, one of a “divinely appointed class.”)

Hamm makes one more point that impacts on my previous assumptions. He argues that the modernist movement of the 1890s and 1900s, spearheaded by such Friends as Rufus Jones and Elbert Russell, was in direct continuity with the renewal movement of the 1850s and 1860s and with the moderate opponents to the holiness revivalists in the 1870s and 1880s. Thus, according to Hamm, the struggle I found going on among pastoral ministers had its origin not in the 1890s but in the 1870s.

## THE ROLE OF JOSEPH JOHN GURNEY

Before examining critically Thomas Hamm’s fresh interpretation of the changes in Quakerism in the nineteenth century, I believed it important to complete my understanding of the principal divergent types of Quakerism that emerged in that century. In particular, I could no longer afford to ignore the writings of Joseph John Gurney. Would I find his outlook on the faith to be as problematic as those of Elias Hicks and John Wilbur, or would I find in him a greater faithfulness to the essential genius of Quaker Christianity or even a fresh, creative insight into the Christian faith and/or Quakerism?

Like his direct ancestor, Robert Barclay, Joseph John Gurney presented his thought in a clearly organized manner. In particular, he published two major books, one on the essential principles of

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Christianity and one on the distinctive views and practices of Quakerism. Thus it is relatively easy to pin down and draw out the basic directions of his thought.

Gurney's very organization of his thought into two areas—the area common to all Christians (including Quakers), and the area peculiar to Quakerism—is instructive. Early Friends had devoted most of their efforts to establishing the uniqueness of the Quaker understanding of Christianity and showing the utter fallacy and perverseness of all alternative understandings. But in a few writings—notably George Fox's Epistle to the Governor of Barbados—they did summarize beliefs they shared with other Christian bodies. Which approach was most characteristic of the early Quaker vision? Quietist Friends had emphasized the uniqueness of Quaker beliefs and practices to the point of insisting on complete isolation of Quakers from other Christian groups and from society at large. Gurney clearly went to the other extreme.

In the preface to his volume on Christianity as a whole, he clearly stated his intentions in that work:

Throughout the present volume, I have endeavoured to avoid the discussion of any of those points in religion, which can with any reason be regarded as *peculiar* or *sectarian*. I have considered it to be, on the present occasion, my sole duty to arrange and unfold the testimonies borne in Scripture to those primary religious principles which the generality of the Christian world unite, not merely in believing to be true, but in regarding as of *essential* importance to their present and everlasting welfare.<sup>9</sup>

It is remarkable that Gurney was able to devote over 500 pages to an exposition of beliefs he believed to be *essential* to the Christian faith and on which he believed Christians generally united. In this very emphasis he went far beyond anything ever attempted by early Friends!

But my question was this: Would the views of early Friends themselves have fit into the extensive *essential consensus on Christian faith and practice* that Gurney postulated? In my review of this volume, I found much with which early Friends would have agreed—probably more than would be accepted by many Friends today, with our acceptance of the methods and results of modern biblical criticism—methods and results that were simply not available to either Gurney or Fox and Barclay (although Samuel Fisher might have anticipated some of

them!). For instance, Gurney wrote that “faith, or belief...may, perhaps, be correctly defined as a reliance of the mind on the truth of that which is probable, but not known.”<sup>10</sup> Today we would insist that this was at least not Paul’s understanding of faith, which would better be defined as trust in God, as a person, and reliance on his redemptive action in history.

But I found a few—very important—points on which early Friends would *not* have fit into Gurney’s consensus on Christian essentials. A basic point is the purpose of God’s revelation to humans. Gurney wrote: “The principal object of the revelations acknowledged by Christians was to unfold certain doctrines, and to promulgate certain moral principles.”<sup>11</sup> Interestingly enough, Elias Hicks would probably have had little disagreement with Gurney on this point. Although he never presented his theological views as systematically or as clearly as did Gurney, there is at least one passage in a published sermon by Hicks that would suggest a similar understanding of the point of God’s revelation to us:

Through the efficacy of the doctrine which he [Peter] preached under the influence of this holy spirit, they were brought to believe in the witness for God in their own souls. This witness was raised in them: by the light of God which shone into their minds, their inward eye was opened, and they were baptized together in the holy spirit. And so it would be at this day if we were honest—if we were open to receive divine instruction.<sup>12</sup>

This emphasis on doctrine and divine instruction, and Gurney’s emphasis on revelation as unfolding doctrines and promulgating moral principles, are in sharp contrast with Robert Barclay’s understanding of the intent of divine revelation: “The height of all happiness is placed in the true knowledge of God.”<sup>13</sup> “Inward and immediate revelation is the only sure and certain way to attain the true and saving knowledge of God.”<sup>14</sup>

In short, for Barclay the point of divine revelation is that we may *know God*. Barclay’s inclusion of the words *and immediate* has, indeed, led Quakers into a side track, as Maurice Creasey claims, of “quasi-Cartesian dualism.”<sup>15</sup> In contrast, earlier Friends like George Fox and James Nayler used such terms as *inward* and *within*, “to emphasize the fundamental difference known by them in their own experience, between, on the one hand, a formal or conventional or notional knowledge of Christianity as a body of ‘revealed truths’ and

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religious and ethical practices and, on the other, a transforming and creative personal acquaintance with and relation to Christ in the Spirit.”<sup>16</sup> As Creasey insists, such an “inward” revelation includes “the necessity of personal response to the acts of God in history as interpreted and transmitted in Scripture.”<sup>17</sup> Clearly, for Fox and the other earliest Friends, perhaps even more than for Barclay, the point of revelation (whether through Scripture, through the history of God’s action, or through immediate experience) is, indeed, that we may *know God*.

For Gurney, the point of divine revelation is that we may *know about God*. The difference is, if I may use Gurney’s own term, essential! And there is at least one significant consequence of this difference. If the main point is personal, saving knowledge *of* God, then all cognitive statements of faith (creeds, in short) must remain provisional and can never be regarded as binding, or—essential. If the main point, on the other hand, is knowledge *about* God, then the more cognitive information, the better. It is hardly surprising, then, that Gurney himself could insist on 500+ pages of essential Christian belief, or that Gurneyite yearly meetings, throughout the nineteenth century, should increasingly insist on detailed statements of faith (creeds, in actual practice), culminating in the 1887 Richmond Declaration of Faith!

Another point, on which Gurney’s “Christian consensus on essentials” would have excluded early Friends, is his view of the nature of Christ’s atonement. In order to make clear what is going on here, I will make use of Gustaf Aulén’s typology of three types of theories (or ideas) of the atonement.

Aulén calls one type the Latin type. This type of atonement theory was first fully developed by St. Anselm of Canterbury (ca. A.D. 1033-1109) and has been popular in Protestant orthodox thought, from John Calvin on. Basic aspects of this type of theory are that sin requires a heavy penalty, and that satisfaction must be made for sin. Christ in becoming man and dying on the cross has provided the necessary satisfaction and paid the penalty for sin on our behalf. Our sins are imputed to Christ, and Christ’s righteousness is imputed to us humans.

The second type, according to Aulén, is the “subjective” type, including various “moral influence” theories of the atonement. This type of theory was first developed, in opposition to Anselm, by Peter

Abelard (A.D. 1079-1142). It has become popular among “liberal” Protestant thinkers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The emphasis in these theories is on the subjective impact of Christ’s work on the hearts and behavior of men and women.

Aulén’s third type is the “Classic” or “Christus Victor” idea of the atonement. It was frequently used by the early Church Fathers, often in strongly mythological or even grotesque form, and was set forth strongly by Martin Luther, but has been largely forgotten since. According to Aulén:

This type of view may be described...as the “dramatic.” Its central theme is the idea of the Atonement as a Divine conflict and victory; Christ—Christus Victor—fights against and triumphs over the evil powers of the world, the “tyrants” under which mankind is in bondage and suffering, and in Him God reconciles the world to Himself.<sup>18</sup>

In choosing to follow Aulén’s typology, I need to take account of Margaret Benefiel’s objections to doing so. She states: “Gustaf Aulén’s interpretation of the history of the doctrine of the atonement, in my judgment, is wrong.”<sup>19</sup> In the first place, I find her way of stating this judgment to be “logically odd.” The terms *right* and *wrong* can be applied to behavior (as a moral judgment) or to statements of fact, but they cannot meaningfully be applied to theories, structures of interpretation, or classifying constructs (such as typologies). These may better be described as “fruitful” or “unhelpful,” as more or less “powerful” tools for analysis, as more or less “adequate” ways of organizing or looking at data.

Margaret Benefiel does propose an alternative typology for atonement theories:

I would like to introduce three ways (or “orders”) of thinking, based on the work of Bernard Lonergan....First-order reflection uses the language of symbol, image, myth, and story. Its purpose is to draw the reader into an experience, to re-create the experience about which it speaks so that the reader can have that experience, too. Its language is rich and full of depth. It captures the reader and makes the experience come alive. Second-order reflection uses the language of theory to ask the questions: “What does my experience mean? Can I make a statement about God or Christ based on my experience?” As it attempts to answer these questions, it works out careful distinc-

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tions and structures to express its conclusions accurately. It relies on logic and reason to build its theory.

Third-order reflection, unlike first-order language—which draws a person into the experience—or second-order reflection—which seeks the kind of metaphysical truth statements that can be made out of the context of the experience—reflects upon what is going on interiorly during the experience.<sup>20</sup>

Although Margaret Benefiel does not say so, “third-order reflection,” as she describes it, is a mode of thinking that was pioneered and developed by a twentieth-century school of philosophy known as phenomenology. If second-order reflection can be characterized as metaphysical, third-order reflection can thus be characterized as phenomenological.

Margaret Benefiel uses her typology as a basis for criticizing Aulén:

Aulén thinks that Anselm and Luther were espousing conflicting theories of the Atonement. I think, on the other hand, that the patristic writers and Luther were doing first-order reflection; and that Anselm, Scholasticism, and Protestant orthodoxy were doing second-order reflection. Their views do not necessarily conflict with one another, because they are doing completely different things.<sup>21</sup>

But even if these views are not necessarily in conflict, neither are they necessarily in harmony with, or complementary to, one another. Aulén does not argue that his three types are the only possible types of atonement theory, but rather that historically they are the three major types to have actually appeared. Neither can Margaret Benefiel argue that the theory of Anselm and traditional Protestant orthodoxy is the only possible metaphysical, “second-order” theory of the atonement! We simply do not know what direction Irenaeus or Luther might have taken, if they had felt constrained to do “second-order” thinking on this subject!

In the final analysis, we can only compare the relative adequacy of Margaret Benefiel’s and Gustav Aulén’s typologies when both are fully fleshed out. Margaret Benefiel argues that early Friends, particularly Robert Barclay, “make the first attempt at third-order reflection in the history of the doctrine of the atonement.”<sup>22</sup> But she admits that he was making only a beginning in this direction. She does not in her brief article spell out in any detail what a third-order or phenomeno-

logical view or theory of the atonement would look like. Until she does so, we will have no way of comparing the relative value of her and Aulén's typologies.

For now, then, I believe Aulén's classification is the best fully-developed typology available, and that I may therefore be justified in making use of it in the present context.

Joseph John Gurney devotes considerable attention to the theory of the atonement. What he argues for clearly belongs to the Latin, Anselmian type of theory:

The incarnation, humiliation, sufferings, and propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, were ordained by the Father himself, as the means through which, in his infinite knowledge and wisdom, he saw fit to provide for the satisfaction of his justice, and at the same time for the pardon and restoration of a lost and sinful race of his creatures.<sup>23</sup>

...The doctrine of the propitiatory sacrifice of Jesus Christ; not only because, while the sinner was forgiven, the penalty of sin was exacted, but because the burden of that penalty was borne by no less a person than the Son of God.<sup>24</sup>

Our sinfulness may properly be said to have been imputed to Christ, because, when he underwent the penalty which that sinfulness demanded, he was dealt with as if he had been himself the sinner; and it is, I apprehend, on a perfectly analogous principle that his righteousness is said to be imputed to us; because, through the boundless mercy of God, we are permitted to reap the fruits of it.<sup>25</sup>

Given the premises of his book, Gurney is clearly arguing that the Latin, "satisfaction" theory of the atonement is *essential* to the Christian faith and to salvation, and that any other views are therefore outside the pale.

Do early Friends, such as Fox and Barclay, fit into the consensus Gurney insists on? Dean Freiday has done a study of Fox's and Barclay's views of the atonement, in light of Aulén's typology. He concludes "that Barclay is not dependent on the classic idea of the atonement...or on the Anselmian doctrine."<sup>26</sup> I can add that Barclay expressly rejects one essential aspect of the Latin theory: "They argue, That as our sin is imputed to Christ, who had no sin; so Christ's righteousness is imputed to us, without our being righteous. But this

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interpretation is easily rejected....The imputed righteousness of Christ, is not to be found in all the bible, at least as to my observation."<sup>27</sup>

Dean Freiday quotes numerous passages from Fox relating to the atonement. None of these contain language characteristic of the Latin theory—penalty, satisfaction, imputation. In 1958, for a graduate school course, I made a study of the theology of Fox, based on a reading of his eight-volume collected *Works*. I concluded that it was virtually impossible to find anything in Fox's writings that reflects the "satisfaction" theory of the atonement.

What view(s) of the atonement did early Friends affirmatively hold to? Dean Freiday suggests that they paid little attention to any of the three major types of theory. Rather, "The unique thing about Fox's teaching on the atonement, as elsewhere in his thought, is the virtually inseparable relationship between what happened in Jerusalem and what happens in or to the faithful today."<sup>28</sup> Further, in summarizing both Fox and Barclay, Freiday suggests, "Perhaps the Quaker 'genius,'...in dealing with the atonement, was in firmly uniting the Christ who lived, died, and was resurrected in 1st-century Palestine with the Christ who has 'come [again] to teach his people Himself,' to instruct them in sharing his suffering *when necessary*, and putting into practice his values and example *always and everywhere*."<sup>29</sup>

In contrast, in my study, I had no trouble finding examples of the "victory" motif in Fox's writings. One typical example is this: "Christ...bruises the serpent's head, and destroys the devil and his works."<sup>30</sup> In 1958 I had not yet become familiar with Hugh Barbour's and Canby Jones's treatment of the "Lamb's War" theme in the thought of Fox, Edward Burrough, James Nayler, and other early Friends. As Canby Jones summarizes this theme,

The final triumph of obedience is promised by the conquering Lamb who leads his obedient people to victory over all evil at the end of history. The early Quakers insisted that...they knew one another in the power of the Lord's resurrection. They saw themselves as the army of the Lamb marching triumphantly through history with the Lamb bringing the victory.<sup>31</sup>

The whole concept of the Lamb's War is shot through and through with the Christus Victor motif, with the additional dimension that, though Christ's victory was in principle won in the events of Christ's ministry, crucifixion, and resurrection, the remnants of the struggle

go on, and Christ's people participate actively in that struggle. That this added dimension is consistent with the classical view of the atonement is suggested by Aulén:

The classic idea of the atonement, as it is set forth in the Fathers, is both clear and monumental....The power of evil is broken; that is to say, not that sin and death no longer exist, but that the devil having been once for all conquered by Christ, His triumph is in principle universal, and His redemptive work can go forward everywhere, through the Spirit who unites men with God and "deifies" them.<sup>32</sup>

Further, the Lamb's War theme, in showing how the faithful are drawn here and now into the redemptive, victorious work of Christ himself, may help to harmonize my perspective with Dean Freiday's insistence that Fox's emphasis is on "the virtually inseparable relationship between what happened in Jerusalem and what happens in or to the faithful today."

Another aspect of the Lamb's War theme may be significant. As I have noted elsewhere, quoting Edward Burrough:

Carnal Weapons,...Prisons,...Persecutions, these are not the Lamb's Weapons, but these are Antichrist's and the Dragon's Armour and Weapons, which he makes War by, against the Lamb and his Followers:...But the Lamb's Weapons are Truth, Patience, Long-suffering, Meekness and down-right Sincerity of Heart and Tongue; and by these things shall Antichrist be slain, and these Weapons shall Conquer his kingdom. (Edward Burrough, *Works* [London: Ellis Hooks, 1672], p. 626.)

Again and again Burrough makes the point that one of the chief differences between the forces of Christ and the forces of Satan is the nature of the weapons each side is using.<sup>33</sup>

But Aulén makes a congruent point in his explanation of some of the more problematic imagery in the Church Fathers' treatment of the atonement:

This idea of the deception of the devil occurs frequently, both in the East and in the West....

This whole group of ideas, including the semi-legal transaction with the devil, the payment of the ransom-price, and the deception, is presented, often explicitly, in order to deny that

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God proceeds by way of brute force to accomplish his purpose by compulsion.<sup>34</sup>

The evidence seems clear that Fox and Barclay were outside of Gurney's consensus on Christian essentials, on the crucial question of Christ's atonement. How could this be? We may guess that Gurney simply assumed that Fox and Barclay held to the satisfaction theory, without carefully examining their views on this issue. This mistake eventually had serious consequences, as we will find holiness-evangelical Friends later taking Gurney's assumptions for granted.

When we turn to Gurney's treatment of the ways in which Quaker practices differ from those of other Christians, we find ourselves forced back to the fundamentally different understanding of the nature and purpose of revelation, between Gurney and the earliest Friends. I have previously argued that the genius of the earliest Friends—Fox, Burrough, Margaret Fell—was that they read the Bible not as a handbook of doctrines, rules, and precedents, but with empathy. They “entered empathetically into the biblical world and the history of the ancient Israelites and the early church.”<sup>35</sup> Their way of life was radically different from that of their contemporary Christians (and similar to that of the first Christian disciples) “precisely because the early Quakers had internalized the life of the early church with such deep empathy, because the history of the first apostles had become their own.”<sup>36</sup> Their fruits were radically different because their root was radically distinctive.

In contrast, for Gurney, the purpose of the biblical revelation was to “unfold certain doctrines, and to promulgate certain moral principles.” The result of this is that he inevitably used the Bible as a handbook, always starting with biblical texts as cognitive information, and building up his doctrines upon this foundation. He therefore saw Christian faith as based on a substantial foundation (500+ pages worth!) of common doctrines shared by all Christians (including Quakers), and the radically different behavior of Friends as a superstructure, based on a particular reading of selected biblical passages, but not absolutely essential to Christian faith or salvation. Our present-day tendency to talk about “Quaker distinctives” surely has its origin in Gurney's approach to these issues. For Fox, Barclay, and Fell, the *whole* of Quaker faith and practice was “distinctive.”

The surprising thing is that for Gurney, by and large, this revised approach seemed to work. But there is one major issue on which it

broke down—the ministry of women. As Gurney attempted to harmonize established Quaker practice with the writings of Paul (he naturally included the Pastoral Epistles among Paul’s writings), his argumentation grew more and more convoluted, and he eventually painted himself into a corner:

When the apostle Paul said, “I suffer not a woman to teach,” he added, “*nor to usurp authority over the man.*” (1 Tim. ii, 12) Had the women, in the church of Ephesus, after receiving this injunction, assumed the office of pastors; had they attempted that description of teaching, which was immediately connected with the government of the church; they would have been guilty of infringing the apostle’s precept, and would have usurped an improper authority over their brethren: but, as long as their ministry was the result of the immediate influence of the Holy Spirit, and consisted in the orderly exercise of the prophetic gift, so long must they have been free from any imputation of that nature. Women who speak, in assemblies for worship, under such an influence, assume thereby no *personal authority* over others.<sup>37</sup>

Gurney’s basically untenable position on issues related to the ministry of women led him to some rather speculative or questionable interpretations of points in early Quaker history, in his concluding essay on church government issues:

Since *women* were not permitted to speak in the churches, except under the immediate influence of the Spirit, and since they were forbidden to “usurp authority over the man,” I conclude that no active part was assigned to them in public assemblies for the settlement of the affairs of the church.<sup>38</sup>

George Fox was led to recommend the setting up of *women’s meetings*....While it belonged to the brethren only to form rules for the government of the Society, and ultimately to carry them into effect, the women’s meetings were established for the purpose of exercising a wholesome care over their own sex.<sup>39</sup>

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## THE HOLINESS REVIVAL AND THE ORIGINS OF PASTORAL MINISTRY

As I read through writings of some of the leading holiness evangelists, I found Hamm's characterization of their work and interests to be strongly confirmed. They had a vision and they were dedicated to it. To this extent they resembled the earliest Friends. They also resembled those first Quakers in their conviction that their vision of the Christian faith was the only true one and in their intolerant rejection of all contrasting visions.

Early Friends were indeed pioneering champions of *toleration*, of granting their opponents, as well as themselves, the right to live without suppression or persecution—and in this they went beyond most of their contemporaries, who demanded toleration only for themselves! But in their controversial writings early Quakers were highly combative, only too ready to characterize all their opponents as the whore of Babylon or to throw all of the name-calling of the Epistle of Jude at them.

In the 1870s and 1880s, of course, legal toleration was no longer an issue. David Updegraff's admirers indeed dubbed him an apostle of tolerance; but the tolerance he demanded was only that other Quakers should grant him and his fellow holiness evangelists the right to practice any sort of innovation, no matter how far removed these might be from the spirit and practice of early Quakerism or the current Quaker tradition.

Within the Quaker fold, these men and women looked on the Hicksites as being completely outside the Christian pale—deists, deniers of the atonement. They failed to acknowledge that Conservative Friends had a vision of their own—those Friends were spiritually dead, clinging to a fossilized past. Reform leaders were a wealthy, educated elite, holding on to their own status and resisting the free flow of the Spirit's outpourings.

In relation to the wider spectrum of Christianity, they did not share Gurney's broadly cosmopolitan outlook. Gurney looked on all Christians as sharing in a grand consensus; the holiness evangelists wished to share consensus only with holiness advocates in other denominations. *Solely* for this reason they decried the "sectarianism" that would emphasize those values that Quakers had long championed but that had distinguished them from the rest of Christendom.

If they flatly rejected the Quaker tradition as they saw it in their time, their attitude toward early Quakers was somewhat ambivalent or even paradoxical. Dougan Clark and Joseph H. Smith noted admiringly that David Updegraff “insisted that he was none other than a genuine GEORGE FOX QUAKER.”<sup>40</sup> But he denigrated the value of silent worship:

We insist upon it that such an one knows *nothing* of what our fathers called “silence before God,” though he may have been sitting in “silent meetings” all his life. But the very common error is to think that such a “silence can heal all these wounds,” or that it “opens a doorway towards the refuge from doubt,” etc. as says Miss Stephen. This is a great mistake. Jesus is the only Healer and the only Refuge, and one hour spent as a *committed* seeker after salvation, and in vocal, personal prayer to God in Jesus’ name, will do more for such a soul than a thousand *silent* meetings. This is settled beyond dispute.<sup>41</sup>

Contrast this with Robert Barclay’s claims for the value of silent worship:

Yea, though there be not a word spoken, yet is the true spiritual worship performed, and the body of Christ edified; yea, it may, and hath often fallen out among us, that divers meetings have past without one word; and yet our souls have been greatly edified and refreshed, and our hearts wonderfully overcome with the secret sense of God’s power and Spirit, which without words hath been ministered from one vessel to another. This is indeed strange and incredible to the mere natural and carnally-minded man....

VII. As there can be nothing more opposite to the natural will and wisdom of man than this silent waiting upon God, so neither can it be obtained, nor rightly comprehended by man, but as he layeth down his own wisdom and will, so as to be content to be thoroughly subject to God.... When I came into the silent assemblies of God’s people, I felt a secret power among them, which touched my heart, and as I gave way unto it, I found the evil weakening in me, and the good raised up, and so I became thus knit and united unto them, hungering more and more after the increase of this power and life, whereby I might feel myself perfectly redeemed. And indeed this is the surest way to become a Christian.<sup>42</sup>

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Updegraff would appear to be only too typical an example of Barclay's "mere natural and carnally-minded man." Indeed, Barclay would go even further in denouncing Updegraff's outspoken preference for vocal prayer over silence:

Since it is, and shall yet be more shown, that preaching and praying without the Spirit is an offending of God, not a waiting upon him, and that praying and preaching by the Spirit presupposes necessarily a silent waiting to feel the motions and influence of the Spirit to lead thereunto;...we do well and certainly conclude, that since waiting and watching are so particularly commanded and recommended, and cannot be truly performed but in this inward silence of the mind from men's own thoughts and imaginations, this silence is and must necessarily be a special and principal part of God's worship.<sup>43</sup>

One other instance of an idiosyncratic approach to George Fox should be mentioned. Luke Woodard quoted a letter from his English Quaker ally, Henry Stanley Newman: "Fox died before our church was properly organized."<sup>44</sup> This seems ingenuous, in light of Fox's own monumental and largely successful efforts—against opposition—to set up the governing structure of Quakerism. Perhaps not so much ingenuous as reflecting Newman's (and Woodard's) own prejudices regarding what is "proper" organization: "The ministry of every church must be organized, and must in some way be provided for, and woe to that church that muzzles the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn."<sup>45</sup>

This leads us to Hamm's thesis that the pastoral ministry was deliberately introduced into Quakerism by the holiness evangelists. His telling quotation from Luke Woodard was from one of a series of talks addressed to ministers. Woodard did, indeed, attempt to buttress his views on the pastoral ministry as an authority-carrying office by offering quotations from Fox, Barclay, and Edward Burrough. An examination of these quotations shows the extent to which Woodard was seeking weapons to buttress his own position rather than seriously attempting to understand and appreciate what the early Friends were getting at.

He wrote:

The teaching and example of the first Friends are much in advance of what has been general among their successors. Addressing the Protector and Parliament, George Fox wrote, in

1658: “If ye be such as propagate the gospel, which gospel is the power of God—as for the maintenance and means of ministers, leave that to the people, and see if the preaching of that will not so open the hearts of the people as to lay down their possessions at the feet of the ministers.”<sup>46</sup>

Yet he ignored other major writings by Fox that denounce the practice of preaching or acting as pastors for pay: *e.g.*, the tract, “Primitive Ordination and Succession.”<sup>47</sup> Which of these writings represents Fox’s prescription for the true church? Present-day studies are making it clear that Fox and Burrough, when writing to government officials, particularly during the last years of the Protectorate, often appealed to pragmatic considerations and to general principles of morality, such as justice and civil order, which they believed to be available to everyone, even those not converted to full obedience of Christ.<sup>48</sup> Thus, in the passage quoted by Woodard, Fox was doubtless simply pointing out to the Protector and Parliament that even non-Quaker ministers should be able to survive on voluntary support from their congregations, without depending on government-collected tithes.

Since Woodard did not specify the source of his quotation from Burrough, it is difficult to determine its context for sure. However, the wording, including Burrough’s appeal to “equity and justice,”<sup>49</sup> would suggest that the context and intent are probably very similar to those in the quotation from Fox. Woodard’s extensive quotations from Barclay<sup>50</sup> are an egregious example of quoting out of context. Woodard made it appear that Barclay was calling for obedience and submission to persons by virtue of their office or general call to ministry. An examination of the pages from which Woodard quoted<sup>51</sup> makes it clear that Barclay was calling for obedience to directives to the people of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and insisting that these directives did *not* always come through the same persons, even the most “weighty” elders or leaders.

There is further evidence that the introduction of pastoral ministry into Quakerism was something actively intended by these Friends. Clark and Smith wrote of Updegraff’s work:

Some of us, who had been reared in proximity to a fossilized and somewhat disintegrated Quakerism, would never have known what the real, living thing was, had it not been for the life and work of David Updegraff. Wherever he has been and

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has worked (together with a few other blessed men and women of like spirit) we find the Friends' church to be different from what it is in places that barred the door upon this humble but mighty servant of God....Different, too, in that their prejudice against an "hireling ministry" and a pastoral oversight has so far yielded, that men called to this work are in some places receiving a measurable support to aid them in giving themselves wholly to it.<sup>52</sup>

Similarly, Woodard replied to Newman with a statement of changes that he saw as essential for London Yearly Meeting: "The question of pastors and support will follow the evangelistic work. It can not precede it. There is little use trying to make a meeting see the need of pastors and support that is crystallized around with traditions, and content to have things go on as they always have gone. We had the same difficulty till the revival forced the other question."<sup>53</sup> This evidence suggests that the introduction of pastoral ministry was not simply a solution that these evangelists proposed to a crisis created by the success of the revival. Rather, it was something that they *already* saw as essential to the church; the needs of new converts simply provided the occasion they desired, in order to implement this change.

As I have suggested, then, they had a vision regarding the local church that was fundamentally different from that of not only Quietist Friends but also of original Quakerism. Was this vision simply part of what they shared with holiness advocates in other denominations?

I did some browsing in the history of the holiness movement, but was unable to come up with a definite conclusion on this question. I found no evidence of an articulated consensus on the nature of the local church. There was plenty of discussion of the "church question"—but it all had to do with the relationship of the holiness evangelists (and their flocks) to the larger denominational structures within which they found themselves: Should they remain within their own denominations, at loggerheads with bishops and other church leaders who resisted their innovations? Should they "come out" and form their own holiness churches and denominations? Or should they simply form "unorganized" congregations, without separate membership and without defined relationship to existing denominations (as in the origins of the Church of God).

## SOME ISSUES FROM NINETEENTH-CENTURY QUAKERISM • 25

I suspect it to be the case that in all denominations, not just among Friends, the moving figures of the holiness movement were evangelists, ministers. And, as Hamm stated: “The revival centered on preaching, impossible without ministers.”<sup>54</sup> Further, the holiness evangelists all tended to go in for innovative methods—whatever furthered the cause of instantaneous conversion and sanctification experiences. They seemed almost to expect opposition from established church leaders.

Quakerism, unlike the Methodist church, had no bishops or hierarchy of leaders to head up and focus this opposition. For their “churchly” opposition, the Quaker holiness leaders could find only the established elders and the renewal leaders. But the elders were already losing much of their influence; the renewal leaders tended to be an “elite” without a strong following among the rank and file. For the Quaker holiness evangelists, thus, the “church question” had a relatively simple solution: They were able to seize the initiative and to gain control of large segments of Gurneyite Quakerism, turning it into a holiness denomination in its own right! Their success was not complete; but in the long run one yearly meeting after another gradually came enough under their influence to break out of the more “moderate” Five Years Meeting/Friends United Meeting. Significantly, these “evangelical” yearly meetings have seen themselves as essentially “holiness” churches. And strong minorities of “holiness” Friends—or their fundamentalist successors—remain within many yearly meetings in the Friends United Meeting.

WALTER WILLIAMS’S INTERPRETATION OF  
QUAKER HISTORY

I have argued that the work of the holiness evangelists and their successors among evangelical Friends constitutes a radical repudiation of the vision of early Quakerism—not simply a rejection of two hundred years of Quietism. If I want to make this thesis stick, I have to take account of Walter R. Williams’s argument in his history, *The Rich Heritage of Quakerism*. Williams claims that evangelical Quakerism is fundamentally in harmony with the best of the Quaker heritage—perhaps more so than other trends in contemporary Quakerism. He clearly states of the Great Revival, culminating in the holiness revival, that “this new outpouring of the Holy Spirit gave rise to...the same

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concern that had gripped the founders of the Society two hundred years earlier.”<sup>55</sup>

When Paul Anderson undertook to write an epilogue to the 1987 reprinting of Williams’s history, he asked me to read and critique that history. At that time, recognizing that the work was to be appreciated primarily as a corrective to the work of Rufus Jones and Elbert Russell, I had a couple of relatively minor criticisms of Williams, which Paul Anderson did cite in his epilogue to the work.<sup>56</sup> Now the issue lies before me: Do I need to revise my current thesis, in light of Williams’s implicit challenge to any such view, or do I need to radically deepen my criticism of his arguments?

On rereading *The Rich Heritage of Quakerism* I now found serious problems in Williams’s interpretation. His summary of the message of the earliest Friends is fair enough, as far as it goes. But in my review of the two chapters in which he summarizes their beliefs and testimonies, I found significant omissions.

We would not know from these chapters, or anything else in Williams’s history, that early Friends decisively rejected the formulation of creeds or the use of statements of faith as tests of membership or ministry. We also miss in these chapters any reference to Friends’ insistence on the ministry of *all* believers. Williams does emphasize that Friends expected holy living on the part of all the faithful, even though he does not mention the early rise of the practice of disowning those whose lives were inconsistent with Quaker testimonies (even before the establishment of formal membership!). He also emphasizes the leadership roles of numerous individual Friends—and implies that this ministerial and evangelistic leadership was essential to the growth and success of early Quakerism. But he does not mention Friends’ emphasis on the existence of a variety of charismata or spiritual gifts, through which all of the faithful provide their own leadership for the building up of the church.

In the two chapters on early Quaker beliefs and testimonies, we fail to find any reference to the high view of the church held by the first Friends. Williams does mention the deep love and fellowship they had for one another, but he fails to note “the intense corporateness of early Quakerism.”<sup>57</sup>

When he discusses the rise of church organization and discipline, Williams tends to see this as a series of pragmatic responses to specific problems and crises, rather than to recognize how it derived from

Fox's concept of "gospel order." Early Friends were convinced they were a "people of God," through whom God was working in history; this revolutionary vision of necessity led them to establish a "revolutionary organizational structure",<sup>58</sup> but we would know nothing of this from reading Williams's book.

Finally, in the chapters on early Quaker beliefs and testimonies, we hear nothing about George Fox's and Margaret Fell's insistence on the full participation of women in all aspects of the church's life and ministry. In his description elsewhere of the work of early Quaker traveling ministers, he does say a little about the involvement of women in this work, but he seems to underemphasize their part. In his description of the work of "A Half Dozen of Fox's Co-Laborers," he does include the work of Margaret Fell, but he states that he includes her "because she well symbolizes a multitude of noble women who...bravely endured loneliness, privation, persecution, and sometimes scarcity of material support, while their husbands were absent from home engaging in gospel ministry or lying in some English prison"<sup>59</sup>—nothing about those women who *themselves* were "absent from home engaging in gospel ministry or lying in some English prison."

All of these emphases that Williams omits were *essential* components of the early Quaker vision. But to have brought them out would have been to emphasize ways in which that vision differed from the vision of the holiness movement or the practices of evangelical Friends today. Further, it would have emphasized aspects of early Quakerism to which other groups of Friends have been more faithful: the Hicksites with their creedlessness, their insistence on the "priesthood of all believers," and their continuing succession of strong women ministers and leaders; the Conservatives with their intense sense of peoplehood and their faithfulness to the radical church discipline of early Quakerism.

I believe Williams, in his discussion of later trends in Quakerism, is unfair in his assessment of Elias Hicks and of the Hicksite Friends. He assigns to them the primary blame for the disastrous separation of 1827-28: "The writer would confess his own deep sorrow of heart that any portion of American Quakerism should have been induced to deny our Lord, His deity, authority, and atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, and thus to set the stage for disunity and division."<sup>60</sup>

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Furthermore, this statement goes beyond the evidence in ascribing to the Hicksites a doctrinal uniformity, even in what they denied. What Hicksites insisted on was simply liberty in the area of belief; in actuality, as Elbert Russell points out, the Hicksite “Philadelphia Yearly Meeting kept for a generation the old discipline which made it a disownable offense to deny ‘the authenticity of the Holy Scriptures and the divinity of Christ.’”<sup>61</sup>

Williams repeats the charge, made by the holiness evangelists and by some Orthodox Friends before them, that Elias Hicks denied the atonement. Unlike some of his predecessors, he does attempt to provide evidence to substantiate this charge. But his evidence is skewed. He quotes from Elias Hicks:

The mode of redemption generally held by professing Christians as being effected by the death, or outward dying of Christ Jesus upon the outward wooden cross...I consider a vulgar error, that came in with the apostasy from primitive Christianity...I consider that the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, on the outward cross, applied only as a matter of redemption, to the Israelites....<sup>62</sup>

In his footnote reference, Williams shows that he has taken this quotation from Rufus M. Jones, “*The Later Periods of Quakerism* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1970), Vol. 1, p. 454.” Rufus Jones, in turn, gives the source for his quotation from Hicks: “*A Doctrinal Epistle, written by Elias Hicks, of Jerico, on Long Island, in the Year 1820; Purporting to be an Exposition of Christian Doctrine, Respecting the Nature and Office of Jesus Christ*. With references to those texts of Scripture by which its truth, or fallacy, may be readily tested. (Philadelphia: S. Potter & Co.; New York: Bliss & White; & Baltimore: E. J. Coale, 1824), pp. 10, 12 (hereafter referred to as Hicks, *Doctrinal*).” But Williams omits the further quotation that Jones makes from the same work by Hicks, and that balances what Hicks denies in the above quotation by stating Hicks’s affirmative position on the subject of Christ’s redemption: For Hicks, the “outward redemption” is “a...*figure of the inward redemption of the soul from sin, by the life, or spiritual blood, of Christ*, inwardly sprinkling our consciences, and enabling us to die to sin, as he died to sin. By which we are redeemed from dead works to serve the living God in newness of life, which makes the true Christian.”<sup>63</sup>

We can best appreciate this statement by Hicks in light of the quotation I have already given from Dean Freiday: “The unique thing about Fox’s teaching on the atonement, as elsewhere in his thought, is the virtually inseparable relationship between what happened in Jerusalem and what happens in or to the faithful today.”<sup>64</sup> If Freiday is correct, it is hardly accurate to say that Hicks denied the atonement. Rather, both Hicks and the holiness Friends separated what in Fox’s thought was inseparable. Hicks insisted that the atonement takes place only in the present life of the believer; his detractors insist that the atonement takes place strictly as an event in history.

Williams has one more argument for his claim that Hicks denied the atonement: Hicks “regarded our Lord’s death as that of a martyr, and only as a pattern for us. Thus, his teachings included no atonement for sin.”<sup>65</sup> On the face of it, this argument does not wash. If he correctly summarizes Hicks here, then it is clear that Hicks’s position does not deny the atonement but rather affirms the “moral influence” theory of the atonement. The most that Williams could claim is that Hicks held to a “wrong” or “unacceptable” view of the atonement. One possibility remains. We could presume that Williams accepts Gurney’s view that the Latin, “satisfaction” theory of the atonement is *essential* to the Christian faith and to salvation. In this case, affirmation of any alternative theory or view could be tantamount to denying the atonement. But even in this case, Williams is in trouble. I have already shown that George Fox and Robert Barclay can in no way be shown to support the “satisfaction” theory of the atonement. Therefore, if Hicks denied the atonement, so did Fox and Barclay; and Williams’s claim, that “Fox and his co-laborers proclaimed that the historical Christ...has provided atonement for...sins,”<sup>66</sup> simply cannot be sustained on his own terms!

I am satisfied that Williams has not adequately confirmed his thesis that nineteenth-century holiness evangelists and twentieth-century evangelical Friends are squarely in accord with the vision of early Friends and that other Friends, particularly Hicksites, fall short of this vision or are even apostate to it.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR QUAKERISM TODAY

What implications does my analysis of nineteenth-century Quaker trends have for the life of the church today? In order to tackle this

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question, I will need to outline a historical context. As I suggested at the outset of this article, the tensions that emerged in the 1870s and 1890s have continued into the twentieth century.

As a young Friend caravanning in 1947, I was often encouraged to share my own views and vision as I visited local churches, yearly meetings, and young Friends gatherings. One exception was my visit to Ohio Yearly Meeting (evangelical: now Evangelical Friends Church—Eastern Region). There I was welcomed as a person, but pointedly *not* asked to say anything publicly. I lamented the apparent unwillingness of evangelical Friends to enter into dialogue with Friends of other branches. As the years went by, I saw hope that things might be changing. The Quaker Theological Discussion Group and the Faith and Life Movement did draw some evangelical Friends into dialogue with other Friends. The New Call to Peacemaking brought all Friends, including evangelicals, into significant dialogue with Mennonites and Brethren, as well. If these interchanges largely involved church leaders and academics, other events seemed to widen the dialogue. Under the leadership of the Friends World Committee, a series of world, national, and regional conferences have brought together Friends from all branches.

But there have been setbacks. There was the 1956 split in Nebraska Yearly Meeting. Evangelical yearly meetings—Northwest in particular, to my knowledge—continue to refuse to appoint official representatives to the Friends World Committee. When regional gatherings are held, Friends from only a few Northwest Yearly Meeting churches attend.

Under the editorship of Johan Maurer, *Quaker Life* has with admirable frankness chronicled some of the most recent developments, including the call for “realignment” within the Friends United Meeting, and Southwest Yearly Meeting’s subsequent withdrawal from FUM and affiliation with Evangelical Friends International. And there are the continuing tensions over such issues as membership in the World Council of Churches and the decisions of some local meetings to support homosexual partnerships or even take homosexual marriages under the care of the meeting.

The tensions that began in the nineteenth century continue; the specific issues have changed. Doug Gwyn helpfully places the current Quaker dilemma in the context of the national crisis portrayed in James Davison Hunter’s *Culture Wars*:

Hunter characterizes the key underlying cultural division as *orthodox versus progressive*. In the *orthodox* worldview, we find the commitment to an external, transcendent, definable source of authority, most often the Bible....In the *progressive* worldview, by contrast, moral authority lies most centrally in immanent, personal experience, and in a progressive unfolding of truth.<sup>67</sup>

Hunter expands on this typology in terms that are instructive for our understanding of what is going on in Quakerism today: From the orthodox perspective,

God...is real and makes Himself tangibly, directly, and even propositionally known in the everyday experience of individuals and communities. From this authority derives a measure of value, purpose, goodness, and identity that is consistent, definable, and even absolute....It is, then, an authority that is universally valid—adequate for every circumstance and context. It is an authority that is sufficient for all time.<sup>68</sup>

In contrast,

What all *progressivist* worldviews share in common is *the tendency to resymbolize historic faiths according to the prevailing assumptions of contemporary life*....The traditional sources of moral authority, whether scripture, papal pronouncements, or Jewish law, no longer have an exclusive or even a predominant binding power over their lives. Rather, the binding moral authority tends to reside in personal experience or scientific rationality, or either of these in conversation with particular religious or cultural traditions.<sup>69</sup>

Doug Gwyn is thus able to put present-day Quaker tensions into the wider American context: “By comparison with some of the larger conflicts raging today between the religious Right and the liberal humanist Left, contemporary Quaker conflicts may seem rather tame. But Friends do embody a *microcosmic version* of this wider civil war.”<sup>70</sup> I believe that the history of nineteenth-century Quakerism shows especially clearly the *origins* of today’s conflict. We are familiar with the origins of the Great Separation of 1827 in the eighteenth-century Enlightenment (via the ideals of the American Revolution), on the one hand, and the Wesleyan evangelical awakening, on the other. Hamm chronicles the relationships of the later tensions within orthodox Quakerism to the nineteenth-century evangelical revivals and the

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rise of modern biblical scholarship; Russell also notes the importance of the impact of modern scientific developments, “especially the new geology and the Darwinian doctrine of evolution,”<sup>71</sup> on the rise of modern liberal Quakerism.

Liberal Friends often look to Rufus Jones as a pioneer of their religious outlook. Certainly Jones’s own views of religious authority place him squarely within the “progressive” camp as here described; he insists,

The authority of facts, the authority of the laboratory, the authority of demonstration seems to us today to be the last word in the matter....Friends have always approved this last kind of authority and have endeavoured to build their religious faith upon the inherent authority of truth. They come back for their basis to the test of experience—to the laboratory of life.<sup>72</sup>

Evangelical Friends, in contrast, are squarely within the “orthodox” camp. Northwest Yearly Meeting, for instance, asserts that “the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments...are the divinely authorized record of the doctrines that we as Christians are bound to accept, and of the moral principles that are to regulate our lives and actions.”<sup>73</sup>

It is little wonder that true dialogue so rarely takes place across the great “evangelical vs. liberal” Quaker divide, and that divisions and realignments continue to take place. Is there any way beyond, through, or around this divide, any approach that would enable genuine dialogue to take place or that would provide a “third way” for us?

One popular tactic among Friends has been to look to the first generation of Quakers for clues. This may indeed be the way to go, but there are pitfalls. Rufus Jones was one of the first to take this route, but his view of early Quakerism as a mystical movement with an optimistic view of human nature led him squarely into the “progressive” camp. Lewis Benson and the New Foundation Fellowship have taken a very different approach. Their appeal is to a direct personal and communal encounter with Christ, as exemplified by early Friends. But in practice, Lewis Benson’s writings and the *New Foundation Papers* appeal to the writings of Fox and other early Quakers as permanently authoritative and make little concession to modern scientific thought or to changes in the historical situation. In

effect, they have landed in the “orthodox” camp, however much their approach differs from that of fundamentalist evangelical Friends.

Other interpreters of early Quakerism have sought out one or more principles or guiding metaphors, as crucial insights for applying the essence of early Quakerism to our own time. Canby Jones has found such an insight in the Lamb’s War. Through this he finds guidance for the life of personal devotion, for a dynamic understanding of the peace testimony, and for a call “to overcome ignorance, poverty, disease; secularism, racism and war; all social ills; the depths of sin and the deepest spiritual needs of men.”<sup>74</sup> This is a good start; but it does not come to grips with the issues that so sharply divide Friends today.

Another insight has come, as I have already suggested, from Reedwood’s definition of its own vision as that of “A Christ-centered Quaker community of ministers.” If we make this central, we do not necessarily have to follow the New Foundation Fellowship in attempting to restore unprogrammed worship as central to the Quaker vision. Despite the problematic nature of the beginnings of the paid pastorate in Quakerism, I do not think meetings with pastors need to fire them. I believe that efforts to recapture and rekindle the essential Quaker vision for our own time have borne much fruit in meetings that have tried the “team ministry” concept (like Reedwood and West Richmond, in Indiana). What I do think is essential is to change the focus and intent of the pastoral ministry. There are still Friends at Reedwood who want to go back to the “strong pastor” model for the local church—but I believe this violates the central Quaker concept of the church as a Christ-centered community of ministers. The pastorate should be seen primarily as an “equipping ministry,” whose main focus is on helping all participants in the church discover and develop their own ministries. The pastor should not be essentially someone who has had a “call”—*all* Christians are called to their particular ministries—but someone who is “released” to devote part or full time to his or her task of equipping and enabling the ministries in the church. Released ministers could also sometimes be persons who are given time and money to carry out particular ministries that the church values and to which they are called—such as David Richie and the Weekend Work Camps in Philadelphia, or May Wallace and the Lambert House adult day-care program in Portland.

So far, so good. But we need to get deeper into the central issues. Doug Gwyn carries us further with his emphasis on the biblical theme of the covenant and on its appropriation by early Friends.<sup>75</sup> The

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Lamb's War, an intense sense of community, and widespread involvement in ministry are all included in Gwyn's description of the Quaker "Covenant of Light." He suggests that the divisions in nineteenth-century Quakerism exemplified "the breakdown of a world-reconciling consciousness,"<sup>76</sup> which had been a heritage from the original Quaker covenant vision. As a way of moving back toward that reality, he proposes a vision of an "X-covenant."<sup>77</sup> He sees this covenant as already emerging, not as a single grand movement, but as "a *concatenation* of groups....Provisional, short-term, situation-specific bonds among diverse groups constitute a vital dimension of X-covenant."<sup>78</sup> He provides a number of examples, from twelve-step groups and shelters for battered wives and children to cases that might well raise the hackles of Friends on the "orthodox" side of the divide: steps by liberal Quaker groups in "cherishing and nourishing homosexual covenants"<sup>79</sup> and participation of Friends meetings in the "sanctuary movement...to shelter and give safe transport to Central American refugees."<sup>80</sup>

I want to highlight some of the more creative attempts to establish dialogue among diverse groups of Friends. The biennial YouthQuake gatherings began as a means of providing evangelical young Friends with a sense of nationwide community and a realization of their identity as Quakers. Participation in these gatherings gradually widened; friendships and dialogue developed among Quaker youth from an increasing variety of backgrounds. As the purpose statement for the 1997 YouthQuake affirms, the central focus is still "to explore Christ-centered Quaker spirituality." Those who take part will "be challenged to...build a spiritual community based on love, respect, truth and understanding across the breadth of Friends."

The 1995 Pacific Northwest Quaker Women's Theology Conference drew together a more diverse group than have regional gatherings sponsored by the Friends World Committee; for example, evangelical Friends, convinced that homosexuality is an abomination, found themselves in dialogue with lesbian Quakers. Further conferences are planned by this group.

A bold attempt at dialogue on one of the thorniest contemporary issues—sexual ethics and the place of homosexuals in the church or meeting—was the 1989 Quaker Theological Discussion Group conference. Papers from that conference were published as a booklet: Wilmer Cooper and Bob Fraser, editors, *Sexual Ethics: Some Quaker Perspectives* (Greensboro, NC: Quaker Theological Discussion

Group, 1990). Although dialogue did occur, it is significant that the papers and responses all reflected two polar extremes. Even though none of them came from a fundamentalist perspective, half of them did rely heavily on Scripture or Quaker tradition; these were, in the final analysis, understood as authorities in a propositional sense; the outcomes were uniformly a reaffirmation of traditional, legalist standards of sexual ethics. The other half read Scripture and tradition, at most, in dialogue with contemporary experience; they emerged with some form of situational ethics and affirmed homosexual lifestyles as having an appropriate place among Friends. There was no middle ground.

Is there any way to find a middle ground? I think so! My own studies of how early Friends used the Bible strongly suggest just this. They took the Bible with utmost seriousness. But for them the Bible was not an external, propositional authority. They entered into the biblical world with empathy; they appreciated the importance of biblical poetry, symbol, and metaphor; they grasped the effective spirituality of the Bible.<sup>81</sup>

I also noted that twentieth-century studies in biblical theology have reaffirmed this goal of reading the Bible with empathy. I especially recommend one work, which goes a long way in laying the groundwork for approaching questions of Christian ethics from this perspective: *Bible and Ethics in the Christian Life*, by Bruce Birch and Larry Rasmussen. This book contains too many valuable insights for me to summarize them all. I will confine myself to one, which seems particularly appropriate to the issues here under consideration:

Any view of biblical authority adequate for Christian ethics must be functional. Biblical materials are used in many different ways as a resource for Christian ethics. The problem with most discussions of biblical authority is that they seem to imply a monolithic view of the Bible and its use. There is no single way in which the Bible is authoritative in ethical matters. For example, a clear and consistent moral imperative within the biblical witness, such as the imperative to identify with and care for the poor, carries a definite authority in ethical discussions of poverty within the modern church. On the other hand, the biblical witness concerning attitudes toward marriage and sexuality is more diverse. There is no one biblical perspective, and yet the biblical materials still carry authority in that they set the neces-

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sary framework for the church's discussion of ethical issues in this area.<sup>82</sup>

Resources, then, are available if we intend to deal with culture-wars questions from the angle of an empathetic understanding of biblical authority. Is it even possible for us to shift from our present orthodox or progressive worldviews to this new view? One way to do so would be to take the long, disciplined route of becoming scholars in biblical theology. There are and will be a few Friends who do just this. But even such scholars face the problem of making their insights available for the larger church. Since their standpoint is so new and strange to most of us, that is a formidable task.

Is there any other way? Certainly George Fox and the early Friends found their way to such a standpoint without the benefit of contemporary biblical scholarship. Was this sheer religious genius, or was there something in their own historical situation that enabled them to do this? Daniel Smith-Christopher's studies suggest the latter possibility. His insights into the period of the Babylonian exile and the return to Palestine led him to seek patterns that might be echoed in the experience of contemporary "exile" communities. His studies of groups like Japanese-Americans during World War II and native American communities disclosed patterns of behavior that gave him insight into the conditions of the Jewish exile. Subsequently, in his teaching and in field studies, he has discovered that members of modern minority, "exile" groups, such as African-Americans and native Americans, are readily able to identify with the work, for instance, of Ezra—a leader whom most European and European-American biblical scholars find it staggeringly difficult to appreciate!

What about early Friends? I have elsewhere summarized Richard Vann's suggestions that early Friends were often people who were losing their centuries-old rootage in the land, were suddenly becoming geographically and economically mobile, and yet had some education and ability to articulate their distress.<sup>83</sup> In this situation, it was not difficult for them to identify themselves with a people who saw themselves "as aliens and exiles" (1 Peter 2:11 NRSV) and recognized their forebears as "strangers and foreigners on the earth" (Heb. 11:13 NRSV).

Can we, comfortable, seemingly secure American and European Friends, make such an identification? And yet—we have not lost the memory that Friends saw themselves as "a peculiar people" (1 Peter

2:9 KJV), set apart from the larger society around them. Daniel Smith-Christopher has offered a lecture series, “A Theology for Living in Babylon: The Hebrew Exile and Our Exile,” at New York Yearly Meeting and at Reedwood Friends Church. In these he suggests that our survival as Friends—or even Christians—in the contemporary world depends on our regaining of a minority-consciousness, of a sense of difference from the larger society. Strategies for regaining such a consciousness could include picturing the future (the Kingdom or City of God) as guidance for living in the present, telling the stories of our heroes of the faith, developing some kind of rituals of separation from the surrounding society.

The first step, then, may be to detach ourselves from the arena of today’s “culture wars”—the attempt to define the meaning and direction of national society. Rather than trying to remake America—as the orthodox and progressive camps today are so desperately doing—we need first to look to ourselves, to remake ourselves as “A Christ-Centered Quaker Community of Ministers.” We may in the process find ourselves becoming, indeed, “a peculiar people.” In so doing, we may well become “a city built on a hill [that] cannot be hid.” (Matt. 5:14 NRSV)

## NOTES

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