

‘THE ANCIENT WAY’: THE CONSERVATIVE TRADITION IN NINETEENTH CENTURY BRITISH QUAKERISM

‘I have wanted to write to thee and let thee know how heavily some of us are going along with the head bowed down because of the oppression, as we are wont to believe, of the enemy, who has, it appears to some amongst us, taken his seat in the Church.’¹

These striking words are from a letter written by John G. Sargent (then of Cockermouth but known to posterity as of Fritchley) to his friend Thomas Drewry of Fleetwood.² He was aged nearly 48 and was writing from London on the 2nd of 6th month 1861, the Yearly Meeting having closed the previous day. The letter continues: ‘Well, they have done what they listed and are permitted to work, and having wrought according to the mind that is in them, they have brought forth the fruits so incompatible with Truth’s dictates in the spirit of his humble self-denying followers (as we believe), so that we are a poor and afflicted remnant who cannot join with them.’³

‘The oppression, as we are wont to believe, of the enemy.’ Who, we may ask, is the enemy ‘who has taken his seat in the Church’; who are ‘they’? ‘They’ are those within London Yearly Meeting who, ‘having wrought according to the mind that is in them,’ had in the course of that Yearly Meeting secured its approval to a thoroughgoing revision of the book of discipline, a revision, moreover, which for the first time included a section entitled ‘Christian doctrine,’ a section which was to remain for the next 60 years. But this revision was but the culmination of what had been a bad decade for the ‘poor and afflicted remnant.’ In 1850 ‘the enemy’ - ‘they’ - had agreed that gravestones might be erected in our burial grounds, a step which, the afflicted remnant feared, might exalt the creature; in 1854 ‘they’ had conceded that the payment of inappropriate tithes should not be a disownable offence; in 1855 ‘they’ had, after 16 hours of deliberation, acknowledged the wrong yearly meeting in Ohio, receiving the Gurneyite rather than the Wilburite epistle; in 1856 and the years following ‘they’ had brought the Yearly Meeting to the point where it was ready to ask Parliament to legislate so that those ‘professing with Friends,’ though not in membership might be

married according to our usages; in 1860 'they' had made a thorough revision of the queries, abandoned many of the written answers and utterly dispensing with the fourth query on 'plainness of speech, behaviour and apparel'; and now 'they' had made a radical revision of discipline.⁴

One further indignity was to come. On the 25th of 6th month 1862 John G. Sargent wrote from Cockermouth, again to Thomas Drewry: 'A trying time at our Quarterly Meeting yesterday... The tabular statement of statistics it appears, is to be an annual production, with which I have no unity. These are the fruits of the natural will in my view, not productive of good or life in our meetings, and take the place of higher matter which, owing to their not more fully coming unto or under the Power, is so much excluded, and our meetings become tedious, and they find they must hurry through the business, and thus we depart from the substance to the shadow.'⁵

If the 1850s had been a bad decade for the conservatives we must next ask who they were. How far were they a cohesive group? What were they concerned to conserve? Or was it just that they were opposed to any change? Is there a distinction between a conservative and a traditionalist? Or, shall we say, between conservation and preservation? And were there important Quaker insights in danger of being lost and in need of conservation? These are important questions and, even if they cannot all be readily answered at this stage, we must begin to clear the ground.

THE GROWTH OF EVANGELICALISM

We cannot look at the mid-nineteenth century Quaker scene without examining the word 'evangelical' and trying to adopt a working definition. It is used in its broad sense, as meaning 'in accordance with the gospel' in, for instance, London Yearly Meeting's epistle for 1855: 'pure, evangelical worship stands neither in forms nor in the formal disuse of forms; and may be without words as well as with them, but must be in spirit and in truth.'⁶ But for our present purpose it is used in its narrower sense so that evangelicals are defined as those who place great stress on correctness of belief as an essential of Christian discipleship, who emphasize the importance of the doctrine of justification by faith, who preach a substitutionary theory of the atonement, and whose prime authority is to be found in the Bible. It should, however, be made clear that evangelicals were not necessarily literalists in their attitude to the scriptures.

Some extracts from a few of the 40 letters of resignation received by Hardshaw East Monthly Meeting in eleventh and twelfth months 1836

will perhaps illustrate the point.

The doctrine of the 'Inward Light' as held by the Society, I am fully persuaded tends to the introduction of another Gospel than that of the Lord Jesus Christ (William Boulton).

On the cardinal doctrine of justification by faith alone, the early writers of the Society are lamentably unsound (Joseph and Anna Crewdson).

I can no longer remain in unity with a Society that encourages the doctrine of an universal saving light, said to be given to every man (John Atkinson Ransome).
...impressed with the necessity of that Society openly avowing the paramount authority of Holy Scripture, from which naturally follow the grand and essential doctrines of the atonement and justification by faith (Alfred Binyon).

The doctrines of Quakerism, as set forth in many of the writings of the early Friends, and as evidenced in the preaching which is generally approved in the Society, have long appeared to me, to be fundamentally at variance with the grand doctrines of salvation by Jesus Christ, as revealed in the Holy Scripture (Mary Maskell).

...the fixed determination there appears to be in the Society, not only in this Meeting, but in other parts of the kingdom, to silence such Ministers as, in their religious communications, give to the greater doctrine of Justification by Faith that importance which I conceive belongs to it (Thomas Simpson).

I do also believe, after mutual deliberation, that the secondary position which you assign to the Holy Scriptures, as a rule of faith and practice, together with the doctrine of the inward light, as maintained by the Society, are errors of a deeply delusive nature (John Butterworth).

The doctrine of the light within, which has always been the leading principle of Quakerism, we believe to be at variance with Holy Scripture, and entirely a delusion (five members of the Thorp family).

The doctrine of justification by faith, that doctrine which lies at the root of vital religion, is, by many of our accredited writers, and by many of our Ministers at the present time, either not held, or so perverted as not to be the Gospel of Jesus (Isaac and Hannah Neild).⁷

The conservatives with whom we have to deal regarded themselves as orthodox in their Christianity. When in 1800 Hannah Barnard questioned whether God had in fact ordered the slaughter of the Amalakites, the conservatives had no doubt that such speculation tended to undermine the authority of scripture, for they had no doubt as to its authority, though they would later differ from the evangelicals as to its primacy. When the Yearly Meeting of 1815 confirmed the disownment of Thomas Foster the conservatives did not dissent from that judgement,

for the circulation of publications of the Unitarian Tract Society presupposed a disbelief in the divinity of Christ and they were fully convinced of his divinity. When in 1827 and 1828 the repercussions of the Hicksite secession were felt this side the Atlantic the conservatives did not doubt the unsoundness of the Hicksites. They were not men and women preoccupied with doctrine, as the evangelicals were, but they did have a core of doctrine - or at least of unquestioned presuppositions - which they shared with the evangelicals.

Though there were earlier hints of divergent opinion, it is in the 1830s that they became unavoidable issues. At the very start of the decade came the Committee on a General Visit - 61 Friends appointed by Yearly Meeting 1830 with a further 21 added the next year. Not until 1834 was the task completed and the committee laid down. The committee was not, of course, confined to evangelicals - there were arch-conservatives like John Barclay and middle-of-the-road traditionalists like William Allen (who was clerk) and Samuel Tuke. But the committee did include some forceful evangelicals - William Boulton, Isaac Crewdson, William Dillworth Crewdson, Joseph John Gurney, Samuel Lloyd, John Wilkinson (five of these six, incidentally, had resigned their membership before the decade was out).⁸

Members of the Committee on a General Visit were in the midst of their labours, visiting quarterly and monthly meetings as well as individual meetings, when, on the 19th of eighth month 1831 there landed at Liverpool an American ministering Friend. His name - which was to become much better known in later years - was John Wilbur. It was his first visit to Europe; he was 57 years of age and he had been recorded a minister by his monthly meeting as long ago as 1812. It was the 17th of second month 1833 before he set sail for home, and the 18 months of his extensive travels have a profound significance not only in relation to British (and perhaps also Irish) Quakerism, but also in relation to America.⁹

But let us return to the Committee on a General Visit. It informed the Yearly Meeting of 1832 that ‘in the course of the visit the Queries and the General Advices have been often brought under notice’ and it suggested ‘that a few alterations in the former and a revision of the latter would in their judgement be attended with advantage.’¹⁰ Concurrently, Meeting for Sufferings informed Yearly Meeting that the *Book of extracts* (1802 with an 1822 supplement) was out of print.¹¹ Yearly Meeting therefore instructed quarterly meetings to appoint representatives to a conference on the whole subject, to be held in the autumn. The Committee on a General Visit was asked to report to that conference as far as the queries and general advice were concerned.

The conference met at Devonshire House in eleventh month 1832. Its importance - and that of the Yearly Meeting of 1833 which completed and authorised the revised Discipline - can scarcely be over-emphasized. As far as the general advices were concerned, they were transformed from the severely practical text of 1791 (when they were first introduced) into a theological essay intended to promote evangelical orthodoxy. It is worth comparing the opening sentences of each:

1790 Friends are advised - To make their wills, and settle their outward affairs, in time of health. To observe due moderation in the furniture of their houses, and to avoid superfluity in their manner of living. To attend to the limitations of truth in the pursuit after wealth.

1833 Take heed, dear Friends, we intreat you, to the convictions of the Holy Spirit, who leads, through unfeigned repentance and living faith in the Son of God, to reconciliation with our Heavenly Father, and to the blessed hope of eternal life, purchased for us by the one offering of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.¹²

We are indeed in a different world.

Joseph John Gurney,¹³ writing to Jonathan Hutchinson¹⁴ of Gedney, describes the autumn 1832 conference: 'We were about 80 in number, & I think *every sitting* was begun & ended in the feeling of solemnity. The whole was concluded by a meeting for worship last fourth day morning at Gracechurch Street. The *Conservative* principle was very prevalent amongst us. Nevertheless some important alterations & improvements, especially in the shape of addition were made in the Book. *Entre nous*, we had some very interesting theological discussion in consequence of something which our dear friend John Wilkinson¹⁵ uttered - & which occasioned alarm in some minds, under the idea that it was not consistent with our good old doctrine of the *light within*. I was fearful of the consequence; but all ended very *peacefully*; & I think we were brought into very comforting unity.'¹⁶

And after the Yearly Meeting of 1833 J.J. Gurney wrote again to Jonathan Hutchinson that 'the grand work of the revised & enlarged book of the law, was surmounted with less difficulty than we could have anticipated... & the various discussions into which some of these matters led us were conducted peaceably & with scarcely any exception appeared to me to terminate rightly - may I not say, according to the mind of Truth.'¹⁷ Samuel Lloyd¹⁸ of Birmingham, writing two years later - and on the eve of another momentous Yearly Meeting - looked back to the occasion in more vehement mood: 'Not to see danger under

present circumstances is indeed extraordinary... No danger! When it is remembered with what difficulty the introduction of sound views was attended in the new Edition of the Book of Extracts, and how obviously preferable to many were the mystical views of Gospel Truth then broached.’¹⁹

“Sound views,” were, above all, introduced into the 1833 book, which was entitled *Rules of discipline* by the inclusion of four extracts ‘from approved documents of the Society, issued at different periods, and declaratory of its views, in preference to some of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith.’²⁰ But these, while an approved part of the book, were not within the main body of the text, but subjoined to the preface. Was this a compromise to meet those who, while unhappy at the inclusion of the extracts at all, were a trifle less unhappy than they would have been at their inclusion (as was to happen in 1861) within the main body of the text?

Joseph John Gurney, in his letter to Jonathan Hutchinson after the 1833 Yearly Meeting, has some significant words: ‘Notwithstanding this rather flourishing account as thou wilt be ready to call it, it has been a time of deep & painful exercise to many, chiefly in consequence of the more apparent prevalence of somewhat different views of divine Truth. We have thou knowest always been accustomed to watchmen at opposite gates, & I believe thou, with myself, hast at times rejoiced in a Providential provision so well suited to our need. But this sort of thing, may if not watched, sometimes go too far - & produce a *diverging* rather too palpable to be welcome. Surmises & alarm, on either side, have prevailed too much - I believe unreasonably - yet probably there may have been on both sides some reason for fear.’²¹

In January 1835 a ‘diverging too palpable to be welcome’ appeared in the shape of the Manchester Friend Isaac Crewdson’s²² *A Beacon to the Society of Friends*. J.J. Gurney noted in his journal that the book contained many ‘painful innuendoes, touching in various degrees on our well-known views of the spirituality of the Gospel of Christ. Indeed, it is my deliberate judgement that the work has an undesirable tendency to undermine the precious doctrine of the immediate teaching, guidance and government of the Holy Spirit.’²³ Isaac Crewdson, his brother-in-law William Boulton²⁴ and their followers were assertive and vocal, and it is not surprising that disunity arose in Hardshaw East Monthly Meeting of Ministers & Elders and in the monthly meeting itself.

J.J. Gurney was one of a committee - a well-balanced committee of 13 - appointed by Yearly Meeting 1835 to assist Hardshaw East Monthly Meeting.²⁵ This is not the place to traverse yet again the work of that committee, but Edward Grubb, in saying that its proceedings ‘were

badly mismanaged, almost from the first,' may have underestimated the complexity of the situation which faced it.²⁶ If the end result was that there were resignations from nearly 50 Friends it may be regrettable, but the committee can hardly be blamed for opening the eyes of those Friends to the fact that they individually held certain beliefs which ran clean counter to the Society's corporate witness.²⁷ The committee was not concerned, as some later committees were, with the rooting out of what they perceived as heresy, but it would surely have been evading its duty had it not made clear, perhaps particularly to Isaac Crewdson and William Boulton, that their vocal ministry and forcibly expressed convictions out of meeting were causing grave disunity in the meeting just because they were out of harmony with fundamental Quaker conviction.

J.J. Gurney has in many, though far from all, Quaker circles enjoyed for a century and a half a singularly bad press. The quotation from his journal about the *Beacon* makes clear that it is untrue to say, as has not infrequently been said, that he was in fundamental agreement with Isaac Crewdson. The fact that he urged the use of the mind ('we shall never thrive upon ignorance')²⁸ was of course distasteful to those who believed that worship demanded the stilling of the mind, the *tabula rasa* on which the hand of God might write. Perhaps, however, his wealth and lifestyle were almost as much offence as his theology. Other Friends, of course, were wealthy, but perhaps not so many ministering Friends or, if they were, it was not so blatantly obvious. Or can it be that suspicions arose from the very fact that he could express himself so lucidly, so fluently? - there have been other instances when these gifts have, so far from being universally persuasive, left at least some among the auditors vaguely convinced that there must be a catch in it somewhere. However it may be, J.J. Gurney's name was to be, in America even more than Britain, a symbol of strife.

The 1837 Yearly Meeting of Ministers and Elders which liberated, but did not unite in liberating, J.J. Gurney for religious service in America illustrates the extent of conservative objection, Sarah Lynes Grubb acknowledging his abilities and great desire for doing good but expressing her conviction that he had many baptisms and testings yet to go through.²⁹

THE CONSERVATIVE REACTION

The 1830s, then, saw the conservatives allied not only against the ultra-evangelicals (as evidenced, for instance, in the Beaconites) but also against those of the middle party, as instanced in J.J. Gurney. In 1843 the very fact that two periodicals were established demonstrates the gulf

between evangelicals, for whom *The Friend* did good service, and conservatives, catered for by the Glasgow-edited *The British Friend*. From 1846 the latter had on the title-page of its annual volume the text from Jeremiah 'Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein.'³⁰ From 1861 it was to stand at the head of each monthly issue.

The Friends who had been foremost in maintaining a conservative witness during these years were taken by death in a way that the survivors found desolating: Thomas Shillitoe died in 1836, John Barclay two years later (at the early age of 41); Daniel Wheeler died in 1840, George Jones and John Grubb in 1841, Sarah Lynes Grubb in 1842, Abram Rawlinson Barclay in 1845 (aged 51), Ann Jones in 1846, George Crosfield the following year, and John Harrison in 1852.³¹

But a new generation was in fact gathering forces even if, at this stage, they did not themselves know it. Thomas Drewry had been born in 1812, John G. Sargent the following year, William Irving about 1815, Charles Thompson in 1819, Joseph Armfield in 1821, William Graham in 1823, and Daniel Pickard in 1828.³²

A further conservative of the older generation, Lydia Ann Barclay,³³ lived on until 1855 - being only 55 years old at the time of her death. Two years earlier she had journeyed from Aberdeen to Manchester to meet John Wilbur, who returned on a ministerial visit in 1853. It was a visit very different from the former. He had been at the centre of a controversy within New England Yearly Meeting in 1845 and was a member of the smaller or conservative Yearly Meeting at the time of separation that year, being disowned by the monthly meeting of the Yearly Meeting with whom we correspond so that the Meeting for Sufferings in London felt it necessary to warn British Friends against receiving him. Nevertheless, many individual Friends did receive him.³⁴ Thus at Manchester 'many Friends of the foremost rank gathered around us, and shook hands very cordially, some of them inviting us to their homes' and even at Devonshire House itself a 'great number of Friends of both sexes, gathered round us, with smiling countenances, giving us their hands in a manner which gave testimony of their unity of feeling.'³⁵

At Tottenham, home of the evangelical Forsters,³⁶ the welcome was not universal: John Wilbur had appeared in the ministry at the midweek meeting, and at the close 'Paul Bevan said, "the person present who had intruded himself upon the meeting was not a member of our Society."' Dr. Edward May, a minister, said "he did not think that which had been offered in that meeting was any intrusion," and a Friend who sat back

said, "he agreed with E.M. that there had been no intrusion; for that he had good unity with what had been said." '37

Of the individual visits two deserve mention, apart from his old friend and valued correspondent Lydia Ann Barclay. At Manchester 'a young man from Leeds, by the name of Daniel Pickard, called to see us, who said that when he heard of my coming again to England, it warmed his heart within him - and expressed a strong desire for us to come to Leeds.'³⁸ Daniel Pickard was now 25 years old: later, when Wilbur came to Leeds, he was to take the American 'to see an aged minister by the name of Mary Wright, of about 98 years. She is valiant in support of the doctrines of early Friends, and in full possession of her mental powers; and holds out to be a living minister.'³⁹ And then, while in Ireland, Wilbur and his son went by rail from Dublin to Moate 'where our dear friend John G. Sargent met us, and took us five miles further, to his residence at Hall, and staying there over seventh day, we went with them to their meeting at Moate, where I largely bore witness to the apostasies.'⁴⁰ These were two encounters which were to have a profound effect on the conservative tradition in English Quakers.

*WILLIAM HODGSON;
THE MEETINGS FOR CONFERENCE*

The Friend who served as catalyst to this younger generation of conservatives was an American Friend who, by his correspondence, brought them together in the 1850s and, by his personality, drove them into two camps in the 1860s. His name was William Hodgson. He was born in Sheffield in 1804, the son of a former Unitarian minister who had been convinced by the ministry of the Philadelphia Friend Thomas Scattergood, and of a mother who was a member of a prominent Sheffield Friends' family. Through his maternal grandmother he was first cousin to the Forsters of Tottenham and during his apprenticeship in London he saw much of his cousins Josiah, William and Robert, the last being almost a brother to him. In the early 1820s William Hodgson's parents emigrated to Philadelphia and in 1827 William joined them, arriving shortly before the close of that momentous Yearly Meeting which was to divide orthodox from Hicksite for upwards of a century.⁴¹

William Hodgson was among the many Philadelphia Friends who were uneasy with the ministry of J.J. Gurney during his extended 1837-9 visit to North America, and during the 1840s and 1850s he became increasingly critical of those in Philadelphia Yearly meeting whom he described as 'the middle party.' By the 1850s the Yearly Meeting, while still predominantly conservative and Wilburite (especially in Arch

Street and the Northern District meetings) had a strong evangelical and Gurneyite element, centred particularly in Twelfth Street meeting. The 'middle party,' perhaps recognising that both conservative and evangelical had something to contribute to the whole, and almost certainly fearful of the consequences of a further separation a mere 30 years after the Hicksite split, were, however, seen by William Hodgson as temporising and lacking in principle. As he became more and more preoccupied with the preservation of the purity of ancient Quakerism (or what he understood as ancient Quakerism) he became obsessional - at times almost paranoid - about threats to that purity.

Hodgson, and those few he gathered round him, saw the relevance of Leviticus 5: 2 - 'Or if a soul touch any unclean thing, whether it be a carcass or an unclean beast, or a carcase of unclean cattle, or the carcase of unclean creeping things, and if it be hidden from him; he also shall be unclean and guilty.' Thus Philadelphia Yearly Meeting became unclean and guilty because its monthly meetings issued certificates of removal to monthly meetings belonging to her fellow-orthodox but predominantly Gurneyite sister Yearly Meeting of Indiana. Ohio (Conservative) Yearly Meeting became unclean because it was recognised by the now tainted Philadelphia. New England (Conservative) became unclean because it exchanged epistles with the now unclean Ohio (Conservative).⁴²

The only logical solution was a narrow circle of those who had touched no unclean thing. William Hodgson withdrew to form, with a small number of others, the 'General Meeting for Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, etc.'; it first met in this capacity in fifth month 1861, almost concurrently with London Yearly Meeting's radical revision of the discipline. It is generally known as Falsington General Meeting. It must be seen as a gathering of primitive, rather than conservative, Friends and it was in correspondence with New York Yearly Meeting at Poplar Ridge and small groups of primitives who broke away from Ohio and New England conservative Yearly Meetings.⁴³

'We are a poor and afflicted remnant.' The concept and, indeed, the existence of the 'living remnant' has an honourable tradition. Going back to the eighth century BC we can see in Isaiah, Israel's essential traditions being continued not, alas, by the whole people, but by the remnant, small and feeble though it might outwardly seem to be.⁴⁴

It was in this spirit that, at the close of Yearly Meeting 1862, a few disaffected Friends met to mourn together over the lost state of Israel. As a result, 17 Friends gathered at Joseph Armfield's house in London on the 17th of tenth month for a 'meeting for conference.' These meetings for conference took place two or three times each year for seven years, the last being held in tenth month 1869.⁴⁵ The attendance at times

reached 30. The group found unity and strength in reading and answering the queries of 1802; the meeting in fourth month 1864 went through the manuscript of Daniel Pickard's *Expostulation on behalf of the truth*; but, as the years went by, it became increasingly difficult to maintain a sense of unity in a group which shared a common distress but did not share a common perception of the remedy.

The perplexities echo those of the sixteenth-century puritans. There were those then who, convinced that the Elizabethan settlement had not gone far enough in purifying the church of abuses, felt they must 'utterlie flee such like disorders & wickednes'⁴⁶ and therefore withdrew from the national church. Most Elizabethan puritans, however, saw their task as to reform the church from within. So was it here. The spiritual authority of London Yearly Meeting, it was generally agreed, had lapsed. But had it lapsed beyond recall? The absolutists were convinced that they should touch no unclean thing and should withdraw entirely from meetings for discipline of the lapsed body. But the moderates were not so sure.

And, in a bombarding series of letters from Philadelphia, William Hodgson presented the absolutist stand. Thus, to Thomas Drewry, Ninth month 14th 1862: 'From all accounts that we receive, it appears that the state of things in the nominal Society in England becomes worse instead of better... for it is very clear that the *train is off the track* - that the body has, in its capacity as a body, departed from the ground of our profession - from the essential characteristics and platform of true Quakerism - and that it has, as a body, lost all authority which it once had from its Holy Head.'⁴⁷

Again, on Eleventh month 25th that year, commenting on the first meeting for conference: 'Surely you must have had among you some weak counsellors and some unfaithful ones, as *we* had at our first gatherings in Bucks County, from whom the church had to shake herself free... There will, I apprehend, be no safety or satisfaction to the truly faithful among you, in taking half-way measures; and I really hope that when you meet again, this may be seen and felt... You would far better be a very small body compacted to the pure life of truth and fellowship with Christ and in Him with one another, than a numerous body of mere literal professors of the truth and half-way walkers, bound together (out of the pure life) by a fallacious semblance of the true unity.'⁴⁸

And, nearly a year later, Eleventh month 3rd 1863: '...your true course I believe would be, to look at the schismatic position which London Yearly Meeting has already taken, not to what it may in future take; and to declare openly, that inasmuch as it has uniformly

encouraged this schism in doctrine and practice from the first, and sanctioned the position of those emerged therein... you can no longer have any unity with it in its defection from the ancient ground, and must stand aloof from any further subordination to it or association with it.'⁴⁹

A couple of months later, on First month 6th 1864, he was writing to John G. Sargent: 'You have already held three or four meetings, yet what has been the result? You seem to *stick* just where you commenced, and the consequence is that no standard has been upheld - no flag unfurled - for that cause which is above all causes, in the view of the true and faithful Friend. It has appeared to me as if there were a leaven among some of those who meet with you (I know not whom), the tendency of which is to keep you back from meeting the heresy of our day to its face, and to be willing to *mince* matters, and live on a false hope that things will either grow better, so that you can again unite with those who have countenanced schism, or else grow worse, so that you may have some stronger ground or dissent than now exists. My dear friend, I am convinced that it is a great delusion of the enemy.'⁵⁰

And, finally, again to John G. Sargent, 18 months later, on Ninth month 21st 1866: 'In regard to your Conference Meetings... I am renewedly confirmed in the belief, which I have so frequently expressed that I almost fear you are tired of hearing me say it, that you cannot as a body increase in strength or clearness, as long as you continue to recognize that lapsed body as "the Society of Friends" ... The very question which was raised in your meeting, last spring or winter, whether Friends ought to rise whilst the preachers of that body are engaged in what they call supplication, shows the entanglement of your position very clearly. How can any of you faithfully do anything to sanction or countenance such spurious ministry as prevails among them? How could any among you conscientiously do anything to lead your children, or others, to believe that you were uniting with such ministry?... They are seceders, and persistently engaged in promoting secession and defection; and how can any among you, knowing this fact, be satisfied to wink at it, and connive at their assumption of a standing and authority which the Head of the church never gave them, or which, if some of them once had, they have surely lost, through their departure from the path cast up for this people to walk in?'⁵¹

TOWARDS THE FRITCHLEY SEPARATION

How many of those who attended the meeting for conference in fourth month 1868 appreciated that it heralded the parting of the ways? It was that conference which liberated John G. Sargent and Louisa E.

Gilkes, with Matilda Rickman⁵² as companion, for religious service in America. True, it was an implicit rather than an explicit liberation for, while the minute when their concern was laid before the meeting records that 'much unity was expressed,' the minute the following day is almost laconically cautious: 'We have at this time again had under our serious consideration the concern of our dear Friends, and we feel that we can offer no obstruction to the prosecution of the service they believe to be required at their hands.'⁵³

Commenting on the occasion, Daniel Pickard wrote: 'As a Conference we did not feel justified in granting them *written* credentials, as certificates of unity.'⁵⁴ Nevertheless, the meeting for conference was subtly turning into a meeting for discipline for, even if no certificate was granted, a minute was recorded. It is pertinent to compare this occasion with the meeting for conference in eighth month 1866 when Louisa Gilkes, Matilda Rickman and Daniel Pickard opened their 'prospect of going into parts of Wales &c,' a prospect which met with 'deep & cordial concurrence' but where, as Daniel Pickard recorded, 'At the particular request of A.F. no minute was made on the subject, or given to us: which may have been for the best.'⁵⁵

The American visit of 1868 is the 'overture and beginners please' to separation. The trio were met by William Hodgson who ensured that they saw only the narrowing circle of sound "primitive" Friends. This pained those who were conservative but deemed by Hodgson not to have gone far enough. Daniel Pickard wrote that 'A long serious communication came unexpectedly to hand last week also from a friend named Joshua Maule of Ohio - expressive of the sorrow & pain which has been felt by himself & others there, at the *partial* visit paid by our three Friends from England among the small bodies in that Country, & of their giving so decided a preference to the company of those who are in correspondence with the General Meeting held at Fallsington.'^[sic]⁵⁶

With William Hodgson guiding them, how could it have been otherwise? With William Hodgson in person and not simply as a correspondent, any lingering doubts the trio might have had about their future could be doubts no longer. Daniel Pickard wrote in his journal under the date 9th month 14th 1868: 'We have been brought under some concern of late from an apprehension lest our dear Friends who have lately returned from America should be acting with undue zeal to promote a separation in the Society in this country.'⁵⁷ Compare this with sentences from a couple of letters from William Hodgson to Thomas Drewry. First, in relation to *partial* visiting, Hodgson had written on sixth month 19th 1868: '...if I mistake not, our English Friends also were comforted in finding themselves among true Friends,

whom they could greet as brethren and sisters in the true unity.'⁵⁸ And, on eighth month 10th (after they had set out on the voyage home): 'And I may say further, that if I am not greatly mistaken, they go home more fully prepared to do the Lord's will in an open and clear testimony against the lapsed body which *calls itself* the Society.'⁵⁹

William Hodgson was correct in his prediction. But John G. Sargent did not find, perhaps, so many as he hoped who were prepared to come out from Babylon. On the 28th of first month 1869 Sargent wrote to Hodgson: 'Those who now meet or sit apart from the old organized meetings are only *seven*; one at Birmingham, one at Bakewell (and attenders sometimes) and five at Fritchley.'⁶⁰ But, nevertheless, the previous day had seen the establishment of a regular meeting for discipline and this body, known for just under a century as Fritchley Monthly Meeting, began to record minutes from fifth month 1869, when 16 Friends signed the minute book,⁶¹ seven being members of the Sargent family. The group, naturally enough, included the other two who had shared the American visit, Louisa Gilkes and Matilda Rickman - but Friends like Joseph Armfield, Daniel Pickard and Charles Thompson remained outside. Thomas Drewry later became a member of Fritchley Monthly Meeting but, as is often the case between those who see clearly a purist absolutism and those who will not take things to their logical conclusion (as the absolutists see it) there was often suspicion.

Two illustrations may suffice. On the 1st of second month 1872 J.G. Sargent laid before Fritchley Monthly Meeting a concern 'to visit in the love of the Gospel as way may open, some of those of the old organization in their families, who are alive to the state of the Society, but are lingering on and mingling with them in worship and discipline.'⁶² He and his wife were liberated. They arrived in London on the 8th and visited Joseph Armfield, who had been so active in and hospitable to the meetings for conference. The Sargents then went to Tottenham and returned to London on the 9th: 'Our first call was a return to Joseph Armfield's under a feeling of necessity in obedience and for peace. Here, I had, what were indeed, to me, hard words to utter, but my peace consisted in not withholding what was required of me to utter, "His words were smoother than butter, yet war was in his heart; his words were softer than oil, yet were they as a drawn sword"; cautioning him against warring against the camp of the little ones of the Lord: left in peace.'⁶³ Then on the 28th of second month the Sargents were in Leeds: 'first called at Samuel Evans,' where we were cordially received; then to Daniel Pickard's; no willingness to receive a visit.'⁶⁴

They had completed their extensive tour about the end of third month. In those two months they record visits to over 170 Friends in Britain and Ireland. Others beside Daniel Pickard refused visits or were like Thomas Chapman of Enniscorthy, where 'not sufficient openness was manifested to make way for a time with him.'⁶⁵ Or there was Richard Brockbank who 'was in the spirit of contest as to our being wrong in separating from such as themselves, but it seemed best to relieve our minds on this head and bear his rebuts. He stood in the reasoning of man in opposition to us.'⁶⁶ Some of those among whom J.G. Sargent relieved his mind were undoubtedly open (Henry T. Wake of Cockermouth, for example, who became a member of Fritchley later) but others were not ('relieved my mind but was not refreshed.') Nevertheless, it is a valuable list of names of Friends who, even if they were not, in the event, open, at least might have been open. And might some of them have been more open to a personality not so uncompromising?

One Friend deserves special mention. On the 20th of third month the Sargents arrived in Limerick 'and soon found the way to Joshua Jacob's. He received us pleasantly and showed openness, his wife also. We had a sitting with him and his wife, and afterwards with a young man, not a member, who is drawing to Friends' views: an open opportunity and it has seemed good we came here.'⁶⁷ The 31-year-old Joshua Jacob was more than 'mingling with them in worship and discipline' for he had that very year become clerk of Limerick Monthly Meeting, an office he continued to hold until 1879, when he emigrated to America, where he died in 1883 at the age of 42. In some Macaulayean verses written in 1877 James N. Richardson pictures Joshua Jacob visiting Ulster Quarterly Meeting at a time when it was in conflict over the introduction of music in Brookfield School, Moira, County Down:

Never a feast biennial,
 Never a conclave day,
 That Jors Jacobus comes not
 To uphold the Ancient Way
 And now his soul is heavy
 With new and bitter wrong,
 For from the lips of Quakri
 Hath poured the voice of song!⁶⁸

But an affectionate picture cannot disguise Joshua Jacob’s extremism:

His corslet is of grey,
 And he, by dint of shoes and hose
 Upholds the Ancient Way.
 But even his own party think
 The matter overdone;
 Men cannot fight with pike and stave
 In days of needle-gun.⁶⁹

CONSERVATIVES AND MODERNISTS

The meeting for conference in second month 1864 had been in Manchester. While it was discussing with Daniel Pickard his detailed analysis of the sorry changes made in the 1861 revision of *Discipline*, other protests against evangelical orthodoxy were gaining ground in that city. The movement we associate with the opening of the Manchester Friends Institute in 1858, with the daring lectures there in the 1860s, and with London Yearly Meeting’s committee of 1870-2 over the Manchester Difficulty is a movement associated with the name of David Duncan.⁷⁰ If we sometimes see him as a hero of modernism, it is but fair also to recognise that he could be obsessional. Here is a Manchester Friend writing of him in 1864:

J[ohn] P[ease] had also an interview with D. Duncan the next day respecting D.D.’s views (of which thou most likely knowest something), but I suppose the said interview was very unsatisfactory to J. Pease, & that D.D. thinks he had the better of J.P. N.B. It is no use having any arguments on religion with such a one as D.D.; he would argue on and on, to any extent, like others who have been like him in views. Yet I was glad to hear J. Pease had been to him; for D.D. boasted some time before to cousin John H. that no one dared to take him to task.⁷¹

This is not the place to follow in detail the events in Manchester during the 1860s, culminating as they did with the appointment by Yearly Meeting 1870 of a committee to restore unity - a committee of strictly evangelical orthodoxy which secured the disownment of David Duncan on 12 July 1871, an event made more tragic on account of his death very shortly afterwards, at the early age of 47.⁷²

His followers, the ‘Manchester Institute’ Friends, represent a third strand in nineteenth-century Quakerism, alongside the conservative and the evangelical, a strand that we may (if we appreciate the fact that any label is unsatisfactory) call ‘modernist.’ And we need to see how the conservatives looked at the modernists. In first month 1870, when the Manchester Difficulty had been for some time under the care of a

Quarterly Meeting committee, but before it had come under the notice of the Yearly Meeting, Daniel Pickard was a visitor at Lancashire & Cheshire Quarterly Meeting at Manchester:

1st mo. 20th. At the Quarterly Meeting at Manchester... James Owen⁷³ there and much to offer on the prophecies and history of Christ - pretty clear; satisfactory & edifying so far - deficient however in & almost void of the present ministration of Christ - viz Christ in Spirit. Some of those who have imbibed sceptical views spoke against it in the Men's Meeting - also Thomas Drewry - but he on account of the defect above named...

1st mo. 21st. Lodged the night by William Irwin's of Sale, & after doing some business that morning joined him to dine at the Friends Institute; here we met with C[harles] T[hompson] & D[avid] D[uncan] & William Simpson - the latter owned his *disbelief* in the Divine paternity of the holy body and person of our Lord Jesus Christ. I felt sad at heart, but love towards him - believing that others older have been the means of unsettling him in this precious fundamental of Christian faith.⁷⁴

William Simpson⁷⁵ was then 24 years of age - 20 years younger than David Duncan - and he was among those who resigned after David Duncan's disownment.⁷⁶ Those who left - and, indeed, some of those who stayed - worshipped at the Memorial Hall, close to the meeting house at Mount Street which they had left. Towards the close of 1871 they founded the short-lived periodical *The Manchester Friend*. *The British Friend* declared roundly that this journal and its advocates belonged to 'the Synagogue of Satan' and it was with dignity that *The Manchester Friend* responded: 'We think that our little movement in the nineteenth century, is identical in aim, with that of Fox, Barclay, and Penn, in the seventeenth; but we do not regard either the one or the other as finalities.'⁷⁷

It is perhaps too simplistic to say that the followers of John Grant Sargent represented the protest of the theological right wing against evangelical orthodoxy and those of David Duncan and his followers to the left. But it is at least of interest, and perhaps significance, that the 1860s should see these two streams, one culminating in the establishment of Fritchley Monthly Meeting in 1869 (and subsequently Fritchley General Meeting) and the other culminating in the disownment of David Duncan, the resignation of a number of other Friends, and the setting up of the (albeit short-lived) Memorial Hall meeting.

Protests from opposite viewpoints? Perhaps. Watchmen at opposite gates? Very likely. Yet it is fascinating to find the conservative Mary Hodgson (she who had written in 1864 about David Duncan's

argumentativeness) writing in sympathy with the Duncan party and, when in Manchester, attending the Memorial Hall meeting rather than Mount Street. Towards the close of 1871 she wrote: 'And once or so in 6 weeks I go over to Manchester to sit with Friends who attend the Memorial Hall... The... sittings are very peaceful - as yet there has been little said in outward ministry but very short prayer or addresses, and of these perhaps only one during a meeting.'⁷⁸

Three months earlier she had written to a friend of evangelical orthodoxy: 'I note thy remark that thou wants "no other belief than that of thy forefathers."' We, Mamma included, consider that the whole Society of Friends, with little exception (and that exception considered heterodox by the rest), has *forsaken* the faith of its forefathers, and gone back to that from which they called it.'⁷⁹

It is always dangerous to speculate, but that letter was written a month after David Duncan's disownment and it is tempting to conjecture how far the visit of the Yearly Meeting's Committee has made her aware of the narrowness of the orthodox Friends, for she went on: 'I feel that if I went to J.B. Braithwaite or Isaac Brown, with a statement as to my views of some theological tenets, I should be told that my notions were "inconsistent with my position as a member".'⁸⁰ She emphasised her point with the news that 'many who still frequent the old, have deep sympathy with the new... ..we believe in *Early Quakerism* and the grand old fundamental doctrine it proclaimed, and *cannot see* why modern Friends should want us to leave them, however much *they* have departed from G. Fox and R. Barclay, with many others perhaps even less "evangelical."⁸¹

The conservative Mary Hodgson, despite her predilections for the modernist meeting at the Memorial Hall, remained a loyal member of London Yearly Meeting until her death, at the age of 51, in 1886. She was niece to William Hodgson of Philadelphia though, as she was born eight years ago after he had emigrated to America, she had never met him. After a time teaching in Friend families she took up painting and was an associate of the Manchester Academy of Fine Arts (and her charming engravings grace Henry Thompson's 1879 *History of Ackworth School*). Her younger brother, Joseph Spence Hodgson, did not, however, join her at the Memorial Hall meetings.⁸²

When she did not go to Manchester, Mary Hodgson worshipped at Ashton-on-Mersey (Sale, as she usually describes it), a meeting which had been opened in 1860. 'No one preaches at Sale save Charles Thompson' she wrote towards the close of 1871, 'but I fear... that they will deprive us of his ever good counsel if possible.'⁸³

Charles Thompson was now 52 years old. He had recently been appointed a city magistrate in Manchester, where he was in business, and he was not long retired from the City Council after a decade of service. He was regular in attendance at Yearly Meeting and a very vocally conservative voice there. But he undoubtedly wore his conservatism with a difference, for he had taken a position of some prominence at a meeting in June 1871 addressed by Charles Voysey. That was not a name lightly to be uttered at that time, for on 11 February that very year the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council had supported the 1869 decision of the chancellor's court of the diocese of York, confirming that court's sentence of deprivation, on ground of heresy, of his Anglican orders. It had been in 1864, the year in which Voysey became vicar of Heelaugh, near Tadcaster, after a time of curacy there, that he published a sermon, *Is every statement in the Bible about our heavenly father strictly true?* and this and later writings and teaching had been seen as a threat to Anglican orthodoxy.

Charles Voysey was thus a notorious figure when he delivered a lecture in Manchester, the object of which, Manchester overseers declared 'was evidently to destroy faith in the Divine authority of Scripture, and in the deity and atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ.'⁸⁴ The substance of this lecture appeared in the newspapers and the overseers reported to Hardshaw East Monthly Meeting in November 1871 'that at the conclusion of this lecture C. Thompson seconded a vote of thanks to the lecturer, that this act had given much pain to a great many Friends, and that the overseers and others had earnestly laboured with him to endeavour to induce him to make a public acknowledgement of his error, but that they had been unable to prevail upon him to do so.'⁸⁵

Charles Thompson made it clear to the monthly meeting that he did not share Charles Voysey's opinions and that he had responded to the chairman's request not because he approved of the matter of the lecture but because it had been lucidly set forth. Charles Voysey had stayed with David Duncan (who had been in the chair) and this had been the precipitating cause of Duncan's disownment. Almost concurrently, in London, Edward Trusted Bennett (a Reigate Friend and former clerk and registering officer of Dorking Horsham & Guildford Monthly Meeting) was serving on 'Charles Voysey's Committee' - an act sufficient to secure his disownment, a disownment confirmed on appeal by London Yearly Meeting 1873, 'the last great heresy hunt in London Yearly Meeting' as John William Graham was later to describe it.⁸⁶

Charles Thompson may not have shared Charles Voysey's views, but the very fact that he was at the meeting demonstrates that not all

conservatives had that fear of modernism so eloquently expressed in the editorial of *The British Friend*. On the other hand, when the Yearly Meeting's committee which had been appointed to restore unity in Hardshaw East Monthly Meeting presented to Lancashire & Cheshire Quarterly Meeting in fourth month 1872 its 'Declaration of some fundamental principles of Christian truth,' Charles Thompson's fellow-conservative, William Irwin, 'maintained that every word of the declaration was consistent with what he knew of the writings of early Friends,'⁸⁷ though Charles Elcock was brave enough to object to the words in the address 'We disavow all spirituality which is divorced from faith in Jesus of Nazareth' as contrary to the fundamental doctrine of Quakerism.⁸⁸ When it came to Yearly Meeting 1872, Daniel Pickard objected to the 'Declaration' as too Calvinistic and Joseph Armfield and William Graham also registered protests to a document which was, in the event, printed in the minutes but not adopted.⁸⁹

CONSERVATIVES AND THE MISSION MOVEMENT

Meanwhile, interest in home mission work was increasing. The Bedford Institute First-day School & Home Mission had been established in 1865 and successful American initiatives in 'General Meetings' (not, it must be emphasised, to be confused with the modern use of the phrase by British Friends) for outreaching evangelistic work were seen as worthy of emulation. Dublin Yearly Meeting 1874 appointed a committee which sponsored a General meeting that June at Grange, attracting some 5,000 people to some 25 meetings in the course of a week. The following year London Yearly Meeting appointed a like committee, which served for the next eight years. This is not the place to amplify on the movement⁹⁰ but the unease expressed in Yearly Meeting by William Graham and Joseph Armfield reflected, perhaps, a growing sense that, for some evangelicals, the salvation of souls was so supremely important that any Quaker insights or practices which stood in the way must be sacrificed. The introduction of congregational singing in meetings for worship was a case of point and Richard Brockbank pertinently asked in Yearly Meeting 'whether the committee was at liberty to override the feelings of Friends living in those neighbourhoods... and to introduce practices which had never been sanctioned by the Yearly Meeting.'⁹¹

The appointment of the Yearly Meeting's Home Mission Committee in 1882 and the support of full-time home missionaries, as well as the introduction of emotional conversion appeals at mission meetings, increased unease. For example, Western Quarterly Meeting in its triennial report to Yearly Meeting 1885 wrote of meetings 'adapted to

the altered circumstances arising from the admission into membership of large numbers of fresh converts.'⁹² Indeed, in Hereford & Radnor Monthly Meeting alone there had been 99 admissions by convincement during the triennium, and in a decade the membership of the monthly meeting had increased from 90 to 255.⁹³ The triennial report spoke of 'the shadow of members disunited from us' and Joseph Armfield in Yearly Meeting 'wished to inquire whether the instances reported in Western Quarterly Meeting of disuniting on account of non-attendance at meeting included any who were faithful according to their lights to our principles, and felt that in consequence of practices which had been introduced into those meetings they could no longer go there.'⁹⁴

In this connection, it is tempting to speculate about Joseph Ashby Fardon, a minister who had been recorded by Alton Southampton & Poole Monthly Meeting and who in 1880 transferred to Hereford & Radnor Monthly Meeting, having settled at Leominster. That monthly meeting in 1883 removed him from the position of minister, but he was to be recorded once more on his removal shortly afterwards to East Cornwall Monthly Meeting.⁹⁵

Revivalist practices and changed forms of worship were developing in the middle west of America. When Western Yearly Meeting gathered at Plainfield, Indiana, in ninth month 1877 it was presented with two sets of answers to the queries, both purporting to come from Plainfield Quarterly Meeting. When Barnabas Hobbs, the Yearly Meeting clerk, minuted the decision to accept those from the revivalist or 'progressive' quarterly meeting, 'a venerable Friend of eighty-two, Robert Hodson, rose and in broken accents said that he "felt he and his party had no rights nor privileges left in this body, and he invited all, young and old, who wished with him to maintain Friends' principles in their purity, to withdraw with him to another place where they might form a Yearly Meeting".' Ninety Friends, or thereabouts, put on their hats and left the Meeting; and as they went out, an American minister, with certificates from another Yearly Meeting, sang at the top of his voice,

See the mighty host advancing,
Satan leading on:

murmuring to the British Friend next to him, 'I thought they should hear one more hymn before they went out.'⁹⁶

London Yearly Meeting 1878 received, as might be expected, two epistles both purporting to come from Western Yearly Meeting. Charles Thompson, Joseph Armfield, William Graham and Daniel Pickard expressed their sympathies with the conservatives - as might be

expected. Walter Robson (he was the British Friend who had been present) said that 'several of the Friends who had separated had borne the burden and heat of the day for very many years past.' And Friends as varied as Alfred W. Bennett and J. Tirnbeck Grace added their voices of sympathy. In all the circumstances we may, perhaps, wonder how realistic it was of the Yearly Meeting to ask Meeting for Sufferings to write to the conservative body 'a few lines of loving encouragement to... re-unite themselves with those who have so long associated with them in Christian fellowship.'⁹⁷

Alfred W. Bennett was brother to Edward Trusted Bennett, whose disownment by Dorking Horsham & Guildford Monthly Meeting in 1873 has already been touched on. The monthly meeting's decision was on the advice of a committee comprising Joseph Crosfield, Francis Frith and Thomas W. Marsh. Joseph Crosfield, though a son of devoted conservatives who had befriended John Wilbur, was a firm evangelical.⁹⁸ The presence of Francis Frith and Thomas W. Marsh is ironic. In 1877 Frith was to publish a highly critical pamphlet, *Evangelicalism* and in 1884 he was to be co-author of *A reasonable faith*, a book which was to shock the evangelically-orientated Yearly Meeting.⁹⁹

As for T.W. Marsh, an obituary recalled: 'He had not had, as far as was known, any strongly-marked or vivid experiences in the spiritual life. He seems to have grown into what one of his friends calls "a profound silent reverence for the unseen Guide of our life," accompanied by the most scrupulous integrity and self-control in the smallest as well as the greatest things.'¹⁰⁰ Thomas W. Marsh was perhaps a conservative of the old school (indeed, John Sargent had visited him on his 1872 round of those who still 'lingered on' in the larger body) but Francis Frith, together with his friend William Pollard, represented, perhaps, conservatism worn with a difference. Pollard, who had written in the *Friends quarterly examiner* in 1879 against congregational singing in meetings for worship, published in 1887 *Old fashioned Quakerism*, a companion piece in its critical approach to Francis Frith's *Evangelicalism* of ten years earlier.¹⁰¹

Let us return to that Western Yearly Meeting, Indiana, of 1877. In 1913 Walter Robson, recalling that dramatic event when the conservatives walked out, wrote: 'The day after this scene in the Yearly meeting, I ventured to address the body, in open session, on the value of unity, and reminded Friends that in God's sight the scruples of these "Wilburite Separatists," as they called them, were as precious as ours. I was warmly thanked afterwards by some Friends, but J.H. Douglas, D.B. Updegraff, and a few other "progressive" leaders were very severe, telling me I was "encouraging a spirit they wanted to crush,"

and that all *they* did was by Divine command, and therefore must be right.' And, looking back with the perspective of 35 years, Robson added: 'That word "*crush*" explains much of the spirit of Separation in the U.S.A.'¹⁰²

At the outset of this paper the question was raised how far the conservatives were a cohesive group. The evidence suggests that they were not. It is possible to discern three groups, who may be described as the purists, the preservationists, and the conservationists - though having said this it is again necessary to recognise the inadequacy of all labels. The purists are represented by William Hodgson and John G. Sargent, taking a view of 'Be ye separate' and 'Be not unequally yoked with non-believers': It may be argued that in some ways they were as exclusive and excluding as the extreme evangelicals. For example, when a quarterly meeting committee came to visit the Sargents in tenth month 1868 JGS wrote to William Hodgson that 'Four in the six wore no appearance of Friends,'¹⁰³ a judgement as outward and dismissive in relation to the plain dress as many an evangelical one in relation to correct belief. Nevertheless, the witness of the purists is an important one, and we must recognise that the Fritchley tradition is kept alive for a century insights which had been too largely neglected within London Yearly Meeting. The purist Friends were indeed a living remnant.

The preservationists, too, kept alive important truths but were often unable to appreciate that tradition is not everything and that the Holy Spirit is ever active and leading us into fresh understandings and new insights. But it is not always easy, at the time, to distinguish between what are essentials and what are not. The plain dress and the plain language, the introduction of gravestones, the intended laying down of the Morning Meeting¹⁰⁴ - these were, we may now think, none of them questions worth going to the stake for. But were the preservationists not right when they saw innovations in worship as potentially undermining London Yearly Meeting's fundamental convictions?

The purists, by their purism, caused separation and yet further separation.¹⁰⁵ The preservationists, maintaining all that was best in Quakerism's eighteenth-century tradition, also tended to maintain outmoded 'peculiarities' and also a distrust of the intellect, so that there was insufficient nourishment of the mind to sustain the spirit. It is the third group, the conservationists, to whom perhaps we owe most - men and women like Thomas W. Marsh, Anne Warner Marsh, William Pollard and Francis Frith, who, seeing what was best in the old, yet looked forward to the new.

Eighteenth-century Friends put their emphasis on Christ within, the hope of glory, and nineteenth-century conservatives maintained this

emphasis. Nineteenth-century evangelicals put their emphasis on the Christ of history and his atoning sacrifice. Edward Grubb may perhaps stand for the bringing together of these two emphases and his 1914 Swarthmore Lecture, *The historic and the inward Christ*, symbolizes that synthesis. He was among a new generation of conservationists, with an aggressively evangelical father and staunchly conservative grandparents. He and those likeminded saw the need for reconciliation between separated branches of the Society. They were zealous for the feeding of the intellect while never denying the insufficiency of the mind alone. They were concerned for the social witness of the gospel. Many who thought during the latter half of the nineteenth century that they were treading a lonely road were to discover at the great conference at Manchester in November 1895 that they were far from being alone. It was indeed the beginning of a new chapter. If it was the beginning of 'the modern way' then those who had upheld 'the ancient way' deserve our gratitude for their witness - a witness which carried the best of the eighteenth century into the twentieth.

Edward H. Milligan

NOTES AND REFERENCES

LSF indicates a document in the Library of the Society of Friends, London.

- ¹ *Selections from the diary and correspondence of John G. Sargent*, 1885, 104 [hereafter, Sargent].
- ² Thomas Drewry (1812-1898).
- ³ Sargent, loc. cit.
- ⁴ For comments from a conservative viewpoint on these matters see *The British Friend* editorial observations on the relevant Yearly Meetings.
- ⁵ Sargent, 115-6. Conservatives pointed to the fact that David numbered the people (2 Samuel 18:1) thus causing God's anger and David's consequent remorse (2 Samuel 24:10).
- ⁶ London Yearly Meeting, *Epistles*, ed. James Bowden, 1860, vol. 2, 383-4.
- ⁷ *The crisis of the Quaker contest in Manchester*, 1837, appendix, 8, 17, 19, 27, 30, 33-34, 40-41, 46, 58.
- ⁸ For members of the committee see London YM MS minutes vol. 23, 411-413, 451; vol. 24, 164.
- ⁹ For an account of the places and people visited see *Journal of the life of John Wilbur*, 1859, 76-166 [hereafter, Wilbur].
- ¹⁰ London YM MS minutes vol. 24, 164.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, 166. See also 'How we got our book of discipline: the story to 1863' by David J. Hall, in *Friends quarterly*, vol. 25, 1988, 32-9.
- ¹² For an admirable account of the advices and queries see 'Friends' queries and general advices' by Richard E. Stagg, in *J. Friends. Hist. Soc.*, vol. 49, 1961, 209-35, 249-69, 279: the text of the 1791 and 1833 advices is given at pp. 222, 226-7.
- ¹³ Joseph John Gurney (1788-1847).

- ¹⁴ Jonathan Hutchinson (1760-1835).
- ¹⁵ John Wilkinson (1783?-1846).
- ¹⁶ Letter of 18 xi 1832 (LSF, Gurney MSS 3/569, [2]-[3]).
- ¹⁷ Letter of 9 vi 1833 (LSF, Gurney MSS 3/573, [1]).
- ¹⁸ Samuel Lloyd (1768-1849).
- ¹⁹ Samuel Lloyd, *Copy of a letter addressed to a Friend*, dated The Farm, 5mo 9, 1835, lithographed (LSF, Box 105).
- ²⁰ *Rules of discipline*, 1834, vii: the documents were extracts from George Fox's letter to the governor of Barbadoes, 1671; a statement of Christian Doctrine, 1693; minutes of London YM 1829; and London YM epistle 1830.
- ²¹ Letter of 9 vi 1833 (LSF, Gurney MSS 3/573, [2]).
- ²² Isaac Crewdson (1780-1844).
- ²³ Joseph John Gurney, MS journal.
- ²⁴ William Boulton (fl. 1827-1836).
- ²⁵ The members of the committee were William Allen, Edward Ash, Peter Bedford, Barnard Dickinson, Josiah Forster, William Forster, J.J. Gurney, Joseph Marriage, Edward Pease, George Richardson, George Stacey, Joseph Tatham, Samuel Tuke (London YM MS Minutes, vol. 24, 515-16).
- ²⁶ Edward Grubb, *Separations, their causes and effects: studies in nineteenth century Quakerism*, 1914, 55 [hereafter, Grubb, *Separations*]. The problems in Manchester meeting, personal as well as doctrinal, which the Yearly Meeting's Committee had to face are much more fully grasped in Roger C. Wilson, *Manchester, Manchester, and Manchester again: from 'sound doctrine' to 'a free ministry,'* 1990, 11-17 [hereafter, Wilson, *Manchester*], where credit is given to the 'patient statesmanship' of the committee which 'skilfully eased the Beaconite cavalry into withdrawing from what could have been a national field of battle.'
- ²⁷ See, for example, the extracts from letters of resignation printed *supra*.
- ²⁸ Joseph John Gurney, *Memoirs*, ed. J.B. Braithwaite, 1854, vol. 1, 440; 2nd ed. 1855, vol. 1, 424; entry for 1831.
- ²⁹ For an account of the deliberations of London YM of Ministers & Elders see *Proceedings of the Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends, held in London, 1837*, 10-11: this (illicit) report first appeared in *The Patriot*, a contemporary newspaper.
- ³⁰ Jeremiah 6:16. For a brief account of the early days of *The Friend* and *The British Friend*, see 'The launch of *The Friend*, 1843: two celebrations or one' by Vanessa Morton, in *The Friend*, vol. 151, 7-8.
- ³¹ For particulars of these Friends see *Dictionary of Quaker Biography* (LSF unpub.).
- ³² William Irwin (1815?-1876), printer, Manchester; Charles Thompson (1819-1903), business man and city councillor, Manchester; Joseph Armfield (1821-1894), London; William Graham (1823-1911), Birmingham; Daniel Pickard (1828-1905), Leeds. Of particular relevance to future studies, the recent thesis on D. Pickard by Mark Ellison.
- ³³ Lydia Ann Barclay (1799-1855).
- ³⁴ See Wilbur, 511-551 for an account of the people and places visited.
- ³⁵ Wilbur, 511, 526.
- ³⁶ Josiah, Robert and Mary Forster.
- ³⁷ Wilbur, 526. Paul Bevan (1783-1868), Tottenham; Edward May (1820?-1864), physician, Tottenham.
- ³⁸ Wilbur, 513.
- ³⁹ Wilbur, 537. Mary Wright (1755-1859).
- ⁴⁰ Wilbur, 547. Sargent farmed at Hall, near Moate, Co. Westmeath, from 1852 to 1854.

- ⁴¹ For William Hodgson (1804-1878) see especially *Selections from the correspondence of William Hodgson, with memoirs of his life*, 1886 [hereafter, Hodgson, *Correspondence*].
- ⁴² For a full description of these pseudo-diplomatic recognitions and breaks in recognition see William Hodgson, *The Society of Friends in the nineteenth century*, 2 vols., 1875-6 [hereafter, Hodgson, *History*].
- ⁴³ Hodgson, *History*, vol. 2, 281-312.
- ⁴⁴ See Isaiah 7:3; cf. also Ezekiel 6:8.
- ⁴⁵ Meetings as recorded in Sargent were on 17.x.1862 to x.1869, Sargent, 118, 122-3, 129, 133, 136, 138, 140, 142, 147, 165, 167-8, 171, 172-3.
- ⁴⁶ Quoted in Hugh Barbour, *The Quakers in Puritan England*, 1964, 15: the phrase comes from the covenant of Robert Browne's congregation in Norwich, 1580, as quoted in Champlin Burrage, *The early English dissenters*, 1912, vol. 1, 98.
- ⁴⁷ Hodgson, *Correspondence*, 301-302.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 310.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 315.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 317.
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 320-21.
- ⁵² Louisa E. Gilkes (1814-1881); Matilda Rickman (1799-1882).
- ⁵³ Sargent, 148.
- ⁵⁴ Daniel Pickard, MS Journal 1867-9 (LSF, Temp.MSS 56/3/2, fol. 25).
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 1866-7 (LSF, Temp.MSS 56/3/1, fol. 14 verso-15). Cf. entry at fol. 12, recording the consideration of the concern at Brighthouse MM 10 viii 1866 when 'after a considerable discussion in which Josiah Forster took the chief part the meeting concluded not to recognise the offering.'
- ⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 1867-9 (LSF, Temp.MSS 56/3/2, fol. 40).
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 1867-9 (LSF, Temp.MSS 56/3/2, fol. 39 verso).
- ⁵⁸ Hodgson, *Correspondence*, 350.
- ⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 351.
- ⁶⁰ Sargent, 168.
- ⁶¹ For a reproduction of this entry, see Walter Lowndes, *The Quakers of Fritchley, 1863-1980*, 1980, 15, with enlargement at p.138.
- ⁶² Sargent, 186.
- ⁶³ Sargent, 187-188: quotation from Psalm 55:21. It is, perhaps, worth noting that in 1875 J.G. Sargent's son Philip married Joseph Armfield's daughter Julia Ann: Joseph Armfield wrote to her 31 i 1875 avering that the 'tendency of those who have united with that community [Fritchley] has been to withdraw themselves from spheres of wider and greater influence, and to assume a repellent demeanour towards others,' adding that 'Surely such is not the fruit of the Spirit, nor evidence of its fuller influence in the heart' (*Annual Monitor*, 1895, 8).
- ⁶⁴ Sargent, 195.
- ⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 199.
- ⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 198.
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 200.
- ⁶⁸ James N. Richardson, *The Quakri at Lurgan and at Grange*, 1899, 92-93.
- ⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 77.
- ⁷⁰ David Duncan (1825?-1871).
- ⁷¹ Mary Hodgson to Elizabeth Green 7 iii 1864 (LSF, Port. A/58, [5-6]). Elizabeth Green (1815-1881), the wife of Joshua Green of Stansted Mountfitchet, Essex, was a daughter of Thomas and Elizabeth Robson of Darlington, Sunderland and Liverpool: Elizabeth Robson, a notable and much-travelled minister, had been in America at the time of the Hicksite separation.

- ⁷² For a full consideration of the subject see 'Authority or experience: John Wilhelm Rowntree and the dilemma of 19th century British Quakerism' by Richenda C. Scott, in *J. Friends. Hist. Soc.*, vol. 49, 1960, 75-95, esp. 76-81; Wilson, *Manchester*, 19-26; 'Heresy-hunting among Victorian Quakers: the Manchester difficulty, 1861-73' by Thomas C. Kennedy, in *Victorian Studies*, vol. 34, 1991, 227-53.
- ⁷³ James Owen (1822-1871) of Iowa YM, a recorded minister, presented to London YM 1869 certificates from Rocksylvania MM 25 vi 1868, Honey Creek QM 4 viii 1868, and Iowa YM of Ministers & Elders 5-12 ix 1868 (LYM, *Proc.*, 1869, p. 3, 1870 p. 3). He presented his returning minute to Iowa YM 6.ix.1870, his death being reported to that meeting the following year (Iowa YM *Minutes*, 1870, p. 10; 1871, p. 7).
- ⁷⁴ Daniel Pickard, MS journal 1870-1 (LSF, Temp.MSS 56/3/3, fol. 1 verso-2).
- ⁷⁵ William Simpson (1845-1914).
- ⁷⁶ For reference to the resignations see Scott, op. cit., 80: 'Eleven members, including some of the most hopeful and intelligent of the young men and women, resigned in protest and two others a year later.' The obituary of William Simpson (*Ackworth Old Scholars Assoc. rep.* 33, 1914, 113) describes his resignation as being 'at a time when a number of earnest-minded Friends in Manchester left it [the Society] for greater freedom of thought.'
- ⁷⁷ *The Manchester Friend*, vol. 1, 1872, 18. The phrase 'the synagogue of Satan' does not appear to be in the editorial in *The British Friend* vol. 30, 1872, 14-15.
- ⁷⁸ Mary Hodgson to Elizabeth Green, xii 1871 (LSF, Port. A/60 [5-6]).
- ⁷⁹ Mary Hodgson to Elizabeth Green, 27 viii 1871 (LSF, Port. A/59, [5]).
- ⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, [6].
- ⁸¹ *Ibid.*, [9].
- ⁸² See letter of Mary Hodgson, xii 1871: 'Joseph has not been to the Memorial Hall meeting at all.' (LSF, Port. A/60).
- ⁸³ Mary Hodgson to Elizabeth Green, xii 1871 (LSF, Port. A/60 [6]).
- ⁸⁴ A full report of the MM held 9 Nov. 1871 is printed in *Manchester Friend*, vol. 1, 1871, 8-11.
- ⁸⁵ At the November MM a Committee of six friends was appointed to visit Charles Thompson (who was present at the MM) and report. The report was received Jan. 1872 MM: for the discussion, which resulted in the matter being dropped, see *Manchester Friend*, vol. 1, 1872, 27.
- ⁸⁶ Edward Trusted Bennett (1831-1908). For an account of his involvement with Voysey see 'Francis Frith' by Beryl Williams, and 'In reason's ear' by Edward H. Milligan, in *Friends quarterly*, vol. 23, 1964, 364-370, 389-396, esp. 366-367, 393-394.
- ⁸⁷ The MM discussion is reported in *The Manchester Friend*, vol. 1, 1872, 93-5: quotation at p. 94.
- ⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 94.
- ⁸⁹ *The Manchester Friend*, vol. 1, 109; reference to these contributions does not appear to be in the reports of YM in *The Friend*, ns vol. 12, 1872, 132-4, or *The British Friend*, vol. 30, 144-146.
- ⁹⁰ For an admirable account of general meetings see 'The Committee on General Meetings' by Malcolm J. Thomas, in *A Quaker miscellany for Edward H. Milligan*, 1985, 133-143.
- ⁹¹ *The British Friend*, vol. 33, (1875).
- ⁹² London Yearly Meeting, *Extracts from the minutes and proceedings*, 1885, 45 [thereafter, LYM, *Proc.*].
- ⁹³ LYM, *Proc.*, 1885, 48. For a brief survey of the effects of mission work in Hereford & Radnor MM at that time see Harriet M. Newman, *Henry Stanley Newman*, 1917, 15-17.

- ⁹⁴ LYM, *Proc.* 1885, 48; *The Friend*, ns vol. 25, 1885, 141.
- ⁹⁵ Joseph Ashby Fardon (1812-1876).
- ⁹⁶ Edward Grubb, *Separations*, 1914, 150-151, reprinting (and identifying Walter Robson as the author of) an article entitled 'An American separation, by an eye-witness' in *The British Friend*, ns vol. 22, 1913, 287-8 (quotation at p. 288). Walter Robson (1842-1929) was a nephew of Elizabeth Green (see note 71). Stanley Pumphrey was also at Western YM in 1877. There were eight visiting Friends, with credentials, from other American YMs: S. Elizabeth Malleson (New York YM); John Henry Douglas, Robert W. Douglas, Daniel Hill, Eliza Hodson, Robert Knight (Indiana YM); Luther B. Gordon, John F. Hanson (Iowa YM) (Western YM, *Minutes*, p. 7). The presence of David Updegraff does not appear to be minuted.
- ⁹⁷ London YM began 22 v 1878, the Western YM epistle being considered that afternoon (LYM, *Proc.* p. 5 where the quotation may be found). For reports of that session see *The Friend*, ns vol. 18, 126-9; *The British Friend*, vol. 36, 127-131. A report from a committee appointed on 22 v 1878 was received by LYM 28 v 1878 (LYM, *Proc.*, p. 14) and the following day a further discussion took place in relation to the appointment of a deputation to Western YM (*ibid.* p. 22).
- ⁹⁸ Joseph Crosfield (1821-1879), tea merchant, Reigate. His parents, George and Margaret Crosfield, were of Warrington.
- ⁹⁹ Francis Frith (1822-1898), photographer, Reigate.
- ¹⁰⁰ *Annual Monitor*, 1903, 62; Thomas W. Marsh (1833-1902).
- ¹⁰¹ William Pollard (1828-1893).
- ¹⁰² Quoted in Grubb, 151-152.
- ¹⁰³ Sargent, 165.
- ¹⁰⁴ The Morning Meeting of Ministering Friends (later, of Ministers & Elders) had been established in or before 1673, from which year minutes are recorded. By the early nineteenth century it had outlived its usefulness and it was proposed in the 1861 revision of discipline that it be laid down. This was seen by conservative Friends as a major issue and the Morning Meeting was, in the event, continued, meeting only quarterly. It was laid down in 1901.
- ¹⁰⁵ Fritchley General Meeting, for example, suffered a separation in the 1890s when primitive Fritchley Friends, feeling that the main body had departed from purist ideals, withdrew to form Bournbrook General Meeting. This separation is touched on, but not fully examined, in Lowndes, *op. cit.*