A STUDY OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS) IN YORKSHIRE DURING THE LATER EIGHTEENTH AND EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURIES, BASED ON THE NOTEBOOKS OF JOSEPH WOOD, A QUAKER MINISTER

By

PETER LESLIE STAPLES

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Abstract

This thesis discusses the beliefs and lifestyle of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Northern England, particularly Yorkshire, during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This has been made possible by the transcription and publication of five volumes of Notebooks that had remained undisturbed for two centuries until made public in 2011.[1] These were written by a travelling Quaker minister named Joseph Wood, who lived near Highflatts Meeting House in West Yorkshire. They are an invaluable source for the Quaker sect theologically, socially, politically and in every other secular way. Having the Notebooks to hand encouraged me to turn to another source on early Quakerism for more information about the purely spiritual side of a Meeting's life. Carole Dale Spencer's book 'Holiness: The Soul of Quakerism'[2] brings a modern understanding to many of the questions that puzzled Wood and to which he could only bring to bear the thinking of the 1700s.

It will quickly become obvious that Spencer appears to have been short-changed on space. She gets little more than a chapter while Wood has five. The reason for such inequality is that 18th century Quakerism takes a good deal of explaining as do each of Wood's five volumes. By the time I get to the core of Spencer's contribution the reader should be well versed in early modern Quakerism. The Notebooks provide evidence for some long-forgotten Quaker beliefs and practices. Foremost among these is the spiritual insight that gave life to the Society of Friends in the mid-17th

[1] Cooksey, Pamela (2011), transcriber of *The Large and Small Notebooks of Joseph Wood, A Yorkshire Quaker 1750-1821*, published by High Flatts Quaker Meeting

[2] Spencer, Carole Dale (2007) *Holiness: The Soul of Quakerism*, Paternoster

[3] Bauman, Richard (1983) *Let Your Words be Few,* Cambridge University Press, 4

century, the holy Inward Light of Christ. Related to this is the 'Day of Visitation' by which Wood's generation set much store.

The thesis also identifies some striking differences between Quakerism in the North and South of England which have been unrecognised until now. Richard Bauman in his book *Let Your Words be Few* says the Quakers 'developed a distinctive, symbolically resonant'[2] communicative style, one among many in 'the Babelistic confusion of tongues'[3] found in revolutionary England. We cannot assume that words and verbal constructions in Wood's Notebooks meant to him what they mean to us. There are other aspects of Quakerism which figure large in the sect's history but which are not developed here, the reason being that Joseph Wood makes little or no mention of them. The best example is slavery, seldom mentioned in Wood's Notebooks but something to which he was passionately opposed. There are two more areas where originality in this thesis has been possible because of Wood's Notebooks. Twentieth-century Quaker academic Lewis Benson believed eighteenth century Friends increasingly lost the initial understanding of the Inward Light. Over time, this changed the nature of Quakerism as it had been understood in the first generation. The Notebooks, and Spencer, show that a century later some still considered themselves to be led by the Inward Light, although the prevailing Quaker theology was by then based on Gospel Order (a system of mutual accountability that George Fox had introduced to control Friends' behaviour and lifestyle). Although Wood was out of step with some aspects of the Quakerism of his day, the Notebooks show him to have remained an obedient Friend. He maintained both the Inward Light and 'Plainness' in his own life. Plainness, or simplicity in clothing, speech and possessions, was an essential part of Gospel Order Quakerism, and this is another theme explored here. The second area is women ministers. I make no claims for originality in this subject, but simply point out that women ministers came to outnumber men in Yorkshire and other Northern counties. Spencer will be of use in both these areas as well as helping to clarify the theology of the first Friends.

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Referencing the Notebooks

This is an example of how Wood's Notebooks are referenced in the text and footnotes: Vol 1, nb2A/21-23
To the left of the oblique slash are the Volume and Notebook numbers (Vol and nb respectively). To the right of the slash are the page number or range of numbers. Large Notebooks and Small Notebooks are indicated by 'LN' and 'SN' respectively, but these are generally superfluous for referencing and are omitted. Remains of previous referencing systems can be seen in some entries.

Note on syntax

The language, grammar and spelling of the later 18th century have been retained by the transcriber and nothing has been altered in this thesis, which means there are many apparent errors. Rather than have the work bristling with '*sic*' I have limited its use to a few cases where clarification is required.

Chapter 1

1.1 In the beginning

To appreciate Quakerism in the eighteenth century, it is necessary to go back briefly to the origins of the sect in the mid-seventeenth, a time of civil war and religious/political turmoil. Rosemary Moore describes the rise of Quakerism, which began in the hills of northern England in the 1650s[5] among individuals and small independent congregations who rejected the Established Church in particular and traditional Christian practice in general. An itinerant preacher named George Fox became the dominant personality in the sect. Although several of the first Friends were articulate and literate he seems to have become their chief spokesman. The first Friends called themselves Children of Light, among other things, and were charismatic and aggressively evangelical.[6] The origins of the name Quaker are unclear. It was possibly used by one of their opponents, a magistrate named Bennet, to cause offence, and stuck. At the time of the civil war there were many sects claiming to be God's answer to all the woes of England and the world. Adrian Davies explains:

> The Quaker religion was all-embracing, for attaining salvation and satisfying God's will on earth were achieved not only by avoidance of church worship, ritual, and dues but also by the manner in which members went about their daily lives, even by their language, dress, and bodily carriage.[7]

5 Moore, Rosemary (2000) *The Light in Their Consciences;* 'Quaker Beginnings 1649-1659,' 3-35; Pennsylvania State University

6 Collins, Peter (2002) *Discipline: The Codification of Quakerism as Orthopraxy, 1650–1738*, 'History and Anthropology' 13(2), 79–92

7 Davies, Adrian (2011) *The Quakers in English Society, 1655-1725,* Oxford University Press

Quakerism preached a direct, personal encounter with Christ, a very different message to that which people traditionally heard in their parish churches. Friends believed in the 'absolute immanence of God, the Inward Light' which was a 'keystone of Quaker spirituality'.[8] Early Friends held that they did not want or need the church, established or nonconformist, because they had direct communion with God through the risen Jesus. This was 'the inward manifestation of divine light'. Spencer quotes Barclay at length on this (p77) and the theology does become rather convoluted. First Friends believed the Inward Light, the Spirit of Christ which had been poured into them when they first believed, was guiding them to live as God required and was the same spirit that had led the apostles. This was the time of the Westminster Confession[9] which said, amid much else, 'we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word.' Quakers not only clashed with the established church but with the Puritans and with most other radical dissenting groups. In times when religion, politics and society did not have clear boundaries a crime against the church could easily be construed as a crime against the state, or at the very least raise doubts about loyalty. Perceived extremists such as Quakers faced great personal dangers, which increased after the restoration of the king in 1660. The passing of the Toleration Act in 1689 was the first of several legal changes that greatly relieved the pressure on Quakers and other non-conformists.

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[8] Collins, 'Quakerism as orthopraxy,' History and Anthropology, 13:2

[9] The Westminster Confession of Faith was drawn up by an assembly at Westminster Abbey in 1646 as a confession of the Church of England. The assembly, called by Parliament, wanted "learned, godly and judicious Divines" to advise on issues of worship, doctrine, government and discipline. They met for over five years.

While this chapter introduces Friends generally it also highlights two aspects of Quakerism which arose in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and also discusses sources and methods. Firstly, this small and zealously religious organisation from the North of England transformed itself into a commercial and financial driving force on both sides of the Atlantic. Secondly, and arguably as a consequence, it began to lose the original and unique spiritual insight that had given it life**,** that every human being could experience direct and personal communion with God through Christ without the need for priests, consecrated objects or even churches. The worship that God wanted was spiritual. Only in the twentieth century did knowledge of the original insight reappear, and then only fleetingly.

1.2 Joseph Wood in the context of his time and place

In recent times a series of notebooks written by an eighteenth-century Yorkshire Quaker minister, Joseph Wood, have been published.[10] These are an invaluable resource for studying Quakerism up to the 1820s, as are the minute books of Highflatts Preparative Meeting, which Wood attended, and various diaries, sermons and letters. Wood was born in 1750, a third generation Friend. Although his parents and grandparents had been established local Friends he was the most active by far, becoming a well-known minister in the sect. For more than half a century he compiled Notebooks, including in them both his own thoughts and experiences and those of other people. By the time of his death in 1821 there were five bound Notebooks, comprising letters, testimonies, ‘memoranda’, travel stories and other material written by himself, plus many letters written to him or that had come into his

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[10] *The Large and Small Notebooks of Joseph Wood, A Yorkshire Quaker 1750-1821*

possession and that he felt needed to be copied and kept. Another 200-plus loose documents, which have not yet been transcribed, are housed in the University of Leeds library. Wood is the central character in this thesis and his views dominate. But that is not to say he was always correct or consistent and he needs to be approached carefully. Apart from what he says, what he omits can also influence a reader. Wood's family home, New House, was just a couple of miles from Highflatts Meeting House and some nine miles south of Huddersfield, which was in his day the hub of a prosperous and influential Quaker network. Highflatts Meeting House was the physical centre of an active village dominated by Quakers.11 They had their own adult school and a hostel for residential gatherings. Highflatts was a substantial meeting house which had begun life as a barn and was converted in 1697, although it is speculated that Quaker influence in the area goes back to 1652. The Meeting House was completely rebuilt in 1754 on the same site. Numbers at meeting varied according to the time of year, and Joseph Wood notes that harvest time meant lower attendance. Bad weather could also reduce numbers, particularly among women Friends. But taken together, the numbers attending first day and weekday meetings at Highflatts could well exceed a hundred people. These would mostly be regulars, but Wood often comments that 'several of other societies came in,' usually meaning Methodists, Baptists and other non-conformists. However, Anglicans also attended (see 3.6 for more details about Quaker relationships with other churches). Apart from Highflatts, regular meetings in the area were held in five other villages. Changes in the 1790s saw most of these places of worship either disappear or, in the case of two of them, join other Monthly Meetings as preparative meetings in their own right.

Little else has been published about Wood, and his papers are not yet fully transcribed. But using Quaker historians in conjunction with those of other interests has enabled me to put him into a wider context. The picture painted so far is of a dynamic and busy congregation, mixing their sacred duties with secular interests to the benefit of the general community. Seventeenth-century Quakerism was primarily about salvation which, Friends believed, was available to all through the Light of Christ, regardless of denomination or religion. Among prominent early Friends who wrote about experiencing the Light were James Nayler, who described it as 'nigh thee, in thy heart [...] the Word of life which the Apostles preached' while Margaret Fell said it was that 'which comes from Jesus Christ [with] which he doth enlighten everyone that cometh into the world'. Isaac Penington gave a detailed description of how coming into the Light worked. It first caused 'fear and trembling' to seize upon the sinner by which 'the work of true repentance and conversion is begun […] a turning of the soul from the darkness to the light'. Then came 'a time of mourning, of deep mourning, while the separation is working, while the enemies [*sic*] strength is not broken and subdued'. In the final stage 'hope in the living principle, which hath manifested itself and begun to work arises For the soul truly turning to the light […] the living power is felt […] it stays the soul in all the tossings, troubles, storms and tempests it meets with afterwards.' George Fox and other early leaders saw the Light as the same thing as the grace of God.

A major question about early Quakerism is how expressions of faith such as those above gave way to Gospel Order, an organisational system based on rules and procedures. First generation Friends rejected every aspect of church life. And they were very public about it, which must have concerned many people in authority.

George Fox presumably urged the changes on Friends to encourage their acceptance and dispel socially destabilising concerns about Quakerism. I suggest he was seeking the best of both worlds, meetings for worship and business that were consistent but which also were open to God's leadings through individual direct prayer. An early example of someone who met all the requirements was Josiah Langdale.[12] He became a Friend in 1693, aged 20, and took up Quaker ways of speaking and dressing, using theological language very similar to that of Joseph Wood over half a century later. Also like Wood and many others he saw evil as a personality. He said he knew that setting a good example to non-Quakers was particularly important but felt he often failed to do so because the devil whispered suggestions 'in mine ear in order to draw me from the simplicity which is in the truth'.

Historians are generally agreed that, after the first generation of Friends, Quakerism developed alternative spiritual strategies but continued to stand apart from virtually every other sect or church in belief and practice. The leading scholar on first Friends' unique insight is Lewis Benson and he has found some degree of support in the work of Rosemary Moore,[13] Douglas Gwynn and Richard Bauman, amongst others. Carole Dale Spencer takes this a stage further,[14] finding holiness to be 'the overarching theme, not replacing the Inward Light, but subsuming it within the way of holiness' which then 'provides the ongoing thread that serves as the common denominator of normative Quakerism.'[15] Much has been written about Quakerism in specific contexts rather than the sect as a whole. Various aspects of Quaker history

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[12] Skidmore Gil (ed) (1999) *Josiah Langdale 1673-1723 A Quaker Spiritual Autobiography*, Sowle Press
[13] Authors of, respectively, *The Light in Their Consciences;* 'The Quaker Dynamic: Personal Faith and Corporate Vision,' Quaker Universalist Fellowship article; and *Let Your Words be Few: Symbolism of Speaking and Silence Among Seventeenth-Century Quakers*, Cambridge.
[14] Spencer, 2-3
[15] *Ibid*

have attracted scholarly attention, including the role of women, elders and overseers, testimony, ministry, Gospel Order, business and industry, and quietism. This thesis examines all these aspects in chapters 2 to 6. Quietism and Quaker silence are discussed in chapter 6 in the context of Spencer's book, *Holiness: The Soul of Quakerism*.[16] She also writes about the role of women in the Society.

1.3 Mission misunderstood

Wood's Notebooks are firm evidence for Lewis Benson's contention that Friends from the second generation onwards had misunderstood Fox's mission in the world. Benson (1906-86) believed modern Friends were wrong in their humanistic approach to Christianity. He held that the first Friends had been correct to believe they were being taught directly by Christ. He,

> argued that to see Friends in terms of mysticism alone was insufficient. Quakerism […] was about the inward experience of the Light of Christ and the universal […] mission which was led and fed by this experience. His prophetic Christianity was about a dialogical relationship with God, of hearing and obeying, and he framed Quakerism within a biblical sense of history.[17]

Douglas Gwynn heard Benson speak in 1976 and later wrote: 'Here was an understanding of the gospel that was new to me, one that I had never encountered in seminary, and one that spoke more clearly to my own experience of Christ.'[18] (Benson's insight is discussed further in chapter 3.6). Gwynn goes on to discuss the strains and pressures that Friends came under in the eighteenth century

[16] Spencer, Carole Dale (2007) *Holiness: The Soul of Quakerism*, Paternoster

and he associates development of Quaker testimony with a particular evangelical outlook. However, this came later in the century. In the early eighteenth century Friends began developing a 'hedge' around the Society to protect it from the wider world. A. Neave Brayshaw said the Quaker hedge was as though,

> designed by infinite wisdom to build a separation, to form though by such despicable briars and thorns, a hedge that pricks on both sides to prevent an improper, unsafe communication, association and intermarrying with those among whom we dwell.[19]

This was intended to isolate Friends from society at large to avoid temptation and thus corruption. But there is an explicit contradiction between early Friends' testimony and the concept of the hedge. The first Friends worked hard to win converts, who immediately became 'Quakers' simply because they shared the revelation of Christ within. But as the hedge developed, criteria were established for being a Quaker. Joining the Society became an increasingly slow process as the eighteenth century progressed, although membership was never a prerequisite for attending meetings for worship. However, membership did require a commitment by the individual to the prevailing spirituality in the Society, which from the late seventeenth century until well into the nineteenth rested on Gospel Order spirituality (discussed below).

By the mid-1700s the Society was aware that standards were slipping and launched a programme of renewal. It was this wave of renewal rather than the

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[17] Benson, Lewis (1974), 'George Fox's Teaching About Christ,' *Quaker Religious Thought*, 39:3
[18] Gwynn, ibid
[19] Brayshaw, A. Neave (1921) *The Quakers, their Story and Message*

original imposition of Gospel Order that dominated the childhood and youth of Joseph Wood. The early Quaker leaders were mostly dead and many of those at meetings were descendants of the first generation. They generally knew Quakerism as hearsay rather than through personal encounter with Christ. For them, and subsequent generations, the Second Coming of Christ was always to be in the future tense.

The 1650s-60s marked the beginning and end of charismatic Quakerism, which evolved into a more functional, disciplined and better organised sect, eventually to be called the Religious Society of Friends under the direction of a small number of London-based, all-male committees. Most Friends accepted Fox's plans to reshape the Society wholesale. So Quaker enthusiasm was curbed, meetings were given authority over what Friends could and could not do and say, and the Society started to become politically and socially harmless under the rule of Gospel Order.[20] Personal spiritual communion with Christ was displaced by conformity to Gospel Order. There was nothing about Gospel Order that obviously conflicted with the spiritual insight of the first Friends. Nevertheless, it involved obedience to rules and regulations drawn up by man, not inspired in each individual by the Spirit of God. So at first 'Friends were hostile to the introduction of any new way of doing things which (went) against the light of Christ itself.'[21] And it is here that Joseph Wood's Notebooks are of particular value, because they show him to be spiritually of one mind with the first Quakers but equally certain that Gospel Order was God's will for Friends in his own time. Wood's Notebooks shed light on many aspects of Quaker

[20] See 1.2. Fox seems to have completely changed course, a subject that requires much more exploration.

[21] Martin, C (2003) 'Controversy and division in post-restoration Quakerism', *Quaker Studies* 8:1

life and that of the wider world around meetings, including the role of women ministers, the relationship between Yearly Meeting (the national governing body of Quakerism) and local meetings, and on differences in outlook between London-based Yearly Meeting and Quakerism in the North of England. The importance of early regional differences has been highlighted by several historians. For instance, Moore, who has traced the development of early Quakerism both geographically and spiritually, says that as late as 1651 they had no contact with London. It was 1654 before a mission to London was established.

In the following years Friends became a ‘peculiar people’. The Inward Light of Christ as originally understood by Quakers in northern England had clashed with seventeenth-century Calvinist belief in original sin and mankind’s total depravity, with Anglican belief in the role of clergy and sacraments, and with Puritan belief in predestination. Through it Quakers demonstrated their spiritual uniqueness and their separation from the wider community. George Fox spoke of ‘the new covenant of light, life, grace, and peace’.[22] But reliance on the ‘covenant of light’ gave way to the more tangible and more obvious plainness testimony of extreme simplicity in speech and attire, which had begun in the seventeenth century. By the Georgian period ‘Fellowship in the light and unity in the spirit’ was a characteristic of the first Friends that was contradicted by Quaker behaviour. Friends had generally lost both the theological truths of the first Quakers and also the language in which to express them. With the 1689 Act of Toleration, Quakers passed from being a group of radical religious firebrands to being reactionary loyalists. This was apparently what the leadership wanted;[23] Leachman goes on to say that no overall picture exists of why

[22] Centre for Barbados Studies in History and Genealogy, 2002. In 1671 Fox wrote to the Governor of Barbados seeking to rebut criticism by settlers and to explain what Quakerism was about.
[23] Leachman, Caroline (1997) From an 'unruly sect' to a society of 'strict unity': the development of Quakerism in England c. 1650-1689, PhD thesis

Friends were able to achieve toleration in 1689 but before the end of the seventeenth century it had become the business of the Society of Friends to silence dissident voices. That this coincided with a more liberal view of Quakers being taken by the state can hardly be a coincidence. By the late eighteenth century, Joseph Wood wanted the Society of Friends to return in spirit to the seventeenth, or at least not to drift further from what he called the Truth, an alternative title to the Inward Light of Christ. Wood could be accused of theological confusion because of the obvious contradiction between the Quakerism he defended and that of the seventeenth century, which he mistakenly believed he was upholding. Friends had generally lost both the theological truths of the first Quakers and also the language in which to express them. They had also discovered that there is no escape from theology for those professing to be Christians. Spencer seeks to reconcile early Quakerism with some aspects of traditional soteriology (pages 51-3) and also to explain the work of Robert Barclay, the first Quaker theologian.

By Wood's time, after half a century of censorship by the Second Day Morning Meeting, Friends had a spiritually emasculated George Fox to remember. After the

[24] Leachman names seven historians who have contributed to the debate about changes in the Society of Friends after 1689, and suggests the sheer variety of specialist approaches perhaps hampers the search for a new all-inclusive overview such as Braithwaite or Jones produced. I agree, especially in light of what has been said about the divergence between religious Quakers and social reformers.

restoration of the monarchy in 1660 their radical ideas for social reform were seen as dangerous and were toned down. Compromise became the order of the day and might account for why the Society was included in the benefits of the 1796 Act. This is just speculation but would explain how the much-harassed Friends of former years were found to be acceptable by the authorities towards the end of the century.

1.4 Benson's forgotten faith

What has been said above about the decline of the spiritual values of First generation Quakerism and its replacement with more worldly Quakerism in the early eighteenth century leads naturally to further consideration of Lewis Benson in the twentieth. Fallout from this seismic change can still be detected (see the next section with a discussion about rules and the Society's reputation). Benson argues that Friends in the eighteenth century had kept the words but lost the depths of meaning in them. He believed Fox was fully aware that in his teaching about Christ as prophet he was inaugurating a revolution in the way people understood who Christ is and how he saves. He was not simply seeking to correct centuries of false teaching by the church. Benson called Fox the leader of a great revolution. 'He was not a reformer building on a foundation that was already laid but was seeking to lay a new, stronger foundation,'[25] he wrote. And he quoted Fox to underline the point: 'As for the gospel foundation it is to be laid again in all the world.' However, Benson realised he was very much a voice crying in the wilderness. In 1954 he wrote,

> I have never been committed to the principles of 20th century Quakerism. I was aware almost from the beginning that the Quakerism of today has almost nothing in

[25] From a letter by Benson to his sister-in-law who had suggested he investigate joining the Bruderhof movement, which had relocated from Germany to the USA after World War Two
[26] *ibid,* 19

> common with the Quakerism of Fox. I have taken my stand in the Society of Friends as the champion of a forgotten faith.[26]

There are echoes of Joseph Wood in Benson's words. He makes a strong case for believing that no generation of Quakers after the first understood Fox's message. However, some individuals did and the Notebooks demonstrate that Joseph Wood was among them. Wood had two messages which he frequently repeated: salvation through the Inward Light of Christ and the sacred nature of Plainness. Between them they sum up Wood's deeply held beliefs. But even in death, as his Monthly Meeting's testimony makes clear (Appendix 7), little real understanding is shown of what Wood's life was about. Richard C Allen describes Gospel Order as a 'means of restraining the excesses of the few' who, he says, were damaging the Society's reputation. Silent meetings indoors replaced outdoor events such as prophesying, walking naked through town centres, and wearing sackcloth and ashes. Allen describes Fox as a 'far-sighted pragmatist' as well as a religious visionary who devised the pyramidal network of meetings that came to be known as Gospel Order, but he accepts that lost individualism might have been the price of increasing centralisation. Gospel Order extended over time to include Quaker attitudes to the arts, music, architecture and domestic items that could be accused of being ornamental and not plain or functional. This new discipline made it harder for individuals to find the spirit of Christ in meeting. The turbulent early years had given way to ordered calm, but at the cost of lost spiritual spontaneity. Althea Stewart argues that 'those who accepted the new organization (of Gospel Order Quakerism) offered a more conciliatory attitude to legal and social authority.'[27] They were also more open-minded about change in wider society. Stewart holds that Quaker women writers 'aided the development of the Religious Society of Friends from

confrontational, persecuted iconoclasts to an organized group that began to enjoy a measure of tolerance and respect.'[28] Conformity to the rules of the Society became the Quaker way to salvation, and conformity was increasingly defined by outward contrast. Perverse as it may sound, that is the real value of eccentric clothing and language. Without the Plainness testimony the Society could well have faded into Methodism or another nonconformist denomination. In practice, Gospel Order enabled a close eye to be kept by a new generation of leaders on Quaker meetings and families to ensure they were not slipping into worldly ways. Friends were never again to experience the enthusiasm and spontaneity of the first generation.

In the same way that Gospel Order was in part responsible for the loss of spiritual understanding of first generation Friends, it also played a part in the decline of other aspects of Quakerism. I am focusing on the three which I think are most significant. The first is plainness, which has already been mentioned and will be

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[27] Stewart, Althea (2010) 'From Iconoclasts to Gentle Persuaders: Plain Dress, Verbal Dissent and Narrative Voice in Some Early Modern Quaker Women's Writing', Quaker History, 99:2

[28] *ibid*

again. The other two are 'right' (that is, spiritual) worship and simplicity in life and word. Both are related to plainness and the three, taken together, make a clear statement about Friends' practice of their faith through lifestyle. Spiritual worship and simplicity of life evoke thoughts of a quiet, bucolic existence, but while they are benign, plainness, with the best of intentions but the worst of results, clouded the original Quaker message and was actually irreconcilable with first Friends' theology. It became a shibboleth that influenced the first two centuries of the Society's history, created division among Friends (plain and gay Quakers) and coloured the way that non-Quakers viewed the Society. In her last epistle to Friends, in 1698, Margaret Fell

warned that dressing identically could not make Quakers true Christians. Many Friends agreed and in the coming century there developed two types of Quaker plain, who dressed as the sect's regulations stipulated, and gay, who dressed like the rest of society.

Another difficulty for Gospel Order was in attempting to impose obedience to testimonies, especially those that had practical consequences for Friends' livelihoods. Testimonies were used to define Quaker values. These changed over time and in the eighteenth century would have included not paying tithes or serving in the militia. The testimony against war, for instance, failed to stop some Friends from manufacturing materials that could have military use or others from arming their merchant ships with cannon.[29]

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[29] Chapter 3:4

1.5 Second Day censorship

Gospel Order in large measure eventually replaced much that the first Friends had believed in and suffered for. It was not really a continuation of the first generation's beliefs, which is how it was portrayed. Mere chronological continuity does not justify claims of spiritual or philosophical continuity. Yet there was no way to say so. Censorship by the Second Day Morning Meeting made sure that individual Friends did not get the chance to speak their minds in print so statements remained unchallenged and questions unanswered. Instead of breaking down barriers of

authority and privilege, which had been one of the intentions behind Gospel Order, Second Day intensified them.

In 1778, Mary Barnard, clerk of the Quarterly Meeting of Women Friends in Yorkshire, wrote in an epistle to the Monthly and Preparative Meetings in the county that there was 'an evident and almost total departure in many, from the Zeal and integrity of our Predecessors in the truth.'[30] This three-page epistle is sweeping and damning in its criticism of Friends' deficiencies. Yet Barnard's understanding went back no further than the beginning of Gospel Order. So when she and others, including Joseph Wood, referred to 'Predecessors in the truth' did they mean first generation Friends or the early days of Gospel Order? Wood's Notebooks confirmother evidence that indicate increasing disagreements and falling standards in the Quaker world. What he frequently referred to as the 'low state of our Society' was, in his opinion, encouraging the wrong sort of ministry. Wood does not elaborate on what the 'wrong sort' of ministry included, but quotes several Friends on declining

[30] Vol 1, nb2A/21-23
[31] Vol 2, nb19/1-2

standards in life and worship. In a letter to Charles Smith in 1800, for instance, he speaks of 'those who have deeply revolted and backsliden'.[31] A letter by Mary Brotherton, written in 1756, shows how the original Quaker spirituality had in just a few years been tamed. She says she 'must pity those who ignorantly receive the traditions of Men for the Commandments of God, and by so doing rely on human Wisdom.'[28] But in some respects that is what Friends were moving towards. In the quietist era there was suspicion about Bible readings interrupting the silence of meeting, at least in the south, but Wood's Notebooks make clear that he and many

of the northern ministers he knew would preach at length from scripture in front of a Quaker meeting or a public meeting. This was evangelical Christianity in every respect except name and it was something else about which many in the Society of Friends were suspicious. Wood was clearly ambivalent about quietism, although he approved of silent worship.

After the introduction of Gospel Order Friends' original emphasis upon the freedom of the Inward Light to guide the individual was contradicted by the perceived need to impose order on the Society as a whole.[29] The deep spiritual meaning of Christ flowing into the human spirit as the 'Inward Light' was gradually lost, to the point where Friends started to speak about 'the light within', as though it were simply a synonym for conscience. The answer to the question of how the Inward Light got lost or distorted lies in precisely the same place as Lewis Benson detected early misunderstandings of Fox's teaching. And the mistake, once made, became compounded over time until it largely changed the nature of Quakerism. In his first major journey, when he was just 23, Wood's primary purpose had been to visit Wales Yearly Meeting, being held in Newtown in April 1773. His written record shows that the Christ-centred theology of early Friends lived on at that time, at least in the Welsh Marches:

> Job Thomas had a very long time next in Welsh. I had a pretty long time next earnestly pressing the People to come up in obedience to the call of the Lord which was gone forth for their help and salvation [….] The meeting held 2 hours and a half. After

[31] Vol 1 nb14/12-13
[32] Martin, Clare (2003) 'Tradition Versus Innovation: The Hat, Wilkinson Story and Keithian Controversies,' *Quaker Studies* 8:1

> meeting a sober Woman called to Job in much tenderness and told him she was greatly affected under my appearances, altho' she understood not a word I said.
>
> At 4 o Clock was the afternoon Meeting […] I was pretty largely concerned therein in Testimony from 2 Cor: C: 9. v: 15. “Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift”, and afterwards I was concerned in Prayer, after which I had a few words more and altho' all could not understand what I said, I believe most were made sensible of the Power which overshadowed at the Assembly.[34]

Similarly in England, many years later, Wood had preached in Melbourn during a visit to Derbyshire. In Volume 2 he includes an ‘Extract of a Letter from a Clergymans Wife to her Friend in London’, dated May 9, 1815, which says in part

> My daughter Susan heard one of their [Quaker] Society preach yesterday at Melbourn, and she says, never in her Life, did she hear anything at all equal to him, either in manner (which was truly solemn) or matter - the doctrine she says was wholly scriptural - every person in the Chapel seemed greatly affected, and some even to extreme agitation.[35]

These examples show not only that the spirituality of the first generation lived on but also where it was to be found – on the fringes of the Society, away from the increasingly bureaucratic heart of Gospel Order Quakerism and London Yearly Meeting. A subject that needs to be explored is hinted at in the above account of Wales Yearly Meeting, and that is language. Welsh and English were both being spoken, apparently without translation, in the power of the Spirit. In the ‘North-South’ debate, to which I shall return, one of the arguments for moving the centre of Quakerism to London is language and culture. Not that northern Friends spoke Welsh, but they had a very different English to that of London. References to

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[34] Vol 1 nb3/4.1-2
[35] Vol 1 nb34/21

language are found throughout the Notebooks that tell the same story. Thanks to Joseph Wood's Notebooks it is possible to get a better sense of eighteenth-century Quakerism as a spiritual organism, with local meetings that were regularly being refreshed by visiting ministers. In separate articles Graves and Stevens[35] describe the rise and work of those who felt called to travel and preach. Fox speaks of the world having only a 'fleshly knowledge' of 'what the prophets and apostles spake.'[36] They had 'gotten their words, the Holy Scriptures, in a form, but not in that life nor spirit that gave them forth.'[37] Eighteenth-century Quakerism came to be in precisely the same situation. Wood recognised this but he was not a second George Fox and all he could do was preach against 'fleshly knowledge.'

1.6 The state of the field

There is more than enough evidence in Wood's Notebooks, the PM minutes, and a few odd letters to make the case that Quakerism ceased to exist at some point in the early 1700s. The organisation that used the name from then onwards was a poor imitation of the original. Joseph Wood often refers to the parlous state of the Society and gets angry with individuals for letting the whole down. Yet for all its faults the Society survived. The big difference in 18th century Quakerism was that it had lost its spiritual bearings. The Spirit of Christ which had animated the first generation had been replaced by committees. What Friends pointed towards as proof of their faithful piety was the way they dressed. But several fault lines appeared as the century progressed, all of which will be discussed in the following chapters. For example, the Bible was frequently quoted in Northern meetings but less so in the South where

[36] George Fox's Journal
[37] Tousley, NC (2008), 'Theology of second generation Quakers; no place for doubt?' Quaker Studies 13: 6-88

silently listening for God's voice was preferred. Tousley argues that whereas scripture was used typologically by the first generation – as if the story were being fulfilled within them – the second and subsequent generations used it analogically, to discover parallels and examples between their own experience and the story of the first Friends.

The popular image of a Quaker meeting has changed little since Victorian times when James Penrose painted 'The Presence in the Midst', a sugary nineteenth century interpretation of how Friends worshipped, with an ethereal well-groomed Jesus hovering just above the elders' bench. From Wood's description of meetings the layout of benches is accurate but the painting misleads in some other respects. It is interesting to compare it with seventeenth century representations of Friends' meetings, which are lively and usually centre on a person speaking. The people in the Penrose painting did not get complete assurance of God's Presence and love through the same first-hand experience as the first generation.[35] Tousley's thesis weaves all of this into a complex pattern about the faith of early Friends.[36]

Quaker holiness is the final aspect of Friends' soteriology to be considered in this chapter. Spencer's book *Holiness: the soul of Quakerism* grew out of her introduction to Friends. She describes herself as 'a traveller in a wholly new country' and brings a different perspective to Quaker history. In particular, her eight 'Essential Elements of Holiness' are relevant here. They are scripture, eschatology, conversion, charisma, suffering, mysticism, evangelism, and perfection. I argue for the addition of a ninth, spirit-filled meetings for worship, several of which Wood records.

Apart from contentious theological issues such as claims to moral perfection, historians including Richard T Vann and Caroline Leachman[38] have explored practical issues and the social pressures on new converts. Douglas Gwynn holds that Quaker worship is nothing less than 'their prime testimony to Christ's direct ministry among them' and in Helen Plant's understanding 'the only possible ground for ministering was the direct inspiration of the Inward Light.' However, Tousley points out that only two in-depth studies have been carried out on late eighteenth-century Quakerism (thus supporting David Hall's view that academic work in the area is sadly lacking) and Erin Bell argues that perhaps the Society was too enthusiastic in its censorship of George Fox, and many others, in its pursuit of conformity. Richard C Allen and Althea Stewart[39] are two historians who argue that Gospel Order Quakerism was more open to co-operating with authority than the first generation. This can also be seen in Wood's willingness to work with magistrates

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[37] Spencer, Carol Dale (2007) *Holiness: The Soul of Quakerism*, Paternoster, 14
[38] Plant, Helen (2003) 'Women Quaker Ministers and Spiritual Authority in England 1750–1825' *Gender & History*, 15:2
[39] Neither is in the Handbook, but Allen's credentials are in an online entry and Stewart has published 'From Iconoclasts to Gentle Persuaders: Plain Dress, Verbal Dissent and Narrative Voice' in *Some Early Modern Quaker Women's Writing*, Quaker History, 99:2

and to defend their decisions. A question of great significance, not just for Highflatts but much more generally, concerned authority. Joseph Wood respected the decisions of those in authority because scripture said to do so. He had clear ideas about the authority of God, which was absolute. But he understood human authority in relative terms. People could give each other titles and ranks, but in Quaker eyes such things were worthless unless clearly from God. Yet Friends were not that distant from currents that were stirring in Protestantism. In the years immediately after Joseph Wood's death (1821) 'natural theology' started to influence Yearly

Meeting, at the expense of the Inward Light and other mystical expressions of worship. The change came quickly. Less than 30 years earlier an attender at Yearly Meeting had written ‘I never felt the divine covering more evidently spread over a meeting […] many were broken into tears before a word was spoken’.[41] Similarly, as Geoffrey Morries goes on to explain, Quakers increasingly found themselves caught in the middle between traditional faith, as articulated by Joseph Wood and others like him, and the new liberal world of thought and science. Subsequent chapters explore the irony of how an originally mystical and other-worldly sect developed successfully as a powerful mercantile and banking organisation, for which authority was measurable in financial terms.

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[40] Bishop Joseph Butler in 1736
[41] vol1 nb3.26-27

Chapter 2 Ministry, networks and relationships

In this chapter I make the case that Quaker ministry was central to the continuing success of the Society's life and that this was the result of extensive networking. I define networking as the process of interacting with individuals or organisations for the exchange of materials, news and ideas. I also consider different types of relationship that the Society of Friends developed, with other churches and with the wider world. Over time a wide network of Quaker communities developed, partly built on family relationships, partly on business relationships and partly on religious relationships, the whole meshing together in a web with no real centre but, as far as preaching was concerned, with a reliance on women ministers. It existed in the context of wider social and economic forces as the discussion of women ministers demonstrates (below). We have few examples of the ministry delivered to meetings at that time which was, by definition, extempore, so we cannot say to what extent ministers preached about the Inward Light of Christ. Wood, however, did preach and write about it. This is discussed below and in 3.2 'Benson and the original Quakerism'. Quaker commitment to the Inward Light is demonstrated through the lives of these ministers, especially women, who were willing to be away from home and family for months or even years, driven by their calling to preach and teach.

2.1 Divisions over ministry

As noted in chapter 1, in 1778 the Yorkshire women's clerk, Mary Barnard, wrote to all the Monthly and Preparative Meetings complaining of 'an evident and almost total departure in many, from the Zeal and integrity of our Predecessors in the truth.' This three-page epistle is sweeping and damning in its criticism of Friends' 'many

deficiencies.' Yet Barnard's understanding probably went back no further than the beginning of Gospel Order. So when she and others, including Joseph Wood, referred to 'predecessors in the truth' did they mean first generation Friends or the early days of Gospel Order? And, if the latter, what had gone wrong with Gospel Order to prompt such feelings? Healey understands Jones to be suggesting that what he labels 'quietist mysticism' helped the Society transition from primitive Quakerism to 'Quakerism'.[41] She then goes on to examine the role of women in this period which saw Friends seeking spiritual awareness 'by rejecting all temporal desires and distractions'[42] It seems to me that this is the point of view Mary Barnard is defending. Wood's Notebooks indicate divisions in the Quaker world over ministry. The 'low state of our Society' was, in his opinion, encouraging the wrong sort of ministry. Wood wrote: 'there is very great danger of that Ministry being encouraged, which proceeds from the Wind the earthquake or the fire' (ie, not the 'still, small voice')[43] Wood does not elaborate on what the 'wrong sort' of ministry included. In the Quietist era, which dominated much of the eighteenth century, there was anxiety about Bible readings interrupting the silence of a meeting. At that time in Quaker history, preaching was considered an acceptable form of ministry,[44] under certain conditions and providing it was impromptu.[45] Graves is at pains to illustrate the unresolved debate within the Society about what was acceptable.[46] He says 75 sermons from the eighteenth century are known to have survived. Richard Bauman, writing mainly about the 17th century, describes silence as a 'communicative

[41] handbook, 47
[42] Handbook, Healey, 48
[43] 1 Kings 19:11-13 KJV
[44] *Handbook*, 47
[45] *Handbook*, 279-283
[46] Graves, Michael P, *Handbook*, 277

phenomenon,'[47] and argues that it can be far more than a mere absence of speaking. Silence can become a 'richly textured and multidimensional experience,' says Bauman.[48] It also has 'patterns, functions and meanings' which, like speaking, should be examined in culture-specific terms. The early Quakers' profound distrust of speech in religious settings soon spilled over onto speech-related secular settings. Bauman does not raise the question directly, but implicit in his book is a query which also runs through the following section of this thesis, 'North and South'. Did people in the British Isles have enough language in common between the geographical extremes to understand the preached word? Joseph Wood tells us that not all the Welsh did.[49] Silence and the Inward Light were gifts from God. Bauman argues that,

> The Inner [*sic*] Light was inaccessible to man's natural and earthly faculties […] a suppression of the earthly self was required of those who were attentive to the Light, and the basic term employed by the Quakers to refer to this state of suppression of self was silence.

2.2 North and South

The active persecution of the seventeenth century had largely ceased by the early eighteenth, but the Society, still psychologically geared up for suffering, was in danger of losing its way as the last section has discussed. Although Quakerism had started in the north of England, London became its centre of gravity from the late 1650s and some of the early meetings with specific purposes were particular to London, notably Meeting for Sufferings, the Six Weeks' Meeting and Second Day Morning Meeting. Sufferings rapidly became the executive arm of Yearly Meeting, a position it still holds. (Meeting for Sufferings was the name originally given to the

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[47] Bauman, Richard (1983) *Let Your Words be Few*, Cambridge University Press, 10-11
[48] *ibid*
[49] see page 74ff

group set up to assess the persecution of Friends and what could be done to lessen their impact and seek redress.)

Because of its size the capital was divided into several monthly meetings. The nationally important meetings based in London were largely products of the Gospel Order reforms. Quakerism in the South of England was geared towards the mercantile world of trade, finance and organisation, what could be called white-collar Quakerism, while that in the North was increasingly caught up in the incredible growth of industry from the late eighteenth century onwards.[50] This can be overstated but as a general statement is a helpful description. Such an argument is entirely in keeping with Wood's Notebooks.

There is not, and never has been, any clear dividing line between the North and South of England. The line I am mentally drawing here runs from The Wash to the Severn estuary, which puts most of the Midlands in the North and East Anglia in the South. Perhaps a more meaningful distinction is that between London and its extensive hinterland and the rest of England and Wales. In the eighteenth century the capital was already the biggest population centre in England. London was also the Quaker 'capital', being home to the Yearly Meeting and its executive committees. This division in the Quaker world led to the development of two types of Quakerism – relatively sophisticated and urbane in the South, but more like the original Seekers after Truth in the North. This is an aspect of eighteenth-century Quakerism discussed by David Hall in his article on Rufus Jones and Larry Ingle.[51] He suggests

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[50] Mathias, Peter (1969) The First Industrial Nation, pt 4, Methuen

[51] Hall, David (2001) 'Eighteenth-century English Quakerism: from Rufus Jones to Larry Ingle,' *Quaker Studies* 5:2. Also see vol2 nb15-16, 'Joseph Wood's Testimony concerning Martha Teall.' There are many similar passages in his correspondence highlighting the spiritual intensity of early Quakerism

that 'from the end of the seventeenth century to the very end of the nineteenth, English Quaker history is pretty much a void.' Hall's article shows just how much the eighteenth century is the orphan of Quaker history. There are many local histories, but Hall is referring to the lack of a substantial general history to replace the ageing works of Braithwaite and Jones.The differences between North and South, even now, are not fully appreciated. Wood only twice travelled south of the imaginary line, first when he went to London Yearly Meeting in 1775 and then in 1811 when he held a short series of public meetings in northern East Anglia. In my development of the two-Quakerisms concept, that is, the differences between Quakerism in the North of England and in the London area, Wood's Notebooks are again essential in highlighting how differences in geography, topography and culture contributed so much to variations in Quakerism. But the Notebooks are essentially simple statements of faith by Wood. The religious sophistication in them is provided by others whose works he laboured to copy. However, Stephen Trowel lays out the case for a different form of duality,[52] based on the George Keith controversy, and different understandings of the Inward Light. That in the North was closer in theology and philosophy to the first generation of Friends, while that in the large area influenced by London tended to Quietism (treated more fully in chapter 6). Wood's Notebooks highlight the reality of the differences between the two. They are best thought of as different views of the same subject. Most Friends in and around London probably had no idea that 'their' Quakerism – with silent meetings and little

[52] Trowell, Stephen (1994) 'George Keith: Post-restoration Quaker theology and the experience of defeat,' John Rylands Research Institute

ministry, under the guidance of Gospel Order – was not the only understanding possible. Wood was personally divided between the two Quakerisms. His Notebooks repeatedly show a desire to return Friends to the Inward Light Christology of the first generation but he also thought it essential to live by the rules of Gospel Order, which he considered to be divinely inspired.

The strong concern seen in Wood's Notebooks to proselytise in the wider society[52] is at odds with the view that Quakerism became an introspective self-absorbed organisation whose main preoccupation was the Gospel Order lifestyle.[53] I suggest that attitude was more true in the South than the North, where Wood and many other ministers never gave up looking for likely Quakers, as can be seen from the number of public meetings he spoke at or helped to organise.[54]

Throughout the eighteenth century the regional Northern Yearly Meeting reflected the local origins of the movement and Quaker feeling continued to be characterised by strong individualism, by what has been called an element of religious anarchism,[55] not focused in any one place. Gwynn argues that early Quaker behaviours,

> sprang from Quaker worship as their prime testimony to Christ's direct ministry among them […] The early sense of testimony was also strongly

[53] Vol 5 NB48/3, Vol 5 NB52.20, Vol5 NB57/3 – three examples from public meetings; there are many others, particularly in volume 5.
[54] Gwynn, *Oxford Handbook*, 208
[55] Between them volumes 4 and 5 list 308 public meetings held by Wood.
[56] Religious anarchism has political overtones that jarred on Quaker middle class susceptibilities, given the unsettled nature of society at the time. Wood frequently urges Friends not to get involved in politics and much Quaker involvement in social issues was weakened through fear of seeming anarchic.

> evangelical in nature: one's life and words should communicate truth and reach to the divine witness/light in each person.[56]

Fox had sought to impose a centralised form of organisation but Friends in the North resisted this. By contrast, London Yearly Meeting, with its executive committees, had no strong regional base. It served to co-ordinate business at national and regional level, while Monthly and Quarterly Meetings channelled business upwards from local meetings.[57] By Wood's time Gospel Order was seen as God's preordained will for Quakerism but the interpretation of it was not universal. The Notebooks show a proactive North Country Quakerism that was keen to preach, not a London Quakerism that had turned to Quietism.[58] It is clear from many references in the Notebooks that Friends declined both numerically and spiritually in this period. One difference between North and South was in attitudes to control and regulation. Collins argues that Quakerism thrived in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries because of the 'sustained, almost obsessive, codification of its discipline.'[59] Quite what he means by 'thrived' is not clear, considering the decline in membership,[60] but the point here is to do with codification. While the first generation lived a life of spontaneous religious faith with few rules or caveats, by the early eighteenth century London-based Quaker leaders were seeking to impose more and more detailed rules on how Friends throughout the country were to live their lives.

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[57] Gwynn, Douglas (2010), 'Enacting Truth: The Dynamics of Quaker Practice,' *Quaker Theology* 17
[58] Healey, Robynne Rogers, 'Quietist Quakerism,' *Oxford Handbook,* 47-8
[59] Collins, Peter (2002) 'Discipline: The codification of Quakerism as orthopraxy, 1650-1738' *History and Anthropology*, 81
[60] The Rowntree Society estimates that Quaker numbers halved – from 40,000 to 20,000 – between the mid-eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries
[61] Trowel, Stephen (1994) *ibid*

This change contributed greatly to suppressing spiritual spontaneity. In 1682 there were just three queries to which local meetings were required to submit replies:

> 1. What Friends in the Ministry, in their respective counties, departed this life since the last Yearly Meeting?
> 2. What Friends Imprisoned for their Testimony have died in Prison since the last Yearly Meeting?
> 3. How the Truth has prospered amongst them since the last Yearly meeting, and how friends are in Peace and Unity?

By 1742 there were 12, and there had been a shift from mere gathering of statistics to what Collins calls the 'rather more complex formalisation of control.' Further changes followed and in the same period Advices were added – 'that myriad of rules and regulations passed down the organisational pyramid.'[61] Both advices and queries prioritised right action over right belief (orthopraxy over orthodoxy). Whatever the intention behind advices and queries, one result was that they tended to replace faith with regulation. Control was important to Friends whose lives centred on London Yearly Meeting and its committees. London-facing Friends came to see themselves as the centre of Quakerism and needed to have their collective finger on the pulse of Friends throughout the nation, for what they believed was the spiritual good of the whole Society. This proved very difficult to achieve except for brief periods when Yearly Meeting sought information on a particular topic, such as the major campaign in the 1770s in which groups of three or four 'seasoned' Friends were despatched on religious visits to every Quarterly and Monthly Meeting.[62] They were able to do this because advices and queries had gradually created a corpus of examples and precedents defining right behaviour which helped to bind them together as a movement. Writing about the period immediately prior to Wood, Collins says that 'the codification of Quaker discipline achieved a high degree of orthopraxy, a habitus [generated] by religion'. [63]

[61] Collins, 'History and Anthropology' *ibid*
[62] Wood has collected many of these in Volume 1
[63] Collins, *ibid*

2.3 Church relations

The maturing organisation within the eighteenth-century Society of Friends was matched by Quakers' changing relations externally. Most obvious among these was its more relaxed attitude to other churches. By the late eighteenth century Quakers and some Anglican clergy were still at odds over tithes, but the emphasis has to be on the *some*. Generally speaking, Quakers seem to have got on well with individual clergy of other denominations if Wood's Notebooks are anything to go by. They shared problems of numerical decline and inroads of non-Christian thought. Friends found themselves under pressure not only from Methodists and other developing non-conformist branches of Christianity but also from the opposite extreme, humanism, deism, and other God-denying philosophies.

Wood says that Anglicans and others were particularly helpful with public meetings. For instance, the rector of Slaidburn 'made way very much for the meeting,' which he, his sister and most of his family attended; at Longnor the 'steeplehouse' itself was freely offered by the clergy 'but we thought it was best to decline it, lest any evil disposed person should inform the bishop and he should put them to trouble.' Anglicans at Kirkburton announced a forthcoming public meeting at their service.[64] When Wood's servant John Proctor, a practising Anglican, died, Wood paid for and attended his funeral in a church and wrote a glowing tribute to

him.[65] Methodists were also supportive. For a public meeting at Hoylandswain the dissenting Methodists not only gave him their chapel for the meeting but did all the publicity for it as well[66] and at Horbury,

> 'William Briggs the Methodist Preacher who gave up his meeting this evening to accommodate friends [...] expressed his full satisfaction with the meeting in language beyond what I feel a freedom to revive, withal adding his belief that the Truths communicated would prove a blessing unto many minds.'[67]

Local Methodists cancelled a service that clashed with a Highflatts public meeting.[68] The Methodist Magazine for May 1809 included an article on Quakerism headed 'The Providence of God Asserted.'[69] Wood writes of visiting William Railton, the Priest of Cumberworth,

> a social friendly man, and his wife also a kind neighbour, having a little business with them. Heavy thunderstorm lasting an hour. After the storm was a little abated, I smoked my pipe and took a glass of rum and water with them[70]

That was in July 1807. Five months later 'Timothy Sykes of Shafton a preacher amongst the Methodists and an intimate acquaintance of mine' came to stay for a few days.' Sykes - 'My beloved friend' - was a regular visitor to Newhouse and sometimes stayed several days. Wood had no problem with Sykes' theology but feared he was too interested in 'knowledge' of the kind that the Enlightenment was making available. He also met the priest of Cawthorne on the road, a man named

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[64] Scattered throughout the Notebooks, but particularly in Volumes 2 and 5 are details of some of Wood's dealings with clergy.
[65] Vol 1 nb17/7-8
[66] Vol 5 nb58/18-19
[67] Vol 5 nb58/20
[68] Vol 5 nb55/18-19
[69] Vol 2 nb28/6-7
[70] Vol 2 nb28/16-17
[71] Vol 2 nb32/24-25

John Bree, a sociable character he had met several times before, and an independent preacher named John Harrison, to whom he also took a liking. In 1817, another Independent preacher, Thomas Hawkins, wrote to Wood after he had preached at Warley near Halifax, thanking him and urging him to ignore doctrinal differences. Instead,

> urge the solemn and important Truths, and leave minor things to the little places which they must occupy. Perhaps if we knew more of each others [*sic*] fixed radical principles, apart from the jealous surmises - and darkening shadows of prejudice, we should approximate nearer to real Christian communion.[71]

In January 1814 Wood stopped to see John Drake, the Skelmanthorp schoolmaster, while on his way to Monthly Meeting in Wakefield. He was 'a pious man and a preacher among the Baptists who always appeared very kind and loving to friends, he had been long indisposed, but I was glad to find him much better.'[72] However, Wood's ecumenical spirit was not universal among Friends. Towards the end of the century the clerk to the Quarterly Meeting of Women Friends wrote to meetings that

> Many of you, we are persuaded, have sustained great loss by associating with those whose religious sentiments may allow of more liberty than ours; the command to Israel was Numbers 23:9 'Lo the People shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned amongst the Nations'.[73]

2.4 Religious and other networks

'Dwelling alone' became increasingly difficult for Friends, for a variety of reasons. As time went by they were obliged by their social convictions to get more and more involved with 'the Nations', as for example in poverty relief and the growing anti-

[72] Vol 1 nb2A/21-23
[73] *ibid*

slavery movement. Quaker businesses, particularly banks, were becoming increasingly successful in oiling the wheels of trade and industry. Family networks played a big part in business growth. 'Many Quaker businesses were family concerns […] for example, the Pease family with its extensive interests in wool, weaving and banking as well as mining and railways,' according to Richard Turnbull.[74]

Quaker ministers had a well-honed system for going about their travels.[75] Help from local Friends could have come about in various ways. Wood could have inquired in advance about local Quaker communities and then just started knocking on their doors when he arrived in the town or village. There is some evidence for this in the Notebooks but it seems unlikely that he would always have left everything to chance.[75] More likely, he (or someone acting for him) had been in touch beforehand to see who could offer him a bed. That suggests a good deal of advance planning because on some journeys he was more than a hundred miles or several days' walking from home. It also suggests that Friends had a communications network, not just local to West Yorkshire but spread across the North of England, the Midlands, and well into Wales. Two wide-ranging examples of how the networks worked are found in Volume three.[76] Such a network can be traced in Wood's journeyings but he would have been following in the footsteps of many other Quaker ministers, both men and women. Wood comments on several occasions about unexpectedly

[74] Turnbull, Richard (2014) *Quaker Capitalism: Lessons for Today*, Centre for Enterprise, Markets and Ethics,1
[75] This had largely come about through trial and error. There was no training as such in the peripatetic ministry although Bownas had given much advice in his day. Consequently standards of preaching varied widely.
[76] Journeys individually estimated in volumes 4 and 5
[77] 3/3.4 is a good example - Wood describes meeting six Friends on the road to Brighouse MM, where four other ministers spoke to a packed meeting
[78] vol 3 nb19/24; Vol 3 nb12/14-16
[79] vol2 nb25/3
[80] vol 2 nb28/22-23

meeting other ministers on the road.[77] The Notebooks tell the story of an active, peripatetic ministry that was never still. Wood was not only the beneficiary of hospitality, he also provided it. Many travelling Friends stayed at his home, Newhouse, some just overnight but others for several days. In June 1806 a total of 19 'stayed to dinner and breakfast'[79] and in June 1808 13 stayed to supper and 12 lodged overnight. On this occasion, and it was not unique, Wood had to send his servants to borrow beds from neighbours.[80]

The importance of Quaker family connections has been well documented and Wood worked with members of several influential families. These included the Tukes of York and the Darbys of Shropshire. William Tuke, aided by members of his family, was the founder of The Retreat[81] of which Wood was an enthusiastic supporter. In his 1773 journey to the Summer Quarterly Meeting (of Monthly Meetings), held at York, Wood writes 'After meeting I drunk Tea at William Tukes in company with a great many friends it being the house were Strangers are usually entertained.'[82] Likewise at the Winter Quarterly Meeting, also held at York that year,[83] Wood dined at William Tuke's and later 'I went and supp'd at William Tukes and spent the evening very agreeably Esther Tuke relating a good deal of her Travels in the service of Truth which was very entertaining.' The Tukes were an important influence in Joseph Wood's life. Three years later Esther, William's second wife, wrote warmly to him encouraging him in the ministry.[84] She refers to visiting Highflatts and names several Friends with whom she wants him to share the letter, and there are several

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[81] vol 2 NB25/3
[82] See below, 6.1b
[83] vol 3 NB4/12-13
[84] vol 1 nb2.1-2 and see chapter 1 (9) and chapter 4 (1.5)
[85] The Darbys built the world's first iron bridge, over the River Severn, in 1779, using coke instead of the traditional charcoal, an industry-changing innovation.

references to joint opportunities for service. The other family was the Darbys, ironmasters of Coalbrookdale in Shropshire.[86] Wood had little interest in iron or any other industry, but he was grateful to Deborah Darby, a fellow travelling minister, for her support. She was part of the second generation of Darby women ministers[87] and Wood had also worked with her mother-in-law Abiah Darby. It was travelling ministers such as these who drove outreach, years before evangelism became a dominant feature in nineteenth century Quaker life. These ministers often knew each other well and were regular visitors to each other's homes and local or monthly meetings. As the eighteenth century progressed they also supported one another's work at public meetings. Wood lists the names and meetings of such ministers, who found their way to Yorkshire from all over England and America in the same way that he and others travelled far if they felt called by God to do so. Between 1774 and 1778 he records the presence of 44 male and 42 female ministers visiting meetings of one sort or another, including numerous Americans. Some returned several times. His later records of ministers are less complete, but in any event it seems that, as the nineteenth century progressed, life was draining out of the system of travelling ministers.[91]

Thanks to Joseph Wood's Notebooks and the works of Lewis Benson it is possible to get some idea of 18th century Quaker spirituality. Quakers had lost the fire of the first generation, but something of the energy of that generation lived on in the peripatetic ministry that developed in and after the second generation. In separate articles in the *Oxford Handbook of Quaker Studies* Michael P Graves

[86] Vol 3 nb4/4-5

[87] See chapter 5, 5.2

[91] Penney, Norman, Friends' Historical Society *Journal,* 10

(*Ministry and Preaching*) and Sylvia Stevens (*Travelling Ministry*) describe the rise and work of those who felt called to travel and preach.[92] Wood often reveals a sense of power and presence which shows him to be conscious of living in the Inward Light of Christ, and confident about it. For instance,

> 'My mind was drawn in such a manner towards the inhabitants of several places […] as caused me to believe that it was required of me to have some religious meetings amongst them.'[93]

Simplicity in life and word and right, spiritual worship might have been lost to Quakerism, but they were not lost to individual Friends. Ministry meant vocal ministry, not someone in charge of performing spiritual functions. Barclay said someone called to vocal ministry, 'having received the true knowledge of things spiritual […] and being by the same (Spirit) in measure purified and sanctified, comes thereby to be called and moved to minister to others; *being able to speak from a living experience of what he himself is a witness*' (My emphasis). Beamish portrays as absolutely basic this idea of ministry as communicating to others what you yourself have received.[94] She goes on to elaborate on those who have practical responsibilities, and the concern that is supposed to underlie them. Ministers in the former sense, however, had 'a positive mission to publish Truth, to rebuke sin, and to strengthen faith, by means of the spoken and written word.'[95] They were to live ascetic lives reminiscent of the Old Testament prophets. In 1759 Christopher Wilson warned ministers to 'be content with what you have, a low state suits best a living Minister of Christ, to eat sparingly, cloathe [*sic*] just decently, to

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[92] *Oxford Handbook,* respectively 277 and 292
[93] vol 2 nb29/19
[94] Beamish, Lucia Katharine (1965) 'The Quaker Understanding of the Ministerial Vocation; with special reference to the eighteenth century,' Oxford DPhil thesis, Introduction
[95] *ibid*
[96] http://files.usgwarchives.net/nc/perquimans/bios/wilson01.txt

have the mind free from cumber and open to receive every impression of Truth, and free to run when he draws.'[96] There was a revival of Quaker ministry in the North of England during the second half of the eighteenth century, due in part to the work of Joseph Wood, Isabella Harris, Thomas Shillitoe and others like them. Wood's Notebooks describe the crowds that flocked to hear them, but this was not a renewal of the first generation's preaching. Persecution had charged early ministry with urgency and power but 'relief from fear of arrest […] brought into being a new type of Ministry, often not worthy of the name.'[97] Ministry became more focused on 'upholding those tenets of the Society that distinguished it from other Christian bodies.'[98] Such criticism did not apply generally in the northern counties where the emphasis was still on preaching from the scriptures. Methodist influence may have been another factor at play. Methodist preachers had a similar evangelical spirit to Fox, and were very successful. There was both interaction and rivalry with Quakers. Wood on numerous occasions writes about Methodist preachers, many of whom he obviously respected.

For these reasons, the key figures of the first generation of Friends, ministers, could find their credibility weakened during the eighteenth century. By the end of the century the central group was elders, whose principal concern was the faithfulness of the members. However, in the North of England ministry remained relatively strong and Wood recounts details of groups of ministers moving from town to town according to where the next major meeting was to be held.[99] Meetings were the

[97] *ibid*
[98] *ibid*
[99] Vol 3 nb3/4 is a good example - Wood describes meeting six Friends on the road to Brighouse MM, where four other ministers spoke to a packed meeting

touchstone of faith and great store was put on attendance at all levels of the Society. All Quaker meetings, even if about business, were supposed to be worship. Time for meetings was unlimited, in fact Wood reports Friends being annoyed on one occasion because a meeting was ended too soon. Only the Spirit could end a meeting and s/he did so through an elder, overseer or minister. In a letter to newly appointed elder John Pickford in 1812, Wood shows ministers and elders working together, saying there is,

> great use in Elders sitting with Ministers in the Gallery; not only to the Ministers but also to the People, and as though [*sic*] hast now broken the Ice by taking thy proper seat therein last first day, I would have thee to continue it […] It sometimes happens that we who are engaged in the work of the ministry are both from home, when it is certainly the duty of an elder to break up the meeting; whilst we have had none in this Station to sit in the gallery it hath fallen to the lot of those who sit underneath to do it; many of these have taken their Fathers seat, without inheriting their Fathers virtues; Thus meetings have sometimes been very unseasonably broken up, to the great sorrow of the rightly exercised.[100]

'The Quaker network was 'an unusually dense network that benefited co-religionists by enabling commerce through its unique topography,' argue Andrew Fincham and Nicholas Burton.[101] 'We chose to examine Quakers as they are known to have played a central role in the development of a variety of industries in the 18th and 19th centuries, […] however their importance and reach originates at least a century earlier despite this period often being ignored in Quaker scholarship.' The claim that the seventeenth century has been ignored is surprising. Fincham and Burton may

[100] Vol 2 nb33/6-7
[101] Fincham, A. and Burton, N. (2021), 'Religion and social network analysis: the discipline of early modern Quakers', *Journal of Management History*, 27:3, 339-358
[102] *ibid*

have to stand corrected on that statement, but they are on safer ground when they argue that Friends' discipline aided the Society's business growth because 'Membership required adherence to both the society's theology and the normative commitments arising from this "discipline".'[102]

Wood got exasperated, even angry, with his co-religionists for not treasuring what they had. After one Monthly Meeting at Wakefield he wrote: 'I had to lament at this time as well as some others the multiplicity of words without life, which sometimes prolong meetings very unprofitably.'[103] On another occasion, a quarterly meeting for worship was followed by the meeting for discipline - 'a great deal of business was before it and many cases of a painful nature.' Business included arranging visits and appointing committees to visit those who were 'negligent in the due attendance of meeting for worship.'[104]

2.5 Meeting structures

The Gospel Order structure imposed on the Society encouraged a pecking-order mentality. For instance, Quarterly Meetings were 'above' their constituent meetings in terms of authority. Particular or Preparative Meetings were the bottom rung of the Quaker hierarchy but they did have some control over their own affairs, finances, and the disciplining of members. This is clear from the meeting minute books, which however always show important decisions (for the meeting as a whole or individuals in it) being sent to Monthly Meeting for approval or action. They seldom strayed beyond the strictly parochial without reference to Monthly Meeting and they did not always own their own meeting houses, which could be a Monthly Meeting asset. Particular Meetings were grouped into Monthly Meetings, with half a dozen or so

[103] Vol 2 nb32/24-25
[104] Vol 2 nb23/8

neighbouring PMs in a typical MM. This was the case in Joseph Wood's Monthly Meeting, which in addition to his Particular Meeting of Highflatts also included those of Pontefract, Ackworth, Wakefield, Wooldale and Burton. It was named Pontefract Monthly Meeting because that was the largest meeting in it. Most of Wood's comments about business meetings refer to Monthly Meeting business. Quarterly Meetings, which were groups of Monthly Meetings, could direct MMs to appoint committees to 'pay a religious visit in the love of the Gospel to such of their members as were deficient in the due attendance of our meetings; or inconsistent with a religious profession in Speech behaviour or Apparel'[105] Two of Joseph Wood's Notebooks contain 14 letters sent by Yearly Meeting to Monthly Meetings advising them that teams were being sent to inspect for conformity. Day-to-day administration of the Society nationally came under the remit of Meeting for Sufferings, successor to the long-established Second Day Morning Meeting which had carried many important responsibilities on behalf of the Society. Both Second Day and Sufferings were in frequent contact with different parts of the Quaker world on matters both spiritual and temporal. Beyond the constraints of Quaker bureaucracy were 'publick' meetings, which mostly appear in Wood's volumes 4 and 5. They numbered 308 by the time of his last entry. Wood's Notebooks repeatedly make it clear that, in the North at least, such meetings were far more in the style of early Friends' meetings than those of Gospel Order times. He says the public response to them was almost always large and enthusiastic. Public meetings for worship attracted big crowds at

[105] Vol 2 nb23/13-14

[106] Northern YM was second to London YM in size, but there were other Yearly Meetings as well serving Wales and different regions of England. From its inception in 1668 London YM took about 10 years to reach its final state. According to Braithwaite (p278) 'Such a central body was a novelty in that age and roused much adverse criticism.' Regional YMs seem not to have had that problem.

Northern Yearly Meeting and 'a considerable number of Ministers from different parts of the four counties' (Cumberland, Westmorland, Lancashire and Cheshire).[106] Some meetings were so large that they had to be divided between two or even three venues. Any minister could hold a public meeting if felt moved to do so, but first he or she required a minute of authority from their monthly meeting. Such minutes could cover just one specific meeting or be open-ended. Joseph Wood always records obtaining his minute before setting off on his travels and formally returning it when he got home again. When Isabella Harris 'asked to pay a religious visit to some meetings in Cumberland and Durham and to have meetings with the inhabitants of some places were [*sic*] none are usually held' in 1807 she had no difficulty getting a minute.[107] But this was no mere formality. Thomas Shillitoe requested a minute to visit meetings in America, but after months of prevarication he was refused. Wood does not explain why. Travelling minutes were not just bureaucracy for its own sake. They enabled meetings to be assured that the person bearing the minute was genuinely representing his or her meeting, and they served a similar purpose in Friends' business networks where they provided some level of security. At a time when the Quaker world was growing larger and busier this was important.

Table 2.1 outlines Joseph Wood's record of meetings attended. He did not add these up, I did. He was not trying to keep any kind of score, for him this was still not enough. His own Particular Meeting of Highflatts, which he would always attend on First Day if not travelling, is not included here because he did not keep a record of it.

2.1 Joseph Wood's total meetings attendance*

Monthly Meetings	56
General Meetings	13
Quarterly Meetings	93
London Yearly Meeting	1
Northern Yearly Meeting	7
Wales Yearly Meeting	2
Circular YM	1
Appointed Meetings	3
Publick Meetings	308

*** Monthly Meetings are now called Area Meetings. General Meetings have been discontinued in England and Wales but still exist in Scotland.**

Established in the latter part of the 17th century, the GM had a vague remit to advance the life of Quakerism. Circular YMs no longer exist; they followed a set annual route around provincial towns.

2.5 Networks: A minister's life on the road

Joseph Wood depended heavily on other Quakers when he went on his travels. He never used the word 'networks' but that is what they were. Although he sometimes stayed at inns, accommodation and food were frequently supplied by Friends in the places he visited. Such people were also invaluable when it came to local knowledge, help with finding venues, setting up meetings and even providing a guide to take him on to the next port of call. A good example of common practice is in Volume 4 where Wood journeys to a public meeting at Wortley Forge in 1807, on his birthday. Three Friends had gone along the day before the meeting to prepare a barn provided by a local Quaker. It was a crowded meeting and Wood reports that 'through divine condescension it was an open favoured time.' help with finding venues, setting up meetings and even providing a guide to take him on to the next port of call.[108] A good example of common practice is in Volume 4 where Wood journeys to a public meeting at Wortley Forge in 1807, on his birthday. Three Friends had gone along the day before the meeting to prepare a barn provided by a local Quaker. It was a crowded meeting and Wood reports that 'through divine condescension it was an open favoured time.' The system obviously worked well

[108] For example, Vol 3 nb4/25

and was still doing so six years later when Isabella Harris and Thomas Shillitoe were unable to hold a public meeting near Huddersfield because of the crowd. Wood reports the numbers were so great that Isabella Harris had to lean out of a window and shout to the people that it was being rescheduled to a larger venue the following evening. Visits and meetings could be combined, as Wood did when he asked Monthly Meeting for authority to visit Friends' meetings in seven counties 'and a few meetings in some adjacent counties. Also to have some meetings with the inhabitants of some places, and to take a few going and returning.' It is not clear how much notice Friends expected to be given that a visiting minister would be among them on a particular date, but it could be very short, just a few hours. Ministers were recognised as authoritative solely on the basis of the value of their preaching. Samuel Bownas had told the previous generation that the minister must be 'humble and inward with the Lord in spirit'; his or her purpose is to bring others into 'a right relationship with the Father and His Son out of their own spiritual formation.'[109] He says nothing about the content of preaching; that must come from a minister's own total resignation to the divine will. 'A spiritual minister is and ought every day to be like a blank paper, when he comes into the assembly of the Lord's people.'[110] The Holy Spirit could be relied on to give subjects to the minister when he or she was in an unfamiliar meeting. Bownas advised them to beware of the pride this could cause. His understanding of ministry was consistent with the first generation of Friends but the nature of ministry changed as the eighteenth century progressed for a number of reasons, including the imposition of Gospel Order, elders increasingly taking on the

[109] Bownas, Samuel (1677-1753) *A Description of the Qualifications Necessary to a Gospel Minister.* Graves calls the 1750 book 'essentially a manual on impromptu preaching'
[110] *ibid*

authority that had been ministers', and the rise of evangelicalism. A fourth reason has been detected by Helen Plant who finds 'complex and ambiguous discourses on the relationship between gender and religious authority' appearing in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[111] She returns to this theme elsewhere, arguing that women were 'left out of some of the new disciplinary bodies that were created as the Society established a more sophisticated organisational structure' but nevertheless became the backbone of Quaker ministry throughout this period and that they were central to a Quaker revival in Yorkshire.[112] Tousley argues that whereas scripture was used typologically by the first generation – as if the story were being fulfilled within them – the second and subsequent generations used it analogically, to discover parallels and examples between their own experience and the story of the first Friends.

Ministry existed before organisation. It was the preached word – as exemplified in Quaker folklore by the Valiant Sixty[113]– that gave Friends a foothold in national religious life. Even though it valued silence very highly, Quakerism could not have flourished without preaching, nor could it have sustained the remarkably high level of consistency in message that it did for a church with no centralised body of clergy or doctrine. However, Quakers did have discipline and a unique attitude to class that transcended social boundaries. Wood is a good example of how an industrious and simple lifestyle could lead to a position of authority in local leadership which in turn led to influence far beyond his own Monthly or Quarterly Meeting. In Joseph Wood's

[111] Plant, Helen (2003) '"Subjective Testimonies": Women Quaker Ministers and Spiritual Authority in England: 1750–1825' *Gender & History*, 15:2

[112] ibid

[113] The Valiant Sixty were the first organised ministers that the Society sent out to preach. The number is probably not historically accurate. They generally travelled in pairs.

Notebooks the first ministry which is identified as such is delivered by Elizabeth Walton of Barnsley, in Pontefract Meeting.[114] It is undated, but a family named Walton who lived in Barnsley are mentioned several times in the Notebooks and Wood was particular friends with Thomas Dixon Walton who died in May 1811.

Notebook volumes 3, 4 and 5 in particular shed light on what Friends meant by ministry and how it proved to be a mainstay of the Society in the eighteenth century, but as pointed out above, there were theological differences which created tensions, and worldly intrusions were always a threat. Wood's account of his journey to Wales Yearly Meeting at Newtown in 1773 is instructive. A total of eight Friends spoke at one meeting in Newtown, with some praying and others giving testimony to the packed meeting room. There was no preaching as such on this occasion. Although there was no formal training or qualification for the ministry, Friends were careful to test the calling of anyone who put themselves forward before they could become 'Recorded' or 'Publick' Friends. There was encouragement for those who wanted to try:

> We drunk Tea with Anne Wilson at her Sisters, she having din'd with us this day at our Inn were she related to us a concern that was on her mind to appear in meetings, but she found an unwillingness to give up thereto, but my Companion gave her great encouragement so that I hope she will get thro.[115]

Wood is careful to distinguish between 'religious visits' and 'publick meetings' - the former were visits to Friends gathered for a meeting, perhaps small and informal but

[114] Vol 5 nb48/21. I cannot trace if Elizabeth was part of that family. The Waltons also figure largely in volume 1

[116] The Darbys built the world's first iron bridge, over the River Severn, in 1779, using coke instead of the traditional charcoal, an industry-changing innovation.

[117] Deborah married Samuel, the son of Abraham and Abiah Darby of Coalbrookdale, who was in charge of the Darby manufactory in London. In 1779 she began a journal. Three years later she began to travel and preach, including a trip to America.

nevertheless a gathering for worship; the latter were gatherings, as described above, which could be organised at very short notice and generally drew large non-Quaker crowds. Wood describes how 'we went to dine at Abiah Darby's along with a great number of [ministering] friends, she keeping as it were an open house for such as chuse [*sic*] to go there without exceptions.'[117] Wood's travels can be divided into two types – those where he journeyed far and wide to public meetings, sometimes impromptu and sometimes planned, and those which were to a specific event such as a Quarterly or Yearly Meeting. Simply joining the other Preparative Meetings in his own Monthly Meeting usually involved an overnight stay. His longer journeys involved many public meetings. The third volume of the Notebooks is particularly good for examples of much of the above. In his visit to the 1773 Wales Yearly Meeting, Wood reports results which showed that the Christ-centred theology of first Friends was still active among Quakers, albeit not in English. There are two examples:

> Job Thomas had a very long time next in Welsh. I had a pretty long time next earnestly pressing the People to come up in obedience to the call of the Lord which was gone forth for their help and salvation [….] The meeting held 2 hours and a half. After meeting a sober Woman called to Job in much tenderness and told him she was greatly affected under my appearances, altho' she understood not a word I said.[118]
>
> At 4 o Clock was the afternoon Meeting […] I was pretty largely concerned therein in Testimony from 2 Cor: C: 9. v: 15. "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift", and

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[118] vol 3 nb4/5
[119] vol 3 nb22/7
[120] vol 3 nb22/6

> afterwards I was concerned in Prayer, after which I had a few words more and altho' all could not understand what I said, I believe most were made sensible of the Power which overshadowed at the Assembly.[119]

From Newtown Wood and others next moved on to Welshpool where,

> there was a meeting appointed in this Town for some friends who had been at the Yearly Meeting, there being no friends living near here, It was held in the Town hall were the Assizes for this County are held, the Ministers sitting in the Judge seat, there was not many friends but abundance of other People, who in general behaved pretty well.[120]

Wood clearly had a gift for preaching that extended beyond language. Because

Friends had no special building for meetings they could hold them in a town hall, barn or anywhere convenient. The gift for preaching was still with Wood many years later. He had preached in Melbourn during a visit to Derbyshire and in Volume 2 of the Notebooks he includes an ‘Extract of a Letter from a Clergymans Wife to her Friend in London’, dated May 9, 1815, which says in part

> My daughter Susan heard one of their [Quaker] Society preach yesterday at Melbourn, and she says, never in her Life, did she hear anything at all equal to him, either in manner (which was truly solemn) or matter - the doctrine she says was wholly scriptural - every person in the Chapel seemed greatly affected, and some even to extreme agitation.[121]

In 1813, Wood received an anonymous letter while visiting Bewdley which began ‘Excuse the inportunity [*sic*] of one, who, though a stranger to your person, is no stranger to the excellent spirit by which you are actuated.’ The writer goes on:

> I have often attended upon the ministrations of those who men have agreed to call eloquent, but I never felt myself more completely elevated above the fashionable vanities of this world than by your truly christian and apostolic address. The impression which it has left upon my mind is greater than anything I ever before experienced.[122]

Such episodes are evidence of powerful forces of faith at work among Quakers. However, other forces were also at work, against which leading Quaker ministers felt obliged to speak out. For instance, in 1769 Samuel Fothergill[123] of Yorkshire preached a sermon in London that was both a rallying cry to Quakers and a denunciation of elders. 'Let the Daughters of our Zion arise from the Bed of indolence, from the Lethargick [*sic*] stupefaction of a fatal forgetfulness,' he urged. 'How many are the careless I have met with amongst you, who alas! it may be said care for none of these things?' This was followed by a lengthy attack on elders ending with 'I know of no state harder to speak to, more difficult to reach, than that of an elder, whose mind is overgrown by the earthly nature.'

Judi Jennings believes 'English Quakerism was dominated by an aristocracy of London Elders, that the Morning Meeting was dictatorial and censorious and that too many American Friends were over-zealous, overcritical and over-eager to cross the Atlantic.'[125] As I argue below, these contrasting attitudes illustrate the different outlooks of Northern and Southern Friends. They also illustrate some of the tensions which existed between different power bases that had grown up within the sect, disfiguring Fox's original vision.

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[121] vol 2 nb34/21
[122] vol 2 *ibid*
[123] vol 3 nb22/5

2.6 'Dictatorial and censorious'

Redaction was a regular feature of life for any Quaker who wanted to write, woman or man, as the all-male Second Day Morning Meeting went about its 'dictatorial and censorious' business of ensuring that the only manuscripts that got into print were those 'intended for the edification of other Quakers.' In other words, those which were not controversial or innovative. As Sheila Wright argues in her paper on Quaker women's writing from the mid-18th to mid-19th centuries most works were 'edited at least twice, in some cases three times: once by the writer's family, again by the Society of Friends' Morning Meeting […] The chances of an "original" voice being heard and retained through these processes has to be doubted.'[130] Wright points out that elision often distorts the character of the writer as well as changing the nature and emphasis of what is written. Because of the manner in which Wood's Notebooks have survived, they eluded Friends' censorship machinery as they were never submitted for publication. But they have not completely escaped redaction as is clear from the text.

[125] Gill, 172

[130] Wright, Sheila, 'Gaining a Voice', *Quaker Studies* 8:1
[131] Kadane, Matthew (2013) *The Watchful Clothier: life of an 18th Century Protestant Capitalist*, Yale University Press
[132] vol 3 nb3/4-5

2.7 Quaker capital and business networking

In the second half of the eighteenth century, some areas of Britain were beginning to grow industrially.[131] Much of this early industrialisation was in the North, as Wood's Notebooks illustrate. A three-way division developed in the English Quaker world - geographical, social, and religious - urban and rural, quietist and Bible-based, well-to-do and poorer. There were no clear borders between them but the communities in which meetings existed were increasingly defined by the lifestyle of their residents and this would have affected Friends' choice of where to worship. 'Contradiction' is a word often associated with Georgian Quakerism and there can be no doubt that contradictory values jostled for position in Quaker life.[132] I am trying to create a sense here of the confusion that would have prevailed generally in society and in the Society of Friends, in a social setting that was very fluid, with mass movement of people and little regulation of life and work. It was against this background that the two Quakerisms of North and South developed, both tailored by circumstance to meet the needs of their particular populations. They were not in conflict or competition in any way but, in the same way that divisions opened over ministry, it was easy for the North and London to misunderstand each other.

Friends developed numerous and efficient networks over time, not only in religious but also in personal and business life. As always, caution in all things was urged on business Friends in their personal and professional dealings. 'Beware the danger of indulging in lawful things beyond the moderation of the disciples of Christ,'[134] was the advice given. As Wood's correspondence shows, letter-writing

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[133] vol1 NB3/26-7
[134] vol 1 NB2A/23
[135] see Chapter 4
[136] Cookson, Gillian (2004) 'Quaker Families and Business Networks in Nineteenth-Century Darlington' *Quaker Studies* 8:2

was of great importance in communication among Friends,[135] but equally in business Quakers developed a high level of written networking.[136] Their history had seen them move from persecution to isolation, with no one to depend on except themselves. Excluded from English universities and the traditional professions, they turned to the sciences and other new careers being generated by the Enlightenment[137] and Industrial Revolution. They were prodigious writers, and their religious practice encouraged this, teaching them to look inwards and to avoid other forms of Christianity.[138] It also taught them to work hard, live plainly and avoid frivolity and ostentation.[139] All of this led to many Quakers having a great deal of disposable income which they were discouraged from spending in 'worldly' ways. Astute investment in new industries was combined with intensive networking among Quaker families in the late eighteenth century and well into the nineteenth. As Walvin points out, more prosperous Friends dominated Quaker affairs, but over and above that Quaker traders were answerable to their meetings as well as to the law of the land.[140] 'Quaker businesses, however grand or humble, were scrutinised by other Quakers, to ensure that all was correct and accorded to Quaker conventions, and therefore unlikely to bring discredit or shame on the Quaker community.'[141] The establishment of many Quaker businesses owed their capital to Quaker-owned

[137] Cantor, 42ff
[138] Grubb, Isabel (1938) 'Quakerism and Home Life: An 18th century study,' from *Children of Light*, ed Howard Brinton
[139] *ibid*

[140] Walvin, James (1998) 'The Quakers: Money and Morals,' ch 1, John Murray
[141] *ibid*
[142] Turnbull, Richard (2014) 'Quaker Capitalism: Lessons for Today,' Centre for Enterprise, Markets and Ethics
[143] Walvin, ch 1
[144] She was a Quaker minister and in 1765 became William Tuke's second wife. Esther Tuke was a co-founder of the York School for Girls.

banks, and they traded with each other both in material goods and in information,[142] confident in the 'system of careful and highly professional accountancy' they had developed. [143]

A good example of Quaker business networking is the foundation of the railways. In 1818 several Quaker businessmen met to consider the feasibility of building the Stockton-Darlington railway, which actually ran its first train just seven years later. The original scheme met strong opposition from landed interests and widespread Quaker lobbying of Parliament was important in getting the Stockton and Darlington Railway Act passed. (Friends seem to have come to terms with their concerns over politics). In Yorkshire there are several examples of successful Quaker business networking, with William Tuke perhaps the most obvious for this thesis because of his wife's connection with Joseph Wood.[144] One of his daughters married into a Quaker banking family. Cookson says two Quaker banks were important in financing development in the North – Pease and Backhouse.[145] Both had developed initially as sidelines of Quaker textile businesses. One of them, Backhouse, developed a wide foundation of trade and lending based on national Quaker connections. Helen Plant has argued that 'wider social and economic trends within contemporary Quakerism' followed from women overtaking men numerically among Yorkshire ministers, thus highlighting 'the importance of family ties and support networks of kinship and friendship.'[146] Walvin argues that it was the opportunities offered by the growing need for secure financial services that enabled Quaker banks to flourish. 'Quakers were

[145] Cookson, 124

[146] Plant, Helen (2006) 'Patterns and Practices of Women's Leadership in the Yorkshire Quaker Community, 1760-1820,' *Quaker Studies* 10:2

especially adept at transforming themselves from local, often rural businessmen [….] About 1750, there were only 12 such country banks. Fifty years later there were 370: a clear indication of the revolution in finance.'[147] Family-owned banks, which included many Friends' organisations, gradually disappeared, but not before many fortunes had been made, or lost, by Quaker bankers.

2.8 Quaker women and the ministry

In 1753 the 'Women Friends of the County of York' were sent a stern letter by their Quarterly Meeting clerk, Mary Birkbeck, pointing out that many meetings had not appointed elders, and even when they had 'there is not that single Eye to the cause of Truth.' Using Old Testament imagery she spelled out the importance of Elders and went on 'they [are] enabled so to watch over the Flock, that they cannot see a Sister or any of the Youth swerve from the Testimony or mix with the Spirit of the World.'[148] In 1778, a later generation of the Quarterly Meeting of Women Friends at York were told more sternly by the then clerk, Mary Barnard, that 'we have observed many deficiencies in the Answers to the Queries' for quite some time. After listing them at length she, like her predecessor 25 years earlier, turned to Hebrew imagery to make her point. She did so at far greater length than Mary Birkbeck because the list of shortcomings was very long. These are confident and authoritative statements by women in leadership roles in the Society of Friends in Yorkshire. But for both of them their audiences were limited mainly to women, not the whole society. In the 1778 letter, the clerk ends by threatening to take the issue to Monthly Meeting, where men would pronounce judgement – because a men-only rule stopped women

[147] Walvin, ch 1
[148] Vol 1 nb3/26

from joining in business discussions at Monthly Meetings. Joseph Wood mentions this in his Notebooks,[149] but not in a disapproving way. Similarly, the PM minute books note issues that must be referred to the men's meeting for decision, without any apparent sense of unfairness or inequality.

Although Wood saw women ministers as equal to men and he willingly accepted orders from women organising public meetings,[150] he was equally willing to accept the Gospel Order ruling that men were in charge. His concern was that the people he worked with were, like him, striving for the Kingdom of God. There is plenty of evidence in the Notebooks to show that he valued women equally with men as co-workers. For instance he wrote that

> Our friends Deborah Darby from Shropshire and Rachel Fowler from Wiltshire being on a religious visit to the Quarterly Meetings of Yorkshire and Lancashire, and some meetings in their way, found a concern upon their minds to have divers publick meetings as they passed along, and […] Deborah having express'd a desire to see me, and finding the like inclination in myself, having been very nearly united in some former religious labours together. [151]

However, the fact remains that women were excluded from the decision-making process at Monthly Meeting level and also at annual local Meetings for

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[149] Examples are numerous, but Vol 3 NB3/4-5 is typical. The business that the men considered included providing a woman minister with a travelling certificate, and they did so with no hint of irony.

[150] Vol 4 nb27/1 Not a public meeting but Elizabeth Copeland of Leeds takes the lead in a local visit

[151] Vol 4 nb26/9

[152] There seems to be some inconsistency here. The journey to Balby Monthly Meeting described in Vol 3 NB3/5 is the first in which Wood mentions women Friends being specifically excluded from MM business; his previous Monthly Meeting reports, in volume 2, have said nothing to suggest that women were excluded

[153] Hope Bacon, Margaret (1995) 'The Establishment of London Women's Yearly Meeting: A Transatlantic Concern,' Journal of Friends Historical Society, 57:2

[154] Vol 3 – two examples: nb4/16 'Rachel Wilson led the way in a large and powerful testimony explaining at large our motive […] she was sensible there was a remarkable visitation extended; 'Frances Dodgson [...] was very close upon the Hireling Preachers and tho' many such were present of different denominations, the Power of Truth was so prevalent, that they were as still as if their craft had not been exposed.'

Sufferings.[152] They were also excluded from founding a women's yearly meeting in London until 1784, years after the establishment of such meetings in the North of England and the American colonies. In fact, it was the presence of a number of formidable American women ministers that helped them finally win the day in London.[153] A question that follows from such exclusion is why Quaker women were not treated equally with men. But that may be the wrong question to ask if we really want to know how Friends of that time saw themselves. A better one would be: were eighteenth-century women at ease with gender distinctions within the Society? On the basis of Wood's Notebooks and the PM minute books, the answer has to be a hesitant Yes.[154] All his Notebooks contain many references to women Friends but Volume 3 is perhaps the most fulsome. In it he gives brief biographies of several and discusses their work. Some anecdotal material is included. Across all volumes, more than 220 women ministers are named by Wood plus references to half a dozen others whose names he did not know. While the average woman's contribution across all projects was a shilling, three of those who gave to the 1754 appeal for the rebuilding of Highflatts Meeting House – and they were the only women donors – gave substantial sums.[156] There is nothing from either women or men to match them in that or any other collection. Such figures prove nothing but they do suggest the need for caution when pronouncing on how gender distinctions were understood among Friends in this era. For Wood and the female ministers he references, preaching the word of God appears to have been their single-minded ambition.[157] Perhaps Wood's focus on his calling was so intense that he was simply unaware of

any growing unrest among female Friends or perhaps he did not want to face such a potentially divisive issue. Modern women writers effectively draw attention to the inequalities of eighteenth century Quakerism, with some suggesting more militancy than others in attempts to win equality. Although there is a danger of anachronistic thinking in this regard it is important to emphasise the power and authority Quaker women were beginning to feel and exercise. The donations to building funds underline this. Sheila Wright speaks of women ministers who,

> knowingly promulgated their views and concerns through their journals to a wider audience […] ensuring that their readers were not only alerted to the women's concerns but were also encouraged to maintain the position of women within the organisation of the Society. [158]

She additionally holds that journals were not written solely for spiritual purposes but were also 'tools for the education of the next generation'[159] and this enabled women writers 'to proclaim their solidarity as a group and to reinforce, maintain and promote their position within a patriarchal Society.'[160] The implication of this is that eighteenth-century Quaker women ministers had a high degree of self-awareness, both as individuals and as a group. My own thinking is that active Quakers, female or male, saw themselves collectively as the 'remnant' through which God was working in the world. Wright's thesis does not negate that, but it does mean that women were fighting on two fronts – against the world and against male Friends' domination. The work of another Friend, Mary Awmack, sheds light on Wright's claim and also emphasises the strength that women ministers found in working together:

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[158] Wright, 'Gaining a Voice', *Quaker Studies* 8:1, 49
[159] *ibid*
[160] *ibid*

> in company with our valuable friend Ann Mercy Bell, (Mary Awmack) visited friends in most parts of this county, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, and at several other times Joined as companion with other Women friends in the course of their religious labours in these parts, the last of which was with our dear friend Alice Hall of Broughton in Cumberland. [162]

The 'Account of Mary Awmack'[163] is a good example of the independence of women ministers in asserting their calling to service. Women ministers often worked together rather than with men. Apart from anything else, this avoided scandal, but it would also have created opportunities on the road for long private conversations about ambitions, frustrations, faith and families. The male-dominated Society as a whole did not share Wood's relative open-mindedness about the equality of women ministers. Wright says that 'Women were warned to yield to the superior presence of male Ministers and to observe "a decent and modest behaviour in the exercise of their ministry and not entangle themselves with the affairs of this life, that they may the better answer the holy warfare in which they are engaged".' [164] A variety of other sources suggest that women were not always happy with the masculine understanding of what they should be like. Mary Morris Knowles, for one, 'viewed knowledge, creativity and the inner spirit as harmonious forces for good' which in no way conflicted with her religious understanding. This was not in keeping with the male view of what eighteenth-century women should be like, certainly not Quaker women. Likewise, men Friends' lack of spiritual insight 'was directly linked to their failure to cast off the great millstone of masculinity, the desire for earthly wealth and

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[162] vol 1 nb11/17

[163] *ibid*

[164] *ibid,* and see Judith Jennings (2010), 'Mary Morris Knowles: Devout, Worldly, and 'Gay'? *Quaker Studies*, 14:2

consequence.'[165] The first Publick Meeting Joseph Wood attended, in 1774, attracted six ministers, three of whom were women. Public meetings provided women ministers with opportunities to preach the gospel from a female point of view, something that would have been novel for their audiences. However, it was a man, Isaac Metcalfe, who noted that,

> Catharine Payton […] explained that Prophecy of the Prophet Joel in Pouring out the Spirit of Prophecy upon the Females as well as Males, and was largely carried forward in Preaching the Gospel in the demonstration of the Spirit and with Power.

Wood's account of Northern Yearly Meeting at Bolton in 1774 includes references to five women ministers, outnumbering men by one. Numbers are perhaps of less importance than attitudes, and it seems that women ministers were popular with the crowds at Bolton, which Wood says were larger for each successive meeting. But numbers did matter if the Society of Friends were to thrive. Phyllis Mack discusses female Quaker ministers in the eighteenth century in terms of agency,[166] saying 'these Quaker women invariably insisted that their actions were done not as acts of will but as acts of obedience, that they acted as instruments of divine authority as well as the authority of the (Quaker) community.' They 'saw their intentions as inspired by and identical with God's.'[168] Agency was not the freedom to do what one wanted but the freedom to do what was right. And as 'right' was determined by God

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[165] Wright, 'Gaining a Voice,' quotes Sarah Lynes Grubb as saying she had been told by the Men's Yearly Meeting to keep 'in the quiet'

[166] Mack gives a Quaker slant to 'agency' by describing some Friends as 'God's agent in the world'

[167] In her book *Heart Religion in the British Enlightenment* Mack refers to 'an aggressive spiritual agency' resulting from a collision between Protestant theology and Enlightenment ideals

[168] *ibid*

[169] *ibid*

[170] Plant, Helen (2003) 'Subjective Testimonies: Women Quaker Ministers and Spiritual Authority in England: 1750–1825,' *Gender & History* 15:2 *Signs*, 29:1, 149-177

[171] Pullin, Naomi (2018) *'Female Friends and the Making of Transatlantic Quakerism 1650-1750,' Cambridge Studies in Early Modern British History*

and the individual, agency implied obedience as well as the freedom to make choices. ‘Agency’ would have lacked meaning for Joseph Wood as a word but his Notebooks prefigure Mack when she says,

> the individual’s religious discipline was to shape her personal desires and narrow self-interest until they became identical with God’s desire, with absolute goodness. The sanctified Christian wants what God wants; she is God’s agent in the world.[169]

That echoes many such comments by Joseph Wood about both women and men. Helen Plant presents a lengthy and balanced view of female and male ministers in her discussion of why ‘complex and ambiguous discourses on the relationship between gender and religious authority’ left women trailing when the Society was reorganised.[170] Quaker women, like Quaker men and other Christians, were also influenced by the rise of evangelicalism and rationalism towards the end of the eighteenth century. Putting a different perspective on the influence of women ministers, Naomi Pullin argues that the role of women in Quakerism ‘diminished with the introduction of a Meeting system from the 1670s, which created separate Men’s and Women’s Meetings for business.’[171] In short, institutionalization led to a decline in women’s significance within their communities. However, women’s authority and influence within the Society was increased rather than decreased by this, Pullin maintains, and Wood’s Notebooks offer evidence to support her view, particularly in Volume 3. Further evidence of women’s leadership comes from an unlikely source. The Rev James Plumptre, a Cambridge man, was taking a walking holiday in Wales in 1799, when by chance found himself at a Quaker meeting in the pub at Rhayader where he was staying.[172] He knew nothing about Friends but ‘never

having been at a Quaker meeting, now that one was come to me I resolved not to miss the opportunity.' A woman preached, and afterwards reproached the congregation for not being moved by her words 'which I did not much wonder at, for there was neither method, matter nor elocution.' There was a period of silence which Plumptre rather envied because, he said, meditation was 'shamefully neglected' in the Anglican church.

In the second half of the eighteenth century travelling women ministers overtook men as the main Quaker spiritual voice in Yorkshire. Women accounted for a considerable proportion of members at Highflatts and surrounding meetings. Some idea of the number of women who attended meetings can be calculated from the lists Wood provides of those giving financial support for various causes. Wood's Notebooks provide evidence to support the views of several scholars regarding Quaker women in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Although women had equality in ministry, they were under male domination in almost every other respect. The academics whose works I am using here have explored various aspects of the question and all make contributions that I have found helpful. Trevett concludes that there was a decline in Quaker women's writing after the first generation of Friends, with what she calls a 'vibrant, confident style of writing' giving way to something more cautious and introspective. Second Day Morning Meeting's enthusiasm for censoring authors must take some of the responsibility for this, but Quakers, both men and women, like people of other denominations, were influenced

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[172] Plumptre, James (1799), Friends Historical Society *Journal*, volume 54, 1976-82

by the rise of evangelicalism as the eighteenth century progressed. There were many religious currents and eddies swirling about in eighteenth-century England and Quakers would perhaps have been better placed to benefit had they been less introspective. According to Rebecca Larson they ‘appealed both to “enlightened” society, the elite culture valuing order and tolerance, and, perhaps, flirting with unorthodox beliefs. . .[and] to the lower classes in awe of the supernatural but increasingly alienated from formal religious observances.’

Summary of Chapter 2

The growth of Quakerism and its dependence on extensive networking of various types – religious, family and business – is discussed. Ministry was the most significant way of spreading or reinforcing the Quaker message. It seems to have been particularly effective in the North, according to the Notebook accounts of ‘publick’ meetings. The Society of Friends also developed different types of relationship with other churches. Women ministers became the real strength of this system. Quaker awareness of the Inward Light is seen through the lives of these ministers. Networking ranged from ministry to industry and banking and included the American colonies as well as the British Isles, with many American ministers visiting Highflatts. Differences can be seen between Quakerism in the increasingly industrial North and the ‘white-collar’ South. Wood shows that within meetings tensions over authority could develop between ministers and elders.

Chapter 3 Friends in the world

Gospel Order, the disciplined management system George Fox introduced in the 1660s, arguably both saved and profoundly changed Quakerism in the eighteenth century. This chapter uses Wood's Notebooks, particularly volumes 1, 2 and 4 and the memoirs of George Whitehead, combined with the works of several historians, to demonstrate how Friends became a 'peculiar people', an eccentric sect whose strict rules helped it to grow rich and influential. I begin by tracing the development of Gospel Order Quakerism and then move on to the changing relationship between the Inward Light and the Society. The negative and positive 'ways' to God are discussed, as is the risk of confusing the Self with the Spirit, the 'new Israel', and the difficulties of holding to tradition in an age which was rapidly changing.

3.1 Religion facing secular competition

Few eighteenth-century Friends realised how radical their religion had been in the 1600s. That short-lived Quakerism remained undiscovered until the twentieth century and its existence is now clearer partly because of Wood's Notebooks. This chapter continues the discussion about Quakers and religion, but it also includes the hard realities of the eighteenth century as witnessed in the rise of empirically based science, engineering, economics, and politics. These areas were all anathema to Joseph Wood and like-minded Friends, who never tired of warning their co-religionists against the dangers they posed. Yet many Friends combined their Quakerism with successful careers in the sciences and engineering.

Meetings were largely managed locally, which meant centralised control was difficult, but Gospel Order ensured a high level of conformity and uniformity. Wood's Notebooks demonstrate the collision between traditional society and the nascent

laissez faire world of the early nineteenth century – in material, political and social senses of course, but also in a spiritual sense. Quakers and other Christians increasingly found themselves in a world for which their faith had not prepared them and which required new thinking about both religion and society. Howard Macy makes the general point about Christianity that '*sola scriptura*, Scripture alone, had become the dominant principle for authority.'[173] The Bible's stories were understood as literally true. In this respect eighteenth-century Friends were in line with other churches of their day and it was the early Friends who had held a radically alternative point of view which stressed the centrality of the Light. James Naylor, a century earlier, had summed up the first generation's view of the Bible:

> 'Thou asks further whether the name of Christ may be known to all the world by the [L]ight within them, without Scripture or tradition? I say, yea, and by nothing else without it, for the name of Christ consists not of letters and syllables, but in righteousness, mercy and judgment, &c., which name none can know but by the [L]ight of the [W]orld, though many of you read your Bibles who are the greatest enemies to his name, such is your knowledge as appears by your practice.' [174]

The role of the Bible in worship was beginning to become ambivalent. While Naylor puts the case for the Inner Light very well, most Christians sought their spiritual inspiration in the Bible or church readings from it. The Bible also retained powerful totemic value and its important semi-secular role in society would not be threatened for at least another century. However, science was becoming a serious competitor to religion. Morries argues that 'For some Quakers, science was justified by theology since it led to a detailed appreciation of the divine wisdom and purpose'[175] but

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[173] Macy, Howard R (2015) 'Quakers and Scripture', Oxford Handbook

[174] *ibid*

[175] Morries, Geoffrey P (2009) From 'Revelation to Resource: the natural world in the thought and experience of Quakers in Britain and Ireland 1647-1830', University of Birmingham, *etheses.bham.ac.uk*

Joseph Wood was not among them. He chose to ignore science rather than oppose it, as did many Friends who, Morries says, saw it limited 'as a path to knowledge in comparison with divine wisdom, and of the primacy of the Bible over the claims of scientific knowledge.'[176] But science got more and more intrusive and there were tensions between it and some Quaker beliefs. Quakers increasingly became 'a peculiar people' in this period, turning in on themselves, partly as a result of Gospel Order, which protected the Quaker way.[177] The result was the creation of a religious enclave, spiritually and physically more distinct than ever from the surrounding world. Corporate holiness became an integral part of eighteenth-century Quakerism. Elders rather than ministers came to guide the way that Quakers should live, think and speak.[178] Although individual Friends were valued, it was the collective value of the meeting that mattered most and individuals came under pressure to aspire to serving the meeting.

George Whitehead, the last of the first generation of Friends' leaders, was a remarkable man but apparently very conservative and not a great leader. However, he became the *de facto* leader of Quakerism simply by living into his eighties.[179] His Memoirs were published in 1725, and it was during Whitehead's time that Gospel Order became completely entrenched among Quakers.[180] While the first Friends grounded spiritual authority in revelation by the Spirit, subsequent generations 'developed a distinctive communal practice and authority, though this process had

[176] *ibid*

[177] Hamm, Thomas (2017) 'Finally Breaking Down the Hedge?' *Friends Journal,* June 2017

[178] Ministers were often personally and spiritually more adventurous than elders, especially travelling ministers who preached from meeting to meeting. Elders generally remained within a single meeting or small group of meetings. Travelling ministers could also break down barriers of distance or doctrine. See 3.3 Local management of meetings.

[179] Whitehead (1636-1723) was a tireless preacher, author and lobbyist, setting out the Quaker cause before three kings

[180] The lengthy appendix to Whitehead's Memoirs explains what, in his opinion, makes for a good Friend.

already begun with the first generation on account of controversy within and persecution from without.[181] While ‘persecution from without’ had largely disappeared by the mid-eighteenth century it was increasingly replaced by challenges from science, industry, business and banking.

[181] Frost, ‘Quaker History’

3.2 Benson and the original Quakerism

However, that is only part of the story. The greater part, I believe, has been made clear in recent decades by Lewis Benson.[182] He argues that George Fox was inaugurating a revolution in the way people understand who Christ is and how he saves. Benson wrote:

> He (Fox) knew that he was building on a very early apostolic tradition; and he knew his teaching about Christ would bring with it a need to challenge the accepted traditional meanings of salvation, saviour, gospel, belief, faith, new covenant, the righteousness of Christ, and the nature of the church of Christ.'[183]

It is hardly surprising if early Friends misunderstood what Fox meant, or that Quakerism provoked so much opposition from both church and state. The revolutionary nature of Christ that Fox preached might well account for the disproportionate suffering of Quakers compared to other non-conformists in the seventeenth century. But if it had not been for the evidence of Joseph Wood's Notebooks Benson's work would have remained largely forgotten. Wood's Notebooks uniquely demonstrate the consequences of the loss of the Inward Light for Quakerism (as discussed in chapter 1.3). It was not the only casualty, however. Some other aspects of early Quakerism were lost in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. These concepts were inter-related and complex but essential parts of the first generation's understanding of their faith. By Wood's lifetime in the middle of the eighteenth, Quakerism was ruled by Gospel Order and was very

[182] Lewis Benson, 1906–1986, was perhaps the 20th century's greatest expert on the writings of George Fox, according to biographer Kennard Wing ('An Appreciation of the Work and Ministry of Lewis Benson') *New Foundation Papers* 98-99, 2008

[183] Benson, Lewis (1974) 'George Fox 's Teaching about Christ', *Quaker Religious Thought,* 24-42

different to the times of Fox. For Wood, Gospel Order was all of a piece with his understanding of the history of the Society of Friends and his own role in God's great scheme of things. It was also the practical backbone that provided the authority and discipline in meetings which saved the Society from falling to pieces. Richard Allen explains that Fox saw the very survival of the movement as requiring both self-government by individual meetings and co-operation between meetings for both worship and business.[184] Fox developed the pyramidal concept of Gospel Order with this in mind. Annual gatherings held in the north (at Skipton and Balby) were transferred to London and by 1668 London Yearly Meeting was established. Allen admits that the new system led to 'greater solidarity but may also have stifled individualism.'[185] For many Friends, living in the manner prescribed by Gospel Order *was* Quakerism and certainly for non-Friends the sight of Quakers in their plain clothes was the defining characteristic of the Society of Friends. Compared to the great spiritual heights to which the first Friends had ascended, the following century can seem mean and petty.

> Questions of discipline and the oversight of the behaviour of individual Friends are now the chief matters of concern […] by far the greater number of minutes refer to questions of personal behaviour, and admonition of those who display a "disorderly carriage and dress" or marry "a man out of the Truth" or lapse into debt or drunkenness.

This reference is to Gainsborough in Lincolnshire,[186] but the same is true of Yorkshire as recorded in Wood's Notebooks and the PM minute books. As if to

[184] Allen, Richard C (2009) 'Faith of our Fathers', Oxford *Handbook*, 35-36
[185] *ibid*
[186] vol4 nb35/3

underline the lack of consistency among Friends nationally, this reference also comments on a lack of travelling ministers. There is not enough information here for an informed contrast with Yorkshire but Wood's Notebooks show the opposite, a strong presence of travelling ministers during the eighteenth century.

3.3 Local management of meetings

There was more to Quaker community than simply good organisation. John Chenoweth argues, I think correctly, that Meetings were fundamentally local institutions rather than branches of a national organisation:

> Quaker doctrine, such as it was, was generally not handed down from the hierarchical structure of Monthly, Quarterly, and Yearly Meetings […] Interpretation and enforcement of policies issued from above was local, and Quaker "rules" of living were the result of local processes of deliberation.[187]

This structure had both strengths and weaknesses. An important strength was that it allowed Wood and others like him to be both highly individualistic and yet still support Gospel Order and all its ramifications in terms of dress, language and behaviour. Robynne Rogers Healey also observes that eighteenth-century Quakerism 'was lived in its local contexts' and that attempts to create a unified Quietist whole were unsuccessful.[189]The numerous attempts by London Yearly Meeting to impose uniformity and conformity provide support for Healey's case.[190]So too do Joseph Wood's Notebooks. They also show that he would have disagreed with any suggestion that there was serious disunity in the Society. For Wood, the

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[187] Volume 2 gives many examples of such ministers, for example Vol 2 NB2/36, 2/30.22, 2/31.13, 2/32.2

[188] Chenoweth, John (2009) 'Quakerism and the lack of things in the early modern,' *Studies in Contemporary and Historical Archaeology* 8

[189] Healey, Oxford *Handbook*, 55

[190] London YM's first printed book of discipline was published in 1738, *Christian and Brotherly Advices,* which collected together answers to questions previously produced individually. It was better known as *The Book of Extracts.*

threats to Quakerism were from the material attractions of the world, with sloth and indifference the biggest dangers among English and Welsh Friends,[191] not any serious threat of theological fragmentation. While he was aware of North-South differences he did not see these as any threat to corporate Quakerism. However, there was also increasing competition - 'Nonconformity in religion and calls for political reform were growing increasingly common as the eighteenth century progressed.'[192] Healey says the Evangelical Revival of the mid-to-late century added a further complication to the Quietist Quaker world, and brought emotionalism back into ministry for the first time in a century.[193] Correspondence, the travelling ministry and publications were all well used connecting threads between local, regional and, to some extent, national Quakerism, but connecting Quakerism as a whole with new developments in society was another matter - finding a way to correlate the light of Christ and the light of reason proved elusive. Frost wrote that 'the entire religious life of a Quaker was governed by his attempt to receive and act within the leadings of the Holy Spirit.'[194] That might have been true of the first Friends but I don't believe he is entirely correct about subsequent generations. Certainly, the leadings of the Spirit remained paramount for many Quakers, including Joseph Wood, but Friends easily deceived themselves into confusing the Spirit with self. Kathryn Damiano challenges many perceptions of the Quietist period, arguing that the process of spiritual

[191] For example, 1/3.22-23 'The great degeneracy there is now seen […] some called Friends not coming to the Truth, and others departing from the Truth', Emanuel Brook 1782
[192] Healey, Oxford *Handbook*, 51-2
[193] *ibid*
[194] Frost, 'Dry Bones', *Church History*

formation for Friends combined the *via negativa*, denial of the world through silence and plainness, and nurture of the inward life through the *via positiva*.[195]

While I agree with Damiano, especially about realised eschatology, I see Healey's observation about Quakerism being lived in its local contexts as a more appropriate description for the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, particularly in rural meetings such as Highflatts. Those contexts were changing and Wood's life was attuned to a world that was disappearing. His Notebooks demonstrate the reality that many Friends in his Preparative and Monthly meetings made no obvious effort to involve the Spirit in their religious lives.[196] He believed this was not just dangerous for their own souls but set an example to the world that reflected badly on the Society of Friends: 'It must be of a bad savour in our respective neighbourhoods, to see some part of the body Assemble together, whilst others are paying or receiving visits, and the families of such spending their precious time, which when over cannot be recalled, in unprofitable company.'[197] In this case he was writing about Friends who went out socially instead of attending evening meetings. Wood does not distinguish between what seem to be relatively minor 'sins' like this and more heinous faults, arguing that allowing small sins into your life will invite larger sins to follow.[198] His problem was that when he had a major failing to confront he did not really have words to do so except those he regularly used for the trivial. In 1805 he accused George Taylor of trying to 'seduce a young Woman from

[195] Damiano, Kathryn (1998) 'On Earth as it is in Heaven: Eighteenth Century Quakerism as Realised Eschatology'. She argues that 18th century Friends saw themselves as living in a time of realised eschatology, meaning the kingdom has come in the hearts and minds of believers.

[196] Vol3 nb2.1/5 The *Abstract of Divers Particulars of Advice at sundry times* shows where weaknesses were thought to exist and exhorts Friends to take action.

[197] Vol1 nb4/4-5

[198] Vol 2 nb22/14

her duty to her Master, and cause her to break the solemn contract made with him.'[199] The employer was Wood himself and he was very cross, but all he could do was repeat what had been said often and which therefore lacked emphasis or power. But also, as he often did, he reinterprets a mundane matter in spiritual terms, saying,

> The enemy who ever envies the happiness of man, seeks by all the means in his power to frustrate this work, and by his cunning craftiness wherein he lieth in wait to deceive, hath prevailed upon many to turn their backs on their own greatest Interest; to their own unspeakable loss.[200]

While Frost and Healey are not necessarily arguing contradictory points of view, the differences between their interpretations do illustrate how Friends varied in both their beliefs and the intensity of their Quakerism. Varying attitudes to the vigorous changes going on in society could also affect the way people saw Friends. Science is the best example. As some Quakers became well-known for their innovative research, and even became members of the Royal Society,[201] so others, like Wood, attempted to hang on to the ways of the past. Wood was not a recusant, but he was very much an individualist who liked to do things his own way. His Christology was drawn from the Bible, both Christian and Jewish scriptures, as chapter 2 shows,[202] and he lived a life of constantly busy obedience to what he saw as God's will for him. While individuals or small groups of meetings lived their lives in local contexts as their forefathers had done, things were changing rapidly further afield as Quakers settled throughout the British Atlantic world.[203] As they settled, the relationship with London Yearly Meeting was changing. Jordan Landes argues that with the resources

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[199] Vol 2 NB22/14-15
[200] See chapter 5:10
[201] Cantor, Geoffrey (1997) 'Quakers in the Royal Society, 1660-1750,' *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London* 51: 2
[202] see 2.4 – 2.5
[203] *ibid*

available to them, London Quakers were in a position to create and adapt networks and participate in the movement of ideas, goods, and people throughout the Atlantic world. In a review of Landes, Healey writes:

> They intentionally used regular correspondence, print materials, and a travelling ministry together with personal, political, and trade networks to produce a system that firmly established Quakerism throughout the Atlantic world.[204]

By the same token, transatlantic experiences changed London Quakerism and LYM found itself having to manage both domestic issues and those in faraway places where people, culture and politics were very different. Reading letters from the American frontier by Quaker ministers was something Joseph Wood enjoyed and there are several of them in his Notebooks. But that was secondary for him to the real business of life. He was one of many Quakers who saw themselves as latter-day Children of Israel as well as heirs of the first Friends. They too were bound for the Promised Land and were allegorically re-living the times, dangers and travails of the people who, the Bible assured them, had followed Moses who was a 'type of Jesus Christ,' a spiritual link that fortified their faith.[205] A good example is from Wood in which Friend Joseph Proctor stood to give testimony:

> he stood long and favoured, informing us, That as the Lord was the strength of his People Israel formally, so he remains to be the strength of his spiritual Israel to this day; and as he fought their Battles for them and rescued them from the hands of their Enemies who rose up to withstand them in their Journey; it was a Type of that inward

[204] Landes, Jordan (2015) *London Quakers in the Trans-Atlantic World: The Creation of an Early Modern Community*

[205] The word 'typology' did not come into use until the mid-19th century with its modern meaning of classifying prefigurative symbols, so it is interesting to see it used in the late 1770s in a closely related way. In the same way that some New Testament writers, notably Paul, give a new level of meaning to texts from Jewish scripture, Wood applies texts from both testaments to deepen points he was making.

> and spiritual warfare which every true believer experiences in their spiritual progress[206]

However, the events of history stepped in to confuse the new Hebrews. War, famine, enclosures, inflation, the industrial revolution - all these things and more meant that Plain Friends were relentlessly, unavoidably, driven into the modern world. 'Many have been our tryals [*sic*] of late, thro endeavouring to support the antient [*sic*] cause,' Esther Tuke wrote to Joseph Wood, citing 'spiritual wickedness in high places and 'false brethren […] in the houses of our friends' as the cause of these trials. Wood's record shows both sorrow and surprise at the way his world was changing. For instance, he and Thomas Shillitoe, a minister well-known nationally and abroad,[207] went to visit 'the Families and near connections of those who suffered death at York for murder, robbery and riotting; [*sic*] on the 8th. and 16th. days of the 1st. Mo.1813'. Wood was deeply shocked that gangs had broken into 'workshops, destroying machinery [and] Stealing' and in his Notebook praises 'the vigilance of the Magistrates' in bringing the campaign of violence to an end.[208] He never mentions the motives of the rioters, although he was well aware of the sufferings of the poor, and I think this is evidence of the Quaker drift into the 'middling order' – not a lack of sympathy with or unwillingness to help the poor but a genuine lack of understanding as to why they behaved as they did.

3.4 Friends and discipline

From their earliest days, Friends needed to ensure discipline among their followers,

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[206] Vol 3 nb10/18-19 and see 5.6 'Biblical truth'

[207] Fell Smith, C, 'Thomas Shillitoe, the Quaker missionary and temperance pioneer,' Dictionary of National Biography v52

[208] Part of Friends' shift to 'middling order' attitudes.

[209] Vol 5 nb51/4 and see pages 23 and 42

particularly after the James Naylor scandal in 1656.[209] The impact of this incident on the Society, real or imagined, was profound and was a factor in leading to the development of Gospel Order. Disownment was one of the few ways to deal with recalcitrant Friends but disownment was a last resort and used reluctantly. Wood's Notebooks show repeated efforts by local, Monthly and Quarterly Meetings to bring the wayward back to meeting. Efforts included:

1727, 'Abstract of divers Particulars of Advice at sundry times from the Yearly and Quarterly Meetings' by Thomas Hammond

1738, *Christian and brotherly advices, a* compilation of advice previously issued piecemeal by Yearly Meeting on a wide range of problems raised by monthly and quarterly meetings and codified under 51 alphabetical headings. The book was distributed in manuscript form to meetings around the country[210] In 1783 it was published as *Extracts from the minutes and advices of the Yearly Meeting of Friends,* popularly known as 'The book of extracts' and the first printed book of discipline. In 1791, a supplement appeared. A revision followed in 1801 and a further supplement in 1822.

1777, 'An appointment being made by the YM at London, of a considerable number of friends to visit the Q[uarterly] and M[onthly] meetings of friends throughout GB and Ireland.' 1783, 'Minutes and Advices of the Yearly Meeting.*'* Meeting for Sufferings was at pains to blame 'such as continue to despise and reject the convictions of truth and the counsel of their brethren' for their own damnation.[211] Yet, in Sufferings' opinion, 'no degree of persecution or imposition can be justly inferred' if Friends chose to remain members while ignoring the rules of the Society. There then follow 276 pages of rules, instructions and advice about how to be a Quaker. A few of these date from the previous century but most of the failings of eighteenth

[210] 'Extracts from the Minutes and Advices of the Yearly Meeting of Friends', held in London, from its first institution, MDCCLXXXIII, preface 4-5

[211] *ibid*, 5

century Quakers were being met by contemporaneous legislation.

1804, Wood reports that the Quarterly Meeting had 'previously directed the several Monthly meetings to make an appointment of a suitable number of friends to pay a religious visit in the love of the Gospel to such of their members as were deficient in the due attendance of our meetings; or inconsistent with a religious profession in Speech behaviour or Apparel.

Wood recounts several episodes of Friends being disowned, which basically meant the loss of public Quaker identity and being barred from taking part in business meetings. It did not mean the individual was excluded from worship with the Society. James Cook, who went on to fame as a navigator, was brought up by a Quaker family named Walker on the Yorkshire coast.[212] Although he admired Friends he never showed any interest in becoming one.[213] Richard Allen says that Captain John Walker, the father of the family, found the restrictions of Gospel Order difficult to manage. His livelihood 'depended upon safeguarding his vessels, but in the process he contravened the Quaker code. Walker was a realist who had to live both in the bellicose and turbulent society of eighteenth century commercial shipping and in the largely inflexible Quaker community.'[214] He wanted to arm his vessels for defence. He was not the only maritime Friend to face this dilemma. In fact Joseph Wood records 14 members of Scarborough Monthly Meeting, including John Walker, being testified against and disowned by the Society in May 1783.[215] There had been several attempts to talk the miscreants into obedience in what was clearly a long

[212] Vol 2 nb23/13-14
[213] Allen, Richard C. *et al* (2004) 'James Cook and the North Yorkshire Quakers' Boydell and Brewer, 21-36
[214] *ibid*
[215] *ibid*
[216] Vol 1 nb1/4.3-4
[217] *ibid*

disagreement (since at least August 1781), which only ended when the 14 refused to receive any more individual visitations.[216]

The Quaker understanding of the Zion tradition is seen by Crabtree as primarily theological but with political implications during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries when, she says, geopolitical borders began to define nation states.[217] The Quaker 'holy nation' transcended these worldly delineations, 'and their doctrine prevented them from identifying with the geopolitical nations in which they lived.'[218] Crabtree's inversion of the usual state-church relationship is radical. Instead of religion being contained by the nation 'we need to explore the possibility of the church as both larger than and in opposition to the nation,' she argues. The Religious Society of Friends in England was never larger than the nation but it was initially in opposition to it, passively, and as part of that experience it developed the kind of machinery of government found in state functions.[219] It had both central and local governance, with comparatively good communications and an efficient secretariat. Local Quakers arranged themselves in an authority structure that fed into and was fed from the national organisation.[220]It was something of a theocracy. Individual Quakers had a good deal of protection provided by their Society-within-society. Local and area meetings provided their members with social welfare and health provision far in excess of anything available in the secular world, as the PM women's minute books make clear.[221] Highflatts meeting and its Monthly Meeting are good examples of this, as is clear from the minute books and Wood's correspondence. They also

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[218] *ibid*
[219] Vol 2 nb12/1
[220] Minutes of Highflatts Men's and Women's Preparative Meetings
[221] See Chapter 3, 11

gave support to needy non-Quakers. Friends founded and ran their own schools and led the way in mental health care. They were in many respects self-contained, requiring little from the state and offering little to the state beyond being peaceful and law-abiding (with the exceptions of tithes and war, but they would never express themselves through violence). Another pressing issue for the new Israelites were those Friends 'who did not conform fully to the discipline in matters of dress and language.' Weekly attendance at meeting was their principal link with the Society. Known within the Society as gay Friends, many of them were disowned for 'marrying out.' Quaker simplicity increasingly became a shibboleth as the eighteenth century progressed – 'the peculiar dress was as much a uniform as that of the soldier and as much a symbol of separateness as that of the nun,' wrote Grubb.[222] They 'tended more and more to become a carefully guarded community,'[223] safe from the world's temptations. There is no way of telling from Wood's Notebooks what the proportion of gay Friends was, either at Highflatts or more widely in the Society. However, there is no doubt how he felt about them. Friend Joseph Brearey wrote to him in February 1821, shortly before Wood's death, to say he was giving up plain attire because 'I have no wish to appear plainer on the outside than I am on the inside.'[225] Wood was very upset. He asks:

> Was it not in obedience to the Spirit of Truth that thou was led into that becoming appearance which for many years thou hast made; and will the same spirit lead thee back again, to wear those things I knew would once have been a burden to thee to wear; and a grief to see other professors of Truth wear […] Our worthy predecessors

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[222] Grubb, Isabel (1938) 'Quakerism and Home Life: An 18th century study'
[223] *ibid*

> bore a faithful testimony against the customs and fashions of a degenerate world; not only in cut but in colour.[226]

He suggests it would be better to leave the Society entirely than be among 'those who continue therein; and are unfaithful to what they do profess.'[227] This discussion about gay Friends illustrates yet again how far Georgian Quakers were from the theology of first Friends, with Wood's comment about the importance of cut and colour bringing to mind Margaret Fell's strident opposition to 'Quaker grey'. Gwynn puts the evolution of the plainness testimony in the early eighteenth century, which would suggest that at least some of it must have been in place before the end of the seventeenth.[228] In other words, Quakers began separating themselves from the world during Fox's lifetime and, says Gwynn, 'by the early eighteenth century, Quaker behaviors had become highly codified.'[229] Disownment could result from several causes, including bankruptcy. The word 'bankruptcy' literally meant much the same as it does now, but it carried profound ethical and religious levels of meaning for eighteenth-century Friends. Ethical business activity had been a Quaker concern from the Society's earliest days[230] and George Fox had warned 'all of what trade or calling soever, keep out of debts; owe no man anything but love.'[230] This attitude gave rise to the belief that Quakers had a more ethical approach to business than others in trade, a belief that Esther Sahle challenges.[231] 'In 1734 London YM issued a particularly long epistle regarding the "Vain fashions and corrupt customs of the

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[224] Vol 2 nb33/23-24
[225] Brearey 1821 letter to Wood
[226] Wood's reply
[227] *ibid*

[228] Gwyn, 'Enacting Truth', *Quaker Theology* 17
[229] Quoted in Sahle, Esther (2015) 'An investigation of Early Modern Quakers' Business Ethics,' London School of Economics
[230] *ibid*
[231] *ibid*

world",' she writes, continuing 'In 1763, it warned the affluent not to get carried away "into pride, indolence, and extravagance" as this had led to debts and ruin.'

Five years later the Yearly Meeting reprinted an epistle written a century earlier by Quaker minister Ambrose Rigge warning tradesmen not to borrow in order to finance an expensive lifestyle. Sahle makes the telling point that non-Quakers were using the same language for the same reasons. 'London Magazine in 1758 diagnosed luxury as a "pestilence" which had spread throughout the nation,' she says, with both Quakers and non-Quakers alike listing financial ruin, fraud, tax evasion, smuggling and negligence of the Christian duty of charity as consequences of covetousness.[232] Non-Quakers faced exactly the same risks in trade as did Friends and therefore had as much to lose if their reputations were tarnished. However, the two causes of disownment described above, which both flaunted testimony, and others like them, seem to have failed to stir up genuine concern within the Society of Friends about its future and its relations with the world. Joseph Wood's enthusiasm for correspondence did not really extend to business matters, although in 1803 he reassured Thomas Dixon Walton that his planned business venture was 'as pure a business as can be followed.'[233] Whatever that business may have been, the results were disastrous. In 1811 Wood was telling him 'nothing is more apt to draw away the minds of the Lords visited children than the love of the world.'[234] Walton was,

> very poorly in health, and much embarrassed in his outward affairs, owing to the turn

[232] *ibid*
[233] Vol 2 nb19/12-13
[234] *ibid*

> of times; and I believe now fully sensible of the loss he hath sustained by too eagerly pursuing the things of this life […] I felt much sympathy with and for him.[235]

Offences such as bankruptcy that impacted directly on a meeting's reputation as well as on the reputation of an individual were among the most heinous in Friends' eyes. They had various means of ameliorating such events. The primary intention was always to protect the meeting's reputation, the erring individual came second.

3.5 Elders, overseers and ministers

The changing character of Quakerism during the eighteenth century is perhaps best illustrated by the growth in authority of elders and overseers, which could see them in competition with ministers. The authority of the minister resided purely in his or her message and its spiritual value to others. Bownas gives advice on being 'measured' in ministry: one should not stand for too long in meeting and should maintain a calm and quiet frame of mind. There should be no prepared speech; the minister must desire simply the virtue of the spirit of wisdom directing his mind. Extravagant delivery and affectation were to be avoided.[236] A passage in Wood's first volume, by a minister named Isaac Metcalfe, written in 1766 after Northern Yearly Meeting, implies that elders were already more powerful than ministers. Elders wanted ministers 'to be careful to keep in their Places, and if any unskilled hand should be too forward, such were desired not to take it amiss if they were spoke to and advised.' Such language shows how far Friends had moved from the spontaneous ministry of a century earlier. The following quotation from the London Yearly Meeting epistle of 1795 hints at

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[235] Bownas, Samuel (From *Friends' Intelligencer, xiv,* 1857), 'To the Meeting of Minsters at Kendal in Westmoreland' *Quaker Writings Home Page*

[236] *ibid*

tensions between ministers and elders: ‘We are concerned that in an especial manner, those in the station of Ministers and Elders may be faithful to each other, in mutual admonition, when needful.’[237] The role of overseer developed later than that of elder (from 1755 but not completed until 1789) and was intended to give spiritual direction to the meeting as a whole, not just to ministers.[238] Monthly Meeting ordered PM overseers to meet quarterly, usually before meeting for worship, ‘respecting the state of things and what might appear necessary to be done for the help of those who might be taking liberties inconsistent with our religious profession.’[240] More than once Wood ‘felt something more than an inclination to attend […] tending to stir them up in their duty. To take heed to themselves and to the flock over which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers.’[241] His words do not encourage belief in the efficacy of overseers as such but perhaps more significant is the last phrase which shows his acceptance of overseers as a requirement of God.

3.6 The Enlightenment

Intellectually the eighteenth century saw a blossoming of thought in England, as elsewhere, in the Enlightenment. Hume, Swift, Defoe, Paine, Johnson, Burke, Voltaire, Malthus, Kant and many other philosophers, both British and foreign, began to change the way people looked at the world.[242] Formal religion began to lose support. But going back a century further, by the mid-1600s ‘England was no longer a simple feudal society: Quakers were never slaves nor peasants in any typically

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[237] 1/8.1-2
[238] *ibid*
[239] LYM annual epistle 1795
[240] Vol 2 NB23/9
[241] *Ibid*
[242] Spencer, *Oxford Handbook*, 152

defined sense.'[243] Quaker attitudes can be understood in terms of politics and economics as well as religion: 'Although couched in almost entirely religious terms, Quaker resistance undoubtedly had significant political overtones, recognised by both Quakers and their opponents alike.'[244] While Friends condemned organised religion in the seventeenth century, which contributed to their persecution both under the Commonwealth and under the restored monarchy,[245] during the eighteenth century they began to be less censorious. But although Joseph Wood came to accept that other denominations were not without merit, even the Church of England, they were second best. The Society of Friends was God's primary route to heaven, everything else was 'the emptiness of all forms and Shadows.'[246] Relations with other faiths were generally good but Friends remained within their own theological ghetto, as witness the penalty of disownment for marrying a non-Quaker and their unwillingness to allow other sects to use their meeting houses.[247] In a lengthy letter Wood explains the reasons for this:

> 'we cannot with consistency, uphold […] worship so far conducted in the will of man, as to consist in Preaching, praying, and Singing, whenever the People are assembled, whatever may be the present state of the mind whether prepared or suitable or not; nor can we countenance […] Sprinkling or baptizing with Water and the use of Bread and Wine called "the Lords Supper." which shadowy observation […]in our judgment tend to eclipse or cloud the clearness of the Gospel dispensation.'[248]

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[243] *Durham Anthropology Journal*, 16:2, 2009: 8-22
[244] *ibid*
[245] For example, Fox's *Journal,* 508
[246] Vol 1 nb4/30
[247] vol 2 nb32/11-12 'Reasons why we cannot lend our Meetinghouses to people of other religious persuasions in a letter to a person who has applyed for the use of one' The full case is given in Appendix 4
[248] *ibid*

This is interesting for what it tells us about Quaker faith in the late eighteenth century. Wood is not speaking entirely on his own behalf, at least two other Friends had approved his text, the structure of which suggests it was something of a template, not simply a one-off. So the question has to be: how often did it need to be sent? Particularly striking are the phrases that are redolent of the first generation of Friends – 'worship conducted in the will of man […] whatever may be the present state of the mind whether prepared or suitable or not'. The most likely reading is that Wood still maintained the first Friends' confidence in the presence of Christ in meetings, if the meetings were truly worshipping in the spirit. At another level, Wood must have found it embarrassing to write such a letter as other nonconformists were very willing to let the Quakers use their premises. Wood, in the early years of his ministry, had tried to convert those of other faiths to Quakerism,

> 'to gather the People from of [*sic*] the barren mountains and desolate hills of an empty profession to Christ within the hope of Glory the substance of all outward Types and Shadows, the true teacher of his People and the alone way to God.'[249]

But eventually he gave up on this, apparently recognising that there was spiritual value in most denominations, and instead concentrated on bringing Quakerism to failed Friends and others who had no connection at all with religion. Friends' relations with other churches, especially the Church of England, seem to have been misrepresented to some degree by historians, at least in Yorkshire, according to the evidence of Wood's Notebooks.[250]

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[249] Vol3 nb22/5

[250] For example, 'I called at Chadwick Hepworths a priest of the Church of England that went from Cumberworth, he was much pleased to see me…. Insisted me tarrying dinner, and showed much freedom and respect to me in his way, after dinner it began to rain … he prest much on me to tarry all night, informing me the way was dangerous, but I was not free to tarry, and he seeing me resolve'd to go, put on his top coat and went with me several miles. And gave me a Bottle of

3.8 Religious culture replaces religious faith

Sirota notes that Anglicans in particular were having to come to terms with a different world in which religion was not central to life. 'The complaint about neglect of holy days was exceedingly widespread in late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century England […] freethinkers increasingly railed against the putative holiness of consecrated places as but another ploy of priestcraft.' The companion volume for the book *Festivals and Fasts,* speaks of,'a social vision characterized by disjuncture between the sacred and the profane…the transition from a "religious culture to a religious faith," that is, from a social order where "every aspect of life had involved religious associations," to one where religion entails a set of largely interiorized commitments with limited purchase on the other spheres of life' and ending in 'a great contempt of the clergy'.[251]

Quakers were becoming respectable rather than being merely tolerated in this new way of relating life and religion. Things had changed since the pious days of the seventeenth century and the church's power and influence were ebbing. As early as 1736 Anglican bishop Joseph Butler had lamented that,

> Christianity is not so much a subject of inquiry; but that it is, now at length, discovered to be fictitious, and accordingly they treat it as if, in the present age, this were an agreed point among all people of discernment; and nothing remained but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule.[253]

Geneva in my Pocket' (vol 3 nb6/12). There are other similar entries but the general thrust of them is the same. He and clergy were often on good terms, regardless of theology.

[251] Nelson, Robert (1656 – 1715), *A Companion for the Festivals and Fasts of the Church of England*, in a later edition

[252] *ibid*

[253] 'The Works of Joseph Butler,' quoted in Sirota

Sirota's perceptive comment about the transition from a religious culture to a religious faith was as true of Friends as it was of Anglicans or others - perhaps more so, as the homogeneous cultural base of Quakerism was newly formed in the mid-seventeenth century. Joseph Wood's passionate faith increasingly became that of a minority, as discussed above. Quakers mostly did not give up their religion but it became largely a matter for weekly observance, not the centre of daily life; the seventeenth and eighteenth century religious culture cooled to a religious faith as the nineteenth century progressed. Growing interest in social issues, notably slavery and poverty, saw a revival of interest in religion later in the eighteenth century, although this could arguably have been social concern being mistaken for faith. The modern Quaker preoccupation with pacifism and disarmament can be seen in the same light. Although by no means an ascetic, Wood lived simply,[254] always with an eye to those he could encourage along the Quaker road.[255] For example, he writes,

> this last meeting was one of the stillest solidest opportunities that I ever remember being at, on such a publick occasion, and am not without hopes but the Publick meetings held at this time will be of service, as People of different perswasions attended them from a great distance.[256]

Wood often remarks on his closeness to God[257] and he never reports speaking in a meeting without God's approval first. This same need for divine guidance was also true of his small evening meetings at home with his 'family' (his servants and some

[254] Vol 4 nb26/12
[255] Vol 4 nb26/2
[256] Vol 3 nb4/30
[257] Vol 2 nb28/4

neighbours).[258] Like larger meetings, these would include a Bible passage, prayer, silence and probably a talk (if prompted by God). Divine blessing was important to him in every aspect of life, but particularly worship. He had to know he was doing God's will. These two examples are typical:

> I got just in time to the Meeting […] I was fully satisfied I was in my place in being here to day and was strengthened to relieve my mind of what appeared to be required of me.[259]
>
> Blessed and Praised be the name of the Lord who is enabling his little ones to perform every thing [*sic*] he is requiring of them.[260]

Speaking in meetings, Quaker or public, was only part of his ministry. His first two Notebooks – the 'Large Notebooks' – show us a man who carried on extensive correspondence with a wide range of people, and who also copied the letters of others which he felt had an important message. Jesus Christ was central to all Wood's work, spoken or written. But he spends much more time quoting Jesus's words than in discussing the Parousia. It was what Jesus pointed towards that excited Wood and which led to the most important theme in all his work - being fit to live with God for eternity.[261] Scripture was a glue that helped to hold Quakerism together in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. While the first Friends had few written sources to turn to except scripture, those of the following century had the works of first Friends to set alongside the Bible. Wood includes a letter by George Fox which had presumably been treasured in his family for many years.[262] Gwynn

[258] for example, Vol 4 nb30/4
[259] Vol 2 nb34/17
[260] Vol3 nb4/38
[261] Vol 4 nb28/9-10
[262] Vol 3 nb6/3 - Friends and the 'Antient principles of Truth'

notes how the Quaker 'covenant of life with God' characterised Quakerism from the beginning because it was so different from the Puritan understanding of covenant through grace: 'Their *participational* sense of covenant […] was in profound opposition to the more *propositional* Puritan covenant' (his emphases).[263] This 'participational sense' lived on in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in the preaching of Wood and other Ministers of the Gospel. But it was not universally cherished:

> Security, ease and privilege did what persecution could never have done. They eliminated the electric enthusiasms of the movement and made it a different type of thing […] it was an unescapable fact that a profound change had taken place, and that the Quakerism of 1752 was quite unlike the dynamic Quakerism of 1652.[264]

Wood's Notebooks provide strong evidence for this, as does a prominent Quaker from the generation before Wood. In a letter of 1751 Samuel Bownas wrote:

> The Church seems very barren of young ministers to what it was in our youth; nor is there very little convincement to what was then. It seems to me – and I have been a minister 54 years – that I had more service, and better success in my ministry, the first 20 years than I have since had.[265]

If eighteenth-century Friends tried to change the identity of Quakerism, as Erin Bell claims, then they are guilty of rewriting history, as she goes on to suggest.[266] The evidence points to Georgian Quakers being embarrassed by their predecessors and

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[263] Gwynn, Douglas (2006), 'The Covenant Crucified,' Pendle Hill Publications, 108
[264] Jones, Rufus (1921), 'The Later Periods of Quakerism,' 2, Macmillan
[265] Bownas, quoted in Braithwaite, 539. Also, 'An Account of the Life and Travels of Samuel Bownas, 1795', London
[266] See chapter 2, footnote 158

wishing to distance themselves from them. However, some issues could not be gainsaid, notably politics. Wood gets agitated about politics. He urges Quakers to stay well away from them because they are a snare of the devil: 'I was made to believe he had gained entrance amongst them by drawing out their minds after political matters and busying themselves therewith, had been led out of that state of inward watchfulness in which alone preservation is experienced.'[267] He was writing about the Preparative Meeting at Dewsbury, at which he had stopped on his way to a General Meeting at Ackworth in July 1817. Friends generally tried to keep government at arm's length, but the simple fact that they paid taxes and their growing involvement in social reform issues made that increasingly difficult.[268] Yet Wood's attitude had changed markedly over the previous 20 years. In 1798 he had attended Spring Quarterly Meeting and later wrote,

> concerning the propriety of friends paying a tax lately imposed by the Government […] for the purpose of carrying on the war against France and the other Powers united with them who threatened this country with an invasion.[269]

He writes that there was discussion,

> for and against the payment thereof with much tenderness and a becoming condescension. But it going into the Exchequer with other Taxes, and being also applyed [*sic*] to similar purposes, and friends having no share in the Government of this country; It appeared to be the judgment of this meeting not to direct their members to refuse the Payment thereof; but if any truly conscientious friend did clearly see it their duty to refuse, they were not to be censured.

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[267] Vol 5 nb57/25-27
[268] Vol 4 nb30/1-2
[269] *ibid*

Meekly accepting the payment of a war tax seems surprisingly unQuakerly, particularly if contrasted with the strong view taken by Wood and many others on some other issues, notably tithes, yet he passes over it, not even commenting on the suggestion that Friends who did pay should not be censured. This is a glaring example of change both in Quakerism and in Wood's personal point of view. When he talks about humbly waiting for the truth to arise, it is unclear what he means and easy to believe he was simply seeking to avoid dispute. Wood returned to the subject of politics numerous times, clearly seeing it as a major threat to the stability of the Society and the whole country. Friends should 'come out of the many things' which tended to unsettle the mind.

> It is a time in which the minds of the people in many parts of the nation are very much unsettled about Political matters, the unwearied enemy hath taken the advantage thereof [...] the present unsettled state of the minds of the People in respect to Political affairs.

> Many have suffered great loss, by giving way unto conversation upon those subjects, which the faithful amongst us have ever found to be their duty cautiously to avoid, as our Kingdom is not of this world.'[271]

> His advice was 'to avoid all conversation respecting Politicks; as we as a People I am sure have no business to meddle therewith; and I fully believe whoever does amongst us, will not prosper in the Truth[272]

[270] Vol 4 nb37/3-4
[271] Vol 2 nb33/19
[272] Vol 2 nb27/15-16, Vol 2 nb33/19
[273] *ibid*

More than 20 years earlier leading Friend Henry Tuke had felt obliged to write to those attending the Yearly Meeting in London on the same subject.[273] His views were similar to Wood's. 'I believe it best to endeavour to turn the attention of friends (to a pending general election) […] whether it is not most consistent with our principles, as well as most likely to prevent our entering into the spirit of political parties, if we were wholly to decline voting for members of parliament.' Tuke reasons that in voting for members of Parliament,

> we vote, without enquiry or hesitation, for men, who, we know, if they approved the occasion, will promote war and bloodshed, who generally support the forced maintenance of an hireling ministry, and perhaps, in some instances, for those who promote the continuance of an unjust and unmerciful traffic in the persons of men [...] Friends will see a safety and propriety in our withdrawing from even this connection with matters of government […] as we have occasionally disavowed having anything to do with the setting up or pulling down of governments, it seems to me difficult, if times of public commotion should occur, to preserve this declaration unimpeachable, whilst we actually give our support to men of one party or another, as best suits our own particular sentiments.[273]

The reference to 'times of public commotion' is almost prophetic. There had already been riots over political and economic issues and in the coming decades there would be more. The extent of how difficult the issue of politics could be is shown by Wood who, over time, held conflicting views. In May 1807 slavery was on his mind when he agreed to go to York to meet and vote for William Wilberforce. Supporters of Wilberforce and another candidate, named Milton, provided a chaise to take Wood,

Elihu Dickinson the Clothier, and William Dickinson to York. They were gone two days. Wood says he was in poor health throughout. He met Wilberforce a second time on that journey, in Pontefract, and wrote later: ‘He told them (Quakers) ‘I love your people from the support I met with in a cause which lay nearest unto my heart’. In 1818, however, in reply to a letter from James Willan about joining the Society, Wood writes that Quakers ‘profess to behave ourselves as quiet and peaceable subjects, under whatever form of government we are placed, not following those that are given to change, nor mixing with the world upon political subjects’.[274] The Society of Friends, as an organisation, did little to encourage reform in wider society, for religious reasons. Wood quotes the Epistle of the Yearly Meeting of 1775 to explain Quaker inertia:

> We cannot consistently join with such as form combinations of a hostile nature against any, much less, in opposition to those who may be placed either in sovereign or subordinate authority; nor can we unite with or encourage such as indecently asperse or revile them. For it is written, “Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of the People”. [275]

The Society did its best to police religious behaviour but when it came to political or social matters there were few if any rules, and the discrete nature of Quaker governance meant meetings were largely independent locally.

3.8 Confused thinking

The example above illustrates Wood’s confused thinking on political issues – not confused in the sense of what to believe but of how to relate these beliefs to his faith. He was not alone. There was confusion in the Society of Friends on politics and several pressing social issues. This could manifest itself in inaction. On one occasion Wood found this attitude intolerable, complaining about ‘the formal traditional

members' who were delaying a membership application.' The Henry Tuke letter quoted above suggests a simple conservative fear of change as the real reason why Quakers blurred religious and political motives. Tuke wanted Friends not to get involved, thus allowing them to 'attend to the righteousness in ourselves.'[276] Yet the world was changing and Frost argues that nascent capitalism was foremost among the many changes that British society faced.[277] 'Capitalism' was a new word that was a harbinger of new things and by the late eighteenth century the destruction of traditional urban-rural social balances was under way. They were being replaced by an unfettered *laissez faire* system which brought new wealth and new poverty, new towns and new expressions of culture.[278] Much of this came in the nineteenth century, but the political landscape that emerged during the eighteenth would have been utterly alien to the nation's political masters of any previous generation.[279] The national context had changed, even if inertia kept a semblance of normality in place.[280] William Penn, in his preface to the 1694 edition of Fox's *Journal*, recalls Fox 'testifying and turning [people] to the light of Christ within them, and encouraging them to wait in patience to feel the power of it to stir in their hearts.'[281] A century later things were very different, although Friends still used similar language. The Enlightenment was well established and long-held beliefs and customs were being challenged.[282] One of the casualties of change was traditional religion, not just the

[274] Vol 2 nb33/19
[275] Hathi Trust 'Extracts from the minutes and epistles of the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends' for 1775
[276] Vol 2 nb21/6-7
[277] Frost, 'Revealed Truth', *Quaker History*, 2017, 25-27

[278] Matthias, Peter (1969) 'The First Industrial Nation: Economic History of Britain 1700-1914,' Methuen, 213ff
[279] Ibid, 23ff – *Gregory King's England: the Pre-industrial Economy*
[280] White, Matthew (2009) 'Popular Politics in the 18th Century,' British Library article
[281] *Fox's Journal* first edition, preface by William Penn: www.oocities.org/quakerpages/1694fox000b.htm
[282] White (2018) 'The Enlightenment**,'** British Library article

Church of England but among well-established non-conformism as well. The weakening of traditional Anglican authority coincided with the rise of many new religious sects and secular philosophies. Spiritual renewal movements or 'religions of the heart', which began spreading across Europe before the Enlightenment, placed the individual's spiritual priority on inner experience rather than church teaching.[283] Ironically, this would have been in line with early Friends' preaching but Quakers of the later eighteenth century saw things differently.[283] Their preoccupation with the strictures of Gospel Order meant that Friends had created both spiritual and social ghettos for themselves. Wood blames Friends for their own problems, because they had strayed from religious questions to seek political answers. 'Many amongst us as a People having wholly rejected, or lightly esteemed, the favour bestowed upon them; he whose mercies are over all his works, hath seen meet to call in others to take their crown.' But the issues are functional as well as theological. He got very frustrated with the bureaucracy of Quaker meetings.[284]

> Two or three friends who have long bore too much rule in this Meeting (Owstwick and Cave Monthly Meeting) caused a very long and painful debate […] I have oftens lamented that overbearing spirit which at times so much prevails in some of our active members, to their own hurt […] it has done more hurt to the good cause, than all the open prophaneness that hath appear'd amongst us.[285]

[283] See chapter 4, 7.1
[284] And the long-windedness of some Friends
[285] *ibid*
[286] Vol 2 nb21/6-7
[287] Vol 2 nb27/15-16

In a letter to James Harrison he complains that ‘The wheels of discipline move so heavily forward in our Monthly Meeting, that I am often ready to say in the secret of my heart; It is in vain to attempt to support the cause of Truth.’[286]

3.9 The mix of memoranda

Many items in Wood’s Notebooks are grouped as ‘Memoranda’. While his understanding of the word does not easily fit any modern definition it does provide a useful umbrella heading under which to include everything from funerals to meeting reports, weddings to the weather, and various aspects of Quaker life and discipline in the wider society. Wood is on safer and more consistent ground when writing about such issues rather than politics. Although the subjects varied he was consistent in his point of view, which inevitably put people first in a context of God’s love.[287]

This chapter has dealt with several apparently unrelated aspects of Quakerism, with the intention of showing how difficult it was to create and sustain a strong whole. Landes sums up the problem as controlling the religious message while protecting Gospel Order, the faith, and the unity of the transatlantic Quaker communities.[288] Crabtree argues that LYM briefly achieved this. At least for a time Quakers held together a ‘cosmopolitan transnational community of believers committed to divine law and each other, rather than to the unholy nation-states,’ she says. Crabtree highlights an issue of that time which eventually faded under the pressure of war: Friends had to decide on whether their first loyalty was to the Society of Friends or to

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[288] Landes (2015) *London Quakers in the Trans-Atlantic World*

their nation-state.[289] But as eighteenth-century Quakers did not even agree among themselves on the nature of God or the divinity of Jesus, that final decision was a long time in coming.

Wood tried to ignore the Industrial Revolution and, for him, the consequences of the Enlightenment were simply not happening. His Notebooks make little or no mention of the debates going on over philosophy, ethics, theology, capitalism, democracy, women in society, population or science. There are no works on any of these subjects in his library,which is in striking contrast to the library of Isaac Fletcher.[290] That was twice the size of Wood's and included classical European and Islamic works which would have been anathema to Joseph Wood. The only authors they seem to have had in common were Robert Barclay and Elisabeth Bathurst.[291] Slavery was the only major social issue in which Wood became involved, yet he was an intelligent and compassionate man with a keen interest in education who spoke out against enclosures. It is as though he sought security in the God of his ancestors rather than engage with God as understood in his world. He was a preaching minister but accepted the constraints of Quietism. Wood also accepted that Gospel Order had become a discipline that sought to extinguish individuality and personal spirituality in the interests of corporate Quakerism, but he never gave up his individual spiritual journey. The Notebooks are surprising for what they omit. If they were the only source available for historical research the reader would hardly be aware that there

[289] Crabtree, Sarah (2015), *A Holy Nation*, part 1 University of Chicago Press

[290] See Appendix 4. Isaac Fletcher was a North Country Quaker whose life overlapped with Wood's

[291] Nakano, Yasuharu (2008) *Quaker Studies* 13:1. Elizabeth Bathurst (1655-85) was one of the few Quaker systematic theologians in the Restoration period. She insisted 'on the sole authority of the Light and on the infallibility of human beings guided by the Holy Spirit.' This was in line with early Friends' theology but opposed to mainstream Quaker thought by the time of Bathurst's death.

had been revolutions in the American colonies, in France and in Ireland during Wood's lifetime, or that the Napoleonic wars had occurred. But while they omit much of the grand and bloody sweep of history, they do bring to life many stories about local Yorkshire Friends, intimate details which would otherwise have been lost to us, and they tell us much about rural life in this period.

3.7 Earning a living

At the beginning of Wood's life, farming and hand-loom weaving provided a living for many local Friends, as they did for many others. Often the two occupations went in tandem. Joseph Wood's ancestors earned their living in this way from the early 1700s, living at Newhouse and renting their farm. He also mentions Friends working as teachers. *Plain Country Friends*[292] lists local occupations as masons, carpenters, cloggers, millwrights, tanners, tailors and tallow chandlers.[293] Women worked as well as men, sometimes in the fields but also in more domestic occupations.[294] At least four Friends in local meetings were shopkeepers and Wood mentions shops in his Notebooks several times.[295] Tailors, barber-surgeons and hatters were other commonly practised trades, and Wood mentions all three. Many of his journeys began with a shave, for which he would go to one of two local Friends. By the time of Wood's death (1821) much in this list would have changed, notably farming with the advent of new methods and enclosures. Weaving was also a different industry, far

[292] *Plain Country Friends* is an invaluable 200-plus page history devoted, as its subheading says, to 'The Quakers of Wooldale, High Flatts and Midhope.' It discusses local occupations (p118 and 132) and many other aspects of Quaker life and has much useful material about Joseph Wood and his contemporaries.
[293] *ibid,* 118
[294] Pullin, Naomi (2018) 'Spiritual Housewives and Mothers in Israel : Quaker Domestic Relationships,' *Cambridge Core*
[295] Including the shop of Joseph Grayham's mother and aunt in nearby Birdsedge. Wood does not give any details about their circumstances, their premises or what they retailed

less a cottage industry based on piece work but increasingly centralised in large ‘manufactories’ in a few centres – a major reason why Quakers and others moved to the growing towns. Wood struggled to understand why Friends would move from country to city. He invoked the memory of first Friends (rightly or wrongly) ‘who bore their testimony against it, and had to see even in their day the sorrowful consequences of it, for by entering into large concerns in trade many got so leavened into the spirit of this World as almost wholly to depart from the plainness and simplicity of the pure Truth.’ This may be true but it seems unlikely, more a melding of Wood’s romantic notions about the past, his fears about the industrial present and his concern for Quaker faith. It may be that, in parts of Yorkshire at least, Quakers who moved to towns did so not out of desperation but to better their economic circumstances. Just three years after Wood’s death Daniel Defoe wrote of Leeds that it was ‘a large, wealthy and populous town’ which had experienced such a big increase in ‘the manufacturers and of the (cloth) trade’ that it had outgrown the market (building) ‘and it is now kept in the high street.’[296]

Wood’s only information on prices is in his record of food and drink prices at inns, which is interesting but of limited value for this thesis. He usually says what drink he is paying for but never what food. Prices charged at inns for alcohol and food were inconsistent and do not offer a meaningful guide to inflation or regional variations in the cost of living. However, Wood’s information does demonstrate how widely prices could vary over time and distance. And because of his extensive travels it is possible to make comparisons between different areas of England and Wales. For instance, in

[296] Defoe, Daniel (1724) *A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain*

1773 he paid 1d and 2d a pint respectively for beer in Staffordshire and Shropshire while en route to Wales Yearly Meeting. Three years later, and closer to home, he was paying similar prices in Yorkshire. By the end of the century this had doubled in some places.

Wood's family background was as clothiers and tenant farmers. His father, Samuel, had been apprenticed to his own father [297] and the expectation presumably was that Joseph, as the eldest son, would follow in their footsteps running a mixed 50 acre farm and the fabric business. Although he was reasonably well off, Joseph Wood must have lost out financially by his decision to serve God rather than Mammon. Other Quaker clothiers included Elihu Dickinson, whom Wood describes as wealthy. Dickinson was also an Elder of the meeting and husband of the troubled Martha Dickinson. Wood simply does not say if there were any latent social issues at Meeting as a result of the wealth divide. Nor do the minute books provide any strong evidence, although they do make it clear that there were poorer members. Isabel Grubb puts the wealth issue into context: 'There was much difference in wealth but to a certain extent membership in the Society overrode class distinctions.'[298] The poor Friends Wood mentions would have included villagers whose livelihood depended on spinning and weaving the wool sent out by clothiers such as Dickinson. Defoe again: 'The clothiers, who generally live in the towns, send out the wool weekly to the spinners. At the same time, the clothiers' servants and horses bring back the yarn that they the spinners have spun and finished.' So clothiers living in or near Highflatts were the exception, the manufacturing centre of gravity was in the towns.

[297] Cooksey, 8

Money is not something that Wood worried about on his own account. But he did worry about the corrupting influence it could have on better-off Friends and about the sufferings of the poor. As the well-off generally had some degree of literacy it is them we know something about, while the poor remain largely silent. The PM minutes are more helpful than Wood's Notebooks as regards the poor and what was being done form them. Most of the Friends Wood mentions are what would now be called middle class. It is impossible to say what proportion of Preparative Meeting they made up, but Wood was one of them. However, he clearly felt an affinity with poorer Friends:

> I am comforted in beholding many virtuous exceptions in the lower class of our Society who by their industry, frugality and economy are an honour to their profession, clearly manifesting to the world they are one in faith and in principle with our worthy predecessors.[299]

In the preface to *The Making of the English Working Class*, EP Thompson writes that 'we cannot understand class unless we see it as a social and cultural formation, arising from processes which can only be studied as they work themselves out over a considerable historical period.'[300] Class in the modern socio-economic sense of the word was developing in the eighteenth century.[301] There had always been gradations in society, but wealth, or lack of it, had just been one factor among

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[298] Grubb, *ibid*
[299] Vol 2 nb34.9-10
[300] Thompson, EP (1966) *The Making of the English Working Class*, Vantage
[301] It was in the 18th century that 'class' began to replace other social markers such as 'rank'
[302] *ibid*
[303] Vol 4 nb32/5-7
[304] Vol 4 nb34/4-7

several in creating the social balance. Land ownership had been more significant at all levels except the lowest. The Industrial Revolution changed the social balance, with big increases in the number of urban and rural poor. The result was instability. In the first 50 years of Wood's life the price of wheat more than doubled[301] and he records rioting in towns – 'a great Mob being assembled, occasioned by the very high price of corn.'[302] In December 1800 at first-day meeting he had 'a great deal of weighty advice to drop cautioning friends against oppressing their servants in their wages.'[303] They were living in a time of great distress 'when many were in want of the necessities of life, the exorbitant price of all manner of provisions, being such as the oldest person living could not even remember the like.' This had been the state of things for a long time and 'the sufferings of many were very great.'[304] Prosperous Quakers, like most of the newly emerging middle class in England, often failed to understanding the economic and social forces at work in society.

3.8 Contradictory values

Wood records recruiting many new Friends at public meetings, particularly in Volume 5, but at the same time the Society of Friends was losing large numbers, either to other churches or to no church at all. Variants of Quakerism developed on both sides of the Atlantic in the nineteenth century, all claiming to be heirs apparent to the first generation of Friends. But 'fellowship in the light and unity in the spirit'[305] was a characteristic of the first Friends that was contradicted by Quaker behaviour in the Gospel Order generation. Friends had generally lost both the theological truth of the

first Quakers and also the language in which to express it. Emma Lapsansky lists American Quaker contradictory values as including ‘Equality and separateness; intellectual preciousness and anti-intellectualism; an emphasis on excellence and a focus on humility; and an appreciation for high quality workmanship coupled with a ban on ostentation.’[306] Contradictory values also abounded in English Quakerism and this thesis has highlighted several. There is plenty of evidence for them in Wood’s Notebooks, some apparently trivial while others were significant intrusions into life. Three examples are:

- Poetry being acceptable to Friends (and there is much of it, usually poor, in Wood’s Notebooks) but music forbidden, along with the performing arts and most visual art.
- Quakers being loyal to the crown to the point of sycophancy but refusing to take the oath of loyalty or to swear to speak truthfully in a law court because of their testimony against oaths.
- Women struggling in later Quakerism to regain the equality with men they had experienced in the first generation.

3.9 Summary of chapter 3

This chapter has considered changes in the Society of Friends over time, from the spontaneous first generation to the regulated Society of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. There was much change, both in Quakerism and society at large. Gospel Order Quakerism was developing and Friends were losing sight of the Inward Light, with elders and overseers taking over the leadership role of ministers. Christianity as a whole was transitioning from a religious culture to a religious faith, and that was as true of Friends as it was of Anglicans or Methodists. The negative

and positive ways to God are discussed, as is the risk of confusing the Self with the Spirit, the ‘new Israel’, and the difficulties of holding to tradition in an age which was rapidly changing. The chapter has also discussed the secular alternatives to religion that were arising from the Enlightenment and Quaker responses to the many changes that the Industrial Revolution was generating in society, local management of meetings, and the development of Quaker isolation behind their ‘hedge’ which failed to save them longer-term from facing up to political involvement.

As Ingle puts it, Fox's successors were destined to relive the contradictions he left them. The Society of Friends at the end of the eighteenth century was very different to what it had been at the beginning. In 1700 it was radically Christian, aggressively evangelical, Bible-focused and zealous to convert the world; in 1800 it was none of these things. The Notebooks provide evidence for Benson’s work on the inspired insight of the first generation, on some Quaker testimonies, and on the ‘two Quakerisms’ found in the North and the London area. There is also much material on ministry, especially travelling ministry, and very especially travelling women preachers. Wood’s own remarks, perhaps unintentionally, reflect the standards of the day and the features that were taken for granted such as the refusal to grant women full equality with men. Quaker involvement in early industry is illustrated several times, although Wood had serious concerns about it on religious and social grounds. Among Wood’s contemporaries, and certainly in future generations, Friends failed to understand how the inward light of Christ was interdependent with scripture, not just as history but as living faith. Instead, they fell to living out the minutiae of religious tradition and in so doing they created Quakerly versions of the ecclesiastical practices that first Friends had condemned in other churches.

Chapter 4 ‘The world and heaven’

Suffering and illness, including mental illness, is a central theme in this chapter, which also takes up the related subject of death. Poverty and the corrupting influence of money are also important themes, with much evidence to show that Friends had shaken off their debilitating concern about politics and were getting seriously involved in trying to help the victims of the Industrial Revolution. Quaker prosperity has already been discussed in terms of its acidic effect on their church and on many individuals but in this chapter I will also discuss Quaker action on education and two

different responses to Friends' discipline – those of the remnant and the remiss, that is those who remained faithful (to either the original understanding of Quaker faith or to Gospel Order) and those who became negligent in their worship. Most Friends were somewhere between these two poles. The Society of Friends, under great social pressures on both sides of the Atlantic, was turning in on itself.

4.1 The remiss and the remnant

The numbers who were negligent in their Quakerism or who disregarded it entirely – the remiss – were a constant cause of anxiety in the Society. Wood saw himself and others like him as part of the faithful remnant. For him, a key part of being among the faithful few was wearing plain clothes. Many contradictions and tensions developed in Quakerism, some because of prosperity and others because of politics, industry, science and changing attitudes to religion in society at large. Friends in the newly developing business and banking worlds invested carefully in search of profit. But all of this mercantile energy took Quakers further away from their religious roots. Banking and other forms of making a profit without making a product, rather than religion, had implications for Quakers' spiritual and moral lives. For example, Frost observes that 'The relationship of the Christ within to Jesus of Nazareth and to God should have been the central problem for Quaker theology,'[307] but it was not. A letter which Wood copies into his second volume shows how the power of money can corrupt even the best motivated people, in this case Esther Tuke and her husband,

> I was against putting money to usary [*sic*] and laying up treasure on Earth, but rather sell what I had and give Alms, they [the Tukes] seem to think it strange talk, and to

[307] Frost, J. William, 'The Dry Bones of Quaker Theology' Cambridge Core, 509

> see no harm in moderate things of this nature. We had a few words, for I was as much afraid of a dispute as they, and I saw they could not receive this doctrine.[307]

William Cobbett attacked Quaker bankers on both sides of the Atlantic:

> There you sit (in your silent meetings); there you consider and re-consider […] how you can contrive to live snugly, and be as sleek as moles, without ever performing one single thing that ought to be called work[308]

Cobbett was a famously eccentric social commentator but he was not alone in his views of Quaker-owned finance houses or of banking in general. Wood also took a dim view of Quakers in finance: 'By entering into large concerns in trade many got so leavened into the spirit of this World as almost wholly to depart from the plainness and simplicity of the pure Truth.'[310] This was yet another contradiction between what Quakers said and what they did. It was a time when the traditional rules of trade and industry were changing and Friends were not alone in finding themselves under pressure from forces over which they had little control.[311]

The remiss were an important aspect of eighteenth and nineteenth century Quakerism because of their numbers.[312] The inability of the Society of Friends to hold its membership, despite the heroic efforts of people like Joseph Wood, was a factor in the ultimate decline of Quakerism as a religious organisation. The belief that the Society could remain an inward looking 'new Israel' got further and further out of touch with reality as time went by. For all their good works and contributions to the changing world around them, Quakers simply did not have the numbers to do more

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[308] Bassett, Thomas (date unknown) 'Cobbett on Quakers', printed in Cobbett's weekly *Political Register*
[309] Raistrick, Arthur (1968), *Quakers in Science and Industry*, David & Charles, 319
[310] Vol 4 NB32/13-16
[311] Vol 2 nb24/10-11
[312] See examples in 3.2

than stagnate. This was acknowledged in 1808 when Yearly Meeting noted 'a shortness in many places in duly admonishing the remiss'[313] and urged monthly meetings to appoint committees to do something about it. Wood's MM resolved to do so through personal visits, splitting their area into three divisions to ensure effective visitation coverage. In March 1809 the visits were 'completed to good satisfaction' with 53 heads of families visited.[314] That was just one among many campaigns to visit the remiss, sometimes organised at the behest of Yearly Meeting and sometimes on the initiative of an individual Monthly or even a Preparative Meeting, spread over more than 40 years. Such campaigns demonstrate how dedicated some Friends were to their cause. Wood records local campaigns in 1778 [315] and 1783, with the total of visits on each occasion numbering well into the 70s, a prodigious achievement for a handful of Friends. He gives a warts-and-all account of how recalcitrant Friends reacted, and it was often neutral or rudely dismissive. Halfway through the 1783 campaign an exasperated Wood was moved to comment on 'the dull stupid senseless benumb'd state that some were unhappily fall'n into.' He reports finding ignorance and indifference during his travels. For instance, on a journey that took him through Lincolnshire he met some 'fair-weather worshippers', as he called them. He had stopped over with Friends, but next morning discovered none of them were going to meeting because it was raining. Not only that, nobody else would be there either, they told him. So rather indignantly Wood went on his way.

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[313] *ibid*
[314] Vol 3 nb12/3
[315] Vol 3 nb15/7

It can be seen from the contents lists of Notebook Volumes 3-5 that interest in the remiss declined over time. Volume 3 has by far the greatest number of visits, Volume 4 has some, but there are none in volume 5. However, the same sources show public meetings doing the opposite, rising in number until they dominate Volume 5. As the former declined, so the latter increased. A clear connection can be inferred. In 1797 Wood wrote to his friend Joseph Walker

> The state of our Meeting is low, and wrong things very much prevail amongst many members thereof, yet there are a few preserved, who are oftens under great discouragement […] there is much rubbish to be removed out of the way.[316]

The 'few preserved' were the remnant, the uncounted and unlisted Friends whom God was setting aside because of their faithfulness, according to Wood. They had not fallen victim to Satan's wiles and the ways of the world. Increasing social acceptance saw a dilution of traditional Quaker faith.[317] Wood often remarked that his contemporaries lacked the spiritual fortitude of their forebears. He also frequently stressed that God was nurturing the remnant for service. In the 1803 letter to Thomas Yeardley already mentioned, he wrote about early Friends that

> they were enabled to stand their ground faithfully; and tho' when they went to their religious meetings they knew not but they might be sent from thence to prison yet they dare not neglect their duty, […] and tho' many of their descendants are too much settled down at ease in the outward form, yet there are a remnant preserved, who are one in Faith, in principle and in practice according to their measure.[318]

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[316] Vol 1 nb12/3-4
[317] Vol 2 nb21/3
[318] Vol 3 nb13/4-7
[319] Vol 2 nb21/7
[320] Vol 2 nb21/1-2

Wood acknowledged the difficulties that life could throw in the way of faith, but believed there was no choice – 'the full surrender of the will of the creature, is exceeding hard for flesh and blood to attain unto; but there is not another way for us to experience the new Creation.'[319] However, he refused to accept this as a reason for backsliding. Rather, it should be inspirational. 'Let not therefore the ensnaring things of this Life, hinder thee from coming up in thy duty to Almighty God, and thy fellow creatures, the workmanship of his hands,' he tells Joseph Mallinson.[320] 'There is a portion of labour allotted to every member in the Church, under the direction of him who is the head thereof; and there is a right preparation to be experienced for it.' The concept of a 'holy remnant' within the closed Quaker community had begun to develop in the seventeenth century as the urgency of the first generation's mission passed into history. The remnant was also linked by some, including Wood, with the 'holy nation' of the new Israel.[321] The earliest reference I can find to the remnant is in a sermon by George Whitehead in 1693.[322] He repeatedly uses the word but it is unclear as to exactly what he means. Sometimes he talks about the Society of Friends as a whole, sometimes about Friends selected by God, and sometimes about righteous people from other societies who are counted in with righteous Quakers. Joseph Wood does the same.[323] That ambiguity was never wholly resolved but by the middle of the eighteenth century the word was used by Wood to indicate those Quakers who lived according to Gospel Order, shunning the ways of the world

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[321] Vol 2 nb26/7-8

[322] Quaker Homiletics Online Anthology, part 1, www.qhpress.org/quakerpages/qhoa/remnant.htm

[326] Vol 2 nb21/6-7

[323] Wood wrote in 1783: '… this was the state of many in our Society who had not only departed from the righteous Law in their own hearts but from those excellent rules established by divine Wisdom as an hedge about us, yet there were a remnant preserved who were made to lie mourning as with their faces upon the ground' - Vol1 nb15/17

which he believed had enticed away so many of their brethren. Wood blamed the powers of evil for corrupting Friends,

> I had silently to view the desolation which an enemy had made amongst a People who had been highly favoured […] yet I believed there were a few preserved who still loved the truth and were concerned humbly to wait for the arisings thereof.

As the requirements of Gospel Order were clear, it should have been obvious who was part of the remnant. In reality, however, it was not that simple. In February 1810 Wood joined the nine overseers of Highflatts meeting for their quarterly conference and 'was truly glad to feel an exercised remnant amongst them, travailing for the prosperity of Zion and the restoration of the members of our Society to primitive simplicity.' The phrase 'to feel an exercised remnant among them' is used several times in different contexts and it suggests ambiguity in Wood's mind about some of the Friends to whom he is referring. In December of the same year he defined the remnant more precisely in a letter to James Harrison, strongly suggesting that the remnant were Spirit-led. Their minds,

> are really cloathed with that charity which the Apostle prefers before all other Graces, which hath for its foundation, the Love of God … [they] are favoured with the spirit of discerning and true Judgement, and who dare not whatever they have to suffer from the slander of tongues depart therefrom.[358]

The remnant have 'that love which is not confined to a few, but is universal.'[359] The essential qualification for being part of the remnant was faithfulness, but that was not

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[357] vol 3 nb13/4-7

easy. The 'unwearied enemy' is warned against repeatedly in the Notebooks. Friends must keep 'their eye single to the light, which discovereth his snares,' he tells John Beaumount in a letter.[360]

> If we on our parts are but concerned faithfully to follow him (God) in the way of his leadings […] And I firmly believe this will be the case with us as a People, that the Lord will carry forward the work which he hath begun through all opposition.' This last reference seems to suggest that all Friends will be saved but soon afterwards Wood is back to the remnant - 'blindness hath thus happened to many in our Israel.'[361]

As with much of his theology, he finds it hard to be consistent. He dwells on questions around why good people sometimes suffer while the bad do not. Implicit in this is his clear belief that human suffering is somehow connected to divine justice.[362] Elders and Overseers were urged to 'use their endeavours to stir up the negligent to their duty.' Whatever its limitations may have been, London Yearly Meeting did try very hard to encourage Monthly Meetings to keep their members disciplined. It

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[358] vol 5 nb57/25
[359] vol 2 nb30/4
[360] vol 1 nb17a/4

[361] vol 2 nb22/6
[362] vol2 nb27/16-17
[363] vol1 nb12/3-4
[364] Hall, David (2000) 'The Study of Eighteenth-Century English Quakerism: From Rufus Jones to Larry Ingle,' *Quaker Studies*, 5:2

frequently reminded them of the need to 'admonish the remiss' and urged personal visits 'to encourage or advise as way may open.'[363] Sometimes the visiting would be quite specific, as in the 1808 exercise mentioned above when Yearly Meeting called for visits to 'all the heads of families […] who had youth under their care.' However, it was 'an unescapable fact that a profound change had taken place, and that the Quakerism of 1752 was quite unlike the dynamic Quakerism of 1652.'[364] This is a partial explanation of what was happening in Quakerism, and it is one that is frequently reinforced in Wood's Notebooks. But Yearly Meeting would never accept that it was part of the problem rather than the solution. Its 1795 communication says defensively:

> We do not think that the state of our Society is in a more declining condition than heretofor,[*sic*] we believe on the contrary, that salutary effects have followed from the labours you have been engaged in yet some subjects have claimed so much of our attention as to make it appear still incumbent on us to extend further counsel.

It can be seen from the contents lists of volumes 3-5 that interest in the remiss declined over time, as discussed above. In 1778 when 'Jane Burrow of Otley and myself accompanied by some other friends'[365] carried out a religious visit to the families of friends in Highflatts Meeting, Jane Burrow wanted to 'visit all such as

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[365] *ibid*

[366] The entire visitation project fills more than 11 pages in vol3 nb12 and is spread over several days.

attended our meeting whether members or not if they was desirous.' These three examples are typical of the range of results they encountered:[366]

> we proceeded to Samuel Haighs Jane Burrow appear'd first in Testimony from Matt. 18:3 [and] had a plain close laborious time, and afterwards was concerned in Supplication. Mary Dickinson dropt a few words next, Henry Dickinson had a pretty long time next, after which Jane Burrow appeared again, but the situation of this family appeared to me very low in respect to Religion may the close weighty remarks there delivered have its due effect upon their minds was the sincere breathing of my Spirit.
>
> We proceeded to Arthur Jepsons were we had hard work, death and darkness seem'd to cover the minds of most of the family. Jane Burrow appeared first, and afterwards William Earnshaw, and tho' they had both a pretty deal to say it seem'd to make very little impression upon their minds, they rather appear'd to be shut up as if they had not room to receive it.
>
> We proceeded to John Chapman's of Leeside[…] It was a tendering season [….] intreating them (as they had experienced a good beginning) to persevere in a watchful state that so they might know a holding out to the end, They was also cautioned against running into superfluities in meals, furniture, or Apparel, and to be careful not to be drawn aside in their behaviour amongst the People of this World.[367]

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[367] See Rosemary Moore in *The Light in Their Consciences*, Penn State University Press, 2000, and Nikki Coffey Tousley (2002) 'The Experience of Regeneration and the Erosion of Certainty in the Theology of Second-Generation Quakers: No Place for Doubt?', University of Birmingham MPhil thesis

Why Friends stopped visiting the remiss is open to conjecture. It may simply be that there were not enough dedicated Friends to keep up the early pace, or perhaps the rise of Methodism was a factor, or perhaps as the saying goes they decided ‘the game was not worth the candle.’ It is not always easy to distinguish pastoral visits from what were termed ‘religious visits’ because they followed much the same form and sometimes those doing the visiting seem to have been unsure themselves.

4.2 Goodbye to the poor

Quaker meetings in the burgeoning urban areas developed earlier than is widely thought, with unfortunate and divisive consequences. By the early eighteenth century Quaker meetings in larger centres of population had lost or were losing the labouring poor from their benches, a trend that increased as the century progressed. At the same time the number of poor was increasing, both urban and rural.[367] Wood wrote ruefully that ‘the wisdom of Man in his fallen degenerate state, hath set himself to work in the Church, and under a pretence of building, is in reality pulling down what the truly wise have built.’ Numerous historians have considered the early generation of Quakerism, but much of the eighteenth century remains unexplored, although the causes and consequences of poverty generally have been well studied. Friends had without question lost the spiritual vision of their forebears even though they consistently denied this. The contradictions and tensions in British Quakerism that developed over the coming years were largely systemic, an unexpected by-product of Gospel Order, a discipline which became an increasingly bureaucratic and

intrusive means of controlling members' lives. This in itself is a contradiction of the first Friends who were far less inhibited in their worship and attitudes. Friends saw good works as a requirement of their faith, but Wood gives few examples beyond the large collections that were taken at meeting, mostly for war relief overseas or building projects at home. However, the PM minute books repeatedly show a generous and caring pattern of careful giving to both Quaker and non-Quaker needy. Wood's Notebooks show the intractable nature of poverty at that time. There were several reasons for this, including the cultural collision between Early Modern and Late Medieval periods, the advent of mechanisation, ignorance of new economic and social forces, and even the weather.[368] But rising population was widely singled out as both a cause and consequence of poverty.[369] Two men stand out in their response to what was generally seen as a crisis, both of them Anglican clerics - Joseph Townsend and Thomas Malthus. In his 1786 *Dissertation on the Poor Laws*, Townsend drily commented that 'to the Reformation we are indebted for the laws which multiply the poor.'[370] Just over a decade later Malthus argued that population would always 'press against the margin of subsistence.'[371] The Elizabethan Poor Law was hopelessly inadequate to deal with changing times and the structure of local government was such as to almost guarantee inefficiency. The history of eighteenth-

[368] Mathias, Peter (1969) *First Industrial Nation*, 197. Wood records numerous floods and thunderstorms, such as vol 4 nb32/2-5, during which 'the corn being generally in the fields was much damaged and some that was cut was taken quite away, the Farmers got boats and got what they could out of the water and brought in onto the higher ground to dry'. It was a superstitious age, and Wood wrote 'Oh that these awful solemn warnings may be a means of awakening sinners to repentance.' (vol 2 nb25/2)

[369] Mathias, *First Industrial Nation,* ibid

[370] Unlike Malthus, Townsend proposed a system of social insurance through compulsory membership of friendly societies for the poor

[371] Malthus, Thomas (1820) *Principles of Political Economy*

[372] Tillott, PM (1961), 'The eighteenth century: Economy and poor relief', *A History of the County of York: the City of York*, 215-229, *British History Online*

century York illustrates these statements[372] and they are supported by Wood's Notebooks for much of the rest of the county. Throughout England, much was done by well-meaning individuals and groups to help the poor, but such aid was erratic, insufficient and unreliable. Quakers were no more responsible for poverty than any other church and they did make some efforts to assuage it. But in the age of Malthus and Townsend there was no apparent corporate Quaker awareness of poverty as a social issue that could and should be managed.

One aspect of poverty which Joseph Wood did speak out about was enclosures, which by Act of Parliament enabled property owners to bring common land into their possession.[373] For centuries, commons had been open for all to use for crops and grazing, and they were an invaluable asset for the poor. But in a period of intense need the commons were being taken over and the poor shut out. Wood was outraged by enclosures because the poor and the very small farmers were 'being depriv'd of their just and equitable right whereby many have been assisted in the support of their families.' He points out that this is contrary to common sense because parish relief or the workhouse are the only options left for those who have been deprived of their living, and more importantly it was contrary to the law of God which teaches us to love our neighbour as ourselves. 'There can be no law consistent with true justice and equity to deprive our fellow creatures of their right without a just compensation for the same,' he writes, likening the legislation which permitted enclosures to that which permitted the slave trade.

[373] Wood's detailed opposition is given in full as Appendix 6

4.3 Suffering and illness

Suffering and illness are recurring themes in Wood's Notebooks. Well over a century had passed since Thomas Hobbes famously wrote that for most people life was 'solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short' and not a lot had changed in terms of understanding or treating the various physical conditions that plagued European life. For Joseph Wood - and many others like him, not just Quakers - there was the added concern that God might have a hand in causing disease as a punishment for sin. The physical and supernatural easily got entwined. Wood's view seems to have varied over time, but basically he believed that God was not fickle. If the Almighty struck at our health, there had to be a good reason for it. Either we deserved to suffer or God was giving us a warning about some displeasing aspect of our lives. The earliest example he gives is that of William Fisher in 1708, who wrote that he was dying justly because he had angered God by paying tithes.[374] Wood shared the Quaker obsession about tithes and would have agreed with Fisher about the gravity of his sin. In 1811 he wrote to reassure a very sick Friend, Thomas Dixon Walton, that God might not 'remove thee from works unto rewards by the present indisposition.' Instead, 'Though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion "according to the multitude of his mercies".' Sarah Chapman, on the other hand, who was 21, 'had had a long illness of about three years and 11 months'. But Wood, while acknowledging that she was 'in the very bloom of her Life', was certain God 'would not remove her hence until she was so thoroughly refined, as to be in a proper

[374] vol 2 nb27/16-17
[381] Lamentations 3:32

situation of mind to dwell with him forever.' She died in 1807.[382] In 1803 Wood's young niece Jane contracted 'a sickness nigh unto Death'. However, she recovered and in a congratulatory letter Wood wrote 'It is the Lord who bringeth low, and raiseth up again, who is worthy to be served, Worshipped, honoured and obeyed.'[383] In the previous year he had written a touching letter to William Taylor,[384] whose address was given as Newhouse and who was presumably a servant, thanking him for all he had done to look after Wood during an unspecified but obviously lengthy and serious illness. With it he enclosed another letter, to 'my own family,' with the request that Taylor would read it to them one day when Wood was away from home (Wood often refers to his household as his family). This passage from it sums up Wood's muddled overall theology when it came to God and health:

> I believe the Lord doth not afflict those who are desirous to serve him willingly, nor grieve the children of men for nought; But every trying dispensation is intended to establish the Truth of his promise, that all things work together for good to them that truly love and fear God.

There are many examples in the Notebooks of Wood looking for reason and purpose in the illness of Friends. He often did not find it, but his faith never wavered, however tragic the circumstances and however close to his own heart the person might have been. A very painful but revealing example of this is the death of Robert Grayham,

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[382] vol 2 nb28/14
[383] vol 2 nb19/16-17
[384] vol 1 nb17a/3

> ‘a child I was remarkable fond of, and he of me […] he put out his little hands as usual for me to take him; he sat up on my knee, but took little more notice. I was much affected to see him so poorly […] I visited him every day after until his change came […] I tarried until I could not bear to tarry any longer; and came home with a heart full of sorrow […] the parting with this beloved child, is to me a bitter cup; may the dispenser thereof enable me to bear it with resignation to his divine will, as not to offend him, but acknowledge with one formerly; "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right".’ [385]

Less personal but still distressing examples include: In the Winter of 1802-3 ‘A putrid sore throat Fever prevailed in most parts of this Nation and carried off many People especially amongst the youth, several of our Neighbours families were afflicted with it.’ One of them, William Dyson of Birdsedge, buried three of his children, aged 7, 10 and 17.[388] In the spring of 1803 scarlet fever broke out and among the dead were seven children at Ackworth School, whose details Wood records. He wrote: ‘These were awakening instances, and appeared to affect the minds of many with an awful sense of their own mortality,’[390] adding that many Friends started coming to his house for evening Bible readings. He found opportunities wherever he could to impress upon people ‘the uncertainty of time and the necessity there was to be prepared for our final change.’ But he, like everyone else then and now, never found a satisfying answer to the question of why a loving God would allow suffering. But suffering did have a positive side for eighteenth-century Quakers, who looked back to the example of the first generation. Suffering demonstrated the unity of Friends, to themselves at

[385] vol 1 nb18/8
[386] vol 1 nb18/17

least, and could also demonstrate holiness in life and thereby become tantamount to sharing the passion of Christ.

4.4 Mental health

There was also mental suffering, which Wood does not distinguish from spiritual suffering, but through which he believed God could refine individuals. Wood clearly suffered from depression, and often writes along lines such as these, saying he,

> was brought into a very low stripped and discouraged state of mind in which state I continued until the day the Meeting was to be held […] the trying dispensation I had had to pass through was a necessary preparation for service; that his servants must be thoroughly emptied, before they can be renewedly filled with the new wine of the kingdom […] tho' the Lord may try for a season, yet in the needful time he will appear for the help of those whom he at times engages to advocate his cause.[391]

The Georgian era saw various advances in medicine and health care but mental health lagged behind. Although its existence had been recorded since ancient times 'madness' in most ages and societies was usually treated with superstitious fear and sufferers were neglected or mistreated: 'a common belief (in eighteenth-century England) was that the mad were wild beasts.'[392] However, in 1796 the Retreat opened in York to treat mentally infirm members of the Society of Friends.[393] William Tuke, the Quaker founder of the Retreat, was a contemporary of Joseph Wood and

[391] Vol 5 nb48/2-3

[392] Rosen, George (1963), 'Social Attitudes to Irrationality and Madness in 17th and 18th Century Europe,' *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, Volume XVIII, Issue 3, 220–240

[393] The Retreat, York, website - theretreatyork.org.uk

the two had corresponded and met.[394] Wood was very supportive of Tuke's philosophy of care, which revolved around co-operation rather than coercion and treating patients with dignity and respect. In his Notebooks Wood records several cases of mental illness, some of them ending in suicide. The case of Martha Dickinson is exceptional, partly because it is so well documented and partly because it spanned a long period, from 1800 to 1821.[395] It brings together Wood's natural humanity and his religious beliefs. On the one hand he felt great sympathy for her and tried to help, but on the other he wanted to stop her disrupting meeting. Wood accepted that he really had no idea what her problems were. His Notebooks make clear that Highflatts meeting generally shared his compassionate concern for her. In the early stages of her illness Wood assumed she was just being carried away with a sense of her own importance but quickly came to realise something far more serious was going on in her mind. 'My friend I do earnestly desire that thy ear may be opened to hear; and thine heart to understand, the things which make for thy peace,' Wood wrote in November 1803. A year later Martha was in the Retreat and Wood noted 'I went to the retreat to see Martha Dickinson who had been very considerable time disordered in her mind. I tarried there a considerable time'[396] God does not get

[394] Martha Dickinson was a member of Highflatts meeting and married to Elihu Dickinson the clothier. Until July 1800 she had been well thought of and was involved in much meeting activity, including being an overseer and an elder. But from that time onwards she got progressively difficult with 'wild ranting unsettled behaviour' (Vol 2 NB25/16). Joseph Wood wrote to her at least 15 times and mentions frequent conversations with her in his Notebooks. He clearly tried to understand her behaviour, as did meeting as a whole: 'she continued to grow worse and worse ... and had it not been that friends apprehended she had thrown herself into a degree of derangement she would no doubt have been disunited from friends' (Vol 2 NB23/20-21). But it was not just at meeting that she was disruptive. Her family and neighbours suffered as well, and in 1805 her husband sent her to the Retreat. Wood felt she was better for a few months' stay there but said it was not long enough, and by 1806 'the wild ranting unsettled behaviour' had returned. In 1808 he wrote (continued on p106) that 'a load of darkness, which by the living is sensibly felt to attend her' (Vol 2 NB28/23-4) left the meeting house when she did. Two years later he wrote that 'she has been more troublesome that way of late than for some time' (Vol 2 NB29/25). But after that she seems to have settled down and from 1810 onwards all mentions of her in the Notebooks are positive. The last mention is in 1821.

[395] Vol 2 nb21/11-12

[396] Vol 4 nb39/5-7

mentioned very often in Wood's writings about Martha Dickinson. In November 1801 Wood 'made a few remarks' to her and hoped that,

> he who hath filled my heart with pity and compassion for thee may be graciously pleased to bless them, and open thine understanding to receive them, in that Love in which they are wrote, and if it be his will restore thee to soundness of Judgment and clothe thee with a right mind.[397]

In that same letter he suggests the power of evil may be at work in her, that she is being deceived by 'the enemy of all good'. There is little about the Almighty after 1801, which I think is a reflection on Wood's inability to reconcile Martha's condition with his faith. She cannot be made to fit any category of the human condition with which he was familiar and for which he had an appropriate biblical response. In his November 1803 letter Wood reminds her of an 'awful instance of the final exit of one whom thou has appeared to follow step by step, and who like thee rejected all the counsel and advice of those who wished him well.'[398] From what he goes on to imply, this nameless person committed suicide.

Dealing with Martha Dickinson was not Wood's first encounter with mental illness, nor his last. An earlier case, which must have played on his mind judging by the amount of space he devotes to it, was that of Daniel Collier, aged about 60, who hanged himself in 1803. For some years he had been,

> behaving both in and out of Meetings at times in a very strange and ridiculous manner, more particularly to any solid weighty friends of our own meeting,

[397] Vol 2 nb21/11-12

> without any occasion except their being concerned at times to give him suitable advice and not countinancing [*sic*] that wild Ranting confused spirit by which he appeared to be actuated.

At length, Wood continues, he 'fell into a low this bonding state of mind' [*sic*]. In a private meeting with Wood, Collier asked forgiveness for his behaviour and said it was all over and too late to change anything. Wood visited him several more times in 1803 but some months later Collier went out into the woods one night and took his own life. Although it ended sadly, the story is very much to the credit of Highflatts Friends. They had tried to look after Collier since at least 1794, when the Elders warned him in stern but not unkind terms that he could be excluded from meeting because of his behaviour. He had clearly been a disruptive influence on meeting long before then. Friends had searched for him until late into the evening, in pouring rain, and resumed again in the early morning, still in heavy rain. Wood attended the inquest where a verdict of 'lunacy' was returned. Quakers did not treat the body of a suicide any differently to other forms of death, so Collier was buried at Highflatts in the usual way, again in pouring rain. One aspect of the story suggests that Quakers had some rudimentary form of help available to the mentally ill. Wood writes 'Friends being uneasy with him being alone in this situation of mind, got him removed in the 7th. Mo. 1803, to the Widow Susanna Taylors of Park were they got him up regularly in the mornings, and employ'd him in such easy work as he was willing to do.'[399] This is an isolated reference and without more details no conclusions can be drawn from it. But, taken with the later

[398] Vol 1 nb6/6-8
[399] Vol 1 nb18/17-19

advent of the Retreat, it is perhaps a hint that Friends in Yorkshire were particularly aware of mental illness. Also in Yorkshire in 1803, but this time at Wakefield, 'the solemnity (of Monthly Meeting) was much hurt by the frequent confused appearances of one Benjamin Boothe, a member of that meeting who hath been long troublesome to friends and continues to refuse to take their advice'[400] However, on this occasion Wood is quite sure of a supernatural cause: Boothe was 'being actuated by a wicked Ranting spirit under a pretence of Zeal for the Lord and his cause.'

It has been suggested that Quaker spirituality could result in 'religious melancholia'[401] and that, 'Quakers gradually incorporated narratives of nervous affliction into their accounts of religious affliction, reflecting the long-running embodied aspect of religious distress, at a time when it was not unheard of for the devout to be supported in religious reconciliation and bodily healing from within a madhouse'.[402] Mitchell speculates that Quaker spirituality 'entailed a depressive piety which escalated to despair, restrictive eating or suicidality in several narratives from Georgian Quaker religious leaders.'[403] Melancholy had been considered a common form of madness long before the Georgian period and was particularly associated with depression. It may be that Wood himself was in need of treatment. He several times comments that people might think him mad because of his lifestyle and he also repeatedly describes being

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[400] *ibid*
[401] www.encyclopedia.com/history/madness-and-melancholy
[402] *ibid*
[403] For example, Vol 2 nb21/13

in a state of mind that would later become known as major depressive disorder or clinical depression.[404] Examples include these from volumes 2 and 4, but there are many others in all volumes.

> My spirit was heavily oppressed all the afternoon, but could not see the cause and in our family sitting in the evening I was ready to cry out under the weight thereof
>
> … some relief to my deeply distressed mind, having been for several days before plunged as it were into an abyss of deep sorrow. O may these baptisms tend to purify me and prepare for every work the most high hath for me to do
>
> …. in the evening an unusual exercise attended my mind the cause of which was hid from me, but was so much depressed in spirit as to hinder me from sleeping much in the night. My prayers were that every dispensation of the Almighty may be properly sanctified to me, and tend to my further refinement and dedication of heart to his service. [405]

The above discussion gives no more than a partial picture of Quaker attitudes. A key to understanding Friends' views on mental health questions, as on an increasingly wide range of issues, is the phrase in the immediately preceding quote from Wood about 'further refinement and dedication of heart'. This applied to subjects both religious and secular. The significance of this is that Friends were now among those expressing opinions and asserting ideas.

4.5 Quakers and Education

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[404] Vol 2 nb24/11
[405] Vol 2 nb24/16

Quaker schools, which had been established since the seventeenth century, were usually held in meeting houses.[406] Friends had taken education seriously from their early years, as *An Abstract of divers Particulars of Advice at sundry times from the Yearly and Quarterly Meetings*[407] tells us. Among many other topics, with which it is inextricably merged, the education of children appears from 1689 onwards. Friends are to exercise a 'Godly Christian care for the due Education of Children, in the nurture fear and admonition of the Lord,' and, the Abstract of Advice continues,

> not by any means indulge their Children, in speaking to either of them (or any others) [*sic*] in the Plural number […] And not furnish Children with such things as tend to Pride, or lift them up in Vanity, or affect them with the vain Fashions of the World […] And that friends of all degrees take due care to breed up their children in some useful and necessary employment, that they may not spend their precious Time in Idleness, which is of evil example, and tends much to their hurt.

This is, effectively, an outline for a very limited religious education as urged by George Fox, a prime mover in establishing Quaker education. Fox believed education should be 'civil and useful'.

There was no national system of education before the latter decades of the nineteenth century, and only a small percentage of children received any schooling.[408] Opportunities for a formal education were restricted mainly to grammar schools, charity schools and dame schools.[409] Friends recognised the need for

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[306] Plain Country Friends
[307] vol 3 nb2/1-6
[408] www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/livinglearning/school/overview/before19thcentury/
[409] Dame schools were usually run by elderly single or widowed women in their homes, teaching the rudiments of reading and writing to very young children.
[410] Lawson took holy orders after graduating from Cambridge, but coverted to Quakerism under the influence of Fox.

literacy (if only to read scripture and Quaker texts) and some grasp of numeracy, but education remained something of a Cinderella in the Quaker movement until numbers started declining. The extent to which Quakers were influenced against any form of education other than that provided within their own narrow theological understanding is illustrated by the 1680 book *A Mite into the Treasury* by Thomas Lawson, which is perhaps surprising considering he had graduated from Cambridge. However, he was also a friend of George Fox and one of the Valiant Sixty.[410] Like many early Quakers Lawson was of the view that 'in the third or fourth century heathen learning, based on Aristotelianism, had come to dominate education.'[411] As a result, "Many Profane, Obscene, Lascivious, Corrupting, and depraving Authors" had been introduced to British schools. The popularity of Lawson's book helped ensure that such opinions prevailed for many years. The opening of a co-educational school for the children of poorer Friends in 1779 at Ackworth, which was in Joseph Wood's Monthly Meeting, was the first step in a resurgence of interest in education, which was seen as important in raising the next generation of Friends.[412] Problems soon arose at Ackworth and Wood reports in an undated 1804 memorandum that the school superintendent, Dr Jonathan Binns, was leaving, having 'sustained with becoming patience the great opposition he had met with from too many who I believe were ignorant of his real value to the institution.'[413] It was on this visit that Wood met Isabella Harris for the first time.[414] The school became a regular venue for Monthly Meeting gatherings and Isabella Harris is frequently mentioned in the Notebooks,

[411] *ibid*
[412] Cantor, Geoffrey (2005) *Quakers, Jews, and Science*, OUP, 48
[413] Vol 2 nb20/19
[414] *ibid*

having become a close companion of Joseph Wood and other evangelically-minded Friends. He remarks after a visit there in July 1804 that he 'left Ackworth having been very well satisfied with my visit there.' Ackworth was the first of several schools, which inevitably came to cater for better-off Friends rather than the poor; the original desire for a 'guarded education' did not fade until late in the nineteenth century, by which time the Society of Friends had a very different outlook to the Society of the eighteenth century.

A famous polymath of the time, Dr Samuel Johnson, had Quaker friends but disliked the sect as such and was troubled by several aspects of Quakerism, 'notably the participation of women in vocal ministry, trust in the leading of an inward light, and the emphasis on the authority of the individual conscience.'[415] He was appalled by a young Quaker woman who argued 'that God will understand and forgive human error and look only at whether we follow conscience, mistaken or not.'[416] It is highly likely that this is the same young woman, named Jenny Harry, who converted from the Church of England to Quakerism in about 1790 and in so doing incurred Johnson's undying wrath.[417]

4.6 Dealing with death

Holiness and mysticism were central features of spiritual life for many Quakers. But as in every religion there were some who observed the formalities of their faith with no particular sense of devotion. The two attitudes often coincided at burials. Wood

[415] Lacey, Paul (2002) 'Like a Dog Walking on its Hind Legs: Samuel Johnson and Quakers,' *Quaker Studies,* 6:2
[416] *ibid*
[417] Pennock South, Helen (1955), 'Dr Johnson and the Quakers,' Bulletin of Friends Historical Association, 44:1

recounts details of many burials. Two Highflatts funerals which deeply affected him personally were those of Robert Grayham, which is described above, and fellow minister John Bottomley, 60, one of Wood's dearest friends and also someone who had previously been a servant with him. Wood wrote in his Notebook:

> Despite deep snow, friends came from all parts of the Monthly Meeting, some from a considerable distance, and many of other Societies. Meeting lasted two hours.[418]

Joseph Wood was one of four friend who provided dinners for 'friends who came out of other meetings'.[419] Nominal Friends' funerals included those of Mary Dickinson, who was 'disunited from Friends', and Samuel Haigh.[420] Both are recorded by Wood in a rather perfunctory way, especially that of Samuel Haigh. Although he was a Highflatts member Wood found many of Haigh's neighbours and relatives 'who were not Friends […] appeared to be a very raw ignorant people.' He never records Highflatts meeting turning away a funeral because of the religious condition of the deceased. Friends did not have a fixed theology of the afterlife, although belief in heaven and hell was almost universal. Numerous deaths that Wood recounts follow similar lines, people looking forward to their 'conclusion' and what will follow it.[421] The last words of Anne Leaver, who died in March 1777, are typical of a devout Friend: 'I want to be gone, I seem to have no business here [...] I hope surely nothing can be done to bring me back again.'[422]

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[418] vol 2 nb37/10-11 and see chapter 3, 1.1c and 1.1d
[419] *ibid*
[420] vol 2 nb24/10
[421] vol 2 nb24/18
[422] *ibid*

There are many references in Wood's Notebooks as to what awaits after death and there is a curious mixture in his language of hellfire imagery, biblical references, and human concern and compassion. Hell was a place of punishment, heaven a place of reward. If you had been a good Quaker you had an eternity in God's presence to look forward to. Wood never speculates on the eternal fate of those who, like Mary Dickinson, became 'disunited from Friends'. The Notebooks demonstrate how heavily Wood's beliefs, like those of Christians generally in his time, were influenced by biblical imagery. His 1795 letter to a cousin, Benjamin Walker, is just one of many examples:

> When mankind by harkening to the voice of the serpent, who deceived our first Parents; and continues to watch, for our unwatchfulness; falls into gross evils, there is no other way of returning […] than by coming under the flaming sword; which I take to be the Judgments of the Almighty.[423]

The Book of Revelation is particularly detailed about what happens to the wayward soul after death.[424] Before death it is a different story, with an emphasis on persuading the sinner into conformity. The two Letters of Peter, which are quoted half a dozen times in Wood's letters, were relevant warnings for Quakers and all other Christians. 'Be self-controlled and alert,' says 1 Peter 5:8. 'Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour'. In 2 Peter Friends are assured 'the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials' while those who 'follow the corrupt desire of the flesh and despise authority will be paid back with

[323] Vol 1 nb8/10-11
[324] Chapter 6 in particular
[325] *ibid*

harm.'[425] It is difficult to decide whether Wood believed literally in 'the great red dragon'[426] of Revelation or saw it purely in symbolic terms. However, he leaves little room for doubt about his belief in 'the awful consequence of living in sin, the punishment for which is eternal death.'[426] Wood was not alone. Belief in the literal existence of heaven and hell was the norm in the eighteenth century. John Wesley urged his congregation to 'flee the wrath to come.' Hell, according to him, was a real place of eternal torment. Heaven, by contrast, was a place of blessedness, of being in the presence of God. Writing about the period just before Wood's time, Babette Boleman comments that 'hell was a definite, loathsome place - a bottomless pit, a stinking lake, an unquenchable fire, where millions of damned creatures shrieked in their agony.'[427] There are inconsistencies in Wood's beliefs and many of them involve his understanding of death and judgement. The Notebooks show a good deal of confused thinking on the questions of eternal life, miracles, the supernatural and God's intervention in human affairs. [428]

4.7 Obsessed with inner condition

Wood was intelligent and educated up to a point, but by no means an intellectual. He would have agreed with Frost that 'all eighteenth-century Friends asserted the link between the historic Jesus and the Christ within.'[429] However, he would not have accepted a clear division between natural and supernatural because, as Frost continues, Quakers who did so 'ended with a very docetic view of Jesus.'[430] Wood

[426] An interesting turn of phrase, emphasising Wood's conservative nature
[427] Boleman, Babette (1943) 'The Puritan Highroad to Hell', *Journal of Religion*, 23:3
[428] http://www.patheos.com/Library/Methodist/Beliefs/Afterlife-and-Salvation.html

never seems to have had an original religious thought, and that includes his views on judgement and the hereafter. The difficulty he faced, along with many like-minded Quakers, was in trying to square the circle of God's involvement in human life. Friends conflated their own brief history with the Bible stories of Jesus and the Children of Israel, and that was where they stopped. As with other aspects of life, traditional churches had fixed routines for dealing with death and bereavement. But Friends had no set graveside words.

4.8 Quarterly Meeting help

The Industrial Revolution introduced new types of suffering and intensified those already prevalent. To the natural but sporadic causes of suffering such as contagious diseases or agricultural uncertainty were added the grim certainty of factory life and newly developing squalor of urban life in an age before sewerage or running water. Such things were changing traditional local cultures. Records of Yorkshire Quarterly Meeting, which were continuous for 300 years from 1666, show just how important that meeting was in assisting both suffering Friends, and non-Quakers.[432] It could intercede with the authorities, give legal advice and defence in court, reimburse fines and distraints, pay prisoners' chamber rent and supply them with money, food and fuel, arrange employment for prisoners and care for prisoners' families. It was something of a localised welfare state, with other activities including

> poor relief, provision of loans, maintenance and guardianship of orphans, arrangement of apprenticeships and employment with Friends, provision of marriage

[429] Mathias, Part 1
[430] *ibid*

> portion funds for poor Friends, care of the elderly and the sick both financially and through hostels and the Retreat, provision of burial grounds, and pastoral care through overseers.[432]

Likewise, the minute books of both men and women (but particularly women) Preparative Meetings at Highflatts show help being given to the aged, ill and needy both within and beyond the Society of Friends. The strength of Wood's faith is made clear in the serious health issues he chose to work through rather than feel he was letting God down.[433] He refers to his ailments as 'baptisms.' His prayer was that they should,

> purify me and prepare for every work the most high hath for me to do, and may his everlasting arm of divine Power be under means [*sic*] to bear up and support in these trying seasons.[434]

Suffering was very important to Wood, as to many Quakers, partly because of its link with the first Friends and the concept of perfection, to which he frequently refers, and partly because he felt Friends of his generation needed the discipline which he felt suffering could bring. The lengthy letter that Wood has included from a young Quaker woman 'to a Preacher among the Methodists' covers many subjects that Quakers cared about, but foremost among them is suffering.

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[432] archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk/search/archives/8fa291d7-9688-3bdc-a1ac-9bd403faf9d3

[433] The Notebooks have many references to Wood's ill health, which not surprisingly worsened as he got older. But his workload did not lessen. In Vol 5 nb49/1-18 he describes feeling 'very poorly…very ill' as he neared the end of a 600-700 miles journey in 1811. Eight years later, at the end of a 300 mile journey, he wrote 'I may expect that travelling long journeys with me will pretty much cease… I desire to be resigned to his will, that in the conclusion I may be rightly prepared to receive the answer of well done.' (Vol 5 nb61/13-23)

[434] *ibid*

> [T]hro' Sufferings we are made Perfect and through much tribulation we must enter the Kingdom - and if I be not mistaken, have seen a suffering state through which thou must be brought, she writes.[435]

And then, after much Hebrew imagery drawn from the Genesis story of the escape from Egypt, she says 'Let us be careful not to flee a suffering state of mind, lest we become as withered branches.'[436] Offering a definition of Quakerism with which many Friends would have sympathised, she writes: 'Sufferings and tryals seem the firmest ground on which we stand, enabling us to know what we are.' This sentence was used word-for-word by Wood in another letter. Much of the young woman's letter resonates with Wood's writings, as for instance her thoughts on the Spirit,[437] which is seen as bound up with the understanding of suffering and spiritual growth. There are many other examples in Wood's correspondence illustrating Friends' response to suffering. However, an example I wish to use is not from Wood's Notebooks but a letter from Lydia Lancaster to her F/friend James Wilson on the death of his wife in 1757. She writes, 'Her soul made perfect through manifold sufferings […] following the Lamb, her light and leader, in patience and resignation, through all the tribulations attending her pilgrimage.'[438] She is certain James is coping in,

> a cheerful and Christian manner […] yet for all that, there may be some low and lonesome sinking times witnessed […] But, dear James, let us endeavour to hold on

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[435] Chapter4, p160
[436] *ibid*
[437] vol 1 nb2B/35
[438] Quaker Writings Home Page, quakerpages@juno.com
[439] *ibid*

> in patience and contentment, without weariness, to our end, for we cannot expect it to be long till their case will be also ours as to this world.[439]

This short letter sums up everything a Friend was supposed to feel about bereavement or physical suffering and the fortitude with which they should meet it. But personal grief was a form of suffering about which Wood had misgivings. He also was unclear about how to relate such grief to faith: 'Though he (God) cause grief, yet will he have compassion' he tells the ailing Thomas Dixon Walton. Wood says he has experienced grief personally and it is something of which to be careful; it can be over-indulged. In 1806 he wrote to Jacob Bright apologising for missing his wife's funeral, and went on 'sorrow on these occasions may without offence have a little vent [but] guard against inordinate sorrow.'[440] Although it is clear in Wood's writings that he feels Quakers would be holier if they could suffer more, this is no sort of mock religiosity on his part. He drives himself relentlessly, despite serious health issues, to suffer as much like an original Friend as possible, to share the discomforts and punishments, and by implication the spiritual rewards of inner peace, of a century previously:

> They who are the faithful followers of a crucified Saviour, must suffer Prosecution [*sic*], and when the time of Suffering comes, here is the Tryal, then, whether we love our own Life or that he has promised; this was a time that tried that bold disciple. Sufferings and tryals seem the firmest ground on which we stand, enabling us to

[440] Vol 2 nb26/10-11

> know what we are, and the need there is for us to be stript of every dependence short of his own Spirit, that can indeed enable us to suffer as well as to bear.

He did not wish pain on anyone but at the same time was comforted when Friends were willing to go to prison rather than pay tithes. The death of Anne Leaver in 1777 well sums up Wood's attitude to suffering, not least in that he believed it could expiate sin:

> [she] express'd her belief that her time would not be long, [and] was thankful for the favoured opportunities we have sometimes had been in sitting together at home, said she hoped the Almighty had blotted out her transgressions and fervently prayed, She might be enabled to bear with patience the trying dispensation she had to pass through, which she believed was allotted for her for further purification - and beg'd for a certain evidence that her conclusion might be happy and her passage easy, which was mercifully granted.[441]

Summary of Chapter 4

Anthony Benezet spoke of Quakerism as 'an endeavor to reconcile those two contrarieties—the World and Heaven.'[442] Each topic in this chapter contributes to that effort, examining Friends' responses to important issues of the time, both Quaker and wider, and also considering 'contarieties' within the Society itself. Traditional certainties, social structures and occupations were being challenged by change, in

politics, economics, medicine and education as well as religion. The Quaker characteristic which stands out here is their preoccupation with suffering.

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[441] Vol 3 nb22/5 – This is one of the more serious examples, there are many others throughout the Notebooks
[442] Vol 3 nb7/6-8

Chapter 5 Correspondence

The extensive correspondence in Wood's Notebooks throws considerable light on his personality and faith, and on the Quaker way of life. The purposes of this chapter are to study Wood's response to the many issues that arise in letters to or from him, and to examine the sentiments of his correspondents and those others whose letters are included, looking for insights into their lives within and beyond Quakerism. Below I look more closely at the contents of each volume.

The first 18 Notebooks in Volume 1 are largely letters between third parties which have come into Wood's possession and, for one reason or another, impressed him enough to be included in his first Notebook. Volume 1 also includes just over a hundred letters written by Joseph Wood. The earliest letter to him is dated 10 October 1776 and is from a well-known Quaker travelling minister, Esther Tuke (see *Women Ministers*). She is writing to 26-year-old Joseph to encourage him in his new-found calling as a minister:

> Having frequently remembered thee since I was your way in much nearness and true Love, It hath divers times turned over in my mind to Salute thee in this way, and add my mite (according to the Strength afforded) in supporting and encouraging thee to perserverence [*sic*] on the path thy feet are happily turned into, as much depends upon it, not only on thine own account, but others, to whom thou hast and I believe will still be made exceeding helpful, thy readiness to promote the cause, and at every opportunity likely to forward the work.[443]

Other correspondence in Volume 1 (which was begun July 1802 and ended March 1821) includes letters by well-known Friends from both sides of the Atlantic, including Job Scott, a popular American minister who visited England three times and is known

to have been in Yorkshire. Wood also comments on having met John Woolman at a Meeting for Worship and being struck by his presence, but they did not exchange letters.

Volume 2 (December 1791 to March 1821) is the second Large Volume and includes Notebooks 19-37. It is made up of 130 letters written by Joseph Wood and almost 300 memoranda. The contents of these varied widely and included the kind of items he would also sometimes report separately, such as his health, births, deaths and marriages, even the weather. Almost at the end of the volume is a letter dated 1683 and signed by George Fox and five others concerning marriage of near kin.[444] There is no explanation of why it is included here. Various financial collections, either for meeting house works or for the relief of refugees on the continent, are also included. Volume 2 is similar to Volume 1 in the sense that some of the content is

[443] Vol1 nb2/1-2
[444] Vol 2 nb37/24-25
[445] Vol 2 nb19/1-2

apparently random, but very different in that most of it originates with Wood himself. LN19 consists of letters, and in the first, sent on 25 July 1802[445] to his friend John Bottomley, Wood begins on a sombre note: ‘such is the low state of our Society in most places, that there is very great danger of that Ministry being encouraged, which proceeds from the Wind the earthquake or the fire, which may appear to rend the Rocks, shake nature, and affect the natural part in others, but not reach the understanding, because the Lord is not in it, but in the still small voice.’ The ‘low state’ of the Society of Friends is a subject to which Wood often returns.

Volume 3 covers the period to March 1796. It is a guess as to when it was started as the volume opens with items from the previous century, including ‘An Abstract of

divers Particulars of Advice at sundry times from the Yearly and Quarterly Meetings'.[446] Perceiving love for the Truth in others was very important to Wood in forming his friendships and in deciding whom to trust. He often doubted if he could trust himself: 'My mind is many times ready to sink under discouragement […] many, who have begun well […] fall in the hour of temptation';[447] In December 1803 Joseph Grayham is introduced[448] – 'betwixt whom and me there had been a growing friendship as far as our differing stations would admit. I believe there is a seed of God in him,' Wood wrote to John Bottomley. Grayham is a 'servant in husbandry' with Wood's cousin John Mallinson of Birdsedge and is 'a hopeful youth'. Thus began a relationship that Joseph Wood was to describe as like no other in his life. It gave him close personal insight into the secular world of poorer people – not poor, but poorer than he. He started teaching Grayham to read and write, going every weekday evening to his mother's shop at Birdsedge to instruct him and frequently teaching him at his own home. 'I think I can truly say I have never found more satisfaction in anything I have ever undertook for the good of my fellow creatures' Wood wrote in one of his memorandums[349], and on March 3 of that year - 'a very near Love and friendship hath been begotten between us, which if we are both of us concerned to keep in our proper places, I believe nothing but death will be able to dissolve.' It is interesting to note the importance he attaches to their respective social positions.

Volume 4 (which begins May 1796 and ends November 1810) has the largest collection of Notebooks. They recount Wood's journeys to meetings in various parts of Yorkshire and other counties, and to Wales Yearly Meeting. Publick Meetings in both England and Wales are reported. He walked some 60 miles in two days to get to Wales Yearly Meeting. Gatherings like this were an important opportunity for English

Friends to socialise with each other as well as with the Welsh. The psychological border, if not the literal one, between the two countries was less pronounced then, and Shropshire was included with Merionethshire and Montgomeryshire in the Quarterly Meeting for Discipline. The three counties had just two Monthly Meetings between them. Wood observed there were 'but few friends in Wales'. However, a public meeting at the YM had to be held at two separate venues simultaneously so that people could hear what the preachers were saying. Volume 4 ends with a brief reminder that there is a wider world beyond Quakerism. The last entry records that Wood's friend Thomas Dixon Walton had business problems – 'a turn of the times

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[446] Vol 2 nb2

[447] Vol2 nb19/3-4

[448] Vol2 nb1-2

[449] Vol2 nb20/4-5

had brought him and many others into great difficulties.' (December 1810)

The final volume of Notebooks, No 5, began December 1810 and ended February 1821. It's ironic but the Volume about which there is least to say took about the longest travelling time for Joseph Wood: 'I was out 11 weeks and 2 days and travelled upwards of 713 miles,' he writes in April 1815. By this time he was 65. Another major theme in this volume is his health, which is failing. He has seven years left to live. But the major theme, as in Volume 4, is meetings. There is an endless stream of them, mostly Publick Meetings – which account for 197 out of a total of 224. And that is why the summary can be so brief. The meetings would have been

hard work to organise but one meeting was much like another when it came to writing them up.

5.1 Discipline

Joseph Wood was a firm believer in the discipline, the set of rules which evolved to control Quaker life and which included 'Plainness' in dress and speech, the most publicly obvious defining characteristics in period Quakerism. Neither Discipline nor Plainness was a Quaker creation, both having their roots in the early 17th century and perhaps even in Lutheran theology.[450] As the eighteenth century progressed these rules became increasingly rigid and constricting. They were seen by Quaker leaders, nationally and often locally, as a mechanism to stop decline but the tighter they became the more unattractive Quakerism became both to many of those in it and to possible converts.[451] There was a serious decline in numbers and many who stayed Friends chose to be Gay - that is, they abandoned the strictures on clothing and speech, and on control of their lifestyle by others, but not Quaker beliefs as such. However, many Plain Friends identified their appearance completely with their faith, the one witnessed to the other and was the most significant identifying sign of Quakerliness.

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[450] Bell, Erin (2006) From Ploughing the Wilderness to Hedging the Vineyard: Meanings and uses of Husbandry among Quakers, 1650-1860, *Quaker Studies*10:2

[451] There are several useful sources for Quaker records, including Leeds university library, Friends House in London and online.

5.2 Written in the service of God

Wood felt a duty to communicate and many letters are undoubtedly an extension of his preaching. His subjects included suffering, plainness, gay Friends, meeting decline, tithes, days of visitation, youth, militia, and the peace testimony. His letters are mostly avuncular and anxious rather than judgmental. Wood saw himself in different ways, all of them in the service of God and the Society of Friends, encouraging or admonishing members as he thought necessary. And that is the purpose of much of his correspondence. All this could make him look arrogant, but there is much else in his writings that suggest humility of spirit. Of the many letters Joseph Wood wrote, 103 are included in the first volume and 126 in the second.[452] They are presented in groups, with the number of letters in each group ranging from 18 to 26. There are 13 groups and in each group the contents are arranged chronologically. Given that there are approximately a thousand items altogether in the two volumes, this means that correspondence accounts for about a quarter of the whole. Most of Wood's correspondents are men, but there are 29 letters to or from women in Volume 1 and 13 in Volume 2. There are also copies of letters to Wood or between third parties, which he has found valuable and kept. These number more than 60. There are also letters outside the groups, including one by Wood and two addressed to him. The first volume also contains an epistle from the Women's Quarterly Meeting at York for 1778[453] and a wide range of other documents including epistles from around the country by London Yearly Meeting committees that had been tasked to visit and assess monthly meetings. Strictly

[452] Tables at the end of this chapter break down the figures further

speaking, these are reports rather than letters and will be considered further in the next chapter. The recipients of Wood's letters are largely local, within a few miles of his home, and in total he writes to 63 addresses in the Long Notebooks. RA Houston[454] argues that increasing literacy in this period was 'closely associated with occupation and thus with socio-economic position' and that this was so in the North as well as the rest of England. Wood's experience supports this. He was 'of the middling sort' in terms of socio-economic position, literate, and had a small library. He was interested in teaching others to read and write for religious reasons as part of a wider interest in education.[454] The earliest letter to Wood in Volume 1 is dated October 1776, from well-known Friend Esther Tuke, whose family home was in York. Surprisingly, the earliest from him is dated almost 20 years later, in 1795, in which he writes twice to a young Friend named Charles Smith.[455] This wide gap raises the question of what happened to two decades' worth of letters: not written or not copied, lost, stolen, or still awaiting transcription? Censorship is another possibility. Although there are a few obvious signs of redaction in the five volumes,[456] the most likely reason seems to be lack of transcription. The Smith letters are dated June 1795, and almost coincide with the first group of Wood's letters, numbering 18 and written in July and August of that year. The end of persecution initiated a profound shift in outlook for English Quakers, both theological and material. In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries they moved away from the intense evangelicalism of the first Friends and, as the eighteenth century progressed,

[453] Women's Quarterly Meeting at York for 1778, vol1 nb5/25

[454] Houston (2009) see *Illiteracy and Society in Scotland and Northern England, 1600–1800,* Cambridge University Press

towards an inward-looking self-preservation where the demands of their understanding of Christianity were re-examined in the light of Gospel Order. Healey observes that 'it is likely that eighteenth-century Friends justified their engagement with the world in diverse, not singular, ways.' But engagement with the world in any form was compromising with evil for Joseph Wood. In a letter to Charles Blackburn in 1806 Wood eloquently urges his f/Friend to

> Come out from amongst them and be separate […] Seek not to comprehend the Truths recorded in the Scriptures, by thy natural understanding, neither busy thyself in comprehending those things which may not be proper for thee at present to know […] all things needful will be revealed in due time […] Neither suffer thy mind to be hurried after the commotions that are in the earth, to the neglecting of the most important business of thy life.[456]

Yet Wood sometimes failed to heed his own advice, as for example when he voted for the anti-slavery campaigner William Wilberforce. In a letter of June 1803 to Thomas Yeardley he laments that many Friends had lost their way, yet a remnant remained 'who are one in faith, in principle and in practice'.[457] He concludes by praying that God will bring Yeardley 'into the beautiful order of his flock and family.' His Notebooks show him travelling, writing and preaching well into the nineteenth century. He clearly saw correspondence as an effective tool for confirming the spoken word. For example, in Volume 2 a spate of conversions to Quakerism in Rochdale and Barnsley keep Wood busy, both writing and visiting, with 13 letters to Rochdale and 19 to Barnsley. These are thoughtful, personal letters, not

[455] Appendix 3
[456] vol2 nb26
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standardised texts. Wood's Notebooks might tell us little about what he preached but they are the work of a committed evangelical. His letters and memoranda are also the main sources of information on the pastoral side of his ministry. Wood set great store by the *Book of Extracts*, which he believed left Friends in no doubt as to the right way of Quaker living. His views echoed those of Charles Marshall a century earlier who wrote copiously on many topics. His works included *An Epistle To Friends Coming Forth In The Ministry, in which he said:*[458]

> Dear Friends, as the will of the Lord is made manifest, yeild [*sic*] sincere obedience thereto; if the requiring be but a few words; for I have seen it a dangerous thing to resist the motions of God's power, and have known many hours of sorrow for it. In the beginning of a testimony for the Lord, even in the upright heart, great will be the opposition of the enemy every way […] And so, dear Friends, for whose sake I am moved thus to write, when a motion is felt, and openings are in the heart, sink down in that in which no vain thought can be hidden, and stand single and passive.[459]

But such ministry could be very hard and unrewarding work. Wood cites many examples of disappointment with his fellow worshippers at all levels of meeting, particularly at Preparative and Monthly Meetings. On one occasion his own PM, Highflatts, which was 'wholly Select of such as usually attend meetings' was a 'painful exercising time throughout, yet after a long suffering season altogether

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[457] vol2 nb21
[458] There are two documents with this title, the other by Samuel Fisher, another early Quaker and prolific author and

agitator.
[459] *ibid*

contrary to my expectation … [I] had very hard labour in a short plain and close testimony.' And again at Wooldale, where he was heading next for Monthly Meeting,

> It was a laborious exercising time; the expectations of the People in general being too much outward and many of the youths of our own Society (of which class there were great numbers present) sitting down too much at ease in the traditions of their forefathers, without being sufficiently concerned to know the Truth for themselves.[460]

Volume 1 of his Notebooks contains 45 letters which throw important light on Friends' beliefs and attitudes in the period from the mid-1740s to the next century. Gospel Order sought to impose uniformity on meetings throughout the British Isles but was never wholly successful. Many of Wood's letters show him facing a three-way dilemma - being loyal to his understanding of first generation Friends, loyal to his local Preparative and Monthly meetings, and loyal to Gospel Order. In particular, he was firmly committed to the plainness testimony. In a letter of June 1803 to Thomas Yeardley he laments that many Friends had lost their way, yet a remnant remained 'who are one in faith, in principle and in practice.' He concludes by praying that God will bring Yeardley 'into the beautiful order of his flock and family.' That is a common theme in Wood's correspondence.

The amount of correspondence from, to, and concerning others, which Wood has taken the trouble to copy, suggests that these letters had special significance for him

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[460] Not from a letter, but a comment in volume 1 that Wood often repeated about the spiritual inadequacies of the younger generation in particular and Friends in general.

either because of their content or because of the people involved in sending or receiving (*see table 5.1*). In Volume 1, a few letters are by well-known people (eg American minister Job Scott) and what Wood has received is probably a copy meant for wide circulation (see below). There are also a number of letters which the dates suggest must have been preserved by his father or grandfather. Mostly, the letters in the two volumes are dated, and they fall between 1774 and 1821, the year Wood died. However, the first entry in Volume One is dated 1756 and there are 24 others which pre-date Wood's adulthood. In the order printed, which is apparently random, the years are: 1746, 1762, 1690, 1682, 1756, 1757, 1759, 1739, 1700, 1759, 1708/9, 1752, 1748/9, 1759, 1696, 1695, 1749, 1736, 1741, 1749, 1661, 1747, 1756, 1756.

The end of persecution initiated a profound shift in outlook for English Quakers, both theological and material. In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries they moved away from the intense evangelicalism of the first Friends and, as the eighteenth century progressed, towards an inward-looking self-preservation where the demands of their understanding of Christianity were re-examined in the light of Gospel Order. Healey observes that 'it is likely that eighteenth-century Friends justified their engagement with the world in diverse, not singular, ways.'[462] But engagement with the world in any form was compromising with evil for Joseph Wood. His Notebooks show him travelling, writing and preaching well into the nineteenth century. He clearly saw correspondence as an effective tool for confirming the spoken word. For example, in Volume 2 a spate of conversions to Quakerism in Rochdale and Barnsley keep Wood busy, both writing and visiting, with 13 letters to Rochdale and 19 to Barnsley.[463]

These are thoughtful, personal letters, not standardised texts. Wood's Notebooks might tell us little about what he preached but they are more forthcoming about the pastoral side of his role as a minister. His letters and memoranda are the main sources of information on this. Wood set great store by the *Book of Extracts*, which he believed left Friends in no doubt as to the right way of Quaker living. His views echoed those of Charles Marshall a century earlier who wrote copiously on many topics, including *An Epistle To Friends Coming Forth In The Ministry,*

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[465] Charles Marshall (1637-1698) Published 1775

Yeardley he laments that many Friends had lost their way, yet a remnant remained 'who are one in faith, in principle and in practice.' He concludes by praying that God will bring Yeardley 'into the beautiful order of his flock and family.' That is a common theme in Wood's correspondence.

5.2 Content of letters

The depopulation of the countryside, rural starvation, social unrest and growth of industrial cities barely get a mention in Wood's letters, although we know from previous chapters that all of these subjects were of great concern to him. The themes that dominate are religious. He treats correspondence as an extension of being a minister at meetings. If the Notebooks were selectively circulated among Friends, the written word would reinforce the spoken word and extend the audience to include some of those who had missed meeting. All Wood's letters are addressed to individuals, but circulating copies of correspondence beyond the addressee was a common practice.[468] Cooksey points out some evidence for this. A good example is a letter from Wood to Thomas Dixon Walton in May 1802:

> I have got a friend to take a Copy of the Original, which I herewith transmit to thee; with one from John Bottomley, which he found his mind drawn to write to you; whilst we were in Derbyshire, not having known of mine, and which he desires thee to read to those to whom it is directed, and if any wish to have a Copy that they may have liberty.[469]

[466] Curran, Louise (2018) *Letters, letter writing and epistolary novels*, British Library
[467] Vol 2 nb19/7
[468] Curran, Louise (2018) *Letters, letter writing and epistolary novels*, British Library
[469] vol2 nb19/12-13

Recurring subjects in Wood's letters include forgiveness, judgement, marrying out, excessive drinking, failing to attend meeting, tithes, faithfulness to God's will, plain dress and plain speech. He was seldom cheerful. Although some of his letters are personal and not for general circulation it seems likely that Wood thought many were fulfilling his God-given duty to preach. It also seems probable that he chose third party material for the same reason. He tells Samuel Dickinson that his 'concern for the welfare of the souls of mankind' is so great, that against his better judgment, he has written to 'divers of the professors of Truth[…] a duty to communicate.'[470] That was in August 1795 just a week after he had written to Thomas Earnshaw lamenting the state of the Society:

> It is not that the Lord hath forgotten to be gracious unto his people, or hath forsaken them […] but because of that sorrowful ease which so generally prevails; little exercise of the mind being experienced for the arising of that life which is the crown and glory of our Assemblies; hence the living have often to sit, where the uncircumcised in heart and ear sit, who continue to resist the Holy.ghost; [*sic*] in a state of Suffering with that seed, oppressed in the hearts of many.[471]

He ends with a warning of 'greater desolation' still to come. Below are the main themes on which Wood wrote, with those on which he has most to say placed first. The three lost aspects of Quakerism which have been identified in this thesis are all evident in his correspondence. Plainness, weekday meetings and tithes are recurring

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[470] Vol 1 nb8/18
[471] *ibid*

themes in the Notebooks and their appearance at the top of the list causes no surprises. But Days of Visitation does. It is a good example of how easy it is to under-estimate the importance of an historic subject in its own era simply because the passage of time has taken it out of common use. Judging by its frequent occurrence in the Notebooks, the day of God's visitation was of major significance to Friends. Other major topics of correspondence were:

i. The plainness testimony regarding clothes and language, which contributed greatly to defining Quakerism in the public mind throughout the eighteenth century and well into the nineteenth. His letters show how much religious credibility he invested in plainness, sometimes comparing Quaker plain dress with the cross of Christ. In 1811 he rejoiced that William Bayldon had 'taken up the cross, both in language, dress and demeanour which I believe had long been as a stumbling block unto him.' And almost a decade later he again compares the wearing of plain dress to the cross of Christ: 'Deviate not from that becoming plainness of Apparel which Truth leads its faithful followers into. Be not ashamed of the cross of Christ.' Wood believed that plainness went back to the very beginnings of Quakerism. To his way of thinking, being a Gay Friend was tantamount to not being a Friend at all. In the last year of his life Wood wrote to Joseph Brearey: 'It is better (for Gay Friends) to leave entirely than be among those who continue therein; and are unfaithful to what they do

profess.' Writing to Joseph Firth in 1810, he warns him to 'beware of too much familiarity with this class of our fellow professors, lest thou should suffer loss thereby […] I felt it my place to caution thee against too much familiarity with those who walk inconsistent with the pure Truth.'[472] In the letter to 'Respected Friend Samuel Dickinson' quoted above, Wood says he has 'a duty to communicate […] I should not be clear without endeavouring to unburden myself a little unto thee.' Dickinson's standards are slipping, Wood believes. Two other things make this letter particularly interesting. He uses it to explain the value of plainness as an outward sign of inward Truth, and says plainness in and of itself confers no religious benefits to the wearer:

> I have observed with concern for a considerable time, a great deviation in thee from that plainness in Apparel which Truth led our Forefathers into, and still leads those who obey its spotless dictates, for it changes not; and tho' I am fully convinced religion consisteth not in dress, yet I believe it is many times a true Index of the state of the mind, for a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit; and if our hearts are regulated by the spirit of Truth, there will be a consistancy [*sic*] therewith in our outward appearance and behaviour.[473]

This letter goes some way to reconciling Wood's apparently contradictory beliefs about the role of Christ in salvation. As discussed in chapter 1, he held firmly to belief in the Inward Light of Christ in saving the individual, but he held equally firmly to the importance of Gospel Order, particularly as lived through the plainness testimony, in doing the same thing. The two cannot be completely reconciled but Wood's letter to

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[472] vol2 nb27

[473] vol 1 nb8/17-19

Dickinson is probably as close as he could get. Wood seems completely unaware of the theological dichotomy he has created.

ii. Related to this theme was his concern about declining meeting attendance. In 1801 Wood wrote to Charles Stead linking plainness with regular attendance at meetings, saying 'I have oftens thought if all unprofitable visits, and superfluity in Apparel were laid aside, there would then be no want of time for the attendance of Meetings.'[474] Two years earlier he had written in the same vein to his cousin William Stead 'Lay aside thy outward concerns to attend religious meetings on Week.days'[472] A couple of months later he bluntly expresses his disappointment with James Arthington Wilson. 'I have observed thee negligent in thy duty in attending week.day meetings […] it hath affected my mind with sorrow.'[473] Attendance at weekday meetings is a prominent theme in Wood's correspondence. As with attire and language, there is a strong emphasis on the importance of such meetings in the religious life. A weekday meeting in Wood's eyes was just as important as that on Sunday (First Day). In the letter to Samuel Dickinson already quoted Wood links plainness to attendance at weekday meetings and tells him he is inconsistent without it: 'The things of this life would not then hinder thee, from a due attendance of religious Meetings on week days.' George Chapman is told 'there is one thing appears to me as a duty to offer to thy serious consideration; and that is the shutting up thy Shop, during the time of the Meeting on week days.' There are many other references to the importance of weekday meetings.

iii. Tithes were another issue that occupied a lot of space in Wood's letters. The ancient right of Anglican clergy to a tenth (a tithe) of their parishioners' crops or

other earnings was a long-standing grievance for Friends, who resented paying towards a church of whose doctrines they disapproved. But by the early nineteenth century the tithes dispute had changed character, partly because the nature of farming was changing. In rural counties, which was most of England at that time, tithe payments were often in kind. Wood includes a 'Copy of a letter from a Parish Clark [*sic*] to the Clergy of the Church of England' on the subject of Tythes.[474] While apparently defending tithes, the letter clearly states the practical and religious case against them as argued by Friends. The 'clark' admits that 'the distress and sale of goods, often amounts to much more than the value of our demands.' Because of its pro-Quaker tone the authenticity of the letter must be open to question.

iv. Days of visitation were much more important to Quakers in the first generation and on into the Georgian period than in subsequent generations and the phrase has now largely disappeared from Friends' vocabulary.[475] But two centuries ago the Inward Light of Christ was equated with an individual's day of visitation.[476] Wood defines such spiritual moments as 'the day when the spirit of God moves upon thy mind.'[477] It was something that should be prayed for and prized, but was not something over which the individual had any control. All a person could do was 'to be as passive clay in the Lords hand, that he might fashion and form thee into such a vessel as he in his wisdom may see meet.'[478] The day of visitation ended the individual's sense of alienation from God, Wood believed, but there was a limit to how

[474] vol 1 nb14/6-7
[475] Appendix 9 for complete letter
[476] 'Visitation' was a well-established Judaeo-Christian theological concept; God or God's agent would appear to someone physically or metaphysically to warn them about their lifestyle or to be ready for some forthcoming event.
[477] Tousley, Oxford Quaker *Handbook* 173
[478] Wood uses the phrase in a letter to Robert Walker of Dirtcar in 1805

many times God would offer each individual the chance of salvation. Without putting a number on the opportunities, he warned wayward Friend Charles Smith on numerous occasions in 1795 that,

> as these Truths are wrote in Gospel Love, I earnestly desire that they may have some place in thy mind, that so the day of thy visitation may not pass over thy head and thy portion be appointed with the unbelievers to all eternity […] For tho' he is a merciful God, yet his Spirit will not always strive with Man.[479]

Wood also saw a relationship between visitation and silence: 'O that thou may prize the day of thy visitation […] It is in this state of pure silence, and true quietude of mind; that thou may be favoured to know the Lords voice.' It is a very common theme in Wood's Notebooks and there is no doubt about the importance he attached to days of visitation. He further suggests that visitations are not just for the spiritually mature. When his friend John Bottomley was very ill some young people came to see him: 'Unto the dear Youth who came to visit him, he was drawn forth in much Gospel Love intreating them to mind the day of their visitation and not let it slip over their heads but come up in faithful obedience to the manifestations of Truth that so they might be favoured with true Peace of mind.' In 1813 he suggests to Joshua Scholefield that God is selective: 'sparing thy life when many of thy companions suffered an untimely death. Thus affording the time and space to repent.'

Soon afterwards he continues: 'Now this I [am] perswaded was the day of the manifestation of the Lords Power unto thee. The day of Gods visitation unto thy soul

[479] see vol 1 nb6

[480] Concern over young people is a continuing theme in the first two Notebooks, for example Vol 1 nb8/11-12, 1/10.2, 1/20.13, 1/12.8, 1/14.9, 2/22.10, 2/26.6

[…] may thou be preserved in a fear of offending him in thought, word or deed.' God did not have favourites: 'the Love of God is not confined to any one particular society; but is universally extended unto all mankind during the day of their visitation.'[480] This is noteworthy in two ways. Not for the first time, Wood says such occasions are time-limited; and secondly, there is a contrast to Wood's view a couple of decades previously, when Quakerism was definitely God's only chosen path for mankind. In two letters to his cousin George Mallinson, written in 1795 and 1803, Wood says there is a great need in the Society of Friends for 'honest labourers […] too many having neglected the day of their visitation.' In the second he also suggests that he can sense when someone's day of visitation is at hand: 'I have sometimes been led to remember thee; and having many times sensibly felt the visitations of Truth powerfully extending towards thee.' Likewise, in a letter to John Ives in 1801, Wood is emphatic: 'certain I am thou has been called, the visitation of Gods love hath been extended to thee.'[481]

v. When Wood wrote about 'the youth' he meant Quaker youth, not young people in general, and he was talking particularly about their religion and morals. He never defines what ages he means by youth, but I am assuming early-teens up to late twenties. The late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were times of rapidly increasing population in England and of social dislocation as rising industrial cities and towns drew in rural families. They were also times of changing social and moral

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[481] vol1 nb15

attitudes. That is the broad-brush background to such language by Wood as this:

> Oh dear youth many are the snares and temptations of the enemy; but they are all discovered by the light, and by those who are watching it; and these experience that the Lamb and his followers will have the victory. [482]

Wood also hoped 'religious young People who are frequently in company together might guard against every inordinate affection; Marriage is an ordinance of God, and it is he alone by his spirit that can point out the way.' However, there is a limit to euphemisms and sooner or later he had to speak plainly about sex. A F/friend, Morritt Matthews, was 'at present before the Monthly Meeting for entangling himself with a young woman in a very imprudent and reproachful manner.' At another meeting '[God's] Power prevailed and reached unto some of the youth; altho' others […] sat in such a state of insensibility as to resemble the heath in the desart.'[*sic*] A letter from John Dickinson to 'Dearly beloved Youths', with an anonymous introduction (by someone who writes very much in the style of Joseph Wood), gives a flavour of what was seen as the best way to nurture Quaker youth in the ways of their fathers.[484] It is clear from the letter that God is believed to use ill health as a means to reach the wayward. Dickinson says he seeks to give,

> a right feeling of what my poor soul hath undergone thro […] having wearied the Lord with my great Transgressions from time to time, he at length visited me with this great affliction, being wonderful in his mercies to my soul in not cutting me off in all my unrepented sins.

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[483] vol 2 nb 15/12-13

[484] John Dickinson was not local but came from Sheffield. His views on God using ill health to chastise people clearly appealed to Wood. So too did Dickinson's background, which is given in vol 1 nb6.8 and includes dissipation in his younger days, soldiering, poverty, being crippled by illness and through that finding God and rejoining Friends.

But God does not stop there; he will also impose physical suffering on young Quakers who have made friends outside the Society. Dickinson warns against even the slightest rebellion and urges the youth to choose their company carefully, 'making use of little as you can of the company of those who are not Friends.' Wood's concern about young people was often entangled with his notions on the justice of God. Wood goes on:

> At our last Quarterly Meeting our beloved friend Thomas Scattergood in the course of this publick Testimony in moving language warned the youth present to beware of wanton behaviour, dancing frolicking etc. that he had known several circumstances or instances of divine Displeasure manifested to individuals, who had attended much [*sic*] Meetings as these.[485]

vi. Yorkshire, like other counties, had to provide a list of able-bodied men who could be called on in time of war, not for foreign service but as a supplement to the regular army for home duties such as riot control. Parishes selected a set number of men by ballot as their contribution to the total. Inevitably, some Quakers found themselves caught in the ballot. Under an Act of 1803-4 'Quakers and aliens' were among those exempted from bearing arms, although they would have to do non-military civil defence duties. Wood records that at the Monthly Meeting held in Wakefield on 18 March 1811 'four friends had suffered each one month

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[485] vol1 nb9

imprisonment in the house of correction at Wakefield, for refusing to serve in the local Militia' Fourteen years earlier, in February 1797, Wood had written encouragingly to Enoch Dickinson because,

> Ever since I heard of thee being Balloted to serve in the Militia, I have felt a secret sympathy with thee, accompanied with a hope that thou would be enabled to stand thy ground faithfully, in this day of tryal, which I believe will try the foundations of many.

This suggests there was a process for appealing against the call-up. Wood does not record the outcome of the case, but goes on,

> since I heard thy case was undetermined, and thou in a state of suspense as to the event; It hath several times appeared to me as a duty to encourage thee to trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and then thou will not need to fear what man can do to thee, for his power only reaches over the body my dear friend be encouraged to stand thy ground faithfully, and if a Prison be thy lot, suffer cheerfully, thou'll have the tender sympathy of the spiritually minded, and the reward of Peace in thy bosom

In January 1808 Wood was involved in the resignation of an elder who 'had manifested some weakness respecting our testimony against the Militia'. Wood writes: 'We had reason to believe his unfaithfulness was more for want of consideration, nor intention of violating the testimony of Truth, yet there appeared so much weakness in respect to our Testimonies, that we thought it might be best for him to resign his station as an Elder' [516] (which he agreed to do).

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[486] 'England Militia History', National Institute for Genealogical Studies

Testimonies had grown in importance and number during the eighteenth century, if not in universal acceptance, and Quaker attitudes to testimonies generally disappointed Wood. He and three other Friends had visited several meetings in the Pontefract MM area in 1781

> to make a particular enquiry of them whether or know (sic) they bore a faithful and Christian testimony against the receiving or paying of tythes, Priests demands or those called Churchrates, likewise concerning the militia, and how friends stood clear concerning stoppages.

The Notebooks show Wood much more concerned to record matters to do with plainness and tithes than with the militia. However, he does record three staff from Ackworth school being sent to prison for a month for refusing to serve in the Militia. He called to see them 'and found they were comfortably accommodated, and that the Magistrates were disposed to shew them every kindness in their power, and they appeared cheerful and easy under their confinement.'

vii. The Quaker testimony against war (now called the peace testimony) is perhaps the oldest and best known. It is one that Wood consistently supports although he does not refer to it often in his Notebooks. He frequently shows high regard for individual soldiers, especially if they show religious inclinations. Wood often found himself between two conflicting points of view. He strongly believed in social order

and obeying the law but on the other hand he could sympathise with people who were driven to anti-social behaviour.

There are two examples in the Notebooks which illustrate the dilemma he felt. As a Friend he found it difficult to support the forces of the state, but as a citizen he was willing to do so. In June 1807, he writes that there had been,

> a great Riot in the town (Dewsbury) this evening which continued most part of the night, It being the time of a contested election in this county, and one of the candidates being very much disliked by the Populace in this manufacturing part, a great number of them collected to burn his effigy; The Magistrates hearing of their intentions had previously sent to Leeds for a party of horse Soldiers […] The riot act was read but they would not disperse but some of them got upon the houses and Pelted the Soldiers with stones, and the Soldiers cut and wounded many as they were passing along the streets […] the constables secured several Persons and confined them.'[487]

Six years later, in 1813, a similar disturbance took place in Huddersfield which Wood describes as the climax of a long campaign of violence and intimidation. Several men were hanged or transported as a result of these riots, which included the murder of a factory owner, and Wood was one of two Friends who visited the families of the executed men soon afterwards.

viii. Drinking in general and the frequenting of alehouses in particular are often warned against in Wood's correspondence. In 1797 Wood cautions his cousin Benjamin Stead about excessive drinking: 'how cautious then ought we to be in all our conduct, that we be not stumbling blocks to those whose eyes may be opened to

see how far our conduct corresponds with our profession'[488] This is both a continuation of Wood's desire to have spiritual peace in himself and, perhaps more importantly, concern for the image of the Society of Friends.He seems to have felt the world was watching Friends and waiting for opportunities to criticise and jeer. He wants Friends never to give such opportunities and feels a sense of personal failure when others fall short. He did not hesitate to write to Friends about drinking too much, such as this, from a 1798 letter to Elihu Dickinson the tanner:

> The respect I bear to thee and thine engages me, in the cross to my own inclination as a Man to write unto thee; having heard several times of late of thee having been overtaken with drinking to excess

Yet Wood was by no means teetotal. He frequently stopped for a drink during his travels, with beer, or rum or brandy and water being his favourites at inns, while Friends in their homes often gave him a glass of beer, wine or spirits He had no problem with being sociable: 'We 'tarried until we smoakt [*sic*] our pipes and drunk two bottles of porter,' he wrote on one occasion.He would buy his servants beer on a hot day after they had been collecting lime for the farm - 'I got six pennyworth of Rum and Water and gave my man a quart of ale.'[489]

Many other subjects are included in his letters, the first group of which, numbering 16 in total, appears in July and August 1796. Another group of 14 follows (in LN12) some six months later, and then a third, numbering 37, covering the two

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[487] vol 2 nb43/7-8

[488] vol 2 nb32/13-14

[489] vol 4 nb35/9

years up to February 1802. In LN17A there are 17 further letters all written in the first six months of 1802. LN18, the last Notebook in Volume 1, reverts to random entries. Volume 2 continues the numbering, from Notebook 19 to 37, ending a few weeks before Wood's death. It begins with a group of 23 letters dated between July 1802 and May 1803. The next group of letters is over a longer time span, 35 in two and a half years, with the last one in December 1805. LN26 and 27 are given over entirely to letters, with 43 in total over a six year period to 1812. LN33 has 35 letters, the first in 1812 and the last in February 1821. These details are confusing, but given the sheer scale of numbers it is hard to see how Wood found time to organise his correspondence, which would have included copying as well as writing letters.[490]

As well as the subjects listed above, he was concerned about the moral and spiritual welfare of many Friends and did not hesitate to tell them so, repeatedly urging people to turn back to their faith, both for their soul's sake and for the sake of the Society of Friends. An example which encapsulates this repeated concern is his letter to Elias Armitage lamenting some unQuakerly behaviour (not described): 'Thy fall my friend is great, and by it thou has caused the way of Truth, which was once precious to thee to suffer reproach, and what is worse, plunged thine own poor soul as into a gulph [*sic*] of misery'[491] That must have been a bitter disappointment to Wood because in a letter about six months earlier he writes of being pleased that Armitage had chosen 'the path into which thy feet is happily turn'd… let others do as they may; thou may according to the best of thy understanding serve the Lord'[492] Many Quakers received similar letters, but they were usually avuncular or anxious in

[490] see table 5.2, *Subjects mentioned in correspondence in volumes 1 and 2*
[491] vol 2 nb19/2-3
[492] vol 1 nb15/8

tone rather than sternly judgemental. They were often calls to reclaim that spirituality which Wood believed had been lost. Several were part of a longer correspondence but Wood does not provide the to-and-fro of letters, except in rare cases where he is trying to win an argument. The best example of this is his exchanges with William Gouldthorpe in 1797[493] Gouldthorpe succeeded in annoying Wood with some comments about the conduct of a funeral, which Wood in reply calls 'falsity confusion and contradictory nonsense'. I refer to this exchange below because of its uncharacteristic nature on Wood's part.

Two letters

I am singling out two letters, one written by Wood and the other by a 'young woman a member of our Society to a Preacher among the Methodists,'[494] for extended consideration. I could have chosen other correspondents but between them these two cover much theological ground and amply demonstrate Wood's strengths and weaknesses. Both are long, the Smith letters more than 4000 words and the young woman's letter more than 6000. The Smith letters, written between 1795 and 1800, seem to have originated as a series of shorter letters that have been brought together. Charles Smith was one of several young men Wood hoped to influence into a virtuous and religious life. However, unlike Joseph Graham, Charles Stead and the others, Wood's relationship with Smith seems to be strained from the outset. He

[493] vol 1 nb10/13-14
[494] vol 1 nb2b/31-38
[533] vol 2 nb22/19-20
[534] vol 1 nb10/9-10 and 17A.13
[535] vol 2 nb27/19

quickly becomes impatient with Smith and there seems to be a mystery about how they got acquainted (See Two Letters, Appendix 11) Many of the letters fall into chronological groups. Their subject is inevitably religion. On rare occasions Wood writes intimately and poignantly, as when a child has died, and at such moments he shows glimpses of a literary gift that is generally suffocated under the flat pedantic prose of one straining to make a convincing point about God.

The core of the second letter is that 'thro' Sufferings we are made Perfect and through much tribulation we must enter the Kingdom.' But it says much more and is a clearer statement of Wood's theology than Wood himself ever makes. It is not surprising that Wood chose to include this anonymous young woman's letter in his Notebooks. She speaks of 'the two great mysteries of Iniquity and Godliness; that, by being preserved in the Power of the one we may be enabled to escape the other.' Believing the preacher is in spiritual danger she presses on to warn him - 'it is my business and duty to give thee this Alarm - shall any tell thee what to do in such a time as this? I think and believe none can direct the path of a Christian but the Spirit'. While she writes on many of the same subjects as Wood she brings to her writing an exceptional depth of maturity and vision, considerably more mature than Wood. 'Sufferings and tryals seem the firmest ground on which we stand, enabling us to know what we are, and the need there is for us to be stript [sic] of every dependence short of his own Spirit,' she writes, summing up a brief discussion on the purpose of suffering - 'these things are but for a season, or as draughts by the way'. This is followed by a reflection on the will of God and various other topics including self-criticism - the Devil's 'busy, crafty working hath been discovered in myself'. The reverse is also true, she says a few pages later - 'too many now are as I once was,

thinking they cannot do the will of God except they were to do some great thing.' For comparison, this quotation is from Wood's letter to Thomas Walton of Barnsley in 1802 (vol 1 nb15/17-18):

> Those who are desirous to live Godly in Christ.Jesus must suffer persecution; Those who live after the flesh ever did and ever will hate and persecute the birth of the spirit, and those in whom it is brought forth; but as these abide faithful and obedient to the manifestations they are favoured with, they will most assuredly experience all things to work together for their good, and to the furtherance of that great and glorious work which the Lord by his own Spirit and Power hath begun in their hearts, so that those things which are intended to hinder, many times forward the Lords work, as we ourselves are preserved in faithfulness.

It is typical of Wood's theological thinking regarding suffering, and however many times he uses the same language the thought remains the same. The young woman, on the other hand, offers her readers a chance to go deeper into the dualism of 'the two great mysteries of Iniquity and Godliness.'

Wood believed Gospel Order was divinely inspired and that loyalty to meeting was an essential part of Quaker Christianity. In a letter of general encouragement to John Issott, Wood reviews the sufferings of the first generation of Friends and then says 'The sufferings of the faithful in the present day are of a different kind, being inward.'[495] This was all of a piece with his understanding of the history of the Society of Friends and his own role in God's great scheme of things, which can be summed up in references from four letters –

[495] vol 2 nb22/19-20

* ‘my labour is not to gather People from one form to another, but to the pure living eternal substance, the Word of God in themselves’[496]

* ‘I have nothing in view, in all my religious movements; but peace to my own mind’[497]

* ‘emptied of ourselves […] the creature silenced that so the Lord […] may be all in all to us’[498]

* ‘we are favoured to see that self is of no reputation, but what we are it is by the Grace of God’[499]

5.3 Salutations and other issues

There are three issues connected with correspondence which must be noted, the first two because they seem very unQuakerly. First, salutations. Wood uses a variety of greetings, with little apparent reference to his opinion of the person he was addressing. He wrote a highly critical letter to ‘Dear Cousin Joshua Smith’[500] and a complimentary one to ‘Dear Cousin George Mallinson.’[501] In 1816 he began a letter to ‘Respected Friend Thomas Camm’ with the memorable words ‘Understanding thou art naturally of a very irritable temper, and very apt to give way to passion…’[502] ‘Dear,’ ‘Beloved Friend’, ‘Esteemed’ and ‘my dear Friend’ are also common. This sits

[496] vol 1 nb12/1-2
[497] vol 1 nb10/9-10 and 17A.13
[498] vol 2 nb27/19
[499] *ibid*
[500] vol 1 nb19/14-15
[501] vol 2 nb21/2
[502] vol 2 nb33/17

oddly with Quaker strictures about truth at all times. Some correspondents do not get a salutation at all, making for an interesting comparison/contrast with Friends' refusal to observe the social niceties in spoken greetings.

Second, there are so few letters *to* Wood. On just eight occasions (all in Volume 2) he refers to receiving letters.[503] That raises the intriguing question of whether Friends did not reply and, if they did, why he did not keep more of the replies. It was criticism by a non-Quaker, William Gouldthorp, in 1797 that provoked Wood into a lengthy exchange which he did record and keep.[504] Gouldthorp had accused Wood of not speaking 'by the scriptures nor by the spirit' in a funeral address. The content of his first letter suggests that he was a Methodist and that Wood had said something about Methodism that he found offensive. Gouldthorp was provocatively critical. But it is hard to see how Wood could justify using language like 'such a piece of falsity confusion and contradictory nonsense I never remember to have before read; a mind I believe in the least enlightened by the pure Truth would have been ashamed to subscribe their name as the author.'[505] He then goes on to say he has written 'in love, even in that which is pure and unfeigned.' Gouldthorp might reasonably have taken this to be hypocrisy or sarcasm.

Third, 'while I am writing.' Wood often tells his correspondents that, as he writes, he has been divinely given some topic to include, which suggests his letters, like his preaching, were not thought out in advance but relied on God's guidance for

[503] vol 2 nb19/9, 2/19.12, 2/21.4, 2/ 22. 14, 2/26.2, 2/22.7, 2/33.10, 2/33.19
[504] Vol 2 NB19/10
[505] 'Seasoned' meant experienced both in things Quakerly and things Christian, long-standing Friends whose loyalty to Gospel Order was undoubted
[506] vol 1 nb8/1-2

inspiration. For instance, William Taylor is told ‘I believe his Love is towards thee, I feel it flow in my heart whilst I am writing.’

5.5 Letters by others

In addition to the letters written by Joseph Wood the Notebooks also include almost 70 letters written by others, some 20 of them from or about women. Some of these have already been referred to. The first entry in the first volume is entitled ‘An abstract of a Letter to a Friend’ and is dated 1756, so presumably was initially kept by Wood’s parents. It uses Hebrew imagery and a metaphor which was very popular among Friends: the parable of the ‘good husbandman and Vinedresser’ which otherwise, perhaps surprisingly, is used only a couple of times by Wood. ‘The parable was of great significance to Quakers and other Protestants of the eighteenth century,’ according to Erin Bell, and worked at both literal and spiritual levels.[506] Well-known contemporary Friend Mary Peisley is included both through a letter and a journal extract, and there are letters to Anthony Benezet and other well-known Quakers on both sides of the Atlantic, perhaps included because they were familiar to Friends.

Most of the letters share the religious views and concerns of Joseph Wood. One in particular - ‘Letter from J: Thorp of Manchester, to F: Dodgson of Leek in Staffordshire.’ - seems to be an answer to what could have been a cry from Wood to

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[506] Bell, Erin (2006), ‘From Ploughing the Wilderness to Hedging the Vineyard: Meanings and Uses of Husbandry Among Quakers, C.1650-C.1860’, *Quaker Studies* 10:2, 135-159. The parable is in Matthew’s Gospel.
[507] John Churchman (1705-75) was a well-known recorded minister on both sides of the Atlantic

God seeking understanding of why he suffered such poor health. Another, in 1752 from John Churchman to John Haslam,[507] criticises himself for unwatchfulness, while an entertaining Quaker named Claude Gay, who appears at length twice, explains how to behave when your ship is boarded by French pirates and you end up in captivity. He then describes his time in the Channel Islands in 1775. Clearly conscientious about Gospel Order, he was also very much an individual and I suspect that combination of characteristics is what endeared him sufficiently to Wood to earn him a substantial place in the Notebooks.[508] Two letters are included from Hannah Earnshaw. That of 1782 urges Quaker parents to 'shun superfluity' and 'not put upon your Children Gayer Apparel than yourselves do wear'[509]. It continues on that theme in a manner of which Joseph Wood would have thoroughly approved. In the following letter Hannah writes to Joseph Wood with 'some Account of her late Sister Sarah Earnshaw deceased'. Her sister had questioned the reasons for her terminal illness, but came to accept that 'she was eased of the hard exercise that had been upon her'. Hannah, for her part, felt there would be no cause to mourn. Her sister's concern for Quaker youth and attendance at weekday meetings would also have appealed to Wood. One letter sent in 1782 appears in two publications: from Sarah Tuke Grubb and Mary Proud it is addressed to two Monthly Meetings in Scotland.[510] Wood was in the habit of writing to people who lived with him when he

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[508] 1/3.1-5 and 1/3.6-12

[509] vol 1 nb3/19-20 and nb3/20-21

[510] The letter is included in Wood's first collection of letters and in Skidmore's book of writings by Eighteenth Century Quaker Women. The two texts are identical except for some confusion in one sentence, of which Skidmore's version is the clearer. The letter criticises a 'spirit of indifference' and 'a mixing with the spirit and customs of the world' through giving up 'that pure language to which our forefathers were turned.' Skidmore's version is addressed to Old Meldrum Monthly Meeting while Wood's is to Kinmuck Monthly Meeting. Both MMs still exist and are in the Aberdeen area.

had something important to communicate, rather than simply talking to them. Such was the case with servant Benjamin Beever who got a lengthy written reprimand for going out without permission.· Wood's reasoning was that they could refer back to a letter whereas a conversation was there and gone. He also had a longer-term reason:

> As I have apprehended there may be a service in leaving to posterity some remarks of such of my acquaintance as have thro' their diligent attention and Obedience to the Grace of God, been preserved in a religious course of Life, and been an honour to the Truth they profest, that others may thereby be encouraged to receive and believe in the same principle of Light and Life which comes by Jesus Christ; so I believe it may be equally as serviceable to leave some remarks concerning those, who thro' unwatchfulness have suffered the light in them to become darkness.[511]

He wrote to Henry Marsden that he also had another reason – he could not feel at peace with himself until he had committed his thoughts to paper.

5.6 Other diarists

This section begins with something not directly connected with Joseph Wood, his Notebooks or Yorkshire – the diary of an eighteenth century Cumbrian Quaker named Isaac Fletcher.[511] The purpose in including Fletcher is to provide a

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[511] Fletcher lived from 1713 to 1781; Roman numerals are used in references to him to avoid confusion
[512] vol 1 nb6/6-8

comparison and contrast with Joseph Wood. I also very briefly introduce another diarist, John Kelsall, who predated Wood by a couple of decades.

The lives of Fletcher and Wood coincided at several points but in many respects they differed sharply. After reading both their works one is left with the question: which one was the more typical Quaker of his time? They were both tenant farmers with business interests, both deeply involved in their local meetings, both well-read, and both well-travelled within the British Isles. Both kept weather details as part of their diary entries, along with comments on the state of agriculture. Fletcher has much more to say about his other business interests; Wood always dismisses his business concerns in a phrase.

A married man with three sons, Fletcher worked as an attorney (although not formally qualified) as well as being a tenant farmer and having numerous business interests. His diary is very different from Wood's Notebooks in both style and content. He kept it for the last 25 years of his life. Each of his entries got a maximum of one inch of space, or four handwritten lines. It follows that they were perfunctory, but Fletcher was adept at conveying meaning with a few words. He reports on the affairs of preparative, monthly and other Quaker meetings, usually without comment. But he could be critical: 'The ministry very poor and low', was his terse summary of one quarterly meeting. Visiting ministers were sometimes named and praised. 'Sound and very acceptable ministry' in November 1760 from visitors named Parkinson and Wilson. Woven in with his thoughts on meeting were comments on his business dealings and farming. Thus his entries, though brief, were often rich in day-to-day social detail. Wood, by contrast, gives fulsome details of meetings – how many were

there, who ministered, what scripture texts they used, what he thought about their contribution, and a great deal else, while seldom mentioning business or farming.

The differences between them as Quakers go deeper. Fletcher was a man of the Enlightenment and read a lot of ‘new thinking’ about science, industry and economics. He had a library of some 300 books. Wood also had a library but it ran to only a few dozen titles, mostly concerning Quakerism in particular or Christianity in general. He was uneasy about the intellectual and religious ideas of the Enlightenment. While God, Christ and scripture are hardly mentioned in Fletcher, for Wood they are the reason for writing his Notebooks. One subject they did share was tithing, but while Wood attacked it on theological grounds Fletcher, having researched the subject in some detail, did so for legal reasons.

The two men had very different relations with their local meetings. Wood was an active evangelical minister who never reports seeking other office. Fletcher was a leading member of his community and his roles variously included being an elder, clerk of the monthly meeting, clerk of quarterly meeting, representing Cumberland at London Yearly Meeting on four occasions, and being included in ‘committees of “heavyweight” Friends’ appointed by Yearly Meeting in 1760 to report on how effectively monthly and quarterly meetings were imposing the Discipline. But Fletcher’s busy life was blighted by bitter disagreements with some of his fellow Quakers, mostly about money.

John Kelsall's diaries, journal and letters have been known as a good source for historians for many years. The diaries detail his travels as an active Quaker and his work in the iron trade for Abraham Darby, both at Dolgun Blast Furnace and Dolobran Forge. Wood often trod in Kelsall's footsteps when he travelled in Wales, with both men choosing to walk in preference to any other form of travelling.[513]

Chapter 5 summary

Wood's letters tell us more about his personality than any other part of the Notebooks, and they also tell us much about the lives of some of his correspondents. Inclusion of letters such as that from the young woman to the Methodist are evidence of a movement in Quakerism that accepted the discipline of Gospel Order but rejected continental Quietism as a practice. However, silence always played a significant part in Quaker worship. Wood's use of the written word as an extension of the preached word is repeatedly demonstrated in his correspondence.

- *Tables overpage*

[513] *John Kelsall Diaries and Journal 1699 – 1743*, Transcribed by George Adamson, 1994-1996, edited by Peter Adamson and Peter Crew, 2020]. Kelsall's Journal (1700-1736) turned up 40 years after the diaries, together with two volumes of copies of letters which he sent and received.

TABLE 5.2 Mentioned in correspondence (vols 1 and 2)

	vol 1 (1756-1803)	vol 2 (1802-1821)
Baptisms	3	1
Clay (in potter's hands)	2	1
Drunkenness/alcohol	2	3
Duty	1	1
Enemy (Satan, evil)	7	20
First Friends	1	-
Instruments (for God's use)	1	3
Light (of Christ)	7	10
Marriage	5	4
Meetings (attendance)	6	2
Obedience	1	3
Plainness	2	2
Remnant	8	9
Seed	4	6
Silence/stillness	7	4
Tithes	1	-
Truth	12	17
Visitations	6	2
Youth	5	6

Table 5.2 lists all the subjects mentioned in correspondence in volumes 1 and 2. There are 26 of them. Volumes 3-5 are not included because there is so little correspondence.

The following subjects are mentioned only in Volume 2

spirit	1,	temptation	1
prayer	1,	sorrow	1
gossiping	1,	untruthfulness	1

Table of women's letters on following page

TABLE 5.3 Letters to or from women

Volume 1

LN1 Abstract of a Letter to a Friend 1756
M[ary] Piesly [*sic*] to a Friend
S. Hume to A. Bezezet [*sic*] 1774
E. Tuke to J. Wood 1776
Tabitha Hoyland to Joseph Wood 1778

LN2 Mary Brotherton (now Brook) to John Hall 1756
Richard Baker to M Wigham and E Tuke 1759
Young Woman to a Methodist Preacher 1779
P. Barclay to her husband's daughter
Jane Burrow to John Schofield 1781
Elizabeth Morris to Samuel Neal
John Churchman to a young Woman on marriage

LN3 Martha Routh to her brother and sister 1782
M. Proud and Sarah Grubb to Kinmuch MM 1782
Hannah Earnshaw to Joseph Wood 1783

LN4 Methodist to Wakefield Friend 1786
M Colsworthy to R Dudley

LN5 Clergyman to Patience Brayton 1787
Mary Leaver to her daughters

LN7 Robert Barrow to his wife 1696

LN8 JW to 19 – all men except Ann Firth

LN9 May Drummond to Frances Henshaw 1736

LN10 JW to 14 – all men except 2

LN12 JW to 19 – all men except 5 (3 to Martha Dickinson)

LN14 JW to 19 – all men except 6 (4 to Martha Dickinson)

LN17A JW to four women in 1802 - Sarah Firth, Elizabeth Dunn, Ellen Spenceley,[*sic*] Elizabeth Wilson

Volumes 2, 3

LN19 JW to Jane Burrow 1802
JW to Susanna Dickinson 1802
JW to Jane Wood 1803
JW to E. Moorhouse 1803

LN21 JW to Martha Dickinson1803
JW to Ellin Spencerley 1803

LN22 JW to I. Bashforth 1804
JW to Suzannah Clark 1804
JW to Alice Midgley 1804

LN26 JW to Ellin Spencerley

LN27 JW to S. Atkinson 1808
JW to E Leatham 1810
JW to Mary Sykes 1810

LN30 M Sykes to S Coward 1810
from Mary Brook to D: H

LN32 J Fisher to his Wife 1813

LN33 JW to E Dickinson 1816
Clergyman's Wife to friend
in London 1815

LN36 young Woman to Parents
respecting Czar's visit

- (All are in Long Notebooks, except these 3)
  SN7 E Dale to R Shackleton
  SN14 Woman in Bath to husband
  SN14 Sarah Lynes to T Dobson c1790

Chapter 6 Holiness and the soul of Quakerism

This chapter explores Quietism, mysticism and holiness as spiritual forces in Joseph Wood's generation, and considers Carole Spencer's typology to compare her understanding of some critical terminology with Wood's. It concludes by looking at the way spiritual beliefs were applied in everyday life. It argues that Wood's Notebooks, which were unknown to Spencer, offer new insights into religious understanding of Quakerism in the period, particularly in the areas I have focused on: the loss of so much in original Quaker spirituality and the differences between Northern and Southern Quakerism. Spencer's book on Quaker holiness was the original incentive for this thesis and therefore dominates the discussion. This chapter also develops other themes, including Spencer's eight Essential Elements (plus one), Friends and continental practice, Quietism, spiritual claustrophobia, perfection, the individual search for God subsumed in the corporate, Quaker Hebrews, and the remnant. Truth, Light and Seed were all metaphors used by Quakers for God or Christ. This chapter demonstrates that Friends were still a spiritually minded people well into the nineteenth century. It traces the sect's transformation into a socially acceptable organisation. Early Friends kept their theology simple. For many years Barclay's *Apology* provided their only systematic theology and an advantage of their worship practices was that they did not have much in the way of dogma to defend. However, T. Vail Palmer suggests that they had 'lost sight of the original Quaker understanding of the atonement'. He argues that the classical church view of atonement – that God and humanity are reconciled through Christ's sacrificial death – is in error, that early Friends were correct in basing their understanding of the atonement on nonviolence and restorative justice.[559] Palmer may be right or wrong,

but I mention this particular debate about atonement because it is similar to Benson's argument for the lost Quaker insight into Jesus.

6.1 Loss of spiritual certainty after 1660s

The spiritual forces that shaped Quakerism for the eighteenth century were at work in the seventeenth. For the first Quakers, direct personal experience of the divine – to them, the Inward Light of Christ – provided certainty of belief. But the idea that this certainty was homogeneous within the Quaker world was more a creation of later writers than a statement of reality. For the second and subsequent generations the light of Christ, however understood, 'did not provide quite the same level of luminous, intuitive comprehension and conviction,' Towsley claims. She observes a shift in Quaker spiritual epistemology between the first and second generations of Friends, with the latter less confident about their understanding of the truth (she uses a lower case 't', unlike Joseph Wood). Quietism, mysticism and holiness were all to play a part in shaping Friends' religious thought after the first generation and all are examined here. However, it was not just belief that mattered; obedience through action was also required. In a letter to George Taylor in 1801 Wood says,

> It is not sufficient to be convinced of the Truth […] our obedience is required in order to prove the virtue and efficacy there of [*sic*], and to be preserved alive in our spirits unto God.' [560]

[559] May, Isaac B (2018) Review of T. Vail Palmer Jr, *A Long Road: How Quakers Made Sense of God and the Bible,* 'Quaker Religious Thought' 131:6

[560] vol 1 nb15/3-4

[561] Chijioke, Mary Ellen, and Claire B. Shetter, *Quaker History*, 82:1, 1993, 48-54

A commonly accepted view is that, as Chijioke and Shetter suggest, 'the radical millenarian movement'[561] that had been Quakerism in the Commonwealth period began to change into a respectable sect after the restoration of the monarchy. Despite this, Friends continued to be persecuted by both state and church. As late as 1690 a leading Anglican divine, Richard Baxter, could run through a litany of Quaker beliefs that was very similar to that which people like him had complained about 40 or more years earlier. Quakers, he said,

> make the light which every man have within him to be his sufficient rule, and consequently the Scripture and ministry are set light by…they pretend their dependence on the Spirit's conduct against set times of prayer and against sacrament, and against their due esteem of Scripture and ministry; they will not have the Scripture called the word of God; their principal zeal lieth in railing at the ministers as hirelings, deceivers, false prophets, etc., and in refusing to swear before a magistrate, or put off their hat to any, or say 'You' instead of 'Thou' or 'Thee', which are their words to all.[562]

By the mid-18th century, when Joseph Wood was born, Baxter's words were still applicable. But the underlying spiritual dynamic had changed and Quaker attitudes in the second half of the century bore little relation to those of a century earlier. According to Hall, it was 'an unescapable fact that a profound change had taken place, and that the Quakerism of 1752 was quite unlike the dynamic Quakerism of 1652.' However, Friends would not have accepted that characterisation and in fact saw themselves as 'the same people our forefathers were, in Faith, in doctrine, in worship, in ministry, and in discipline.'[563] That was how Joseph Wood would have

[562] Davies, Adrian (2000) 'The Quakers in English Society 1655-1725,' Oxford Scholarship Online
[563] 'Extracts from the Minutes and Advices of the Yearly Meeting of Friends held in London from its first institution,' 1783 preface, *Meeting for Sufferings*, p6

wished to describe himself and to be described by others. He says that 'ever since I was favoured with a religious turn of mind, apprehended it my duty to be diligent in the attendance of [monthly] meetings, where I have many times been refreshed with my Brethren and Sisters; and do not know that I have ever neglected this duty.'[564] It is not my contention that Wood was unique, but that he was among a minority of Friends whose spiritual world, resting on a mystical understanding, was more that of seventeenth century Friends than those of the later eighteenth or the nineteenth. The explanation offered by Adrian Davies in chapter 1 of this thesis illustrates this and also demonstrates how plainness became and remained a mark of spiritual Friends. When the early Friends reified personal holiness it was part of their binding into a unique relationship with God; they were with Christ as individuals as well as collectively. The Parousia for the whole world might not have happened, but it did so, in the Spirit, for them. Theirs was an anarchic, blissful, unrepeatable moment in history. But even before the passing of the first generation, this eschatological moment had come and gone. Perhaps ironically, Fox himself hastened the passing of the first phase of Quakerism. He directed the movement into collective responsibility and into Gospel Order and the discipline, which were to become defining features of Quakerism. Corporate holiness became an integral part of eighteenth century Quakerism.

Quakers might have been mystical in both the North and the South of England, but it was in the North that scripture was incorporated into their mysticism and not shunned as causing distraction from worship. Henry Cadbury points out that he is offering *A* Quaker Approach to the Bible, not *The* Quaker Approach, and it is

[564] Vol 2 NB23/5

therefore not surprising that 'the Quaker view of the Bible seems to be one of less regard for it than is found in other groups.'[565] The question can be asked, but not satisfactorily answered, whether southern Quakers could grow spiritually without regular use of the scriptures in worship. It is my contention that they could not and that over time this contributed to the decline of religious Quakerism, abetted by increasing material prosperity. While northern Quakers had always given a distinctive value to the Bible, they did so without accepting it as the ultimate divine authority. That authority was the Holy Spirit speaking directly to the true believer and supported by the Word of God, coterminous with Jesus Christ and beyond any contradiction.[566] That unique role of the scriptures led to spiritual refinement for the individual as Wood explained in this letter, one of several on the subject,

> O the necessity there is for us, to be cast again and again into the furnace of affliction, for our refinement, not only from the dross and Tin, the dregs of fallen nature and inbibed [*sic*] corruptions, but also from the reprobate silver; the busy workings of self … That so thou may experience as thou art thus exercised, under the daily cross: "the fining pot is for silver and the furnace for Gold, but the Lord trieth the heart." and will in his own time perfect his work there, as thou art concerned to abide in the faith and patience, under the varied operations of his holy hand.[567]

Friends had no monopoly on belief in the activities of the Holy Spirit although they expressed it differently to other Christians. Wood wrote that the Spirit was 'the only sure guide and director in all religious duties.' More than a century before Wood's

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[565] Cadbury, Henry Joel (1953) 'A Quaker Approach to the Bible,' Ward lecture at Guilford College, North Carolina
[566] Vol 1 NB8/6-7, to John Pickford, July 1795
[567] Frost, 'Dry Bones,' 508

time the Westminster Confession had said ‘we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word.’[568] From their beginnings Quakers had waited for the Spirit to make the true meaning of a passage of scripture clear rather than just taking it at face value. That would not contradict its literal meaning but would give it deeper spiritual meaning.[569] The issue then became one of the credibility of the person through whom the Spirit spoke. It was a matter of perception and interpretation,unlike liturgically based worship where the minister’s personality and style (at least theoretically) were less important. However, the implicit irony in this seems to have been lost on those Friends in whose Quietistic meetings ministry became less frequent, less relevant and more obscure as the eighteenth century wore on.

Likewise, the Inward Light and silence were gifts from God. Bauman argues that,

> The Inner [*sic*] Light was inaccessible to man's natural and earthly faculties […] a suppression of the earthly self was required of those who were attentive to the Light, and the basic term employed by the Quakers to refer to this state of suppression of self was silence.[570]

However, this waiting ‘cannot be performed but by a silence or cessation of the natural part on our side, since God manifests himself not to the outward man or senses, so much as to the inward, to wit, to the soul and spirit.'[571] Wood, as was usual among Friends of the period, lays more stress on the Spirit of Christ than on

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[568] Westminster Confession of Faith, 1:6, 1938 text
[569] Graves, Oxford *Handbook*, 277
[570] Bauman, Richard (1989) ‘Speaking in the Light: The Role of the Quaker Minister’, *Explorations in the Ethnography of Speaking*, Cambridge University Press, 146
[571] D. Barclay 1831, quoted in Bauman 145-6

Jesus the human being, the supernatural as against the natural. Frost observes that Friends placed 'far more emphasis upon the ethical teachings of Jesus and upon the inward illumination than upon the actual events in the New Testament'.[572] He also holds that many Friends had a docetic view of Jesus (that is, believing his bodily form only appeared as human). Wood illustrates this in the numerous times he refers to the 'prepared body of flesh' that Jesus was given in which to live his life in this world. That phrase sounds very much like a Jesus who had no real autonomy as a person and no will of his own. Wood often seems to refer to God the Father rather than Son or Spirit (although when he speaks of 'the Master' it is often unclear which member of the trinity he has in mind). Quakers generally believed in the trinity but conventional Christian theology was of far less significance to them than the Inward Light, or Truth, and God's use of it to offer every person the opportunity of salvation.

6.2 English and continental Quietism

The foregoing discussion leads naturally to consideration of Quietism, which is a means of meditative worship in which the individual seeks to say, do and think nothing. It appears under a variety of names in the mystical branches of major religions and also in philosophy. Of particular interest here is the use of the word in a Quaker context and the relationship between English 'Quietism' and that of continental Europe. Ingle refers to the use of the word Quietism to describe a period

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[572] Frost, 'Dry bones of Quaker theology'
[573] Ingle, Larry (1997), *The Future of Quaker History*, '*Journal of the Friends Historical Society*'
[574] It is clear how the misunderstanding could arise when Wood writes 'the Masters presence was near, his power was felt, the minds of many were solemnised thereby in times of silence, and prepared to receive the testimonies of Truth'

in the eighteenth century as ‘a term that I find questionable’.[573] I share his hesitation. Quietism became a synonym for silence, but it was really much more than that. Despite the evangelical tone in his Notebooks, Wood is sometimes regarded as a Quietist but I contest that view.[574] Quietism in some countries predated Quakerism by decades, with roots that can be traced back even further. The core question here concerns the significance, if any, of continental Quietism for English Quakerism. The coincidence of an upsurge in continental Quietism at the time of the first Quakers leads easily to the assumption that there must be a connection between the two. However, they are not the same: Continental Quietists were in search of inward peace rather than in receiving and sharing what Quakers called Truth. The first Quakers used silence as well as the spoken word in their worship. Subsequent generations also worshipped in silence and were very interested in continental Quietism, to the extent of translating and publishing French devotional works. The Spirit would speak to the individual Friend out of the silence, and that Friend would know what to do with what he or she had been given, often repeating it to the meeting as ministry. According to Jones, the emphasis shifted from individual to corporate Quietism over time[575] and, as with so much else, the spontaneity and spiritual adventurousness of early Friends was lost. As Braithwaite says, the Society of Friends ‘established a strong organisation and lost something of its soul.’[576] This is illustrated by the loss of ministry in many meetings, where Friends who felt a call to speak felt an equally strong call not to break the silence for fear of introducing ‘self’[577]

[575] Jones, *Later Periods of Quakerism*, vol 1, 38-40
[576] Braithwaite, 324
[577] Jones, 62-3

rather than Truth. Reading Wood's Notebooks, however, this does not seem to have been the problem in Yorkshire that it was in southern England and in Ireland. As he put it, God 'knows the states of the people and whether verbal communications or silence be best for them.'[578]

It is not possible to demonstrate a connection between Quakerism and Quietism either in philosophy or in practice that goes beyond the obvious similarity of silence, although in 1689 comments by a French bishop show an indirect relationship.[579] He warned that if Protestants 'base their faith on direct revelations rather than on the scripture, they will fall into the error of Quakers, the most extreme fanatics'. His source for this view was Robert Barclay and he is clearly familiar with Barclay's *Apology*, [580] but he does not connect Quakerism with Quietism. Jones, however, claims that Friends 'had settled into a confirmed Quietism long before they discovered and used' continental writings. [581] He immediately goes on to say Barclay established 'the entire basis and framework of Quietism' for Friends.[582] After a 24-page eulogy on the history of continental Quietism Jones embarks on a chapter, almost twice as long, about Quietism in the Society of Friends.[583] He argues that Quietism was thoroughly absorbed by eighteenth century English and American Quakerism,[584] but says there were 'plain signs' of it in Quaker groups before this. He

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[578] Vol 2 nb24/5
[579] Lloyd Gilbert, Dorothy, and Russell Pope (1940) 'Quakerism and French Quietism,' *Bulletin of Friends Historical Association*, 29:2, 93-96
[580] Barclay, Robert (1678) 'Apology for the True Christian Divinity' (which became the standard statement of Quaker doctrine for more than a century)
[581] xli, Jones' introduction to first edition of Braithwaite's *Second Period of Quakerism*
[582] *ibid*
[583] *Later Periods of Quakerism*, Vol 1, chapters 2 and 3
[584] *ibid*
[585] *ibid*
[586] *ibid*

sees Barclay's *Apology* as 'beyond question the primary influence which made Friends quietistic,'[585] showing how to get beyond human depravity and our inability to help ourselves by 'an act of faith in supernatural divine actions […] suppressing all human activity – which is Quietism.'' [586] However, Jones' apparent enthusiasm for Quietist Quakerism is at odds with the introduction he had written just two or three years earlier to Braithwaite's *Second Period of Quakerism*, in which he finds a difficulty in Quietist theory: 'There is no test, no criterion […] one must not question why, one must not ask for rational grounds. Reason is excluded. One must simply obey.' [587] Quietism 'has never told its adherents how to discriminate between the false light and the true.' [588] Jones names numerous individuals whose ministry, he says, was based on Quietism (although there are some quotations, he gives no references). One that he lingers over is Thomas Shillitoe, [589] who became a great friend and ministry companion of Joseph Wood. Hall believes Jones came to have a low view of Quietism[590] which he saw as timid, exclusive and negative, 'content with the cultivation of a remnant and the making of a peculiar people', unlike the mysticism of the Quaker founders which was characteristically positive. [591] Quietist Quakerism, in Jones' view, was almost monolithic in its distrust of the spoken word, fear of the 'creature' (ie, oneself) and sought union with God's will. Both were

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[587] *Later Periods of Quakerism*, Vol 1, chapters 2 and 3
[588] *ibid*
[589] *ibid*
[590] Jones, introduction to *Second Period of Quakerism,* xliv
[591] *ibid*
[592] *ibid*
[593] Hall, 'From Jones to Ingle,' *Quaker Studies* 5:2

mystical, and both greatly valued silence,[592] but there was a theological gulf between Catholic Quietism and Protest Quakerism which even the works of William Law[593] could not bridge, although his writings did much to help shape Quietist Quakerism.[594] Jones, who says this Quietism 'was corporate rather than individualistic,' [595] gives many examples of eighteenth century Quaker Quietism. A French Quietist well-known in England was Jeanne Guyon, who spent several years in prison for publishing *A Short and Very Easy Method of Prayer* in 1695, which became popular among English Friends. She wrote,

> What must the soul do […] to be faithful to God? Nothing, and less than nothing. It must simply suffer itself to be possessed, acted upon, and moved without resistance […] letting itself be led at all times and to any place, regardless of sight or reason, and without thinking of either.[596]

From these words it is clear how Friends could easily align their faith with continental practice. Spencer holds that by the beginning of the eighteenth century continental Quietism had 'helped to transform radical Quakerism into mystical Quakerism.'[597] I think this is true, but for many Quakers Gospel Order could provide a workable substitute for mysticism. Spencer's brief discussion touches on the complexities of mysticism as a whole, not least the extent to which Quakerism was mystical in its

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[594] *Later Periods of Quakerism,* 62
[595] *ibid*, 94-100
[596] see chapter 2 of Spencer
[597] Spencer, chapter 3
[598] *ibid*

early years. This rapidly becomes a highly subjective question incapable of a definitive answer. However, mystical Quakerism produced 'some of Quakerism's most passionate and practical social reformers' on both sides of the Atlantic.[598] Wood believed that a person wanting to be regenerated needed to be brought into a state of perfect stillness 'lest he should not hear the still small voice.' This is typical of his understanding of the value of silence. God can use the Quaker silence to reprove or improve the individual. Wood says he would never speak at a meeting for worship without being led by the Spirit and this is repeated many times in the Notebooks. Silence could be spiritually invaluable and it is easy to see how Friends' silence and Quietism could become confused. Wood particularly noted if a meeting were held in silence. For instance, 'The meeting was held in silence, but I thought it was a solemn profitable time'[599] and,

> excepting people come to experience the advantage of pure silence I am convinced there will be not much growth in the Truth, and for this reason Ministers frequently find themselves concerned to lead the People thereunto by example.[602]

He never uses the word Quietism in the Notebooks. Quietism resembled both the mystical experience and the Quaker experience. The following is not just an example of mystical ministry by Wood, it also includes Quaker imagery of the Light of Christ and biblical metaphors from the Hebrew captivity. Wood writes:

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[599] Wakefield MM – vol 2 nb29/9. This reference and the next one, 602, are particularly interesting in that Wood (1) unambiguously extols the virtues of silence and (2) he clearly says ministers could find themselves led not to speak. Other references to silence include vol 2 nb24/5 in 1805 and vol 2 nb29/8 in 1809.

[602] See 599

[603] Several times Wood uses the symbolic value of Zion, both as place and people, but never more fully than here where the parallels between the ancient Israelites and contemporary Quakers are made clear.

> I had sat four or five meetings before in this place (this frame of mind), as with my mouth in the dust, mine harp being hung as upon the willow, in a low suffering depressed state which was my situation in the forepart of this meeting… And as I was thus exercised Light began to shine, and life spring up, and the language of the prophet in the Lords name came before me […] I felt a concern to stand upon my feet I had a long testimony to bear […] not feeling myself clear, I got up again and enlarged pretty considerably, by way of encouragement to the rightly exercised and deeply afflicted minds.[603]

If Quietism came to dominate meetings in England at the expense of more active Quakerism, with the sect turning increasingly in on itself in silence, that domination was not total. I have already argued from Wood's Notebooks that Quietism was not the rule in northern England. It is an essentially negative view of eighteenth-century Quakerism, and one that Kathryn Damiano rightly rejects.[604] Writing from a subjective point of view, she provides a modern political and feminist interpretation of Quakerism and Quietism. It is a shame she did not know Wood's Notebooks, which provide much evidence to support her view that,

> spiritual formation for Friends of this period combined both the negative way, denial of the world, the disciplines of silence, waiting, plainness, and the affirmative way sustained by the community of faith, which encourages faithfulness, transformation and nurture of the inward life.[605]

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[604] Damiano, Kathryn (1998) *On earth as it is in heaven: eighteenth century Quakerism as realised eschatology*
[605] *ibid*
[606] Spencer, Carole D. (1991) 'Evangelism, Feminism and Social Reform: The Quaker Woman Minister and the Holiness Revival,' *Quaker History*, Vol 80, 24-48

Whatever the historical reality about the influence of Quietism, the general subjective impression is that the era could be spiritually claustrophobic. In an article on nineteenth century women Spencer remarks that 'a flood of creativity and energy […] had been suppressed by a century of Quietism and a rigid legalism.'[606]

This section has illustrated the differences between Quakerism and continental Quietism. Despite similarities between them, Quakerism was different both in what it sought to achieve and the way it used silence to achieve those ends. Silence was a means to an end for Quakerism but it was an end in itself for continental Quietism.

6.3 Spencer's model of Holiness Quakerism

In the preface to her book *Holiness: The Soul of Quakerism,* Spencer speaks of many unknown and long-dead Friends who had 'experienced the love of God as mystical union.' She refers to them as her spiritual mentors. But her model, or type, for the book is much more modern and is based on a widely used four-part typology[607] which she combines with Hugh Barbour's 'six historical ideal types or models of perfection.'[608] The result is eight 'Essential Elements of Holiness Quakerism', in Spencer's phrase, which she claims both sum up the faith of first generation Friends and also 'represent basic early Christian beliefs.'[609] In other words, she is saying that Quaker Holiness in the eighteenth century stretched back to that of the first Christians. This is a big claim and to discuss it the Essential Elements must be considered individually. In Spencer's listing they are in this order: scripture,

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[607] Holmes, Urban (1984) 'The History of Christian Spirituality: An Analytical Introduction,' Seabury Press
[608] Barbour, Hugh 'six historical types of perfection,' 10-11
[609] Spencer, 'The Essential Elements of Holiness Quakerism,' 14, 1.5 (*Holiness* from here on)

suffering, evangelism, mysticism, perfection, eschatology, conversion and charisma.[610] References from Wood's Notebooks will be used to provide eighteenth-nineteenth century examples, contrasts and comparisons.[611] I have followed Spencer's ordering with the exception of mysticism and perfection, which I have put last. This is partly because of the amount of attention they require but also because, if we think of attaining holiness in stages, their significance on the road to it comes towards the end of the journey. Spencer has a lot more to say in her book about aspects of the eight points than can be accommodated here but I have tried to focus on the kernel of her case. Among much else she says that 'entering the arena of holiness is a step across the ordinary into the extraordinary, into the transcendent.' That phrase is borrowed from John Punshon, whose book *Reasons for Hope*, is praised. [612] But Spencer criticises Punshon because he identifies holiness as transcendent while resisting using the word mystical.[613] She argues that 'Holiness is first of all a step into the mystical, a direct encounter with God as early Friends experienced it.' [614] Section 1.6 in Spencer's first chapter says Quaker holiness is 'essentially orthodox' in nature but it is not clear how she comes by this conclusion. She argues for Quaker holiness 'as a form of Christ-mysticism' (page 35) that was central to the beginnings of Quakerism but at the same time accepts conventional understandings of the trinity, incarnation and atonement.

The eight essential elements are:

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[610] Spencer, the 'constellation' of eight Essential Elements, 15-33

[611] Spencer, *Holiness*, 34-38

[612] Punshon, John (2001) *Reasons for Hope*, Quaker Studies 7:1

[613] Spencer, Carole (2003) 'Quaker Holiness: A Response to John Punshon's *Reasons for Hope,* Quaker Religious Thought 99:4

i ***Scripture*****.** The tables in Appendix 1 illustrate both the width and depth of Friends' use of the Bible in their preaching. In addition, scripture features strongly in Wood's reports of meetings through all chapters. Like most Christians of their day, Quakers took a literal view of scripture. There could be disagreement about interpretation of a passage but its veracity was never in doubt. [615] Spencer broadly follows the same line as Wood (whose work she would not have known) except that she underestimates use of Matthew's Gospel. [616] Her claim that Quakers found God's inspiration beyond scripture, as well as in it – an interpretation that set them apart from Puritans – is substantiated in Wood, [617] as is her argument that passages of scripture have not just a literal meaning but also a deeper mystical meaning 'that would be illumined by the Spirit for those who were truly converted.' [618]

ii ***Eschatology*****.** The imminent end of the world and second coming of Christ, were propositions that early Quakers, like others, believed in and saw themselves as preparing for. However, that changed before the first generation had died out, into a 'realised' eschatology, which saw Christ's return as inward and spiritual, even though there might be a bodily resurrection at some time in the future It was something for the individual to find within her or himself, according to Spencer. [617] Wood's examples include 'some experience, and many more might; His second coming in them without sin unto salvation, and this experience doth not in the least lay waste or set at nought, what he did in the flesh but fully confirms the same.' [618] Wood illustrates Quakers holding to a spiritual and individual understanding of the eschaton. It is

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[614] Scripture meant the Authorised (or King James) Version of the Bible
[615] Spencer, *Holiness,* 15
[616] Spencer, *Holiness,* 16
[617] Spencer, *Holiness,* 17
[618] vol17a nb4/5 - 1802 letter to John Beaumont

'those and those only who are crucified with Christ, that will be found worthy to reign with him.'[619] But despite the apparent clarity of that statement Quakers of his generation were far from unanimous in their beliefs about the nature and timing of Christ's return. 'We must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, to answer for our own deeds […] humble thyself before the Lord, that so thou may be holpened [*sic*] with a little help'[620] was just one of Wood's many pronouncements on the subject.

iii *Conversion*. Spencer vividly describes the powerful conversion experience of the first Friends, using their own words and introducing the concept of the 'religion of the heart' to explain the divergence from tradition. [621] Religion of the heart was a Europe-wide phenomenon, Catholic and Protestant, beginning in the sixteenth century and continuing into the eighteenth. It was inward and highly individual, stressing personal encounter with the divine. [622] It had an impact on Friends, but there was nothing like the explosive joy of first generation conversion experiences. Wood wanted new members to become 'plain' Friends, to show the world through the way they dressed and spoke that they were Quakers, and he also wanted gay Friends to see the error of their ways and adopt the plainness testimony. That, to him, was on a par with winning a new convert. Spencer notes that first Friends gave a sense of assurance in their conversion narratives. [623] The conversions which Wood records are more like

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[619] vol 2 nb26.21
[620] Campbell, Ted (1991) 'The Religion of the Heart; A study of European Religious Life in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,' quoted in Spencer, 18-19
[621] *ibid*, 11
[622] Spencer, 18
[623] *ibid,* 21
[624] *ibid*, 21-22
[625] Vol1 nb18; 1/18.12-13; 1/18.13
[626] Spencer, *Holiness,* 23
[627] Anderson, Paul N (2018) 'Primitive Christianity Revived—The Original Quaker Vision,' *Quaker Religious Thought* 131:2

those of seventeenth century Puritans, whose spiritual peace was only temporary. [624] One interesting (if possibly apocryphal) example is that of a Dr and Mrs Southam of Buckingham, who were converted by seeing a sympathetic Quaker character in a London play and then reading Barclay's Apology.[625] Six other conversions - family and servants – followed soon after.

iv *Evangelism*. Spencer calls the first Quakers 'a missionary movement on a grand scale.' [626] They attempted to preach to the world but belief in the universal availability of grace failed to impress people on a grand scale, and even in England conversions were relatively few and hard won. Wood writes a lot about mass conversions in Derby, Dewsbury and Burton in the early nineteenth century[627] and he often has one or two individuals to mention, but it was nothing like the enthusiasm of the first generation of Friends of whom Spencer says they could be called 'the "evangelicals" of their time.' [628] Paul Anderson argues that the first Friends were definitely not 'seeking to foster and perpetuate a particular denomination or sect.' [629] Rather than preaching a new movement, they were challenging the whole gamut of sectarianism, preaching primitive Christianity revived, a return to the apostolic church. [630] (This shades into Benson's work, as outlined in chapters one and two)

v *Charisma*. The first generation of Friends saw themselves as continuing the growth of the primitive church as found in the Acts of the Apostles and their

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[628] *ibid*
[629] *ibid*

charismatic behaviour has been likened to modern Pentecostalism. But care is needed not to equate the two because many aspects of their worship differed. From the second generation onwards, Quakers played down charismatic signs, such as miracles and glossolalia, in the writings of the first generation.[631] They feared some early works could be misconstrued. However, by Wood's generation in the later eighteenth century charismatic signs were still in evidence[632] and they could refer to a community just as much as to an individual. Spencer notes that the coming of 'the 'power of the Lord' was found to be disturbing among American Orthodox Friends during the Holiness Revival of the nineteenth century, [632] a generation after Wood. Wood describes some Pentecostal-type experiences in his own day. [633]

vi *Suffering*. According to Wood, responding to suffering in the right way not only demonstrated the unity of Friends both to themselves and the wider world, but also demonstrated holiness in life and was tantamount to sharing the passion of Christ. (Chapter 4 explores suffering in more detail.) God was not fickle. If the Almighty struck at our health, there had to be a good reason for it. Wood argues that Quakers would be holier if they could suffer more. But his thinking was muddled when it came to God and health, as this letter to William Taylor shows:

> I believe the Lord doth not afflict those who are desirous to serve him willingly, nor grieve the children of men for nought; But every trying dispensation is intended to

[630] *ibid*. Anderson suggests that the first two generations of Friends - not just the first - were seeking to recover primitive Christianity

[631] Examples can be found in Wood's Notebooks, where he mentions many dreams and visions, and also in Sylvia Stevens' *Quakers in Northeast Norfolk, England, 1690-1800* (2012) Edwin Mellen

[632] *ibid*, 26

> establish the Truth of his promise, that all things work together for good to them that truly love and fear God.' [634]

Spencer uses Besse's *Sufferings of the People Called Quakers* to define and elaborate on the privations that first Friends suffered. [635] Like Wood in his generation she sees that 'Participation in God means participation in the cross and in the passion of Christ' but it is in the 1661 publication *The Spirit of Christ* by Ellis Hook that Spencer identifies the beginning of 'a theology of suffering as the way of holiness.' [636]

Spencer starts to develop the theme of suffering in persecution as a route to holiness but instead turns to self-denial and renunciation as evidence of holiness. This is a pity. There are several aspects of suffering which could be elaborated under this heading. For one, Spencer implies that there was, as it were, a scale of suffering, the more you suffered the holier you were. Second, suffering for religious reasons (like the first generation Friends) morphed into suffering for political or social reasons (such as women's equality). Third, religious suffering can be equated by some people as suffering for God. Joseph Wood sometimes felt he was being punished by God and at other times that his faith was being tested.

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[633] One such involved a young man named Charles Blackburn. Wood writes [in Vol 4 NB26/11]: 'After a considerable time silence he thus addressed himself to me in tears Joseph I am now fully convinced that a Man may know something of a man by the spirit of a man which is in him but none can know the things of God but by the spirit of God; I have no need to inform thee of my state thou knows it better than myself. It has been clearly opened this evening, and the way of life and salvation pointed out.' This is the same Charles Blackburn who was to forsake Friends for Joanna Southcott's sect.

[634] vol 2 nb21/4-5

[635] Spencer, *Holiness*, 27

[636] *ibid*

[637] *ibid*

vii mysticism. At his or her simplest, the mystic can be defined as having a mind that is free of distractions and is seeking direct experience of God. However, Spencer observes that 'there is no consensus on the nature of mystical experience'[637] and goes on to reference more than a dozen scholarly works to prove the point. It is found in varying degrees of importance in all major religions. Some Quaker writers have seen the Society of Friends as primarily mystical[638] and well-known Anglo-Catholic spiritual writer Evelyn Underhill refers to Quakerism as 'that great experiment in corporate mysticism.' [639] Mystics are commonly thought of as passive, followers of the *via negativa*, but paradoxically another road to God is the *via positiva*.[640] Early Quakers used both, valuing both the spoken word and silence in their worship.[641] By the later eighteenth century, however, the early Quakers' search for direct knowledge of God had been tempered by the passing of time and the changing material circumstances of the Society of Friends.[642] As previously discussed (chapter 1) the North of England remained closer to the practices and beliefs of original Friends. Joseph Wood exhibits many of the signs that were

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[638] Spencer, *Holiness*, 28, footnote 58
[639] *ibid* 28-29
[640] *ibid*
[641] Respectively, these are the language of negation and of the positive.
[642] It is unlikely that unlettered Friends would use the language of classical mysticism but they could still express the meaning and feeling it conveyed.

associated with mysticism. His belief in the universality of God's grace,[643] prayerful use of silence at meetings, constant search for communion with the Spirit, regular use of contemplation in private worship, reliance on scripture,[644] and readiness to suffer for his beliefs, all testify to a strong mystical strand in Wood's faith. When Wood wrote about 'that great mystery of his inward and spiritual appearance in the hearts of all men' he was not necessarily thinking in terms that transcended Quaker practice. Scripture was central to his understanding of mystical faith, even though it was not immutable. In particular the gospels were,

those sacred writings which testified of the many mighty miracles wrought by our saviour in that prepared body of flesh given him to do his heavenly Fathers will in […] he purchased for all men a measure or manifestation of his holy spirit which convinceth man of sin and leads those who believe therein and obey its requirings out of sin into all truth.[645]

Spencer argues persuasively that early Friends sometimes used language in a way that could transcend reality, that they had 'profound insight into the limits of language in expressing Reality'.[646] It was here that the roots of silent worship lay: 'a Reality existed which was ***not*** (her emphasis) relative to language … a type of apophatic mysticism'. [647] Tolles seems to confuse quietism with mysticism when he says 'The mood of quietism crept over the Society of Friends in the early eighteenth century and the enthusiast gave way to the mystic as the normal Quaker type.'[648] It is

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[643] Wood means the *availability* of God's grace, not its indiscriminate use.
[644] vol 2 nb20.3. Wood uses Titus 3:3-5 which is about salvation through rebirth by the Holy Spirit
[645] Tolles, Frederick B. (1945) 'Quietism versus Enthusiasm: The Philadelphia Quakers and the Great Awakening,' *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 69, No. 1 (Jan 1945), 26-49, The Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
[646] Spencer, *Holiness*, 30
[647] *ibid*

[651] Spencer, holiness. 'Apophatic' mysticism, or mysticism of the negative way, means using only negative terms when speaking of God, negating concepts that might be applied to God.

true that enthusiasm waned, but 'the mystic' was never the normal Quaker type. The Hebrew Bible and New Testament contain many reports of direct experiences of God. There are also many such references in Joseph Wood's Notebooks, and the reason for pointing them out is to underline Wood's mysticism, which can easily be overlooked in his record of daily Quaker life. For sheer mystical intensity it is not Wood himself but some of those whose work he approvingly copied into the Notebooks, who spiritually connect the late eighteenth century with the first Friends. *A Letter from P: Barclay to her husbands daughter by a former Wife,* is one such. This letter has been referenced previously in this thesis and is a very good example.[654] But the Notebooks provide many other examples, particularly in Volumes 1 and 2. As Robert Atchley puts it: 'Mystical experience is direct experience of God. Quaker silence is an invitation to experience that of God within ourselves.'[655] But the invitation was often not accepted; many Quakers after the first generation were not mystically inclined. Mystical faith was only accessible to those who lived in the Inward Light of Christ and Gospel Order worked to dampen such enthusiasm, certainly in the South.

Some 24 years after the above, Wood wrote to his nephew Robert that 'man in the present day can do little one for another, the work of Religion being a heart work, and as it is the Lords, so it must be begun and carried on by his Power.'[658] This short

[652] Atchley, Robert (2017) 'Mystical Experience, the Bedrock of Quaker Faith,' *Friends Journal* February 2017.These are the first words of Atchley's article, but they seem to be contradicted by the headline on it 'Mystical Experience, the Bedrock of Quaker Faith'. I argue that mystical experience *should* have been the Quaker bedrock but was lost after the first generation.
[653] Tolles, see 645 above
[654] '[God's] divine power reached to my Soul when about eighteen years of age which hath wonderfully changed my mind, thoughts and affections […] I find the peace of God to rest upon my soul.'
[655] Atchley on direct experience of God

letter urges ‘walking in obedience to the discoveries of the Light of Christ’ on Robert Wood. Joseph Wood acknowledged that there were degrees of mystical experience. In 1800 he wrote to Hezekiah Smith: ‘It is in this state of pure silence, and true quietude of mind; that thou may be favoured to know the Lord’s voice […] though for a season thou may have to sit as with thy mouth in the dust, bearing the indignation of the Lord because though [*sic*] hast sinned against him.’ [654] There were few ‘in this our day who are willing to submit to the necessary Baptisms that qualifies to be truly useful’ he writes to his cousin Joseph Mallinson in 1795. Mysticism is perhaps the best known but least understood of Spencer’s eight elements. In her words ‘the mystic is not content to know about God, he longs for union with God.’ Wood fits that description: ‘I had a few words [...] setting forth the nature of spiritual worship, and the sorrow I had felt that so many appeared Strangers to it and were sitting down at ease in the traditions of their forefathers.’ [656] Wood saw himself as living with God moment-by-moment in a mystical relationship of obedience and trust. He believed this relationship was sometimes tested by God, but that ultimately the almighty would provide the spiritual resources to enable the minister to triumph:

> I stood up in much weakness, but feeling in the excercise [sic] of *my Gift* (my emphasis) a gradual increase in strength, I was enabled to bear a long testimony to the Truth , opening in a convincing manner the way of Life and salvation, through Jesus Christ the mediator of the everlasting covenant. [657]

Similarly, writing about another minister, he says

> Mary Leaver had […] an extraordinary time in testimony *being enabled* (my emphasis) to preach the gospel in the demonstration of the Spirit and Power of God for upwards of an hour and a half, many hearts being broken and a heavenly baptizing season it was. [658]

Wood was in some trepidation when he went to visit a former Friend whom he wanted to win back: 'when I drew near the house all fear was removed believing *the Master was gone before me*.' [659] (my emphasis) In all these examples the ministers are able to perform God's demanding will because he has empowered them to do so. They don't question any further. The italicised words in the two paragraphs above demonstrate Wood's belief that a minister's words were not under his or her sole control, but that somehow, mystically, the minister and God were uniting to speak the message. The following, by a Friend named William Payne who died in 1768, is typical in its emphasis on the unknowability of God and preparing for eternity:

> The end of Man's Creation is the Glory of God [….] If we weigh ourselves in the Balance and are found wanting; let us […] resolve with full purpose of heart for the future to double our diligence to make our calling and Election sure; for our Death is sure and the time of it uncertain, and the preparation for it absolutely necessary, insomuch that we ought to be always ready, that whenever it shall please the Almighty to remove us hence, we may receive the Answer of well done good and faithful servant enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. [660]

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[659] vol 2 nb30/14
[660] vol 4 nb34/7

viii. Perfection. Jones wrote that in the second and subsequent generations 'the Quaker Society was eventually to become the apostolic *Church'* (his emphasis) and was adjusting itself to the task of 'perfecting a spiritual remnant – a little Zion, a "peculiar people", set apart, hedged around, but inwardly beautiful and glorious and the Lord's *very own'* (his emphasis).[663] There is a narrow exclusivity suggested in these words which is at odds with much that Wood taught. He was certainly committed to the 'spiritual remnant'[664] which became more and more important as he saw the Society of Friends degenerating. [665] But he did not see it as an exclusively Quaker preserve, more as a means of ensuring Quaker survival so that Friends could continue to do God's work. Wood mentions perfection[666] but it was to be after his time, in the nineteenth century Holiness Movement,[667] that it took on new life. Perfection is described by Spencer as participation in God through Christ, or union with God, but she quotes Barclay as saying 'there remaineth always in some part a possibility of sinning.' [668] In addition to her eight 'essential elements of Holiness Quakerism' (see above) in her study of the first generation, Friends in the eighteenth century who were seeking a continuing personal and intimate mystical relationship with God as well as collective holiness could have added a ninth element. That ninth element was Meeting for Worship, which, as Wood's Notebooks make clear, could on occasion reach profound spiritual depths, although he felt few meetings reached

[661] vol 4 nb36/8
[662] vol 1 nb3/22
[663] Jones, 'Later Periods,' vol 1, 105-6
[664] vol 2 nb25/5
[665] For instance, in 1809 he wrote about having attended 'a very favoured meeting' at which it was clear that 'his coming might be experienced the second time without sin unto salvation' (vol 2 nb29/14-15)
[666] The Holiness Movement began in 18th century England with Wesley but, in its American incarnation, took in diverse Christian groups, including Friends. Guyon was among the writers seen as precursors of the movement, which centred on achieving a second work of grace to ensure perfection.

such a level.[669] Union with God was something for which early Friends strove both as solitary witnesses and when joined with others in meeting for worship. But a century later the individual search for God had been largely subsumed in the corporate. There were still those who sought to live their lives centred in God but the collective life of a meeting was what made it a success or failure. In such a meeting the totality was greater than the sum of its parts. The eight elements which Spencer argues 'characterize historical Quakerism in its first generation and can be found with differing emphases in the writings of all early Friends,'[667] were abundantly present and collectively created something additional and profound. [668] Such meetings were rare, but treasured by Wood in his search for Truth. [669]

In the final analysis, Punshon writes, 'Holiness is not the whole of evangelical Quakerism, but is an essential component of the faith.' [670] However, I agree with Spencer that for early Quakers holiness *was* the whole of Quakerism - personal, experiential, mystical, communal, and ethical. By the late eighteenth century this was still the case for some Friends, as is made clear in Wood's Notebooks.[671] But the individual's quest for ethical perfection did not bring the assurance of forgiveness that the first Friends had known. Towsley argues that 'Second-generation experience left greater room for doubt [...] Friends began to raise the question of discernment.' And Wood, troubled by the failings of Quakerism in his day, looked back to the apparently golden age of the seventeenth century.[672] Sometimes, when totally bewildered by a

[667] Spencer, *Quaker Holiness*, 14
[668] For example, vol2 nb23/18 – 'The Masters presence was near in the early part of the meeting.'
[669] Vol 2 nb23/16 - 'We were enabled to draw nigh unto God in full assurance of faith'
[670] Punshon, 285
[671] For example vol 2 nb35/4, which is from an evening meeting at home. The simple format was a scripture reading followed by ministry and prayer.
[672] Vol2 nb19/6

turn of events, he would ask God what was going on, and find an answer in a verse of scripture. He knew his Bible very well. But above and beyond the Bible, Wood held most tightly of all to the nearness of God in his own life. This was a personal, spiritual relationship.[673] It is the point where he experiences Holiness Quakerism as described by Carole Spencer.

Spencer says her eight elements have been 'changed, reduced, conflated or heightened' at different times in Quaker history. None of them exists in isolation. But if holiness is a step into the mystical, a direct encounter with God, then 'we know when we have taken it.'[674] The Quietist eighteenth century became increasingly marked by formalism and lack of individual spiritual experience, at least in the south. It is my contention that whatever happened to Holiness Quakerism in most of the country for most of the century, by the last quarter it existed spiritually in west Yorkshire in a form that would have been recognised by the first Friends.

Related to this is the manner in which Friends comprehended God. As far as Wood was concerned, his relationship with God is difficult to gauge.[675] He saw the Almighty as loving, forgiving and compassionate but also judgmental, harsh and often apparently arbitrary and unfair in his dealings with humanity. (After failing in his duty (in his opinion) to speak at a funeral in 1806 Wood felt 'much sorrow for a season'[676] but finally concluded

[673] vol 1 nb17a/15
[674] Spencer, Carole (2003) 'Quaker Holiness: A Response to John Punshon's 'Reasons for Hope', *Quaker Religious Thought*: 99: 4
[675] vol 1 nb20/13
[676] Spencer, 3
[677] Hennessy, M (2019) 'Holiness', in I. Johnson (ed) *Geoffrey Chaucer in Context*, 167-177, CUP

> I have been led to admire the mercy and goodness of the Almighty to me in chastising me for my disobedience to manifest duty, and in his own time as I was made willing nay even desirous patiently to bear his chastisement and fatherly correction to favour again with the peaceable fruits of the spirit. [677]

That is a common enough apophatic understanding of God, for that age and for ours, but it is oppressive and intimidating, and not at all the first generation's understanding of the divine. Judging by the number of similar accounts, fear of disobedience loomed large in Wood's mind in his relations with the Almighty. He often refers to finding God's peace after preaching or praying. Perhaps Wood was a solitary eccentric, but if not this and similar passages raise questions about the eighteenth-nineteenth century Quaker understanding of divine forgiveness. Part of the answer may be found in scripture - many Bible books feature punishment, but none more so than the Book of Job, which is referenced 76 times in Wood's Notebooks.

6.4 Degrees of holiness

Holiness is well defined by Spencer as 'a spiritual quality in which human life is ordered and lived out as to be consciously centered in God'[678] and is seen as a gradual process rather than as an absolute state. There are degrees of holiness. Seen in this way, holiness can be applied to Quaker meetings or other religious groups as well as to individuals. Mysticism, like Quietism, was a means to an end: they were both about seeking God. Holiness was the end; it was the finding of God, or rather, of being found by God. The search for holiness has gone on for centuries with Quakers and other searchers sometimes seen as saints by the church of their

[678] Spencer, 3

day and sometimes as heretics.[679] For Friends, union with God was something for which they strove as solitary witnesses, even when joined with others in meeting for worship.[680] But a century later the individual search for God had largely been subsumed within the corporate. There were still those who sought to live their lives 'consciously centered in God' but the collective life of a meeting was what made it a success or failure. In a letter of 1810 Wood makes an obscure remark that suggests he believed both individual and collective salvation were possible: God has clearly set out the way to salvation, it 'is alone effected by Christ …[but] there yet remains to be a way, even the way of holiness, in which the wayfaring man tho' a fool cannot err.' [681]

Holiness for many Christians was intimately associated with relics, shrines and other holy objects, but of course this was not so for Friends. Biblical passages were as close as they could get to material associations with holiness. There were several consequences to this. For one, it encouraged Quakers to turn to ancient Israel – God's original holy nation[682] – for metaphors and other figures of speech to describe and explain their spiritual emotions and give them a visual context in which to develop their own understanding of holiness.[683] As the age was one of exploration, empire and many new things, the concept of being a new 'holy nation' was easily assimilated into Quaker thinking. Wood's Notebooks include dozens of references to

[679] Hennessy, M (2019) 'Holiness', in I. Johnson (ed) *Geoffrey Chaucer in Context*, 167-177, CUP
[680] Vol 2 nb21/3
[681] vol 2 nb27/8-9
[682] Crabtree, Sarah (2015) *Holy Nation: The Transatlantic Quaker Ministry in an Age of Revolution*, University of Chicago Press
[683] See chapter 4, 7.2, and also tables on use of scripture in Appendix 8
[684] Gould, Mitchell Santine (2007), 'Walt Whitman's Quaker Paradox' *Quaker History* 96:1, 1-23

ancient Israel. Alas for Friends, however, their holy nation fared no better than that of the original Hebrews. Time, secular pressures and the less attractive side of human nature saw the holy nation eventually fail. This failure occurred in both England and America. The reasons for failure were complex but basically many Friends began to see, certainly as the nineteenth century wore on, that effective social action and avoiding the 'world' were largely incompatible. As Mitchell Gould observes: 'Reformers' efforts on behalf of justice and equality too often conflicted with the elders' admonition to avoid "the world's people".' [684] This is getting a little beyond Wood's time, but in his day social concern was stimulated by religious belief for many Christians. [685] 'Nineteenth-century (Quaker) reformers had to choose between keeping their activities "inside the fence" or collaborating with like-minded citizens, at the risk of disownment,'[686] says Gould, writing specifically about anti-slavery campaigning in America. But parallels are found in England, not least in the acute social issues thrown up by the Industrial Revolution. The century-old systematic theology of Robert Barclay[687] had not been followed by anything that could update or modify their thinking and Quaker theology had not developed. In Wood's Notebooks there is no attempt at systematic or any other organised type of theology, he simply wrote about his relationship with God and people, and what he believed God wanted from him. His own preferred metaphors were those used by the first generation, notably inward light, seed, and most commonly Truth (see below). Persecution became discrimination after the 1689 Act of Toleration. Exclusion from university

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[685] Gould is writing specifically about anti-slavery campaigning in America. But parallels are found in England, not least in the acute social issues thrown up by the Industrial Revolution (see M Nellis and M Waugh, *Oxford Handbook,* 380ff)

[686] 'An Apology for the True Christian Divinity,' 1675

[687] Rufus Jones in the early 20th century accused Barclay of leading the Society to Quietism. But as Trueblood has pointed out, Barclay was equally attacked by the Beaconites, Quakers of the opposite persuasion, in the 19th century.

education and the established professions led many Friends into commerce and the newly-developing areas of science and manufacturing. As they prospered, the doors of society began to open to them.[688] Friends became an established part of the social, economic and religious landscape, and were even being tempted into political involvement. [689]

Throughout his life Wood faced a dilemma. Early Friends had an individual relationship with Christ which no church had ever taught them. By Wood's time Quakers were taught the opposite - that the search for Truth was collective; individualism was dangerous and could lead into all types of sin. In his Notebooks both individual and collective responsibility are held up as good Quaker practice.[690] Wood's Notebooks show a man divided – in some respects highly individual and with an intensely personal faith, like the first Friends, but also believing that Gospel Order was divinely inspired and that loyalty to meeting was an essential part of Quaker Christianity.[691] Such conflicted spirituality was, for him, a form of suffering and in his letter to Thomas Yeardley Wood says it would not be 'profitable for us if we did not suffer.'[692] It was one of his great regrets about the Quakerism of his day, that the spiritual cutting edge had been blunted; the lack of obvious suffering was having damaging effects on many individuals in the Society. That was Wood's way of explaining to himself the state of religious decline. Yet he did not believe God had

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[688] Raistrick, 10

[689] [787] vol 2 nb28/2-3 May 1807 election

[690] See Contradictions chapter 7

[691] vol 4 nb39/8-10

[692] vol 2 nb21/1-2 JW letter to Thomas Yeardley, numerous encouragements. And see Chapter 3.7. 'Great were the Sufferings our Friends had to pass through when they were first gathered to be a people, for the Truths sake, yet to the Lord was their support; O the beatings scoffings and mockings with the various other kind of cruel usage they met with, but they were enabled to stand their ground faithfully; and tho' when they went to their religious meetings they knew not but they might be sent from thence to prison yet they dare not neglect their duty, neither on first nor other days of the week; and tho' many of their descendants are too much settle [*sic*] down at ease in the outward form, yet there are a remnant preserved, who are one in Faith, in principle and in practice according to their measure'

[693] vol 4 nb42/20-22

given up on Friends: At the 1807 spring Quarterly Meeting in Leeds Wood says he had to meditate upon the mercies of God towards man 'the noblest part' of his creation: 'We as a Society of People notwithstanding our deep revolting, and many amongst us backsliding as with a perpetual backsliding; yet in what an eminent manner he was pleased to continue the visitations of his love unto us.' [791] And this 'will be the experience of all those who are concerned to rebuild the waste places in our Zion,' he tells Thomas Earnshaw in a letter eight years later. Clearly, not a lot had changed in that period but judging by the Earnshaw letter Wood's religious optimism was undimmed.

6.5 The second coming as metaphor

Friends' eschatological enthusiasm began to wane towards the end of the seventeenth century [694] Some leading Friends, including Penn and Whitehead, the only early leaders to survive well into the eighteenth century, began arguing for a second coming that was personal, spiritual and internal – metaphorical and intangible – rather than a physical return of Christ on the clouds of heaven.[695] Wood leaned in that direction. He sought to gauge the value of any meeting on its unmeasurable and highly subjective spiritual results, but he also seems to have thought that a truly spiritual Meeting bridged the gap between his time and the past when, he believed, Friends had walked much more closely with God. [696] 'Seeking' is the wrong word to

[694] Hill and other historians have noted an abrupt decline in Quaker eschatological expectation after the Restoration (Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down*, 1972, Penguin, 355)

[695] Trowell, Stephen (1994) 'George Keith: Post-Restoration Quaker Theology and the Experience of Defeat,' John Rylands *Library Bulletin*, Manchester University, 76: 1, 125

[696] vol 2 nb23/5 and 23/18

describe Wood's relationship with God. 'Living' is more appropriate - the Notebooks make clear that Wood sought to live his life daily in the presence of God.

Spencer argues that Quaker holiness 'is not tied to a formulaic experience of conversion' – which could easily have been the case under the influence of Quietism – but that the 'Christ-nature' resulted directly from conversion. 'This is the holiness that permeates the individual, like leaven permeates bread, to restore the *Imago Dei*,' she writes.[697] In *Holiness: The Soul of Quakerism* Spencer defends early Friends against what she believes is modern misunderstanding: 'The Quaker concept of holiness, to the modern mind, appears to be puritanical, moralistic rigorism of the highest kind. But to the early Quakers, holiness was a manifesto of freedom.'[699] I suspect 'the modern mind' knows little about early Quakers and draws its conclusions from eighteenth and nineteenth century stereotypes. For Joseph Wood, holiness was an individual response to the love of God and he urged the same attitude on those at the many meetings he attended. He took the words of the New Testament very seriously – 'Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one misses the grace of God.'[700]

Holiness can be seen as 'the quality of God that sets him utterly apart from his world.'[701] But that is a definition of holiness to which many eighteenth-century Quakers would have given only qualified assent. They would also have emphasised the ethical aspects of holiness and would have claimed that holiness required both

[697] *ibid*
[698] *ibid*

[699] Hebrews 12.14-15
[700] NIV Thematic Study Bible 1996, p1838

faith and works - the inner Christ of mysticism and the outer Christ of prophecy.[702] However, 'works' has another meaning beyond the prophetic. The New Testament book that emphasises the importance of doing good for others as essential 'works' of salvation is the Letter of James, which is quoted 40 times in Joseph Wood's Notebooks, putting it high in the rankings of Quaker approval.[703] Passages such as James chapter 1 and 3:13-18 make the point eloquently. Yet a glance through a lectionary will show that James was (and is) largely ignored by the church.[704]

Lewis Benson and more recently Douglas Gwynn are Quaker academics who articulate a Quakerism shorn of the religious accretions that, they argue, have distorted the original vision. That vision was of divine indwelling, 'the experience of "being-in-Christ" and "Christ-in-me",'[704] in other words a Quaker understanding of holiness. But rather than dwelling on the metaphysical aspects of divine union, Gwynn uses the concept to explain the distinctive Quaker social ethic.[705] In Yorkshire this social ethic was to bear fruit in the founding of The Retreat for the mentally ill[706] and Ackworth School,[707] which was originally for the children of poorer Friends. Wood writes about both in enthusiastic terms and he was closely involved with Ackworth. He tells John Beaumont in mystical language that harks back to the first Friends and might have shocked many Quietist Quakers

> some experience, and many more might, His second coming in them without sin unto salvation, and this experience doth not in the least lay waste or set at nought, what he

[701] Spencer 1.7.2
[702] See Appendix 8
[703] Among the many hundreds of readings in the Church of England lectionary there are only seven from James
[704] Spencer 48-49
[705] *ibid* 49
[706] See chapter 3, 7.2
[707] Ackworth, founded in 1779 by John Fothergill

> did in the flesh but fully confirms the same…. [do] not only believe in the Light but walk in it and then thou will be preserved alive in the Spirit unto God'. [Christ is risen] and is arising by his glorious and mighty Power in the heart, in order to subdue all his and our souls enemies, and bring mankind through him into an inward and spiritual communion with God their maker.[708]

Several strands of Christian thought and practice seem to intertwine in the spirituality that shows through in the Notebooks: holiness, quietism and mysticism in particular have been mentioned, but the early stages of evangelicalism are also present. There is a clear similarity between the well-established pattern of public meetings that Wood reports, which could become intensely religious, and what would later be called evangelicalism.[709] However, although dutifully observing the corporate requirements of Gospel Order in life and at meetings, Wood did not find it a substitute for direct personal communion with God. Damiano is surely correct in suggesting that initially such external practices as plainness 'made a quasi-sacramental statement about the inward ideals', which she understands in terms of realised eschatology – ie, that the kingdom of God is going on already in the hearts of believers.[710] Punshon has argued that the idea behind the Discipline was discipleship[711] but he is closer to reality in his following paragraph when talking about the Queries. He refers to them as 'an instrument of control.'[712] Realised eschatology

[708] vol 1 nb17A/4-5
[709] vol 4 nb30/15-16 – In 1798 a public meeting out on the sparsely populated moors in a hamlet called Carlcoats. More than 300 turned up – 'some of whom … had not been at any place of public worship for 20 years' - and there were four speakers, including Wood.
[710] Damiano, *Realised Eschatology*
[711] Punshon, John (1984) 'Portrait in Grey,' 136, QHS
[712] *Ibid*

faded under the weight of Gospel Order, but more slowly in the North if Joseph Wood is to be believed.

Truth, Light and Seed were all metaphors used by Quakers from their early days to describe how the Almighty worked within individuals. All were biblical. Wood uses all three, particularly Truth, when trying to capture something of the same spirit. He told Charles Unsworth 'I am persuaded the Seed, the precious seed of the kingdom, which seed is Christ, is sown in thy heart'[713] and in 1803 he wrote to his cousin Joshua Smith 'if our obedience keep not pace with the Light we are favoured with, the Lord causeth it to cease shining in us, and then we are left in a state of darkness, and neither see, nor are able to withstand the temptations of the wicked one.'[714] So long as one was faithful to Gospel Order, the Truth, Light or Seed would reveal God's leadings for your life,[714] but otherwise like 'so many visited minds' the poor soul would 'remain in a state of captivity, and not experience a being set free by the Son the Light of the world, and the Life in man.'[715] Here he is using Light in a thoroughly scriptural way that both first Friends and those of the eighteenth century would have accepted. But generally speaking the metaphor was used loosely, when it was used at all, after the first generation. Walter Wink argues that 'Early Friends strongly held to the transcendence of the light […] transcendence and immanence are held in tension in early Quaker understanding.'[716] I have previously discussed Wood with regard to Gospel Order[717] but the above references show a different aspect, in which Gospel Order is seen as facilitating a Quaker's faithful obedience.

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[713] 2/19.14

[714] 2/19.17. Rationalising Quakerism by making divine guidance conditional on accepting Gospel Order was a logical development of Friends' theology.

[715] *ibid*

[716] Wink, Walter (2001), *The Human Being: Jesus and the Enigma of the Son of the Man*

[717] See chapter 1: 1.3 and 1.4

The emphasis on obedience had shifted from the individual to the collective body of Friends, the constituent meetings that made up Yearly Meeting. Wood seems to be struggling with this, wanting to keep the individual at the heart of the process. As he says to George Mallinson – 'many times have I secretly desired that thou might be favoured with the saving knowledge of the Truth.'[718] Likewise to John Yeardley, warning him of Satan's wiles – 'as our abiding is in the light; its here his temptations are discovered, and way made to escape.'[720] Wood wrote to individuals and not groups, except for welcoming new converts.[721]

Summary of chapter 6

Spencer argues that holiness in any organised form 'represents a more intense form of spirituality and a detachment from all that distracts from the pursuit of union with God.'[722] This chapter has largely been premised on the belief that she is correct and that her eight 'essential elements' of holiness (plus one more that I have suggested) were central to the spirituality of first Friends' faith and, a century-plus later, were the driving force behind Wood's tireless evangelical drive in Yorkshire. Quietism, mysticism and holiness have been identified as related spiritual forces which most strongly influenced Friends in his generation, against a background of gospel order organisation and discipline. Although quietism is seen as most clearly identified with Quakerism the underlying presence of holiness was of more profound and longer-term importance. This is because quietism is to some degree a matter of human will

[718] vol2 nb19/2-3
[720] vol2 nb22/3
[721] See chapter 1.1
[722] Spencer, 92

and practising it is therefore subject to all the frailties that beset humanity. We impose quietism on ourselves and our surroundings in the expectation of coming closer to the eternal, but it is a fragile flower and small variations in its situation can stop it blossoming. Holiness, in contrast, is detached from the will and comes to us as a gift. Who the giver of the gift might be is the subject of endless theological speculation, but when Joseph Wood urged 'the restoration of the members of our Society to primitive simplicity'[257] he was talking about the holiness which the first generation of Friends had known. Spencer talks around holiness but does not really get to grips with describing or defining it. But she does make the very important point that for the first Friends holiness was more than just metaphor or analogy. It was God and human touching, (page 3) which explains why, when it was gone, it was gone forever.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

This chapter draws the thesis to a conclusion and it therefore seems an appropriate moment to note that 2021 marked the 200th anniversary of Joseph Wood's death and

the end of a significant contribution to our knowledge of the Quaker past. What should we look for in a source like Wood's Notebooks, which have sprung almost out of the blue? Should we hope for confirmation of current understanding of 18th century Quakerism with its roots in Rufus Jones' understanding of Quietism; should we look for a backward turn to the first generation of Quakers in the hopes of regaining their spiritual fire; should we look for the ancestors of modern Liberal Quakerism? I don't believe any of these routes offers a satisfactory approach to the Notebooks. Instead, Wood's work should be taken as new light cast on an area of Quaker history that is often ignored and a welcome addition to the wider field of 18th century studies. In particular, the new light shed on Benson's rediscovery of the importance of the Inward Light in early Quakerism is timely, coming as it does in a period when modern Friends are struggling to understand what the Light is all about. Informal Light Groups are a common feature of many British Preparative Meetings but none that I am familiar with is more than a meditation group by another name.

Wood's Notebooks have also helped raise awareness of the significant contradictions and tensions that developed within English Quakerism during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, showing how different Friends of that period were to those who had gone before or who would come after. Joseph Wood was not alone in keeping written records. In the 18th and 19th centuries many people kept diaries or notebooks to record details of their thoughts, lives and times. What makes him unusual is the vast scale of his work (well over a million words) and his single-minded focus on his religion. His crusade to save Quakerism from mediocrity or even extinction is all that matters to Wood. The Notebooks are therefore something of a mystery. They record so much and yet tell us so little about why he

painstakingly created them. The Society of Friends was not static and that in the North of England evolved rather differently to that in the South, to the point where the North remained evangelical and Bible-based while the South became introverted and quietist. This thesis demonstrates the unhappy irony that Quaker testimonies, outward religious expressions that mattered greatly to Friends, ended up eclipsing what were arguably Friends' more important contributions to Christian spirituality, what Wood called 'The Seed, the precious seed of the kingdom, which seed is Christ.' (Wood used The Seed interchangeably with The Light).

The world into which Joseph Wood was born in 1750 was not just a chronological continuation of that which George Fox had left 59 years earlier. It was qualitatively different – the Enlightenment, enclosures, incipient industrial and agrarian revolutions, almost endless foreign warfare, civil unrest, the growth of cities and large towns, and much else had seen to that. As Tousley puts it, 'Most historians of Quakerism describe a transition between the first and second generation of Friends, from an enthusiastic movement with few structural controls to a well-organized religious body with clear boundaries.'

The most significant finding of this thesis is that the Inward Light of Christ, which was critically important in bringing Quakerism into existence in the seventeenth century, barely survived on the margins of the Society in the eighteenth. Joseph Wood's Notebooks tell us that 'The Light' continued to shine in his life and among some other Friends. These were the Quakers whom he classed as the remnant. But by his time most Quakers were children of Gospel Order and increasingly of the Industrial Revolution. Although this loss of insight and connection with God is the most important conclusion of the thesis, it is not the only one. Others have been

illustrated in different chapters under three broad headings: the North-South divide, the spiritual divide, and the cultural divide. The first two have been discussed as concrete entities, while the third consists of discrete topics that can loosely be grouped under the title ‘cultural’, including:

* growing awareness of the distinctive role of women in the church

* Friends’ disproportionate contribution to the industrial and scientific revolutions, and to education

* Quaker involvement in the social work of the wider Christian world, particularly anti-slavery campaigning

* Friends’ increasing prosperity and detachment from the poor[728]

* Transatlantic journeys (in both directions)

* Gospel Order

Friends achieved social and political acceptance as a small but peculiar and materially successful sect. In the early eighteenth century the Society started to become inward looking and self-obsessed, concerned with its own survival rather than converting the world. The world of belief was becoming more adventurous and before the century ended Quakers and other nonconformists such as Methodists and Baptists had been joined by numerous other religious causes – and by science. Deism, freethinking, rationalism, Socinianism, Unitarianism, latitudinarianism and the mechanical philosophies of nature such as expounded in the previous century by Hobbes were all available for thinking people to read and discuss. Blasphemy trials notwithstanding, religious and social change was in the air. Philosophy, science, religion and politics were each taking on individual lives of their own, although there

was often overlap. In the religious and social confusion of the times Friends lost sight of their initial spark. Wood's great contribution to the Society of Friends is to remind them of the Inward Light of Christ. Considering Wood began the Notebooks in his early twenties and made his last entry at the age of 71 they are remarkably consistent in the pictures they give us of Friends in Yorkshire. His work is unusual, with travel, preaching, prayer, reflection, social incidents and personal information all mixed in together. He is constant and consistent but there is little evidence of development or change in the Notebooks.

Tousley argues that while inward conversion was still the 'sanctified route' into Quakerism, tradition was leading the Society towards formal acceptance of 'birthright Friends', strengthening the importance placed on unity in decision-making and action, and hardening the part played in Quaker life by Gospel Order. Gwynn notes that as time went by it became harder and harder to bring the covenant of life with God freshly to mind or to explain it. This was partly because Friends proved all too human, he says, but also because later generations only understood it as words. That which Quakers had long lambasted others for relying on – the formal word of creed and prayer – became a danger for their own Society. Joseph Wood was not a progressive Quaker in any way. He had no plan for the future beyond his next missionary journey. His faith required him simply to wait for God to show him what to do. What he was saying and writing in the closing years of his life was similar to what he had been saying and writing in the opening years of his ministry, the only significant difference being a big increase in the number of public meetings. His theology had not developed and the themes of the messages he felt compelled to deliver remained largely unchanged. The Notebooks provide a yardstick against

which to measure historians' opinions, but they do not provide any single, sharp insight into eighteenth-century Quakerism. There is no 'eureka' moment waiting to happen. Instead, they provide numerous pieces of evidence to help build up a picture of a Quakerism that is at variance with the traditional picture of Friends in the eighteenth century.

Wood tried to ignore the Industrial Revolution and, for him, the consequences of the Enlightenment were not happening. His Notebooks make little or no mention of the debates going on over philosophy, ethics, theology, capitalism, democracy, women in society, population or science. There are no works on any of these subjects in his library (see Appendices), which is in striking contrast to the library of Isaac Fletcher. That was twice the size of Wood's and included classical European and Islamic works which would have been anathema to Joseph Wood. The only authors they seem to have had in common were Robert Barclay and Elisabeth Bathurst. Slavery was the only major social issue in which Wood became involved, yet he was an intelligent and compassionate man with a keen interest in education who spoke out against enclosures. It is as though he sought security in the God of his ancestors rather than engage with God as understood in the contemporary world. He was a preaching minister but accepted the constraints of Quietism. Wood also accepted that Gospel Order had become a discipline that sought to extinguish individuality and personal spirituality in the interests of corporate Quakerism, but he never gave up his individual spiritual journey (see Vol3 nb3/8). The Notebooks are surprising for what they omit. If they were the only source available for historical research the reader would hardly be aware that there had been revolutions in the American colonies, in France and in Ireland, or that the Napoleonic wars had

occurred. But while they omit much of the grand sweep of history, they do bring to life many stories about local Yorkshire Friends, intimate details which would otherwise have been lost to us. I think particularly of Joseph Grayham and his family.

Wood records recruiting many new Friends at public meetings, particularly in Volume 5, but at the same time the Society of Friends was losing large numbers, either to other churches or to no church at all. Variants of Quakerism developed on both sides of the Atlantic in the nineteenth century, all claiming to be heirs apparent to the first generation of Friends. But 'fellowship in the light and unity in the spirit' was a characteristic of the first Friends that was contradicted by Quaker behaviour in the Gospel Order generation. Friends had generally lost both the theological truth of the first Quakers and also the language in which to express it. Emma Lapsansky lists American Quaker contradictory values as including 'Equality and separateness; intellectual preciousness and anti-intellectualism; an emphasis on excellence and a focus on humility; and an appreciation for high quality workmanship coupled with a ban on ostentation.' Contradictory values also abounded in English Quakerism and this thesis has highlighted several. There is plenty of evidence for them in Wood's Notebooks, some apparently trivial while others were significant intrusions into life. Three examples are:

- Poetry being acceptable to Friends (and there is much of it, usually poor, in Wood's Notebooks) but music forbidden, along with the performing arts and most visual art.
- Quakers being loyal to the crown to the point of sycophancy but refusing to take the oath of loyalty or to swear to speak truthfully in a law court because of their testimony against oaths.

- Women struggling in later Quakerism to regain the equality they had enjoyed in the first generation.

As Ingle puts it, Fox's successors were destined to relive the contradictions he left them.. The Society of Friends at the end of the eighteenth century was very different to what it had been at the beginning. In 1700 it was radically Christian, aggressively evangelical, Bible-focused and zealous to convert the world; in 1800 it was none of these things. The Notebooks provide evidence for Benson's work on the inspired insight of the first generation, on some Quaker testimonies, and on the 'two Quakerisms' found in the North and the London area. There is also much material on ministry, especially travelling ministry, and very especially travelling women preachers. Wood's own remarks, perhaps unintentionally, reflect the standards of the day and the features that were taken for granted such as the refusal to grant women full equality with men. Quaker involvement in early industry is illustrated several times, although Wood had serious concerns about it on religious and social grounds. Among Wood's contemporaries, and certainly in future generations, Friends failed to understand how the inward light of Christ was interdependent with scripture, not just as history but as living faith. Instead, they fell to living out the minutiae of religious tradition and in so doing they created Quakerly versions of the ecclesiastical practices that first Friends had condemned in other churches. Wood's Notebooks indicate a division opening in the Quaker world over ministry. The 'low state of our Society' was encouraging the wrong sort of ministry and the use of the Bible was increasingly suspect in the quietist South. He does not elaborate on what the 'wrong sort' of ministry included. In the quietist era there was suspicion about Bible readings interrupting the silence of a meeting but Wood and many of the ministers he knew

would preach from the Bible at length. This was evangelical Christianity in every respect except name and it was something else about which many in the Society of Friends were suspicious. Wood was clearly ambivalent about quietism: while he approved of silent worship he also wanted to preach from scripture.

His writings show him to be in the mystical tradition of the first generation of Friends rather than a quietist, as well as repeatedly showing his desire to preach the Gospel. The shift in Quaker spiritual epistemology between the first and second generation was, in a sense, repeated in the 19th century with a shift away from Christianity towards various forms of secularism. However, this time it was banking and other forms of making a profit without making a product, rather than religion, that had implications for Quakers' spiritual lives. Wood took a dim view of things financial: 'By entering into large concerns in trade many got so leavened into the spirit of this World as almost wholly to depart from the plainness and simplicity of the pure Truth.' This was yet another contradiction between what Quakers said and what they did. However, Friends were not alone in finding themselves under pressure from forces over which they had little control. Quakers declined numerically and spiritually in this period, as is clear from many references in Wood's Notebooks. William Penn had written that worship 'fell [...] from power to form, from life to letter.' These were the words of someone who had experienced both early Quakerism and the reformed variety, the visceral reaching out to God and the willingness to wait in restrained silence on a Sunday morning to see if God had anything to say. Wood agreed with Penn, frequently preaching against the 'form' and 'letter' of religion, both inside and beyond the Society of Friends. There was almost a prohibition on ministry, imposed by elders and particularly seen in the South. Women ministers are referenced

frequently by Wood in his Notebooks, which not only illustrate the strength of concern about Quakerism having lost its way but also how many Friends there were on the road trying to do something about it, many of them women. As has been discussed, the relationship between ministers, elders and overseers could be troubled. Wood, a minister, took a conciliatory tone but seems to have regretted that ministers lost much of their authority. The strong concern seen in the Notebooks to proselytise in the wider society is at odds with the view of many historians that Quakerism became an introspective self-absorbed organisation whose main preoccupation was the Gospel Order lifestyle. Had Rufus Jones known Joseph Wood's Notebooks he might have found reason to reassess his view that the days of spiritual explosiveness were over, that 'there were now no intense and dynamic groups waiting only for a spark to fall upon them' The Notebooks show a proactive North Country Quakerism that was keen to preach, not a London Quakerism that had turned to quietism. Although silence also played an important part in Northern Quakerism it would be an error to call Wood a quietist Quaker.

Whatever his intentions, the results throw light on the God of English Quakerism in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and it is not necessarily a God that will be to modern tastes. Care must be taken when examining what Wood says. Although he is a first-hand witness of how Quakerism operated, at least in the North, he had pronounced prejudices. This thesis has not sought to make judgements on his theology, and it has sought to be cautious about his prejudices. It has also sought to investigate his Notebooks rather than the man, and it is notable that the enormous record he has created ends rather where it began. It is the fate of many diaries to be inconclusive but the repetitive nature of much in Wood makes this stand out. It is

easy to become absorbed in Joseph Wood's world of journeys and meetings, marriages and burials, queries and testaments, and to forget that there is a wider context in which he must be set. His world was one small corner of one small organisation in a rapidly changing country that was almost constantly at war with its neighbours. The Notebooks show only a little of the bigger picture. But it is through the Notebooks that I have found a link to the original seventeenth-century Friends' spirituality, based on their understanding of the holy and inward Light of Christ. This was something that had faded but not disappeared and it was very much part of Joseph Wood's life in the eighteenth century.

The mystical, outward-looking Christocentric Quakerism of the early years changed after the restoration in 1660. Gospel Order saved the organisation but led it towards an internal conformity which was increasingly defined by outward contrast. That is the real value of eccentric clothes, language and obsessive behaviour – they saved at least a form of Quakerism for future generations. Without them the Society would probably have faded into Methodism or another nonconformist denomination.

Attitudes to George Fox changed in Georgian Quakerism. Benson argues that as the Society of Friends spread south, Fox's teaching was misunderstood and has continued to be so ever since. 'The difference between Fox's view of Christ and that of main line Reformation Protestantism cannot be exaggerated. This is the key that accounts for everything that is distinctive about Fox's interpretation of Christianity,' he wrote. 'There has been no movement to recover the distinctive Christ-centeredness that belongs to the Quaker vision.' Another reason for this collective failure by the Society of Friends is explored by Philip Sheldrake: that 'traditional histories reveal a geographical bias. We make assumptions about where

‘‘the center’’ and ‘‘the margins’’ are in the history of spiritual traditions.’ In the case of English Quaker traditions, these are London-centric. His argument provides additional strength for my case about the North-South divide.

A contentious issue among scholars concerns Quaker spirituality, which is discussed in chapter 6, with Carole Spencer attracting several opposing views to aspects of her book *Holiness: The Soul of Quakerism*. There is broad consensus among historians over the development of many of the better known features of Quakerism, such as the plainness testimony, campaigning against slavery, and the use of silence, but there is some debate over other aspects, including interpretation of the peace testimony and the distinctive development of Quaker women’s history. There is a strong case for radically reconsidering many of our ideas about George Fox. He certainly did not teach or preach the conservative version of Quakerism that dominated the Society in England by the end of the 1700s, nor the humanistic version that dominates it today. I suggest that at least some of the persecution that first Friends suffered is explained by the radical nature of their claims about God and Christ. They seriously alarmed other believers in a way that struck at the heart of organised religion and therefore at the state. This is a broad proposal for a lengthy article which would investigate Quaker sufferings in the social-political atmosphere of the times.

Wood’s Notebooks are very much concerned with putting Christ at the centre of Quakerism but he also uses them to portray an image of the Society of Friends that is not socially revolutionary. Wood was not seeking to take a reformist stand but rather, as discussed, to save the Society of Friends from the world by re-invigorating its members spiritually. He blamed prosperity for the growing worldliness of the

Society. The Society of Friends in the eighteenth century had lost Fox's vision. Fox had written often about the conflict between freedom in the Spirit and bondage in the flesh. Although his work can be obscure the general tenor of his message is clear – it is through the Spirit of Christ that we will find 'peace and access to God' not through 'fleshly things or words.' Yet it was the latter that came to dominate Quakerism within a few years of Fox's death. Gospel Order seems to have been a second-best hope to keep Quakerism alive after Fox realised that the spiritual basis of the Society would not survive without temporal support.

The spiritual did not completely disappear but became subdued in the age of Gospel Order. It was mainly to be found on the margins of the Society of Friends in the North, at public meetings and even at public sessions in regional Yearly Meetings. Original spiritual Quakerism could also remain a potent, if limited, force in local meetings, and Wood records examples of people being converted well into the 18th century. During that century Friends failed to understand how the inward light of Christ was interdependent with scripture, not just as history but as living faith. Wood is only one source but a consistent one over more than half a century. While he never claims to speak for the Society of Friends as a whole he does represent a current of thought and belief within it.

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Appendices

APPENDIX 1
Old and New Testament passages used by late 18th century Quaker preachers

OT	V1&V2	V3	V4	V5
Genesis	23	19	22	29
Exodus	4	7	3	2
Leviticus	0	2	3	2
Numbers	11	7	4	10
Deuteronomy	7	15	4	14
Joshua	2	4	1	1
Judges	9	3	8	0
Ruth	0	0	0	0
1 Samuel	10	11	8	8
2 Samuel	3	2	3	5
1 Kings	9	2	2	6
2 Kings	7	12	12	16
1 Chronicles	0	5	5	6
2 Chronicles	0	2	0	3
Ezra	0	0	0	0
Nehemiah	1	1	0	2
Esther	3	0	0	0
Job	37	16	9	14
Psalms	111	81	47	91
Proverbs	44	31	23	32
Ecclesiastes	17	10	0	0
Song of Songs (Canticles/Song of Solomon)	14	14	0	12
Isaiah	110	90	68	145
Jeremiah	42	24	26	49
Lamentations	6	2	1	7
Ezekiel	13	6	14	9
Daniel	3	2	1	2
Hosea	14	10	5	16
Joel	2	5	1	0
Amos	4	6	2	0
Obadiah	0	0	1	0
Jonah	2	2	3	1
Micah	4	16	5	7
Nahum	0	1	1	0
Habakkuk	5	3	13	9
Zephaniah	0	4	2	1
Haggai	0	1	1	0
Zechariah	12	1	3	6
Malachi	1	5	0	2

NT	V1&V2	V3	V4	V5
Matthew	116	156	103	102
Mark	15	26	14	29
Luke	46	66	66	87
John	79	114	90	161
Acts	32	28	30	46
Romans	40	41	38	40
1 Corinthians	29	48	30	58
2 Corinthians	18	20	28	41
Galatians	14	8	15	10
Ephesians	20	12	8	20
Philippians	7	5	8	8
Colossians	7	0	2	8
1 Thess	9	8	15	12
2 Thess	2	1	3	3
1 Timothy	10	9	2	6
2 Timothy	5	9	8	8
Titus	4	7	3	4
Philemon	0	0	0	0
Hebrews	23	19	22	18
James	14	11	6	9
1 Peter	10	14	4	12
2 Peter	5	6	6	3
1 John	18	15	12	12
2 John	0	0	0	0
3 John	0	2	0	1
Jude	3	1	1	1
Revelation	23	47	33	24

APPENDIX 2

Advice to meetings, from Wood's third volume (3/2.1-5)

'An Abstract of divers Particulars of Advice at sundry times from the Yearly and Quarterly Meetings' by Thomas Hammond 1727. As explained in the conclusion, this abstract was compiled by Hammond (and possibly others) from 'several Epistles or Manuscripts'. It had wide circulation and other documents were created on the same theme. The following has not been edited.

Education of Children Y : M. Anno 1689, 90 Q : M. Anno 1690,1719 That friends exercise a Godly Christian care for the due Education of Children, in the nurture fear and admonition of the Lord, and that none go into nor be found in the Vain and Gaudy habits, Dyes, Attire, nor Foolish Antick modes, and Fashions of the World either in Apparel, Furniture, or other Superfluity whatever. nor join with any in observing and keeping the Feast days, Banquets, or Vain Customs of the World. And also that Parents do not by any means indulge their Children, in speaking to either of them (or any others) in the Plural number, or allow them the liberty of those sports and Plays, which have viciate their minds and corrupt their manners, teaching them to avoid all unbecoming gestures, cringings, Bowings, and ceremonies in salutations contrary to our Ancient Plainness and simplicity.

Y: M. Anno 1690, 91, 92, 93, 95, 96, 1700, 1701, 1703, 19. And not furnish Children with such things as tend to Pride, or lift them up in Vanity, or affect them with the vain Fashions of the World, but as much as in them lies restrain them therefrom, and to forward and encourage them as much as may be to read the Holy Scriptures and other good Books, that are profitable, and not to indulge them in corrupt Liberty, whereby they become exposed to the world, either in their Marriages, or evil conversation tending to their hurt and ruin. And that friends of all degrees take due care to breed up their children in some useful and necessary employment, that they may not spend their precious Time in Idleness, which is of evil example, and tends much to their hurt.

Y: M. Epistle of caution against Pride 1718 Q: M. 1719 That Friends keep to Truth and Plainness both in a Language, Habit, Deportment, Behaviour, and Dealings, and avoid Pride and immodesty in Apparel. Our Ancient friends were raised up to bear a faithful testimony against Pride, and the vain and foolish fashions of this World, as well as other Evils, and became a plain and self-denying People, and adorned our Holy profession by their grave modest and exemplary conversation, the contrary having brought a weighty exercise upon friends by reason of an undue Liberty, which too many under the profession of Truth run into, to the great grief of the Faithful Friends, by reason whereof the way of Truth is evil spoken of, and our holy profession greatly reproached, by many Men amongst us putting on extravagant Wigs, and wearing their Hats and Cloaths after the vain Fashions unbecoming the gravity of a religious People. And too many Women decking themselves with gaudy and costly Apparel, which shews more of Pride and Ostentation than for use and service and is inconsistent with that modesty, which should adorn their Sex, and did adorn the holy Women of Old, for certainly it does not become the gravity of our Profession, or any under it, to run into every new Fantastick mode, or Fashion, but to keep to that which is modest, decent, plain, and useful.

Wherefore we tenderly advise those that are blessed with the Riches of this world, would make it their Christian concern to be exemplary themselves, which certainly will be very conducive to the much desired end, for then those of lower circumstances in the World (we hope) would be ashamed to take such undue Liberties as we here complain of. And that Parents in the tender Years of their Children would not adorn them with gaudy Apparel, which Practice cannot come from the Spirit that leads out of the vain Customs of the World, but must proceed from Pride in that the Parents and Children being led into such Vanities and Fineries come gradually to be in Love with them which is apt to increase with their Years to that degree until it may be found very difficult to reclaim them, and as there ought to be a religious care duly exercise towards our Children, so also towards our Servants, that all appearances of Pride, Idleness and vain Conversation in them may be discouraged, and in order that friends may be the more hearty and effectual in suppressing the abovementioned Evils, it is absolutely necessary that they stand fast in one Spirit, Labouring together against the work of the Enemy, that would destroy the work of God, and lay waste his heritage. Marriages Q: M. That all young and unmarried People be very cautious in their proceedings relating to Marriage, that there Eye be not so much to the world, and worldly ends, as unto the Lord and the concurrence of his Grace, and goodness in all those concerns, that they be not hasty or forward in making such proposals to any, (or excepting *[sic]* them when made) but with good advice caution and deliberation, and when or after such proposals be made, and are not embraced that there may be a waiting in patience some reasonable time to see what may be affected or done therein, before there be attempts made of such like proposals to any other, that so none may be found in such Levity or inconsistency as is manifest in the World, in running hastily from one person to another; and that before any such proposals be made, that the Parents or such as have those Persons in Tuition or Guardianship be first spoken to, and their consent obtained therein (if any such be) That 12 Mths. time is little enough to forbear being concerned in relation to Marriage after deceased husband or Wife

Q: M. An. 1680 1685, 1709 and also that Widowers, and Widows be not too forward in making or accepting proposals of Marriage again after decease of a former Wife or Husband, but that there be some considerable forbearance in those cases, and that care be taken before any such Widows or Widowers be permitted to marry again, or consent be given thereto, that such provision and settlements in Temporal things be made, and done for the former Issue, Child or Children of such deceased Husband or Wife, as shall be seen or appear to be fair, just and reasonable, for the preserving of Love Peace and Unity, in Families, as also for preserving the rights of Infants, and those in Minority from been wasted or spent contrary to reason and Equity. Q: M. An: 1709 And when any Marriages are accomplished or solemnised amongst Friends, that they be performed in the fear of God, and in a grave, sober, devout and solemn manner, and that Friends be careful at such times to keep out of the Forms, Modes, and customs of the world, in Feasting and other Superfluities, as also Riding too fast, or going in great Companies together, in a vain Splendour or wanton manner. And that care be taken (as much as possible may be) that none that make profession of Truth, do concern themselves in matters of Marriage or in making proposals relating thereunto with such as are not reputed of our Society, or of their near Kindred, at least not within the degree of second Cousins.

Mispending of Time Y: M. An: 1689, 90, 91 That all in Gods holy fear, watch against, and keep out of the Spirit and corrupt Friendship of the World, and avoid unnecessary frequenting of Taverns, and Alehouses, and all, looseness, Excess, and unprofitable, and Idle discourses, mispending their precious Time and Substance to the dishonour of Truth and scandal of our holy Profession.

Against strife Y: M. An: 1689, 92, 93, 95, 96, 97. That every one watch against and shut out all occasion of strife, Offences, Contention and Division, as also Whisperings, Talebearing, Backbitings, and Evil speaking, tending thereunto, and that care be taken to put a stop thereto, and to shun going to Law one with another, but keep in that Love and Humility, in which their unity and Fellowship will always be dear and valuable; and to be kind and tender hearted one to another pressing for Universal Love.

Offences Differences Y: Ms. An: 1692, 93, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 1702 That where any hath Offences against another they first speak privately to the party concerned, and endeavour reconciliation betwixt themselves, and not Whisper or Aggravate matters against such behind their Backs, to the making of parties and that all may be watchful against that Spirit which would sow discord and make Dissensions, Divisions, Parties or Breaches, to the scandal of the Church of Christ, and that in all cases of controversies or Differences, the Persons concerned therein, either speedily compose matters betwixt themselves, or make choice of some faithful or unconcerned friend, justly and speedily to end and determine the same, or otherwise submit the choice to the Monthly Meeting, and such as refuse to submit to Truths order, or hear the Church are to be disowned.

Covetousness Y: M. An: 1689, 97, 99. That all take heed and beware of Covetousness, over reaching oppressing or defrauding of any; and be watchful against an earthly Spirit getting up in any, for that will bring forth a slighting and neglecting of their Testimonies in keeping to first days and week days Meetings, and bring a decay of their strength and Zeal for God and his Truth.

Attending of meetings Y: M. An: 1691, 93, 96, 98, 1701, 1703 That Friends be diligent in keeping their week day meetings as well as their first days, and to keep all their Meetings for Discipline, and good order, as for Worship in the Love of God, and in the Name and Peaceable spirit of Jesus Christ, and to keep all heats, passions doubtful disputations, Contentions, Strife, Personal reflections, and Smilings out of their Meetings, and suffer no Contentious, Turbulent Quarrelsom Spirit or Person be concerned amongst them in ordering their Affairs that they may all be managed in the Peaceable Tender Spirit of Christ Jesus, and in his Power to stand fast in Righteous Judgment, over all unruly and disorderly Spirits, that would break in upon the good order settled amongst us, as well as over all those that seek to lay waste the Testimony of Truth, and to encourage faithful Womens Meetings knowing their service, and what need there is of their Godly care in the Church, in divers weighty respects proper to them.

Y: M. 1703 That all friends keep up their ancient Testimony in calling Months and Days, by Scripture Names, and not by Heathen, and comply not with tn the superstitious observation of days.

That Servants Professing the Truth behave themselves in due subjection, humility and plainness, as becomes their profession, and places, and likewise Masters and Mistresses behave themselves towards their Servants according to the Apostles directions.

Tythes Y: M. 1690, 91, 92, 98, 99, 1701, 1703 That Friends Ancient testimony against Tythes of all sorts, and Steeplehouse rates, or Lays, be faithfully maintained and kept up in all the parts of it, and not avoided or shuned by any indirect way or courses in the Landlords or otherwise, and that in the peaceable Spirit of Christ, as becomes true Christians rather suffer patiently the spoiling of goods than any ways to strive or struggle with the spoilers and to retain them by force; and where any Friend or Friends shall be prosecuted upon any branch of their Christian Testimony for Truth, that such labour in a sense of the weight of their Testimony with the Prosecutor, before or at the beginning of the Prosecution, that so if possible the witness of God may be reached; and he convinced that their refusal to comply, proceeds not from Obstinacy, nor self Interest, but from a Godly care to preserve a Conscience void of Offence towards God and Man. It is therefore tenderly and in true Love advised, and desired that all Friends everywhere be very careful, and diligent that this our Ancient Testimony in every part and Branch thereof be Faithfully observed and kept, and that no Friend do by any means, or ways whatsoever invalidate the same, we being satisfied that the Payment of Tythes, either to Priest or Improprietor will not stand with our Christian Principle, they being both one in the ground, and if Paid to either in so doing, that which our Lord Jesus Christ came to put an end to is upheld; and thereby the hands of Truths opposers strengthened, and the sufferings of the Lords faithful and innocent People increased; for the more faithful Friends are therein we are really perswaded the Lord will the sooner make way for our ease and deliverance from that Burthen.

Payment of debts Y: M. 1692, 1698, 1703 That the Payment of just debts be not delayed by any Professing Truth beyond the time promised and agreed upon, nor occasion given of complaint to those they deal with by their backwardness of Payment, when no time is set, or limited, nor any to over charge themselves with too much Trading and Commerce, beyond their Capacities to discharge a good Conscience towards all Men, and that all Friends concerned be very careful not to contract debts to the endangering or wronging of others and their Families, which some have done to the grieving the hearts of the upright, nor to break their Promises, contracts and agreements, in their Buying and Selling, or any other Lawful affairs to the Injury of themselves and others, occasioning strife, contention and reproach to Truth, and Friends: and its advised that all Friends that are entering into Trade, or that are in Trade, and have not sufficient Stock of their own to answer the Trade they aim at, be very cautious of running themselves into debts, without devising with some of their Ancient and experienced Friends amongst whom they live, but be careful to keep within the Compass of their own Substance in the management of their Affairs to prevent failures and Breaches, and to avoid all indirect and unwarrantable methods, both in Trade and Merchandize whereby the Government may be defrauded of its due.

Charity Y: M. Epistle 1696 That such among Friends as are endued with plenty of outward substance, be timely and tenderly advised to do good therewith, in their day and generation especially

with regard to the Poor, that the token of their charity may commend their memorial, and be good precedents to the Generation to come.

Making Wills Y: M. 1703 That all Friends in time of Health and strength of Judgement, take care timely, Lawfully, and firmly to make their Wills, and dispose of their substance as in Justice and Wisdom may be agreeable to their satisfaction to prevent future inconveniences and trouble; Making such Wills in due time will shorten no Mans days, but the omission, or delay hath proved very pernicious to many and injurious to Truth.

Burials Q: M. 1700 Y: M. 1717 That Friends abstain from all superfluities in Meat and Drinks etc at the Burial of their dead; and as much as in them lies in all their management relating thereunto, shew forth a selfdenying life; being that which most becomes a holy profession, and in order thereunto, It's desirous that friends of each particular Meeting do appoint two sober weighty faithful Friends to inspect, and see into the practice of friends amongst them in this matter, that none professing Truth amongst us, at such times may run into excess, or superfluities in that case, either in providing too much meat or drink. It being our sense that the Burials ought not to be a time of Feasting, but rather a time of Abstinence and Mourning, and not to exceed what may be sufficient for necessary refreshment according as the circumstances of the place may require. That Friends should not give or Receive Cakes or Gloves at such times and not to shew a distinction of Habit etc as tokens of Mourning for the Dead.

Visiting families Y: M. 1703 And in that a Godly care is growing among friends in many places that all things that are unsavoury and hurtful be removed, that so all that profess the precious Truth with us, may come up together in the good order of the Gospel, for the furthering of which, and encouraging thereunto; It is recommended that Weighty and sensible Friends of unblamable conversation be chosen in the Wisdom of God to Visit the Families of Friends in his Love, who are desired to advise or admonish in the peaceable Spirit of Truth, as the occasion may be seen. That faithful Friends and Elders specially watch over the Flock of Christ, in their respective places, that they Faithfully and diligently walk up to the Testimony of Truth; and that where any of found, short weak, or faulty, they may be sought in the spirit of Love wherein Mercy is not only mixed with Judgement, but may appear over all their works, so that it may appear to all, that Church love abounds, before Church censure comes, and that a Gospel Spirit is the spring, and motive to all their Performances, as well in Discipline as Worship.

N: B. For further information in the particulars advised against we refer to the several Epistles or Manuscripts from whence this Abstract was collected.

From our Quarterly Meeting held at York ye. 28th. and 29th. days of ye. 4th. Mo. 1727. Signed on behalf of the Meeting by Thomas Hammond

APPENDIX 3

Visitors to Highflatts Meeting 1797-1815 (from SN27)

Those from neighbouring meetings are only listed once, although some were frequent visitors. Some years have no visitors listed and none are listed after 1815. Wood also kept some lists of visitors to quarterly and general meetings, plus regional Yearly Meetings.

1797
William Sowerby
Hannah Wigham
William Earnshaw
Dinah Woodhead
Mary Stirrey from London
Mary Watson from Ireland

1798-99
Thomas Colley of Sheffield
William Earnshaw
Jane Burrow from Westmorland
Sarah Shackleton from Ireland
Sarah Talbot from Delaware
Elizabeth Copeland of Leeds
Mary Brantingham from Durham
Mary Rotherford of Sheffield
Catharine Tricket of Sheffield
Ann Fairbank of Sheffield
Phebe Speakman from Delaware
Mary Tate of Cottingwith
Hannah Barnard from New York
Elizabeth Coggeshall from Rhode Island
David Dent from Suffolk
Thomas Scattergood from Pennsylvania

1800
John Wigham from Scotland
Charles Parker of Bentham
John and Elizabeth Hoyland of Sheffield
Martha Smith of Doncaster ('Who with William Tuke and Thomas Priestman of York and Sarah Hustler of Bradford were under appointment of the Quarterly Mg. to visit our Monthly and Preparative Mgs.')

1801

William Sowerby from Richmond

Charity Cooke from South Carolina

Mary Swett from New Jersey

Thomas Cash from Cheshire

James Howarth from Lancashire

1802

Mary Ridgeway from Ireland

Susanna Appleby from Shropshire

Ann Alexander from Suffolk

Ann Burgess from Leicestershire

Henry Tuke of York

1803

Joseph Cloud from North Carolina

William Crotch of Scarborough

Mary Stirrey from London

Margaret Bragg of Newcastle upon Tyne

Mary Brantingham from Durham

1804

Isabella Harris of Ackworth 25 3 1

William Jackson from Pennsylvania

David Sands from New York

Deborah Darby from Shropshire

Rebecca Byrd from Dorsetshire

John Hoyland of Sheffield

1805

Sarah Bleckley from Norfolk

Mary Bleckley from Cambridgeshire

Ann Crowley from Middlesex

Susanna Horne

Thomas Shillitoe from Middlesex

William Foster from Middlesex

Thomas Clark from Sommersetshire

Joseph Milford from Sommersetshire

1809

Esther Lees from Lancashire

Benjamin White from Pennsylvania

1810

Jane Doncaster of Sheffield

Henry Hull from New York in America

John Hull from Middlesex

John and Elizabeth Hoyland of Sheffield

Esther Lees from Lancashire,

Hannah Broadhead of Leeds,

Stephen Grellete from New York

Sarah Hustler of Bradford

Isaac Hadwin from Lancashire

1813

Sarah Sharman from Surrey

George Richardson from Newcastle upon Tyne

William Smith of Doncaster

Robert Walker of Netherdale

Ann Burgess from Leicestershire

Mary Shorthouse from Warwickshire

Sarah Lambly from Worcestershire

Ann Fairbank of Sheffield

Daniel Wheeler of Sheffield

Esther Lees from Lancashire

William Masters from Staffordshire

John Kirham from Essex and 13 9 3

Elizabeth Copeland of Hull

George Sanders of Whitby 6 11 1

Isaac Taylor of Helmsley

William Alexander of York

Thomas Scantlebury of Sheffield

William and Rachel Rountree of Pickering (part of a Committee appointed by the Quarterly Mg. to visit its Monthly and Preparative Mgs.)

1815

Elizabeth Robson of Durham

Mary Cooper of Brighouse

APPENDIX 4

Joseph Wood's library

'A List of the Books and Pamphlets belonging to Joseph Wood of Newhouse taken down in the year 1778'

BOOKS

1 Bible
2 Dr Everards Sermons
3 Royal Magazine Vol. 5
4 Enticks Spelling Dictionary
5 John Websters Sermons
6 Pilgrims Progress
7 Riders British Merlin for 1761
8 Works of Thomas Chalkey
9 Life of John Woollman [*sic*]
10 A Collection of Letters on various subjects
11 Present state of Denmark
12 Epistles and papers of John Audlands and John Camms
13 Life of Richard Davies
14 Truths vindication by Elisabeth Bathurst
15 Counsellor Manners last legacy to his Son
16 History of Halifax
17 Life of William of Reckit
18 The Naval Chronicle
19 Life of Thomas Ellwood
20 Life of Samuel Bownas
21 The Critical History of England
22 Life of John Richardson
23 A Letter to a Deist
24 300 Animals
25 Young Mans best Companion
26 Schoolmasters Assistant
27 Goughs English Grammer [*sic*]
28 Religious Courtship
29 Spiritual Diary and Soliloquies by Jno. [*sic*] Rutty Volumes1 and 2
30 Dyches English Dictionary
31 Universal Museum Vol. 2
32 Piety Promoted
33 Guthries Geographical Grammer
34 Life of John Griffith
35 Sermons by Robert Barclay and several others

36 William Shewens Christian Faith and Experience

37 Life of John Churchman

PAMPHLETS

1 A sermon delivered at Leeds by S: Fothergill

2 Reasons for quitting the Methodist Society by John Helton

3 Select pieces on religious subjects by Isaac Pennington

4 Reasons for the necessity of Silent waiting in order for the solemn worship of God by Mary Brook

5 Deborah Bells Journal

6 The deplorable state of Man and his redemption by Jesus Christ extracted from a late author by John Helton

7 The fighting Sailor turn'd peaceable Christian

8 Some expressions of Ann Crowley during her last illness

9 An Epistle to friends in Great Britain or elsewhere by David Hall

10 An address to the inhabitants of Pennsylvania

11 Poems by John Fry

12 Considerations touching the likeliest means to remove hirelings out of the Church by Jno. [*sic*] Milton

13 Two Sermons preached at York by Thomas Story [*sic*]

14 Remarks on an address to the people called Quakers by S. Fothergill

15 A serious Address to all such as are concerned in commerce and Trading by Ambrose Rigge

16 Method of managing Bees

17 An Epistle of Love and Caution to the Quarterly and Monthly meetings of Friends in Great Britain and elsewhere by James Brown

18 An alphabetical extract of the advices contained in the annual printed Epistle of the Yearly Meeting in London from 1682 to 1762 inclusive by John Fry

19 True Christian Faith and Experience by William Skewen

20 The conversion of Cornelius Cayley Junior

21 Remarks on a Pamphlet intituled a letter to a person lately join'd with the People called Quakers

22 A General Testimony to and for Gods everlasting Truth by Richard Summerland

23 A Preservative from Criminal Offences by T. Humphries

24 An Exhortation to the inhabitants of South Carolina by S: H.

25 To the youth of Norwich Meeting

26 A short history of a long Travel

27 The just character of the late S: Fothergill

28 An Epistle in true love by Elizabeth Jacob

29 An Expostulatory Address to all who frequent places of diversion and Gaming

30 A useful instruction for Children by A: Darby

31 Two Letters by Samuel Crisp

32 An Account of a visit to this Metropolis by the Ministry of Anne Mercy Bell

33 Life of John Roberts

34 A brief account of the people call'd Quakers taken from a Dictionary of Arts and Sciences

35 An Address to the serious reader pointing out some reasons why the Almighty continues and increases the National Troubles

36 Brief remarks on sundry important subjects by John Griffith

APPENDIX 5

Use of meeting houses by others

At LN32,11-12, Wood explains why Friends would not allow their meeting houses to be used by others

Reasons why we cannot lend our Meetinghouses to people of other religious persuasions in a letter to a person who has applyed for the use of one.

To Respected Friend

To thy application to friends of --- requesting the use of --- Meetinghouse, we are desired, on behalf of the monthly meeting,* to reply; and agreeably to the Apostolic precept, "to be ready to render to everyone a reason with meekness etc." we would tenderly and respectfully assign ours, for objecting to comply with thy request; in such a manner as not to wound or hurt any degree of religious tenderness; while at the same time we believe it to be our indispensable duty to maintain some testimonies, with which the desired compliance respecting the use of --- Meetinghouse seems not to Quadrate; lest we should be found destroying with one hand what we are attempting to build up with the other. We have no manner of doubt that there are very sincere, and religiously devoted minds among you (so no doubt you think there are in that church from which you conscientiously dissent and separate) but we cannot with consistency, uphold, or contribute to uphold a worship so far conducted in the will of man, as to consist in Preaching, praying, and Singing, whenever the People are assembled, whatever may be the present state of the mind whether prepared or suitable or not; nor can we countenance, consistently with the deep and awful views attending our mind respecting the nature of religion and the Christian dispensation in particular, those ordinances so called - so much contended for - Sprinkling or baptizing with Water - and the use of Bread and Wine called "the Lords Supper." which shadowy observation we think were not meant to be continued, but in our judgment tend to eclipse or cloud the clearness of the Gospel dispensation; and form a kind of virtual denial of the coming of Christ, in that glorious, superior, and spiritual manifestation which our Lord himself spoke of, and to which we apprehend the Apostle alluded, when he says "though we have known Christ after the flesh; yet henceforth we know him so no more." but they are acquainted with him in the dispensation of Light, life, and Power beyond all shadows and ceremonies; which we think have very much marred the beauty of the Christian profession, and proved a Stumbling block in the way of deep inquirers after the power of Religion; and on the other hand a false rest to many who have centred in these forms, and contended earnestly for them, and for their different modes of administration, rather than for the operation of that pure "faith which operate by love to the purifying of the heart." Neither can we countenance sentiments that lead to a supposed reprobation of, or intentional or withholding the saving Power of Grace from any individual. Some of your ministers also receive a pecuniary emolument for Preaching; which is totally repugnant to our sense of the dignity and purity of the Gospel Ministry. - "freely have you received freely give" which we can by no means think restricted to the first promulgators of the Gospel. These be remarks are but a very small part of what might be mentioned but we mean not hereby to enter into any argument, only simply and briefly to express why we are not free to comply with what, at first sight or on a superficial glance might

seem very reasonable or desirable; we are nevertheless with sincere regard and desires for thy welfare etc Thy Affectionate friends

* Note. One friend observed, it was not necessary to consult the Monthly Meeting; but another deemed it more respectful both to those who applyed, and those to whom the application was made.

APPENDIX 6

‘Remarks on Inclosing Commons’ by Joseph Wood (Volume 1,17/13-14)

(paragraphing added)

I have never found it to be my business to meddle much with Publick affairs; But having with sorrow observ'd for a great number of years, how much the spirit of this world hath prevailed in man; even without regard to that justice and equality towards their fellow creatures which the new Covenant dispensation particularly enjoins, of loving our Neighbour as ourselves; I thought I felt most easy to commit to writing a few remarks on the present mode of Inclosing Commons as I doubt not but many well-disposed People, have been ensnared thereby, from a view of Self.Interest, having suffered the God of this World to blind the eye so as not to see into right justice and equity. The Lord by the mouth of his Prophets hath declared. "I know your manifold transgressions, and your mighty sins; they afflict the just, they take a bribe and they turn aside the poor in the gate from their right." Amos C: 5. v: 12. "Wo unto them that decree unrighteous decrees. To turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor". Isaiah C: 10. v. 1, 2.

Now the word Commons signifies what it really is something common to all; and whilst it remains open, the Poor have an equal privilege with others thereon, and what law of true justice and equity can deprive them of it. The Man of little property takes a little Farm upon the edge of the Moors, he considers with the privilege of the situation he may perhaps be enabled to pay his Rent, and get a scanty subsistence for his family But these mercenary Freeholders, by their inclosing scheme deprive him of this privilege, and all the pity he gets from them is; if he cannot do there, he may go somewhere else; altho' perhaps he or his ancestors have laid most of their small property in the place, which is also considerably reduced, by being under the necessity of selling of their Stock of sheep all at once, which they have been many years carefully and industriously raising, and before the greatest part of them be come to their proper age for Sale.

Add to this also the additional weight that is brought upon them by the increase of a Poors [*sic*] Rate, and the Highways, which also follow Inclosures of Commons. For the poor being depriv'd of their just and equitable right whereby many have been assisted in the support of their families; and the little Farmer being reduced by these things, are obliged to fall upon the Parish for relief. Are those then who are active in procuring Inclosures, loving their Neighbours as themselves; Or are they not rather of those who are taking away the right of the Poor and afflicting the just whose eye hath not been blinded by the Gods of this World. O but saith the Freeholder my Estate is so situated that notwithstanding I have a right of Common I cannot enjoy it, but whilst it remains unenclosed others enjoy my Property. I have considered this matter well and I cannot see that this argument will at all hold good. When a man purchases an Estate he considers its situation, advantages and disadvantages; and purchases accordingly, wherefore he hath every privilege he expected in the purchase, and ought not to covert more to the injury of his Neighbour. But the Freeholder saith we do nothing contrary to the law we have procured an Act of Parliament for it. To which I answer there can be no law consistent with true justice and equity to deprive our fellow creatures of their right without a

just compensation for the same; but this certainly does for whilst it remains Common, the poor have an equal right with others and no man can prevent anything they have from grazing thereon.

There is a Law for the Slave.trade, but is it consistent with true justice and equity. 17. 14 The Jews said we have a law and by our law Christ ought to die. I mention these things to shew that many of the Laws of Man may be inconsistent with the Law of God wrote in the heart, and therefore the first ought not to be put in practice in violation of the other. Besides the Injustice of the present mode of Inclosing commons, I have looked upon it to be a National evil. This Nation being largely concern'd in manufactories, the stable commodity of which is the Woollen, the quantity of wool grown is already much reduced thereby, the price amazingly advanced consequently when manufactured must be sold considerably higher whereby other Nations will be enabled to undersell us and the trade in time may be in danger of being wholly lost. I have oftens admired how wisely this land was diversified before the Inclosing scheme took place, there was sufficient of ground in cultivation to support the Inhabitants and sufficient of Wool grown upon the commons to compleat them, there was no want of the necessaries of life at a moderate price, or of labour to afford the means of purchasing them. But since the Inclosing scheme hath been put in practice, the necessaries of life hath been gradually advancing, the supply for our manufactories decreasing, and consequently many People have been, and must in time be more so, in want of employment, than formerly; This appears no mystery to me, for the ground that was in cultivation, would bring forth three times the quantity, if a sufficiency of manure could be procured, That it is not the want of ground, but the want of manure to till it, and the tillage being laid upon the Inclosed commons for their improvement; The old cultivated land hath been thereby neglected, that it is a matter of doubt with me whether both have produced as much in some places as the old Land did before the Inclosure took place.

I have been informed by a credible person, that a friend of his who was an Inspective Man, and lived in a town where the commons was Inclosed, told him that he had taken a particular account of the Yearly produce of the Land in the said Town for several years before the Inclosure, and for the same space of time after the Inclosure was finished, and found a considerable reduction of the quantity both produced, from what the old land brought forth before it took place, setting aside the quantity of Sheep which before that time was kept upon the waste; What a loss this was then to the Publick, if we also consider the additional quantity of manure which we apprehend must be laid upon the new land; perhaps if it had been applyed to the old, it might have caused the produce to be double the quantity heretofore; which with the addition of the Sheep and Geese kept upon the waste, must have made the supply of Provisions more abundant, and the Wool and Skins been a means not only of employment, but of making the cloathing of the Inhabitants cheaper. Now when these things are duly considered, need we wonder at the dearness of provisions, and the want of employment; and is not this Inclosing scheme one great cause; I not only believe it to be so, but that the Poor and little Farmers are depriv'd of their just rights and oppress'd thereby, and that it will be a means in time of bringing on a National calamity; and therefore let others do as they may as far as I am enabled shall bear my testimony faithfully against it.

J: W. 12th. Mo. 1801

APPENDIX 7

Meetings attendance by Joseph Wood

According to his Notebooks these are the meetings Joseph Wood attended, totalling 493. His own Particular Meeting of Highflatts, which he would always attend on First Day if not travelling, is not included.

Monthly Meetings	40
General Meetings	13
Quarterly Meetings	93
London Yearly Meeting	1
Northern Yearly Meeting	7
Welsh Yearly Meeting	2
Circular YM	1
Appointed Meetings	3
Publick [*sic*] Meetings	308
Welsh Half Year Meeting	1
Visits (with other Ministers and including families of hanged rioters)	8

APPENDIX 8

Post mortem testimony

After Joseph Wood's death the following testimony was included in volume 5, the writer is not known (5/63.15-16)

The testimony of Pontefract Monthly Meeting concerning Joseph Wood deceased

This our esteemed friend was born at Newhouse near Highflatts, within the compass of this Monthly Meeting. On the 26th. of 4th. Month 1750. His Parents Samuel and Susanna Wood members of our society were concerned for the best interest of the children. In his youth he gave way to some of the vanities incident to that period of life; but when approach manhood, he was happily brought under the restraining power of Truth and often humbled in deep inward exercise, once being in the fields in the night season, he exclaimed! "Lord what shall I do, or whither shall I go?" The answer in the secret of his own heart was as intelligible as if spoken to his outward ear; "whether wilt love go have not I the words of Eternal life." Soon after this he attended a neighbouring Meeting when a ministering friend, who was a stranger stood up with the very words which he had received as an answer to his enquiry and enlarged upon the subject in a manner united to his tried state of mind In the year 1779 in the 29th. year of his age was his first appearance in the ministry, in great fear and brokenness of Spirit, but being obedient to the manifestations of Truth he experienced an advancement therein and was a good example adorning his profession by a circumspect life His testimony was not with the enticing words of mans wisdom but in demonstration of the spirit and of power neither was he forward to offer his gift patiently abiding in the deep till he felt the holy fire burn. He was at times laid in a plain, close manner to the unfaithful professors of Truth, but had the word of consolation to the rightly exercised and to whom he was indeed a nursing Father, he was especially useful to such as the Lord was gathering from the barren mountains of an empty profession to the knowledge of the truth and he was frequently in solemn supplication for these and for the awakening of those who were at ease in Zion. His had been enlarged in costs will love [*meaning obscure*], he was anxious for the salvation of all and was frequently engaged to appoint Meetings amongst those not in profession with us.

For this service he was eminently gifted and his ministry on these occasions was often attended with the powerful baptizing influence of the Spirit to the convincement of many. He was concerned to impress on the minds of his friends the necessity of a due attendance of weekday Meetings, believing that such as were negligent in this duty never experienced an attainment to the state of strong men in the truth. That our dear friend was a zealous for the proper support of discipline in our religious Body, was sufficiently evident from the part he took in the exercise of it in his own Monthly Meeting For active service in this important branch of church government he was eminently gifted. In the course of his religious labours he visited the meetings of friends generally in most of the Quarterly Meetings in England and many Meetings within the principality of Wales, and divers of them repeatedly. During the latter period of his life feeling his bodily strength decline, he was anxiously desirous that no service required of him should be omitted; his zeal increased with his years, and he became more abundant in labour for the promotion of Christian cause. In a memorandum made about a year before his death he writes, "This day I attained the 70th . year of my age. Made the remainder of my days be

so devoted to the Lord service, as, when the solemn message of death is sent, I may have nothing to do but to render up my account with joy." In the last Monthly Meeting he attended he expressed amongst us, that he had seen, in the vision of life that day, that there were of the Youth their present, who if they were faithful and kept in their innocent sea would become instruments of good, and finally would shine as the stars forever and ever.

The day before his death, the first day of the week; his appearance in his own meeting at Highflatts in a powerful testimony beginning with these words of Moses to Hobab Numbers 10 chap 29 verse "we are journeying into the place of which the Lord said I will give it to you", come down with us and we will do the good, for the Lord has spoken good concerning Israel." and in the course of his testimony he had in strong terms to urge the necessity of a preparation for an awful Eternity In the afternoon of the same day he complained of pain in his breast and arms, but was not considered in danger he retired to bed at his usual hour, but he slept little and quietly departed about five o'clock the following morning, the 26th. of 3rd. month 1821. And was buried at Highflatts the 31st. of the same many friends and others attended the meeting on this solemn occasion which was eminently owned by the presence of the great Shepherd of Israel. Aged nearly 71 years in ministry about 42

Signed in and on behalf of Pontefract Monthly Meeting held at Barnsley 18th.of 3 Month 1822.
A total of 59 Friends signed.

APPENDIX 9 'Parish Clark' letter (1/9.5)

This odd entry in Wood's first Notebook purports to be a 'Copy of a letter from a Parish Clark (sic) to the Clergy of the Church of England on subject of Tythes.' As the content is slanted strongly towards the Quaker view of tithes, this seems unlikely, but no explanation is given by Wood. The text is unedited.

To the Reader

Being a Parish Clark, you may imagine I am zealous for the rights and privileges, as well as the reputation of the Church; and industrious in collecting the Vicars due, but there being many of the People called Quakers in our Parish who always refuse to pay them, we are thereby obliged to take such methods as the Law directs, which by the distress and sale of goods, oftens amounts to much more than the value of our demands, tho' we take the easiest way; and I must confess I never went thro' this execution free from reluctance; nor as I believe, is it possible that any person of consideration should be otherwise affected under such circumstances. - For the Quakers do seriously affirm, that their refusing a compliance, arises purely from a conscientious scruple, founded upon Christ and his Apostles and agreeable to the principles of Protestantism and equity. 1st. They assert that the Law only gives the Clergy power to take; but no equitable right in any part of their property for such uses. 2nd. That Inasmuch as what we demand of them is for religious uses, Viz. for the support of our religion and its Ministers, the Scriptures being the only rule for such matters, as our articles of faith maintain, that ought to decide the Question in dispute, and accordingly; 3rd. That as saviour by commanding his disciples to depart from those cities and places which rejected them and their doctrines as in Luke C:10 vs.7,11. is evidently a prohibition upon his Ministers to ask or receive any reward pay or maintenance from those who are not their hearers, and the Apostles acted pursuant to the same Acts C: 13. v: 51. C: 20. v: 33. 4th. That the precept freely you received, freely give; makes the Gospel a dispensation of free Grace, not admitting any coercion in pay or proselyting. 5th. That the civil Governors can have no more just Authority to force any man to contribute of his property, to support a religion or its Ministers, from which he according to the dictates of his reason and conscience dissents, than they have to chuse or determine his religion for him and that a right to the one implies a right to the other. 6th. That no man for conscience, or for his own happiness, or the public good, is obliged to conform to any Church, or to advise with or paying any Priest, but such as himself approves. 7th. They tell us there can be no right when but what arises from reason and the nature of things, or from the express revelation of God to mankind 8th. That no obligation can be laid upon any one in such cases, unless an equivolent really received creates it or a command from the Supreme lawgiver enjoins it. That they cannot owe to any Priest a Maintenance, but on the terms of an equivolent, ie. by receiving his administration. Seeing no divine command enforces it. 9th. That these acts and statutes of the civil Legislature which enjoins the Payment of Tythes etc; were all founded upon a presumption, that the same were due Jure Divine but as this doctrine cannot be proved, and if admitted does evidently render all who hold [9. 6] impropriations guilty of gross sacrilege; so those called Protestants do positively refuse conformity to it. 10th. And if there is no such thing as Jus Divinum, the which was made the very basis of all the Laws that enforce the payment of Tythes, and without admitting which they cannot without manifest injustice be put in execution, the Laws themselves become invalid and Null; pursuant to that approved maxim Cessante

Tatione Iegis agis cessat Iex when the reason of any law ceaseth to be the Law, itself thereby becomes void. 11th. That its manifest inconsistency and self contradiction, for any to presume to enforce a law, which they themselves maintain is invalid, and whose foundation they allow never really existed. 12th. That notwithstanding if they could irrefutably prove a divine right to what they claim, yet they cannot extend it to any but to their own hearers: For say the Quakers, it would be a notorious absurdity to suppose that a divine right to Tythes, should contradict a divine right to a free toleration of faith and Worship; or that the divine Law, without which a divine right cannot exist; Should require a Man to maintain any Religion or its Ministers; but what he according to the best of his Judgment chuses and professes; hence they infer that none can put any of those laws in force, without giving up Protestantism, and embracing Popery in two Cardinal points. viz. the doctrine of divine right, and the infallibility of the Church, the which allows of no dissent. Do not the most approved writers (say they) of your Church unanimously declare, that every act of religion must be free and voluntary; as the effect of clear conviction, that the Magistrates has nothing to do with compulsion in matters of a religious nature; that whatsoever is applyed to religious uses, whether our words, our actions, or any part of our property; if dedicated to Religion or the service of God, the same thereby becomes of a Religious nature, and as such never to be exhorted by force. Further same they say no human power upon earth, can justly consecrate to religious uses, any part of any mans property, without a positive command of God, or the owners voluntary consent or intention. These and the like reasons the Quakers render, when we ask them for the Parsons dues etc and patiently suffer the spoiling of their goods by frequent distress for such demands. From hence there arises two considerations, if the Quakers are in the right, and their refusal is so well grounded, is it not strange that our Clergy should proceed to exact their temporals since it is obvious they receive none of our spirituals; as an equivolent to create an obligation. But if the Quakers are mistaken, then I am no less surprized that none of our learned divines have endeavoured to convince them of their error, and plainly prove that the right they have, in such a part of the Quakers property, is derived from Scripture, consistent with the Gospel; for seeing the Quakers as well as we do allow, that the sacred texts of the New Testament, is the only rule in Religious affairs, why do they decline when called upon, to produce such evidence in defence of our practice, when that authority is so reciprocally assented to. Does it not naturally suggest some invalidity in our cause, and confirm the Quakers in their judgment, viz. That we have no right at all to such demands, either from scripture, reason or equity, but only power given to exhort it, and that to have power to take anything, without a just right in the thing, amounts to no more than superiority of force. Wherefore its humbly requested that some of our learned Clergy, would furnish us with a short tract, bring the points to the test of scripture and reason; and endeavour to refute fairly the Quakers allegations; hereby we should be qualified when we go on such errands, to make a defence, and convince, or at least silence them; and that with arguments deduced from the same Authority, to which they themselves to appeal. But as the case now stands, we are all at a loss, having nothing to say in our Vindication; but depart with no less condemnation of conscience, than confusion of countenance, not to name the contempt, and opposition we generally meet with, in the aspects of the populace, when we carry away and dispose of the Quakers goods.

APPENDIX 10

Yearly Meeting committee inspects in Yorkshire

This is one of the Yearly Meeting epistles sent to Quarterly Meetings around England summarising the results of formal visitations by small groups of highly regarded Friends in the late 1770s. Their remit was to assess and report on the spiritual health of monthly meetings with regard to the Queries. In Volume 1A of Wood's Notebooks there are 17 such reports in addition to that for Yorkshire. The Yorkshire report is included in full, with very little editing, because it is a significant source in seeking to understand local Friends in the period. It is distinctive in that part way through it switches to Yearly Meeting Queries (this is indicated) which does not happen in other reports. There is a good deal of repetition in this part, which is wordier and more censorious than the first section.

Sent to: 'Friends at their ensuing Quarterly Meeting for the County of York, to be held ye 24th of 9th mo. 1777'

Dear Friends Having been nominated at the Yearly Meeting in London, with other Friends, to pay a religious visit to the monthly and quarterly meetings of Great Britain and Ireland, we found ourselves inclined to come among you, our friends and Brethren, in this county; and having now been enabled to accomplish this service, and, we trust, in a degree of Gospel love, we think it expedient to offer some remarks on the state of the Society in these parts, as it appear'd to us from the answers brought in from the particular to the several monthly meeting; an abstract of which we deliver herewith to the quarterly meeting. And as we came amongst you in much brotherly love and goodwill, we fervently desire that our labours may be made instrumental in promoting your growth and prosperity in the truth.

By answers to the first [Query] it appears that Meetings for Worship on first days, where they have only one Meeting on that day, are in general well attended; where they have two, those in the Afternoon, are often very slender. The time of gathering is in many places not well observed, and in respect to week day meetings, the neglect of attending them in general is too obvious; scarce a quarter of the members in some places, a third in many others, half in a very few, Two thirds at the utmost giving up themselves to their duty in this respect. Preparative meetings being mostly held on first days this part of the meetings for discipline may be said to be pretty well attended: But this cannot be said in respect to the attendance of your Monthly and Quarterly meetings in general; few in comparison to your numbers giving up to this service; In Thirsk monthly meeting one particular meeting is not always held on week days. In Gisborough and in Knaresborough there are several meetings in the like situation. At Rawcliffe a meeting is not always held on first days, and on the week day seldom. In most of the Meetings complaint is made of a dull drowsy disposition; from the Answers it would seem that a care exists to advise against it, but whether so efficaciously or extensively as the necessity of the care requires, must be submitted to your Consideration

Query 2nd

In some of the Monthly Meetings, the Answers to this Query were not quite so clear as might have been desired; some Breaches of Unity subsisting, which nevertheless appears to be under friends care, and which we hope will speedily be adjusted. No complaints of Talebearing or detraction.

Query 3rd

It appears from the Answers that many Friends are careful by Example and Precept to train up their Children and those under their care in a Godly conversation, in frequent reading the Holy Scriptures, in plainness of Speech behaviour and apparel; yet with sorrow we had to remark that very many exceptions were made in respect to these important duties. Even one Particular Meeting acknowledged they were remiss in regard to the frequent reading of the Holy Scriptures.

Query 4th

Many Friends appear to stand faithful in respect to the Payment of Tythes, those called Church rates, and other demands of the like nature. Ostwick Monthly meeting gives a clear account. No friends have a claim to receive any. Complaints are made in many others of some paying Tythes, admitting of Stoppages or other suspicious methods of evading this Query. In the Monthly meetings of Gisborough, Ostwick and Balby, Pontefract and Brighouse, no meetings appear to be held for the purpose of Enquiry into these circumstances by divers of the particular meetings.

Query 5th

For the most part it appears from the Answers to this Query, that Friends are generally clear of attending vain sports, places of diversion and gaming; But there is too much reason to apprehend that all are not clear in this respect, and that divers are accustomed to the unnecessary frequenting of Alehouses and Taverns, and drinking to Excess. We hope however that this matter is under friends care in divers places.

Query 6th

In a few of the monthly meetings there are complaints of some friends not being just in their dealings or punctual in fulfilling their engagements. These appeared to be under the notice of friends and a clear account to this Query was given by the rest of the monthly meetings.

Query 7th

It appears that care is taken to deal with such as appear inclinable to Marry contrary to the rules of the Society; also in respect to Certificates on Removals.

Query 8th

There are friends appointed in some of your particular meetings to have the oversight thereof, but this direction is not so generally complied with as appears necessary; particully in the monthly meetings of Richmond, Thirsk, Gisborough, Malton, Scarborough, Ostwick, Cave, York and Pontefract. The accounts from all the Monthly Meetings gives us to understand that the rules of our discipline are mostly put in practice where anything appears amiss.

Query 9th

This Query seems for the most part to be regularly complied with, and care taken to register Births, Burials and Marriages, to record the Titles of Meetinghouses and Burial Grounds and to apply Legacies agreeable to the intentions of the Donors, some few exceptions appeared which are under Friends care.

Query 10th

Answers were brought in that this Query was read recommended and complied with by many, in settling their Affairs by Will or otherwise.

Query 11th

Apprentices and Servants appear to be duly taken care of by Friends, except in a very few Instances; in some places where young Persons have engaged in the service of such who are not Friends, and a few Children disposed of in like manner by their Relations not of the Society.

Yearly Meeting Query 9th

In three of your monthly meetings complaint were made of some dealing in goods suspected to be runn [*sic*] or prohibited by Law; in a few others it was apprehended some Friends might purchase things for private use, but in general the accounts brought in were clear and consistent in this respect.

Query 11th (*sic*)

In two monthly meetings it appears that some of their members are concerned in Armed Vessels, in one of which exception was given that the cause of complaint would be removed as speedily as possible. In Brighouse Monthly meeting one Person has been concerned in subscribing to hire a Substitute to serve in the Militia, another in dealing in prize goods. From the rest of the Meetings which brought Answers to these Queries, a clear account was given in regard to every part of this Query. We observe that though first day meetings are kept up, and for the most part well attended, yet too generally a neglect is evident in respect to week day meetings, and to a lamentable degree: in a few particular Meetings we had the satisfaction to find that of late a growing care to come up in this Religious duty was apparent, and we fervently desire that a like disposition may become more general throughout this county: for if individuals neglect their incumbent duty, a diligent attendance at the times set apart for the worship of God, how is it likely they should witness an increase of that help, strength, and divine energy, which alone is sufficient to enable them to live to the praise of him who has called them to glory and virtue? Through this neglect a due attendance of religious meetings, on week days especially, we fear have entered many evils and much loss to the Society. Be ye, therefore, who have the cause of truth and righteousness at heart, stirred up to be urgent with such who are in danger of sliding into indifference and neglect, that they may be awakened to a sense thereof, and that they may be enabled to come up in this part of their religious duty, to their own help and comfort and the edification of their brethren.

We observe, that as the preparative meetings are generally held on first days, the answers are pretty full in respect to the meetings for discipline being well attended; but on enquiry, we find that in divers places too many neglect coming up to their monthly and quarterly meetings; even such from whose stations and circumstances more diligence and zeal might have been expected: to all such we address ourselves in much brotherly love, and entreat them, as fathers, as elders, and as brethren in the same holy profession, to give themselves up freely to these necessary duties. And it is our earnest desire, that in all these meetings the business may be spoken to audibly, and with due solemnity; that the well-disposed youth of both Sexes, who we desire may be encouraged to attend

these meetings as general as possible, may be gradually brought forward and fitted by the forming power of heavenly wisdom, for the services of the day, and to succeed the elders as in the course of Providence they may be removed. Let the aged call to mind the tendering influence which often melted their spirits in their youth, and under a renewed sense of that heavenly virtue, which gathered them into the service and strengthened them in it, encourage the rising generation in such a religious conduct as may render them useful members in the Church of Christ, of good savour in their lives, and in their old age fruitful unto holiness, to the praise of the Almighty Father and their eternal comfort.

We are sorry to find, there are few meetings clear of some complaint of a dull and drowsy disposition. How inconsistent is such a state with that worship we profess? The worship of God in spirit, and the lively exercise of our minds in holy vigilance towards him! May you be directed to the most effected means of awakening those who are subject to this grievous state of weakness and unwatchfulness, to considerations of its tendency, its evil effects upon themselves and others, in order that they may be restored to a proper exercise of their spiritual faculties.

We have observed, with a degree of satisfaction, in passing through your county that considering the large body of friends, and the numerous occasions of misunderstanding that might in the course of human affairs have arisen amongst them, that love and unity are so well preserved. There are indeed a few painful instances of the contrary come to our knowledge, but these, we trust, are weightily under the care of friends where they have happened.

The third query which includes so great a part of the duties of parents and children, has been much under our consideration; we acknowledge with satisfaction, and with humble gratitude to him who has not forsaken the offspring of his people, that a degree of godly care rests upon many for the education of their children in the fear of the Lord, and in the footsteps of the flock and family. But we must not conceal from you the affliction we feel on account of the deviation of many, who instead of following the example of their pious ancestors, and the counsel of those who had their true interest at heart, have gradually swerved from the pure way of truth, into many hurtful liberties, to their own great loss and the affliction of their friends. Parents! Be ye excited to a diligent watchful care over yourselves, that by the holy influence and assistance of the Spirit of Truth, ye may be enabled to place before your children lively examples of the precepts which you are called upon by this query to set before your offspring.

Children, and young people, by what powerful language shall we influence your minds to yield obedience to these instructions, and to the holy tender calls of divine love in your hearts, thus to follow the examples of your faithful friends and predecessors? How wisely have our worthy ancients been led to guard you against the snares of folly and destruction, in forming this query, and in its frequent repetition, in order the more effectually to preserve you in that safe though narrow way, which leads securely to life and blessedness for ever! Be prevailed upon, we intreat you, as you value your own safety, the comfort of your friends, and divine approbation, to yield to the counsels of love,

and to consider the restraints herein recommended, as the means appointed in wisdom for your preservation in innocence and Christian simplicity.

Fervent have been our desires and deep the travail of our souls, that a renewed labour and care might take place in every mind, that yet more clear accounts might be given in respect to this query, as so much of the safety and happiness of individuals, and the increase of piety and virtue amongst the members of our Christian profession, greatly depends on the due performance of the duties it indicates.

We are pleased with observing the general clearness of friends in respect to Tythes, and the continued labour of many to prevent unfaithfulness, in this important branch of our Christian Testimony. May you be enabled to persevere in it with minds disposed to suffer patiently, and in the meekness of wisdom; whatever may be permitted to befall you, in asserting the cause of Truth and freedom against all antichristian impositions. We are concerned, nevertheless, at the many instances of Stoppages that occur in this County. Many of these, we doubt not, are exercising to the rightly concerned, who are thus prevented from standing in their lot with their suffering brethren, and bearing with them a publick testimony to the truth. Others, we fear, from their easy acquiescence under such circumstances, are not so averse as they ought to be, to such indirect methods of complying with these demands. For the weak and unfaithful in these respects, we fervently desire a greater degree of stability in the truth, and that by yielding obedience to its language in their hearts, they may be brought to see the temptation they have yielded to, and be enabled to come up in more faithfulness and integrity. To the former we recommend, in much tenderness and goodwill, a close attention to their Christian duty, and to the leadings of heavenly wisdom in these probations. Make it known to those who have such demands upon you, that to recover them in a legal manner, and with lenity and moderation, is all the favour you desire.

It afforded us comfort, to find that not many amongst you had deviated so far from their principles, as to attend vain sports and places of diversion; scenes contrived by the enemy of all good, in which the mind might gradually be inured to forget God, and become estranged to virtue and religion. Young people! as you value your happiness in this life, and the hope of a quiet habitation hereafter, when all the glory and pleasures of this world will be at an end, shun these paths to sure perdition. The ardent breathings of our souls to the God of all our mercies are, that he may graciously condescend to preserve you, dear young people, from these delusive snares of Satan; and that you may shun the paths which lead many to affliction in this life, and separation from blessedness for ever.

We find, to our great concern, that the unnecessary frequenting of ale-houses, and drinking to excess, are too prevalent in several places, notwithstanding the care of friends. How much is the condition of such to be lamented, who give way to these practices, which are so injurious to the parties themselves, and so disreputable to the Society! May all be warned to shun such places, as they abound for the most part with unprofitable, if not hurtful company, whose object is too often to promote drinking to excess: and if an habitual love of liquor should take place, those tender feelings which would guard us from the first approaches of evil are weakened; and from such beginnings,

many become great sufferers themselves, as well as their families; and grievous reproach is often brought by such gross misconduct on our Christian profession.

We have been affected with sorrow, to find, by the answers from some of your monthly meetings, that all are not so careful as might be desired in respect to punctuality in fulfilling their engagements. We hope that those who have fallen short of their duty in these matters, will be more circumspect for the future, and endeavour to live within the bounds of true moderation; this would prevent much sorrow to themselves, loss to many, and disreputation to the Society. And we earnestly desire, that in all our dealings we may ever make the case of others our own, and not unseasonably withhold from those we deal with, what is justly their due.

Notwithstanding a clear account has been given for the most part, in respect to dealing with such as appear inclinable to marry contrary to the good order of the Society; yet from the numerous instances of misconduct that have happened in this county, we are very apprehensive due care has been wanting to prevent such afflicting connections. If parents, through a neglect of the pure law of God, written in the heart, are rendered incapable of training up their Children, by example and precept, in a Goodly conversation; and instead thereof give way to improper liberties in principle and practice, living too much at large, as if without God in the world; permitting their children to read unprofitable and pernicious books, that corrupt the mind and render it susceptible of the worst impression; what else can be expected but trouble and disappointment to themselves, a woeful neglect of all religious duties and its fatal consequences in their children, with a life of sorrow and affliction, or of vanity and vexation of spirit.

As this is a matter of so great concern to all, we cannot but in the most fervent manner, recommend a watchful care over the conduct of young persons of both sexes, that the first approaches to improper acquaintance may as much as possible be timely prevented: it is here that a lively concern for the safety of inexperienced youth may greatly avail to their preservation from those entanglements, which often terminate in much trouble to their friends, to the parties, and great loss to the Society. And as young persons naturally wish for society amongst those of their own age, we desire a care may prevail amongst friends in general, that in fixing themselves and their families, especial regard may be had to the conveniency of attending meetings, and the neighbourhood of other friends; thus they may be a strength and comfort to one another, and may bring their offspring and families with them more constantly to meetings, than we fear is the case at present in many places.

As amongst the various instances of improper marriages that have happened in this county, there may be some persons, who being touched with a just sense of their outgoings feel at times the power and love of truth working in their hearts for their recovery; it is our desire that such may be watched over for good, the tender principle in their minds cherished, and way be made, as the wisdom of truth directs, for their restoration. We are glad to find that in most meetings friends are appointed to have the oversight thereof. To these we tenderly recommend the apostolick advice, “Take heed to yourselves”. Watch over the tender youth in gospel love and affection; watch over those who are more advanced in years, in the meekness of wisdom; encourage the diffident and humble; stir up the

negligent and remiss; admonish offenders; and reprove the impenitent with christian boldness. And thus by a faithful discharge of your duty, may you receive at last the welcome sentence of “Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord”.

We were well pleased to find in this large maratime (sic) county, that friends are so generally clear of defrauding the King in respect to his customs, duties, and excise, or of dealing in goods suspected to be run; very few instances of the contrary having appeared, and those are mostly under the care of friends; whose attention to this branch of our testimony appears to have been efficacious and commendable. We are glad likewise to have the same observation to make in respect to bearing arms, or being in any manner concerned in acting contrary to this our Christian duty; few instances of unfaithfulness in this respect having been complained of. Some, however, we observe with sorrow, are unfaithful in being owners of armed vessels. We desire that friends may be stirred up in the love of the Gospel, tenderly to deal with all such, that they may be made sensible of the inconsistency of such practices with our holy profession, founded on the doctrines of the gospel of peace.

And as we passed along, we were sometimes impressed with an apprehension, that friends were not everywhere so clear as might be wished for, of engaging in worldly matters on first days; a practice which we fear is often hurtful to themselves and not of good repute among their neighbours: for though we would not be thought to encourage a superstious regard to days, yet we think as a day is set apart for the worship of Almighty God, it ought to be faithfully dedicated to his service. The laws of the land have intervened in restraining persons from their usual labours and vocations on this day; and as we have always been desirous of complying with every ordinance of man by which our Christian testimony is not affected, we think it necessary to be particularly careful not to offend in these respects, either by selling goods in shops, writing letters on business, or otherwise engaging in affairs which on other days it is both lawful and expedient to transact.

Nor can a tender mind easily give way, on that or any other day, to the perusal of such books and publications as may have a tendency to lead into unwatchfulness, and to a frame of spirit unfavourable to our growth in religion; and we recommend it to all who are concerned in Societies for purchasing books, and other the like institutions, carefully to consider their tendency, and whether they are most likely to promote the increase of that wisdom which is from above, or that which is from beneath, and described to be earthly, sensual, and devilish.

And let all friends dwell as much as possible under the holy covering of the Spirit of Truth; this will make our conversation savoury, and be a means of preserving us from many hurtful things, that would retard our progress in that conversion of the heart to God, which ought to be the labour of every christian to attain. A jealousy has affected us, lest in some of your meetings the answers to the Queries be not always given with that impartial openness which truth requires.

The object of the queries is to gain a faithful account of the state of things in the several parts of the county, in order that help may be afforded as occasions may require; but if weaknesses are concealed by doubtful answers, and either from a want of due enquiry, or a desire to appear in a more favourable light than is consonant to truth, the true state of meetings is not represented, how can

proper help be extended? Where a practice of this kind is admitted, increasing weakness and decay must necessarily ensue. And we most ardently desire, that friends every where, and in every rank and situation, may be stirred up to a more diligent exercise of mind, both in meetings and out of meetings, towards God, and his truth. May the elders, especially, be examples, in all your meetings, of a holy reverent, inward watchfulness, seeking to the God and Father of all our mercies for heavenly help and enlivening virtue; the younger may hereby be stirred up to their religious duty, and all be animated to labour for that which alone can preserve them in a living frame of Spirit. The want of this diligence and holy zeal, and a depending one upon another, rather than on him alone in whom is all power and sufficiency, is one great cause, we fear, of the lamentable decay of antient vigour, faithfulness, and love, for which many of your predecessors in the truth have been eminently distinguished.

Be excited, therefore, we intreat you, in that love which led us from our habitations to visit you, not to let your dependence rest one upon another; but seek to and trust in him who is able to build you up in the most holy faith; so will you witness a renewal of strength and ability to labour for yourselves, and for the church, and have judges raised up amongst you as at the first and counsellors as at the beginning. We acknowledge with reverent thankfulness, the gracious extending of divine love and regard vouchsafed to the churches in this religious visit; and we have likewise to acknowledge the openness with which it has been received amongst you.

The meetings were large, and we believe friends gave themselves up to meet us in this service with much love and good-will: we found our hearts united to the faithful labourers amongst you; may they be enabled and encouraged to preserve in a godly care for the support of our religious discipline in this county; and be exercised therein under the influence of the spirit of the Gospel; then will their Christian endeavours be manifest, where they may have occasion to labour, that the same are for edification and not destruction. May an humbling sense of the favour of the most high, vouchsafed to his church and family, in this renewed visitation of love for our daily help;, and the restoration of ancient simplicity, and brightness amongst us, so influence all our minds, that praises may ascend to him who is worthy for ever.

We salute you affectionately and are your friends and brethren, Signed at York the 25th. of the 9th. month 1777, George Boone William Rathbone Isaac Grey John Burgess John Fothergill

APPENDIX 10

Two letters

(These are: Young woman Vol1nb2B/31-38, 1779, Leeds;
Charles Smith Vol1nb6/9-14, 1795.

Copy of a letter from a[ny] young woman a member of our Society to a Preacher among the Methodists.

Dearly beloved

Duty to God and one another is the bond that binds when distance of time or place doth separate, whilst that Unity of Spirit is preserved which is indeed the Bond of peace, that binds the living Members together, into that body of which Christ is the head, thy Preservation and Growth into this more and more is what I long for as well as for myself, that 2B. 32 as we advance in Years we may be more acquainted with the two great mysteries of Iniquity and Godliness; that, by being preserved in the Power of the one we may be enabled to escape the other; for nothing short of the powerful Influence of the Spirit of Truth can preserve us from the Snares of death, for they are many, I often think, O, how great is the mystery of Iniquity! What need we have to keep close to the Spirit, and steadily adhere to its dictates, lest our unwearied enemy by some of his formings or Transformings, shou'd draw aside, from that simplicity there is in the Truth. I hope thou wilt bear with me - I think we cannot be too much upon our guard - The reason of addressing myself in this manner, is, because of some fresh exercise that accompanied my mind respecting thee, which bespoke to me some approaching danger, the sense whereof continually drew my Spirit (if I may so say) mightily to cry unto the Father of mercies for thy preservation; which exercise continued for some days; after which my mind was favoured with a perfect calmness and sweet serenity wherein I thought my soul was now returned to its Rest; and as I was abiding in my Watch Tower, harkening to hear or waiting to know what was his mind and will concerning me - as my mind was now relieved of that exercise which bespoke danger, I did not expect to see or know any

further; but it seemed as if I saw thee in much Exercise of mind, and the enemy of Souls exceeding busy herein; and, as I can find it is my business and duty to give thee this Alarm - shall any tell thee what to do in such a time as this? I think and believe none can direct the path of a Christian but the Spirit, in safety. - Many are the Afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivers out of them all. If conflict of Spirit be such that we know not what to do for the best and right, one instance left on record for our Instruction, occurs to my memory; when the Children of Israel were pursued by the Egyptians behind, and the Red Sea was before their Faces, there seem'd no way to escape, yet the command was for them, to stand still and see the Salvation of God - for my part, when such a conflict has attended, that I knew not what to do nor how to escape, by waiting in Patience and Resignation way has been made, where no way was to be seen; and there yet remains a way for the ransomed and redeemed of the Lord to pass over, which the Vultures eye have not seen, nor the foot of any ravenous Beast trod in, so that here is no cause of discouragement, for thro' Sufferings we are made Perfect and through much tribulation we must enter the Kingdom - and if I be not mistaken, have seen a suffering state through which thou must be brought, if preserved in the life of Truth - "Every branch in me that beareth fruit, my Father purgeth, that it may bring forth more fruit" or as if the Spirit if followed, wou'd lead into the wilderness, there to be preserved for a season, where want and thirst are known, for that which only and alone can nourish up the Soul unto eternal Life - there is yet the same Rock ready to gush out with Living Water, to afresh the weary Spirits of Zions Travellers now, that did when Israel went from Egypt to the promised land. - Let us be careful not to flee a suffering state of mind, lest we become as withered branches "they that lose their life for my sake shall find it; he that wou'd save his life shall lose it". The way of life is through death, and the way to the Crown is by the daily cross, but let us faithfully endure the fight of Affliction, that so by suffering with him, we may be glorified together; for they who are the faithful followers of a crucified Saviour, must suffer Prosecution, and when the time of Suffering comes, here is the Tryal, then, whether we love our own Life or that he has promised; this was a time that tried that bold disciple. - Sufferings and tryals seem the firmest ground on which we stand, enabling us to know what we are, and the need there is for us to be stript of every dependence short of his own Spirit, that can indeed enable us to suffer as well as to bear - Let us be very watchful, diligently attending to know what his mind and will is concerning us, then endeavour faithfully

to give up in obedience to the manifestations of duty, if it be the parting with of that in which our life consists, if only in little things he is a rich rewarder; but if great things be required he is able to support, as there is a trusting in and dependence upon him who is indeed the Safety of his poor depending people, who dare not lean to their own Understanding. It seem'd to me as if thy Life was to be laid down - as outward Sufferings are not now in force, the Life of our bodies may never be required, but the Life of our Spirits may be so 2B. 33 far called for, that we must leave all and follow the Lamb withersoever he goes - keep close to the Spirit, if he be pleased to lead as through the rugged road of Self-Denial, Trial and Tribulation; for the Lord will have a tried People. The enemy would draw into ease but good Soldiers in time of War must endure Hardship, yet the Captain of our Salvation was never overcome, no more will his followers so long as they hear and obey his Command; but if when hard sayings are uttered we turn away from following him, certainly we shall come to the worst, if anything maybe so called, but all things that come from him are good. "Once more will I shake not only the Earth but the Heavens also" - these Heavens seemed to me the many good livings with which we are favoured, for our strength, encouragement and support, when the earthly part in some degree is shaken and removed - in these goodly things we have delighted, because they come from him, and thought, now we shou'd see sorrow no more; yet these things are but for a season, or as draughts by the way, in order to renew our strength, and must be removed as we advance from state to state, to me it was a time of bitter proving, when far as I could find my mind divested of all good, notwithstanding I sought it with diligence, in every place, where once had found it as refreshing dew on Herman's hill, but all in vain, to my own thinking then had lost my part in him, who is the Resurrection and the Life; so then must be an Example of his Justice and his wrath, not knowing that his Arm was underneath for my support. Let us not be afraid, he only strips that he may better clothe, and empties that he may better fill, with his goodness and Love; they that dwell in him they dwell in Love. But experience since has taught that it was the work of his own Spirit, in order to remove any visible and neutral comfort and consolation where in the Soul wou'd have taken its repose. - this is the way of his working for the firmer and better establishment of our feet, upon him the immovable Rock of ages. - May the Feet of our minds be so established upon this Rock, that is, as Mount Sion, never to be moved. It is often cause of Admiration why I am thus led, to treat with one whom I do far prefer before myself - could I by any means have found Peace of

mind without, wou'd not have troubled thee with reading so incorrect a matter; but as these things have been so continually the companions of my mind, with that constraint that I durst not forbear offering them to thy consideration, lest I be found guilty of wilful disobedience which Sin I know must not go unpunish'd. In consideration of these things have remembered how Israel fared before they entered the Promised Land - the Priests had to go with their Feet into Jordan when it overflowed its Banks, when the Waters were stayed they stood in the midst, and bearing the Ark until the People had passed over; then were a Man of each Tribe chosen, to bring up from the Bottom, where the Priests feet stood firm, Twelve stones, for a memorial, that they were to carry with them, for a token of Praise to that Arm of Power, which is yet the same, and can preserve from being overwhelmed when Floods of Temptation attend, or when the river of Judgment is ready to overflow. - as there is a trusting in him, he will bring through as on dry ground; then shall have to praise him as on the Banks of deliverance; for they are they that go down into the deeps who see the Wonders of the Lord, and from thence they bring up living Memorials of Praise, to him who is glorious in holiness, Wonderful in working, and worthy of Praise - they are only and alone his own Works that acceptably Praise that great and Worthy Name - Let then at the Earth give way and the heavens bow, humbly bow, at the Presence of the mighty God of Jacob, and all that is within me Praise his name. Have now enlarg'd beyond intention; but tho' the income of that sweet refreshing Peace, the sure reward of true Obedience, I am enabled a little more to bear the Cross. Shall I be favoured with Peace who merit casting off for ever! but O, then what should I do ? how humbling is the sense of his goodness, that now hath put another opportunity into my hands to do his Will! Having experimentally found before now, it was Meat and Drink to do his Will, and as there is a patient waiting in Resignation, not daring to go before, they know he puts them forth and goes before them, while this disposition of mind prevails, he bears and forbears with his creature Man, and suffers him to try the fleece both wet and dry; when he thus puts forth he will go with our Armies, and bring safe through the enemies Camp; it's he 2B. 34 who fights our Battles; and gives us the Victory, then crowns with Peace- how can we then but with the Elders cast down our crowns at his Feet, because he is worthy, worthy to receive Might, Majesty, Dominion and Renown for he it is that doth redeem us unto God with his Blood. O, that the Kingdom of this World, would become the Kingdom of our God and the Lamb! 0! That the Children of

Men wou'd be so wise as to maintain the Warfare of a Christian Life, until they know themselves under the Government of the Prince of Peace, the increase whereof was never to end; for it enlarges upon the mind, it increases with time, and shall to Eternity endure. O, what Love is like unto this! It is as a River, the Streams whereof make glad the whole Heritage of God; wherein I am emboldened somewhat more to impart, as the Spirit may assist that hitherto hath helped me. I have sometimes thought, why should I be so concerned? yet considering the repeated views that have been represented, how can I but sympathize? and for what end they are permitted, that I leave to him that knoweth all things – I find it necessary for my own Peace, to be faithful to what is manifest duty. Let me once more tenderly intreat thee, to keep close to the Spirit – beware of the Calvinists. I have nothing against any Name of Religion, or form; for he that works Righteousness is accepted – As I mentioned, How clear it seem'd to me, Satan calling his Council in order to see how they might draw thee aside; in the like view have seen them set, as one head above another, as if none might hear a word spoken, and Lucifer the chief going to and fro, as it were to bring and carry Tidings, but the Calvanists was the way, this is as clear an Idea as I can give. Am I deceived? Or are these Imaginations of the Brain? To me they are confirmed Truths - What can discover the hidden things of Darkness but the Light of Life? Or reveal the Mysteries of the Kingdom, but he who hath the Key of David, who opens and none shuts, and when he shuts no Man can open. It is in humility and fear I pen these things – He that made the heart knows what lodges there. – my desire is to be clear in Spirit; to live in Peace with God and all Mankind. There is yet another thing I thought to have omitted; but find a part will not do if I wou'd have the Evidence of Peace; finding the need I have of the whole Armour of Proof, and if I do not right, where will my Breastplate be, which I have witness'd sufficient to turn the fiery pointed darts of the wicked one? we have need not only to put on, but also to remain clothed, with, the whole Armour of Light. I have not only been led to see his Ways of working in others, but also his busy, crafty working hath been discovered in myself; and to withhold from duty, and draw into confusion and distress; But O, how precious is this safe retreat of Quietude, and Retirement of Mind! waiting to hear the Shepherds voice, that so the Strangers we may not follow. Must now impart near as I can what was presented to the eye of my mind. – was led to view the Tract wherein thou had been led, which was sweet, divine and Consolatory, though some Occurences to the outward, contrary happened, yet was

so bourne up, as on the Wings of Faith and Love, far above all; the Benefit that accrued therefrom unto thy mind, was not a little, but this dispensation seemed to me at an end; thou arrived at the height, or come so far as it would reach; the Feet of thy mind now stood upon the tottering Brink of danger, ready to be drawn into one thing or another; the Way for the Preservation in the Life of Truth, was such a state of Suffering as before is hinted at. – upon this view I was exceedingly concerned, lest, after so much sweetness, thou would not think the Bitters good for thee, and so refuse which seems to me no less than stumbling at the Cross; it is the only and alone way to the Kingdom; there is not another. – the Cross to me produces a Crown of Peace, and is the power wherein I am preserved, from doing things that would procure my condemnation; so now do witness being saved from my Sins, by him whose Name was to be called Jesus. I am far from charging thee with anything, and feel the flowings of Love to attend thee as a Covering; but it seems to me as if these seasons would be permitted to overtake for thy Refinement, and Trial of thy Faith, whereby thou may'st become as a Pillar in the House of God, never more to go out. But if we decline from being as Clay in his hand, what shall we become but Castaways? Let us then submit unto the turnings of his holy hand, until he hath made us such as he would have us to be; but a damp hath often covered my Spirit, as thou art 2B. 35 a Young Man who has large professions, whether or no thou wilt be willing to part with all. – it seems to me a deal. – Death is to all a strait passage, and there is not another way to Life; but as there is a keeping close to the Spirit and Power, God will work in us a willingness, in the day of his Power. – nothing short of this could have enabled me to bear this Cross. – I wou'd far rather have continued my supplications unto him that see'th in secret, than have been thus exposed; but when obedience was not yielded he would not accept a Sacrifice. I would have thee take these things into consideration; consult the witness of Truth in thy own Breast, compare them together, and see what it will say concerning them. – I have sometimes tho't it is for thy encouragement, that when these proving seasons do attend, thou may'st not be cast down too low – at other times have thought perhaps for caution, that thou may'st not shun these things as the Enemy's snares – But nothing can preserve us but the Spirit; that only and alone is able and sufficient, to keep in every proving season. – Be watchful unto Prayer, in readiness prepared to follow thy Lord to Calvary's Mount. – though the wicked may be permitted to slay the Lord of Life and Glory, as we are faithfully following him unto Death, he will not be

long before he come again, and make himself known by the breaking of bread; but as thou art thus following him in the way of his leading, thou wilt have Enemies, not only within but also without; if I be not mistaken, such of those will prosecute the Life in thee, or thee in it, if preserved, who for their time, had they kept close unto the Simplicity of the Truth, might have been as pillars, or Helpers of others, but by stumbling at the Cross, or turning aside into the paths of Scepticism, are accumulating unto themselves something instead of the true Life of God, that will admit no Rival, hereby judging and giving despicable names to those who are leaving all, because perhaps they are further advanc'd than their adversaries come, so do not know nor think it right. But it is our business to keep our eye single unto the Lord, who must go before us; - look not at those that are Enemies, yet do not know nor believe it. – Keep close to the Spirit: it will bring through and overall. - By following its Leadings contrary to my own thinking or will, have witnessed such deliverances out of danger, and preservation from harm, when I did not so well know what it was; have since compared it to a skilful Pilot, that knew right well both Rocks and Sand, steering our course straight to the Haven of Eternal Rest. Others there are who dare not trust unto the Spirit, as there are more than one, lest they should be misled, so go about in a circle of duties and performances the Spirit led others into; but dare not trust the Spirit which is the Way, the Truth and the Life. – these poor things I have compared to a Ship without a Pilot, that is tossed hither and thither, that by the time they might have landed at their desired Port, I am afraid they are farther off than when they first set out. – I wish these wou'd give up their own Wills Ways and Likings, for a season, to try whether or no the Spirit is sufficient, to lead out of Error into Truth – had all kept, that had begun, in the Spirit, there wou'd have been a noble Army for the cause of Truth on Earth. Let us who know the warm Influence of the Sun of Righteousness, abide until it hath arisen to the Meridian of its Glory, that our going forth may be as the morning fair, as the Noon clear, as an Army terrible with Banners. – But I am afraid there are too many flee, when the Spirit would lead into the wilderness, by reason of its painful weariness to the Mind, wherein the Almighty proves his People; they also prove him to be a faithful, gracious, good Longsuffering God, whereby they are allured into a true submissiveness, unto his divine and holy Will, casting their care and trust upon him, whereby they do come forth out of the Wilderness, leaning on their Beloved, who leads into the green Pastures of Life, beside the still waters, where they can lie down

to rest as at noon day, where none can make them afraid: here is the nature of the Wolf, the Lion and the Bear reduced into the meekness of the Lamb; so all can safely feed together. It is cause of mourning to see my dear fellow mortals Forsake the fountain of living mercies, hewing to themselves broken Cisterns, that can hold no living Water: seeking good where it is not to be found. – Let me say to thee, do not turn in the circle, but come forward; and if the fiery Trials be permitted to overtake, think not as if some strange thing had happened; the more noble our stations in the Church are, the more need there is to be refined: 2B. 36 “I will purge the Sons of Aaron and purify the Sons of Levi that they may do office in mine Holy place.” If he do not sit as a Reprover now, have we not still need, if he be pleased to sit as a Refiner with Fire, or Fuller with Soap, to purge away not only the Dross and the Tin, but also the reprobate Silver, and make us more pure than fine Gold, seven times tried in the Fire? as there is an abiding under the forming hand, he will be pleased to beautify his footstool with Ornaments of his own preparing, and Jewels refined in the furnace of Affliction, Be not discouraged then, if all the Branches be lopt off that would destroy the Life of Truth, and waste that Sap that nourishes the tender Plant, ingrafted in the Vine of Life. My dear friend, if the good husbandman be pleased to lop of all the Branches, that so the Root may strike more downward, then bring forth fruit upward more abundantly, to the Praise of him who created us; let us not retain anything contrary to his Will, if its appearance be ever so goodly, lest Blasting or Mildew come upon it, our safety and preservation consists in doing his Will, whatever it may be in – we are shortsighted, and do not know what tomorrow may bring forth - its therefore needful to give up, if it be in Opposition to our own Will, and contrary to the view of human Apprehension – as we are thus trusting in the Lord he will make way for us; if we be faithful he will be our strength – and if hard sayings be uttered, let us not turn away from following him, but, with Peter remember, that he hath the Words of Eternal Life: then wither shall we go? so with one formerly say, though thou slay me, yet will I trust in thee, and if I perish, I will perish at thy Feet. – In these humbling seasons when to our own feeling, are destitute of him whose care is over all his works; yet his tender regard at these times is such, that his left hand is underneath to support; his right hand hovering over us for good; though in Wisdom he may be pleased thus to visit, he is not unmindful of his People, neither doth he willingly grieve nor afflict the Children of Men; but his work is to destroy all his and our Enemies; treading them under his feet; keeping all

things in subjection to his divine and holy Will, that he may reign and rule in us, whose right it is, and sway his sceptre there in Righteousness; that neither Arts nor parts, nor the Wisdom Learning and understanding of Man may be permitted to oppose or obstruct the work of his own Spirit; for his own Arm it is that brings Salvation, that no Flesh may glory in his presence. – Let then all bow and give way to this divine Principle of Light and Life, that comes from God, would gather all unto him, and thither will return when time here shall be no more, and stand for us or against us, at the last day. Happy for them that know his Kingdom thus come, and his Will done, here on Earth as it is done in Heaven: these are the Effects of living under the Government of Christ – Let us love him in all his Offices, and be subject to his Will in all things, so will he be pleased to bring safe through every dispensation, in Wisdom, that he sees meet to overtake for our Refinement and Good – may he be pleased to keep in his Power, and guide by the skilfulness of his hand, that nothing may be able to separate us from the Love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord; and we thereby be enabled to Worship in the Beauty of Holiness, where his Honour dwells, and know a sitting at the Table of the Lord, and partaking of the dainties of his house, even the feast of fat things prepared, and Wine of the Kingdom well refined; here is Richness in Abundance; but none of Adam's fallen Race here can come, but as they are renewed in Christ the Vine of Life. – the flaming sword yet hangs that can turn every way to keep the Tree of Life, whose Leaves are healing to the Nations round of them that are the saved of the Lord – Let us be careful not to feed upon the tree of Knowledge. It is good; but not for Food – if we feed thereon shall certainly die to God, and wither in the Root of Life; then be driven from the presence of the Lord, into the Earth again, out of which in some degree have been redeemed - but as there is an abiding in the Paradise of God, we only have to wait to know, and then do, his Will; - this is dressing and keeping clean the Garden of the Lord, and Vineyard of our own hearts. Having now imparted what have been imprest upon my Spirit, a considerable time, would willingly leave and commend thee, with my own Soul, to the keeping of him, who is able to build up in that most holy Faith, which is an Anchor to the soul, steadfast and sure, as he is our Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption – How shall we partake of his fulness, but as we are following in the Way of his Leadings, giving up our own Wills unto 2B. 37 the death of his Cross? So shall we have part in him who is the Resurrection and the Life, on whom the second death shall have no Power. P:S.

There is one thing I would take liberty to remark in which too many Fellow mortals sustain great loss, who are desirous to live in and do the Will of God; these desires are Gifts of his own, and he would fulfil them unto us, were we so careful as not to deprive ourselves of such Blessings. the Loss that I have thought of was this, when these desires have attended, they have been willing to do this or that which others have had to do that was his Will; but I am afraid are not waiting in the Faith and Patience steadily to know what is his mind and will concerning them; so do not come to that stability there is in the Truth; but like the Fishermen weary themselves with toiling all the night; but as there is a waiting for the Master he will direct where to cast in the Net; then by the sweet, heart felt satisfaction of the soul, with what it had been so long seeking, will know who it is that hath thus directed them; for those were they that did the Father's Will who were to know the Doctrine of the Son "after ye have done the Will of God wait for the Promise." as there is a patient waiting for the Promise, we are enabled to discern whether it is his Will or our own; if any of the Transformings of him that can and doth appear as an Angel of Light, will here be discovered. But too many now are as I once was, thinking they cannot do the will of God except they were to do some great thing; thinking what can these mean? such things as were not worthy of the regard of mortals; much more the King of Heaven! As he who in mercy waits to be gracious shewed, and brought me to do his will in those despicable things, my sight was such that I saw Men as Trees; and by following the same Director came to see things as they were; Men as Men, walking on their Feet. – it is too much neglected by the wise master Builders. – it is despised by reason of the meanness of its appearance; but yet remains the chief Corner stone, elect and precious to them that believe – How desirable it is that all who are seeking might turn in hither, to this more sure word of Prophecy, which shineth as a light in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise, that will shine more clear unto the perfect day - By taking heed hereunto have found the will of God consist in many little things, which I once in my own Wisdom had despised; but now do love, because they have produced to me that precious Pearl, the World with all its Wisdom can neither purchase nor comprehend; finding that Truth fulfill'd, "they that are faithful in a little shall be made Rulers over more." – they were the little Foxes that spoil'd the tender Vines, Where great things may not be admitted, little ones will needs creep in, so then destroy the tender Grapes. – I am far from charging any; but trust I live in that which thinketh not nor worketh any Evil; but wisheth the Salvation

of all. I fully believe it is the Goodwill of our heavenly Father, that thus engages me so freely to impart these simple Truths, - when I have looked a little to the outward, remembering to whom I was speaking, these things have appeared as Cities with great and fenced walls, to the discouragement of the honest mind, for which they were never to enter the Land of Rest; but as the Lord in great Mercy and wonderful Loving kindness is pleased to draw me inwardly; to look with Singleness of heart, in duty to him, and my peace with him, simply to impart things as they come, which I hope are not to thy discouragement, but rather to the bearing up of the hands that are at seasons ready to hang down, take courage then; be valiant for Truth; look not at the outward appearance of things, but keep inward with and to the Lord. - Had the spies looked this way they would not have discouraged the People at all. – But as there is a waiting for and a trusting in him, who hitherto has preserved us, he will bring us to possess Cities with great and fenced Walls, and to subdue every giantic appearance, that wou'd oppose his own seed, from dwelling in houses they have not built; inheriting Vineyards they have not planted; and Wells of living water which they have not digged, springing up to Everlasting Life - This is the portion of all the faithful, weary Travellers, through the wilderness unto the land of Rest. It's cause of humbling to my Spirit, what or who am I, that I should thus address myself, to one, whom, I do so far prefer before myself? – If I may still remain thy sympathizing friend, in Labours; in Exercise of mind; in conflicts of Spirit; his Will be done; 2B. 38 if not, I shall remember thee as the Spirit maketh way – So think may now conclude, desiring as we grow in Years we may grow in Depth , as it is needful for our Preservation. – I trust and hope the Father of Mercies will be pleased, to bring safe in and through the deeps, where the Foundation must be laid, of those that do stand firm and unshaken, when Storms attend and Tempests Blow; that he in his Wisdom may see meet to overtake: so think once more to bid Adieu. – from one who wishes thy present and eternal Welfare as my own. Leeds – 1779.

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A copy of a Letter to Charles Smith with some remarks concerning him by way of Introduction thereunto. Dated 5th. Mo. 24th. 1795

The following Letter was wrote to Charles Smith a young Man of about 19 years of age (the son of John Smith of Bankbottom near Shelley) who was favoured with divine visitations when young and join'd Himself in Society with the Methodists where being taught that regeneration was an instantaneous and not a gradual work which state he apprehended he had attained unto; so that instead of humbly waiting for further manifestations of the divine will concerning him, and strength and ability to come up in obedience to the same, he lived upon former experience, ease and indifferency of mind prevailed; and being only superficially washed, in a short time like of the sow he return'd to wallowing in the mire, leaving the Methodists connection and joining his former vain companions in those things which he once saw to be evil; yet still the Lord left him not but was mercifully pleased to strive with him by his Spirit and at times brought him to a serious consideration of his state; several of his neighbours being in some degree convinced of the Truth he at times attended our Meetings with them and frequently went to their houses and read in friends Books with which he appeared affected and would sometimes say if he was to continue to read therein he should certainly become a Quaker which he had a great fear of; knowing that he should then become a derision to his former companions and that his Relations would entirely stand at a distance from him; It was about this time which was near a year ago that I first saw him standing in a pensive state of mind by the road as I was returning from Huddersfield market we just spoke to each other as I passed by and he called me by my Name which I wondered at not having the least knowledge of him; but I had not gone far before an unusual exercise came over me on his account accompanied with a concern to go soon and pay him a Religious visit, which I found upon enquiry of one of the beforementioned friends such an opportunity might have been easily obtain'd at their house; from whom I also first understood who he was, and what was his Name; but alas this appeared so hard to me that I did not give up thereunto; and none but the Lord alone knows the Sufferings I passed thro' for my disobedience; I continued at times under deep distress on his account for 9 or 10 months frequently enquiring after him and flattered myself that I should some time or other meet with him accidentally and then if anything was required of me to say to him I could do it without any body knowing; and I several times did meet with him after this manner and spoke to him and once conversed a pretty long time with him yet never knew that it was him until after we were separated at length my exercise grew so heavy as

frequently to hinder me from sleeping in the night, and then I went over to James Wilkinson one of the friends beforementioned who was under convincement, (this was in that the forepart of the last month) and acquainted him a little how it was with me and the concern that was on my mind to see the young Man, he inform'd him thereof and the first day after in the afternoon he came to my house and we had a memorable opportunity together and I got thoroughly relieved from a burden which had long lain upon me his state and condition was remarkably opened and spoke unto, he was tendered and dissolved in a flood of tears, and a time of extraordinary visitation it was to him the opportunity ended in Prayer and Praises to Almighty God for his mercies and that we might be enabled to walk worthy of the continuation thereof. After which he told me that the language of the Almighty unto a People formerly had been deeply impress'd on his mind in the opportunity. Jos: C: 24. v:15. Chuse ye this day whom ye will serve. After this he more frequently attended our Meetings and several times came over to our house where we had some other satisfactory opportunities together, he once told me in conversation that Phebe Haigh a young Woman who was convinced and joined our Society some years ago; was as a bright shining light in a dark night and observ'd that when he was in an enquiring state of mind he frequently went to her house and took notice of her innocent life and circumspect conversation which with her diligent attendance of Meetings on First and Week-days had a great reach upon him; I remark this with a view that it may be a means of stirring up some, who may read it, when I may be laid in the silent Grave; not to rest satisfied in the profession but be concerned to have the Truth in profession; that so they may be good examples unto those who may be enquiring the way unto Zion with their faces thitherward that their Lights may shine before men; that those who behold their good Works the product of living Faith may be made to magnify the divine Principle we profess. As I was returning from our Monthly Meeting at Pontefract in the present month I met with him at Anthony Kinsleys of 6. 11 Skelmanthorp were I called to drink Tea; It happened that our friend Martha Teall was come to see them that afternoon; after Tea I felt she was under great exercise of mind and closing into solemn silence her mouth was soon opened, she address'd herself particularly unto him told him she neither knew who nor what he was but her Spirit had been humbly bowed before the Lord on his account it was a time of high favour she was remarkably opened into his state, and counsel and admonition in the Power and Authority of Truth was plentifully administered unto him,

myself and Leah Kinsley having to unite in communication as Truth opened our way: What effect these late extraordinary visitations may have upon him time will determine; but this I am well assured of; the Lord will be clear and those who have or may discharge their duty will be clear and if he perish these extraordinary favours will add much in the balance against him; Having known myself the slippery paths of youth, the dangers and temptations attending that time of life, and how hard it is for flesh and Blood to take up their daily cross and follow Christ in the way of his leadings; and having seen how many who would have been favoured have turn'd aside either in the Winter season or on the Sabbath day, or when hard things have seem'd to be required on them; or some of whom I have seen the indignation of the Almighty poured forth a concern came upon me to write to him a letter of which the following is a copy

Beloved Friend Charles Smith I hope that thou will excuse the freedom I take in writing to thee, when I inform thee, that nothing short of a sense of duty could have engaged me therein; my mind hath gone through a large share of exercise on thy account both before I knew thee personally and since; I have been I believe baptised in spirit into thy state and condition, and have seen the unutterable Love of God in mercy extended towards thee in order if thou art willing to be as passive clay in his hand to form thee unto himself a vessel that shall shew forth his praise I have also seen the mysterious workings of Satan seeking to frustrate this work by endeavouring to perswade thee, that thou art yet young and may take a little swing in pleasure that it may be soon enough for thee to be Religious when thou art further advanced in years: but O my friend believe him not he is a Lyar; the Lords time is not only the best but the only time; for experience hath taught me that no Man can turn to the Lord in their time, but it is in the day of his power that his People are willing; which day I am fully perswaded thou hast been mercifully favoured with, in which a power of choice hath been afforded thee whether thou would give up to serve the Lord, or follow after Lying vanities and forsake thine own mercies; and O! that this day may not pass over thy head, for it hath many times run through me of late, when I have been concerned before the Lord on thy account: Because I have called and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded, But ye have set at nought all my counsel and would none of my reproof ; I will also laugh at your calamity and mock when your fear cometh. O! That this may never be thy deplorable

state, but that thou may prize this the day of thy visitation, and be willing to become a fool for Christs sake for there is no other way to be truly wise; If any man will be my disciple he must take up his cross and follow me; this is confessing him before men and if thou art thus willing to confess him, he will confess thee; but if thou deny him, If thou refuse to open unto him when he knocks; If thou refuse to follow him when he is mercifully pleased to point out the way, when his light shines upon thy Tabernacle, he will then deny thee at a time when the glory of this world will be stain'd in thy view, and when thee and all mankind I believe would be glad to be owned by him: Methinks whilst I am writing I feel the call renewed: Come out of Babylon, come out of those things that keep thy soul in a state of bondage; If Christ wash thee not thou hast no part in him; If thou does not experience a being cleansed from sin thou can never inherit the Kingdom; altho' thou may say and truly; I have eaten and drunk in thy presence and thou hast taught me in the street of my heart, yet if thou art not thoroughly separated from thy sins but art keeping those things alive that thy natural inclination is most prone unto, the Language unto thee will be, I know thee not depart from me thou worker of Iniquity; and how awful will 6. 12 the prospect be if thou should see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all the Prophets and faithful servant of Jesus in the Kingdom of Heaven and thou thyself shut out; Now consider of these things I intreat thee and be not deceived God is not mocked if thou art sowing to the flesh of the flesh thou wilt reap corruption, but if unto the spirit of the spirit thou wilt reap life everlasting; and remember that unto that man that knoweth to do good and doeth it not unto that Man it is a sin; now I am fully convinced that this knowledge is not a wanting in thee and an increase thereof would be witnessed if faithfulness to manifest duty was yielded unto; if there was a concern to improve by the gift bestowed, for unto every one that hath thus improv'd shall be given and he shall have abundance; but unto him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. Now my friend as these Truths are wrote in Gospel Love, I earnestly desire that they may have some place in thy mind, that so the day of thy visitation may not pass over thy head and thy portion be appointed with the unbelievers to all eternity: Give up thy heart unto him without any reserve who will never accept of a part of the whole; Be willing to forsake thy former vain companions, and give not up thy strength to Women, I cannot help expressing that I greatly fear thou suffers loss this way: Marriage is an ordnance of God, and he alone ought to be sought unto for instruction in so great an undertaking; and not run after young Women in their own wills, which

hath laid a foundation for repentance unto many, and caused them to have sorrowful putting on through time: Remember Sampson the strongest Man, who giving way to his natural inclination, out of the Lords counsel, after a daughter of the Philistines; not only lost his strength thereby, but also his sight; consider this seriously: I would not write one word if I knew it from under the dictates of the Holy Spirit of Truth, and beware lest by entangling thyself with any out of Gods counsel, and before thou have a sense that the thing proceedeth from the Lord, thou lose thy little strength, and the things that belong to thy peace be forever hid from thine eyes. Beloved Friend many are the temptations of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth out of them all; and I believe he will deliver all those, whose eyes are preserved single unto him, and with the temptation will make way for their escape: May thou be of this number is what my Spirit travels for, that so thy feet may be established upon Mount Sion never to be moved; So wisheth and prayeth thy faithful and affectionate friend Joseph Wood After I had sent the former Letter I felt quite easy for a while but observing him more negligent in the attendance of Meetings and hearing that he frequented vain company and places of diversion, I found my mind concerned to write to him another of which the following is a Copy. Newhouse 6th. Mo.14th. 1795 Respected Friend Charles Smith It is with considerable reluctance, that I again set pen to paper to write unto thee; greatly fearing that the labour heretofore bestowed hath been far from having the desired effect upon thy mind: But on considering the word of the Lord unto the Prophet formerly, I was brought into a state of willingness once more to communicate what Truth make open? Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the House of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way to save his Life, the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his Blood will I require at thy hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shatl die in his iniquity, but thou hast delivered thy Soul. and O! that it may prove such a warning to thee, that thou may no longer harden thy heart against the reproofs of instruction which are the way to Life. For he that being often reproved, hardeneth his neck shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy. What a pity it is then, that thou whom I believe the Lord hath in an abundant manner favoured, should trample his mercies under thy 6. 13 feet, and cause him to pour forth his indignation upon thee; For tho' he is a merciful God, yet his Spirit will not

always strive with Man, and if he should cease striving with thee, thou may then like Esau seek carefully a place of Repentance with tears and not find it; but I believe he hath not yet left thee unto thyself, for methinks the language comes before me. How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee Israel? How shall I make the [stet] as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? And O that his long suffering may lead thee to repentance, that so thou may experience thy sins to go beforehand unto Judgement, for if they follow after they will most assuredly sink thee below the Grave. Many sorrowful instances I have known, in my time, of such as have been highly favoured of the Lord; who for want of taking up their daily cross have lost their good beginnings, and fallen under the Lords displeasure, one of which appears to be my duty to revive unto thee. A certain young Man with whom I was intimately acquainted; and who in the early part of his time lived a vain and ungodly Life, but being favoured with a powerful visitation from on high and closing in therewith, a great and visible change was wrought in him, but Alas for want of keeping in a state of humble watchfulness which leads unto Prayer for preservation and strength to come up in obedience to the manifestations of duty; he stumbled at the cross and when hard things appeared to be required of him like the young Man in the Gospel turn'd away sorrowful; and altho' he was never guilty afterwards that I know of, of those things which are generally called Gross evils; yet a lukewarm and indifferent state of mind prevailed, and his zeal for the Lords cause abated. Nevertheless the Lord for a season was pleased to strive with him, immediately and instrumentally; but he persisted in that state, until he was pleased to visit him with sickness, which in a short time terminated his existence here, in the very bloom of Life and flower of his age: I was invited to attend his Burial, went mournfully thither, and as I followed him to the Grave sorrow sat on my countenance; a solid-looking man entered into conversation with me, I asked him if he had seen the deceased in his illness, he told me he sat up with him the night he departed, and related to me: "that when he went in he asked him how he did? he answered very poorly and should certainly die before the usual time of rising at morn, but added my peace is not made with God; he continued sensible but very weak, so as not to be able to turn himself in Bed until about 3 o Clock in the morning, when on a sudden he gave one of the most dismal shrieks he ever heard, and leaped upon the floor, crying out all is on fire; he took him in his arms and laid him upon the Bed, and he immediately expired." My mind was deeply affected with the relation, and I earnestly desire that thou be so impressed

therewith that such a state may not be thine. Thus saith the Lord of hosts consider thy ways? consider what will be the consequence of rejecting the calls of divine wisdom? consider the danger of joining hand in hand with the wicked, for the lord declares these shall not go unpunished? What will thy ungodly companions do for thee, when on a dying Bed and a rolling pillow, what comfort will it then afford thee, on considering of that precious time which thou hast spent in the attendance of those places of diversion, set up for the purpose of promoting vice and immortality: O why wilt thou run into these things against the clearest convictions of Truth and destroy thy own soul: Flee them I beseech thee, and follow after righteousness, faith charity peace, with them that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart; I want not to turn thee from one form of religion unto another; I am not one of those who would compass sea and land to gain proselytes; but I long that thou might bow unto that Power which alone is able to put an end to sin in thee, to finish transgression, and bring in everlasting righteousness in the room thereof: Has not thou heard as in the cool of the day when thou hast been treading in the paths of folly and dissipation; Perhaps when thy head has been upon thy pillow, a language similar unto that which was uttered unto our first Parent when he had transgressed the Lords command, Adam Adam where art thou? What art thou doing? what will be the consequence of continuing in this state of rebellion? Turn thou at my reproof, and I will pour forth my spirit upon thee. Methinks I now feel my mind relieved of a burden which hath lain heavy upon me, I believe I shall now be clear, whether thou wilt hear or forbear; and if thou perish thou wilt one day know thou hast been faithfully warn'd: Unto God I would therefore leave thee, and to the Word of his Grace I would recommend thee; that 6. 14 faithful and just witness in the secret of thy heart, which will never speak peace to thee whilst in a polluted state; may thou love it and refer to it; It would strengthen thee in the hour of temptation? It would teach thee as never man taught? It would enable thee to deny ungodliness and the worlds Lusts, to live soberly righteously and Godly in this present evil World: Then would thou be favoured with that hope, which is not like that of the Hypocrite which perisheth; but will be as an Anchor to the Soul when afflictions may roll upon thee, and enabled thee in thy concluding moments to triumph over Death Hell and the Grave: In much affection I conclude thy faithful and well wishing Friend Joseph Wood

6. 16 Letter to Charles Smith Newhouse 6th. mo.26th. 1795

Respected Friend Charles Smith

Methinks my mind feels impress'd with a sense of duty, just to inform thee, that when I wrote to thee before, I had not heard anything of thy late loose and shameful conduct; but believe it flowed from that Spirit which searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God; and was intended by him as a faithful warning to thee, who has in an abundant manner manifested, that he willeth not the death of a sinner but had rather that all should return repent and live, by renewing his calls unto thee even when thou hast wilfully hardened thy heart against his reproofs; but I have been greatly afraid lest thou should reject the offers of his Love until he cease striving with thee and thou become a monument of his wrath: having remembered the language of the Prophet unto a People formerly, "If ye will not hear and if ye will not lay it to heart; to give glory to my Name saith the Lord of Hosts I will ever send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings." Also that of the Apostle, "the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it receiveth blessing from God. But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected and is nigh unto cursing whose end is to be burned." Now weigh these truths seriously, and the more thou hast been favoured the greater will thy condemnation be if thou art not bringing forth fruit answerable thereunto; and break of thy sins by repentance, cease to do evil, learn to do well; lest thou fall into the situation of some described by the Apostle Jude: "Clouds (he saith) they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; Raging waves of the sea foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever." I conclude with desires for thy welfare thy real friend Joseph Wood.

APPENDIX 11

Changes and additions to the Notebooks by others

The changes and additions provide evidence that Wood allowed others to annotate or alter his work.

1/2.1 begins with the words ‘Joseph Wood’s Book 1777’

1/2B.1 ‘1779 James Harrison wonts much to see this work again (Written in pencil at top of Page 1 - P.C.)’

1/3.27 ‘Joseph Wood’s Book Finished ye 31st. of ye 7th. mo:1783’; a postscript

1/5.1 ‘1789 to 91’ at top of page

At the end of 16.18 is a very short 16.19, which begins without any of the usual preamble and has no list of contents, simply the heading ‘Remarkable Occurrences’ relating to the weather and food prices. The style is not typical of Joseph Wood

2/19.20 At end, ‘For Joseph Cloud from North Carolina in America at London’

2/33.1 At beginning, ‘No. 1 Long Book examined by James Harrison and approved’

3/7.1 At beginning, ‘Joseph Wood 1776’

3/20. 1 At beginning, ‘Written in an unknown hand’

4/31 *Missing*

4/27.1 At beginning, ‘Joseph Woods Book’

5/56 *Missing*

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