

Religious Melancholia and the York
Retreat 1730-1830

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Abstract

This thesis will examine the hitherto understudied area of Georgian Quaker spirituality, and bring it to bear on the historically significant York Retreat asylum. The York Retreat opened in 1796 to serve the Quaker community. It was managed by the Tukes, an influential family of Quaker religious leaders. Georgian Quakers had a rich and idiosyncratic introspective tradition and spiritual life. Their spirituality entailed a depressive piety which escalated to despair, restrictive eating or suicidality in several narratives from Georgian Quaker religious leaders. It was common for Georgian Quakers to interpret these episodes of affliction from the perspective on religious melancholia common to several other radical dissenting movements, in which such episodes were seen as a divinely ordained trial that would ultimately add to the gravity and authority of the afflicted, and prepare them for a religiously orientated life. Yet this concern with religious melancholia has escaped the notice of previous writers on the York Retreat.

The thesis will first examine Quaker worship, the cornerstone of Georgian Quaker practical theology. It will then show how religious doubt, despair and affliction were intrinsic and causally efficacious parts of Georgian Quaker narratives of spiritual progress, before examining accounts of religious distress in Quaker biography and at the York Retreat. This thesis therefore provides an alternative narrative on the early years of the York Retreat. The York Retreat will not be approached as a site of innovation in secular humanistic psychiatry, but as a relic of dissenting modes of experiential religion and religious melancholia. In so doing, the thesis will show that assumptions around a link between Quaker spirituality and the 'moral treatment' regime are unfounded; the liberal humanism of contemporary Quakerism has been imputed onto the history of the York Retreat by supporters and critics alike. Instead, it will be shown 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.

Abbreviations

FHL	Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College, Pennsylvania, USA
FHR	Friends Hospital Records, Haverford College, Haverford, Pennsylvania, USA
BIA	Borthwick Institute for Archives, University of York, England
FH	Friends House Library, 173-177 Euston Road, London, England
LUSC	Leeds University Special Collections, Leeds University, England

The King James Bible is cited throughout

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Introduction – Religious Melancholia and the York Retreat

The ground-breaking York Retreat asylum, founded by the Quaker tea merchant William Tuke, opened its doors to an exclusively Quaker clientele in 1796. Famed for its non-coercive methods and its appeal to the essential core of rationality within the mentally afflicted, the Retreat's well-publicised advocacy of its 'moral treatment' regime is regarded as a highly influential development in psychological medicine. For better or for worse, as Foucault says, it heralded the 'Birth of the Asylum' as a uniquely curative environment, and has therefore come to occupy a totemic place in the history of psychological medicine.

The York Retreat is often portrayed as a bastion for humanitarian values and a forerunner of modern psychological medicine. It seems to be a world away from the spiritual warfare which was a hallmark of Protestant spirituality in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. However, I will show that twentieth-century Quaker values have been uncritically imputed upon the history of the York Retreat. Following from the Puritan roots of Quakerism, Quakers continued to view intense melancholic episodes as a part of religious life, as the York Retreat opened its doors.

The York Retreat attracted academic attention in a formative period for the history of psychological medicine up to the early 1990s, through Foucault's *History of Madness* (1961, 2009 translation cited throughout) and subsequently Scull (1979, 1993) and Porter (1987a). This period also gave rise to monographs on the York Retreat by Cherry (1989) and Digby (1985). The York Retreat's affirmation of human value has been presented as an articulation of the Quaker belief in the 'Inner Light' or 'that of God' within all humanity, according to several Quaker historians and Anne Digby, who worked on the exhaustive monograph *Madness Morality and Medicine* under the guidance of contemporary Quakers (Digby, 1985, p.xv, p.26; Glover, 1984, p.14; Stewart, 1992, p.26; Cherry, 1989, p.92). The influence of this generation of scholarship continues to be felt in several recent articles on the Retreat by Charland (2007), Lawrence (2009), Mack (2015) and Cherry (2013), whose position has not changed since his monograph of 1989. Throughout this scholarship it is maintained that the Tukes' benign faith ideals moved them to asylum reform, and that religious melancholy was only their concern insofar as Quakerism was tarnished by the stigma of the heady days at the start of the Quaker movement one hundred and fifty years

before. This made Samuel Tuke defensive over the 'legacy of his ancestors' antics' in his *Description of the Retreat* of 1813, according to Cherry (2013, p.396).

I will revisit the York Retreat through an exploration of the hitherto understudied area of Georgian Quaker spirituality. Georgian Quakerism, as Rosemary Moore has pointed out, has not recently been examined as a stand-alone topic (Moore, 2012). The Georgian period is apt for this project as it almost perfectly spans an era of Quaker history in which a distinctive type of spirituality, often called 'Quietist' Quakerism, dominated the Quaker movement.¹ As chapter two will show in greater depth, the beginning of this period in the early eighteenth century sees the last of the founding Quaker leaders pass away, symbolising a change of mood in the movement from confident evangelising to the temporal withdrawal and spiritual inwardness which characterised the next century (Healey, 2015, pp.49-50). By the end of the Georgian period in the 1830s, a new Evangelical influence had emerged after a series of theological debates, significantly altering the character of British Quakerism. Regarding the York Retreat, the cut off point for this study will also be 1830. This corresponds with the changing character of Quakerism, the passing of the original superintendents, and the further professionalization, secularisation and medicalisation of asylum practice (Digby, 1985, pp. 105-122).

Sources from the Georgian period will form the core of this study, which will make use of the wide array of printed material generated by Georgian Quakers, as well as unpublished personal papers where possible. These approaches to spirituality and melancholia will also be placed in a wider historical perspective. A recurring theme of this project is that Georgian Quaker values owed a great deal to the roots of Quakerism in seventeenth-century piety, at the well-studied highpoint of religious melancholia. Therefore, studies grounded in the seventeenth century will be used to illustrate continuity and change within Georgian Quaker approaches to these issues. John Stachniewski's *The Persecutory Imagination* (1991) will be particularly useful in this regard. Continuity will be found in the gravitas and spiritual import attached to episodes of melancholic turmoil, yet change will be found in the incorporation of aetiologies of afflicted nerves into discussions of religious melancholy, following the suggestions of Schmidt (2007), Darcy (2011), and Beatty (2012).

Georgian Quakers had a rich and idiosyncratic spirituality, as the opening chapters will demonstrate. Quaker biography shows this spirituality to be closely linked to periods of

¹ The 'Quietist' label will be shown to be unsatisfactory in chapters one and two, and 'Georgian Quakerism' will be used in its place.

anxious or depressive soul searching, which sometimes escalated to episodes of suicidal ideation and restrictive eating. These episodes were presented as an integral part of spiritual progression, and as a basis for religious authority. Yet this concern with religious melancholia has escaped the notice of previous studies on the York Retreat. Through this context, an alternative reading of the link between Quaker spirituality and the York Retreat will be offered. The axiomatic assumption that a humanistic, twentieth-century reading of Quaker doctrine played a role in the history of the Retreat will be challenged, and shown to be an ahistorical imputation of later writers. In its place, I will show that the York Retreat was a space in which the ambiguities between inspiration and affliction could be played out. Yet it is not my intention to offer a detailed history of the York Retreat in this thesis. Whilst the latter chapters will present new research into the circumstances around the admission of several Retreat patients, this revision of the Retreat will be largely based upon a new exploration of Georgian Quaker piety, which will add to a body of recent research on religious melancholia up to the early nineteenth century.

It has been assumed that Quakerism in the eighteenth century fell into a respectable but spiritually dead and withdrawn 'Quietism' (Cherry, 1989, pp.52-84; Cherry, 2013, p.396; Porter, 1990, p.73). In this view, the eschatological fervour of the mid seventeenth century died down under the restored monarchy, as the leaders of the movement instigated a process of internal organisation, disciplinary codification and theological consolidation in the face of continued persecution, erratic behaviour from some converts and internal disagreements over doctrine (Dandelion, 2005, p.42; Bauman, 1983, pp. 137-154). These changes in Quakerism took place during the years after the Restoration in which subjective religious insight came to be marginalised, as medicine combined with moderate Anglicanism, enlightenment rationality and political stability to put a cap on the experiential religion of the seventeenth century (Heyd, 1995, pp.165-191; Wallace, 1982, p.189). Yet it has recently become apparent that the spiritual vibrancy of the eighteenth century in general has been underestimated, and it has been shown that accounts of intensely afflicted conscience and dramatic conversion continued to be viable in British Protestantism until the early nineteenth century. Interpretations of religious melancholy as a necessary stage of spiritual development survived through the Georgian period to a far greater extent than supposed by authors of previous monographs on the York Retreat, published in the late 1980s. I will show that religious interpretations of melancholia continued to be a powerful idea in Quakerism up to the early years of the Retreat, far beyond the heyday of religious melancholia in the mid-seventeenth century.

This growing body of work on eighteenth-century experiential religion and religious melancholy includes Schmidt (2007), Andrews (2011), Darcy (2009, 2013), Hindmarsh (2005) and Laffey (2001), as well as publications from Ingram and Sim (2011) and Walker and O'Connell (2012) associated with the Leverhume Trust project 'Before Depression 1660 - 1800' (2006-2012). In *The Evangelical Conversion Narrative*, Hindmarsh finds that 'the sense that one was descending into madness and the urge to commit suicide were typical, if not universal' of eighteenth-century evangelical spiritual biography. The universality of these accounts leads Hindmarsh to challenge Roy Porter's influential history of madness *Mind Forg'd Manacles* (1987) in which Porter claimed that intense conversion experiences were only the preserve of 'fundamentalist' groups after the seventeenth century (Hindmarsh 2005, p.276, fn46). Walker and O'Connell's primary source anthology *Depression and Melancholy, 1660-1800, Volume One: Religious Writings* similarly testifies to the religious import of melancholic turmoil, from diverse eighteenth-century theological viewpoints. Methodist biography in particular 'abounds with references to the sense of psychological despair' occasioned by the writers' sense of being abandoned by God (Walker and O'Connell, 2012, p.xiv). Whilst such emotionally charged piety was highly contested, Darcy shows that it only became indefensible in the early nineteenth century. Darcy's *Melancholy and Literary Biography (1640 – 1816)* shows how the excesses of the bestselling poet William Cowper's religious despair became known after his passing at the turn of the century, forcing nonconformists to distance themselves from Cowper's posthumous *Adelphi* (1816), an account of melancholia which would have been more at home in the seventeenth century than the nineteenth (Darcy, 2009; 2013). Andrews similarly finds that the rationalism and moderation of the Restoration and the early eighteenth century had a limited impact on the popularity of nonconformist 'heart religion,' which continued to have plenty of advocates from the established church (2011, p.65). Laffey also shows that several moderate mid-century commentators were willing to posit that the melancholic turmoil which could accompany religious conversion was a valid religious experience (Laffey, 2003b p.65).

After discussing the nature of Georgian Quakerism, I will then build on the work of Schmidt (2007) and Darcy (2013), to explore the permeability between narratives of religious conversion and narratives of nervous affliction. The embodied elements of religious melancholia played a key role in how it was regarded in the York Retreat and by Quakers throughout the Georgian period, and will be key to understanding how religious despair could be so easily discussed in a medical or somatic register at the York Retreat. Pastoral

and medical treatment for religious melancholia was often closely interrelated, ever since an explosion of melancholic religiosity in the early seventeenth century. According to Hodgkin, when melancholics expressed religious fears the problem became 'how to identify one of two separate causes [somatic or spiritual] in an apparently indistinguishable set of symptoms' (2006, p.66). Spiritual angles could be found in somatic aetiologies, and medical support could work hand in hand with pastoral care, as Schmidt has explored in detail throughout *Melancholy and the Care of the Soul* (2007). It was a given in early modern medicine and pastoral care, that 'both spiritual and bodily physick were required for healing' melancholia (Schmidt, 2007, pp.10-11, 51). Given that doubt, fear or temptation could enter via bodily weakness, it followed that spiritual war could be waged by administering physic to the body, to rebalance disordered humours or agitated nerves (Schmidt, 2007, pp.136-137). Schmidt (2007) shows how the bodily, mental and spiritual causes of melancholia were subject to constant speculation and revision, changing with the tides of religious, medical and political opinion.

Darcy adds that nonconformists in the early nineteenth century finally distanced themselves from religious melancholia by suggesting that the most extreme episodes were caused pathologically by nervous imbalances, and that the religious subject matter of a sufferer's distress was merely incidental. The sufferer was presented as a victim of their own delicate constitution, and was therefore not morally or spiritually culpable for their self-condemnation and sense of damnation, whilst attention was deflected away from the religious doctrine which framed these sentiments (Darcy, 2013, pp. 172-204). The York Retreat will be located in a period in which Protestant spirituality was finally shifting away from celebrating the gravitas of religious melancholy; religious narratives and pathological aetiologies overlapped and entwined as these ambiguities were played out in the York Retreat.

Depression, Despair and Melancholia – A Note on Terminology

The meanings of 'depression,' 'despair' and 'melancholia' need to be clarified before proceeding. 'Depression' in the eighteenth century was used to indicate a sense of pessimism, dread or fear. It did not have the pathological connotations that it has today (Walker and O'Connell, 2012, p. xviii). Chapter two on 'Depressive Georgian Quakerism' will show how Quakers often described themselves as 'depressed,' and saw this depression as valid and useful in spiritual life. As Ingram points out, the implications of depressive

sentiment have changed since the eighteenth century, and we now give short shrift to the ‘dignified gloomy aloofness’ of the eighteenth-century poetic or philosophical sensibility, which has little place in (post)modern consumer culture. Likewise, the benefits of an awareness of sin are not dwelt upon in twenty-first-century Christianity. Unhappiness has become ‘an abnormal state of mind demanding correction’ (Ingram and Sim, 2011, p.20). Yet across the board in diverse eighteenth-century cultural and religious contexts, a depressive outlook punctuated by episodes of despair was a realistic response to the demands of philosophic enquiry, artistic sensibility (Ingram and Sim, 2011, p.20), or in our case, the human condition in relation to God. For example, Henry Tuke, the Quaker theologian and son of the York Retreat’s founder, wrote in 1808 that religious ‘depression and discouragement’ could be beneficial as it stimulated religious ‘vigilance and exertion.’ Nevertheless, Tuke continued, ‘despair’ should be carefully guarded against (Tuke, 1808, p.20).

Despair overstepped the boundaries of acceptable piety because it involved a complete loss of faith in the promises of the gospel and the goodness of God. Despair was seen as a sign of damnation or reprobation, indicative of the sin of losing faith in God; damnation therefore seemed self-evident to those caught in the depths of despair. However, with hindsight these periods of despair could also be framed as an integral part of spiritual progress, following the pattern of abject despair before salvation through the free gift of undeserved grace, started by Martin Luther’s ‘anfechtungen.’ (Hindmarsh, 2005, pp.33-60; Stachniewski, 1991, pp.17-61; Schmidt, 2007, pp.47-77). Westerink summarises:

A person who learns to see himself as being worthy of damnation and eternal death is in fact torn away from his egocentric attitude in life and is on the verge of becoming saved... the spiritual struggles characterized by anxiety, sadness and despair were seen as precondition for the formation of the religious subject. (Westerink, 2014, p.341)

As chapter one and two will explore, depressive pessimism and doubt were encouraged in Quakerism, as well as in Puritanism and Methodism, as a means to arouse conscientiousness and gain a full understanding of sinful human nature, in a spirituality which involved balancing pious depression against the danger of despair.

As MacDonald states, the despair of ‘Puritan and Methodist’ spirituality was a ‘distinct emotion’ due to ‘the particular cognitive content of religious despair, which was an overwhelming sense of rejection, guilt, and helplessness with respect to God’ (1992, p.58). For this reason religious despair cannot be regarded as modern depression, neither can it be aligned with medieval Catholic *desperatio* or *acedia*, according to MacDonald. Catholic

desperatio and *acedia* (desperation and sloth) were 'wholly negative' and 'abnormal' emotions, which held little relation to narratives of spiritual growth, whereas religious despair was a 'normal, although not inevitable' occurrence, which with the benefit of biographical hindsight, became integral to narratives of spiritual progression (MacDonald, 1992, p.58).

Alongside this inward-looking despair, in *The Persecutory Imagination* Stachniewski posits that religious despair 'meshed' with lived experience of the external world, due to the unprecedented emphasis on providence in Puritan culture, which led the devout to impute their fears and sense of abandonment upon their surroundings (Stachniewski, 1991, pp.74-80, 134). As William James put it in *Varieties of Religious Experience*, in relation to the conversion of the evangelical minister Henry Alline, these episodes entailed 'the whole universe coagulating around the sufferer into a material of overwhelming horror, surrounding him without opening or end' (1982, pp.159-162), as creation in its entirety bore witness to God's anger.

Finally, religious 'melancholia' will be used in this project to refer to religious despair when accompanied by somatic and behavioural correlates such as anxiety, lethargy, lost appetite or restrictive eating, suicidality, or hearing the condemnation of an angry God.

'Melancholia' in its original seventeenth century context had somatic connotations, referring to an imbalance of 'black bile,' in the Galenic humoral system. The label of 'religious melancholia' was used to denigrate radical movements during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, by pathologizing religious distress. This is not the intention here; the term will be used in this project to capture the unique combination of bodily, mental and spiritual distress, for which we have no other readily available term. The long running entanglement of religious distress and bodily affliction can be easily overlooked in due to our contemporary dualistic views of 'mental' illness or the psychology of religious experience. Religious melancholia in Protestant spirituality was a unique and terrifying phenomenon of the body, mind and soul, which defies easy comparison.

From its literary inception in Burton's seminal *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), religious melancholy was likened to 'a species of love melancholy in which the object of unrequited love is God' (Walker and O'Connell 2012, p.xxiii). This is perhaps the closest we can get to this embodied aspect of religious melancholia in contemporary secular frames of reference. As with heartbreak, a religious melancholic perceives their God, the ultimate object of faith, love and refuge, to turn 'His' back, giving rise to a searing panic, vertigo or

groundlessness, and a loss of appetite and sleep. The love itself may have been a meaningful long-term partnership, or may have been a teenage crush, based upon projections, fleeting glances and hearsay; but either way, the psycho-somatic experience of heartbreak is just as real. Likewise as we explore this melancholic religious heartbreak; assessing the reality of an individual's relationship to God is tangential to understanding the ways in which the devout suffered in body and in mind.

Chapter Summary

The first two chapters will explore the practical and theological tenets of Georgian Quakerism, with particular focus on the widely acknowledged but seldom explored depressive mentality which permeated Georgian Quaker piety. This mentality has been apparent since one of the earliest histories of the Quaker movement, Rufus Jones's *The Later Periods of Quakerism* (1921), which is testament to the un-ease, uncertainty and depression of Georgian Quaker religious biography. As Jones wrote, it was 'usual' for Georgian Quakers to describe a 'timid, shrinking, trembling walk with God,' with 'depression, dryness, emptiness and inward conflict' built upon the 'pervading sense of the wreck and ruin of man' (1921, p.27, p.33, p.66). Self-depreciation to the point of 'self-loathing' and 'self-abnegation' was encouraged as a sign of spiritual progress, as devout Quakers subjected themselves to constant self-critical introspection (1921, pp.57-103). As William Tuke's daughter and Quaker minister Sarah Tuke Grubb put it in 1783, 'surely there are none so tried as the poor weak instruments that are used for the Divine will to be communicated through' (Murray, 1792, p.311). Examples from the Tuke family including William Tuke's daughter Sarah Tuke Grubb, his son Henry Tuke and grandson Samuel Tuke, will be used to illustrate these dynamics in Georgian Quakerism, and also illustrate the proximity of these values to the York Retreat.² The Tukes were significant religious leaders in late eighteenth-century British Quakerism. Plant credits Quakerism's mini-revival in the late eighteenth century to the efforts of William Tuke's second wife Esther Tuke, a tireless minister in regional and national Quaker meetings, and a focal point for a network of itinerant Quaker ministers (Plant, 2003).

² The Tukes were significant religious leaders in late eighteenth century British Quakerism. Plant credits Quakerism's mini-revival in the late eighteenth century to the efforts of William Tuke's second wife Esther Tuke, a tireless minister in regional and national Quaker meetings, and a focal point for a network of Quaker ministers (Plant, 2003).

The volume of evidence found in Quaker biography and presented by Jones shows depressive piety to be an undeniable feature of Georgian Quaker religious narratives. Yet Jones's interpretation will be questioned. For Jones, writing in the early twentieth century, Georgian 'Quietist' Quakerism was an aberration of the engaged liberal humanist principles which he championed as the essence of Quakerism. As he sought to explain why Quakers departed from their earlier evangelism, Jones portrayed this depressive piety as Catholic in origin, and as an unnecessary divergence from his reading of authentic Quaker principles (1921, pp. 57-104). Jones ascribed blame for these supposed shortcomings of Georgian Quakerism to a non-Quaker female cause, by condemning the 'pathological' French mystic Madame Guyon (Pryce, 2013, p.184). Whilst Jones' interpretation is problematic, no alternative explanation for the depressive piety of Georgian Quakerism has been offered. Jones failed to account for the difficult truth of Quaker religious dis-ease without reverting to his beliefs of what Quakerism should be socially and spiritually, but others have barely taken up this challenge, and Georgian Quakerism has attracted little academic attention.

A detailed exploration of Georgian Quaker worship will first be offered in chapter one. This will question Jones' claim that Catholic Quietist influence shaped Quaker practical theology in the Georgian period, and will be referred back to in a discussion of the curative power of worship at the York Retreat. Primarily however, this chapter will combine with the next on Quaker soteriology, to show how worship combined with theology to produce anxiety around salvation, which itself came to be a sign of spiritual progress. Chapter two will expand upon the work of Tousley (2009) to argue that an 'erosion of certainty' around the eschatological mission and soteriological assurance which energised early Quakerism, caused the Quaker movement to revert towards the anxiety of seventeenth-century Puritanism. Quakerism dwelt once again upon the fallen human condition, rather than assurance of salvation or the imminent second coming. Following Stachniewski's study of Puritan despair, *The Persecutory Imagination*, the Foucauldian concept of 'subjectification' will be introduced to explore Georgian Quaker practices of self-denial (Stachniewski, 1991, pp.6, 85). 'Subjectification' describes how the subject was simultaneously created and subjected, in a practical theology which 'created the rebel state of mind it reprobated' (Stachniewski, 1991, p.10). A sinful 'self' was created and then subjected through self-critical introspection, leaving Quakers always struggling to transcend the sense of sinfulness which such introspection created. Whilst early Quakers found themselves 'reborn in the Spirit,' Georgian Quaker piety involved a constant process of 'dying daily to the self,' as chapter two will explain.

We then turn to the biographies and correspondence of Georgian Quaker ministers in chapter three. Quaker ministers were said to be able discern divine communications during worship and convey them in spontaneous ministry to the assembled group. This ‘inspiration’ was ‘absolutely necessary to every right minister, that without it can’t be a true minister’ as Bownas wrote in *A Description of the Qualifications Necessary for a Gospel Minister* in 1750 (1853, p.20). Whilst the majority of ministers remained within the area of their local Monthly Meeting, it was not uncommon for ministers to intuit a divine call to minister further afield, throughout the national and transatlantic network of Quaker meetings (Punshon, 1984, pp.138-142). Quaker ministers left a significant amount of written material documenting their travels and their spiritual development, which provides an excellent insight into Georgian Quaker spiritual ideals. How their depressive piety connected to narratives of melancholic suicidality, sleeplessness and loss of appetite will be explored in this chapter.

Melancholic episodes were not uncommon in spiritual biography of the eighteenth century, but an analysis of its uniquely Quaker articulation will be offered in chapter three, showing the significance of the practical theology discussed in the preceding chapters. Yet it will be shown that melancholia was often held in ambiguous regard within Quaker communities, with competing explanations in circulation for any one episode. As the historian Andrew Scull aptly puts it, eighteenth-century reactions to mental affliction consisted of a number of complex, permeable, and confused discourses. It was ‘separately or simultaneously’... ‘medical, moral, religious and or even satanic ... belonging to body or to the brain, or to the mind or the soul’ (2006, p.43). These melancholic episodes were similarly subject to diverse medical and spiritual interpretations by Quakers, united by the potentially transformative nature of melancholic suffering and an insistence on God's special providence over mental and physical ailments. Whilst some early nineteenth century biographies continued to promote religiously melancholic episodes as a valid and transformative religious experience, pathological aetiologies were combined with accounts of spiritual conflict in other narratives to defend the character of the sufferer and to neutralise their most extreme behaviour. Following Schmidt's *Melancholy and Care for the Soul* (2007), Beatty's *Nervous Disease in Late Eighteenth Century Britain* (2012) and Darcy's *Melancholy and Literary Biography* (2013), it will be shown in chapter three that Cheynean discourse was most suitable to this task; the delicate nerves of the sufferer absolved them from moral or religious wrongdoing, whilst general tenets of the sufferers' religious convictions could still be validated.

These issues will then be expanded upon in three shorter chapters relating to the York Retreat. Samuel Tuke's views on religion and madness will be examined in chapter four, followed by the circumstances around the admission of several York Retreat patients in chapters five and six, showing the ambiguous responses to melancholia and religious affliction within Quakerism and at the Retreat. Narratives of conversion and religious healing during admission can be found in Quaker correspondence, biography and eulogy to offer alternative angles to Samuel Tuke's secular *Description of the Retreat*. Like a number of eighteenth-century madhouses, the Retreat offered a space for both medicine and religious consolation, including the healing offered by experiential religion. The York Retreat is often presented as the first asylum, in which time and space were so organised to provide a psychologically curative environment, with minimal use of medicine or direct physical control, to target the mind through 'moral treatment.' Yet this project will locate the York Retreat in the long history of dissenting therapeutics for melancholia, in which both the body and soul were the targets of intervention.

Finally in chapter seven the notion that the Quaker doctrine of 'Inner Light' informed the treatment offered at the York Retreat will be questioned. It will be shown that advocates and critics of the Retreat alike, hold the misconception that Quaker spirituality was ideologically similar to 'moral treatment' therapeutics. Moral treatment appealed to an essential latent rationality within the patient as a target for therapeutic intervention, and it had been thought that Georgian Quaker doctrine particularly similarly emphasised the idea of an essential 'divine spark' (Digby, 1985, p.26) within all humanity, including insane individuals. This chapter will demonstrate that there is no such link between 'Inner Light' and moral treatment, building upon the analysis of Georgian Quaker spirituality in the preceding chapters and on Quaker scholars such as Dudiak and Rediehs (2015) who have critically charted the evolution of the 'Inner Light' doctrine. This is not to disparage the York Retreat, but rather to place the Retreat in proper historical context. Neither is this to disparage the benevolent motivations of Quaker reformers past and present; but it will question insular and overly charitable interpretations of Quaker history. In a similar way, the Quaker historian Elizabeth Cazden has revised histories of Quaker involvement in slavery reform and race relations, which have 'portrayed Quakers as consistently opposed to slavery, active in abolition efforts, and committed to racial equality... ignoring inconvenient or contrary facts or treating them as isolated slips between theory and practice' (Cazden, 2015, p.347). The inconvenient facts in relation to Quaker interest in mental medicine are that melancholic distress was a recurrent feature of Georgian

Quakerism, and that Georgian Quakers held a pessimistic view on human nature which is alien to the humanistic interpretations of Quakerism found in contemporary Quaker histories of the York Retreat.

Methodology – Taking Religious Experiences Critically and Seriously

This study will use a variety of texts that can be loosely divided into three (not mutually exclusive) categories; theological and devotional instruction, religious self-writing from letters and biographies, and texts which take a medical or not overtly religious angle. Through these texts we will encounter accounts of religious experiences which fall outside of contemporary frames of reference. A host of issues arise as we endeavour to take these texts, and the experiences which they describe, as seriously and as critically as any other historical source. The extent to which these texts offer a veridical reflection of lived experience may be asked, as we acknowledge that accounts of religious experience may be constructed through institutional and pedagogical pressures or axioms, and bound by the constraints of language. As we move on to material from the York Retreat, the question of whether some of these accounts were caused by ‘mental illness’ also arises. As Hindmarsh writes in *The Evangelical Conversion Narrative*, the twin dangers of studying accounts of religious experience are ‘too much trust, or too much suspicion’ (2005, p.4). Whilst we may marginalise religious experience by treating spiritual biography and ‘mystical’ worship too critically, we may treat medical narratives with too much trust, or impose retrospective diagnoses ourselves.

Yet in this project we will regard Georgian pathological narratives as having equal weight to religious narratives, as they both ordered and interpreted events according to their respective agendas, nosologies and theological perspectives. Indeed, medical and religious interpretations of affliction were not always in conflict in our period; the two were integrated together in narratives of spiritual progression as the latter chapters will show. The parity with which we will regard religious and medical narratives reflects the parity which these continued to share up to the early nineteenth century in the York Retreat, before the interpretive dominance of modern psychological medicine. A sympathetic account of Quaker views on religious melancholy will be attempted, using primary material as will be discussed below, together with the scholarship on religious melancholy touched on above for context.

Firstly, chapter one will focus upon devotional manuals which describe rarefied states of consciousness arising from worship and contemplation, and instruct on how these states might be achieved. Since George Fox's first revelations and his assertion 'all this I knew experimentally,' Quakers claimed that intuitive insight or self-transcending divine communion drove their movement. These claims of religious experience are sometimes taken on face value, as some scholars assume Quaker religious experience to be the unique preserve of an emic perspective, held by the custodians of Christian mysticism over the millennia. Spencer writes, 'perhaps Quaker mysticism will always be in part an enigma to outside interpreters unless they have taken that step into the transcendent themselves' (2007 p.43). Yet in the eighteenth century a diverse range of 'mystic ways' existed in Europe (Ward, 2006, pp.40-69); mysticism was not as uniform as Spencer suggests, and need not remain as enigmatic. The chapter will locate Quaker practice within one of these ways, through a closer analysis of Quaker texts and their context. A growing number of scholars in mystical theology, not least McGinn (2006) and Turner (1995), have shown in differing ways that mysticism or mystical dialectics can be hugely varied, nuanced and subtly graduated. It precludes historical analysis to assume that Quakers were led by the Spirit or by intuition operating in a vacuum, divorced from the philosophical, religious and metaphysical frames of reference of the time. It will be presumed here that Quaker religious practice was imbued with the historically situated theology of Georgian Quakerism, which itself functioned within and addressed soteriological issues of seventeenth and eighteenth-century Protestant theology.

However, close analysis of devotional manuals need not rule out the insights and experiences claimed by adherents, argue writers in the embryonic field of Contemplative Studies. Chapter one will take the view that, as Komjathy points out in *Contemplative Literature*, one risks 'becoming a dogmatist oneself... under the implied hegemony of secular materialism and scientific reductionism' if the claims of religious adherents past and present are not given due weight alongside historical, cultural, theological and linguistic factors (2015, p.11). Whilst we may question whether language can capture religious transcendence at the limits of conceptualisation, as Bernard McGinn says, 'the search for more adequate terms to describe certain types of mysticism should begin with the texts of the mystics themselves' (2001, p.37). Close engagement with these texts and their context will challenge the claim that Quakers were custodians of an ineffable lineage of Christian mystical experience (Spencer, 2007; Pryce, 2010), yet will provide a possibility for modest comparisons with other devotional or contemplative practices.

Secondly, biographies and correspondence of pious Quakers attest to a religious experience of a different type, one pervaded with religious doubt, pessimism and depression. Historians of religion, as Stachniewski writes, have sometimes found it difficult to take the depressive nature of Puritan literature seriously. Most Christian theology no longer allows for the possibility of despair occasioned by thinking oneself to be abandoned by God, or the depressive mind-set brought about by an emphasis on depravity and an uncertainty around salvation. Therefore, some historians have reverted instead to explanations based upon exaggerated performances of piety, hyperbolic pedagogy, or even pathology when they encounter such texts (Stachniewski, 1991, pp. 1-5). Clearly the experiences described in the spiritual biographies which play an important role in our study were indeed mediated by any number of pressures and conventions. Ostensibly private religious soliloquy, memoranda and correspondence had performative elements, and were written in the knowledge that personal religious papers and letters were often circulated for the edification of family, friends and the wider Quaker community. Indeed, many Quaker biographies simply consisted of posthumously edited personal papers and correspondence, collated by family members or close connections. In any case, religious self-writing, whether private or public, is by its nature influenced by the author's need to locate themselves within the theological and experiential paradigms of their group. On top of this, most Quaker publications were subject to editorial control firstly from sympathetic editors and secondly by the London 'Second-Day Morning Meeting,' which held a veto over British Quaker publications. Even in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, candid or sceptical Quakers such as James Jenkins and Sarah Greer were suspicious of the literary conventions of their peers. Greer described one biography as 'a record of immaculate devotion, as untrue as it is uninteresting' (Frost, 1984, p. xlii). Jenkins recorded the personal side of revered ministers, thus providing a check to taking their formulaic biographies too seriously (Frost, 1984, pp. xlv-xlv).

The survival of melancholic episodes and depressive piety in the tightly controlled medium of spiritual biography undoubtedly attests to the central role of these sentiments as institutionalised spiritual ideals in Georgian Quakerism, as chapters two and three will explore. Yet this need not be regarded merely as an ideal or literary convention. Stachniewski argues for the 'experiential reality' of the depressive mentality found within Puritan biography, through a fine grained theological and anthropological analysis of the Calvinistic Puritan mind-set (1991, p.52). Stachniewski asked 'how, given their ideas, puritans felt, how their subjectivity was organised,' and found them to be haunted by the

presence of the 'collective projection of the Calvinist God' (1991, pp.5-7). Their 'all pervasive' religious depressions were an 'entirely rational' response to the organisation of Puritan subjectivity (1991, pp. 157-177). Similarly, this study will ask what it felt like to be a devoted Georgian Quaker, and likewise will find that self-persecution was a response to belief in human depravity and an omnipresent, omnipotent, but often judgemental and capricious God. This type of religious experience was not one of rarefied, transient mystical consciousness at the limits of the psyche, but was a religious subjectivity which permeated to the core of Quaker self-identity; it was a religious lived-experience, constructed by demanding religious practices coming into tension with a theology which emphasised the possibility of falling from grace and sinning against the Holy Spirit.

Unpacking Quaker religious subjectivity in this way demands that Quaker biography and correspondence be thoroughly contextualised, by taking a multi-perspectival approach from several sources whenever possible, and by locating the conventions of Quaker biography and correspondence in the context of Quaker practical theology. The visceral, recurrent accounts of distress and depression across biography and correspondence, the entanglement of these episodes with Quaker theology and narratives of spiritual progression, and the close correlation between spiritual distress and bodily symptoms, are all suggestive of the experiential reality of Quaker religious distress. Despite the problems inherent in religious biography, we will therefore find ample grounds to take the depressive sentiment of Georgian Quaker piety seriously, as an integral part of their practical theology and subjectivity.

Whilst this project presents a sympathetic approach to the experiential reality of Quaker piety, it will circumvent many of the difficulties of discussing religious 'experience' in specific instances by using 'narrative' in its place. It will show the centrality of melancholic episodes and depressive sentiment in general soteriological models and in individual religious narratives, whilst remaining agnostic over what any individual 'experienced' on a particular occasion, or what the 'real' cause might have been. The extent to which these narratives offer a veridical version of events is ultimately secondary to the perspectives from which they ordered events. It is these perspectives that will be the target of the following investigation, which does not seek to establish biographical truths about individual historical actors, or to make these narratives palatable to contemporary Christianity, or palatable to the dogma of psychological medicine. This unpacking of the Georgian Quaker perspective on melancholy seeks to reveal the deep religious significance

that melancholic episodes held within the Quaker community, up to and during the early years of the York Retreat.

Finally, regarding medicine, we will encounter medical or somaticized interpretations of episodes which blurred the boundaries between religious experience and illness even as they were first published. The danger when encountering such accounts would be to place them into our contemporary nosological categories, or to side with pathological explanations from the Georgian period. As discussed above, medicine did not necessarily stand at odds with religious narratives in Georgian nonconformity. Furthermore, there is little to be gained from applying modern diagnoses to melancholic episodes, simply because modern psychiatry offers little in the way of aetiology. We may diagnose depression, anorectic disorders or psychosis as if these labels had explanatory power, when in fact they have little or none. They merely describe clusters of symptoms whilst remaining agnostic (or implicitly neurobiological) regarding the cause (Walker and O'Connell, 2012, p.xviii). Like the suggestion that Quakers were custodians of a perennial lineage of Christian mysticism, the imposition of contemporary psychiatric diagnoses on Georgian Quakers flies in the face of historical analysis and closes down discussion of these limit-experiences with an empty display of authority.

In any case, it would of course be ridiculous to retrospectively diagnose a century of Quaker spiritual leaders as 'mentally ill.' 'Unless we are to diagnose entire cultures,' writes Hodgkin on seventeenth-century 'madness', 'we have to rethink the question of what counts as mad, locating it in social and cultural definitions rather than assuming a trans-historical identity of the insane' (2007, p.4). Walker and O'Connell warn that when comparing religious melancholy to modern depression 'the contexts are so different they cannot be described as the same experience' (2012, xviii). Religious melancholy was a 'madness' writes Porter, which did not necessarily delegitimise or stigmatise the sufferer, but was imbued with the mystique and significance of a providentially ordained affliction, signifying personal attention from God and the transformative power of saving grace (1987b, pp.95-99). Religious melancholy operated in the historically unique frames of reference of reformed theology, and the distress which arose therefrom could be interpreted as an integral part of preparation for a religious vocation. It must be approached on its own terms.

To sum up; in what follows we will take our sources as seriously and as critically as anything else on the historical record, taking the time to delve into the context of Quaker religious

writing, to gain as much of a sympathetic understanding as space allows. The result of this approach will contrast with contemporary religious and psychiatric normativity. We will attempt to encounter historical actors on their own terms as best we can, rather on terms dictated by hagiographic histories of psychological medicine or teleological histories of Quakerism, and without adhering to the 'hegemony of secular materialism and scientific reductionism' which currently dominates the mind sciences and threatens the humanities (Komjathy, 2015, p.11).

Chapter One - Three Methods of Worship in Georgian Quakerism

Introduction

The understudied topic of Georgian Quaker worship is relevant to this study of the York Retreat for two reasons. Firstly, the curative value of religious practice at the Retreat has been suggested but never explored in detail. We shall therefore return to Quaker worship later in the study, to ask whether and how these practices eased the suffering of Retreat patients. Secondly, much of reformed practical theology in this period was concerned with discerning signs of grace and spiritual progress, bestowed from above to save the fallen 'creature.' An absence or decrease in these signs of progress was the referent of religious doubt and depression amongst Protestants across the wide theological spectrum of our period. In this chapter, we will explore the signs of grace particular to Quakerism. Quaker worship was itself a challenging practice, and Quakers often reported periods of 'spiritual dryness' in prayer, when the sensations associated with spiritual progress ceased or decreased. This difficulty was compounded by a theology which caused pious Quakers to regularly question whether saving grace had been irreversibly withdrawn, as we will see in the second chapter. Taken together, these chapters will show how Quaker worship in reciprocity with this belief system gave rise to the distinctive mind-set of depressive inward conflict, in which mental suffering was an integral part of Quaker piety and came to be a sign of spiritual progress in itself. This chapter will focus solely on Quaker silent worship.

All members of the Society of Friends were expected to attend various meetings for worship for up to eight hours a week according to the Quaker elder John Ruddy, writing in 1757 (1840, p.29). Ministers held meetings almost daily when itinerant in the ministry, oftentimes calling extra meetings upon their arrival, or holding several small meetings a day during visits to Quaker families in their community. There is also evidence that Quakers practiced privately 'in the closet,' as Joseph John Gurney explained in his instructions 'On Silent Worship';

Are you accustomed, in solitude, to pour forth your fervent prayers to God who alone is able to keep you from falling? Those who are the most faithful and diligent in the religious duties of the closet, will be the most edified in congregational worship. (1842 p.334)

Some biographies show that ministers kept a daily practice of waiting on God alone; Mary Waring for instance worshiped alone ‘almost daily’ (Waring, 1809, p.1) as did Jane Pearson (1817, p.viii).

Quaker practice in this period has been associated with self-denial as a means to self-transcendence through ‘self-emptying,’ and a ‘nothingness of self,’ which since Rufus Jones has been linked to Catholic ‘Quietist’ mysticism, particularly with the writing of the seventeenth-century Catholic mystics: Madame Guyon, François Fénelon and the propagator of this movement, Miguel de Molinos (Jones, 1921). Whilst many aspects of Jones' writing are now considered to be problematic, (Spencer, 2007, 91-92; Spencer, 2004, p.196; Pryce, 2010), his interpretation is still influential. Citing Jones, Plant writes of ‘Quietist’ Quakerism;

From the 1690s until at least the 1820s the dominant character of Quaker mysticism owed much to the contemporary mystical tendency known as Quietism... Attaining a state of receptiveness demanded both literal withdrawal from the bustle and conflict of the outside world and silence within, through the annihilation of self-will and the stilling of human emotions and impulses – often referred to in Quaker parlance as ‘the creature.’ (Plant 2003, p.298; also Healey, 2015, p.49)

Spencer draws on terms from across mystical theology to describe this Quietist-Quakerism; ‘Apophaticism, the via negativa in the seventeenth century, was the interior way termed Quietism’ (Spencer 2004, p.158). Taking a more reserved tone, Birkel defines Quietist-Quakerism as ‘a practice of apophatic prayer, that is, prayer that is without content as much as is humanly possible... when one empties the mind of all distracting thoughts and feelings, God will fill the vacuum.’ For this reason Birkel proceeds to compare Quietist-Quakerism to the fourteenth-century Dominicans Johannes Tauler and Meister Eckhart, the quintessential mystical theologians of medieval apophysis (2015, p.152; 2004, p.32). For similar reasons Spencer likens eighteenth-century Quaker worship to ‘Desert Fathers,’ ‘Greek Fathers,’ ‘Spanish Carmelites’ and again Eckhart’s ‘Rhineland School,’ as well as the Catholic Quietists, who according to Spencer were the conduit through which this ‘apophatic’ practice influenced Georgian Quakers (2007, p.92). There was for Spencer ‘a direct transference of ideas’ from Catholic Quietism to Quakerism (2007, p.270). This chapter will add nuance to these ecumenical claims, and in doing so will find such overarching generalisations around the ‘mystical’ heritage of Quakerism to be problematic. In particular it will be found that the term ‘apophysis’ has been appropriated in recent Quaker scholarship in a questionable way. Furthermore, it will be shown that writers such as Spencer, Birkel and Plant have incorrectly taken the ideal of Quaker worship to be a

‘prayer that is without content.’ On the contrary, it will be shown that Quaker worship involved turning the mind to an emotionally rich, affective response to the idea of God’s presence.

The term ‘mysticism’ can be used to denote a sense of God’s imminent presence, and it is of course undeniable that eighteenth-century Quakers made this claim. However, ‘mystical union’ and apophysis are used in relation to Georgian Quakerism by Spencer and others to suggest particular types of immersive ‘mystical’ experience, and a commonality between Quakerism and the medieval Catholic mystics. This position will also be challenged, as the Quaker notion of mystical union is discussed. It will be suggested that Georgian Quaker worship was primarily concerned with the ‘Inward Light’ as a moral guide and as a means of salvation rather than as a ‘mysterious union with God’ or an ‘elevated and intense union with God’ as Spencer suggests (2007, p.43; 2004 p.159). As such this chapter follows and reiterates Barbour’s critique of these views in relation to early Quakerism, applying them now to the eighteenth century (1964, pp.110, 108). Nevertheless, the concept of ‘recollection’ will be introduced from Catholic contemplative practice as a starting point for further comparisons between Quaker worship and silent worship in other Christian groups. It must be added, however, that Quaker adherence to the general principles of Protestant soteriology significantly changed the context in which these practices took place.

Birkel (2015) undertook the first academic study of a Quaker devotional text from our period in his article on *A Guide to True Peace or a Method of Attaining Inward Spiritual Prayer* (Backhouse, 1813). This chapter will build upon and challenge Birkel’s article, and will include several similar Quaker texts. Quakers were not as prolific as those from monastic or Quietist contemplative traditions and preferred to focus their literary efforts on spiritual biography. Furthermore, Quakers have always ‘insisted on the centrality of immediate divine guidance’ and as such have been reticent to record spiritual instruction (Birkel, 2004, p.41), lending a degree of ambiguity to their devotional manuals.

Nevertheless, a significant amount of instructional literature relating to eighteenth-century Quaker worship can be found, detailing the mental attitudes which Quakers were encouraged to adopt and the sensations which were said to arise during worship. Three methods of worship will be outlined in this chapter, all of which were documented in Georgian Quaker devotional literature. These methods brought a range of influences together, united by the notion of ‘Inward Light,’ which was said to bring about self-awareness and mental stillness, ‘awful’ humility and/or love, which was felt by the devout to arise more or less spontaneously. This Inward Light was held to be synonymous with the

redeeming aspect of the Christ of John's Gospel (the 'light of the world'), or the Holy Spirit, or simply the will of God. Jesus, God, the Holy Spirit, the 'seed of God' and Inward Light were used interchangeably in this period by Quakers to describe the workings of grace in the soul (Pyper, 1998, p.18; Barbour, 1964, p.110). However, it is widely recognised by those who have critically studied that development of Quakerism that 'Inward Light' in this period 'was not a testimony to innate goodness, but rather an illumination of sin' (Hamm, 2007, p.14), bringing Quakers to an awareness of sin and showing them the way out of sin (Angell, 2013, p. 149), as we will discuss.

The first method of worship, which I will call 'silent waiting,' will be examined by way of Robert Barclay's *An Apology for True Christian Divinity* (1678, 1827 edition cited throughout) and Mary Brook's *Reasons for the Necessity of Silent Waiting in order to the Solemn Worship of God, to which are added several quotations from Robert Barclay's Apology* (1775). A search of the Friends Historical Library at Swarthmore College reveals that Brook's pamphlet was re-printed at least twenty-five times up to 1877 including editions in French and German. Joseph John Gurney's chapter 'On Silent Worship' in *Observations on the Distinguishing Views and Practices of the Society of Friends* will be used to further illustrate this method (1842, pp.312-340), and an alternate version entitled 'Observations on Silent Worship' was published alongside a selection of religious poems by the York Retreat patient Mark Holman Shephard in *Hours of Retirement* (1829). The second method to be discussed in this chapter, which I will call 'Quietist prayer,' was most fully articulated in Backhouse's *A Guide to True Peace* (1813), and has recently been the subject of Birkel's analysis as mentioned above. The tract consists of paraphrased or directly quoted passages from the leading writers of the Catholic Quietist movement, and is regarded by Jones, Spencer and Birkel as the most influential articulation of the Quaker-Quietist position (Jones, 1921, p.58; Spencer 2015, p.145; Birkel, 2015). Like *Reasons for the Necessity of Silent Waiting* this tract was published throughout the nineteenth century, twelve times up to 1877 (Birkel, 2015, p.162). Finally, the method of 'watchfulness' as outlined in pamphlets by Bellers (1702, reprinted in 1760 and 1802), Phipps (1815) and Phillips (1781) will be examined. Further contextual remarks on silent worship in early modern context and on Quaker assumptions about the operation of Holy Spirit will be offered before we explore these tracts.

Silent Worship in Early Modern Context

To see God's providence in everyday events, to reflect on the progress of grace in the soul, and to seek out and claim an unmediated relationship with the Divine through 'practical divinity' or 'experiential Christianity,' was not unusual within Protestant movements of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Quakerism arose in a hotbed of popular spirituality where a personal inward relationship with the divine was a controversial but not unusual claim (Smith, 1989, pp.33-34; Watkins, 1972, pp. 226-238; Nuttall, 1946, pp.150-167; Hindmarsh, 2005, pp.33-61; Heyd, 1995, pp.11-41). Yet Quakers also alluded to the extraordinary claims of mystical union made by Catholic mystics. If the designation of 'the mystical' as a blanket term to denote an ineffable union with the divine is a modern idea, as many in religious studies now argue (King, 2005, p.306), it may be that Quakers on the cusp of the modern era were amongst the first to articulate the claims of perennial mysticism. Writing in 1678, Robert Barclay stated:

The name of Mystics hath arisen, as of a certain sect, generally commended by all, whose writings are full both of the explanation and of the commendation of this sort of worship; where they plentifully assert this inward introversion and abstraction of the mind, as they call it, from all images and thoughts, and the prayer of the will: yea, they look upon this as the height of Christian perfection (p.277-278)

On these grounds Barclay proclaimed Quaker worship as 'the best of worships, which the best of men in all ages, and of all sects, have commended, and which is most suitable to the doctrine of Christ' (1827, p.279). Yet the problem with the appropriation of Catholic terms into reformed piety is that Catholic mystics made qualitatively different claims to those found in reformed theology. As Tamburello explains, the former spoke of 'losing one's identity and becoming absorbed into God,' the latter, 'spiritually one with God through love and conformity with God's will' (2013, p.408).

These positions are both 'mystical' in the broader sense of the term, as both profess to a direct experience of the presence of the divine (McGinn, 1991, xv-xvi). Yet as a result of this tension, a 'Mystics vs Puritan debate' has arisen (Spencer, 2007 pp. 40-43) over how far Quakerism was influenced by or similar to Catholic mysticism, or evolved through 'puritan attitudes pushed to severe conclusions' (Barbour, 1964, p.2, p.32; 1988, p.5). The Catholic mystical interpretation continues to be popular amongst some contemporary Quakers in the United States, in historical accounts and in pastoral guidance (Birkel, 2015, p.166). A resolution to this debate has recently been proposed by Spencer, who asserts that;

both the Catholic mystical and the Puritan radical provided fertile soil for the emergence of the Quaker movement, primarily because Puritanism itself was deeply steeped in the medieval mystical tradition (2007, p.40)

Yet this is not a view found amongst other historians of Puritan thought, neither is it a position for which Spencer provides evidential support. There can be no doubt that Puritans translated and read monastic mystical tracts and engaged in introspective spiritual exercises based in part on their inheritance from monastic traditions (Spencer, 2007, pp.59-63; Barbour, 2004, p.24). Yet the possibility that Catholic mystical language took on a different meaning in a post-reformation context that was dominated by the wholly new emphasis on predestination and electing grace, has not been considered by Spencer (2007) and other recent Quaker writers such as Birkel (2004; 2015), Pryce (2010) or Dandelion (2010). Instead, these writers all locate eighteenth century Quaker worship within a lineage of monastic 'apophatic' or Quietist mysticism.

Tamburello suggests that reformed theologians such as Luther and Calvin found the language of medieval mysticism, particularly apophatic mysticism, amenable to their sense of the passive reception of justifying grace. Passive reception of grace occurred towards the beginning of Protestant spiritual life, but was discussed using the linguistic tropes of passive mystical absorption, which occurred at the very end of the Catholic contemplative ascent to God (2013, pp. 414-420). Likewise, W.R. Ward in *Early Evangelicalism* (2006) summarises this dynamic: 'The Puritans scored an advantage over the Catholics by moving mystical union, conversion, into the first stage of their doctrinally framed scheme of justification, sanctification and glorification' (2006, p.87). This difference did not prevent diverse Pietist and Puritan groups from appropriating Catholic mystical language into their own accounts of spiritual progress, as W.R. Ward makes abundantly clear. Ward continues:

Mystical union, in the Catholic schemes the ultimate reward for the spiritual elite, was now available to all the faithful, and available where it was most needed, at the beginning of the saints' pilgrimage, as encouragement for everything ahead. (2006, p.87)

Despite these and other theological differences, W.R. Ward, Tamburello and Patricia Ward show that mystical writings from monastics and Quietists were an integral element of many reformed movements all over Europe up to the mid eighteenth century. The condemnation of Molinos and Guyon by the Catholic Church greatly aided the wide dissemination of their writings amongst Protestants, whilst the authors themselves had very little involvement with the interpretation and assimilation of these texts (McGinn, 2010, p.22; W.R. Ward,

2006, pp.61-66). In *Experiential Theology in America*, Patricia Ward shows how interpretations of Catholic Quietist texts evolved through three centuries of American Protestant spirituality, including eighteenth-century American Quakerism (2009, pp.85-107) but also German Pietism, Evangelical Methodism and the Holiness movement. The use of Quietist texts by Methodists such as Wesley and Cowper (who of course rejected many of the practical and theoretical tenants of Quietism and indeed Quakerism) is testimony to the diverse interpretations that mystical language can accommodate (2009, pp.94-97). Eighteenth-century radical Protestantism was a melting-pot of 'mystical mayhem,' according to W.R. Ward (1993a, p.86). Patricia Ward quotes an account of reading habits amongst German speaking migrants in Pennsylvania which illustrates this point; 'These people read all the writings of the mystics – Bernier, Madame Guyon, Tauler, John of the Cross, Bertot, Molinos, Arnold, etc. and even the writings of Jacob Boehme – mornings and evenings for their home worship!' (P. Ward, 2009, p.71)

Given these circumstances of free-flow and casual appropriation of mystical literature throughout Protestantism in this period it is problematic to automatically assume that Quakers preserved monastic or Quietist contemplative traditions simply because they, along with any number of radical movements, read and republished these texts. Moreover, it should be recognised that worship involving interior silence and claims of intuitive insight should not be considered in isolation from sacramental, confessional, syllogistic and liturgical practices, and the soteriological or metaphysical frameworks in which they are found (Komjathy, 2015, pp.38-39). Such factors are wont to be devalued by scholar/practitioners from modern liberal Protestant backgrounds and those who wish to illustrate perennial mysticism or holiness theories (Schmidt, 2012, pp. 463-468).

On the other hand, the spread of this mystical literature was accompanied by experiential claims involving interior silence or mental stillness in diverse Catholic and Protestant groups across Europe. Such claims were not uncommon before the late eighteenth century. Accounts of divinely infused interior silence are found throughout the Pietist movement, notably and beautifully in the eighteenth century writing of Gerhard Tersteegen (P. Ward, 2009, pp.72-79; W.R. Ward, 1993b). Even Jacob Boehme, one of the most idiosyncratic mystics of the period, started his esoteric alchemical panentheism with inward silence, a 'gelassenheit' of silent surrender to God's will which similarly underpinned the Pietist movement (W.R. Ward, 1999, pp.20-29). The issue of 'stillness' in prayer caused John Wesley to split from the Moravian advocates of this practice in 1740 (Hindmarsh, 2005, pp.66, 162-169), and silent worship is evident amongst the radical Puritan movements

which preceded Quakerism such as the Family of Love, the Seekers and the Waiters (Braithwaite, 1912, pp.25-26; Barbour, 1964, pp.31-32). The experiential value of such practice may also be demonstrated by the unlikely allegiances to which it gave rise. Iconoclastic Barclay cited an orthodox Benedictine prayer manual *Holy Wisdom* (1657), in support of Quaker worship (1827, pp.277-278). Scottish Episcopalians tended to Catholic Quietist Madame Guyon on her deathbed ('one of the most extraordinary images of the eighteenth century' according to W.R. Ward, 1993a, p.87) and Quietism was 'common talk of the coffeehouses of Bath' in the mid eighteenth century thanks to Dr. George Cheyne's holistic approach to aristocratic nervous affliction (W.R Ward, 2006, p.120). In an era in which theology could still be unabashedly related to experience, it seems there must have been something of value in these practices of interior silence.

Recollection

One of the central features of the contemplative practices which spread across Europe in Quietist literature was the prayer of 'recollection' (McGinn, 2010, p.29). This practice, known in Molinos' *Spiritual Guide* as 'internal recollection,' involved repeatedly re-collecting the mind to the idea (considered by the practitioner to be a truth) of God's imminent presence or omnipresence (usually experienced as pure love), thereby gradually excluding all external and mental distractions. The 1688 English translation of Molinos' *Spiritual Guide* explained the method over chapters 11-16 within the first volume;

Internal Recollection is Faith and Silence in the Presence of God. Hence thou oughtest to be accustomed to recollect thy self in his Presence, with an affectionate attention, as one that is given up to God, and united unto him, with Reverence, Humility and Submission (1688, p.30)

Guyon's *A Short and Easy Method of Prayer* similarly described how the active, effortful and initially difficult exercise of recollection gradually become passive, as this recollection became 'infused' with divine presence. From the 1775 translation by the Quaker Thomas Digby Brooke, for example;

Our direct and principal exercise should consist in the contemplation of the Divine Presence; we should be also exceedingly watchful and diligent in recalling our dissipated senses... Though recollection is difficult in the beginning, from the habit the soul has acquired of always being away from home... It soon will be rendered perfectly easy. (1775, pp. 9-10)

And;

All our care and attention should therefore be to acquire inward recollection; nor let us be discouraged by the pains and difficulties we encounter in this exercise, which will soon be recompensed, on the part of our God, by such an abundance of Grace as will render the exercise perfectly easy. (1775, pp. 35-36)

Birkel briefly touches on the essence of this practice, which is correctly identified as the 'heart of the message' of the 'Quietist' Quaker text *A Guide to True Peace*. As Birkel states, it 'might be considered as the method for this prayer'; one should 'imagine' oneself in God's presence (2015, p.159). Yet it is not clear how this active and imaginative method is squared with Birkel's assessment of Quaker worship as wholly 'without conscious effort and use of images' and therefore by his definition 'apophatic' (2015, pp.147-152). There seems to be a tension in Birkel's analysis, between the overarching insistence that Quietist 'apophatic' practice involved 'self-emptying' until 'God filled the vacuum' (2015, p.152) and the texts, which as Birkel briefly states, described an effortful tuning of the mind to the idea of God's presence.

Molinos was unequivocal that the practice of recollection in silent prayer was not passive;

I'll conclude this Chapter by undeceiving thee of the vulgar error of those who say, that in this internal Recollection, or Prayer of Rest, the faculties operate not, and that the Soul is idle and wholly unactive... This is a manifest fallacy of those who have little experience. (1688, p.37)

Catholic mystical itineraries chart how practitioners might progress from effortful recollection to 'infused' or 'passive' contemplation by way of any number of subtly graduated steps (for example 'Recollection' in *New Catholic Encyclopaedia*, 1967, Vol. 12, pp.128-129 and 'mystical contemplation' in *ibid*, Vol.4, p.259). Whilst these stages of contemplation were debated in Catholic mystical theology, McGinn shows that the writings of Miguel de Molinos which underpinned the Quietist movement featured only a slight variation on this orthodox formulation. Although passive contemplation was emphasised in relatively imprecise and democratised Quietist spiritual literature, so called 'Quietism' was an essentially orthodox articulation of Catholic practice. The accusations of unorthodox passivity and antinomianism levelled against Quietists by various inquisitors had no grounds in Molinos' published work³ (McGinn, 2010, pp.24 -39). Furthermore, W.R. Ward notes there is little difference between Molinos and Guyon, 'there was nothing particularly

³ The debate continues over whether Molinos' condemnation was politically motivated or whether there is substance to accusations of personal misconduct. It may well be that Molinos gave unorthodox antinomian teachings in private, but such teachings did not feature in *The Spiritual Guide* (McGinn 2010, pp.24 -39).

distinctive about Madame Guyon's formulation of Quietist doctrine,' save for her democratising, anti-establishment stance (1999, pp. 22-23).

This will be a vital point for what will follow in this chapter; the incorrect assumption that Catholic Quietists advocated a wholly passive or potentially unorthodox and iconoclastic practice has been assimilated into Quaker histories since Rufus Jones's account of the 'Quietist' Quakers. It is still to be found within recent treatments of the subject, hence the tension in Birkel's analysis discussed above (2015). The proposition that Quietist prayer was wholly passive appeals to the reformed preference for freely given grace rather than methodical praxis. Quietist practice may well have been 'self-emptying'⁴ but it was a self-emptying by way of a subtly effortful attentional training upon an affective response to considering oneself in God's presence. Save for the final stages of contemplation (which were downplayed in Quaker literature, as we will see) the Quietist method was not an 'empty' contemplation devoid of content or images. This study of Quaker devotional literature will show that Georgian Quakers, like the Catholic Quietists, practiced recollection upon the idea of the divine being present, prior to claiming their prayer to be infused by the Spirit, the Inward Light, or internal silence.⁵

Salvation and the Fallen Human Condition

Before discussing these texts, some further qualifications need to be made regarding the assumptions which Quakers brought into their worship, particularly in relation to human nature, human agency and the operation of the Holy Spirit. Robert Barclay's 1678 *Apology for True Christian Divinity*, 'the canonical Quaker theological treatise' of our period (Birkel, 2015, p.149), will be used to illustrate these points. The foremost scholar of Barclay's theology, Hugh Pyper, comments that 'in light of the modern Quaker reputation of humanism and "that of God" in every human being, it comes as a surprise to realise that Barclay's view on human nature outdoes the pessimism of Calvinism' (2015, p.214). Pyper's

⁴ The concept of 'self' in Georgian Quakerism will be explored in chapter two.

⁵ This chapter explores Quaker practice in a Christian ecumenical context but there may be scope for wider comparisons. Some academics in the emerging field of Contemplative Studies claim that a basic and recurrent feature of inwardly silent contemplative practice the world over is 'The focusing of the attention in a sustained fashion, leading to states of concentration, tranquillity, and insight... on a spectrum ranging from the rather common... to the most profound' (Sherman, 2014, p.226). Robert Foreman claims that practices involving silent recollection of the attention are common across most classical mystical itineraries (1997, p.37). See also B. A. Wallace, 2009, pp. 37-87.

assessment should be borne in mind in our later comparison between Quakerism and Catholic Quietism, as there are no grounds to suggest, with Quaker scholars from Jones (1921, p.33) to Birkel (2015, pp.153-154) that Catholic Quietism added a pessimistic element to Quaker views on human nature.

Barclay started with the notion of the totally depraved and sinful human condition, in keeping with the majority of contemporaneous Protestant theologies. Yet in a variation on the imputation of Original Sin, Barclay rejected the notion that all children are automatically born into a state of sin, ridiculing the idea that children are damned if they die before personally sinning as an 'absurdity' (1827, p.94). Children, for Barclay, are born in a state of purity and fall into disobedience at some indistinct point by obeying a 'seed of sin' inherited from the Fall in a latent form;

we confess then that a seed of sin is transmitted to all men from Adam, although imputed to none, until by sinning they actually join with it; in which seed he gave occasion to all to sin, and it is the origin of all evil actions and thoughts in men's hearts. (1827, p.94)

Humankind was either joined with the 'good seed' of the Holy Spirit, the *vehiculum Dai*,⁶ or was joined with the 'evil seed' of the 'carnal man,' and Original Sin. The question of what compelled all children without exception to join with the 'seed of sin' and re-enact the Fall, when in life this occurred, or if it could be avoided, went unanswered. Regarding adults therefore, Barclay's view was hardly different to the imputation of Original Sin as usually conceived (Pyper, 2015, p.216). Having established this variation on Original Sin, *Apology* insisted that absolutely nothing arising from this totally fallen condition could lead to salvation. Any religious act in this fallen state was ineffectual or counterproductive; 'if man's thoughts be always and only evil, then they are altogether useless and ineffectual to him in the things of God' (1827, p.88). The heart cannot lead to God as it is 'deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked' [Jeremiah 17:9]. Humanity, in its fallen state 'can know nothing aright; yea, his thoughts and conceptions concerning God and things spiritual, until he be disjoined from this evil seed, and united to the divine light, are unprofitable both to himself and others' (1827, p.88).

⁶ '*Vehiculum Dai*' was distinctive to Barclay's theology. Essentially was synonymous to the Inward Light (Pyper, 2015, p.216).

Such pessimism was not unique to Quakerism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Watkins, 1979, p.5; Delumeau, 1990, pp. 523-544). It was repeated almost word for word by John Wesley in *On Self Denial*, for example;

There is in every man a carnal mind, which is enmity with God, which is not, cannot be subject to his law, and which soon infects the whole soul, that there dwelleth in him, in his flesh, in his natural state, no good thing; but the imagination of his thoughts, of his heart, is evil, only evil and that continually. (Delumeau, 1990, p.507)

For both Wesley and Barclay, the totally fallen state of humanity made divine intervention absolutely necessary to bring about salvation. Only by regeneration through the Holy Spirit could the 'natural man' become transformed (1827, p.140). For Quakers, pure ethical conduct was not enough to gain salvation; also necessary was the inward crucifixion of self-denial and rebirth, catalysed by the Holy Spirit, or 'Inward Light.'

The path to salvation was one of complete resignation to the will of God or 'Inward Light' when and if it became known in the mind of the fallen creature. In this framework, Barclay insisted that agency to lift the soul out of its fallen state always and only came from the divine rather than the 'creature.' This was explained by Barclay in a reinvention of Plato's cave allegory. It is like;

Diverse men lying in a dark pit together, where all their senses are so stupefied, that they are scarce sensible of their own misery. To this I compare man in his natural, corrupt, fallen condition. I suppose not that any of these men, wrestling to deliver themselves, do thereby stir up, or engage one able to deliver them to give them his help, saying within himself, I see one of these men willing to be delivered, and doing what in him lies, therefore he deserves to be assisted; as say the Socinians, Pelagians, and Semi-Pelagians.

One cannot 'deliver' oneself through natural strength of will and rationality, and no praxis whatsoever will entice the 'one able to deliver' down into the pit. Barclay continued;

Neither do I suppose that this deliverer comes to the top of the pit, and puts down a ladder, desiring them that will to come up; and so puts them upon using their own strength and will to come up; as do the Jesuits and Arminians: yet, as they say, such are not delivered without the grace; seeing the grace is that ladder by which they were delivered.

Barclay refutes effortful prayer of Jesuit spiritual exercises as a means to salvation, or the Arminian view of co-agency with God's grace. Finally, Barclay stated the Quaker position;

But I suppose that the deliverer comes at certain times, and fully discovers and informs them of the great misery and hazard they are in, if they continue in that noisome and pestiferous place; yea, forces them to a

certain sense of their misery, (for the wickedest men at times are made sensible of their misery by God's visitation) and not only so, but lays hold upon them, and gives them a pull, in order to lift them out of their misery; which if they resist not will save them; only they may resist it. (1827, pp.124-125)

In *Apology*, the self-awareness and 'misery' of fully recognising human depravity was the result of saving grace, which would 'make them sensible' of their fallen state, then 'given them a pull' towards self-transcendence.

By way of context, pedagogical preaching with the aim to incite despondency over the human condition was a standard feature of British Protestantism, from the early Puritan divines to Wesley and Whitfield's Methodism. 'The procedure,' writes Watkins, 'was first to enlighten the unregenerate man about the nature of sin, then to lead him to a conviction of his own Guilt before God' (1972, p.7). In due course this despair at the sinful human condition was resolved by a realisation of the personal efficacy of Christ's atoning death, or some similar theological commitment, which was previously only known in theory. This personal assurance of salvation was said to be justifying divine inspiration via the Holy Spirit, different in kind to the former conviction of sin (Delumeau, 1990, pp.491-497). Yet in Quakerism, the despair of becoming fully aware of one's fallen state was of the same nature as saving grace. Conviction of sin ('convincement'⁷) and justification both depended upon this 'Inward Light', as the unregenerate 'carnal mind' did not fully register in the awareness of a Quaker until the moment when the divine descends into Barclay's pit, 'forces them to a certain sense of their misery' and 'gives them a pull,' according to Barclay. By not resisting this inspired self-awareness and 'misery,' Quakers allowed the Holy Spirit to pull them to self-transcendence and salvation. 'Convincement' was catalysed by a visitation of the Spirit, but also as Gwynn states, quoting George Fox; 'Justification and sanctification are one, not distinguished the one from the other... for Christ [the Inward Light]... it is he that sanctifies and justifies' (Gwynn, 2015, p.26). Hamm agrees; before the influence of Evangelism in the nineteenth century, justification and sanctification were all of a piece (1988, p.6).

⁷ 'Convincement' is used synonymously to 'conversion' in our period of Quakerism. 'Convincement' in seventeenth century England meant: 1.'The proving a person guilty'; 2. 'to produce conviction of sinfulness'; 3.'Mental convincement' (Beek, 1969, p.93). In modern Quakerism 'convincement' is usually only used in the latter sense, to be 'convinced' of the Quaker spiritual 'Truth.' It is likely that 'convincement' was used by early Quakers because it embraced all three of these meanings.

Therefore, whilst W.R. Ward shows that Puritans brought the language of mystical contact to the beginning of the spiritual path, this path was further 'compressed' by Quakers. (Watkins, 1972 pp.215, 238; Nutall, 1946 p.vii; Barbour, 1964, p.2). This left a spiritual itinerary in which everything depended upon the Holy Spirit. The language of mystical contact became applicable to all stages of 'convincement,' justification and sanctification, from novice to adept. It was a spiritual path along which totally fallen humankind could not progress without surrendering to the merciful dispensation from above, 'the terror and power of the Light,' in a state of complete submission (Barbour, 1964, pp. 94-126).

Silent Waiting

Turning to the first method of worship, the practice of 'silent waiting' was said to engender readiness in a state of passivity for when this 'Inward Light' manifests:

This great duty then of waiting upon God, must needs be exercised in man's denying self, both inwardly and outwardly, in a still and mere dependence upon God, in abstracting from all the workings, imaginations, and speculations of his own mind, that being emptied as it were of himself, and so thoroughly crucified to the natural products thereof, he may be fit to receive the Lord, who will have no co-partner nor co-rival of his glory and power. (1827, p.270)

In this way, Quakers 'waited upon' God in silent prayer, with the 'self brought to nothingness' in an 'attentive, submissive' 'inward watchfulness and retiredness of mind' (Brook, 1775, p.12). Because one cannot worship without the Spirit, it followed for Barclay and Brook in *Reasons for the Necessity of Silent Waiting* that watching and waiting was not 'prayer' until it become infused with the Spirit. Brook quoted Barclay's use of Matthew 24:42, Mark 8:33 and 24:38 and Luke 11:36 to explain that 'watching unto prayer,' comes previous to actual prayer:

That there is a Necessity of this inward Retirement of Mind as previous to prayer, that the Spirit may be felt to draw thereunto, appears for that in most of those places where prayer is commanded 'watching' is prefixed thereunto. (1775, p.31)

This 'watching' was a 'waiting to feel God's Spirit draw unto prayer' since prayer without the spirit was inconceivable, and prayer was by this definition effortless from the side of the 'creature.' 'We are to pray always in the spirit, and cannot pray of ourselves without it acceptably' therefore 'this watching must be for this end recommended to us as preceding

prayer, that we may wait for seasonable times to pray, which is when the Spirit moves thereunto' (1775, p.31).

However, it was not the case that absolutely all 'human emotions and impulses' were to be shunned in an inward silence and vacuous 'nothingness' as often suggested (Birkel, 2015, pp. 147, 152; Plant, 2003, p.298). On the contrary, this attitude of waiting and watching was emotionally rich in qualities such as fear, humility, 'self-abasement,' awe and reverence, which were encouraged as an appropriate response to the awesome power of God alone to bring about salvation. Quakers were instructed to recollect the mind on these emotive responses to the idea of God's presence as a way to be 'fit to receive' spiritual visitation. Brook advised that 'before we approach the Fountain of Wisdom' practitioners must 'shut out everything that would amuse or divert attention from the Reverence due to the great Object of our Adoration' (1775, p.13) and that the mind should be 'uninterruptedly stayed upon him [sic, God]' with a 'solid attention to hear what he shall reveal' (1775, pp.5-6). Obstacles to this attention, which 'scatter and divert his [the practitioner's] attention from the right object' were 'thoughts, imaginations and propensities of an earthly or sensual nature' which should be abandoned in favour of the 'attention ... fixed upon and stayed in true watchfulness towards the Lord' (Brook, 1775, p.12). Like the practices advocated by Molinos and Guyon, Brook advised recollecting the mind to the idea of God's presence.

The demands placed upon Quakers by their theology of total depravity made it problematic to posit any effort from the side of the 'creature.' Nevertheless *Necessity of Silent Waiting* strongly implied that 'attention on the Omniscient Spirit' was a prerequisite to spiritual visitation;

Is not the Almighty a most pure and perfectly glorious being, dwelling in the Light, whom no man can approach unto but by the Spirit of the Mediator; and is not Man absolutely dependant on the merciful Goodness and Power of his creator... and in what state is he so likely to be made sensible of this, as under an abstraction of mind from earthy cogitations and concerns, into a Silent Attention upon the omnipresent Spirit. (Brook, 1775, p.19)

This object of recollection, the 'great Object of our Adoration' as Brook put it, was an affective response to the power and sovereignty of God. Rather than recollecting the mind to what Molinos held to be the theological truth of God's 'pure love,' Brook's approach demanded that God be approached in an attitude of self-abnegation and fear;

Is not a humble, conscientious, silent Waiting in Submission, to be influenced and led by him, abundantly more preferable in his sight? Then how much more the sighs and expressions that proceed from a real heart-affecting sense of his Greatness and Omnipresence, and the Lowness and Unworthyness of the Creature that considers itself as Dust and Ashes before him! (1775, p.8)

This theme runs throughout *Necessity of Silent Waiting*. As Brook put it, Quakers should be ‘deeply humbled into a Feeling of our Inability and Nothingness’ with ‘a reverent Sense of the Majesty and Purity of the Supreme Searcher of Hearts’ (1775, p.7). Likewise Barclay advised, ‘fear the Lord, to stand in awe before him,’ and worship ‘in the pure fear of the Lord’ (1827, pp.261, 387). For Henry Tuke ‘when we consider the Omnipotence, the Omniscience, and the Justice of God, we shall find abundant cause for cherishing this Fear, accompanied with an awful reverence in spirit towards him’ (1808, p.35-36). Similarly for Gurney, who continued to advocate a similar approach in the nineteenth century; ‘Men ought to be humbled, prostrate, and in a mental condition of profound reverence and awe, under a sense of their own vileness and of his perfections—of our own unworthiness and of his power—of our own nothingness and of his infinity’ (1829, p.188).

The inner silence that was said to arise from such practice was held to be an apt expression of humility before God, but this silence was not vacuous or emotionally neutral; ‘what more becoming a humble dependant creature, sensible of the depravity of its nature’ asked Brook ‘than a deeply expressive solemn silence’ (1775, p.12). Quakers were advised to silence their ‘roving imaginations’ (Barclay, 1827, p.264) and wait upon God in a submissive attitude, a ‘nothingness’ which was not an absence of phenomenal content but resembled the ‘feeling of personal nothingness and abasement before the awe inspiring object’ which Rudolf Otto defined as a ‘numinous’ experience (Otto, 1936, pp.18-20). Gurney addressed this issue directly in *Observations on the Distinguishing Views and Practices of the Society of Friends*;

I have sometimes met with persons of a tender and seeking mind, who have imbibed a notion, that the first point to be aimed at in order to silent worship is a vacuity from all ideas; and who have been greatly discouraged by their unsuccessful efforts to attain to a state of which the waking mind of man is, by its nature, incapable. That which is truly required for this holy purpose is an abstractedness from worldly thoughts, and even from religious meditations of our own devising, a quiet fixing of the soul on God. The glorious idea of an omnipotent, omnipresent Being, will then fill our minds; and so far from our being destitute of an object to contemplate, one will be before us, of sufficient depth and magnitude to occupy the minds of saints and angels to all eternity. (1842, p.335)

Gurney essentially made the same point as Molinos; that it is erroneous to regard this method as a wholly passive imageless practice without 'an object to contemplate.' The mind was to be silently concentrated in an attitude of reverent fear and awe, thereby decreasing the frequency and intensity of other mental events. According to Barclay 'it becomes easy, though it be very hard at first for the natural man, whose roving imaginations and running worldly desires are not so easily brought to silence' (Barclay, 1827, p.264).

The practice contained an ambiguity which is a characteristic of Quaker spirituality in our period. It was not clear where the action of the 'creaturely' agent ended, whether the practitioner should exert effort in maintaining this awful concentration upon the idea of God's presence, or whether this concentration upon God was in itself a sign of 'natural man' becoming subject to God's power. It was theologically problematic to credit an improvement in 'staying' the mind to depraved human agency because 'natural will' in its fallen condition was of no use in worship and the unregenerate 'can do nothing aright.' Therefore a qualitative improvement in this practice was referred to in the register of divine intervention. Progress in prayer was always and only ascribed to the divine, rather than the 'creature, and Quakers dispensed with the gradations of effort and co-agency found within Catholic mystical theology. Regarding those with ill-disciplined concentration, Brook reckoned it is 'the necessity of the Holy Spirit to disengage them from roving thoughts and concerns of a temporal nature' (1775, p.17) or 'it pleased the merciful redeemer to open up a way to them gradually into humble stillness' (1775, p.22). Brook was clear that 'nothing less than the Holy Spirit can chain down and subdue the carnal mind' and 'those who pray under the Guidance of the Holy Spirit, pray with additional fervency, knowing their Attention fixed on God alone' (p.9). Similarly for Barclay:

The Lord oftentimes, when any turn towards him, and have true desires thus to wait upon him, and find great difficulty through the unsteadiness of their minds, doth in condescension and compassion cause his power to break forth in a more strong and powerful manner. (1827, p.264)

A typical articulation of this ambiguity between divine and human agency is found in the Quaker minister Mary Waring's journal, published in 1809;

I did not eat the bread of idleness this morning at meeting; though have no doubt but my labour was increased by my un-watchfulness at first sitting down, suffering my mind to wander, hither and thither; so that I could not easily get it centred; yet the Lord was not unmindful of me. (Waring, 1809, p.86)

Despite Waring's effort to re-collect her wandering mind, the desired mental attitude was only achieved with divine intervention.

As the wandering mind of the unregenerate 'carnal man' lost its influence, attention was said to become reoriented towards an attitude of resignation before God as the salience of the numinous took precedence over all else. Illustrating 'powerful convictions of the Holy Spirit' by way of Isaiah 6:5, Brook explained

What a deep reverence of his maker and just abhorrence of self filled his humbled Mind, when he was favoured with this awful sight of the Supreme Glory. How self-abasing were his sensations and, emphatical his expressions when he cried "woe is me"... how different is this heart-felt acknowledgement, proceeding from the powerful convictions of the Holy Spirit, to those dry, formal, unfelt words that come from the lips of bare nominal Christians (1775, p.11)

In worship, the devout 'learn not to trust themselves or their own words but attentively to watch and silently wait' so that 'every thought might be brought into obedience with Christ' (Brook, 1775, p.23). From the point of view of being 'fixed,' distracting thoughts and imaginations were seen to originate from the 'enemy' of the unregenerate 'carnal mind,' which was now identified as that which drew attention away from being 'stayed' on God. For Brook, some cannot wait correctly because 'the enemy is too strong for such worshippers, and carries their thoughts and imaginations after strange objects' (1775, p.15). For Barclay, 'the devil' could appear in meetings, exciting the mind from being stayed upon God or causing laxity, dulling the mind from attending fully in worship;

He [sic; the devil] can well enter and work in a meeting, that is silent only as to words, either by keeping the minds in various thoughts and imaginations, or by stupifying them, so as to overwhelm them with a spirit of heaviness and slothfulness: but when we retire out of all, and are turned in, both by being diligent and watchful upon the one hand, and also silent and retired out of all our thoughts upon the other, as we abide in this sure place, we feel ourselves out of his reach. (1827, p.273)

Over a century later the Quaker minister Joseph Wood echoed Barclay's assertion:

I believe it is the business of him who works with all the decieveableness of unrighteousness to keep thy poor unstable mind busied and hurried about many things in order to keep thee from the one thing needful, that quiet waiting state (Wood, 7th July 1800, Vol.1, 14.13)

The appropriate response to these obstacles was not effortful concentration but more humility until the mind became stayed upon the numinous once more, as illustrated by the Quaker parenting advice pamphlet *Christian Instruction as Between a Mother and Her*

*Daughter*⁸ (Wigham, 1816). A sudden inability to stay the mind in prayer led the daughter to exclaim: 'I am afraid he has cast me off; my thoughts ramble so, I cannot get my mind stayed, when I wish to wait on the Lord.' In response the mother did not advocate effortful re-collection of the mind but advised more humility and awe; 'That my dear is the one thing that gives thee a clear sense of thy weakness and how little thou canst do for thyself; and by which thou mayst be instructed to depend on the Lord for everything' (Wigham, 1816, p.34). Thus a Quaker formulation of recollection was established which circumvented the idea of effortful prayer by the use of humility, in keeping with the assumptions of Quaker theology on the fallen human condition and the total sovereignty of God in bringing about salvation.

Quietist Prayer

A significantly different type of Quaker silent worship drew on Catholic Quietist methods, and was articulated in Backhouse's *A Guide to True Peace or a Method of Attaining Inward Spiritual Prayer* (1813). Similarly to the method above, and the practice of 'interior recollection' in Molinos' *Spiritual Guide*, Backhouse's *A Guide to True Peace* advocated a single pointed attention to the idea of God's imminent presence or omnipresence. *A Guide to True Peace* paraphrased Guyon's *A Quick and Easy Method* on this point, identified as the 'heart' of the practice by Birkel as discussed above (2015, p.159):

You should consider yourself in the Presence of God, looking with a single eye to him, resigning yourself entirely into his hands, to receive from Him whatsoever he may be pleased to dispense... fix your mind in peace and silence; quitting your own reasonings, and not willingly thinking on anything, how good and how profitable soever it may be. (Backhouse, 1813, p.23)

Yet this method used a loving and trusting concentration on God rather than the numinous awe so evident in methods inspired by the Puritan mindset:

giving ourselves up to Him fixing our eyes continually on Him, placing all our confidence in His Grace, and turning with all the strength of our soul to His pure love...With a simple view or attention to God, the soul

⁸ This intriguing pamphlet illustrates idealised Quaker piety in a domestic setting, at the time of the York Retreat. The copy in Leeds University Special Collections was owned by Samuel Tuke's sister, Esther Tuke (1782-1857). The pamphlet, which was perhaps inspired by Wesley's translation of Guyon's *A Mother's Advice to Her Daughter*, takes the form of a dialogue between a Quaker mother answering a teenage daughter's questions about Quaker belief and practice.

becomes like a humble supplicant before its Lord; or as a child casts itself into the safe bosom of its mother (Backhouse, 1813, p.25)

Here again is the cultivation of an emotive response to the idea of God, to 'consider yourself' in God's presence, and an exercise of staying the mind in that attitude. This method had a more assured tone in regards to effort and agency, 'turning with all the strength of our soul' in contrast to Brook's assumption that humankind can do nothing aright, and that waiting should be in fearful submission. *A Guide to True Peace* was more forthright about the human agency of this effortful training of the attention upon God, but also advocated a subtler method. The *Guide* states:

Although we should be at all times watchful and diligent in recalling our wandering thoughts, restraining them, as much as may be, in due subjection; yet a direct contest with them only serves to augment and irritate them; whereas, by calling to mind that we are in the Divine presence, and endeavouring to sink down under a sense and perception thereof, simply turning inward, we wage insensibly a very advantageous, though indirect, war with them (1813, p.178)

Nevertheless, I fail to see how such practice can be described as imageless and effortless, as has been repeatedly suggested by Birkel and Spencer. It was not an attitude of passivity whereby God 'filled the vacuum' (Birkel, 2015, p.152). The practitioner deliberately filled their awareness with the idea of divine presence, using subtle effort to bring the mind back to this affective attitude.

Birkel shows that the aspects of passivity and humility from Catholic Quietist literature were drawn on and emphasised repeatedly in *A Guide to True Peace*, along with passages concerning 'spiritual dryness' and 'dark nights of the soul' which will be discussed in chapter two (2015, p.150). Yet the active stage of 'interior recollection' is still noticeably evident in this Quaker appropriation of Quietist writing, exhibiting a notable departure from the awful humility and passivity demanded by Barclay, Brook and Gurney. A passage that likens spiritual progression to a vessel setting out to sea is paraphrased in *A Guide to True Peace* from Guyon's *Quick and Easy Method*, and illustrates this difference. In Barclay's *Apology* the Holy Spirit descended into Barclay's pit of human corruption to inform the depraved soul of its condition, and wrench it from the shackles of its unregenerate state. Yet in *A Guide to True Peace*, a strong concerted effort is required from the practitioner upon commencing the spiritual journey:

At first we should labour with diligence and toil... when the vessel is in port, the mariners are obliged to exert all their strength that they may clear her thence, and put to sea... in a like manner, while the soul remains

in sin, and creaturely entanglements, very frequent and strenuous endeavours are requisite to effect its freedom; the cords which hold it must be loosed; and then by strong and vigorous efforts, it pushes gradually off from its old port.

When at sea the vessel continues under oar until 'at length she begins to get sweetly under sail.' The analogy for this stage of co-agency with the divine is, 'to spread the sails, to lay the mind open before God that it may be acted upon by his Spirit.' But that is not the end of effortful worship altogether; even after the sail is set, gentle direction is required of the captain as prayer becomes slowly infused with the divine;

to hold the rudder is to restrain the mind from wandering from the true course, recalling it gently, and guiding it steadily to the dictates of the blessed spirit, which gradually gains possession and dominion of it; just as the wind by degrees fills the sails and impels the vessel. (Backhouse, 1813, pp.78-79)

This passage from Guyon as found in *A Guide to True Peace* shows a subtly active method with a gradual shift to passive contemplation. As we have already seen, accusations of unorthodox passivity against Continental Quietists were unfounded and largely motivated by ecclesiastical politics and a growing ambivalence towards 'mystical' contemplation in the Roman Church. Catholic Quietism fell within the orthodoxies of the Catholic tradition of contemplative prayer (McGinn, 2010, p.29; 2006, pp.144, 502). Methods found within *A Guide to True Peace* contrast sharply with the approach found in *Necessity of Silent Waiting* and demonstrate that a Quietist influence cannot be blamed for introducing a passive element into Quaker worship. From Jones (1921) to Birkel (2015), Catholic Quietism is incorrectly equated with spiritual passivity. If anything, Quietist-influenced methods were more active than Brook's method in *Necessity for Silent Worship* or Gurney's 'On Silent Worship.' Unlike most early modern reformed theologies, Catholicism did not assert the total corruption of unregenerate humanity. Therefore Catholics were able to be more forthright in asserting their will towards God.

It is at the culmination of prayer that a major difference between Catholic mysticism and the Quaker appropriation of Quietism can be found. At the risk of generalisation, and whilst numerous variations on this topic exist even within Catholic mystical theology, an ultimate self-forgetting in immersive ecstatic union with God is said to occur during the culmination of mystical prayer. This was the ultimate moment of passivity, self-surrender and unitive immersion with God, according to Catholic mystical theology, after various stages of increasing co-agency with God. The *New Catholic Encyclopaedia* features a pithy summary of the stages of Catholic mystical contemplation, showing how degrees of recollection

moved to 'the prayer of quiet in which the will is captivated,' followed by 'a sleep of the faculties.' Finally the gradations of mystical union are described;

The soul then advances to the prayer of union, which admits of the following grades; simple union, ecstatic union terminating in mystical espousal, and transforming union, terminating in mystical marriage... in the prayer of ecstatic union the external faculties are alienated to such an extent that ecstasy is a concomitant phenomena... In the prayer of transforming union, the soul is completely surrendered to God and enjoys quasi-permanent union in love and confirmation of grace. (1967, Vol. 4, p.25)

This implosion of the senses and ecstatic union is unlike anything found in eighteenth century Quaker devotional literature or in spiritual biography. Backhouse's *A Guide to True Peace* uses passages from Quietist literature to describe union with God along the lines of subjection to the will of God rather than immersive union. For example:

The soul remaining in its disorderly will, is imperfect; it becomes more perfect in proportion as it approaches nearer to the will of God. When a soul is advanced that far, that it cannot in anything depart from the Divine Will, then it becomes wholly perfect, united with, and transformed into the Divine Nature; and being thus purified and united to God it finds profound peace, and a sweet rest, which brings it to such a perfect union of love that it is filled with joy. It conforms itself to the will of God in all emergencies, and rejoices in everything to do in the divine pleasure. (1813, pp. 93-94)

In contrast to classical Catholic mysticism which reported several degrees of negation of the phenomenal world and inner world, the end that Quaker worship claimed to bring about was a total surrender to divine will: 'the soul is not to make itself dead but rather become as receptive as it can to God's work within it,' as Birkel puts it (2004, p.79; 2015, p.153). This supports the suggestion from Tamburello that Protestant mystical encounters tended not towards completely immersive 'nuptial' union with God, but a union of human will with Divine will in a resolution of the Protestant concern to live by the Spirit rather than by the Law (2013, pp.419-420). In Quaker silent waiting, including in the Quaker appropriation of Quietist methods in *A Guide to True Peace*, the soul was not said to be annihilated in an ecstatic unitive immersion with God, but was said to be reborn in a state of complete subjection to the will of God. Barbour has made a similar point in relation to early Quakerism which 'did not speak of mystical union' (1964, pp.110, 108). Barbour cites the seventeenth-century Ranter Joseph Salmon, who claimed to have been 'confounded into the abyss of eternitie, nonentitized into the being of being, my soul split and emptied into the fountaine and ocean of divine fullness,' as a contrast to early Quakers who 'cared more about salvation than religious peace or discovery' (1964, p.108). My argument is a

reiteration of Barbour's position, and I would contend that Barbour's reading in this regard should be extended into the so-called 'Quietist period' of the eighteenth century.

An Excursus into Quaker Apophasis

Before continuing this analysis of Quaker practice, a brief excursion into the topic of Quaker 'apophasis' must be taken. Spencer, Birkel, Dandelion and Nakano have recently applied the term to Quaker spirituality as a way of locating Quakerism within traditions of Christian mysticism. Spencer's argument for Quaker mysticism makes a case study of the 'true apophatic mystic' and Quaker minister Anthony Benezet, and Benezet's 1780 edition of the Anglican William Law's devotional treatise, *Spirit of Prayer* (Part i, 1749; Part ii, 1750), which according to Spencer advocated 'an apophatic approach to mystical union.' Spencer finds Benezet's apophatic credentials to be substantiated by 'one of his favourite phrases "it is in nothingness that God is found,"' a phrase from Law's *Spirit of Prayer* (Spencer, 2007, p.95). Similarly Nakano draws parallels between Meister Eckhart and Robert Barclay over their use of the term 'nothingness,' (2011, pp.51-54) and Dandelion cites an epistle from the 1738 London Yearly Meeting; 'we exhort Friends to feel their minds abstracted from visible objects into a true nothingness of self' as evidence for this apophatic influence (Dandelion, 2010, p.96). Yet a closer contextual reading of Quaker devotional literature shows that Quaker use of 'nothingness' or 'emptiness' of 'self' in worship refers to a silence of the discursive mind as it became fixed in an attitude of numinous awe, reverence and humility. 'Nothingness' was not used to denote mystical vacuity or phenomenal negation, it was an attitude of humble and 'awful' supplication that was used interchangeably to denote inner silence or a reverent fear of God. Brook's *Necessity of Silent Waiting* and Gurney's chapter 'On Silent Worship' show how the latter was used to bring about the former.

Numinous self-abasement and subjection before God is to be found in Luther and Calvin (Tamburello, 2013) and throughout Puritan writing as a reaction to their ubiquitously pessimistic view of unregenerate human nature. For example in Whatley's *The New Birth of 1619*, 'But yet withal, hee takes heart in the most humble abasement of himself, most earnestly to call, and cry and beg for mercie, and for the work of grace to change his nature' (Beek, 1969, p.82). According to Dewey Wallace, 'Awe, terror, fear of the "sacred" or the "numinous"' was a widespread element of Puritan religiosity, as a reasonable reaction to the total dependency upon God demanded by Puritan theology (1982, pp.194-

5). 'Self-emptiness' was in common usage amongst Puritans according to Beek, to denote 'the utter dependence on God in all one's actions' given the unprecedented emphasis upon predestination and providence in Puritan England (1969, p.69). Smith shows that 'self-annihilation' was advocated by the early Puritan Richard Rogers, and continued throughout Puritan literature. Whilst Quakers were particularly negative in Smith's opinion, there were also 'strong traces of such self-denial in Ranter, Seeker and Independent writing' (1989, pp.39, 66).

As a further counter to Spencer's conception of apophysis as finding God in nothingness, it should be noted that the array of medieval apophatic mystics which Spencer and Birkel unequivocally cite (as discussed above) (Birkel, 2015, p.152; 2004, p.32; Spencer, 2007, p.92) would of course *not* find God in nothingness. Turner and McGinn, the eminent scholars of Christian mystical theology, are in agreement over the defining characteristic of apophysis; 'the importance it attaches to the experience of the *absence* of God' (1995, p.262, Turner's italics). True apophatic mysticism involved negation heaped upon negation; not only negation of 'self,' but a decisive not-finding of God after a comprehensive and conclusive search. By realising these negations, the ultimate 'consciousness of the ground' upon which God and the soul co-exist is said to be unveiled, as a 'presence' which defies conceptualisation (Turner, 1995, p.252-273; McGinn, 2001, p.39). The debate between Turner and McGinn over how far apophatic mysticism was an experiential praxis or a dialectical philosophy need not concern us here, because Quakerism was clearly not apophatic in any proper sense of the term. Quakers affirmed the presence of a discernible Spirit, the Inward Light, which guided them throughout their spiritual progress. Rather than finding an ineffable existential truth in all-encompassing negation, they aimed to fuse their will with a knowable and absolute divine will.

Finally, I fail to see evidence to support Spencer's assertion that Law's *Spirit of Prayer* or Benezet's 1780 edition of *Spirit of Prayer* was 'an apophatic approach to mystical union' (2007, p. 95). Law's method of prayer was not a *via negativa* which by Spencer's definition constitutes 'apophatic' praxis. Law explained the type of worship he advocated on several occasions, including the second book of *Spirit of Prayer*. According to Law, the Fall was caused by misplaced will, by desiring external objects rather than God (Gregory, 2008, pp.20-22, 132-133, 144-146). Therefore, as Hobhouse has shown, Law advocated a deliberate reorientation of 'Will' and 'desire' from 'self' and worldly concerns, and back to an infinitely compassionate and forgiving God (1927, pp.287-297). This deliberate reorientation of the will was not passive, nor was it necessarily silent. Discursive or

conceptual meditations, vocal supplications, singing or silent contemplation were all permissible modes of worship for William Law, provided they were carried out in this 'spirit of prayer.' Benezet's 1780 edition of Law's *Spirit of Prayer* included only part one of the two part treatise, omitting Law's views on worship as they were incompatible with Georgian Quakerism. Part one of *Spirit of Prayer* did not offer an 'apophatic approach' through a dialectic of negation nor through any type of worship, and does not warrant further discussion in this chapter because it did not present any method of worship. It advocated the virtues of self-abasement with the usual urgency of radical experiential Protestantism, together with an unusually esoteric narrative of the Fall. Spencer's use of 'apophatic' as synonymous to 'renunciation' or 'self-denial' is too wide-ranging to be meaningful, so too is the way that 'mystical union' or '*unio mystica*' are deployed without qualification by Spencer in relation to diverse claims of sanctification, including those made by Law (2007, pp.91-105).

Watchfulness

I have called the third distinct method of Georgian Quaker worship 'watchfulness.' As we have seen, Birkel describes Quaker worship as 'a contemplative form of silent prayer without conscious effort of thought or use of images' (2015, p.145, p.152). It is questionable whether the methods found in *Necessity of Silent Waiting* or in *A Guide to True Peace* can be considered imageless and effortless, as both methods involved recollecting to mind to an affective response to the idea of God's presence. As Molinos put it in a rather abrupt tone, the interpretation of Quietist prayer as wholly passive is a 'manifest fallacy of those who have little experience' (1688, p.37). Gurney was more forgiving; people of 'tender and seeking mind' often hold the incorrect notion, 'that the first point to be aimed at in silent worship is a vacuity from all ideas' (1842, p.335).

If any type of Quaker practice can be considered to be 'without conscious effort of thought or use of images,' it was the practice of 'watchfulness.' The importance of maintaining a vigilant 'watchfulness,' as in a sense of alertness, was stressed in all Quaker methods of worship. Yet watchfulness had a further meaning to describe a method of prayer in itself. The method was to watch the mind without getting caught up in the mind, and to re-collect the mind to that watchfulness. No image or thought was to be created by the practitioner, as the naturally occurring contents of the mind became the object upon which attention

should be fixed. In *Concise Remarks on Watchfulness and Silence* Phillips explained the method;

If a man, in communing with his own heart, become still, he will greatly profit. For this purpose he must abstain from any vocal expression and keep a watch over his own thoughts, as to prevent his attention from being carried away by them, and not attempt to obstruct the prevalence of such thoughts by exciting other thoughts of his own. (1815, p.6)

Watchfulness required a dis-engagement with thoughts, watching without 'being carried away,' or exerting effort to stop thoughts. On this point Phillips is quite clear that, unlike the other two methods, practitioners should not 'attempt to prevent the occurrence of their own thoughts, by exciting other thoughts of whatsoever description' (1815, p.12). The practitioner should not actively try to achieve mental silence by bringing God to mind. But, Phillips explained, when attention was not 'carried away' and remained in 'watchfulness,' a greater ability to 'watch over' thoughts was said to lead to an 'inward spiritual and profitable silence.' Similarly to becoming 'stayed' on God, a qualitative improvement in mental calmness and self-awareness was associated with divine agency. It was 'the evident work of the Redeemer, bringing into subjection the thoughts cogitations and imaginations of man' (1815, p.9).

Watchfulness was an attitude to be cultivated with a gentle touch, and less of the overt abasement found in *Reasons for the Necessity of Silent Waiting*. In this sense it is similar to the practice found in *A Guide to True Peace*. For example, Phillips cited the Catholic mystic Fénelon on how to return the mind to this watchful attitude; 'If your Will never concur your straying, you will never stray'; however, 'each time you perceive yourself straying, let it fall, without combatting it; and return gently to the side of God without any struggle of mind' (1815, p.6 n.1). In the original context of Fénelon's anonymously translated *Advice and Consolation for a Person in Distress and Dejection* (1750) such instruction was used to show how the mind should be recollected to the attitude of 'pure love' typical of Quietist prayer. Fénelon continued; 'If by any straying of the mind we lose sight of him, without stopping at this, we turn again from whom we had wandered. If we commit faults, the penitence we have for them is all of love' (1750, p.20). That Phillips appropriated Fénelon's remark ('return gently to the side of God') to the context of 'watchfulness,' is key to reading this method. The attitude of 'watchfulness' can be read as a facsimile of that inspired self-awareness which the Inward Light, the 'inward monitor,' the 'Searcher of Hearts' was said to bring about. The method of 'watchfulness' can be seen as a method of recollection, of fixing the mind on the idea of the divine, using the distinctive Quaker idea of God's

presence through 'Inward Light.' As Bellers put it, 'He that watches in the light (to bring his thoughts into captivity to the obedience of Christ) it will lead him to the New Jerusalem (from whence it shines)' (1760, pp.3-7).

As Bellers' remark shows, again in this method of worship there is an ambiguity between natural and supernatural agency, an uncertainty over the point at which recollection of the mind became prayer infused with the Spirit. Watchfulness was of the nature of divine inspiration but nevertheless was also an exercise which made the practitioner fit to receive the Spirit. In this regard Habakkuk 2:1 played an important role in discussions of this method of prayer; 'I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower,' was a prerequisite to prayer being infused with the Spirit; 'and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved' (Phipps, 1781, p.62; Henry Tuke, 1808, pp.54-55).

Like Brook's attitude of humility and awe in *Reasons For the Necessity of Silent Waiting*, 'watchfulness' was framed as an attitude of passivity and was therefore permissible despite the Quaker reticence to suggest any agency whatsoever from the side of the 'creature,' in their insistence of the absolute sovereignty of the divine in all soteriological processes. Echoing Barclay's view of the impossibility of co-operative Grace given the human condition ('only they may resist it' recalling Barclay's pit), practitioners must 'maintain the watch' to ensure they are not 'retarding, adulterating, or preventing the work and frustrating the design of the visitation.' (1815, p.12). Phillips continued:

When this divine operation, or exercise, is not adulterated, or interrupted, by meddling, active man but the watch is faithfully maintained and the mind kept passive and dependent to the conclusion of the work... its effects will occasionally proclaim it to be the gracious operation of Him who is the root and offspring of David, the bright and morning star' (1815, p.12)

Therefore, this method can be read as a distinctly Quaker way of recalling the presence of God. It circumvented the overtly Puritan or Catholic approaches to the method of recalling God's presence as found in the other practices, by appealing to the Quaker notion of penetrating self-awareness as a manifestation of that of God within (as will be explored in more detail in chapter two). Yet this practice drew on an ecumenical range of writers. Phillips (1815) appended copious footnotes and quotes throughout *Concise Remarks on Watchfulness and Silence* from the seventeenth-century Puritans John Hales and Robert Gell, the Anglican mystic William Law, Catholic Quietists Fénelon, Guyon and Molinos, the Quaker William Penn, and a now obscure early eighteenth-century Irish vicar George

Munro. The term 'watchfulness' was in widespread use in Puritan devotional literature on self-examination (Beek, 1969, p.127). For example, Richard Rogers devoted a chapter to 'watchfulness' in his *Seven Treatises*, first published in 1605;

The first priuate helpe is watchfulnesse,... it is a careful obseruing of our hearts and dillegent looking to our waies, that they may be pleasing and acceptable to God... (1610, p.300)

Watkins writes that the capacity to maintain 'watchfulness' was integral to Roger's estimate of his own spiritual progress, and was recommended as an essential part of private devotion in *Seven Treatises* (Watkins, 1972, p.7; Rogers, 1610, pp. 300-311). Like the other methods surveyed here, the aim of Quaker 'watchfulness' was a fusion of human will with the Divine will, rather than immersive union with God, of which no mention is made.

Conclusion

In this chapter, brief accounts of three very different methods of worship have been offered, two of which ('Silent Waiting' and 'Watchfulness') have previously eluded scholarly attention. It appears that methods of worship inspired by Barclay's theology such as that described in Brook's *Necessity of Silent Waiting* were at odds with the appropriated version of Quietist prayer in *A Guide to True Peace*. Only a more detailed investigation can establish how Quakers integrated Catholic Quietist literature into their practice, despite its incongruities with Barclay's theology. It may be that Quakers valued these more proactive methods, the loving conception of God and copious consolatory advice found therein, and that far from being the cause of passivity, 'Quietism' ameliorated the severity of Quakerism's Puritanical heritage. The method of 'watchfulness' circumvented these distinctly Puritan or Catholic assumptions and can be read as being distinctly Quaker, built upon the concept of the Holy Spirit as 'Inward Light.'

These three practices have not been set alongside each other before, and this presentation gives rise to a number of questions. One might ask whether particular Quakers chose one method over the others or switched between them all, or whether Quakers comprehended a theological and practical dissonance between *Reasons for the Necessity of Silent Waiting* and *A Guide to True Peace*, or whether this was of little importance in this radically experiential, theologically nebulous and geographically dispersed movement. It may be that our contemporary bias against numinous religiosity prevents an appreciation of how

'pure love' and 'awful fear' might be intimately related in Quaker thought. Whilst Gurney advocated an awful fear of the Lord, he also wrote an *Essay on the Habitual Exercise of Love to God* in 1834. For Henry Tuke 'love' and 'fear' of God were both Christian duties warranting a chapter each in his *Duties of Religion and Morality* (1808).

Reasons for the Necessity of Silent Waiting and *A Guide to True Peace* continued to be published throughout the nineteenth century as the Evangelical influenced gained ascendancy, and I have shown that J.J. Gurney, one of the leading Evangelicals, advocated a style of worship which was comparable to *Reasons for the Necessity of Silent Waiting*. How these methods of worship fitted into Evangelical theology remains to be seen. It may be hypothesised that the same methods were used as a means towards sanctification, with less of the anxiety around justification which characterised the Georgian period (which will be discussed in the following chapter).

Suggestions have also been made on how to place Quaker worship in an ecumenical context. I suggest that 'apophysis' be dropped completely from discussions of Georgian Quakerism, and that 'Quietism' should be used with caution and precision. It is highly problematic that recent authors have attempted to trace Quaker worship back to medieval apophatic mysticism, and in doing so have uncritically mingled Catholic Quietism and monastic apophysis in ill-defined histories of Quaker 'mysticism.' It does nothing to aid our understanding of these practices, and these comparisons are based on questionable evidence. The language of passive self-surrender before God as a reaction to human depravity was a staple of Puritan literature and had a long half-life in Georgian Quakerism. It is not evidence of 'apophysis.' Methods of worship which drew on Puritan notions of fallen human nature required the recollection of the mind into an attitude of humility, fear, 'self-abasement' and 'self-emptiness' before the 'awful' presence of God. W.R. Ward's suggestion that the language of mystical union was appropriated by Puritans in the early stages of their spiritual itineraries is supported by the findings of this chapter; 'nothingness' and 'emptiness' of numinous 'self-abasement' was as much Puritan as it was mystic. In keeping with Barbour's findings, Quakers did not write of unitive mystical absorption, even though their access to Catholic literature gave them ample opportunity to do so. Through their worship, Quakers sought to live by the Spirit rather than the Law. Therefore, I do not accept Spencer's opinion that a 'mysterious union with God' rather than 'eradication of sin' was the defining feature of Quaker worship in the eighteenth century (Spencer, 2007, p.43). This will be discussed in further detail as the notion of 'Inward Light' is explored in the following chapter.

Nevertheless, this chapter has placed Quaker worship within the rich history of Christian contemplative prayer by way of the concept of 'recollection,' whilst noting that Quaker antipathy towards spiritual agency made these practices difficult to pin down. All Catholic contemplative literature featured several nuanced stages such as purgation, illumination, recollection (which can be subdivided into several stages of decreasing effort), passivity and union, the likes of which were not evident in Quaker literature.

The Quaker practices described above resemble the instruction left by George Fox in the early years of the Quaker movement. For example, Fox's *Epistle to Lady Claypole* (1658) contains the elements of 'staying' the mind in an attitude towards God and watchfully disengaging from cogitation by being still 'from thy own thoughts.' With ambivalence regarding human and divine agency, Fox suggests staying the mind on God whilst also allowing the mind to be turned to God by God. Fox wrote;

Be still and cool in thy own mind and spirit from thy own thoughts, and then thou wilt feel the principle of God to turn thy mind to the Lord God, ... be still awhile from thy own thoughts, searching seeking, desires and imaginations, and be stayed in the principle of God in thee, to stay thy mind upon God keep low in his fear, that thereby you may receive the secret of God and his wisdom, and know the shadow of the Almighty, and sit under it in all tempests and storms and heats.... what the light doth make manifest and discover, temptations, confusions, distractions, distempers; do not look at the temptations, confusions, corruptions, but at the light that discovers them, that makes them manifest; and with the same light you will feel over them, to receive power to stand against them. (Nickalls, 1997 pp.346-348)

The 'stayed' mind was indicative of resignation to God, or the presence of the Holy Spirit which itself was thought to have the power to still the mind. Quakers claimed the ability to be aware of the 'carnal mind,' by maintaining 'watchfulness' over it without engaging with it, and claimed an ability to maintain a 'stayed' mental attitude towards God, whereby pulls on the attention from the 'carnal mind' decreased. This 'stayed' mind was central to Quaker practice, be it stayed upon an attitude of watchfulness, an 'awful fear' of God or love of God. Devout Quakers found their thoughts to be 'gradually diminished, (sometimes attended by a calming humbling, yet gratifying influence,) until they are entirely subdued, and the mind completely relieved therefrom' according to Phipps (1781, p.68). As Woolman put it, 'through an inward approaching to God, the mind is strengthened in obedience' (1815, p.25), or according to Backhouse (paraphrasing Guyon) 'at length, to

have a mind turned towards God, becomes, as it were, habitual' (1813, p.62).⁹ In *The Principles of Religion* Henry Tuke cited Mark 13:37 ('And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch') and explained 'this secret attention and exercise of mind is necessary for all, and as man is willing to be reduced into it, the weak and erring mind may be brought into the discovery of its own state' (1805, 75).

However, problems and obstacles could arise through these practices despite their potential benefits, not least the 'terror' that a visitation of Inward Light could bring about, as Quakers were brought to a sense of their own sinfulness during conversion (Barbour, 1964, pp. 94-126; Birkel, 2015, p.151). It is also possible that prolonged periods of worship could cause psychosomatic discomfort, 'dark nights of the soul' as will be seen, and the ambiguities of their methods of worship certainly did little to allay the doubt that crept into Quakerism from the second generation of the movement. These issues were compounded by theological assumptions which gave rise to the distinctively depressive Quaker mentality of the eighteenth century, as the next chapter will explore.

⁹ It is interesting that the same passage in the 1816 first American edition analysed by Birkel reads 'at length, to have the mind turned inward, becomes, as it were, habitual' - 'turned inwards' in the 1816 American edition replaced 'turned to God' in the 1813 English edition (1816 edition reprinted in Birkel, 2015, p.187)

Chapter Two - Depressive Georgian Quakers; From Being Reborn in the Spirit to Dying Daily to the Self

Introduction

To introspect in order to know one's status in the eyes of God 'experimentally' (that is, experientially) became imperative amongst radical Protestant movements in the seventeenth century, following the undermining of the intercessory role of the institutional Church after the reformation. Such introspection was not an activity confined to the Quakers, as amply illustrated by Puritan and Methodist spiritual biographies (Smith, 1989, p.27; Hindmarsh, 2006, pp.33-60; Nuttall, 1946; Schmidt, 2007, pp.47-77). As personal piety became more important, so did the notion of God's presence and providence in everyday events. Whilst God's providence was not a uniquely Protestant tenet, the Reformation did away with the multifarious saintly figures who could be ascribed with intercessory agency, and thus placed unprecedented emphasis on the direct action of God. As Walsham shows in *Providence in Early Modern England*, the God of early modern popular piety was thought to intercede in the minutiae of everyday life, taking on the 'tit-for-tat' aspect of local saints and spirits which had been abolished by the reformation (Walsham 1999, p.255).

Therefore, practical divines from across the bandwidth of reformed theology became fixated with discerning the signs of their own election, grace, or damnation, by reflecting upon their own mind or soul, and also outward circumstances (Walsingham 1999, p.90). Following either Calvin or Arminius it became vital to know one's personal situation in order to gain assurance of salvation. For many seventeenth-century Puritans this high-stakes introspection resulted in disorientating self-awareness and inescapable hopelessness, as doubt or an afflicted conscience was itself interpreted as sign of reprobation, making damnation seem self-evident. Religious dis-ease, ranging from uncertainty to anxiety, despair and suicide, was endemic in seventeenth century England (Hindmarsh, 2005, pp.33-60; Stachniewski, 1991, pp.17-61; Schmidt, 2007, pp.47-77). Stachniewski sees George Fox's Quaker innovation (or inspiration) of 1647 in this context, as Fox 'developed a religion that could be lived with' in the face of 'unbearable predestination despair' (Stachniewski, 1991, pp.55 fn22, 159). Coming to a similar conclusion to Nuttall, Watkins and Barbour, Stachniewski finds that early Quakerism

involved a profound rejection of Puritan piety, despite being cut from the same cloth of intense self-scrutiny. By this reading Quakerism arose through taking Puritan anxieties to an extreme, a 'radical extension of Puritanism' (Barbour, 1988, p.25, p.30) whereby the self-critical Puritan 'persecutory imagination' reached crisis point and collapse (Stachniewski, 1991, pp. 268-269; Nuttall, 1946, pp.viii, 13, 151). Likewise for Watkins, the Puritan lifelong struggle against sin was heightened and condensed, 'compressed' into a 'dramatic' conversion in accounts from the first generation of Quaker converts, which were nevertheless a 'natural extension' of many Puritan sensibilities (Watkins, 1972, pp.215, 238). The 'harrowing' weeks or months of confusion, terror 'tears and sleeplessness' which accompanied conviction to Quakerism were vividly described by early Quaker converts, yet resolved into a peaceful sense of holiness and assurance in most seventeenth century narratives (Barbour and Frost, 1988, p.33; Barbour, 1964, pp.94-126). Early Quakers felt released from their searching and uncertainties as they realigned themselves around the 'radical, inward ethical challenge' revealed to them by the 'Inward Light'; 'to recognise and surrender all habits and ideas arising out of self will and pride' (Dandelion, 2007, pp.15-17; Barbour, 1964, pp.94-126).

Quakerism was no different to contemporaneous radical Protestant movements in that, as we have already seen from Westerink, 'the spiritual struggles characterized by anxiety, sadness and despair were seen as precondition for the formation of the religious subject' (Westerink, 2014, p.341). Our concern in this chapter is why these discreet 'death of self' and 're-birth in the spirit' conversions become so protracted in the Georgian period that, as Jones shows by citing the preminent eighteenth-century Quaker minister John Woolman, ministers were led towards 'dying daily' without a lasting sense of assurance (1921, p.77). This chapter will examine depressive Quaker piety in order to set up the next, which will explore behaviour such as restrictive eating and suicidal ideation that featured in Quaker biography of the period. A number of Quaker scholars have encountered the depressive Georgian Quaker mentality, in which Quakers came to place value on mental suffering as a means of spiritual purgation. The emphasis on despondency and dejection in Quaker literature of the period is beyond debate. This chapter will present some features of this piety for those who have not encountered it before, and will also comment on the question raised by those who have: should the emphasis on despondency, dejection and mental suffering be interpreted as an ongoing and unresolved conversion of the type found throughout Protestant spiritual biography, or as a mystical 'dark night of the soul' as found in Catholic mystical itineraries?

Jones and Plant cite the influence of mystical Catholicism as the source of the drawn-out 'times of depression, dryness, emptiness and inward conflict' and 'acute psychological suffering' which feature so centrally to be 'usual' in the writing of devout Quakers in the period (Jones, 1921, p.27; Plant, 2003, pp.303, 208). Those who are more complimentary of what they perceive to be the mystical roots of Quakerism take a view that the depressive mentality of the era arose through unpleasant but necessary 'dark nights of the soul,' related to the demands of deep and sustained 'mystical' practice. These 'dark nights of the soul' are used to add credos to their reading of the Quaker movement as custodians of a lineage of Christian mysticism (Spencer, 2007, pp.85, 114). Tousey and Birkel differ from this emphasis, suggesting that theological, social and eschatological changes involving an 'erosion of certainty' led to prolonged anxieties around conversion within the paradigm of Protestant theology (Tousey, 2009; Birkel, 2015, p.151). Hamm is more cautious, finding 'no discernible cause' for the repeated 'baptisms of the Holy Spirit' which took the form of 'mental anguish and depression' (1988, p.4). Yet just as eighteenth-century Quaker worship has not been explored in detail, neither has Georgian Quaker piety. Rufus Jones's *The Later Periods of Quakerism* of 1921 remains the most comprehensive account, at least in terms of sheer volume (1921, pp.57-103).

One further and very recent attempt to tackle this depressive mentality comes from Phyllis Mack in the article 'Depression and Evangelicalism in the Family of Esther Tuke' (2015). Mack also recognised a 'tendency to depression' amongst Quakers of the late eighteenth century, particularly the Tuke family around the time of the York Retreat's foundation. Yet Mack is out on a limb in suggesting that this mentality was catalysed by material circumstance rather than religious factors. For Mack, anxiety and depression arose at a time of growing economic prosperity, and the pressure to maintain a disciplined way of life against worldly temptations generated 'collective angst,' as Quakers struggled with their ambivalent relationship to the rest of society. Their 'attempts to balance material ambition with inward simplicity created emotional problems' (2015, pp.242, 251). Mack's reticence to discuss the liminal episodes associated with Quaker piety in the context of the York Retreat is striking, given Mack's other publications on Quakerism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Mack, 1995, 2003). Contrary to Mack's interpretation, it will be suggested in this chapter that when 'depression' was mentioned in Quaker literature it almost always had religious connotations. These depressions were not caused by social or economic factors, nor were they a religious interpretation of an underlying malaise. They

were an integral part of Quaker spirituality, a causally efficacious element within Quaker narratives of spiritual progression.

This chapter will show how doctrinal suppositions worked in reciprocity to the practices described in the previous chapter, leading Georgian Quakers to give such great weight to the depressive aspects of their experience. It will be demonstrated that underlying tensions of Quaker thought and practice, originating from Puritan theology rather than Catholic mysticism, gave rise to this distinctive Quaker mentality in which mental suffering was the means and the end of spiritual life. Drawing on John Stachniewski's *The Persecutory Imagination* (1991), it will be argued that as Quakers ceased to report the lasting self-transcendence or assurance of salvation which featured in the accounts of earlier Friends, they reverted towards the 'persecutory imagination' of Puritan subjectification. Finally the chapter will sketch out the difference between this depressive piety and the all-out hopelessness of religious despair, before suggesting that an Evangelical influence in nineteenth-century British Quakerism attenuated these depressive tendencies.

Soteriology is conspicuous by its absence in most treatments of Georgian Quakerism, given that, as Hindmarsh writes, introspection to find the soteriological 'marks and signs' of grace, election or reprobation in one's own soul was a significant driving force across the board in Protestant experiential religion of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (2005, pp.255-6). Theologically contingent soteriological anxiety was the referent of the episodes of despair which will be the focus of attention in the coming chapters. Therefore soteriology will be the focal point of this exploration of the under studied area of Georgian Quakerism. It is beyond the scope of this project to balance soteriology with aspects of Georgian Quakerism explored by other authors, such the eschatological focus which has informed work by Dandelion (2007) and Crabtree (2015).

The 'Day of Visitation'

One of the most obviously 'chilling' and 'frightening' aspects of Georgian Quaker theology, as Pyper puts it, was the notion of the 'day of visitation' (2007, p.66). Whilst it is mostly associated with Barclay in the *Apology* of 1678, it was also present in the writings of his peers such as William Penn (Endy, 2015, p.242) and Elizabeth Bathurst (Nakano, 2008, pp.91-92), and was in use since the start of the Quaker movement (Angell, 2013, p.149), indicating that it was not unique to Barclay amongst Quaker theologians. Pyper suggests that Barclay's emphasis on this doctrine arose out of a particular theological problem, of

how to locate Quakerism in relation to Calvinistic insistence on the total depravity of human nature and Arminian universal atonement; to reconcile complete reliance upon grace with universal salvation (Pyper, 2007, p.66). The problem being that the grace of Inward Light was said to be revealed through no effort whatsoever from the side of 'carnal,' totally fallen humanity, yet some people appear to go through life in sin or spiritual indifference, and seem never to have been offered the opportunity by God for regeneration. So it would appear that only a few are saved, and that Quakers advocated predestination, contrary to the well-known Quaker belief of universal redemption, the driving force behind early Quaker evangelism. To combat this discrepancy and combine the seemingly irreconcilable tenets of Calvinistic depravity and Arminian universalism, Barclay and his contemporaries insisted that salvation was offered to all without exception on a single occasion of God's appointment, upon a 'day of visitation.' This visitation (a 'season' rather than a day) could occur at any time in life, including on the deathbed. Sinners condemned themselves by ignoring these leadings of the Spirit, it was argued, and were responsible for their own damnation by resisting God's mercy:

Many men may out-live this day, after which there may be no possibility of salvation to them, and God justly suffers them to be hardened, as a just punishment of their unbelief. (Barclay, 1827, p.115-6)

The repercussions of ignoring the day of visitation were likened to crucifying the Christ within, as Inward Light was a manifestation of Christological redemption. The Inward Light;

may, by the stubbornness and wickedness of man's will, be quenched, bruised, wounded, pressed down, slain and crucified...wherever it is God and Christ are as wrapped up therein, therefore and in that respect as it is resisted, God is said to be resisted; and where it is borne down, God is said to be pressed as a cart under sheaves, and Christ is said to be slain and crucified. (Barclay, 1827, p.116)

The result was, for Pyper, a 'distinctive' doctrine which gave rise to this 'chilling' and 'frightening' suggestion that grace was not irresistible, and that one's only chance for salvation could be missed (2007, p.66).

This doctrine was a peculiarity of Quaker theology, and may well have arisen from the epistemological demands of seventeenth century theology, as suggested by Pyper (1998). Yet the concept of grace being forever withdrawn was not without precedent in Protestant theology. After all, if saving grace or the Holy Spirit could be felt experientially, then sinning against the Holy Spirit became possible – a deadly, unforgivable sin, a definite evidence of reprobation. There are numerous examples of early modern Protestants who were

absolutely sure that they had felt God's will and rebelled against it, and were unforgivably damned as a result. Many committed suicide in this mind-set. The case of the Italian Francis Spira in 1548 was paradigmatic of this type of despair and had an enduring impact on early modern popular culture (McDonald, 1992; Stachniewski, 1991, pp.37-41; Schmidt, 2007, pp.47-55). Spira became enveloped in despair and saw himself as a sinner against the Holy Spirit, 'a Reprobate like Cain or Judas,' after being forced to return to Catholicism against his Protestant beliefs. Spira attempted suicide and finally starved himself to death despite the best available ecclesiastical counsel, against whom Spira deployed considerable scriptural knowledge to prove his own irredeemable damnation, with such force to compel one of his Catholic deathbed ministers to convert. Various accounts of Spira's story were published in the following three hundred years and many similar cases occurred in Puritan England, which were likewise publicised as edifying warnings against all types of apostasy (Stachniewski, 1991, pp.45-47; McDonald, 1992). McDonald has found dozens of republications and reworkings of Spira's story, and a particular spike in accounts of 'second Spiras' during the 1680s and 90s (1992, pp.41-43) almost synchronously to the time that Barclay elaborated on the 'day of visitation' doctrine. In his context, Barclay's proposition was as not as outlandish or unusual as it might first appear. The danger of irredeemably sinning against the Holy Spirit was an unquestioned element of Puritan belief.

In suggesting that grace could be irreversibly withdrawn, the 'day of visitation' doctrine added an edge of urgency to the already intense demands of Quaker conversion, as exemplified by Fanny Henshaw's conversion of 1734. Henshaw felt called to abandon her pious Anglican upbringing for Quakerism, but missed an opportunity to meet with a travelling minister and was challenged by her sceptical family (Hobhouse, 1927, pp.21-108). Henshaw considered herself to have missed the day of visitation due to her doubt and indecision. Or rather God put this to her directly, according to Henshaw's intuition of God's message transcribed soon after the event:

Knowest thou, O weak woman, whose will thou thus desputest? Consider and dare not offend me – remember I am God, able to kill and make alive, wilt thou then to please the world and thy own will disobey me, who can destroy both body and soul in hell?... thou canst not serve God and Mammon; if thou wisely makest choice of my service, adhere to this day of thy visitation and thou will assuredly find my grace sufficient for thee, otherwise it will be hard, thou will find, to disobey and cast my words behind thee. (Dodshon, 1804, pp.28-29)

As a result of missing this visitation Henshaw tried by her own admission to starve herself to death, exhibiting the paradoxical but oft-repeated style of religious melancholia found

since Spira, whereby damnation was so certain that, as Henshaw put it, she 'dreaded the continuance of my days on earth' lest she become ever more sinful (Dodshon, 1804, p.19). 'So extreme was the religious despair,' writes Stachniewski in relation to similar cases, 'that it commonly gave rise to suicidal temptations, suicide attempts and even actual suicides' (1991, p.46). Henshaw's encounter with God was regarded as an authentic account of a religious experience by the Quaker community upon the publication of this narrative when she entered the Quaker ministry in 1737, and was re-printed posthumously in several editions at the turn of the century.

Henshaw thought herself condemned by God despite hardly being culpable, according to Jantzen's recent interpretation, for the way that her family obstructed her spiritual ambitions (Jantzen, 2010, pp.93-100). However, other converts or budding ministers with more opportunity to embrace Quaker life also initially recoiled from the all-encompassing self-denial which it demanded. 'I will never do it,' exclaimed Jane Pearson in a biography published in 1817, upon first realising the demands of Quaker spirituality in the 1750s. Pearson feared she may have missed the day of visitation, but could not regain the inspiration which she initially rebelled against. As a result, Pearson went through a three year period of lost appetite, sleeplessness and, in Plant's view, 'melancholia' before finding reconciliation and finally entering into the ministry. (Wilkinson, 1817, pp. 18-29; Plant, 2003, p.300). Likewise for Rebecca Jones during her conversion of 1754:

Oh, the many days of sorrow and nights of deep distress that I passed through ; how frequently did I cry out, ' Lord, save me or I perish !' I almost despaired of finding mercy, for sin not only appeared exceeding sinful, but my soul's enemy almost persuaded me that my sins were of so deep a dye, and so often repeated, that I had neglected the day of my visitation
(Jones, 1849, p.6)

These and similar episodes related to this distinctively Quaker permutation of sinning against the Holy Spirit will be expanded upon in following chapters. But for our purposes in this chapter it is easy to see how anxiety and indecision arose from the very start of the Quaker spiritual path. Converts were faced with a choice between following a demanding re-orientation of their lives around devout Quakerism, working against their 'natural will and wisdom' when by the Inward Light they were 'made sensible of their misery' and perhaps an 'awful fear' of God; or damning themselves by resisting the demands of mental asceticism and intense conscientiousness under which they were now placed.

Falling from Grace

The problem of missing one's 'visitation' could be exacerbated by (and to an extent merged with) anxiety over 'falling from grace' after conversion or after becoming a Quaker minister. Eighteenth century Quaker spiritual biographies exhibit a loss of confidence regarding whether a lasting degree of regeneration could be achieved. In sharp contrast to the confidence which typified biographies from the earlier years of the movement, Quakers became fearful of the possibility of completely losing their measure of grace. Despite his Calvinistic leanings relating to depravity, Barclay's theology did not advocate a Calvinistic assurance of election and had no place for justification by faith. Justification and sanctification were 'inseparable,' in Quaker theology until the Evangelical influence of the nineteenth century, as shown in chapter one (Hamm, 2013, p.70). Neither justification nor sanctification were possible without continual abeyance to the Inward Light. In *Apology* of 1678, Barclay warned that indecision or resistance to leadings of the Spirit could cause grace to be withdrawn completely after conversion:

Although this gift and inward grace of God be sufficient to work out salvation, yet in those in whom it is resisted, it both may and doth become their condemnation. Moreover, they in whose hearts it hath wrought in part to purify and sanctify them in order to their further perfection, may, by disobedience, fall from it, turn it to wantonness, make shipwreck of faith, and after having tasted the heavenly gift, and been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, again fall away (1827, p.200)

Here Barclay first discussed resisting visitation, but 'moreover' even those who consolidated their spiritual progress could fall away. Whilst the Inward Light could 'sanctify' towards 'further perfection,' Barclay wrote that Quakers may completely fall away from saving grace at any time.

A useful starting point relating to this loss of confidence within the Quaker movement comes from Tousley's article 'The Experience of Regeneration and Erosion of Certainty' (2009). The article demonstrates that in spiritual biography of the 'second generation' of Quakerism (in the late-seventeenth century) the 'struggle with sin rather than the victory of regeneration' took centre stage. Following regenerative 'convincements' to Quakerism, spiritual warfare became an 'ongoing process,' as the 'complete assurance' which typified much of early Quakerism diminished and 'spiritual warfare became the primary focus.' Fewer claimed 'full victory over sin' despite feeling some degree of regeneration, assurance and intimacy with God, and some second generation Quakers strove for perfection without experiencing assurance (2009, p.37). Tousley attributed this change to a general tightening

of discipline within Quakerism towards the end of the century after the initial years of evangelical expansion, and does not relate these changes to Barclay's *Apology*. Yet Tousley's 'Experience of Regeneration' shows the environment in which *Apology* was written, giving the implication that *Apology* articulated and formalised developments which were already in the air, and did not cause the passivity, uncertainty and anxiety which according to Tousley started in the second generation and came to 'dominate Quakerism in the next century' (Tousley, 2009 pp. 35-42). There is a developing consensus that Barclay was of his time in expressing this subtle re-balancing of Quaker theology (Dandelion, 2007, p.48), rather than being the primary cause of the Georgian Quaker mind-set.

A further aspect to the 'second generation' growth of spiritual doubt was a reticence amongst Quakers to claim that sanctification or perfection had been achieved. Backsliding away from saving grace was thought to be a real possibility, whilst perfection became an unobtainable goal. It is difficult to pinpoint when Quaker views altered, but by the time of *Apology* it was generally thought inappropriate to publicly make the claims of sanctification or perfection, which were not uncommon in earlier Quakerism (Dandelion, 2007, pp.41-42). Barclay admitted that a state had historically been achieved whereby sinning became impossible, known as 'the perfection of the saints.' In theory it could still be achieved, but Barclay instead made comparatively modest claims about the nature of Quaker spiritual attainment. For Barclay the regenerated state was one 'in which he may be able not to sin, yet he may sin' but it was not perfect, 'not as if we were to be as pure, holy, and perfect as God in his divine attributes of wisdom, knowledge, and purity' (1827, p.186). There remained the possibility of growth and of fall even after regeneration. Constant vigilance was required, therefore: 'yet doth this perfection still admit of a growth; and there remaineth always in some part a possibility of sinning, where the mind doth not most diligently and watchfully attend unto the Lord' (1827, p.185). Barclay therefore offered the vague hope of perfection but dashed the assurance given by Calvinistic election or justification by faith. Thus Barclay negated the security upon which many Calvinists based their faith, 'the great promise and guarantee of Calvinism' as Pyper puts it (2007, p.67), whereby Calvinists become assured of their election despite retaining some sinful propensities. According to Barclay's formulation, the benefits of spiritual regeneration are forfeited without 'constant vigilance,' inviting Quakers to doubt the extent and efficacy of their regeneration, and to become increasingly wary of losing it – hence Pyper's assessment that Barclay's Quakerism was more pessimistic than Calvinism (2015, pp.214, 200, 67).

According to Barclay, even the apostle Paul could have fallen as he wrote 1 Corinthians 9:27;

The apostle supposes it possible for him to be a cast-away, and yet it may be judged he was far more advanced in the inward work of regeneration when he wrote that epistle; than many who now-a-days too presumptuously suppose they cannot fall away, because they feel themselves to have attained some small degree of true grace. (1827, p.203)

This reading of Paul continued to have currency in Quaker biography throughout our period, as devout and renowned ministers made reference to their fear of being a 'castaway' up to the end of their lives, never professing to certain assurance. 'May He, who only is able, keep me from falling, lest, after having preached to others, I become a castaway' wrote the minister Sarah Lynes Grubb in a journal entry of 1820 (1863, p.30). Similarly Henry Tuke described the rigours and fears of eighteenth century Quaker piety in correspondence to his sister Sarah Tuke Grubb in 1789;

I 'feel for myself and tremble for my soul'... we do indeed stand on slippery ground 'a sea of glass mingled with fire' is perhaps as just a description of our state here as words can convey - I often fear for myself even at times almost to despair 'lest after I have preached to others I myself should be a castaway' but I remember we are exhorted even to 'serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling' [Psalms 2:11] and nothing is a better preservative than this Fear and jealousy when rightly exercised over ourselves' (BIA, TUKE 1/5/1/2/21)

In this extract Tuke eventually rejoices in those qualities which bring about conscientiousness and humility. As Tuke pointed out by using Psalms 2:11, the fear, trembling and near 'despair' demanded by Quaker piety catalysed those same feelings of fear and trembling which were indicative of spiritual progress.

A cautious, guarded and self-depreciatory nature, 'low thoughts of themselves, and a constant guard over themselves' became necessary for ministers, according to Bownas, in *Descriptions of The Qualities Necessary to Minister the Gospel* of 1750 (1853, p.74). This call for self-depreciation is abundantly demonstrated by Sarah Tuke Grubb, who thought her perpetual self-abasing introspection to be representative of all who moved in the line of devout Quakerism:

I have had daily and piercingly to abhor myself – under renewed, powerful evidences, that without the frequent administration of the Holy Ghost and fire, and descending into the washing pool, there is no offering an acceptable sacrifice; and this must be a dispensation for life, if ever an offering will be found to be without blemish, which I fear it never will; but

if preserved with spiritual sight, and a necessary jealousy over myself, I shall, I trust, so far deem myself blessed. How are such as move in this line to be pitied! (Murray, 1792, p.35)

Whilst ministers agonised over being 'cast off,' the alternative, consoling narrative for these periods of spiritual barrenness was to interpret them as a divine trial, a growth towards perfection, a 'baptism of suffering' to bring about virtuous 'fear and trembling.' After all, the extract from Henry Tuke shows how feelings of desolation and despondency were, when viewed from another perspective, 'preservatives' against sinning, and not far removed from the qualities advocated by Mary Brook in *Reasons for the Necessity of Silent Waiting*. Likewise in John Wigham's *Christian Instruction as Between a Mother and Daughter*, these periods were presented as an edifying lesson from God, and the occasion for more humility:

Mary:... My poor mind is so dark I can see nothing...

Mother: Yes Mary, you see one thing, that without Him thou canst do nothing which is good, and this is a great and profitable lesson... Dost thou not feel more humbled under a sense of nothingness than before, and more charity to others? If thou hadst not been thus humbled thou mightest have been in danger of thinking something of thyself. (Wigham, 1816, p.36)

Marks and Signs and the Single Eye to God

The methods of worship described in the previous chapter were, as Birkel says, intended by Catholic 'Quietists' and Quakers alike to imbue daily life with a constant sense of God's presence, to be a form of constant prayer whether in formal worship or not (2015, p.153). Similarly in *Watch unto Prayer* Bellers explained that 'he that lets his mind go ungoverned out of meeting, cannot set it so right as it should be, when he comes into one; and such as not get forward on the spiritual journey' (1760, p.6). Quakers were advised to have their minds turned to God in an attitude of prayer by constantly having a 'single eye' to God, to maintain the exercises discussed in the previous chapter as a way to contend with their precarious soteriological situation. For example the minister Sofia Hume in a letter of spiritual guidance recommended a 'single eye to Him at all times' to prevent the 'tossings and fluctuations of the mind' which were seen as a shortcoming by pious Quakers (Kendall, 1802, p.63).

In *Advice and Consolation for a Person in Distress and Dejection of Mind, with Some Thoughts on the Remedys of Dissipation* (translated into English in 1750) Fénelon also

recommended being 'entirely abandoned to God,' to 'die to all wills of our own' and to pray constantly whether in formal worship or not (1750, pp. 17-18 p.11). Fénelon then explored how this type of practice could cause mental distress. An inability to sufficiently re-collect the mind due to excitation, anxiety and 'dissipation,' could for Fénelon lead to 'dejection' and 'melancholia,' arising from a self-perceived inability to practice according to the instructions. Thus a feeling of distance from God and a loss of confidence in the practice or in one's own spiritual potential was said to arise. In Fénelon's analysis, worries about the practice caused the dissipation which led to dejection, leading to a vicious cycle, as 'we stray often from fear of straying and after that, from regret of having done it' (Fénelon, 1750, p.13). The remedy to 'dejection' or 'melancholia' arising from 'dissipation' was for Fénelon to stop worrying about sins or poor practice in the past or about spiritual ambitions in the future. God, for Fénelon, is always available to the practitioner in 'the present moment' via a wilful turning of the mind out of its cogitations, to re-collect the mind upon a loving God, as mentioned in chapter one (Fénelon, 1750, p.20). This gentle but effortful re-collection of the mind advocated by Fénelon and other Quietists in *A Guide to True Peace* was seldom advocated in the consolatory writings of eighteenth century Quakers. The total passivity advocated by Barclay far outstripped the passivity advocated by Quietists as we have seen.

The disavowal of agency typical to Barclay's theology dominated the eighteenth century. 'None but God can quicken the spirit,' and 'his times and seasons are not at our command' insisted Quaker ministers. It is apt therefore to suggest that Georgian Quakers did not pursue a practice of staying the mind on God, but wrote of monitoring themselves for the humble self-aware attitude indicative of the Holy Spirit, thus pursuing a single eye to God by proxy, through this self-awareness. They professed to be powerless to bring their minds into the Inward Light, save for cultivating the attitude of humility and watchfulness, which was said to be both the cause of divine blessing and (when these qualities increased) the sign of their bestowal, through no effort from the 'creature.' For example Samuel Tuke's mother Mary Maria Scott found herself unable to abide by her visitation and to keep a single eye to God:

Oh, a single eye, Betsy, a single eye, how great is the gift of it! I have heretofore experienced the wonderful power of God in those whom He visitieth, indeed they were my only happy moments; but I could not abide in Christ; not his merciful love nor the sweetness of his presence could ever tempt to enable me to stay with him; and I am rather inclined to see all outward means as ineffectual; for, if the soul be in an insensible state, none but God can quicken it (Tuke, 1860, vol.1, pp.48-50)

'None but God' can pull the soul out of its fallen state, therefore daily life came to be an exercise of constant self-monitoring for devout Quakers, as they linked their sense of spiritual worthiness and even their soteriological prospects with the state of their minds, and the presence of those qualities which indicated spiritual progress.

In this respect, Quaker piety was little different from other types of Puritan introspection, which looked for 'marks and signs' of election or reprobation in the mind or soul, with very little sense of the 'creature' or 'self' being the agent behind spiritual progression. John Crook's account of his confusion around these 'marks and signs' before his conversion to Quakerism in the mid-seventeenth century was typical of Puritan spiritual biography:

The ministers then commonly preaching by marks and signs, how a man might know himself to be a child of God, if he were so; and how it would be with him if he were not so; which made me sometime to conclude I had saving grace, and by and by to conclude I was but an hypocrite. Thus I was tossed up and down, from hope to despair; and from a sign of grace in me one while, and then presently to a sign of an hypocrite and reprobate again; so that I could not tell what to do with myself, or whether it were best to go to church, or stay at home; for I could get no rest, or lasting peace, by all my hearing and running up and down. (Crook, 1791, p. vi)

The marks and signs of grace for Georgian Quakers were the awful, humble, calm, self-aware mentality which they sought in worship. The diary of Maria Fox exemplified this attitude of watching for the Inward Light, without self-consciously bringing it about. Fox was the sister of the York Retreat patient and minister Hannah Middleton, and made these entries as an established minister (having already travelled in the ministry in Europe) in 1826;

Sixth month, 25th, First-day. Went to meeting; low, flat and stripped. Much tried, in the early part, with wandering thoughts. Before the close, a renewed feeling of the divine goodness, was mercifully granted, under which, I ventured on my knees, and supplication was offered...

Seventh Month 1st, Seventh-day. My mind much divested of good, and fearing, lest a state of indifference should wholly seize me. "Oh! For a closer walk with God" I may well exclaim... Oh! That the lamp of divine light may be continually fed with holy oil, by constant watching unto prayer....

Seventh Month 12th, Fourth-day... How astonishing is the practical infidelity of the human heart!... on every cross occurrence or discouraging aspect of our affairs we are ready to distrust, or at least give way to unprofitable anxiety, which is a species of distrust...

Seventh Month 14th, Sixth-day... Rose this morning with a strong sense of my own unprofitableness... Oh for a more earnest seeking to do more under this holy influence, by continual watchfulness unto prayer! Oh! For

a constantly prevailing sense of being always in the sight of Him, whose eyes run to and fro throughout the whole earth; and "who knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity!"(Fox, 1846, pp.101-106)

Anxiety was seen to be symptomatic of distrust of God's will, whereas 'quiet confidence' and humble self-awareness, 'a sense of being always in the sight of Him,' indicated divine favour. It was an awkward combination of a method of prayer which seemed to demand subtle types of attentional effort, and a theology which was reluctant to admit to any agency whatsoever. Maria Fox soliloquised on the need for 'continual watchfulness unto prayer' but instead of setting her sights on God, she longed for God to set eyes on her. Georgian Quakers assumed that because 'man can do nothing aright,' Quakers were rewarded by the divine for their faith, patience and humility. Their doubts over their spiritual prospects coupled with a disavowal of effort created the anxious and uncertain Quaker mentality which placed evermore emphasis on humility, self-denial and watchfulness to maintain these signs of grace. Given their precarious soteriological position, pious Quakers were drawn towards constant prayer and vigilance.

Inward Light, Self-Denial and Puritan Subjectification

An interpretation of Quaker 'self-denial' and 'Inward Light' will now be offered, in order to further illustrate and contextualise the self-judgemental aspect of Georgian Quakerism. 'To modern Friends it is startling to find the Inward Light described in terms of such fierce judgement' writes Barbour of seventeenth century Quakers; 'the Light that ultimately gave joy, peace and guidance at first only gave terror' (1964, p.98). It is posited here that when assurance and sanctification became evermore distant prospects in the eighteenth century (after the 'erosion of certainty' described above), Quaker accounts tended towards the terrific judgemental aspect of 'Inward Light' rather than towards joy and peace.

God witnessed everything of a Puritan's body, speech and mind as the Puritan cleric Richard Kilby wrote in *The Burthen of a Loaden Conscience* (1609);

'believe verily... you are alwaies in the sight of God. He searcheth out your thoughts and affections: he hearkneth to your words, he vieweth your behaviour, and writeth up all in a booke, with pirpose to judge you'
(Stachniewski, 1991, p.105)

The Light in Quakerism was said to bring about a divinely inspired self-awareness, with 'every thought brought into submission' and judgement by God, thereby 'showing sins and the way out of sin.' Whereas Kilby could only speculate on God's judgement from the

human perspective, Quakers claimed that the locus of their view shifted from the creature to the divine during their spiritual visitations; through the Inward Light, Quakers claimed to know the judgement of God. It is posited here that the Quaker notion of divine visitation involved an internalisation of the judgemental aspect of the Puritan God described by Kilby. The Foucauldian concept of subjectification as used by Stachniewski in *The Persecutory Imagination* (1991) and Carrette in *Foucault and Religion* (2001) will be used to illustrate this point.

The Inward Light was often likened to conscience by early Quakers, who would in the same breath insist that it was an inspired rather than a mundane conscientiousness. Anxieties arising from an afflicted religious conscience were common pastoral topics in the early seventeenth century as shown by Kilby's *The Burthen of a Loaden Conscience* and many other similar tracts. The benefits of conscientiousness, the ability to recognise when one was or was not living up to one's religious commitments, was also a regular topic of pastoral discussion. The era-defining example is Perkins' *A Case of Conscience, the greatest there ever was: howe a man may know whether he is a childe of God or No* of 1592. Therefore conscientious piety was nothing new by the mid-seventeenth century at the genesis of Quakerism, and the premise of the early Quaker movement was vulnerable if it were conceded that Quakers were not divinely inspired but were simply extremely conscientious. Whilst Quakers likened conscience to the Light Within, they were keen to maintain a distinction between the two by making it clear that neither their conviction of sin, nor their further inspiration was result of mundane conscientiousness. Moore describes how early Quakers 'split hairs into imperceptible slivers when trying to explain that when they talked about the universal light in the conscience, they did not mean conscience itself' (Moore, 2000, p.109; Barbour, 1964, pp. 111-112). Barclay was no exception in making these distinctions, explaining that conscience is misguided because it is based on fallen, worldly referents; 'conscience followeth the [human] judgment, [but] doth not inform it.' The Light on the other hand 'removes the blindness of the judgment, opens the understanding, and rectifies both the judgment and conscience' (1827, p.122). In *Apology*, Inward Light was of the nature of conscientiousness, but a conscientiousness informed by divine judgement; it 'makes all things manifest that are reproveable, and so is a faithful witness for God against every unrighteousness in man' (1827, p.121).

Wigham's *Christian Instruction in a Discourse as Between a Mother and Daughter* (1816) illustrates how Quakers were schooled in this ultra-conscientiousness. The pamphlet introduced the doctrine of 'the Light' and its relation to conscience:

Mary: Yes, Mother, but I want to know how to walk in the Spirit.

Mother:... whatever is reprov'd, is made manifest by the Light... when thou hast done or said something that was not right: and this is the Spirit, Light or Grace, that thou feelest to check and reprove thee... thou hast also sometimes felt something sweetly to influence and draw thy mind to good... This is, my dear, a beginning to walk in the Spirit, and pray in the Spirit.

Mary: Oh! Yes Mother, I have often felt just as thou describes, both the reproofs and the sweetness; but I did not know that this was the Spirit, or I should have been more careful to attend to it. (Wigham, 1816, pp.17-18)

The mother continued with a warning about the trials which her daughter was about to undergo. In 1816 Wigham had his idealised Quaker mother describe conversion in a way which would not have been out of place in Barclay's *Apology* of over a century before:

At first it discovers sin, rather than subdues it, makes it appear exceedingly sinful, brings deep remorse and an abhorrence of self, for the commission of it; lets us see our own weakness and inability to overcome it, and thus brings us to a dependence upon Christ¹⁰ to save us... we are gradually made sensible, that in this little seed is Light and Life, so that we begin exceedingly to love this light that discovers sin. (Wigham, 1816, p.20)

This newly awakened conscientiousness convinced Mary, the fictional teenage daughter of an early-nineteenth-century Quaker household, that her life had not been as blameless as she had assumed, triggering her 'convincement' of sin and her entry into the Quaker spiritual path. Mary is bidden to 'love this light that discovers sin' and this divinely inspired conscience which brought about 'deep remorse and an abhorrence of self,' as everything of the totally fallen creature came into the judgement of God. Mother advised Mary that 'the Lord has seen meet to place man in a situation, wherein he can do nothing towards his own salvation' save for adhering to the grace of 'the Light' and 'not yielding to the temptations of Satan' (Wigham, 1816, pp.37-8). Thus Mary felt herself led to practice Quaker self-denial through the inspired conscientiousness associated with the Inward Light.

To better understand this 'self-denial' some thoughts on the referent 'self' in this context must also be sketched out, of course acknowledging the historical and social contingency of 'self'. Notions of 'self' in the years preceding the Quaker movement were informed by the problematizing of personal agency towards salvation in Puritan theology. The increased availability of religious literature encouraging personal piety and an unmediated relationship to God, enabled a growing number of those with the education and the social

¹⁰ 'Christ' being synonymous to 'inward light' as discussed in chapter one.

and economic freedoms to encounter and take care of their 'self' and their soul on a hitherto unprecedented level in English history (Mascuch, 1997, pp.71-96; Hindmarsh, 2005, pp. 33-61). Yet such scrupulous and painstaking self-awareness did not sit well with the injunction of reformed theology that one should feel confidence and assurance in order to be amongst the elect, or the consensus view that free will towards salvation was not a viable expression of piety as it ran counter to divine sovereignty, forensic grace or predestination (Stachniewski, 1991, pp. 17-27). Barclay's *Apology* was in keeping with the orthodoxies of the *Westminster Catechism* insofar as humankind 'can know nothing aright,' and is 'desperately wicked' without the grace of God (Pyper, 2015). It was therefore difficult for Calvinistic Puritans to posit an independent agent, a 'self' separate from the 'seed of sin' or the 'seed of God,' of the reprobate or elect. Agency towards salvation was at odds with resignation to the providential will of God; 'free-willer' or 'free-will man' was a term of derision and abuse in Puritan England, as was 'self-esteem' in a religious context (Beek, 1969 p.43), despite a turbulent social, economic and political atmosphere in which individuals had unprecedented freedom to self-fashion. Paradoxically, as Renaissance culture and the emergence of capitalism created more space for the notion of atomised and independent individuals, it was problematic (and in some cases held to be blasphemous Popery) to assert free will towards salvation (Wallace, 1982, pp.1-28). Hindmarsh offers the pithy summary; 'as the Renaissance made people aware of themselves as individuals, the Church made people more aware of themselves as sinners' (2005, p.32).

This growth of the subject, of individual self-awareness and agency in political, economic and social spheres was at odds with reformed theology, and therefore routinely pointed out and appealed to in order to convince congregations of their fallen state. As Stachniewski shows, 'individualism in the sense of awareness of independent selfhood was stimulated by Puritan preachers' to provoke 'a sense of radical sinfulness and helplessness' as part of the conversion process, preceding the sublimation of individual selfhood back into the community of the elect (Stachniewski, 1991, p.79). Stachniewski refers to this process as 'the persecutory imagination'; a mode of introspective self-regard which emerged in seventeenth-century Puritanism and which 'created the rebel state of mind it reprobated.' In this 'persecutory imagination,' many seventeenth-century Puritans found no relief from their sinful 'self,' which was brought more and more to light in a process of 'subjectification' in the Foucauldian sense, a process of defining a 'self' through disciplining a 'self,' which was simultaneously aroused and condemned as sinful (1991, pp.9, 85).

I posit that pious Georgian Quakers likewise become convinced of the existence of a sinful 'self' which they sought to transcend. The relief of attaining a position whereby they perceived the fallen 'self' to be overcome was tempered by the fear of backsliding or a withdrawal of grace, and therefore created the occasion for more conscientiousness, self-awareness and conviction of sin. The Light Within bore witness to 'every unrighteousness,' and therefore had a potentially vast scope over the fallen 'self'. In the writings of devout Quakers, this ill-defined fallen 'self' was liable to manifest in any mental event which drew the mind from the attitude of humble submission and self-awareness, indicative of a mind 'stayed' on and guided by the Spirit with a 'single eye.' In order to deny 'self,' a sense of self first has to arise as a target in the awareness of those who would deny it; I argue that the 'self' of eighteenth-century Quakerism came into being in reciprocity to a system of introspection which created 'self' as a target for subjection. Therefore, this system of introspection offered little opportunity for lasting self-transcendence.

To summarise these Puritan roots of perpetual self-denial in eighteenth-century Quakerism: newfound individuality of the seventeenth century came into tension with self-critical Puritan introspection, causing religious anxiety. This Puritan anxiety was overcome in early Quakerism (Nuttall, 1946; Barbour, 1985, p.41; Watkins, 1972, pp.215, 238). However, eighteenth-century Quakerism drifted back towards this mode of conscientiousness, which brought a sense of self to light only to condemn it, with little hope of being delivered from sin and 'self.' The Puritan dis-ease which was overcome by George Fox and the early Quakers returned in a mutated form, I suggest, in the subjectification which re-emerged in Georgian Quakerism. A constant self-critical humility was encouraged in order to grow in grace or prevent a fall, following the 'erosion of certainty' (Tousley, 2009) in a soteriological binary between sanctification and depravity with little space for justification and assurance. These factors, together with demanding practices of silent worship, compounded by a disavowal of agency, were the foundation for the narratives of mental anguish so common to our period. After rebirth in the spirit, converts described themselves as being haunted by the spectre of the unregenerate 'self,' which upon closer inspection was not quite dead after all. The 'terror' of encountering the Light Within during conversion became prolonged indefinitely. Thus devout Quakers did not report one single 'death of self' and 'rebirth in the spirit' episode. As Jones has shown, the lot of the devout Quaker in the eighteenth century was to 'die daily' to the 'self' (Jones, 1821, p.77) in a relentless process of purgation and self-critical mental asceticism. 'May I never shrink from under that mournful covering,' wrote Sarah Tuke Grubb, 'till the sense of

what I am... that is, the creature, its wisdom and activity, may die daily, under that Power.' (Murray, 1792, p.104).

The Light Within was a puritanical God's eye view over the fallen creature; as we have seen from Maria Fox, 'Oh! For a constantly prevailing sense of being always in the sight of Him, whose eyes run to and fro throughout the whole earth; and "who knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity!"' (Fox, 1846, p.106). Pious Quakers were tasked with identifying completely with this scrupulous judgemental self-awareness, a conscience which bore witness to the totally fallen 'self' and therefore had an almost inexhaustible scope. In a journal entry from 1770 Job Scott described how it was to live under the guidance of the light, in a manner reminiscent of the extract which opened this section from *The Burthen of a Loaden Conscience* of nearly two hundred years before:

I must live continually in an inward watchfulness and dedication of heart; watch all my thoughts, words and actions and know all brought to judgement; and allow nothing to exist unexamined, nor willingly unapproved. (Scott, 1831, vol.1, p.45)

When Quakers spoke of unity with God, they were referring to total acquiescence with this judgemental aspect of God. It was the 'faithful witness for God against every unrighteousness' as Barclay said, the 'inward monitor,' the 'divine guide,' the 'searcher of hearts' and 'the superintendent of souls' for Quaker ministers who aspired to 'abide at all times on the watch-tower,' (Mary Alexander in Skidmore, 2003, p.131) of what Jeremy Carrette calls the 'internal spiritual panopticon' of puritanical introspection and subjectification (Carrette, 2002, p.121). It was either immensely liberating or immensely worrying and repressive, depending on whether one was in the watch-tower or the cells of this internal spiritual panopticon.

'Dark Nights of the Soul'

Further to these theological dynamics, some evidence suggests that distress could arise solely from the practice of silent worship. Firstly there was the problem of keeping the mind 'stayed' on God. This 'spiritual dryness' was an unexpected inability to worship correctly, and was covered at length in *A Guide to True Peace*, where it was emphasised that those who were experienced in this type of worship could still be subject to such obstacles;

Through the prayer of mental stillness, we may feel ourselves to be in a dry and comfortless state, not being able to get rid of our troublesome thoughts, nor experience any light, consolation, or spiritual feeling; yet let us not be afflicted, nor desist from our undertaking; but resign ourselves at that time with vigour, and patiently persevere in that manner, our souls will be internally improved. (Backhouse, 1813, p.36)

Or

When you endeavour to fix your mind in silence, in order to feel after your God, you will not experience the comfort and refreshment you expected; but on the contrary, you will be more than usually beset with a multitude of troublesome and importunate imaginations; insomuch, that you will begin to think your labour to no purpose, and that the prayer of internal silence is an attainment to which you need not aspire; seeing that your imagination is so ungovernable, and your mind so void of good. (Backhouse, 1813, p.35)

Such a turn of events would be particularly jarring for Georgian Quakers given their theological system which emphasised the possibility of falling from grace.

Yet a deeper sense of dereliction and loss could reputedly arise from worship, even when this problem of dejection arising from dissipation, as Fénelon (1750) put it was overcome. Birkel notes that Backhouse's *A Guide to True Peace* features an emphasis on 'issues of inner purgation and spiritual aridity' drawn mainly from Molinos (2015, p.150-1). Spencer and Jones have also noted that Quakers seemed to find value in Catholic mystical writings during what these authors call 'dark nights,'¹¹ claiming that Quaker distress was occasioned by the disorientation of deep mystical contemplation. According to Spencer, the minister Thomas Story suffered 'a "Dark Night of the Soul" experience that parallels the accounts of many Christian mystics' and that 'as with many saints and mystics who have come to the Light, Grellet found himself in a period of testing, a dark night experience' (Spencer, 2007, pp.85, 114). According to Rufus Jones, 'Rebecca Jones describes, as Madame Guyon might have done, this dark night of the soul' (Jones, 1921, p.75).

Studies in religious phenomenology across temporal and theological divides indeed suggest that a multitude of disturbing experiences can arise from prolonged contemplative practice, as described here by Ataria:

¹¹ I have not found any direct reference in Georgian Quaker literature to John of the Cross's *Dark Night of the Soul* nor have I encountered the phrase 'Dark Night of the Soul' in eighteenth century Quaker literature. Jones and Spencer assume parallels can be drawn between 'Quietist Quakerism' and John of the Cross via Guyon and Molinos.

Delusions that include meeting death, fear of loss of control which presents itself as a fear of losing hold on reality, sense of helplessness, anxiety and nihilistic despair, alterations in body image, including a lack of sense of boundaries, depersonalisation and derealisation, a loss of sense of meaning. (2016, p.7)

It seems 'paradoxical' for Bernard McGinn that the great mystics such as Teresa of Avila, Gregory the Great and St. John of the Cross should feel such periods of dereliction despite being wholly committed to the contemplative life for some time when these episodes arose. Nevertheless in his overview of Christian mysticism McGinn writes that recurrent features of Christian mystical theology include 'fear and distress that the overwhelming majesty of God brings to those who draw near to him [sic]' and 'the even more frightening experience of dereliction, the feeling of being abandoned by God' (2006 p.365).

A counter to the view that Quakers underwent mystical 'dark nights of the soul' would be that the widespread appropriation of Catholic mystical literature by diverse Protestant groups in our period makes it problematic to suppose that shared language is indicative of a shared referent. Wesley appropriated Catholic language of mystical dereliction in his sermon *The Wilderness State* for example (Walker and O'Connell, 2012, pp.127-140). This is, of course, an enduring criticism of those who propose experiential similarities between religious traditions, and I have suggested in chapter one that it carries weight in regard to comparisons between Quaker 'nothingness' and medieval apophysis. In Quakerism the issue of mystical dereliction is further complicated because the 'fear and distress at the overwhelming majesty of God' which McGinn describes as an obstacle in the latter stages of deep contemplation was regarded as a boon by Quakers from the early stages of conversion onwards. Furthermore, Birkel has presented a reading of Quaker spiritual distress which has been pursued and elaborated upon in this chapter, suggesting that subtle changes within eighteenth-century Quakerism involving a loss of eschatological direction and soteriological assurance, explains why passages relating to religious distress featured so prominently in *A Guide to True Peace* (2015, p.151). These factors should be borne in mind when comparing Quaker distress to 'dark nights of the soul.'

Nevertheless the silent prayer of single-pointedly turning the mind towards God was certainly described in Quaker literature as being distressingly counterintuitive, and a trigger of somatic and mental dis-ease:

We must be aware that nature is always an enemy to the spirit; and that when it is deprived of sensible pleasures it remains weak, melancholy, and full of irksomeness. Hence, from the uneasiness of thoughts, the lassitude of body, importunate sleep, and our inability to curb the senses, every one

of which would follow its own pleasure, we will often feel impatient again to mingle in the concerns of time. Happy are we if we can persevere, amidst this desert experience! (Backhouse, 1813, p.37)

Reflecting on her life in later years, Jane Pearson wrote of the trials of Quaker spirituality:

When all the old inhabitants are cast out, the creaturely part is apt to catch at something, to make up for the loss it has sustained; for how hard it is to live without life in the creatures or externals! The senses are constantly seeking for something to heal this deadly wound; and to replace somewhat in an emptied mind; for it is hard thus to die to self. (Wilkinson, 1817, p.16)

The language of subjection, self-death, and re-birth in the spirit is also repeated in *A Guide to True Peace*:

By the destruction of the existence of self within us, we truly acknowledge the supreme existence of our God; for unless we cease to exist in self, the spirit of the Eternal Word cannot exist in us. Now it is by the giving up of our own life, that we give place for His coming; and, in dying to ourselves, He himself liveth and abideth in us. (Backhouse, 1813, pp.70-71)

Were Pearson and *A Guide to True Peace* trying to convey a mystical 'dying to self,' an implosion of the senses ('creatures and externals') or simply the agonies of reorientation to new spiritual commitments, identity and plain dress and speech required of devout Quakers? Or somethings on the spectrum between the two?

Death of 'self' and 'spiritual rebirth' are ungrounded platitudes, and amenable to any number of culturally, historically and theologically contingent interpretations without an understanding the referent of 'self' which was supposedly mortified, and the referent of the 'Holy Spirit' which was said to take its place. My interpretation of these two and their interrelationship in Georgian Quakerism has been offered above. Whatever the cause, or combination of causes behind this distress, there is abundant evidence that uncertainties arising from Quaker theology and prolonged contemplative practice could equally lead to religious distress. Ultimately, whether we conceive of Quaker distress as a prolonged unresolved Protestant conversion, or as the upheavals and purgation of the 'dark night of the soul' in deep mystical contemplation is not our primary concern as we move to focus on religious melancholia and the York Retreat. However, we can be certain that Quaker responses to whatever they encountered was enmeshed in a belief system which was indebted to Barclay's theology.

Depressive Georgian Quakers

Due to the confluence of these practical and theological factors, depression came to be a recurrent feature of Quaker spiritual writing. It became the path and destination of Quaker piety, as mental suffering came to be celebrated in itself. As John Woolman explained in a pamphlet printed in 1816; 'Pure wisdom leads people into lowness of mind, in which they learn resignation to the divine will, and contentment in suffering to the Lord's cause, when they cannot keep a clear conscience without suffering' (1816, p.13). An absence of this 'lowness of mind' gave rise to the fear that grace had been withdrawn. Devout Quakers laboured under the divine judgement of the Inward Light but felt abandoned in its absence.

Divine favour came to be associated with the 'chastening hand' of a fatherly God who punished out of compassion in order to purify the soul. Again this discourse had its precedents in the seventeenth century as Stachniewski's *The Persecutory Imagination* shows at length. Citing *The Divine Poems* of 1613 for example, Stachniewski asserts that 'Donne's plea "O thinke me worth thine anger, punish mee" expresses a common feeling,' as the 'protective-punitive' father figure God showed love through chastisement (1991, pp. 96-101). Such sentiments were widespread in Georgian Quakerism as shown in Kendall's *Letters on Religious Subjects Written by Divers Friends, Deceased of 1802*:

So sensible was I that I must be again redeemed through judgment, that I was made willing not only to kiss the rod, but to desire to be fed with it. I rejoiced to feel the chastising hand of our gracious Father, which was both rod and staff, as it afforded me comfortable hopes of a future inheritance, and that I was not cut off as illegitimate but that after I had suffered according to the will of God, he might again restore me to a place in his house. (1802, p.58)

On the other hand, the absence of the Spirit could be seen as a trial of faith. Rather than being abandoned by God, Quakers consoled one another that desertion could actually be divine attention, a trial which devout Quakers were encouraged to revel in. For example in Wigham's *Mother and Her Daughter*:

He tries their faith by hiding his face, in order to humble them under a sense of their own wretchedness without him, and although these seasons are trying, they produce a stronger love, and more humble dependence upon him; and the more the mind is exercised in a feeling of wretchedness, the sweeter is the return of his love. (Wigham, 1816, pp.31-33)

The problem for Georgian Quakers and seventeenth century Puritans alike was not this unease in itself, imbued as it was with potentially positive spiritual potential. Problematic

anxieties arose from telling 'the despair of the reprobate from its potentially misleading simulacrum in the pre-conversion experience of the elect' (Stachniewski, 1991, p.27). Given these overlapping narratives around mental suffering, of love through 'chastisement' and affliction, of suffering being essential to 'keep a clear conscience,' and of a God who 'hides his face' to try faith, Quakers often found it difficult to discern the source of their trials. But as this extract from Sarah Tuke Grubb's correspondence shows, humble resignation before the will of God was the failsafe solution:

I was sorry to hear that thy mind was still in so dejected a state. Causes for situations of this sort cannot always be comprehended by us, and therefore we ought to be careful how we conclude that they either are, or are not, in the ordering of best Wisdom. One thing however affords consolation to the truly contrite mind that all things shall work together for good to those who love and fear God. (Murray, 1792, p.402)

Yet the consoling knowledge that suffering was necessary to purge sin did not always attenuate these depressive feelings. God was thought to baptise through suffering and to try faith until it reached near breaking point, as Bownas wrote in his advice to ministers:

A minister is thus prepared by spiritual affliction, occasioned by the withdrawal of divine virtue from his mind, and suffered, as many good men have been to be buffeted, tempted, tried and sifted by Satan, feeling faith, hope and patience almost to fail... Thus it pleases God to suffer his ministers to be proved... (1853, p.68)

According to the minister Jane Pearson; 'The same baptisms which are the means of qualifying for eminent service, sometimes induce a fear, a depression, a sense of unworthiness in the instrument, which makes it slow in believing, that the Lord vouchsafeth to regard it, and that he will finally crown it with eternal blessings' (1817, p.77). It certainly was the case that many pious Quakers underwent episodes in which they described themselves as bereft of any chance of salvation.

Quakers were well aware that they wrote of states of mind (and accompanying somatic symptoms, as will later be discussed) which bore semblance to melancholia. In his advice to ministers of 1750 Bownas told how some converts first take 'medicines to help them against what they call melancholy' upon convincement into Quakerism as they 'know not at first what it is... finding ourselves very uneasy, and in great trouble of mind, being under heavy sorrow and heaviness' before submitting to Quaker piety (1853, p.13). Likewise the Quaker minister Samuel Scott expressed his opinion on the publicly melancholic literary

critic Samuel Johnson, suggesting that Johnson's depressions were due to the 'divine light' which Johnson was sinfully ignoring;

his being unconversant in works of an inward, spiritual, and soul-awakening tendency, was by the internal emanations of divine light, favoured to see, and bitterly bewail, his own defects and shortness in that purity, which is required by the gospel of Christ. May none, who enjoy superior privileges and more advantage of spiritual improvement, "quench the spirit," and stifle the inward convictions of that divine light, which can only shew them the sinfulness of sin, and the wickedness and deceit of their own hearts. (1809, p.151)

The editor of Scott's diaries appraised the 'melancholic temperament' that 'appeared occasionally to have prevailed in the author of the following Diary,' and which 'when seasoned and regulated by grace, has been deemed the most favourable to a religious life' (1809, pp.9-10). As John Wigham wrote to his son in 1822, depressive feelings were a normal part of Quaker piety:

I do not wonder at thy feeling frequently low and depressed; it is the path that all the faithful followers of a crucified Saviour have to walk in. He is described in Scripture as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and surely it is enough for the disciple to be as his Lord. (Wigham, 1842, p.116)

Job Scott described the necessity of this endless self-abasement in his spiritual biography:

Under the refining hand of God's power, whereby he thus humbled and abased my soul, I was given clearly to see the need I should have of this excellent qualification Humility in my further progress in religious life. I saw pretty clearly, in the midst of my deepest depression, that if I should be favoured with unremitting tranquillity and divine enjoyment, I should be in danger of spiritual pride and exaltation. (Scott, 1831, p.39)

We may well conclude with Sarah Tuke Grubb; 'How are such as move in this line to be pitied!' (Murray, 1792, p.35).

Of course 'depression' in the eighteenth century did not carry with it the medical connotations which it does today. Walker and O'Connell have some pertinent comments on the semantics of 'depression' in the eighteenth century, as defined by Johnson's dictionary of 1750:

To depress is given as 'To Humble; to Deject: to Sink. As a verb it was something done to you rather than something you were... the end result of this being done to you was a sense of despondency and gloom of mind. The noun derives some of its meaning from the verb: to be depressed in either sense is to be pushed downwards; to be humbled, dejected and sunk. (2012, p. xviii)

By this reading it transpires that 'depression' was remarkably apt for describing the mentality associated with Quaker piety. It captured the sense that spiritual depression was catalysed by an outside force, a numinous aspect to Quaker spirituality or an intense conscientiousness pressing down upon the 'carnal mind,' or 'self,' bringing it into subjection. This 'depression,' as will now be shown, was clearly differentiated from all out 'despair' and loss of faith.

The 'Humble Hope' of Georgian Quakerism

The endemic fear of falling from grace resolved itself favourably in the posthumous religious biographies that were sanctioned for publication by the Quaker community. In Quaker publications at least, Quakers found the Spirit to return after all, often when they reached new levels of resignation or humility. Furthermore, if depressive suffering in itself became a sign of divine favour, it could be deduced that God was always at hand, whether it was the 'chastening hand' of the Father or the 'divine arm' of support. As the minister and York Retreat patient Hannah Middleton wrote to Samuel Tuke's sister Elizabeth Wheeler in 1828, seventeen years after her admission:

When we reflect on the powers of the divine arm to support and carry through the remaining stages of life, those who are left behind, and, above all, the merciful designs of our Heavenly Father to his afflicted children – even, eventually to convert their deepest griefs into blessings inestimable – and are enabled to believe by his chastening hand, he is proving his love towards us, how are we brought to bow into submission to his holy will, and acknowledge that he doeth all things well, and that his compassion fails not. (Tuke, 1860, vol. 1, p. 432)

In the thoroughly providential world that Quaker ministers inhabited with their omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent God up to the mid-nineteenth century, consolation for those who feared themselves 'castaway' would be that all things work together for good, for those who have humble faith.

This was extensively demonstrated in the *Piety Promoted* series, which followed the Puritan tradition of recording deathbed confessions by cataloguing the last days of thousands of Quakers, spanning the Georgian period in eleven volumes. It was usual, particularly in radical dissenting movements, for the dying to be asked 'how things are with you?' – that is, the dying were expected to know their future state by introspectively identifying the various marks and signs particular to their theological commitments. Caught between this life and the next, dying Quakers possessed supernatural authority. Georgian

Quakers and Methodists, and seventeenth-century Puritans alike, attested to a foreknowledge of the hereafter upon the deathbed (Barbour, 1988, p.116; Stannard, 1977; Hindmarsh, 2006, pp.256-258). In Quakerism the 'day of visitation' doctrine came into its own, as wayward rank and file Quakers were mercifully subject to their first visitation, passing away in awe, humility and calmness, and were therefore reckoned to be saved. Although pious Quakers struggled with spiritual warfare into old age, death provided one last opportunity for purgative suffering and self-surrender, as their spiritual biographies and deathbed narratives uniformly demonstrate.

The death of twenty-year-old Ann Leaver from Nottingham in 1777 as recorded in *Piety Promoted* is typical. Upon being taken seriously ill she exclaimed;

that the prospect of eternity was awful; and that though she had not committed any bad thing, yet she had found it difficult, when at meeting, to get into that steady watchfulness and settled composure she longed for.

She 'begged for a certain evidence that her conclusion might be happy' and that her final illness may be 'allotted for her further purification.' Assurance duly came as 'the unwearied enemy had been endeavouring to trouble her, but she found him a liar' and Leaver enjoyed periods of 'stillness and composure of mind.' Finally she passed away, following the conventions of Quaker eulogy by testifying to a degree of assurance that was unusual in Quaker daily life:

"It is all over, and I am perfectly happy, I have no pain. The conflict is at an end. Farewell, farewell... I am going to join the spirits of just men made perfect... I would have you leave me for I am going to sleep." Then laying her head quietly on the pillow she expired without a sigh or a groan.
(Evans, 1854, pp.107-110)

Discerning between the will of God and the 'carnal' will of 'self' was no longer a problem on the deathbed. One final act of total resignation to Providence was all that was required. The journey through the 'vale of tears' was over; the conflict was at an end and Quakers had 'nothing to do but die' in resignation.¹² Famed ministers and errant birthright Quakers alike bore witness to a confidence in salvation which had eluded them previously – finally the death of 'self' was complete. Of course the veracity of these accounts are questionable, and the remarkably forbearing, selflessly compassionate and erudite last words of dying

¹² 'Nothing to do but die' was commonly used in deathbed narratives from the early eighteenth century (Evans, 1854, vol.1, pp. 81, 124, 24, 253) up to the nineteenth century (1854, vol 4, pp.60, 153, 150, 170, 273, 253, 411). Life is described as a 'vale of tears' by Sarah Tuke Grubb (following Psalm 84:6) in the quote which follows below.

children and teenagers in *Examples of Youthful Piety* (Evans, 1851) seem particularly far-fetched. Be that as it may, there were ample grounds in Quaker print culture for faith in the promise of salvation, long before the doctrine of justification by faith permeated into Quakerism, and despite the fears of abandonment caused by some aspects of their theology.

This faith in Providence was well reflected in the writings of devout Quakers such as Sarah Tuke Grubb, who remained with a steadfast faith as she gained experience in the ministry, in the face of depressive self-criticism and soteric uncertainty. Tuke did not regard her faith as a justifying faith, neither did she regard it as being catalysed by the Holy Spirit. Rather it was a resolute belief in benevolent providence, despite evidence to the contrary from her own introspection and from what she and other itinerant ministers often saw as degeneration in the Quaker movement. Faith allowed Sarah Tuke Grubb to persevere through the worst of low spirits, as she wrote in 1789:

It is a very low time with me. There are few I believe that need such baptisms as myself, and therefore it is, no doubt, best for me to bear them as quietly and profitably as I can. He with whom we have to do, afflicts not willingly the children of men, and therefore, if our afflictions are not of our own bringing on, they are a part of the work of that righteousness which produces quietness and assurance for ever. We must not expect to pass through the present vale of tears, without bearing our proportion of suffering, for the body's sake [a reference to the corporate body of the Society of Friends], and those abasements which are so necessary for our own preservation in the Truth. Therefore let us be patient, and establish our hearts, that so we may not be moved or turned away from the hope of the gospel, but through all, stand in the faith that the day of the Lord draweth nigh. We often find, to the mortification of the creature, that times and seasons are not at our command, nor even for us always to know: it is the divine prerogative to dispose of them; and the human mind is taught thereby its own dependency, and driven in quest of that faith by which the just live. Faith removes our doubts, anchors the soul when upon the fluctuating waters of uncertainty, "is the very substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen." (Murray, 1792, p.27)

This passage is a neat reiteration of the sentiments already touched upon in this chapter; humility, providentialism, the disavowal of the 'creature' and its agency and the ambiguous regard for depressive suffering. It is instructive that Tuke cites Hebrews 11:1, 'the substance of things hoped for,' when she moves on to faith. Tuke saw herself as amongst the long-suffering old testament prophets, tried and chastened by God but eventually rewarded for fortitude; this was a common

theme in eighteenth century Quaker literature as Crabtree has shown (2015, pp.29-61).

Sarah Tuke Grubb's biography had 'a very unusual measure' of an 'intense wish to achieve "the annihilation of own self"' appearing 'on almost every page' according to Rufus Jones (1921, p.68). From a modern perspective one may be shocked by what appears to be a compendium of self-loathing and passivity, and one of the most voluminous articulations of what Jones called the 'timid, shrinking, trembling walk with God' which defined the period (1921, p.66). Yet Tuke becomes a steadfast and courageous heroine when seen in light of her resolute faith, and her biography soon became a source of inspiration for contemporary Quakers. The editor of her biography, Lindley Murray,¹³ portrays Sarah Tuke Grubb as such; 'few lives have exhibited a more pure example of piety and virtue, than that which is set forth on in the ensuing pages.' His hope is that 'an account of this humble, self-denying and dedicated servant will prove the means of instructing others; and of strengthening their faith in the efficacy of that divine principal "which wrought all her works in her."' (1792, p.iii).

Therefore Quakers relied upon faith in Providence as a check to the fear of abandonment which their piety could give rise to. This faith differentiated depressive Quaker religiosity from religious despair, the defining characteristic of the latter being a complete loss of faith and absolute conviction of one's own damnation. As Henry Tuke's 1808 *Duties of Religion and Morality* explained, five years before his son's *Description of the Retreat* was published:

It sometimes happens that religiously disposed minds fall into a state of depression and discouragement, respecting their inward or their future state. This, so far as it excites vigilance and exertion, may be beneficial; but when its tendency is to lead to despair of the mercies of God, and to cast away our confidence in his goodness and loving kindness, it becomes a disposition to which we ought not to give way, but should carefully guard against its attacks. (Tuke, 1808, p.20)

Total despair and loss of faith fell outside of Quaker orthodoxies and was not encouraged. However it was a position to which Quakers were clearly vulnerable, as the minister Job Scott lamented in his journal, 'when we have again and again

¹³ Lindley Murray (1745-1826) was a close friend of the Tukes, sat on the founding committee of the York Retreat and helped Samuel Tuke draft *Description of the Retreat* (1813).

to pass through the valley and shadow of death, it is not so easy to stand firm, keep the faith, and trust in God' (Scott, 1815, p.48).

Evangelical Quakerism

There is a consensus amongst scholars of Quakerism, that Evangelical influences from the early nineteenth century decreased the salvific role of the Inward Light and elevated the scriptural promise of atonement. Evangelical Quakers came to make a clear distinction between justification and sanctification which was not evident in Georgian Quakerism (Hamm, 2013, p.70), thereby dispelling the all-or-nothing implications of Barclay's theology. By the mid-nineteenth century, the Inward Light came to hold a sanctifying role but was not a precondition for justification (Barbour, 1988, 172-173).

The genesis of this Evangelical influence is debatable. Writers from Jones (1921) to Wright (1995) and Mingins (2004) conclude that British Quakers gradually assimilated Evangelical ideas as Quaker men started to mix in the business and philanthropic spheres, particularly rubbing shoulders with Methodists who held very strongly to the idea of justifying faith. Further to this, controversies such as the Hicksite schism and the Hannah Barnard affair arose as extremes of Quaker spiritual Christology came into conflict with the developing Evangelical current. Georgian Quakerism, and indeed Quakerism since the time of George Fox, implicitly downplayed the role of historic Christ in favour of 'the light of the world' of John's Gospel realised internally. Christ had returned to teach and redeem his people via this Inward Light. It was this Christological light, Christ realised internally, which brought salvation, rather than faith in historic Christ (Angell, 2013, p.160). In largely unrelated incidents in the early nineteenth century the Quaker ministers Elias Hicks and Hannah Barnard made these implications explicit in a way that was no longer tenable. Their uncompromising views were absolutely rejected by British Quakers in the early nineteenth century, as Evangelical sentiment slowly emerged victorious.

The pace of these changes and their cause are tangential to our focus, but the result is of significant consequence. By the 1830s, British Quakers were more assured of their salvation. The doctrine of forensic justification by faith took the intensity and urgency out of Quaker piety and introspection, as the soteriological doubt behind their anxieties were removed. It was such a dramatic change in Quaker mentalities that by the mid-nineteenth century some Quakers came to wonder at the self-scrutiny to which their predecessors

subjected themselves, which now appeared to be over-exacting and unnecessary. The anonymous editor of Samuel Tuke's posthumous *Memoirs* of 1860 found that Tuke 'subjected his own mind' to 'severe self-discipline' and held a 'low estimate' of himself (although his anxieties appear trifling compared to those of his aunt Sarah Tuke Grubb). The editor of Tuke's *Memoirs* put these anxieties down to Georgian Quaker theology:

It must not be overlooked that the doctrine of perfection has been very prominently set forth by the founders of the faith in which he was educated.... The early Quaker not only believed perfection attainable, abstractly, but seldom seemed to doubt having arrived in that condition himself. S Tuke, reading as he grew up of perfection... longed to attain this state.

But the ministers of the eighteenth century, 'did not so frequently preach the doctrine of atonement as they do now.' 'Hence,' the editor continues;

we believe that, placed as it were on the bridge which connects these two doctrines, S Tuke was, at times, more self-exacting than he otherwise would have been. He still clung to the doctrine of perfection as doctrine; but he could no longer be free from the mis-givings of its truth, when he measured himself against its requirements... he sometimes scarcely permitted his mind to repose sufficiently for its own comfort on the doctrine of justification. (Tuke, 1860, vol. 1, pp.411-412)

Thus Tuke's biographer posited the reasonable hypothesis that the growing emphasis on justification by faith served to decrease self-critical Quaker introspection by the mid nineteenth century.

Conclusion

Depressive piety has been an acknowledged part of Quaker history since Rufus Jones's studies of the 1920s. Whilst it has escaped the notice of previous histories of the York Retreat, it was clearly a live issue within the Quaker community and within the Tuke family, up to and throughout the early years of the York Retreat. This will become increasingly evident as we take a closer look at the extreme behaviours exhibited by some Quaker ministers, and when we proceed on to Retreat patients.

In these first two chapters I have suggested that permutations of Puritan theology continued to inform Quaker piety throughout the Georgian period. The majority of Quaker scholars follow Jones's narrative, particularly when encountering the depressive mentality of the period; that Quakerism was adversely influenced by Catholic 'Quietist' passivity. I find this narrative to be erroneous through and through. Seeds planted by the Puritan

origins of Quakerism came into fruition in the eighteenth century and were responsible for depressive mindset of the period. If anything, so-called 'Quietism' was actually more active and forgiving than Barclay's theology.

The concern over missing the day of visitation or falling from grace, coupled with demanding methods of worship and a passive or at best ambiguous model of agency on the spiritual path, brought about the depressive mentality of Georgian Quakerism. Theology and practice combined in such a way that Quakers rarely escaped the subject of their self-denial. Quaker piety involved a watchful guard against a nebulous and ill-defined 'self' and a set of demanding introspective practices which construed mental qualities such as 'stillness,' 'watchfulness' or 'nothingness of self' as signs of spiritual progress, and a decline in these qualities as a withdrawal of grace or even a fall. As a result, devout Quakers found the more they subjected the 'carnal mind,' the more they found the subject of their self-denial. In Quaker spiritual biography the distressing 'convincements' upon joining the Society of Friends or entering into the ministry became ongoing and harder to resolve, tending to recur as the Inward Light discovered yet more sin. By the end of the eighteenth century, as Woolman said, devout Quakers 'could not keep a clear conscience without suffering.' Quaker piety had moved back towards that which George Fox and the early Friends overcame; the inescapable 'persecutory imagination' of an internalised, judgemental Puritan God.

It will not do to close the conversation around Quaker distress by claiming that Quakers were undergoing 'dark nights of the soul,' with no further explanation. In fact, this should open up questions as to how ostensibly benign practices such as watching the mind or recalling the presence of God, (particularly the loving presence of God found in the Catholic literature) could trigger such a reaction, and if such experiences did occur, how might theological commitments shape their interpretation?

Future explorations into Georgian Quaker piety should not be about apportioning blame or assessing the period against the spiritual or theological models and ideals held by Quakers today. Georgian Quaker piety was radically alien to current Quaker spirituality, and should be studied as such, without taking theologically and historically contingent concepts such as 'God' or 'Inward Light' or 'self' for granted. Quaker scholarship tends to be either dismissive of the Georgian period as an aberration of Quaker principles, or tries to skirt around its distinctive aspects, making unsuccessful attempts to incorporate the era into teleological or perennialist theories. Georgian Quaker piety needs to be understood on its

own terms if we are to really appreciate the heartfelt dedication and intimate ties of mutual understanding and consolation which it gave rise to across generations of long-suffering, faithful and tireless itinerant ministers. A truly heroic and inspiring devotion balanced the pervasive sense of sadness, uncertainty and loss found in the great Quaker biographies of the era. Dozens of outstanding individuals undertook arduous journeys across Britain, Europe and the East Coast of the United States with grace, gravity, dignity, humility and a selfless dedication to bear witness to their realisations. It must be accepted that devout Quakers found their piety to be a realistic, reasonable and cogent response to the theological situation as they perceived it.

Chapter Three – Quaker Religious Melancholia

Introduction

We now move on to instances of self-destructive behaviour amongst pious Quakers, in narratives from Quaker spiritual biography and correspondence. These episodes of suicidal ideation or restrictive eating were catalysed, according to these narratives, by the weight of new spiritual commitments or by an afflicted conscience arising from self-perceived spiritual shortcomings. One case of actual suicide will also be discussed, as we explore the multifarious explanations for this event within the religious paradigm that the deceased's status as a renowned transatlantic itinerant minister necessitated.

The Devil often featured in these narratives and indeed in narratives across Protestant spirituality (Westerink, 2014). Georgian Quaker approaches to temptation and Satan is once again an understudied area. However, Quakers followed their Puritan heritage in affirming the role of the Devil in the excesses of an afflicted conscience, to explain how the afflicted were tempted into the blasphemy of distrusting God's providence, and to despair and suicide. Talk of Satan was not uncommon amongst pious Quakers, including the Tuke family, who thought themselves each engaged in their own spiritual battle for the salvation of their souls. For example, Samuel Tuke's mother, Mary Maria Tuke, wrote of being 'under the power of Satan, who now reigns in me, and daily subdues me' during her conversion (Tuke, 1860, vol.1, p.48). Three years later Sarah Tuke Grubb wrote to encourage Mary Maria to turn 'a deaf ear to the subtle insinuations of the adversary who is evidently and peculiarly seeking thy destruction' (BIA TUKE/1/4/1/3/3). The difference between self-centredness and temptation was a matter of degree rather than type, due to Quaker emphasis on the fallen nature of the 'self'. Any urge which prevented pious Quakers from fulfilling their religious duties could be presented as the work of the Devil. In chapter one we have already seen an example of the Devil entering into meetings for worship, to cause laxity or excitation amongst the congregation, thereby preventing them from staying their mind upon God. Joseph Wood's phrase, 'that great monster of self' (LUSC MS 1936/1/1/12 dated 12mo. 2nd, 1797) sums up this interchangeability between Quaker views on unregenerate human nature and diabolical temptation.

These incidents of intense despair and associated somatic ailments were framed in Quaker narratives as an essential part of a minister's spiritual progress, and could later be appealed

to as a basis for a minister's religious authority. This is in keeping with the norms of Protestant conversion narratives, as we have already seen (Westerink, 2014, p.341). Porter calls the extremes of these conversion struggles 'religious madness.' But unlike modern madness, religious madness did not necessarily have a negative stigma, and could be regarded as '*therapeutic*,' Porter emphasises, in its role of purifying and preparing the soul for the spiritual life, and could lend gravity and authority to the suffer (1987b, pp.95-99). Yet by the eighteenth century the era of mass Quaker conversions was over, and those moved to convert to Quakerism or enter the Quaker ministry were few, thus increasing the possibility that unusual behaviour during conversion could be misinterpreted.

In what follows, we find Quakers also using medical discourses alongside narratives of spiritual warfare and temptation when they discuss the most serious cases of anxiety or suicide within their community. Since the seventeenth century it was common to discuss this embodied element of religious despair and the reciprocal relationship between body, mind and soul. As the Puritan divine William Perkins wrote in *Cases of Conscience* (1602), 'the distraction of the mind [from an afflicted religious conscience] will often breede a distemper in the body, and a distemper of the body will sometimes cause distractions of mind' (in Schmidt, 2007, p.52). Bodily affliction could fit into conversion narratives either as a trial from God, or a tactic of the Devil manipulating the bodily humours in order to bring about melancholia and therefore tempt the afflicted to disbelieve the promises of the Gospel. Conversely, bodily weakness itself could be the first cause of a convert succumbing to the Devil. As Burton wrote in *Anatomy of Melancholy*, 'this humour [black bile, the melancholy humour] invites the Devil to it, wheresoever it is in extremity ... melancholy persons are most subject to diabolical temptations and illusions, and most able to entertain them, and the Devil best able to work upon them' (Schmidt, 2007, p.77). Thus, as Schmidt shows, 'medical care was not at all alien' to the pastoral consolation or even demonological narratives in Puritan England (Schmidt, 2007, p.77).¹⁴

From the 1730s, George Cheyney's enormously popular *The English Malady* provided somatic grounds for destigmatising disordered behaviour. Prior to Cheyney, medical interpretations of mental distress focused upon humoral or digestive imbalances. The 'black bile' of melancholia, the 'spleen' or 'vapours' were linked to uncontrollable sensual appetites and base animalistic drives; gross and unseemly imbalances of the body polluted

¹⁴ And in early modern France, as Foucault has discussed briefly in 'Religious deviations and medical knowledge' (1962).

the brain and mind. Critics attacked Quakerism in such a register after the Restoration, suggesting that Quaker spiritual experience was caused by excess bile, lesions on the womb, epilepsy, indigestion or an overheated brain (Godlee, 1985, p.80). Cheyney himself endorsed this interpretation of religious melancholy:

There is a kind of melancholy, which is called religious, because 'tis conversant about matters of religion; although, often, the persons so distempered have little solid piety. And this is merely a bodily disease, produced by an ill habit or constitution, wherein the nervous system is broken and disordered, and the juices are become viscid and glewey (1724, p.57).

Nevertheless Cheyney's work could be used to turn the tables on this stigmatising somatic aetiology of religious affliction. Whilst Cheyney still offered a somatic explanation for mental distress, his innovation was to implicate subtle 'nervous' imbalances, concluding that nervous mental affliction was a sign of exquisite sensibility rather than gross imbalance. This interpretation became enormously popular and continued to be used up to the end of the century as Beatty shows in *Nervous Disorders in Late Eighteenth Century Britain* (2012). It was also appropriated by Methodists and, as we shall see, Quakers, to destigmatise the worst excesses of despair and melancholia. For example, Beatty shows how Lady Maxwell (1742-1810) combined discourses of nervous affliction with religious conversion in her diaries as she synchronously followed spiritual, physical and dietary regimes during her Methodist conversion under John Wesley's guidance (2012, pp. 70-1).

In *Melancholy and Care of the Soul* (2007), Jeremy Schmidt explains why Cheyney's presentation of afflicted nerves was so amenable to appropriation into religious narratives. Nervous sensibilities were not only a sign of civility and sensitivity, but operated in Augustine thought in a similar way to the Puritan afflicted conscience. There was a 'spiritual value of nervous dread' which, like an afflicted conscience, was caused by inevitable moral failings; in this case the demands of Augustine high society rather than Original Sin. Like Puritan conscientiousness, a nervous sensibility was a moral boon, a restraining force which countered natural tendencies towards excess and temptation.¹⁵

¹⁵ Cheyney's own progress from sickness to health was presented in such a manner, as Child writes that Cheyney 'adopts the literary inheritance of the spiritual autobiography.' (2005, p.70). In Schmidt and Guerrini's opinion, Cheyney's autobiographical case study reads as 'a kind of conversion narrative' not only for this reason, but because the transition towards physical and mental balance came after, in his words, a 'a long season of undisturbed Meditation and Reflection' on the mystical writings of Madame Guyon and Antoinette Bourignon (Schmidt, p.178; Guerrini, 1995).

The concept of afflicted nerves was as useful to Quakers as it was to Augustine aristocrats, allowing Quakers to allude to the sensibility, civility and virtue of their distressed ministers, and to offer an alternative narrative to the sufferer's claim of having been abandoned by God, without suggesting a gross physical imbalance. In this way somatic and spiritual narratives could overlap and coexist for Quakers to support the character of the afflicted without implicating the Quaker belief system which provided the referents of the religious distress. That there was no single way to view these maladies within the Quaker community should come as no surprise in the context of the permeable and diffuse eighteenth-century views on mental affliction (Scull, 2006, p.43). The notion that there was a hard and fast line between religious and medical interpretations falls apart in this time of changing attitudes to experiential religion and mental dis-ease. This will become apparent as we explore the cases of Quaker religious distress below, and in the following chapters.

Fanny Henshaw

The best documented episode of Quaker religious melancholia in the eighteenth century is that of Francis (Fanny) Henshaw's conversion of 1734-6.¹⁶ The case shows a variety of reactions from the Quaker community to these episodes of despair, physical weakness and loss of appetite. Further to these, the Anglican theologian William Law wrote to affirm Henshaw's affective piety and claims of inspiration, whilst dismissing her Quakerism as a sign of nervous affliction in an attempt to keep Henshaw within the Established Church. The opinions of the Quaker physician John Fothergill can also be found, putting forward a somatic interpretation of Henshaw's trials as a means of consolation.

Henshaw's first account of her conversion in 1736 was written as a response to her sceptical Anglican family. An additional section was quickly added, clarifying the issues which arose from this first document. The two were published together with an additional introduction and commentary as *Narrative of the Convincement and Religious Experience of Frances Paxton* in a pamphlet alongside Henshaw's evangelising tract, *A Serious Call in Tender Compassion to the Sinners in Zion*, in 1744. This pamphlet, containing the conversion narratives and *Tender Call to the Sinners in Zion* was republished in 1794, a year after Henshaw's death (with the normal eulogising testament added), and twice more in

¹⁶ Henshaw (1714-1793) married twice, becoming Paxton and then Dodshon. Her birth-name will be used throughout.

1803 and 1804.¹⁷ Further contextual material survives through correspondence, particularly the letters of William Law to Henshaw. Law intervened with a response to Henshaw's conversion account of November 1736, at the invitation of the family friend John Byrom. Law's correspondence to Henshaw, as well as Henshaw's and Byrom's writings on the matter, are transcribed in Hobhouse's *William Law and Eighteenth Century Quakerism* (1927). The case is also subject to Grace Jantzen's analysis in *A Place of Springs* (2009, pp.93-100).¹⁸ From this rich body of material we will focus on how Henshaw and others related to the loss of appetite and suicidal thought which arose during Henshaw's religious trials.

During her conversion to Quakerism Henshaw was confined indoors by her initially sceptical family, and bombarded with clerical and medical opinion to expose the error of her religious views and bring her sanity into question (Hobhouse, 1932, pp.73-81; Dodshon, 1804, p.18). Henshaw's condition was talk of the town. In his journal, Byrom notes a confrontation with a local Quaker urging for Henshaw's release, likening her limited domestic freedoms to 'Lancaster Jail,' and defending Henshaw's sanity; 'they say she is mad, and melancholy, and I know not what. She is neither mad not melancholy, but a person of good sense who knows what she does very well' (Parkinson, 1856, pp.67-69). Henshaw did not dwell upon ill-health in her first account of conversion, stating only, 'so great was my concern that it shewed itself in all my actions, in so much that all who saw me, enquired what could be the reason.' Henshaw continued that the she was at risk of being 'given up into the hand of the enemy, whose malice seeks my life' (Dodshon, 1804, pp. 29-31). This version, written in the midst of conversion, focused almost exclusively on the nature and content of Henshaw's divine commutations, and her indecision over

¹⁷ The 1804 edition is cited throughout.

¹⁸ My refutation of Jantzen's analysis has no bearing to my argument but may be of interest. Jantzen used the correspondence between Henshaw and Law (as found in Hobhouse, 1927) to illustrate a philosophical / theological argument. For Jantzen, Quaker 'Inner Light' is 'a spirituality of beauty' that 'stands as an alternative paradigm' to modern forms of knowledge which have displaced 'life and beauty' and 'underlies the violent structure of thought and behaviour of our time' (p.98). In Jantzen's reading, Henshaw's call to the 'spirituality of beauty' of Quakerism was challenged by Law, who in this analysis represented Lockean anti-enthusiast rationality. As such, the encounter between Henshaw and Law is held to be paradigmatic of the encounter between Quaker spirituality and modern materialism. The redeeming feature of this interpretation is Jantzen's laudable philosophical project, but the analysis lacks historic veracity. Jantzen's reading of Quaker 'Inner Light' as a 'spirituality of beauty' is insensitive to eighteenth century Quaker thought, and it is incorrect to cast Law as a Lockean rationalist. Law was involved in the practical divinity of the Oxford Methodists at the time of writing to Henshaw, and his affirmation of experiential spirituality continued to evolve afterwards, culminating in *The Spirit of Prayer*.

whether or how to adhere to these leadings. Henshaw felt herself led to 'lay aside all the vanity and foolish amusements of the world' and to become a Quaker, to renounce the opinion of family and friends and 'profess the opinion of a people so much despised' (Dodshon, 1804, pp. 24-28). On two occasions Henshaw heard a disembodied voice warn against disobeying divine visitation, as quoted at length previously in chapter two; 'I am God, able to kill and make alive, wilt thou then to please the world and thy own will disobey me, who can destroy both body and soul in hell?...' Henshaw's anxieties were typical of Quaker converts, and the discernment and transcription of audible commands from a disembodied voice 'as though a voice had pronounced these words' was of course an experience which Henshaw shared with George Fox (Dodshon, 1804, pp.28-29).¹⁹ Whilst it was less common in Quaker biography of the Georgian period, Henshaw's claim was not unique. A similar instance can be found in the biography of Mary Alexander, first published in 1811, and in Bownas' biography quoted below (Alexander, 1811, p.24). The account ends with Henshaw drawn to Quakerism, whilst fearful of being 'given up to the enemy.' The final plea was a pointed one given Henshaw's lack of domestic freedom, and was directed to her family as much as it was to God; 'I hope (God) will in His good time set my soul at liberty to bear testimony to the truth and be His faithful penitent, entirely devoted to His service' (Dodshon, 1804, p.31).

Written very soon after Henshaw's first account, Law's reaction against Henshaw is paradigmatic of the materialist, pathologising critique of experiential practical divinity in the early-eighteenth century (2009, p.93). Jantzen places Law alongside Locke; Law 'might have been lifting his objections to her directly from the philosopher' (2009, p.99). Yet, contrary to Jantzen's analysis, Law's argument did not seek to discredit Henshaw's experiential piety completely as Locke presumably would have, but only to emphasise the errors of Quakerism. Henshaw's pious leadings towards self-denial were authentic religious leadings in Law's opinion, but had been perverted by Quaker doctrine:

The piety of your mind and the goodness of God towards you has begun a good work in your life ... the work of God had gone prosperously in your soul, and given you no sorrow but that of Godly repentance, had you not been tintured by the spirit of this sect. (Hobhouse, 1927, p.33)

¹⁹ Fox writes of his conversion 'When all my hopes in them and in all men were gone, so that I had nothing outwardly to help me, nor could I tell what to do, then, oh, then, I heard a voice which said, "There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition" and when I heard it, my heart did leap for joy.'

Law held out an olive branch to Henshaw's afflicted conscience, suggesting that she could indeed live a self-denying, pious life within the Established Church as in 'Miranda' of Law's *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*; an idealised model of piety, devotion and discipline (Hobhouse, 1927, p.63). Henshaw was aware of Law's advocacy of practical divinity in the style of early Oxford Methodism, and was familiar and sympathetic with his advocacy of, as Henshaw put it, the 'strictest life within the Church of England' (Dodshon, 1804, p.21). Henshaw was considering taking up residence with Law instead of the Quakers, Hobhouse has shown (1927, p.141). Law devoted several pages to persuading Henshaw that he had 'no desire to quench the Spirit of God in you, or to lead you to a religion of outward forms and dead practices' (Hobhouse, 1927, p. 67). Law's argument was not a Lockean critique of experiential religion as suggested by Jantsen but embraced inward spirituality. Law associated an awakening of conscience with 'the Spirit of God,' but thought it inconceivable that the Spirit could lead against Anglican interpretations of scripture, particularly in relation to the sacraments and female ministry²⁰ (Hobhouse, 1927, p.30).

Law chose not to follow Henshaw's account of Satanic temptation, and instead offered the explanation of afflicted nerves. Law proclaimed; 'you have no evil spirit, as that signifies a bad angel that has possession of you' (Hobhouse, 1927, pp.41-2). Law concentrated on Henshaw's somatic symptoms (which were disclosed to him by Byrom), putting her unorthodox religious views down to the passions of youth and nervous disorder; 'all the disorder, that you here mention, is just to be looked upon as meer nature, the meer workings of human, young, inexperienced, and disturbed passions' (Hobhouse, 1927, p.57). These passions were misled and aggravated by Quakerism, which had perverted 'the work of God... in your soul,' and Henshaw's pious intentions:

The frights, the sickness, the fainting's and disorders of your body, the sudden starts and convulsions of your mind, the confusions of your passions, the light and darkness which alternately arise within you, the flashes of strange terrors and damnation, thoughts of evil spirits, and fears of being possessed by them (for this I know to be your case, though not mentioned in it) - these disorders are now in your present state for this reason, because it was not a priest but the Quakers that have had the direction of your mind. (Hobhouse, 1927, p.30)

Law's response to Henshaw did not challenge the possibility of experiential religion, or suggest moral failure; Henshaw's 'young, inexperienced' passions and youthful nerves had

²⁰ Quakers opposed all sacramental practice, and were the first Protestant movement to allow female ministry.

been misled by poor counsel from the Quakers, perverting Henshaw's keen piety and authentic leadings of the Spirit. At times Law construed Henshaw's irregular symptoms in such a way to undermine her religious claims; regarding Henshaw hearing a disembodied voice, Law concluded that 'there was no extraordinary voice, but only your own disturbed mind that spoke to itself' (Hobhouse, 1927, p.47). Nevertheless, Law provided a narrative that allowed for Henshaw to continue her practice of self-denying practical divinity within the Established Church.

Henshaw composed an additional section to her narrative in December 1736. There is no clear indication that this second section was a response to Law, but Henshaw certainly added clarification to the areas in which Law criticised her, particularly Law's opinion that Henshaw's unbalanced body/mind was the cause of her hearing the voice of God. Henshaw reversed Law's formulation to present the auditory experience as valid, and to contend that her bodily afflictions arose as a result of not heeding these commands. Job 33 is used to justify this position and proves to be remarkably apt to the situation. Henshaw pointed out that, as for Job, 'God spake once, nay twice, but I perceived not, in a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep fell upon me' (Dodshon, 1804, p.31; Job 33:14-15). Henshaw then moved to Job 33:20, using this continuity to add credence to her claim of a causal link between spiritual disobedience and bodily affliction:

He hath chastened me with a multitude of pains and afflictions, so that my life abhorreth bread, and my soul dainty meat, because I have rebelled against the will of the Lord, I have not followed the commandments of my God. (Dodshon, 1804, p.32)

The verses allude to Henshaw's physical condition, as Job 33:21-22 continues, 'flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen; and his bones that were not seen stick out, Yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave.' This aspect is not mentioned until Henshaw's reflections of 1744, which suggest that Henshaw's life was indeed endangered by a loss of appetite, as will be shown. Rather than mentioning this in detail, possession by an 'evil spirit' was introduced to explain non-specific suicidal inclinations in this 1736 account:

God has, for reasons best known to Himself – I hope for his own glory, been pleased to permit me for a year or more to be grieved, nay even possessed with an evil spirit: whose power over me for some time was so absolute, that it drove me to the utmost extremity and despair. It was with the greatest difficulty that I strove to restrain myself from taking my own life....God, casting an eye of mercy and compassion on my lost and deplorable condition, has miraculously preserved my life from the enemies power... (Dodshon, 1804, p.33)

The 'evil spirit' brought about a complete loss of faith and subsequent suicidality. Henshaw steadfastly resisted with the help of God's mercy, in this narrative.

For reasons which remain unclear, Henshaw was able to convince her guardian uncle to allow her to reside with a family of local Quakers very soon after this additional account of 1736 was written. Law's ministrations were rejected, and upon taking up residence in a Quaker household, Henshaw found herself restored to health within 'three or four months' to the surprise of all those around her, having 'waded for about the space of two years, through unspeakable afflictions of body and mind' (Dodshon, 1804, pp.34-35). Henshaw's final reflection on this period came from the 1744 publication of her epistle *Sinners in Zion*. An introduction was added to the previous two accounts, all of which appeared in print for the first time. This introduction contained the bluntest admission of Henshaw's suicidal restrictive eating. It was again attributed to a diabolical cause, yet the reasoning behind this suicidality was presented differently once more:

Through the suggestions of Satan, I esteemed myself utterly abandoned and forsaken by God. And in such a circumstance, dreading the continuation of my days on earth, lest I should be suffered to fall into evil practices, I earnestly sought death and resisted unto blood striving against sin! My life became a burden unto me when bereft of the light of life, I refused my natural food, thinking I might by that means gradually compass bodily dissolution, with the least imputation of reproach.
(Dodshon, 1804, p.19)

In 1736 Henshaw wrote of restraining herself from suicide, fighting an impulse from an 'evil spirit,' with the help of God. Yet in this version from 1744 Henshaw portrayed herself as having rationally decided on suicide. According to this passage, Satan did not tempt Henshaw directly to suicide but Henshaw took a proactive stance in spiritual warfare by seeking death, wishing to die in order to resist sin. The reference to Hebrews 12:4 ('Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin...') legitimised this position. Henshaw claimed she did indeed resist, and portrayed herself as carrying out the scriptural command in doing as much as it takes to resist sin, 'unto blood' in earnestly seeking death, rather than falling into 'evil practices.' Not realising her self-perception as 'utterly abandoned and forsaken' was made in error, under temptation, Henshaw 'earnestly sought death' as a rational act of piety, in contrast to the previous account, in which Henshaw 'strove to restrain myself from taking my own life.' Henshaw revised the previous depiction from 1736 (possession by 'an evil spirit,') to suggest she did not at any time lose faithful religious orientation and capacity for self-control, despite being under the influence of Satan. In this latest version from 1744 quoted above, Satan introduced 'suggestions' that

became the premise upon which Henshaw's pious reasoning for suicide were based.

Henshaw continued:

But my relations, especially my dear sister, having a watchful eye over me and being concerned lest I should by my abstinence shorten my life, obliged me to take food; but it was so little they could prevail with me to take, that they said, and I have often since thought, that it is a wonder I pined not away; which was what I secretly aimed at. (Dodshon, 1804, p.19)

Whereas, in the 1736 account, Henshaw exercised self-restraint herself by resisting the temptation of an 'evil spirit' to suicide, the reflections of 1744 attribute survival to family support. In the 1736 version the devil tempted Henshaw to take her life, yet in 1744 Henshaw sought death, starving herself in order to resist the Devil. A further explanation was used by Henshaw through Job 33 in the first 1736 account; 'he hath chastened me with multitude of pains and afflictions so that my life abhorreth bread,' implying that Henshaw's physical condition was a direct chastisement from God.

These three differing reflections of the same episode were published in the single pamphlet of 1744, and again when the pamphlet was republished on three occasions after Henshaw's death in 1794, 1803 and 1804. It can only be concluded that the internal coherence of the narrative in relation to these afflictions was not important. It is a dense conversion narrative, atypical due to its several chronological jumps, and in its role as a prelude to Henshaw's epistle to the Quaker community, *A Serious Call in Tender Compassion to the Sinners in Zion*. Yet this lack of coherence cannot be taken for a religiously worded interpretation and apologetic for unusual behaviour. The episode was an integral part of Henshaw's religious authority and identity, and the severity of this episode was used to demonstrate Henshaw's religious credibility. She commented, 'as one that has gone through various dispensations, and witnessed the terrors of the Lord for sin, I feel a pressure on my spirit to reason with, and if possible, to persuade, my fellow creatures' (Dodshon, 1804, p.45).

Despite this dramatic conversion, Henshaw's trials were not over upon becoming a minister. She was subject to recurrent 'religious depression' until the end of her life according to Hobhouse (1927, p.183), although it would be well to see these as part of Henshaw's religious milieu, given what we have seen in the forgoing chapters. The 1744 pamphlet recalled a further period, described as her 'deepest trials' in Henshaw's obituary (Dodshon, 1804, p.42), in which several more ways of relating to religious affliction are to be found. The focus this time was the relationship between somatic and spiritual affliction.

'In the course of this latter affliction,' Henshaw wrote, 'I was brought very low, both in body and mind, and bewailed the loss of my loved one [a feeling of intimacy with the divine] day and night' (Dodshon, 1804, p.37). Henshaw portrayed herself as being punished by God for spiritual pride, as 'the boaster was not then so entirely slain in me,' and also as a martyr, whose afflictions arose not only as providential chastisement, but to serve as an example to others; 'I waded thro' such deep waters, not, I believe, on my own account altogether: but that many might hear and fear, and give glory to Him' (Dodshon, 1804, p.36). Private correspondence from the same period echoed Henshaw's published belief that her physical and spiritual ailments had a supernatural cause. Indeed, Henshaw's correspondence repeated the themes explored in chapter two, and showed that she doubted her salvation years after becoming a minister:

Whether I may ever be favoured with redemption is yet unknown to me and must be left to the good pleasure of Him who alone can cure the wounds of my spirit, which is the cause of (and far exceeds) the bodily disposition I labour under. Therefore to Him I look, well knowing from former experience 'tis vain to look or expect help from any other.
(Dodshon, 1804, p.167)

This exclusively spiritual interpretation was not shared by all in the Quaker community. Whereas William Law used nervous affliction to undermine Henshaw's religious views, the Quaker doctor John Fothergill wrote offering the consolation, that 'some mixture of bodily indisposition' may be connected to these trials, and that Henshaw may be 'teasing herself overmuch,' before offering the standard advice to pursue a 'reverent stillness of mind' (Hobhouse, 1927, pp.166-7). Fothergill recommended Henshaw to board with Grace Chambers, from whom another letter relating to this episode survives. Chambers is an intriguing character, noted as an accomplished Quaker minister and as 'one who tended the sick and cared for those who were sorrowful and troubled in mind' according to the Quaker historian Gil Skidmore (2003, p.26).²¹

In contrast to Henshaw's assessment of her afflictions, Chambers' take of Henshaw's situation in 1743 combined bodily and spiritual causes:

She has been quite overdone, in both body and spirits, and the fever coming upon her in that low condition was beyond what her constitution could undergo without being borne down below measure, which is not

²¹ Chambers is noted for 'skill in surgery' and 'devotion in tending the sick' according to Hobhouse (1927, p.167 fn1). Both Hobhouse and Skidmore seem to be working off the same document which neither of them reference.

easily recruited, there being need of both inward and outward helps.
(Skidmore, 2003, p.31)

Chambers placed Henshaw on a regime of bathing, a typical remedy for nervous affliction. Henshaw was advised to bathe 'first in salt water and then in fresh and began in the salt this morning.' It is not clear whether this treatment was prescribed by Chambers or by a physician (perhaps by Dr. Fothergill). After describing Henshaw's bathing regime, Chambers followed with an expression of faith in providence once more:

She can do it [bathe] very well so that I am not doubtful but that a blessing upon our endeavours will in due time prove effectual, though we poor creatures have often great need of patience... As divine providence has provided for both our souls and bodies so I conclude we ought to revive both in as much faith and thankfulness as possible we can...
(Skidmore, 2003, p.31)

Henshaw's compliance with this regime suggests that she accepted the medicalisation of her ailments to an extent, despite presenting a wholly spiritual view in the above quote. Therefore, in Henshaw's pamphlet which was reprinted several times shortly after the York Retreat was established, somatic afflictions could be easily incorporated into narratives of providence and divine chastisement.

Jane Pearson

From the variety of conflicting and overlapping narratives associated with Henshaw's tract, we now turn to Jane Pearson's *Sketches of Piety* of 1817. *Sketches of Piety* is a heavily edited posthumous biography, derived from Pearson's memoranda and correspondence. It is worthy of our attention for several reasons. It offers a vivid account of the dramatic afflictions that could feature in conversion narratives, making an emphatic case for the religious interpretation of such episodes in 1817, a year after the religious melancholy of William Cowper's *Adelphi* was found to be unpalatable to popular taste as we will later see, and a year after William and Samuel Tuke exercised their newfound reputation by contributing to the *Parliamentary Select Committee Report into the State of Madhouses*.

It cannot be said that *Sketches of Piety* was an apologetic for behaviour fresh in the memory or under the public gaze, as Pearson hardly ever travelled as a minister and was unknown outside the Quaker community. Pearson's conversion as a young woman was barely in living memory, and *Sketches of Piety* was not produced by family members, as was often the case with commemorative Quaker biography. Pearson was widowed and

survived by two granddaughters only. *Sketches of Piety* was co-authored by the socially engaged Quaker poet Thomas Wilkinson, friend of William Wordsworth and editor of the Anglican abolitionist Thomas Clarkson's rambling but sympathetic *Portraiture of Quakerism* (1806). *Sketches of Piety* was published by Samuel Tuke's brother in law, the printer William Alexander, who published Samuel Tuke's *Description of the Retreat* four years previously. Henry Tuke's correspondence contains several admiring references to Pearson's edifying presence and advice, as in later life her home in Whitehaven, Cumbria became a regular stopping point for travelling Quaker ministers (BIA, TUKE/1/5/1/3/58; TUKE/1/5/1/5/11; TUKE/1/12/1/5/40). *Sketches of Piety* is therefore remarkably proximate to the York Retreat. Given Pearson's obscurity outside of the Quaker fold and lack of surviving family, it seems that *Sketches of Piety* was produced for no other reason than to remember and learn lessons from this long-lived, much-loved and spiritually accomplished member of the Quaker community.

Wilkinson introduced *Sketches of Piety* by pronouncing that 'she has, in the sincerity of her heart' shared with the reader her 'mental trials' that arose as 'the conscientious mind, longing to be united with divine purity, has sometimes sore conflicts with the evil principle within.' The 'greatest of all' of these trials, Wilkinson declared, 'is like death' (1817, pp.vi-vii). Likewise in the conclusion he reminded the reader of the need to be born again in the Spirit; being born into membership of the Society of Friends is not sufficient for salvation (1817, p.97). Pearson also wrote of her hope that *Sketches of Piety* would be instructive and inspiring for those undergoing the trials of Quaker religious life, 'hoping it may be of service to some poor, tossed, afflicted, disconsolate, tempted mind' (Wilkinson, 1817, p.13). Allusions to self-death and spiritual rebirth were banded about so much in Georgian Quakerism and in experiential reformed theology in general that they became commonplace, but in *Sketches of Piety* these platitudes were applied to circumstances in which the protagonist did indeed come close to physical death. This melancholic episode was presented as powerful religious experience, twenty years after the opening of the York Retreat.

Born in 1734/5 into a Quaker family, Pearson described how she initially balked when the demands of her calling to the ministry were intuitively revealed to her at the age of seventeen or eighteen. 'I will never do so' she exclaimed, in reaction to realizing that 'if I continued thus inward with God, I should soon have to speak to others' (Wilkinson, 1817, p.17). After turning away from the spiritual life, Pearson married 'a choice husband' but conscience soon caught up with her like a 'heart piercing sword:'

My undone condition was present with me day and night, when awake. Indeed I slept but little; sleep departed from my eyes and slumber from my eyelids; so that when night came I wished for morning. (Wilkinson, 1817, p.19)

Preluded as it was with a refusal to follow the Spirit into ministry, Pearson's period of despair was presented as an integral part of the spiritual journey, causally linked to her reluctance to become a minister. Pearson endured 'two sabbaths of years in which I feared I should never get to the better side' as she 'neither eat nor slept much,' occasioning 'a visible decline in my health.' Acknowledging the ambiguity of the situation, Pearson professed that, 'I was just a wonder to behold, the people wondering what had befallen me' (Wilkinson, 1817, p.19). What had befallen her was recounted through scripture, in this account published sixty years after the event:

I ate my bread weeping, and mingled my drink with my tears; I was as amongst fiery serpents, and as in the jaws of a devouring adversary, who was exulting and darting into my mind, that the next temptation would sweep me away: and things were hurried into my mind, one after another as swift as thought, and as dark as the darkest night. Oh! That my troubles were written with an iron pen, and lead in the rock for ever! For surely a hundredth part is far beyond my power of description. (Wilkinson, 1817, p.20)

Far from being beyond description, *Sketches of Piety* used scripture very effectively to convey and legitimize the episode, by locating Pearson on a par with biblical protagonists, and her battles 'as in' the scriptural precedent. Paraphrasing Psalm 102:9 in reference to loss of appetite, 'I ate my bread weeping' is fitting for the visible decline in health narrated by Pearson immediately before; the line quoted is preceded in the psalm by 'I forget to eat my bread... my bones cleave to my skin' (Psalm 102:4-5). The verses also have implications of being lifted up and cast down (Psalm 102:10) due to divine 'indignation' and 'wrath,' and are therefore appropriate given the recurrent Quaker anxiety of incurring divine retribution by disobeying the Holy Spirit. Having touched upon physical ailments, the passage moves to the spiritual troubles from whence they arose. Placing herself 'as amongst' the fiery serpents of Numbers 21:6, Pearson thereby implicated herself of 'speaking against the Lord.' Similarly she was 'as in' the jaws of the adversary of 1 Peter 5:8 for failing to 'be sober, be vigilant,' again showing despair and regret within the context of an unwillingness to follow her spiritual intuition and become a Quaker minister, and a subsequent failure to regain the level of tranquillity which she felt was required to do so. In this regard, Pearson's anxiety and unsettledness is conveyed; a 'hurried' mind 'darting' to 'swift' temptations, being both the cause and the sign of distance from God for pious Quakers, compared to the

'stayed' and 'still' mind, indicative of grace. Pearson's sense of immutable sinfulness and abandonment were likened to the sins of Judah in Jeremiah 17:1, 'written with a pen of iron... graven upon the tablet of their heart.'

Pearson's wish for death was then introduced, in keeping with several other accounts of religious despair in which death was preferable to a life of sin. The inflection in Pearson's narrative differed slightly from Henshaw's. Pearson wished to die under this providential 'dispensation' of physical and mental affliction, thinking salvation may still be open if she were soon to pass away, rather than continue living as a sinner:

The dispensation was so severe, that I could not tell how to live under it; so that I wished the Almighty would, by an act of his power, snatch me from mortals, though it might be by an accidental death; for I still believed that if he did take me, it would be in mercy. So earnest was I after holiness and virtue, that I often besought Him, that he would never suffer me to sin against him. (Wilkinson, 1817, pp.20-1)

Finally she compared her situation with the precedent of Job (42:6) and insisted that she remained rational throughout this entire episode, with a statement that stands alone in its own paragraph: 'I now abhorred myself as in dust and ashes, because the enemy was thus permitted to assault me. But through all, my intellects were preserved clear, and my reason sound' (Wilkinson, 1817, p.21). Without denying the questionable behaviours, Pearson defended her sanity and her behaviour as a reasonable response to her spiritual predicament; she was paying the price for having ignored the Holy Spirit. Indeed, she feared she had sinned against the Spirit, and expressed this as a revelation from 'the devourer' rather than the divine:

I turned to prayer to the Judge of all the earth, making an appeal that He knew I was not wicked, beseeching that he would rebuke the devourer for my sake, and set me at my liberty to serve him: it was darted as quick as lightning: "There is no God!" Oh! How then did I mourn! Believing there was none who had the least remains of good that was ever tried in this manner. I thought I was now sinning against the Holy Ghost, and that I was the most wretched creature upon earth; the enemy followed hard with his bitter whispering: "To what dost thou pray? There is no God" (Wilkinson, 1817, pp. 21-22).

Like Henshaw, Pearson also exhibited ambiguity over the role of the Devil. In the above extract we see that 'the enemy' was 'permitted' to assault Pearson, demonstrating a long-established formulation of Puritan despair; that temptations could be almost synonymous with a 'dispensation' of God's chastisement. Within a theological system which placed emphasis on divine sovereignty, the 'enemy' could only be 'permitted' to act when divine

protection was withdrawn, and God could 'rebuke' the 'enemy' whenever God pleased. God and Satan united against religious melancholics to chastise, tempt and afflict at the same time. Whilst Pearson felt 'the Lord's hand in judgement against the sinful, impure part in me' she also reckoned 'the enemy followed me closely with most grievous besetments; things that my very soul loathed would be charged upon me to be my own' (Wilkinson, 1817, p.19). Pearson well surmised the ineffability of this period of mental, physical and spiritual distress, as she was not able to distinguish 'what arose from the weaknesses of nature' and 'what proceeded from the enemy and his grievous insinuations.' She recalled 'everything in me appeared out of order, and a confused mass' (Wilkinson, 1817, pp. 19-20).

Similarly to Henshaw's narratives, Pearson's narrative was not an apologetic for irregular behaviour but actually gave weight to Pearson's spiritual authority. This episode of despair and restrictive eating was entitled 'the deep inward conflicts she endured for not resigning herself for Divine disposal, till she was made willing to obey' in the chapter contents page of the biography (Wilkinson, 1817, p.13). Later in the text Pearson returned to her conversion in order to defend her religious discernment, after narrating an unusual transport and vision; 'lest any hereafter should think I had exceeded the bounds of a finite creature... let them call to mind my deep exercises, hard servitude and bitter bondage... I was then so marred, that I became a wonder to my contemporaries' (Wilkinson, 1817, p.81). Thus Pearson's embodied spiritual battles and her suicidal thoughts played a crucial role in her conversion narrative and her subsequent religious authority, as Quakers continued to appeal to the gravitas of religious melancholy during the early nineteenth century.

Secret Conversions

The coherence of well composed retrospective narratives such Pearson's *Sketches of Piety* belie the uncertainty which ran through conversions, and the ambiguous nature of these episodes within Quaker communities as they became more uncommon in the Georgian era. Due to these factors, budding ministers often chose to keep their spiritual anxieties to themselves. Pearson 'never opened her case' to others during her conversion, 'for I believed whoever I opened my mind to, would believe I had been guilty of some gross thing, and therefore was a castaway' (Wilkinson, 1817, p.22). John Wigham kept his trials secret during his calling to ministry so to not discourage others:

All my grievous struggles were however in secret; none knew them but the Lord alone: for I was afraid to let it be seen that I was at all exercised about religion, lest I should fall, and dishonour the cause, and prove a stumbling-block in the way of others. (Wigham, 1842, p.5)

Rebecca Jones also chose to keep her trials secret, although her reasons for doing so are not clear. Like Henshaw and Pearson, Jones also described sleeplessness and restrictive eating; 'I was reduced to the brink of the grave. I went alone — I kept silence — I refrained from my natural food, and my sleep departed from me' (Allinson, 1849, p.12). Jones wrote an anonymous letter to the travelling minister Catherine Payton during this conviction in which Jones feared she has missed her day of visitation, as quoted in chapter two (Allinson, 1849, p.6). Fearful of how her request for counsel would be interpreted, Jones recalled her anxieties in approaching Payton; 'I was afraid to sign my name to it. I watched an opportunity and slipped it into her hand, just as she was going into meeting.' Payton responded with consolation, but agreed that Jones's anxieties should be kept secret from those who do not understand, despite being in the midst of Quaker Philadelphia. Payton added as a postscript 'I had rather thou kept this to thyself; and be sure, be careful how thou tellest thy condition to such who have no knowledge of it' (Allinson, 1849, pp.8-9).

Martha Routh's conviction in the late 1760s demonstrates the confusion which this secrecy could cause. Like Pearson, Routh was initially unwilling to enter into the disciplined life required of a Quaker minister. Routh wrote that 'strait was the gate, and narrow the way' but that she was 'unwilling to enter on those terms' (Routh, 1822, p.24). The ailments which followed Routh's missed call to ministry left her bed-bound and close to death. However she did not disclose this turmoil to the Quaker community, keeping 'as close as was possible from any discovery on my part' until;

my health became so impaired, that I was scarcely able to stand; and at length I was confined to my chamber and bed; a skillful physician having done his utmost for me to little purpose, and those who kindly watched with me in the night season, thought I could not continue long. (Routh, 1822, p.26)

It is curious, however, that ministers were aware of her distress leading up to this crisis; 'those who came from far, as well as those who were near, clearly pointed out my state in public ministry; and some of them told me afterwards, they could have laid their hands on my head,' Routh recalled (1822, p.26). Likewise Routh's sister, 'had been fully aware, with many others of my friends, of the deep exercise I had long been under', but, 'as I had never opened the subject to her, she was backward and fearful of mentioning her thoughts to me.' No counsel was offered until Routh requested, but Routh felt unable to ask due to

doubts over her own religious credentials. Upon meeting with local ministers Routh found she 'could not utter a word' leading her to think it 'best to have my lips sealed with silence, as long as I could endure it' (Routh, 1822, pp.26-8).

An explanation for this apparent breakdown in communication is to be found in the Quaker view of the sovereignty of the divine in the salvific process, and the total inability of the 'creature' to do anything from its own side. In 1783 this passivity prevented Sarah Tuke Grubb, when traveling in the ministry, from consoling a potential minister. As Tuke Grubb wrote to her long-time confidant Tabitha Middleton:²²

S. Lee has been since about midsummer without making any appearances in meetings till last 4th day – she has I believe waded through very deep exercise of mind so that I have often been afraid about her when left to herself – once at a monthly meeting she kneeled down and said nothing which added to her distress – I have all along felt a great fear of meddling with her, lest I should interfere with the dispensations intended for her good so that she has not received encouragement or discouragement from me – it appears to be an awful thing to tamper with divine anointing and as I trust she is under the fatherly care of our heavenly Shepherd. (BIA TUKE 1/4/1/4/37)

Likewise from the perspective of a convert, Sarah's mother Mary Maria Tuke reprimanded herself for the same reason, for seeking consolation from Quaker meetings during her conversion. She attended 'hoping to partake of their Light, having totally extinguished my own,' but;

thereby rendered myself under the power of Satan, who now reigns in me, and daily subdues me... for we must receive our sufficiency from him alone who can be a Redeemer of and mediator for man; for no one can help his brother in the marvellous and godly work of regeneration, neither can we quicken our own souls. (Tuke, 1860, Vol.1, p.48)

John Griffith also thought it irreligious to ask for help, even though his struggles were obvious to those around him. Griffith's conversion took place in Pennsylvania in the mid-1720s. Upon becoming a minister he eventually settled in Chelmsford, England. After his passing, his biography was duly published on both sides of the Atlantic in 1780. During conversion he thought himself 'forsaken' (Griffiths, 1780, p.15) and went through a period of despair and restrictive eating, which he tried to keep secret from the Quaker community:

²² Tabitha Middleton was the mother of the retreat patient Hannah Middleton, to be discussed in chapter six.

My friends took notice that I was in uncommon distress. The family in which I then lived, as they could not be altogether ignorant, though I concealed it as much as I could, of my wandering about in the fields, &c. at nights, and much refraining from food (my deep distress being also very legibly imprinted on my countenance) feared, as I afterwards understood, lest I should be tempted to lay violent hands on myself. I was forbid in myself to tell my condition to any, as that would be seeking relief from without; a very improper and unworthy thing. (Griffiths, 1780, p.17)

According to his retrospective narrative, Griffiths mistook Satanic temptation for divine guidance, as Satan transformed into an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14), causing Griffiths to restrict his diet and to be generally over-scrupulous:

This subtle transformer, taking advantage of the ardency of my mind to press forward in this necessary concern, suggested that my work would be much easier in obtaining a complete victory over evil, were I to refrain for a time from some of the necessaries of life, particularly from eating, and taking my natural rest in sleep, except just as much as would preserve life; and that I must constantly keep my hands employed in business, as idleness is the nursery of vice; neither was he wanting to bring scripture, and passages out of other religious books, to confirm these requirings. I then really believed it was the voice of Christ in my mind commanding these things, and therefore endeavoured to be faithful therein, till my natural strength abated, and I found my body grew much weaker thereby. Greatly distressed I was, when at any time I fell short of what I apprehended to be my duty in these respects, he that required this service being a hard master; though he had power to deceive, yet he could not give me faith that I should overcome. My views in those days were indeed very discouraging, my poor afflicted soul being almost sunk into despair. (Griffiths, 1780, pp.18-19)

Likewise Mary Maria Tuke fell into abstinence during her conversion but was commended by Elizabeth Wheeler (William Tuke's daughter) for seeing the error of her ways. Wheeler recalled:

She was for a while equally abstemious in her food so much so that her constitution (which is very delicate) apparently suffered, but she has seen into the impropriety of that and many other extremes. (BIA TUKE/2/2/4/1/1)

Finally Griffiths was counselled by a minister from the local meeting:

He strictly inquired concerning my inward condition, informing me that friends were much concerned about me, as it was very obvious I was under some uncommon temptation. I was at first very unwilling to open my state to him, however he at length prevailed, and took the opportunity to shew me that I was under a gross delusion of Satan. (Griffiths, 1780, p.19)

It is striking that despite his 'despair,' and his obvious physical condition, Griffith, like Pearson, Jones, Mary Maria Tuke and Martha Routh, felt unable to approach his community, family or religious leaders for help. Griffith's family were 'not altogether ignorant,' and afterward told him they feared he would lay 'violent hands' upon himself. Yet they also felt unable to intervene. Only the intervention of a local minister, himself reputedly following a leading from God, facilitated Griffiths' recovery and the commencement of his career as a Quaker minister (Griffiths, 1780, pp.18-19).

At the eleventh-hour Martha Routh finally disclosed the reason and nature of her afflictions 'for the first time' to her sister, as she sat 'bathed in tears' at Routh's bedside, lamenting 'I am likely to lose thee, and be left alone.' So moved was Routh by her sister that she revealed the source of her troubles:

My dear sister! My sickness is not designed by the great Physician of value for the death of the body; if that would have been accepted as a peace offering, thankfully could I have resigned it: but resignation of will, to the Divine will, in a way more trying to my nature, is what is required, and what I have been struggling under, till I am brought thus low. (Routh, 1822, p.27)

After this disclosure, the Quaker community validated the religious nature of Routh's afflictions through a bedside vigil, described by Routh as a 'supplication' with 'my nearly concerned friends, for my preservation and help.' Routh was restored to health in a recovery which 'became speedy, beyond all expectations' despite being initially too weak to stand unaided (Routh, 1822, p.28). Shortly afterwards, Routh became a Quaker minister.

For a number of reasons therefore, Quaker communities did not automatically offer support and validation to those undergoing these afflictions. Manifesting in such a visible somatic fashion, the religious nature of these afflictions was not always obvious, and support was not immediately forthcoming. A doctor was called for Routh, the community 'wondered what had befallen' Pearson, and Rebecca Jones was encouraged to keep her trials secret. Griffith, Routh and Mary Maria Tuke were reluctant to seek guidance. Only vague details survive relating to William Tuke's conviction, through his later correspondence to Esther Tuke in which he wrote that 'Having given way to the convicting power of truth I was extremely humbled for some time... A manifest alteration appeared in me and many thought that something was the matter' (Sessions, 1987, pp.16-17). Similarly, Samuel Bownas recalled that his Quaker family did not know what to make of him upon his conviction:

I went home, with a heavy heart, and could neither eat nor sleep as I used to do, but my work never succeeded better in my hands than it did at this time, nor my mind never less in it; but my conduct, as well as countenance, was much altered, so that several in the family were doubtful that I should fall into a kind of melancholy distraction. (Bownas, 1795, p.3-4)

Likewise Samuel Neale was accused of madness, by his worldly minded 'associates' (i.e. not 'Friends,' although Neal was born a Quaker) in 1750s Dublin, during a conviction in which he was 'very much brought down and humbled.' 'My associates would cry out, "This is a religious fit, — come let us take a coach and go to the Park, Black-Rock [a venue for sea bathing], or some such place, and drive it away"' (Neale, 1806, p.6).

Evidently there was scope for conversions to be misinterpreted or for events to go awry in a myriad of ways. Martha Routh, Rebecca Jones, Fanny Henshaw and Jane Pearson regarded themselves as being brought to near death, and it is curious that Routh's sister feared she might die whilst simultaneously, according to the narrative, suspecting in private that she was undergoing religious conviction.

Recovering the voices of converts who passed away part-way through conversion is problematic due to the selective and generic nature of Quaker biography and eulogy. Perhaps they would have passed away 'without the least imputation of reproach' as Henshaw put it as she considered starving herself to death, or by some natural accident, as Pearson once hoped. John Churchman's journal tells of an incident in which a woman became sick and died after her Quaker husband prevented her following her calling as an itinerant minister. Like Fanny Henshaw, she was barred from ministry due to limited domestic freedoms. Churchman tells how the Quaker minister Peter Gardner warned the husband:

Thy wife had a concern to visit churches in another country beyond the sea, but thou wouldst let her leave: so she shall be taken away from thee. And behold! The Lord's hand is against thee, and thou shalt be blasted in whatsoever thou doest, and reduced to want thy bread.

The husband did not heed these warnings and in due course the prophecies came to pass:

In about two weeks afterwards the man's wife before mentioned died, as Peter had foretold. At that time the same man had three ships at sea: his son was master of one; a second son was on board another; and in their voyages they were all wrecked or foundered, and the cargoes chiefly lost: his two sons and several of the hands being drowned. The man soon after broke, and could not pay his debts, but came to want bread before he died; though he had been in good circumstances, if not very rich. (Churchman, 1829, pp.226-229)

There is no doubt in this narrative that the wife's death was an act of divine vengeance, yet we only know of it in the context of a pedagogic tale of punishment on the husband. The wife's voice at the time of death, her religious aspirations and indeed her name, all also lost to eternity.

A Quaker Suicide - The Death of William Crotch

Our modern sensibilities associate 'spirituality' and religious practice with well-being and personal fulfilment. Yet in the eighteenth century, experiential religion was a high stakes game in which suffering was par for the course, and extreme distress or suicidality was not unusual, as Hindmarsh says (2005, p.276). We have seen that several Quaker ministers professed to suicidal thoughts or came close to death during conversion. Due to the protracted nature of Georgian Quaker spiritual battles, these religious doubts could continue even for well-regarded itinerant ministers. Samuel Bownas' biography narrated an instance in which he was tempted to drown himself whilst itinerant in the ministry. Bownas heard a disembodied voice during worship 'as if a voice had spoken it intelligibly,' which accused him of preaching and travelling in the ministry without the aid of the Inner Light. Ministers spent considerable time agonising over this issue, as their journeys in the ministry were supposed to be entirely led by God. This voice accused Bownas 'Thou runs, and God has not sent thee; thou speaks, but God doth not speak by thee; therefore thou shalt not profit the people.' This led to a train of thoughts which culminated in Bownas ruminating on how to best bring his life to an end; 'having considered of sundry ways to take, at last this presented, to make away with myself in some river or pond, as though it had been an accident, and this would cover all.' Realising these to be diabolical temptations, Bownas, 'prayed with that fervency, that few under the roof but were melted into tears, and it was such a time as I never had before nor since in prayer' (Bownas, 1795, p.13).

For obvious reasons, posthumous biographies of ministers who actually committed suicide have not come to light. It simply was not in the interests of any family to record a loved one passing away in religious distress, let alone by suicide. However, the suicide of the Quaker minister William Crotch gave rise to several responses within the Quaker community, as will now be explored. William Crotch of Norwich (date of birth unknown) was convinced to Quakerism aged only thirteen, according to his own account which was republished in *The British Friend* of November 1847 (Vol.5, No.11, p.291). Crotch passed away in Philadelphia in 1806 during a transatlantic journey in the ministry. His personal papers were not

published posthumously, and are not to be found. A brief allusion is made to Crotch in Crabtree's *Holy Nation* which states that Crotch 'committed suicide after being accused of financial and sexual irregularities' (2015, p.23). Although no source is cited to support this claim, it appears that Crotch was indeed implicated in wrongdoing whilst itinerant in the ministry. He may have made false accusations of misconduct against other members of the community, or may have conducted himself poorly in a theological debate with a Methodist. In any case, Crotch was accused of misconduct, and unlike Bownas, was not able to shake off his fear of having mis-stepped. The section will explore the diverse reactions to this event, which sent shockwaves through the transatlantic Quaker community.

Crotch was well known to the Tuke family, having travelled in the ministry with Henry Tuke in England and Scotland in the 1790s and with Ann Alexander (William Tuke's daughter) in the United States in 1805. Alexander's reflections on Crotch's suicide survive, as do those of the diarist James Jenkins. Crotch's suicide is also documented in correspondence from Philadelphian Quakers, in an untitled, anonymous Quaker manuscript from a Philadelphian Quaker, dated 24th December 1806²³ and also in a non-Quaker account entitled *Memorandum on the Death of William Crotch* (Lloyd and Hopkins, 1810, pp. 84-85). Some saw the suicide as a result of nervous affliction, whilst for some it was evidence of Crotch's backsliding into sin. Others said that saintly Crotch was removed by God for the good of other Quakers, so that they may worship God rather than Crotch, or conversely that Crotch was not suited to the ministry and became out of his depth, as his natural talents were inflated by overzealous supporters.

The *Journal of Friends Historical Society* illustrates the problems attendant to researching suicide in religious communities, by providing the following account of Crotch's passing: 'He arrived in New York in a poor state of health, but was able to pay some remarkable family visits and engage in other service in Philadelphia and elsewhere. Surrounded by the tender care of Friends of Philadelphia, he departed this life in that city in 1805' (1918, p.11). Whether by accident or design, this version of events is demonstrably untrue. A graphic account survives in the non-Quaker pamphlet *Memorandum on the Death of William Crotch*, which is confirmed by the Irish Quaker diarist James Jenkins, who wrote that Crotch

²³ The manuscript *A Quaker Suicide in Philadelphia* is currently held at Blackwell's Rare Books, Oxford, UK. It was reprinted in full in *The British Friend*, Vol.5, No.10, October 1847, pp.259-261. The verbatim version in *The British Friend* will be cited throughout.

'severed his wind-pipe with a razor' (Frost, 1984, p.448). The correspondence of John Shallcross, a Philadelphian Quaker gives the additional detail that Crotch 'secreted a Razor' on his person despite having everything taken from him 'by which injury could be produced on himself,' (including his box of razors) the evening before. (John Shallcross to Ann Ferris FHL MISC MSS Box 19 dated 23rd Dec 1806). The *Memorandum* states:

On the 20th of the 12th month; Dec. 1806, the day he was to embark for London, early in the morning of the day, say 8 o'clock, he came down stairs, went into the necessary, fastened the door, and then and there cut his throat with a razor. His long stay in the house created uneasiness, and on breaking open the door they found him still alive, weltering in his blood; but he could not articulate, and died in a few minutes after. He was interred the same day in the Quakers' burial ground, corner of Fourth and Arch streets, in this city.... Thus died William Crotch, a man who was almost deified, and who, but a few months before, was viewed as a prophet amongst the Quaker society. (Lloyd and Hopkins, 1810 pp. 84-85)

Letters from the Philadelphia Quakers James Bringhurst and Benjamin Ferris provide contemporary reactions on Crotch's passing. In a letter dated 16th December 1806 Bringhurst described the event which left the community reeling:

I made this addition with a mind filled with deep anguish and distress, poor William is no longer in mutability. The great persecution he suffered was too much for his weak nerves & led him into a state of derangement, most of this City amongst friends is in sorrow & mourning perhaps but few excepted as it may be in some parts eastward. I shall be disappointed if it didn't fall heavy on some who had a hand in bringing it on... there seem'd a general deep mourning amongst friends, a greater cause I believe never was in this City, he is not much out of my mind day or night when awake – it's a very sorrowful and mournful case. (FHL MSS/046 Box 2, 16th December 1806 to Micajah Collins)

Bringhurst is clearly sympathetic to Crotch, providing an explanation based on Crotch's oversensitive nerves, and apportioning blame to those who spread unspecified rumours. Another letter from Bringhurst dated 18th December, two days before Crotch's death, was more explicit about Crotch's state of mind before his death and takes a more religious tone. Bringhurst confessed to his correspondent Stephen Gould that although being 'very advanced in years' Bringhurst found Crotch's condition 'rather new and at times distressing' and 'sorrowfully afflicting,' the reason being that 'a man who was heretofore so eminently favoured as Wm Crotch was, to be now laid so low as he is at present.' Crotch's low mental state was due to religious misconduct, despite Crotch being 'very careful, only might have been a little off guard at one time and then I believe did not miss it [correct conduct] much from what I have heard.' Whilst discussing the then-living Crotch, Bringhurst proceeded to reflect on Crotch's situation as a providentially ordained affliction:

Oh the need there is for a deep labour for preservation, and constant care, & daily yea hourly fear lest we fall, keeping in as much self-abasedness & great humility looking step by step for our way in passing along thru this vale of tears, suffering the harms of others to prove a warning to us... It is not our business to query why it is so, but to endeavour patiently to submit to whatever He is pleased to inflict upon us (FHL MSS/046 Box 2, 18th December 1806 to Stephen Gould)

The letter was not sent before Crotch's passing, and Bringhurst switched from a religious register in the body of the letter, to draw attention to Crotch's weak nerves in the postscript which described Crotch's passing. Crotch had 'lately from his feeling great trouble and distress of mind had got into a state of derangement... great distress was his portion, too much for his weak nerves' (FHL MSS046 Box 2, 18th December 1806 to Stephen Gould).

A different interpretation is offered in Benjamin Ferris' correspondence. In a letter dated 11th January 1807, Ferris found himself unable to support Crotch's religious credentials. Ferris acknowledged that unspecified accusations were made against Crotch and that Crotch was 'a man of weak natural parts.' Yet it was impossible, for Ferris, that a true minister could commit suicide if that minister was moved by the same Spirit which carried the apostles and the early Friends through their ordeals. Therefore the suicide must have been preceded by a fall from grace:

It would be a melancholy reflection to think that a minister of the Gospel with all the requisites for that sacred sanction might be driven to desperation by the malice of any set of men whatever who should undertake to oppose him. The whole band of primitive Christianity, the crowned host of martyrs and our noble and undaunted predecessors in the faith, all underwent every manner of opposition, and remain as so many monuments of the sufficiency of divine Grace to support its upright professors in every trial... He was a man of weak natural parts and of whom it might with truth be said; 'by Grace he was what he was' losing that he lost all. The blind caresses of indulging friends elevated him, too much self-indulgence elevated him, he lost his strength and fell! A solemn warning to priest and people. (FHL RG5/040 Box 5, 11th January 1807)

The longest and the most sympathetic narrative is the anonymous and untitled pamphlet known as *A Quaker Suicide in Philadelphia*. This seventeen page manuscript pamphlet is dated 24th December 1806 (four days after Crotch's passing), and was reprinted in *The British Friend* in 1847. It is an unashamed apologetic for Crotch, and opens with the aim to 'rescue therefore the honest fame and reputation of the worthy deceased.' (*The British Friend*, December 1847, p.259) The author was vague on the circumstance of Crotch's

death, and prefers place the incident in a providential paradigm; 'It maybe asked, if William Crotch was that humble, innocent creature he is represented to be, if he was favoured in the sight of God, why was it permitted him to commit a crime so heinous to nature?' The author claimed Crotch was not in his right mind, 'under mental derangement man is not accountable for his actions' (*The British Friend*, December 1847, p.261. Crotch was thereby exonerated from sin by diminished responsibility.

The answer to the question of why it would be 'permitted' by God for such an eminent minister to be afflicted with insanity is beyond the understanding of human reason, according to the author; 'It is not for the tainted capacity of the wisest of us to dive into the mysterious dispensations of Omnipotence.' Nevertheless, the author continues, 'were however the circumstances which permitted this out to be searched for, reasons may be abundantly found' in the conduct of the community in which Crotch ministered. In an ingenious twist, the author suggested that God removed Crotch because Crotch was too much adored by the Quaker community. Too many were 'looking for earthly rather than heavenly comfort' so 'his afflictions might therefore be suffered to come upon him' as a providential intervention to ensure that Quakers worship God alone. After the author's attempt at humility regarding the mysterious working of providence, the pamphlet concluded by putting words into God's mouth, paraphrasing Philippians 2:10-11;

The almighty might present itself saying "where is the man that ye adored? Behold I have smitten him, I have laid him low who ye exalted peradventure that ye may henceforth know that I only am the Lord your God; before whom every knee must bow and evert tongue confess." (*The British Friend*, December 1847, p.261)

That Crotch was so distressed as to be 'deranged' and therefore not morally responsible for suicide is of course a common way to sympathetically make sense of suicide. That Crotch's suffering was designed by God to prove a point to the people of Philadelphia seems to be an incredible argument, but not beyond the realms of possibility for this sympathetic author.

Taking a very different angle in his candid memoranda, James Jenkins reflected on the case of William Crotch over several pages, suggesting several reasons for Crotch's suicide. Firstly, Crotch thought himself infallible 'in a state of sinless perfection from which no man can fall.' He then got into a theological debate with a 'dissenting minister' on 'the knotty points of Election and Reprobation' but he 'was completely foiled, if not to his own shame, to the disputation if not dishonour of the society.' According to Jenkins, Crotch became further unstuck during a family visit somewhere outside of Philadelphia when 'he charged a

young man with the commission of great crimes.’ These accusations had to be withdrawn by Crotch in writing, causing Crotch to be sent back to Philadelphia in disgrace, ‘in a desponding state of mind, bitterly lamenting that he could not take home with him those testimonials which are usually given to ministers’ (Frost, 1984, pp.449-450).²⁴

It was not for Jenkins to say ‘whether our benevolent creator did not bestow upon Wm Crotch a gift in the ministry,’ but ‘had he remained an humble, industrious Shoemaker, the occasional pastor of a little meeting, loving and beloved by his congregation, how useful and how happy might his life, and his end have been.’ Instead:

Such a gift was forced into an unnatural growth, and “swaddled, and rocked and dandied” into consequence, which a weak mind was unable to bear with sufficient humility... thus flattered, caressed and encouraged, he soon believed it to be a duty of his to visit churches distant from his own, and those journeys once began, extended even to the remotest part of the nation... riding about in the fine open air, at the willing expense of his Friends, was a healthier exercise than sitting on a stool to cobble shoes.
(Frost, 1984, p.451)

Thus Jenkins placed some of the blame for Crotch’s untimely death on the institution of Quaker ministry. ‘Swaddled, and rocked and dandied’ here is a reference to the fact that Crotch converted to Quakerism and came under the care of pious Quakers at the age of thirteen. Jenkins implies, similarly to Benjamin Ferris, that Crotch’s religious gifts were exaggerated, as he was pushed beyond his capabilities by overzealous friends.

From Jenkins’ scepticism we move to the Tuke’s personal papers. These papers contain unreserved affection and support towards Crotch from the pen of Mary Maria Tuke, but also contain one of the most forthright articulations of the negative religious implications of Crotch’s suicide, from William Tuke’s Daughter Ann Alexander. Mary Maria’s messages were conveyed via her husband Henry Tuke, when Tuke and Crotch travelled together in the ministry in the 1790s. Mary Maria had been close to Crotch since her conversion in Suffolk:

Thy and my dear Wm Crotch - what shall I say to him more than that the writing of his name seemed to cast a light upon the paper. I have no head to address him with neither a heart clear enough to entertain him...I do feel such an unblocked or unclouded freedom with him that I think I could write to him in almost any state. And I don't know but that had I written immediately on receiving his letter, I mean message in thine, I should

²⁴ Quaker itinerant ministers departed on their journeys with a certificate to show their suitability to preach, and returned to their home meetings with a certificate showing the satisfactory execution of their duties.

have sent him a love letter, and not have been ashamed of it neither. He is the only and first person since my knowledge of friends that ever I felt able or to have an inclination to have any intercourse with of that kind not even to my mother. (BIA TUKE/1/7/1/1/2)

But Crotch was not well even then. In 1794 Henry Tuke wrote from Bristol to York on the toll that life as a Quaker minister took on Crotch:

Wm has been very much discouraged most of the way from London, but since he has got here, he has been much better in both in body and mind... his Exercises in the Exercise of his Gift are very singular and trying and notwithstanding he has some infirmities. (BIA TUKE/1/5/1/3/133)

Mary Maria responded, again alluding to their shared background and her great affection for Crotch:

Frequently as I am writing this inadvertent scrawl I wonder and seem displeased with myself that I can feel so cheerful when Wm is so sad... I do sympathise with him I am sure I do, and have beheld him in so much beauty, nay glory and honour since his leaving Suffolk (or Needham) as makes his memory sweet to me... I know he has a wounded and tribulated spirit – and should rejoice it entering such regions of rest as I feel are prepared for him....I could rather suppose he will gain in a little strength every way, more particularly in his mind and that his wounds will be healed and his spirit be less afflicted than heretofore. (BIA TUKE/1/6/1/1/35)

Crotch appears again in the Tuke correspondence in 1799. Several letters chart how Crotch had a calling to travel to America in the ministry, which was initially declined by his local meeting. Following this, Henry Tuke was concerned with looking after Crotch's failing health and tried to set him up in business, to preserve his 'reason,' if he was not to pursue his fateful prospects in America;

Wm is better this morning in his head than he generally is in mornings, which I think is owing to some camphor pills²⁵ I gave him last night at going to bed, by which he slept better and is now very composed. He... seems generally to think what he does is wrong and what he has not done right. Indeed there are frequently symptoms which increase my fears whether he will not lose his reason and which also increase my apprehensions of the necessity of his speedily getting into business. (BIA TUKE/1/5/1/3/204)

In these fleeting snippets of correspondence, the religious nature of Crotch's distress was compounded by physical ailments; 'his Exercises in the Exercise of his Gift are very singular and trying and notwithstanding he has some infirmities.' Whilst Henry and Mary Maria

²⁵ A remedy for afflicted nerves.

Tuke were aware of Crotch's physical and mental weakness, they nevertheless supported his religious vocation.

A response to Crotch's passing from the Tuke family is known by way of a letter from Ann Alexander to her brother Henry Tuke. Alexander thought that she could speak for Henry Tuke, 'there is no need to express our sentiments' she wrote to her brother 'as they so entirely correspond with thy own, as to the ground work of what has occurred in America.' Nevertheless, Alexander offered the following on the cause of Crotch's suicide, which:

was surely the want of humility and nothingness of self, tho by many less acquainted with his real character it may be imputed to a different cause. So needful indeed does it seem that no man should think more highly of himself or of another, than he ought to think; and in this respect may now the blemishes of his life, and the dreadful catastrophe of his untimely death mark the individual as a pillar of salt for the warning of the present and succeeding generation. (BIA TUKE 1/9/1/1/44)

The 'different cause' here may be the explanations around insanity or nerves such as those employed above. In any case, an unambiguously negative religious reading of Crotch's suicide was offered by the daughter of the York Retreat's founder ten years after it opened its doors. As in Genesis 19:26, Crotch glanced back on Sodom and was turned into a 'pillar of salt.' Similarly to the letter from Benjamin Ferris, it was inconceivable that a minister could be thus overwhelmed without having succumbed to temptation.

Crotch's case has therefore revealed the diverse ways in which Quakers could relate to suicide, within the religious framework which was unavoidable given Crotch's status as a well-known minister. Depending on their assessment of Crotch's character and religious credentials, Crotch was either absolved through his weak constitution, or showed the cost of losing the war against sin. Yet suicidality was a recurrent feature of the Quaker spiritual path, as shown by the other accounts that we have seen in this chapter. Crotch succumbed to the temptation of suicide, but it was not unusual for pious Quakers to be tempted in this way, and was not unusual for Quaker ministers to experience intense periods of affliction throughout their lives. As shown by the Tuke's correspondence, Crotch suffered recurrent melancholic episodes in which he, like Fanny Henshaw, required support and care from other pious Quakers; from Henry Tuke in England and from James Bringhurst in Philadelphia. Given the important role of purgative suffering in Quaker spirituality, these episodes did little to undermine a ministers' credibility. Those who tended to Crotch in his final days continued to affirm his religious credentials, and the potentially purgative nature of his afflictions, right up to the time of his death.

Conclusion - Moving on to the Retreat

This chapter has demonstrated how melancholic episodes were integral to Quaker religious authority and identity. These episodes were fraught with danger from bodily weakness and suicidality, compounded by secrecy and the potential for misinterpretation. The Tuke family were well aware of the rigors of Quaker spirituality, and were no strangers to the extremes of Quaker spiritual warfare.

In this context therefore, a further reason for the foundation of the York Retreat may be posited. The death of Hannah Mills, a Quaker from Leeds, is widely accepted to have catalysed the foundation of the York Retreat. Mills, a 42-year-old widow with one son, was admitted to York Asylum in 1792 as 'melancholic' and died there shortly afterwards, after York Quakers were refused access to her (Cherry, 1987, p.94; Digby, 1985, p.14). Clearly it affected William Tuke, who then proposed the idea of the York Retreat to the Quaker community at the York Monthly Meeting. However there is no information about the circumstances of Mill's death, and no record of the identity or agenda of the visiting Quakers from the York Meeting, despite historians waxing lyrical about the scandal of Hannah Mill's supposed mistreatment (Stewart, 1992, p.25; Lawrence, 2009, p.72). Whilst Quakers uncovered a scandal relating to mistreatment at York Asylum in the 1810s, there is no evidence whatsoever relating to Hannah Mills' treatment twenty years before. Furthermore, it was not uncommon for madhouse patients to pass away during their admission. Two patients died at the York Retreat within a year of its opening; John Ellis hung himself in January 1797, and Mary Evens, a melancholic who was averse to taking food or medicine and had 'a constant inclination to make her escape,' became weak and died in April 1797 (BIA RET/6/5/1/1A case no.3; BIA RET/6/5/1/1A case no.7; Glover, 1985, p.43, p.48). In any case, Tuke suggested to the York Meeting that Mills' religious needs were not being met in York Asylum, and that afflicted members would benefit from being in an institution that was sensitive to their religious values and social mores. There is a consensus that Quakerism was important in the foundation of the Retreat because its social and religious peculiarities made it difficult for patients to integrate in other institutions (Digby, 1985, pp.14-15; Cherry, 1987, p.95; Porter, 1987, pp.223-4).

I propose that Mills' melancholia held religious portent for York Quakers. Whilst Mills' conversion narrative is not to be found, minutes from Quaker meetings in Leeds show that Hannah Mills underwent convincement to Quakerism only two years prior to entering York

Asylum, and submitted a narrative detailing her spiritual progress to the meeting in order to gain membership (Leeds Preparatory Meeting Minute Book, 1749-1792, LUSC MS/DEP/1979/1/LEE/1/4, pp.304-5). This procedure was common to nonconformist groups of the period, as aspiring members would demonstrate their suitability by composing their conversion narrative in accordance to the values of the group. Depressive episodes were an unavoidable aspect of these narratives, intrinsic to spiritual identity, and imbued with religious meaning. It is likely therefore that Mills' subsequent or ongoing melancholy would have been seen in this context. After all, Routh and Henshaw were offered medical care for afflicted nerves during their conversion, and as we will see the following chapters, Quakers were admitted for treatment in the York Retreat during their religious trials.

Whilst conditions may have been bad at York Asylum, a parallel explanation is available as to why Quakers were denied access to Mills, why Quakers were so anxious to reach Mills, and why the not-unusual event of the death of a madhouse patient had such an impact on the Tuke family. At a time of contested religious values it may have appeared to the York Asylum keepers that Quakerism catalysed or aggravated the melancholia of this recent convert. The reluctance of York Asylum to allow Quakers to visit was in keeping with the guidance of madhouse keepers such as Thomas Arnold in the late-eighteenth century, who attacked experiential piety on the grounds that it caused on religious insanity (Andrews, 2011, pp.68-70). Pious Quakers, on the other hand, may have seen themselves in a position to speak to Mills' condition, to provide consolation based on the unique referents of Quaker religious distress.

This chapter has shown that religious melancholy was a significant part of Quaker religious life up to the early nineteenth century. The deep despair required of a covert often made distinguishing between conversion and a fall from grace matter of perspective and retrospect. Several narratives could be used to explain these liminal episodes. God could chastise the body and mind directly as a means of punishment or purgation, or could allow the devil to tempt the pious to harming themselves; or in narratives from John Churchman and Crotch's sympathetic pamphleteer, God ended the life of a blameless minister to chastise a third party. Whilst physical afflictions could have a providential or Satanic cause, somatic aspects of affliction were also discussed using religiously neutral explanations, to console the sufferer or to rescue their reputation, as in the case of Crotch and Henshaw. The following chapters will build upon this to show that somatic aspects of religious

melancholia continued to be important at the York Retreat, as device used by religious adherents to absolve the sufferer from the excesses of religious distress.

Chapter Four - Samuel Tuke and *The Description of the Retreat*

In Digby's, Porter's and Scull's standard works on the history of psychological medicine, Quakerism in the era of the Retreat epitomised enlightened rationality, respectability and self-discipline, alongside a doctrine of compassion (Digby, 1985, p.14; Porter, 1987, pp.223-6; Scull, 1979, pp.30-32). It is striking that Georgian Quaker piety and the upheavals which were integral to narratives of spiritual progression have been overlooked in modern descriptions of the York Retreat; an omission which can in part be explained by Samuel Tuke's approach to religious symptoms in the highly influential *Description of the Retreat* of 1813. Samuel Tuke's significant undercounting of religious madness at the York Retreat has already been commented upon by Cherry, Stewart, and Lawrence. Stewart finds that religious symptoms were 'exceedingly common' in the early years of the Retreat, a finding shared by Lawrence's and Cherry's examinations of the Retreat case books (Stewart, 1992, p.42; Cherry, 1989, p.100-2; Lawrence, 2009, p.94). For Cherry and for Godlee, 'the legacy of their ancestors' antics' made Quakers hypersensitive to accusations of insanity (Cherry, 2013, p.396, Godlee, 1985). This supposed hundred-year legacy hung over Tuke's presentation of the topic in *Description of the Retreat*, which 'contradict' 'actual records' from the Retreat archives which make 'frequent' reference to religious symptoms (Cherry, 1989, pp.100-2). These writers assume that by the early nineteenth century, the Quaker movement had settled down into bourgeois respectability, far removed from the enthusiastic eschatology and emotional conversions of the seventeenth century. For Cherry, Quakers had 'moved into a period of quiet withdrawal... they became more cautious about the promptings or openings of the spirit ... they became sceptical about religious emotionalism.' Thus 'while avoiding the Scylla of a frenetic, misguided enthusiasm, they risked the Charybdis of a self-satisfied formalism' (Cherry, 1989, p.102). Lawrence and Stewart suggest that the highly visible, socially disruptive and experientially intense Methodist movement caused Tuke to be cautious around religious madness in the Retreat. Lawrence states that '*Description* was a presentation of Quakerism to a potentially hostile world' in which 'facts were inevitably skewed' (Lawrence, 2009, p.94; Stewart, 1992, p.42).²⁶

²⁶ Some also suggest that Quakers suffered from hereditary insanity due to inbreeding, citing the rules against marrying persons from outside of the Society of Friends and the large number of cases which were described as 'hereditary' or 'constitutional' in the patient notes (Stewart, 1992, p.39). It was common however to diagnose nervous affliction and madness in general as hereditary or

Lawrence's proposition that Tuke 'skewed the facts' seems all the more compelling when the melancholic episodes of Georgian Quakerism are taken into account. Whilst Tuke's presentation of religious madness was indeed distorted, a contextualised reading will be offered in this chapter, setting Tuke alongside his contemporaries in mad-doctoring and alongside other nonconformist writers. It will be shown that Tuke's approach was in keeping with his contemporaries in both fields. We will also touch upon Samuel Tuke's religious views, through his ministry and his biography. Tuke's ministry on the 'fear and trembling' required by Quaker piety will show that Tuke was not the enlightened rationalist he is often made out to be. Tuke was a multifaceted character within a time of change, who like many of his contemporaries, simultaneously operated within the registers of experiential religion, 'enlightened' rationality and medicine.

Religious Madness at the Retreat

Before moving on to Samuel Tuke's *Description of the Retreat*, further context will be given on religious afflictions at the Retreat and the varieties of religious experiences recorded amongst Tuke's contemporary Quaker ministers. The enlightened rationalism which featured so prominently in Tuke's *Description* belies the enchanted world inhabited by pious Quakers at the turn of the nineteenth century. Whilst Georgian Quakerism featured less of the public antinomianism of the early movement, it was nevertheless saturated with reports of the supernatural. In addition to the intervention of Satan or the Holy Spirit recorded by devout Quakers in their spiritual battles, it was not uncommon for ministers to 'speak to the condition' of individuals during meeting for worship; to give individuals personal advice based on divine revelation. William Crotch reputedly had such prophetic powers (*The British Friend*, December 1847, pp.251-261), and the minister William Earnshaw prophesied the downfall of the York Retreat patient Martha Dickinson, as will be discussed in a later chapter. Several other instances of prophecy are cited by Rufus Jones (1921, pp.93-5). Further to auditory apparitions (of which we have seen several examples already), the Quaker historian Amelia Mott Gummere found that 'visions and apparitions by night' were significant in the religious trajectory of several Georgian Quaker ministers such as Thomas Storey, Samuel Bownas, Joseph Hoag, William Savery, John Woolman, and Stephen Grellet (1908, p.66). John Woolman's visions are the most well-known, notably the

constitutional in this period, according to Beatty (2012, p.84). Newman has found that contrary to popular belief, 'Quaker discipline forbade marriage between first cousins' (2013, p.437).

angelic voice declaring “John Woolman is dead,” signifying the death of Woolman’s natural will, and his duty to serve suffering humanity (Woolman, 1774, pp.234-5). On another occasion Woolman was visited by radiant orb of light ‘at the apparent distance of five feet, about nine inches in diameter, of a clear, easy brightness’ which twice communicated the message “certain evidence of divine truth” (Woolman, 1774, p.53).

Yet ministers were usually discreet or even secretive when discussing their religious leadings, let alone their visionary experiences. Unlike the journals of Wesley and Whitfield that were published in instalments thought out their lives, Quaker spiritual biographies were published posthumously, after the minister's life had received the general approval of the community. Caution and humility were the watchwords for those claiming divine inspiration. In this context, those who were more upfront with their claims were conspicuous.

At the York Retreat, several patients claimed to experience visions or have prophetic powers. Several patients claimed to be divinely inspired. John Grundy, admitted in 1798, claimed to be ‘commanded by angels to walk naked and pronounce woes and judgements to the king and nation in general.’ Grundy died in the Retreat in 1809 (BIA RET/6/5/1/1A case no.22). The disowned romantic poet Charles Lloyd ‘suffered the delusion that he should suffer for the sins of mankind’ during his admission of 1816, before being transferred to St Luke’s madhouse in London from where he escaped to France (Trimble, 2000; BIA RET/6/5/1/1A case no.194). Mary Waring was ‘in a very visionary way, apprehending a Number of divine communications.’ As her referral letter put it ‘on many other subjects she is quite connected and being a young woman of abilities will argue and endeavour to prove that she is perfectly well and that nobody has a right to control her but when the subject is turned to that of Supernatural Communications to her own mind, it soon convinces her Friends in what spot she is’ (BIA RET 1/5/1/9 15th February 1804 from Thomas Crowley). Elizabeth Bass was ‘full of fears and terror having much anxiety about herself –Thinks she has done something to displease the Almighty ...will beat and bite herself with agony’ (BIA RET/6/5/1/1A case no.91).

Other patients refused food upon religious grounds, like the ministers discussed in the previous chapter. For example in the case of Sarah Merrill, ‘the reason assign’d for not eating is that it would be disobedience in her to do so, and she has been unfaithful’ (BIA RET/6/5/1/1A case no.4). Elizabeth Wallis had a ‘very mean opinion of her own ability & merit... became mostly silent and obstinately refused food... marked by religious

peculiarities – consulting the bible about ordinary things’ (BIA RET/6/5/1/1A case no.77). After recently undergoing conviction, Elizabeth Simms exhibited ‘an almost obstinate refusal to take food, from an apprehended religious scruple’ (BIA RET/6/5/1/1A case no.91). Henry Perkins of Bristol, aged 30, suffered from ‘religious melancholy and starvation’ (BIA RET/6/5/1/1A case no.203). Joseph Gregory refused to eat following ‘distressing ideas of having missed his way (in a religious sense) and that he is to be burnt alive etc and sacrificed to offended deity’ (BIA RET/6/5/1/1A case no.85).

Several other patients were described as religiously melancholic. ‘The case [was] one of religious melancholy’ for Sheppard Bell, according to the casebook, who suffered ‘great mental anguish’ when admitted in 1822. He was discharged as recovered in 1823 (BIA RET/6/5/1/1A case no.268). Joseph Russell of Warwick, an aged 74, had ‘been deranged about two months’ when admitted in 1818 with what was ‘supposed to be religious melancholy’ although problems also ran in the family; ‘Had a brother affected with insanity. His father & his mother both insane.’ Russell died six weeks after admission (BIA RET/6/5/1/1A case no.220). Samuel Wheeler had a short admission between December 1821 and February 1822 for ‘deep religious melancholy’ (BIA RET/6/5/1/1A case no.216). Thomas Ellin of Leeds had been ‘more or less affected with religious melancholy for 5 or 6 years, has shewn a propensity to injure himself, but seemed disposed to guard against it’ when admitted in 1796, aged 39 (BIA RET/6/5/1/1A case no.13). In 1829 Lydia Sanger was readmitted having been ‘low,’ ‘violent’ and had also been a patient at Edward Long Fox’s Brislington House (a private madhouse); ‘the prominent exhibition is religious melancholy’ (BIA RET/1/5/1/33 dated 11th April 1829).

That a minister could become insane or suicidal was loaded with diverse and competing meanings as William Crotch’s suicide shows. Several Quaker ministers were admitted to the York Retreat. Hannah Prior of Sussex was admitted in May 1803 at the age of 38. The case notes show that Prior ‘has been in a state of melancholy derangement several weeks, made two attempts upon her life & came here with a wound on her throat made by a knife. She used the warm bath with great advantage’ (BIA RET/6/5/1/1A case 81). Prior’s referral letter confirmed that she tried to slit her throat and tried to drown herself (BIA RET 1/5/1/7 dated 2nd May 1802). Prior was discharged a year to the day of her admission, but was readmitted suffering melancholia from 1821 to 1823 (BIA RET/6/5/1/1A case 257), having moved to York in the intervening years (BIA TUKE/1/21/1/3/14). Prior’s entry in *Testimonies Concerning Ministers Deceased* (FH YM/TCMD Vol.5, p.10) stated that she passed away in 1830 ‘aged 65 years, a minister for about 35 years,’ indicating that Prior had

been a known minister for eight years when, as the Retreat case book states, she was admitted as 'an acknowledged minister' in 1803 (BIA RET/6/5/1/1A case 81).

John Moxham of Melsham, Wiltshire was admitted February 1801, aged 50 and 'an acknowledged minister' according to his case notes. He suffered intermittent melancholic episodes and 'was seized with a high fit of derangement near five years ago' (about 1796). Moxham was previously under the care of 'Dr Fox at Clevehill' for six months, returning 'pretty well recovered' only to sink into 'dejection and despondency' within a few weeks. Upon becoming too high spirited he was 'put under private care' in October 1800, from where he tried to escape three times before being transferred to the York Retreat. Moxham was 'discharged recovered' 22nd May 1802 and 'was an approved minister afterwards for many years' the case notes add. Moxham 'relapsed before his death into a state of derangement' and died in 1824 (BIA RET/6/5/1/1A case 62). Moxham's eulogy in *Testimonies Concerning Deceased Ministers* shows that Moxham became a Quaker minister in 1791 'about the 40th year of his life,' ten years before he was admitted into the Retreat (FH YM/TCMD, vol. 5, p.202; *Annual Monitor*, 1825, p.27; BIA RET 1/5/1/6 dated 22nd February 1801).

Two other ministers were admitted but did not recover. Elizabeth Rake of Dorset was admitted in August 1808 aged 38. Rake was 'An acknowledged minister' from the Shaftesbury and Sherborne Monthly Meeting for seven years and was 'in good esteem among her friends, and her ministry was truly acceptable and serviceable.' No notes are added other than she died of an 'apoplectic fit' on 11th November 1808 (BIA RET/6/5/1/1A case 127). Mary Lloyd of Birmingham was admitted in July 1810, aged 48. 'An acknowledged minister in the society' was inserted into the text which continues, 'has been deranged many years and several times under confinement at a private house... talks much and incoherently... requires mostly in her paroxysms to be fastened in bed.' Lloyd died in 1816 after a 'gradual decline' (RET/6/5/1/1A case 139).

Further cases will be presented and expanded upon in more detail in later chapters, including the cases of the Quaker ministers Mark Holman Shepherd and Hannah Middleton. We now focus on Samuel Tuke's presentation of this religious distress in *Description of the Retreat*.

Tuke's *Description of the Retreat* in the Context of Mad Doctoring

In 1809, twenty-five-year-old Samuel Tuke wrote to the nonconformist periodical *The Philanthropist* on the plight of the pauper insane in parish workhouses, after visiting a workhouse somewhere in the south of England on-route to court Priscilla Hack, whom he married in 1810. It was a chance visit; 'I confess that this interest was in great measure accidentally excited by a conversation in a stagecoach, which led me to visit the workhouse' (Tuke, 1811, p.357). In this article Tuke told of insane paupers kept naked in freezing outhouses with little hope of release, with only straw for both warmth and sanitation. He proposed that parish provision for pauper lunatics be better monitored nationally (1811, pp.357-360). Perhaps as a result of the article, Henry Tuke asked his son Samuel to write a history of the York Retreat, fifteen years it was opened by Samuel's grandfather William. Samuel Tuke's *Memoirs* recall how he threw himself into the task for the next two years, diligently researching mad-doctoring medicine by way of Locke, Pinel, Ferrier, Crowther, Haslam and Arnold (1860, vol.1, pp.150-165). Samuel Tuke wrote to Lindley Murray (the editor of Sarah Tuke Grubb's biography) for details of the day to day running and general principles of the Retreat, and Murray later drafted the final paragraph of the introduction to *Description of the Retreat*.²⁷

Tuke's copious citations of existing treatises on moral management, and the commendations of the visiting Dr De La Rive and Dr Hunter gave *Description* considerable weight within the progressive side of proto-psychiatric discourse. *Description of the Retreat* brought together English and continental strands of thought to argue for 'moral treatment'; for the curative value of non-restraint and kindness to awaken a patient's capacity for rational self-control. Acting on the 'morals' by way of supervision, reward, recognition and punishment, yet without overt appeals to religion, moral treatment was presented as an alternative to medical intervention upon the nerves, humours or brain (although the principles of moral treatment were not always evident in how cases were treated in practice Digby, 1985, p.xiii). Tuke's tabular presentation of cases afforded his work the air of credibility and transparency, and was reproduced along with sections of *Description* in the leading periodical *The Edinburgh Review*, which applauded *Description* as

²⁷ Lindley Murray's passage in *Description* is pp.ix-ix: 'I hope that my partiality for the Retreat, and my wish to present its objects and regulations to the public eye, have not induced me to deviate from the candour and sobriety of representation, which the reader has a right to expect....' It can be found in manuscript in BIR TUKE/ 1/20/2/1/12.

being 'full of good sense and humanity, right feelings and rational views' (1814, p.190; Porter, 1987, p.159).

'Moral treatment' as found in *Description* and its relation to Quaker religious principles will be explored in a later chapter, as here we are solely interested in Tuke's approach to religious madness. This was significantly undercounted in *Description*, as mentioned above. Samuel Tuke calculated that out of 149 patients admitted to the Retreat up to the end of 1811 'only three cases have occurred, which can at all be considered' as 'apparently arising from the religious impressions.' These few cases in which an 'apparent cause,' of religion might be postulated were in actuality a manifestation of pre-existing 'hereditary' or 'constitutional' complaints, argued Tuke, even though 'to imagine it as a constitutional malady gives to it a character of hopelessness, from which our pride and affection alike recoil.' Nevertheless, he restated the position:

Very few cases admitted into the Retreat have been, in their commencement, at all connected with religious impressions; and in most of the cases which have occurred, inquiry has proved, that the unhappy religious notions, have not been excited by any external means; but have arisen spontaneously in the mind; and have either been preceded or attenuated by other symptoms of approaching insanity.

Religion did not necessarily bring about madness, even if the patient's first symptoms were un-ease or delusions around religion, as 'the imputed cause is, in reality, no more than the first overt act,' Tuke continued. These conclusions were questionable, Tuke admitted, but only insofar as there were so few cases where religion manifest at all. Tuke claimed to have barely enough evidence to make these tentative conclusions, as it has 'certainly not been the case' that even the 'apparent cause' of religion was present in enough of his patients to reach a reliable conclusion (Tuke, 1813, pp.131-133). In the 1830s Tuke provided an updated estimate to the asylum reformer Thomas Prichard, stating that only eight out of 334 cases could be put down to religious anxieties (Andrews, 2011, p.80).

It was an emphatic denial of the link between religion and insanity that had been suggested by a number of mad doctors in the 1780s and 1790s, who rehashed the arguments of the Restoration 'critique of enthusiasm' in the context of Methodist awakenings (Andrews, 2011, pp. 68-73). As shown above, Tuke's presentation was inconsistent with records from the Retreat. Many more cases involving a religious referent have come to light than accounted for by Tuke. There were a variety of religious symptoms, and contrary to Tuke's analysis there were a number of cases in which religion was not only a symptom of the disorder, but cited as a cause. Cherry, Stewart and Lawrence explain Tuke's incongruous

statistics by casting Tuke as justifiably disingenuous, as he attempted to defend his religion from the taint of madness with which it was associated since the clampdown against radical sectarianism in the late-seventeenth century, and the reaction against Methodism in the eighteenth (Lawrence, 2009, p.94; Cherry, 1989, p.44-50).

Yet despite the implicit link between Methodism and Quakerism, Quakers in this period actually escaped the heaviest accusations of religious madness. The highly visible, socially disruptive and enormously popular firebrand piety of Methodist denominations were a world away from ostensibly sedate and socially detached Georgian Quakerism, which seemed like a movement in decline or stagnation, coming across as 'sober and level-headed' according to Andrew Scull (1993, p.363). The review of Thomas Clarkson's 1807 *Portraiture of Quakerism* in the influential periodical *The Edinburgh Review* remarked that George Fox was 'exceedingly insane,' in a passage used by Cherry to demonstrate accusations of madness against Quakerism in the early-nineteenth century (Cherry, 1985, p.49). Yet the reviewer continued that he did not 'suspect many of his present followers of the same malady' despite the incomprehensibility of Quaker doctrine, made hardly any clearer by Clarkson's cumbersome tome (1815, p.101). In an article of 1808, *The Edinburgh Review* was harshly critical of 'three classes of fanatics'; the 'Arminian and Calvinistic Methodists, and the evangelical clergymen of the church of England,' all of whom promoted 'lunacy' and 'one general conspiracy against common sense' (p.341-342). Yet Quakers were not mentioned, and Clarkson's reviewer in 1807 painted Quakers as well intentioned but dull and spiritually dead, reflecting the great differences between Quakerism and Methodism in terms of public visibility and perceived threat to social order. Quakers were;

[A] tolerably honest, painstaking and inoffensive set of Christians. Very stupid, dull and obstinate, we presume, in conversation... active and methodical in their business, and narrow-minded and ill informed as to most other particulars... chilled to a sort of Chinese apathy, by the restraints to which they are continually subjected; childish and absurd in their religious scruples and peculiar usages, and singularly unlearned as a sect of theologians; but exemplary, above all other sects, for the decency of their lives. (1815, p.102)

Mad-doctoring discourse could be even more complimentary, and Tuke did not need to look very far when presenting benign aspects of Quakerism to his asylum-keeping peers. Haslam's *Observations of Madness and Melancholy* (1809) was critical of 'Methodistical madness' including the classes of fanatics which he cited from *The Edinburgh Review*, adding that 'the whole of their doctrine is a base system of delusion, riveted on the mind

by terror and despair' (1809, p.266-267). Yet Haslam did not tar Quakerism with the same brush and was cited by Tuke in *Description*; 'The decorous piety, and exemplary life of the Quaker, has signally exempted him from this most severe of human infirmities' (Haslam, 1811, p.89; Tuke, 1813, p.132). Writing on the back of Tuke's *Description*, the apparent lack of religious madness at the York Retreat was celebrated by the German asylum keeper Jacobi, who lauded the Quakers for their 'strictness of moral education and discipline... the restraints imposed by them on the imagination and the indulgence of passions and to the absence of enthusiastical and mystical excitement' (Andrews, 2011, p.80).

The 1790s heralded a surge of publications about mental medicine, due in part to the afflictions of George III. The direction of these works, from the likes of Arnold, Pargeter, Perfect and Erasmus Darwin, was to present the theology and practice of dissenting religion (particularly Methodism) as a cause of madness, often repeating and expanding upon earlier criticisms of seventeenth-century Puritans (Andrews, 2011, pp.68-72; Darcy, 2013, pp.179-183). However, by the early nineteenth century, Andrews finds that that mad-doctors were toning down their attacks on experiential religion. An 'explicit contrast' was emerging from the early nineteenth century due to a 'concern to offset the perceived harm done by the prolonged and virulent campaigns against religious enthusiasm to the cause of "right" religion.' Some madhouse keepers in the early nineteenth century were moving away from hostility to religion in an attempt to attract more customers and avoid charges of atheism themselves (Andrews, 2011, pp.68-72). Tuke's claims were in keeping with this change, and also with a change taking place within the work of continental alienists such as Pinel, Esquorel and Jacobi, who were likewise moving to describe religious insanity as a symptom rather than a cause of insanity (Andrews, 2011, pp.74-76). Alienists had an interest in excluding religious causes and cures in order to side-line pastoral consolation and authority and carve out the exclusive domain of psychiatric medicine (Goldberg, 1998, pp.59-63). Mad doctors like Arnold wrote of excluding pastors because they could exacerbate a patient's delusional symptoms. Yet continental alienists wrote of excluding pastors not because religion caused madness, but because the pastor had no power or knowledge in this purely medical/psychiatric domain (Andrews, 2011, p.84). Tuke's influential account of the lack of religious insanity at the York Retreat added to the weight of evidence against the notion that religion could be a trigger for insanity. Alienists, and asylum keepers, looking to entirely secularise religious affliction, were happy to support this move (Andrews, 2011, p.84).

Whilst this invalidated types of extreme religious experience and modes of consolation, it conversely served to rehabilitate sanctioned and controlled types of communal worship within asylums, as Andrews points out (2011, pp. 86-87). Tuke did not present a wholly secular approach in *Description*, and mentioned the edifying and calming power of worship and scripture reading, and its role in creating a congenial, familiar atmosphere to aid recovery (1813, pp.101-2). These comments will be discussed in the following chapters, but were innocuous enough not to raise eyebrows amongst Tuke's broad readership. Tuke's destigmatisation and rehabilitation of religion was instrumental, 'more than any other single factor' in dissociating religious madness from nonconformity in proto-psychiatric literature, according to Andrews. It then paved the way for nonconformist reformers to argue for the introduction of basic religious services into the rapidly expanding network of public asylums in the early nineteenth century (Andrews, 2011, p.84). In such a context, Tuke's undercounting of religious madness was inconspicuous and credible to his alienist contemporaries.

Samuel Tuke's Quakerism

Given this engagement with progressive medical thought, it is well to ask how far Samuel Tuke himself was aware of and adhered to Quaker piety. In the history of psychiatry, the Tukes are presented as demure, rational enlightened philanthropists, and their Quakerism is portrayed as compassionate and community minded, but not experiential in the Puritan sense of the term (Digby, 1985, p.14; Porter, 1987, pp.223-6; Scull, 1979, 30-32; Foucault, 2001, pp.229-264). The Tuke family are presented as progressive 'Evangelicals' by some Quaker historians, and as the heralds of a move away from eighteenth-century styles of Quakerism. For Mingins, Wright and Mack, 'Evangelicalism' denoted reform and engagement, a turning outwards from the perceived inwardness, passivity and social disengagement of so-called 'Quietist' Quakerism, as Evangelicals engaged with the world with more confidence than their predecessors. Following this logic, the ground-breaking and influential York Retreat *ipso facto* signalled the start of 'evangelical Quakerism,' and the Tuke family were at the forefront of this change. (Mack, 2015, pp.253-254; Wright, 1993, p.23; Mingins, 2004, p.7). Samuel Tuke was indeed socially engaged, but he was also an advocate of experiential religion along similar lines to that of his eighteenth-century predecessors, as will now be demonstrated.

Samuel Tuke's two-volume biography (1860) and personal papers are an immensely rich resource in relation to his trajectory and views, as well as the ebb and flow of early nineteenth-century Quaker thought. It is worthy of more space than can be given here. However, it is clear that Tuke was aware of the tenets of eighteenth-century Quakerism described in the previous chapters, and preserved several of them in his own religious life. During the same period that he studied mad-doctoring and wrote *Description*, Tuke's *Memoirs* reveal that he was immersed in religious literature. From the seventeenth-century Quaker canon he covered Barclay's *Apology*, William Penn's *No Cross, No Crown* and *Sandy Foundations Shaken*. Alongside these were Milton's second book of *Paradise Lost*, Cowper's *The Task*, Hannah More's recently published *Practical Piety*, his father Henry Tuke's *Duties of Christian Morality* and Miguel de Molinos' Quietist prayer manual *Spiritual Guide*. He also read the eighteenth-century Quaker staples *Piety Promoted* and Kendall's *Letters* (1860, vol.1, pp.150-165). On several occasions in his *Memoires*, Tuke was reluctant to accept the new evangelical emphasis on justification which was slowly influencing early nineteenth-century Quakerism. For example, regarding J.J. Gurney's emphasis on justification by faith, Tuke commented in correspondence of 1846, 'I cannot but think he attaches more importance to it than the New Testament warrants' (BIA TUKE/1/20/1/19/22). Commenting again on Evangelical Quakerism in 1845 he wrote:

We talk of Christ more than our fathers did but have we that fear which they had lest words should outrun experience? Or is there the same depth of Christian experience? The being brought under mental discipline in Christ's school, the bearing the yoke, the seeking alone and keeping silence seems to be less thought of as parts of Christian training. (BIA TUKE/1/20/1/19/18)

Reflecting on his calling to the ministry in 1826, Tuke admitted never having descended to the depths reported by some other ministers but recalled a taste of 'being reduced to nothingness,' and realised that he now understood a little of what his aunt Sarah Tuke Grubb went through so often (1860, vol.1, p.400). The Quaker minister James Backhouse recorded Samuel Tuke's demeanour during this period:

Our dear S.Tuke communicated to our monthly meeting of ministers and elders a most touching communication on the sense he had been brought unto of his own deficiencies. He did indeed seem baptised unto the death of self; and instead of looking at anything which he had been an instrument of good, described himself as found wanting. I feel no doubt but this has been dispensed to him that he may renewedly feel that his salvation is of the free and unrestricted mercy of God in Christ. For it is one thing to recognise this doctrine by the understand [sic] and another to feel it experimentally. (BIA TUKE/2/2/6/2/1)

During his ministry Tuke continued to advocate an awful fear of God, as had his predecessors. In this sermon delivered on December 14th 1832, for example:

May we then, my friends, be what we profess to be, true Quakers, true fearers of the Lord: this was their distinction; I am not ashamed of that name, I trust you are not so, for what can be more fitting to man, than to tremble in the presence of Him, who is the dread of the whole earth. And, in proportion, my friends, as we come to see the depths of our unworthiness, and the greatness of him who hath so condescended unto us, so shall we be filled not only with love, but with a reverential awe; we shall be deterred from speaking lightly of his name, we shall indeed, though men may think us deficient in our words, we shall indeed truly show that we fear and love the Lord our God ; if indeed, my friends, we are truly brought on in our spiritual course, we shall come to know somewhat of that holy awe ; we shall not only come to know the fear of the Lord, and to tremble under his judgments, that so we may rejoice in his salvation, but we shall know somewhat of that trembling, which we read of as being very consistent with the highest state of existence, that awful reverence, which is set forth in those, even the elders, the four and twenty elders that surround the throne, who fall down before the throne, ascribing "honour, and glory, and power, unto him who sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever." [Rev 5:13] (Hamilton, 1834, pp.31-32)

Tuke also preached on humankind's totally bereft fallen condition, in a manner reminiscent of Barclay's pit analogy quoted in chapter one:

Indeed, my friends, of ourselves we are in a state of total inability, that we are by nature utterly helpless, in a dark, and an utterly lost estate; and that it is nothing which we have done, and nothing which we can do, by any effort or exertion of our own, which can redeem us from our state of death, from the pit of our natural corruption and our natural darkness. (Hamilton, 1834, p.8)

Like those who featured in *Piety Promoted*, Tuke continued to worry about his fate in the hereafter during old age. During his protracted final illness Tuke held his spiritual case to be 'a very critical one,' and a 'solemn warning,' explaining that 'I have for some time past, felt the necessity of being broken to pieces more completely than I have ever yet been; I want to get more fixtness of soul upon my God' (Tuke 1860, vol. 2, p.418).

Samuel Tuke was not entirely the enlightened humanist that some studies of the York Retreat make him out to be; echoes of the Puritan roots of Quakerism are still evident, including the Calvinistic view on human nature. How we might understand this in the context of 'moral treatment' will be explored later, but it is clear that Tuke was an advocate of a vibrant and sometimes severe experiential piety. Spencer's concept of 'Evangelical Quietism' may be an apt way to explore piety such as Tuke's, in this period in which

Quakers became more socially engaged, whilst adhering to many of their eighteenth-century principles (2007, p.119).²⁸

Remarks about Tuke's view on melancholy are also to be found in Tuke's posthumous *Memoirs*. It transpires that whilst Tuke may have skewed the facts regarding religious symptoms in *Description of the Retreat*, Tuke and his biographer use similar somatic interpretations to describe Tuke's own situation; both put the worst of Tuke's spiritual doubt down to a physical or 'constitutional' complaint. After Tuke was taken suddenly ill, for example, 'his feelings in reference to his spiritual condition painfully partook of the depression into which the nervous system was brought into by the shock it has sustained.' Tuke himself articulated this explanation in his journal upon recovery from this 'paroxysm' (1860, vol.2 p.401). Tuke's biographer suggested that 'the low estimate which S. Tuke formed of his state' throughout his life, resulted 'partly from constitution,' as well as the theological problem of aspiring for perfection without belief in justification, as discussed above in chapter two (1860, vol.2, p.411-2). Tuke was 'pensive' with a 'want of hopefulness' and a 'sombre tinge'; a constitution which in his biographer's opinion was inherited from his mother, Mary Maria Tuke (1860, vol.2, p.411).

The *Memoires* show Tuke's reflections on this 'tinge of melancholy' in correspondence with his sister Maria:

'We have both of us a tinge of melancholy of which my dear sister E. knows nothing. This tinge I sometimes think I would not be without. If it deepens the gloomier shades of our course, it gives richness to the livelier parts. (1860, vol.2 p.413)

Tuke discussed his melancholy in a constitutional register, and claimed that his melancholic bent bolstered his aesthetic sensibilities. But Tuke also mused on the balance between constitutional melancholy and religious sentiment, differentiating a 'dissatisfaction with the world, or a disposition to renounce it's society' with authentic, engaged Christian spirituality, 'that Christian temper which, while it overcomes the world, still feels a strong interest in and attachment, in a certain sense, to those who compose it.' As a person of melancholic temperament of the former type, Tuke aligned himself with the monastics of old. Yet Tuke took a dim view of monasticism, believing them to be mistakenly led into asceticism by their constitution: 'I have no doubt that persons of our class have furnished

²⁸ Although I must add the caveat that 'Quietism' is a potentially misleading way to label Georgian Quaker piety in the first place, as discussed in chapters one and two.

the great mass of monks and nuns and hermits.' Finally he warned that despite the days of monasticism being over, 'I fear there is a good deal of religious self-deception still prevalent, and that many mistake the suggestions of a melancholic temperament for the feelings of religious zeal and devotion' (1860, vol.2 p.413). In so doing Tuke reversed Bownas' statement of 1750 (cited in chapter two), that convincement into Quakerism is often mistaken for melancholia, and that converts mistakenly 'take medicines to help them against what they call melancholy' (Bownas, 1853, p.13). Tuke did not dismiss the possibility of melancholy arising from religious zeal, but took the focus of attention from the soul to the melancholic 'temperament' and 'constitution.'

Tuke and his biographer therefore applied similar principles to Tuke's own 'tinge of melancholy' as Tuke applied to his patients in *Description of the Retreat*. This approach was not solely a result of his medical background in mad-doctoring and alienist literature, but attested to a larger change within nonconformist presentations of their own experiential piety, as will now be shown.

Nonconformity and Religious Melancholy in the Early Nineteenth Century

By the 1810s, few nonconformists claimed that providentially ordained madness or a religiously afflicted conscience could be the cause of melancholic distress. A significant shift in opinion in the early nineteenth century heralded this 'downfall of the once-revered status of religious melancholy' according to Darcy (2013, p.174), who points to the controversies around the outstanding religious melancholic William Cowper as an indicator of public opinion and a catalyst for change. Concurrently to the renewed emphasis on the pathology behind religious melancholy in mad-doctoring literature, the severity of Cowper's afflictions came to light after his death in 1800, in the rapidly expanding and increasingly influential periodical press. These factors finally made it untenable to speak publicly of religious melancholy as part of a conversion experience (Darcy, 2013 pp 172-205).

Darcy contrasts the reception of Boswell's *Life of Johnson* in 1791 with that of Cowper's biographies to illustrate this point. Boswell cast Samuel Johnson as a religious melancholic to afford gravity and dignity to Johnson's afflictions, an interpretation which was favourably received by the press. Darcy goes on to show that such a presentation became problematic in Cowper's biography (Darcy, 2009, 2013). Although Cowper's religious trials were hinted at in sympathetic biographies and were plainly evident in his poetry, the

publication of *Adelphi* in 1816 made the full extent of Cowper's desolation public, in vivid detail for the first time. Written in 1767 for private circulation, it was, as Stachniewski says, a 'throwback' to seventeenth century Puritan despair (1991, p.13). *Adelphi* reads as a formulaic schema of religious melancholy and conversion to such an extent that, in Buie's opinion, Cowper was not 'really' a religious melancholic. Buie saw Cowper as a work-shy poet, who lifted the tropes of religious melancholy from *Signs and Causes of Melancholy* (1716) and *Counsels and Comforts for Troubled Christians* (1749) (which are in turn indebted to seventeenth-century texts) to impress his religious friends and secure himself a comfortable sheltered life at Olney (Buie, 2013). Most other historians accept the experiential reality of Cowper's despair (Porter, 1987, pp.93-102). Regardless of the veracity of Buie's conclusions, Buie's analysis shows that Cowper described intense religious melancholia by adhering closely to conventions which had been in circulation during the preceding century.

Cowper's presentation was archaic in 1767 and beyond the pale when it was published in 1816, by which time it became untenable to regard Cowper as anything other than a mad poet, rather than the 'dignified Christian sufferer' whose appeal rested upon his melancholic sensibilities (Darcy, 2013, pp.175, 189). When the full extent of Cowper's religious anxieties became public it furnished moderates with an opportunity to attack radical nonconformity, which was taken up with relish. The relentless depth of Cowper's misery made it untenable for nonconformists to support a religious explanation for his trials. The more Cowper's papers came to light, the more the extent to which Cowper regarded himself as one absolutely castaway, abandoned and hated by God, was revealed. Cowper held no hope during his final moments, but spoke of an 'unutterable despair' with his dying breaths (Porter, 1987, pp.93-102; Darcy, 2013, p.190). Cowper's life was not amenable to the efforts of evangelical hagiography once these details and *Adelphi* came into the public domain. This forced the hand of nonconformists, Darcy explains; 'evangelicals tried to separate Cowper's madness from his religious faith, while detractors of evangelicalism used evidence of Cowper's horror of damnation as a weapon to destroy the hold of evangelical belief' (2013, p.173). Nonconformists deployed the same tactic used by Samuel Tuke in *Description of the Retreat*, by claiming that Cowper's religious anxieties had a pathological source, that Cowper would have been melancholic had he never converted, and that the religious referent of his distress was irrelevant. In the course of defending nonconformity in his review of *Adelphi*, the evangelical James Montgomery concluded that 'what is falsely called religious melancholy' is a redundant and misleading

diagnostic category, and should 'properly' be called 'physical melancholy' (Darcy, 2013, pp. 202-203).

Similar arguments were set out in 1809, in a letter to *The Evangelical Magazine* titled 'Thoughts on Religious Melancholy' by 'Amicus,' a pseudonymous medical practitioner (1809, Vol.17 pp.95-98). Samuel Tuke used this pseudonym in 1806 when writing to *The Monthly Review* on 'Remarks on the Observations made on the Discipline of the Quakers' (BIA TUKE/2/1/8/3), but no firm evidence has been found to link Tuke to 'Thoughts on Religious Melancholy.' Tuke or not, the article by this nonconforming physician exhibits a similar shift in evangelical opinion to those laid out by Darcy. Amicus certainly knew of religious melancholy amongst those in his care; 'several patients who have appeared, some suddenly and others gradually, to be seized by a species of religious horror – despairing in salvation – distrusting in Divine providence – asserting they had committed sins which could never be forgiven.' Whilst some had committed suicide in this state, 'others, by proper care and *medical treatment* have recovered and have been completely restored to their former soundness of mind' (1809, vol.17, pp.96-98, author's italics). Yet, Amicus points out, no religious transformation took place, as 'the sense of their sinfulness ceased with the removal of their hypochondriac²⁹ affection.' Therefore, Amicus continued:

In ninety-nine cases out of one hundred, no religious impressions, no true or false views of any scriptural doctrine, have anything to do with the business, and whatsoever is felt or expressed on this subject by these Hypochondriacs, should be considered merely as symptoms. (Amicus, 1809, p.96)

By getting involved in such cases, those who offered religious consolation did so on an erroneous premise that 'the disorder is of a wholly religious nature' which in turn opens nonconforming religion up to the denigrating charges of 'fanaticism and enthusiasm' as the 'numerous fatal issues' of these cases can be 'charged on Religion itself' rather than an underlying pathological complaint (Amicus, 1809, p.96). Amicus closed by quoting a defence of Cowper by Cowper's companion and composer of "Amazing Grace," John Newton:

Cowper's letters will shew how much his mind was occupied at one time with the truths of the Bible; and at another time by the fictions of Homer; but his melancholy, originally a constitutional disease – a physical disorder, which indeed could be affected by either the Bible or Homer; but was utterly distinct in its nature from the mere matter of either. And here

²⁹ 'Hypochondria' was synonymous with melancholia in this period and used interchangeably.

I cannot but mark this necessary distinction; having often been witness to cases where religion has been assigned as the proper cause of insanity, when it has been only an accidental occasion in the case of one already affected. (1809, p.97)

Likewise in *Description of the Retreat*, religious anxieties had an underlying somatic cause, totally unrelated to religious commitments; ‘the imputed cause [religious anxiety] is, in reality, no more than the first overt act’ as Tuke said (1813, p.131).

Conclusion

We have seen two sides to Samuel Tuke: a quaking minister who preached on the depravity of human nature, and a proto-psychiatrist who championed rational progressive mental medicine. Tuke was amongst a number of Quaker and nonconformist reformers who saw no conflict between rational scientific discourse and experiential piety. For example, the Quaker chemist and amateur astronomer William Allen borrowed from the enlightenment philosophy of Beccaria and Bentham to argue for the amelioration of the capital punishment laws through the innovative secular-scientific medium of social statistics (Mitchell, 2009) whilst also following his vocation in the Quaker ministry, and indeed preaching alongside Samuel Tuke (Hamilton, 1832).

Samuel Tuke, like his grandfather William, was an ‘absolute beginner’ in asylum management (Porter, 1987, p.32). But unlike his grandfather who did not originally aspire to change national policy, Samuel Tuke came into the field in masterful display of authority to use the Retreat to argue for the reform of public provision. Tuke deflected attention away from Quaker idiosyncrasies that might cast aspersions on this project, and aligned his account with other alienists and nonconformists who also dismissed the possibility that religious practice or belief could be the primary cause of mental affliction. Thus, the episodes of distress associated with Quaker piety were unknown to most of Tuke’s contemporaries, and have continued to escape the attention of York Retreat historians. Whilst Tuke certainly ‘skewed the facts,’ his presentation was in keeping with evangelical and medical opinion of the 1810s, and the views that he took on his own ‘taint of melancholy.’

The Retreat stood on the cusp of a move to pathologise all types of melancholy in the early nineteenth century. Until then ‘medical thinking had accommodated the theological view that religious melancholy could be seen as, at least in part, the distress of the soul’

according to Darcy (2013, p.178). By the early nineteenth century, nonconformists were coming to terms with the increasing unpalatability of religious distress in public discourse and were moving towards somatic explanations of extreme cases to defend themselves. Meanwhile mad-doctors moved from seeing religious extremes as a cause of insanity to seeing them as a symptom (Andrews, 2011), as their proto-psychiatric aetiologies gained dominance in the pastoral domain by denying causal agency to religion and folk superstition altogether, thus cementing the sovereign authority of mental medicine.

In this context, Tuke and other nonconformists of the early nineteenth century could easily slip between religious and medical explanations of religious distress. It was a matter of giving greater salience and aetiological priority to bodily aspects of the sufferer's experience, over the religious aspects which a few decades earlier may have driven a narrative. The somatic slowly took precedence, at a time when experiential religion was falling out of favour and when the theology which underpinned these interpretations was slowly declining with the rise of Evangelical Quakerism.

Chapter Five – Ministers and Converts in the York Retreat; Conversion and Constitutional Weakness

This chapter will set correspondence and biographic material alongside York Retreat case notes, in a continued exploration of the diverse responses to religious distress within the Quaker movement and at the York Retreat. Spiritual and medical narratives combined in various ways in these accounts, but I repeat if I may that we are not seeking to establish whether Quakers at the Retreat were *really* undergoing spiritual awakenings, or were *really* pathologically ill, let alone whether they were (to use a modern invention) 'mentally ill.' There were many instances in which patients appeared to be religiously afflicted, as listed in the previous chapter. This chapter will look in more detail at the interpretations which these cases could be subject to. In keeping with Schmidt's findings melancholia in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries (2007), spiritual and medical factors were not mutually exclusive; patients in the Retreat could be both religiously and somatically afflicted at the same time.

Evidence of religious conversions during madhouse admission can be found throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Wesley brought a religious angle to what others described as nervousness or madness through his preaching, pastoral support and madhouse visits (Laffey, 2001), for example in the case of the Methodist convert Martha Thompson in 1750. Thompson was thought insane by her family upon returning from one of Wesley's public meetings and expounding her religious convictions. Thompson was admitted to Bedlam after being examined by a doctor, but was released following Wesley's intervention and became a Methodist minister (Pilkington, 1890, pp. 12-13). The well documented case of George Trosse has been the subject of numerous studies. Trosse believed himself to be utterly abandoned and hated by God upon being informed by a disembodied voice: 'Thou Wretch! Thou hast committed the Sin against the Holy Ghost!' He underwent three madhouse admissions during the 1650s, often under restraint, believing himself to be in Hell already. Memorably Trosse wrote of how he was tempted to bite off his own tongue and 'spit it in the Face of God' out of hatred towards a repressive and capricious God, who brought him into the world to have him suffer inexorable damnation (Stachniewski, 1991 p.93; Porter 1987, pp. 85-92). Yet Trosse found spiritual reconciliation in the madhouse and framed the episode as an integral part of his spiritual development in his biography of 1712, after becoming a successful dissenting minister. A century after

Trosse's admission, Cowper's *Adelphi* told of how Cowper converted to Methodism, having experienced the fruits of experiential religion whilst a madhouse patient.

Yet these narratives of conversion were not independent from medical treatment. Trosse recalled that the doctor's wife Mrs Gallop was 'been the prime instrument of both the health of my body and the Salvation of my Soul' (Porter, 1987, p.92), and Cowper received both the medical care and religious support of Dr Cotton, a Methodist doctor (Porter, 1987, p.98). Similarly the Quaker healer and minister Grace Chambers provided spiritual support for Fanny Henshaw whilst overseeing her bathing regime, and George Jepson, the village apothecary who was given superintendence of the York Retreat, may have been a spiritual healer in Digby's conjecture (1985, p.36).

This chapter will show how the York Retreat could in some cases preserve this longstanding permeability between religious and bodily healing, and allow for the embodied aspect of religious despair. Yet the chapter will also show that an increasingly medical approach started to eclipse parallel religious interpretations in the early nineteenth century.

Mark Holman Shepherd

Mark Holman Shepherd's admission survives to us through biography and poetry, as well as his York Retreat records, and demonstrates the diverse perspectives that could be taken on the issue of religious melancholia. Holman Shepherd was admitted to the Retreat in October 1822, where he converted to Quakerism, having been born into an Episcopalian family. His posthumous collected works, *Fruits of a Retired Life*, (1879) included a biographic account which offered a confused narrative of disappointed love, religious doubt and bodily weakness, and tends to focus on Holman Shepherd's weak nerves. Yet Holman Shepherd's poetry made numerous references to the spiritual transformation which took place in the Retreat, emphasising the providential nature of purgative suffering and its resolution through spiritual reconciliation.

Shepherd stayed in the York Retreat for five years, from October 1822 (BIA RET/6/5/1/1A case no.268). In need of financial support due to physical disabilities ('his right hand is shrunk, and appears to be of little use ... his right foot is so turned in and deformed, that it would be almost impossible to walk'), his family were not willing to have him return home after his conversion to Quakerism. Therefore, his father left an annuity only for continued lodging at the Retreat (1879, pp.2, 17). Having the need for an independent life but being

unable to live alone, in 1827 Holman Shepherd married one of the York Retreat attendants named Rebecca Burgess, and left the Retreat (1879, pp.18-19). Holman Shepherd's first anthology of poems, *Hours of Retirement* was published two years later in 1829. The newlyweds moved to Otley, just north of Leeds, where they tried to set up a half-way house for convalescent Retreat patients and later a private madhouse of their own. Both attempts failed due to financial problems (1879, pp.21-22). Rebecca Shepherd passed away in 1861, leaving Mark Holman Shephard to fall into another period of mental and physical affliction, which the biography puts down to a physician's overzealous prescriptions of alcohol. The biographer made much of this ill-advised use of liquor as fuel for the temperance movement, whilst defending Holman Shepherd's essentially good character and vindicating Holman Shephard as he cut down on alcohol and found a new lease of life. Holman Shepherd found a new life companion through an advertisement in *Friends Journal* and passed away in 1876, aged 90 (1879, pp. 23-31).

According to *Fruits of a Retired Life*, Holman Shepherd's afflictions started with disappointment in love in 1813, aged 27. Holman Shepherd's father did not approve of his proposed engagement, as the biographer narrated:

Such disappointments have not unfrequently turned the minds of much stronger men than he. Could we wonder then, if one of such weak physical constitution, so highly imaginative and nervous, and of such tender sensibilities, should sink into despondency and gloom? (1879, p.11)

Immediately after this, a religious element was introduced:

He had been seeking the way towards Zion with his face turned thitherward... but when this dark cloud came upon him, his spiritual vision was obscured and all hope for a time was taken away. The Enemy as if let loose at afflict and destroy, insinuated that he had committed sins of the deepest dye, and that there was nothing but everlasting punishment for him! (1879, p.11)

This type of narrative was old-fashioned by 1879 when *Fruits of a Retired Life* was published. Drawing on material that was over a century old, the author used John Newton's *Letters to a Nobleman* of 1776 to explain Holman Shepherd's religious fears. The author quoted a lengthy extract in which Newton described the 'imagination' as a bodily faculty more than a faculty of the soul, and therefore reasoned that it could be an easy target for interference from 'the Enemy' because it was so influenced by imbalances in the fallen, embodied human condition:

That wonderful power which we call the imagination is, I suppose, rather the medium of the souls perceptions during its present state of union with

the body, than a spiritual faculty, strictly speaking; but it partakes largely of that depravity which sin has brought upon our whole frame, and affords Satan an avenue, for assaulting us with the most terrifying and dangerous temptations. At best we can have an indifferent command over it. We cannot by one act of our own wills exclude the wild, inconsistent, and hurtful ideas which are ever ready to obtrude themselves on the mind, and a slight alteration in the physical system, in motion of the blood, or nervous spirits, is sufficient to withdraw it wholly from our dominion, and leave us exposed to the Enemy. (1879, p.12)

Newton reflected on the idea that Satan could strike at a time of physical weakness from the perspective of eighteenth century 'nervous systems' rather than seventeenth century Galenic approaches to melancholy. Therefore, according to this biography, Holman Shepherd was tempted by the Enemy's insinuations, but nevertheless was exonerated from moral failing, having not actually committed sins of 'the deepest dye.' His susceptibility to 'Satan' was caused by bodily weaknesses rather than a moral, mental or spiritual failing.

The author continued on this theme with a further quotation from Newton:

How dreadful the consequences when the Lord permits some hidden pin in the human machine to be altered! Immediately a door flies open... [abridgement in Fruits of a Retired Life] the enemy pours in like a flood, falsehood and horror, and the blackness of darkness, the judgment is bourn down and disabled, the most distressing delusions seize upon us with all the apparent force of evidence and demonstration. When this is the case in a certain degree we call it distraction, but there are various degrees of it, which leave a person in the possession of his senses, as to the things of outward life, and yet, with regard to his spiritual concerns, are sufficient to shake the very foundation of his hopes and deprive him of all peace and comfort and make him a terror to himself ... [abridgement in Fruits of a Retired Life] All the Lord's people are not called upon to navigate these deep waters, but all are liable to. (1879, pp.12-13)

'Delusions,' 'distraction' and a loss of 'judgement' arose in circumstances of bodily affliction and temptation, but it was nevertheless a religious madness which Holman Shepherd was 'called upon to navigate' by 'the Lord' to further his spiritual development. Even 'Satan' entered via imbalances which 'the Lord permits' as a providentially ordained trial. The subject was absolved doubly through this narrative; through the physiological angle in which afflicted nerves and a delicate constitution indicated refined sensibility, and through the overarching narrative of special providence behind religious madness, in which 'delusions,' and lost judgement indicated particular and personal divine attention.

Between 1813 and 1821 Holman Shephard suffered from intermittent bouts of this 'despondency,' the biographer stated. By 1821 it had 'settled upon him deeper than ever' and he was placed in the York Retreat. For all this talk of disappointed love, providential

suffering, temptation and fear of 'everlasting punishment,' only a couple of pages later the author offered a more concrete cause, settling squarely on a somatic angle despite the preceding justification of religious affliction:

In alluding to mental disease, we must not overlook the fact as before intimated, that in many cases it arises from some physical ailment, – in H.S.'s case most likely from indigestion... But change of air and society, proper diet and the right occupation of body and mind restored him to his usual health. (1879, p.15)

It is therefore a jumbled and disjointed narrative, which ranges from disappointed love, to afflicted nerves, diabolical influence, madness as a religious trial, and to finally indigestion. A parallel can be found in Hayley's biography of Cowper, which in Darcy's opinion 'is fatally confused' with no overarching aetiological narrative for Cowper's maladies. In an effort to protect Cowper's reputation, Hayley likewise gave a psychological explanation of thwarted love, a physical explanation of a 'scorbutic habit' (scurvy) and a religious explanation based upon Cowper's exquisite pious sensibilities (Darcy, 2013 pp.192-3).

In this biographical narrative there is little sense that Holman Shepherd's conversion to Quakerism was connected to his afflictions. After all, Holman Shepherd's afflictions were actually caused by 'indigestion.' Therefore the author presented it as a happy coincidence that Holman Shepherd found Quakerism to match his own religious beliefs. Although 'he knew little, or nothing of their views' before his admission to the Retreat, 'how great must have been his delight to find that some of their leading principles were so much in unison with his own impressions of Divine truth... His judgement became at length convinced, he adopted their principles and practices, and became a Friend' (1879, p.16). Conversely the Retreat case notes show a period of religious seeking prior to admission, which we may assume coincided with his protracted religious dissatisfaction:

He had been changeable in his religious opinions. Had been educated a churchman, become an independent & Methodist in turns & since his coming here has become a friend & has often spoke in meetings (BIA RET/6/5/1/1A case no.268)

A recurrent theme of Holman Shephard's poetry was the role of religion to ease an afflicted mind. This was a commonplace of Quaker piety, yet many of these poems were composed during or very shortly after Holman Shepherd's Retreat admission and conversion, suggesting a continuity between his afflictions before admission and the consolations found during. For example;

*Though great the afflictions and heavy the grief,
That often the righteous befall,
The lord in his mercy will send them relief,
And rescue them out of them all.*

*What though in the world they should have tribulation,
And oft with the foe have to fight,
Yet through the dark hour of every temptation,
They are led with an inshining light. ('Light in Darkness,' 1879, p.112)*

A tribute to the female superintendent of the York Retreat, 'To Katherine Jepson,'³⁰ again described religious conciliation at the Retreat:

*When I first arrived thy bright countenance beamed,
With kindness above every feature,
A ray of sweet hope thro' my Katherine gleamed,
To cheer up a poor fallen creature,*

*Oh who would have thought that I ever should meet,
Such friends in my deep tribulation,
Fair Haven of Rest, hail lovely Retreat!
Thou ark of such sweet consolation! (1879, p.53)*

In these excerpts, Shepherd appealed to the authority of having undergone spiritual awakening following the conventions of reformed theology, the 'poor fallen creature' finding 'sweet consolation,' and being rescued from affliction and grief. This motif of crisis and resolution is found throughout Shepherd's poetry, many of which were reworkings of the Psalms, for example:

*Afflictions compassed around me
and pains gat hold of me:
I nought but grief and trouble found
Nor knew I where to flee
Then to the Lord I raised my voice;
He did my soul deliver
And bade me in my strength rejoice
And trust in him forever (1829, p.96)*

³⁰ Katherine Jepson is frustratingly elusive to the historical record. The Quaker physician Edward Long Fox ran Brislington House, a non-sectarian upper-class madhouse in Bristol (and before that in Cleeve Hill, Bristol). Katherine Allen was an assistant for Long-Fox before moving to the York Retreat, where she married George Jepson the superintendent. Several writers have speculated that her experience was important in development of the treatment regime at the York Retreat – she was the only member of staff with prior madhouse experience. Hardly any information about Katherine Jepson survives, so the account in Holman Shepherd's poetry is a useful if somewhat rose-tinted addition.

The curative implications of Holman Shepherd's conversion were played down in the biographic introduction to *Fruits of a Retired Life* despite Holman Shepherd's indications in his poetry, although one might assume that an interested reader would be able to read between the lines given the content of the poems. Indeed, the introduction to *Fruits of a Retired Life* encouraged readers to find comfort from the life and works of this 'afflicted child of the Lord':

To the chastened and afflicted child of the Lord, may this volume prove as a 'Brook by the way' [Psalm 110:7] reminding them, that the Lord still chooses His own dear children in the furnace of affliction, and though "no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous, yet afterwards it yeildeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them who are exercised thereby." [Hebrews 12:11] And thus in the hands of the Great Refiner, they become vessels to his praise here upon earth, prepared to do, or suffer according to His Holy will. (1879 p.v)

Quaker spiritual biography was often introduced by celebrating the examples of faith, devotion and fortitude to be found therein, whilst reassuring and consoling the reader about the providential and purgative nature of their own afflictions (for example, Dodshon, 1804, p.6; Murray, 1792, p.19; Pearson, 1817, pp.13-14). This religious angle was overlooked in the Retreat case book, save for the remark about Holman Shepherd's changing religious views; he was 'insane about eight months, cause unknown. The disease partly constitutional partly superinduced' (BIA RET/6/5/1/1A case 268).

'Cousin Hannah' - Hannah Middleton

Holman Shepherd's biography shows the awkward evasions which could be used when discussing religious affliction. Similarly, some of the retrospective accounts of Hannah Middleton's life are also evasive about her York Retreat admission. Yet the surviving material relating to Middleton demonstrates how delicate nerves and religious anxiety were both targets for treatment at the Retreat.

Hannah Middleton was admitted to the York Retreat on 24th January 1810, aged 24. Whilst Holman Shepherd's poetry suggested that religion had a curative value, Middleton's case notes are one of the few instances in which the Retreat case book makes this claim. Records of the four-month admission show Middleton 'in a great degree of despondency respecting her future state' after the passing of her mother, and that she left 'after gradual recovery and the use of the warm bath.' The case notes add that 'she afterwards became an acknowledged minister in the Society' and although she remained well 'it was noticed by

her intimate friends that there was a latent tendency to melancholy existing in her mind' which she kept in check through 'the well-regulated state of her feelings under the influence of religion' (BIA RET/6/5/1/1A case 138). Middleton's personal papers have not come to light, but her activity can be traced through her obituary notice, her younger sister Maria Fox's spiritual biography and Samuel Tuke's personal papers. Born in 1786 to a devout Quaker family, 'Cousin Hannah' as Samuel Tuke called her in his *Memoirs* (1860, vol 1, p.86) was the daughter of Sarah Tuke Grubb's long term spiritual confidant, Tabitha Middleton.³¹ Hannah Middleton was educated near her home town of Wellingborough until the age of 13 when she was sent to Esther Tuke's Trinity Lane Quaker Girls School in York for a year. According to Plant, this school was specifically designed to instil Quaker spiritual ideals into the next generation of female ministers (2000, pp.262-266). The education was a success, as Maria Fox recalled:

At this early period of life, she was more than usually thoughtful and serious, so that I have heard my dear mother express the comfort she derived from the belief, that the work of divine grace was going forward in the heart of this beloved child. (Fox, 1846, p.17)

Hannah Middleton's afflictions started after her mother passed away in 1809. The Quaker minister Mary Alexander recalled being 'greatly surprised' by Tabitha Middleton's sudden passing, when Elizabeth Wheeler (William Tuke's daughter) welcomed her to the mourning Middleton household in October 1809, shortly after Tabitha's death (Alexander, 1811, p.174). Elizabeth Wheeler was given charge of the bereft Hannah Middleton and gave the following account of Hannah's distress in a letter to her nephew Samuel Tuke, on 23rd November 1809:

Since in the possession of my present charge at have found but little leisure for writing, yet I am unwilling to withhold qualifying thy request of having some tidings of us... the hourly attention to HM allows me no separate enjoyment and to her fresh company is at present very painful. Therefore thou will in some measure be capable of comprehending the tried spot we are in.... I hope to be enabled to persevere. Dear Hannah was accompanied by the friend proposed the latter end of last week, who I find a very needful addition to the undertaking – the poor thing continues extremely low, which during many sleepless hours in the night is a most painful confirmation that the mental powers have lost every desirable equilibrium – I have had fresh advice on the occasion, and as the present state of health is very unfavourable I cannot but cherish the hope, the present clouds of dismay will by & by be permitted to vanish – her revolving thought fails not to centre in the censure of herself for

³¹ Tabitha Middleton née Hoyland was the sister of Elizabeth Hoyland, William Tuke's first wife.

unfaithfulness, and therefore frustrating the blessings in store, which being now deemed irrecoverable, life is a burden and the prospect of futurity tremendous. (BIA TUKE/1/7/1/4/1)

Although it was catalysed by the loss of her mother, Middleton's distress assumed a religious nature; Middleton deemed herself to be irrecoverably unfaithful. It was not unusual for Quaker 'convincements' or periods of religious distress to be triggered by death or thoughts of mortality. The death of John Griffith's drinking friend catalysed his conviction (Griffith, 1780, p.10), during which Griffith was tempted into severe abstinence as seen in chapter three. Fanny Henshaw cited her sister's illness and near death as the catalyst for her own conversion (Dodshon, 1804, p.16). The minister Margaret Lucas's religious seeking started when she look up residence opposite a graveyard, and was therefore 'frequently reminded of the mortality of the body and thereby struck with many serious reflections' (Lucas, 1797, p.19). William Tuke's conviction of 1761 came after the passing of his first wife, an event which at the time he saw as divine punishment for lack of devotion. As William Tuke wrote to his future wife Esther Maud four years later 'the insinuations and temptations of Satan found an easy entrance' and 'I was almost upon the brink of destruction when my dear wife was taken from me and in such a manner that I could see no cause for it but divine judgement upon me' (Sessions, 1987, pp.16-17).

Little was recorded of Middleton's admission, save for her gradual recovery and use of warm baths (BIA RET/6/5/1/1B, p.58; BIA RET/6/5/1/1A case 138). A month after being discharged Middleton wrote to Pricilla and Samuel Tuke, telling of enjoyable 'rambles' in the countryside around Harrogate, having been sent there by her father to 'take the water.' Therefore a significant part of Middleton's treatment was for nervous imbalance. Middleton continued to follow a regime of warm baths in Harrogate, which she found to have a 'salutary effect,' despite the 'dismal shape' of the tub at the new accommodation (BIA TUKE/1/21/2/1/3). Yet a religious meaning to these events ran parallel to care of the body, as shown by the 'well regulated state of her thoughts under the influence of religion' which, according to the case notes, kept melancholy at bay. In the same letter to the Tukes, Middleton told of the comfort she found through having a religiously 'centred' mind:

Tho I believe no one estimates the value of true friendship "A tie more stubborn far than natures band" [quoting 'The Grave' by Robert Blair] more than I do, yet my dear Pricilla! Seeing there are seasons when, even this will avail us little, or nothing, how desirable is it that we should seek to have our minds centred in that which is all in all and which alone can serve as an anchor, in the day of trouble. (BIA TUKE/1/21/2/1/3)

Over the course of her stay in the Retreat, the 'revolving thoughts' of self-deprecation decreased as Middleton became anchored and 'centred' in a religious attitude. This curative aspect of Quaker spirituality will be explored in the final chapter.

Another indication of Hannah Middleton's spiritual progress whilst at the York Retreat was made in a letter from Mary Alexander and Mary Proud, who were caring for the convalescent Retreat patient Sarah Barrett. On 14th June 1810 they wrote to George Jepson and Henry Tuke on the occasion of Barret's emergency readmission, Barret having once again becoming unmanageable. Concerning Middleton, Proud wrote:

MG rejoiced on HM's behalf that she was qualified to bear such a Testimony, tho very diffidently expressed, to that Power which can do for his despondent little tho often afflicted ones more than they can ask or think respecting themselves. (BIA TUKE/1/5/1/3/216)

Middleton therefore wrote religious consolation to a fellow patient, in a letter dated one month before her discharge from the Retreat.

The religious implications of Middleton's Retreat admission are also touched upon in Middleton's obituary notice in *Testimonies Concerning Ministers Deceased*, the annual return of Quaker obituaries to the London Yearly Meeting. In this account, the 'spiritual conflict' so central to Middleton's religious authority as a minister took place during her admission, as the result of the passing of her mother:

Brought at an early age to know something of the love of Christ, and her mind gradually becoming subjected to its constraining power, her conduct gave proof of a decided preference for the things which are most excellent. – the death of her beloved Mother in the year 1809, was the means of introducing her into great spiritual conflict, but the Lord was pleased to grant her the consolations of the Gospel, and she was enabled greatly to contribute to the comfort of her surviving parent, during a period of protracted suffering which terminated in his death. – By these and other trials, her Christian experience was enlarged, and in the year 1816, she appeared in the character of a Minister. (FH YM/TCMD, vol.5, p.81-82)

The admission itself was not mentioned but the entire period was framed as one of spiritual growth. The passing of Tabitha Middleton, described by Elizabeth Wheeler and the Retreat case book as the cause of Middleton's distress, was now a providential trial, 'the means of introducing her into great spiritual conflict.' Middleton's melancholy was a sign of special providence, of specific divine intervention to expand Middleton's 'Christian experience,' as a prerequisite for spiritual growth.

Maria Fox's conviction paralleled that of her sister Hannah Middleton. It also involved affliction during the grieving process, as her biography made clear:

...under the chastening hand, her religious character was increasing in strength and solidarity; for when the influence of parental power and example was about to be withdrawn, her heavenly Father saw fit to introduce her into such a course of discipline in the school of affliction, as, under the divine blessing, greatly tended to her subjection and refinement. (Fox, 1846, p.21)

Similarly to Middleton's obituary, the episode was introduced in the register of special providence. These afflictions were both physical and mental, the author continued:

After a time of domestic trial, dear M.'s health became very delicate, with strong indications of consumption, during which period, her peculiarly susceptible mind, connected with a delicate nervous system, often yielded to feelings of discouragement; but I believe it was sweetly evident to others that the Lord was near, carrying on his own work, and bringing her to an establishment on the one foundation. (Fox, 1846, p.21)

Delicate nerves and an amorphous consumptive illness³² were used to explain Maria Fox's negative state of mind, whilst the overarching meaning of the episode was that in fact 'the Lord was near,' and was bringing about the spiritual change that proved to be a life-defining part of Fox's religious trajectory. The examples of Hannah Middleton, Maria Fox and Holman Shepherd show how a somatic emphasis and an appeal to special providence served to absolve the individual from spiritual shortcoming and sin. Yet the extreme elements of Quaker conversion narratives were not dwelt upon in these examples, as the 'once-revered status of religious melancholy' (Darcy, 2013, p.174) fell out of favour for the reasons discussed above.

Constitutional Weakness

Like the omission of Holman Shepherd's religious trials in his Retreat case notes, several York Retreat case book entries dwell upon constitutional weakness with little mention of

³² Consumption in the medical context indicated tuberculosis or diseases of the lungs, but in popular usage could refer to any wasting condition (Lawlor and Susuki, 2000, p.462 fn.11). In 1804 Dr William Buchan cited the causes of consumption as "violent passions, exertions, or affections of the mind; as grief, disappointment, anxiety, or close application to the study of abstruse arts or sciences" (Lawlor and Susuki, 2000, p.476). Like nervous affliction, consumptive illness in this period was imbued with 'essentially positive attributes, such as heightened beauty, refined sensibility, and artistic creativity' (Lawlor and Susuki, 2000, p.458). Tuberculosis meant almost certain death in the 1810s, therefore Fox's consumption was probably not tuberculosis, but general weight loss and precarious health.

the parallel religious narratives found from other sources. Samuel Wheeler's 'deep religious melancholy' was originally described as wholly constitutional; 'his disorder constitutional – he labours under deep depression of spirits.' A different hand added the religious angle to the notes (BIA RET/6/5/1/1A case 258). Betty Pierson found no relief from her 'constitutional' religious affliction at the Retreat in 1824: 'Cause of insanity doubtful but thought to be constitutional... Affected by religion operating too much on an originally weak mind; many means have been employed for recovery.' Pierson 'Left by desire of her friends, much as admitted' in 1827 (BIA RET/6/5/1/1A case 305). Likewise for Ann Payne aged 47, admitted in March 1827. As the case book put it; 'The disorder constitutional; remedies have been tried with a view to Biliary Secretions & the digestive powers... no derangement of health, beyond debility... Great religious despondency, fretfulness and dissatisfaction.' Payne was 'discharged recovered' on 4th September 1827 and passed away in 1830 (BIA RET/6/5/1/1A case 361). Payne recorded her final spiritual battle in memoranda which were reproduced for the edification of the Quaker community in a substantive four-page *Annual Monitor* entry. The *Annual Monitor* was a nineteenth century version of *Piety Promoted*, edited by Samuel Tuke's sister and brother in law, Ann and William Alexander. In the typical style of Quaker deathbed literature, Payne battled to maintain trust, resignation, and a mind stayed upon God as death approached:

The near view of death excited in my mind very trying feelings of timidly; and I reproved myself for want of more faith and confidence in my never failing Helper, who has indeed been with me, blessed be his Name, in six troubles; and will not leave me in the seventh, if my whole dependence is placed upon him; 'He knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust' [Psalm 103:14]. This assurance provided a stay for my tossed mind, and the endeavour after tranquillity produced feelings of resignation to the Will of my Heavenly Father, wherein I could desire neither life nor death, believing that however long my illness may terminate, all will be ordered in Infinite Wisdom; and trusting that when the awful period arrives, at which I am summoned to an unseen existence, the dread which I feel for its approach will be mercifully removed, as my eye is steadily fixed on the Rock of Ages; 'thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee [Isaiah 26:3].' (*Annual Monitor*, 1831, p.131)

Payne eventually departed 'gentle and easy' uttering 'Dear Jesus! My trust is in thee' (*Annual Monitor*, 1831, p.134). Notwithstanding its protracted length, the account was unremarkable in the *Annual Monitor*. This admirable example of piety in *Annual Monitor* was regarded as constitutional timidity in the Retreat case book – just as Samuel Tuke put the worst of his religious fears to his own constitution during his illnesses of the 1840s:

Died aged 49. See the Annual Monitor for 1831 for extracts from her religious diary, these speak of great bodily suffering and represent a pious mind sometimes suffering from self-condemnation, and a degree of fear at the approach of death, – probably attributed to constitutional timidity, – but ultimately triumphing of these and reposing in the strength of faith.
(BIA RET/6/5/1/1A case 361)

The split of opinion between the pathological and the spiritual could be even starker, as the religious views of patients sometimes went completely unrecorded. Lydia Harding's (née Sanger) referral letter stated, 'I understand the prominent exhibition is religious melancholy' (BIA RET/1/5/1/33 dated 11th April 1829), yet this was not reflected in her case notes, which described her simply as 'very melancholy' (BIA RET/6/5/1/1A case 357). The referral letter of Ann Gibbons in 1798 suggested 'her disorder is rather of the melancholy kind and some of her acquaintances think previous to her derangement she was under serious religious impressions' (BIA RET/1/5/1/3 dated 6th December 1798). The referral letter validates the 'seriousness' of her religious views, and her potential (prior to her 'derangement') to build upon these religious impressions. Yet the case notes make no mention of this and simply state that Gibbons:

Has been in a state of derangement about four months attended with great horrors and irritability there is reason to believe she has at times been inclined to injure herself. But has not offered any violence to others.
(BIA RET/6/5/1/1A, case no.37)

The case of 33 year old Henry King, admitted in April 1829, offers an outstanding example of the radically different perspectives that could be taken when a patient presented with religious symptoms. An unusually detailed referral letter told of his religious distress, and reads like a conversion narrative for the most part:

He became low in Spirits and dejected and it was apprehended he was under religious exercise of mind and got so dejected and desponding as to begin to neglect his business, thought himself too unworthy to attend meetings or come amongst his friends as heretofore and ceased for a time to attend meetings and mostly kept himself to his house, seldom going out even if wanted on business would prefer to avoid it if he could and sometimes his house keeper feared he did not take sufficient sustenance and had to have a deal of labour at times to persuade him to take more – he got so far in his despondency as to be apprehensive he was become a castaway for whom there was scarce a hope.

In these early stages, it was evident that King was 'under religious exercise of mind' rather than suffering from a pathological disorder. Appearing to have made it through the depths of Quaker conviction, King commenced a short-lived career in the ministry:

About three months ago he changed suddenly, came to Meetings and was amongst his friends, resumed his business and appeared better and more cheerful in spirits but with a degree of gravity. On his coming again amongst his friends he began to say a little chiefly texts of scripture in meetings...

It was only in these final stages that his behaviour became abnormal and the referral was made:

till in a few weeks he began to be much more frequent with his communications and got more restless and disturbing to the Meeting and he is now got so high and self-opinionated as to be past the effect of any advice whatever. He disturbed our Monthly Meeting very much yesterday, both of them and in that for business particularly so frequently making his remarks till at length the excitation of his mind appeared to be worked to such a pitch as far exceeded all bounds of any reasonable Man, persuasion had lost all affect.... He got quite so wild and ungovernable last evening after meeting as to go about in the village without his hat and exclaim in wild gestures that he was the King. (BIA RET 1/5/1/33 dated 3rd April 1829)

In contrast, King's case notes offer no indication whatsoever of religious distress or irregularity, and pathologised the entire episode:

He has shewn slight symptoms of insanity for 2 months, but they have been more decidedly apparent for a week. The present attack is the first in which he has shewn any wandering of mind but he has been subject to depression of spirits at intervals for some years. The intervals have been complete. There was nothing peculiar in his previous habits or manners, and nothing approaching to mental weakness. He is in good bodily health at present but is liable to disorders for the biliary organs. He has not been confined in an Establishment for the insane. He once refused food for three days together, but has never attempted to injure himself or others. (BIA RET/6/5/1/1A, case no. 404)

King was placed on a Cheyneyan treatment regime of a 'vegetable diet,' emetics, and a 'saline mixture,' suggesting that his disorder was attributed to nervous imbalance. King was discharged 'recovered' in March 1830 after having made two unsuccessful escape attempts during the previous summer (BIA RET/6/5/1/1A, case no. 404), but his religious concerns were conspicuous by their absence in his case notes, given the detail supplied in the referral letter.

Conclusion

The prominence of somatic or 'constitutional' explanations for religious affliction has once again come to light, following the approach taken in *Description* and the direction taken

within dissenting movements from the early nineteenth century. Vivid descriptions of religious distress tend to be found in case notes from the first two decades of the Retreat's opening as shown in chapter four, whereas the 'constitutional' narratives discussed above tend to be from the 1810s and 1820s, suggesting the shift in attitudes towards religious affliction which, as Darcy shows, occurred at the turn of the nineteenth century.

It is testament to the increasingly uneasy relationship between melancholy, medicine and religious experience that Samuel Tuke attempted to remove religious affliction from *Description of the Retreat*, and the Retreat was marginalised or ignored in religious biography and eulogy. On several occasions as shown in this chapter, medical narratives were given precedence in the Retreat case books to such an extent that parallel religious interpretations were passed over, in this drift towards pathology. Yet somatic aetiologies could be integrated into religiously informed responses to affliction, providing interpretive angles on the long-standing embodied aspect of religious melancholia. 'Constitutional weakness' offered a way to rehabilitate the excesses of religious distress amongst Retreat patients, as it did in Samuel Tuke's biography.

As discussed in chapter two, much of the pastoral consolation of Puritanism revolved around distinguishing 'the despair of the reprobate from its potentially misleading simulacrum in the pre-conversion experience of the elect' (Stachniewski, 1991, p.27). There is little evidence of 'talking therapy' at the retreat as Porter has pointed out (1987a, p.225). Yet Holman Shepherd and Middleton's biographies suggest that such consolation may have been in use, as the afflicted may have been invited to reframe their narrative of abandonment and dejection to a narrative of special providence through the trials of affliction. Holman Shepherd presents narratives of purgative affliction in his poetry, and as we have seen in chapter two, Hannah Middleton consoled Samuel Tuke's sister Elizabeth Wheeler by reframing difficulties in this way:

by his chastening hand, he is proving his love towards us, how are we brought to bow into submission to his holy will, and acknowledge that he doeth all things well, and that his compassion fails not. (Tuke, 1860, vol. 1, p. 432)

Whilst the Retreat can be presented the birthplace of the secular therapeutics of 'moral treatment,' clearly religious healing was still taking place in the Retreat. Yet body, mind and soul were closely entwined even in these religious narratives, and in several instances, religious angles recorded elsewhere were omitted in the Retreat case notes, perhaps suggesting the increasingly secular nature of the institution.

Chapter Six – Policing Religious Authority; the Case of Martha Dickinson

Introduction

This chapter will examine a claim to religious authority which did not meet with approval in the Quaker community. Unlike the voluminous records left by those who participated successfully in Quaker religious life, York Retreat case notes furnish us with only a minuscule amount of information on such cases, and all too often from the single perspective of the case notes. Henry King's case at the end of the previous chapter shows how one-dimensional these could be.

However, a significant body of evidence survives relating to the case of Martha Dickinson, as recorded in diaries of the local minister Joseph Wood.³³ Martha Dickinson was an aspiring Quaker minister whose persistent preaching was deemed to fall short of accepted norms. Wood's diary contains correspondence and memoranda relating to Dickinson's spiritual progress and downfall, preceding her Retreat admission in 1804. Wood's reflections once again show a spectrum of religiously and medically informed responses, changing with hindsight and with the intended audience in mind. However in this instance the religious narratives were not centred around validating the afflicted, but aimed to delegitimise Dickinson and bring about the correct religious behaviour.

The York Retreat casebook mentions several patients who spoke out of turn in meetings. Sarah Delves of Coalbrookdale (admitted December 1796 aged 55) was initially described in the casebook as 'an acknowledged minister in the Society,' a detail which was then crossed out. The marginalia added that Delves 'had been a rather giddy girl and had married out of the Society. She occasionally spoke in meetings when considered not in a sane state of mind and was not a member of Society.' Delves suffered from fits and lowness of spirits, but was discharged recovered on 20th November 1798 (BIA RET 6/5/1/A case 14). According to a referral letter, Ann Sawton 'at meeting laid claim to revelation as to clearly express her disorder' although it appears she was never actually admitted

³³ These notebooks are held by Leeds University Special Collections, MS 1936. They have been transcribed and digitised by P. Cooksey and the University of Birmingham Quaker Studies Centre. These digital transcripts have been organised into the five volumes cited here, and are available at <http://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/pages/notebooks.html> (accessed on 22/3/2017).

(Stewart, 1992, p.42). Sarah Merrill of Castle Donnington, admitted July 1796 was also described as 'an acknowledged minister' in the casebook, which was then struck out and amended to 'she sometimes spoke in meetings, though not a minister.' As mentioned in chapter four;

she was seized about three months ago with insanity accompanied with an obstinate refusal of a sufficiency of food, in consequence of which her Flesh and Strength were much reduced. Her spirits are low and Aspect Melancholy and desponding. The reason assign'd for not eating is that it would be disobedience in her to do so, and she has been unfaithful. (BIA RET 6/5/1/A case no.4)

Merrill was discharged in 1797, only to be readmitted having relapsed several times over the next ten years. Merrill was finally discharged in 1810 and passed away in 1814 (Stewart, 1992, p.42; BIA RET 6/5/1/A case no.4). Mary Pyle was admitted August 1796 aged 50, suffering from 'ensoriousness & sourness of disposition and an absurd idea respecting an expectation of Marriage,' and passed away in 1816 after twenty years in the York Retreat. Pyle was, according to the case notes, 'an acknowledged minister in the Society,' which is then struck out, and it was added, 'It was supposed by some that M.P. had been in the station of an acknowledged minister but upon enquiry of Bristol Friends this appears not to have been the case, tho' it is still probable that she spoke in meetings, and she used for some time to sit in the Elder's gallery.' (Stewart, 1992, p. 42; BIA RET 6/5/1/A case 7). Mary Bayes of Wellingborough, admitted in 1796, was 'noisy & restless and completely deranged in her ideas' and 'frequently in the habit of speaking in meetings though not a minister.' She 'manifested symptoms of Insanity, chiefly by doubts of a religious nature' and passed away in the Retreat in 1820 aged 82 (BIA RET6/5/1A case no.10; Lawrence, 2009 p.90).

Lawrence and Stewart note that the majority of those admitted to the Retreat under such circumstances were women. For Lawrence, 'erroneous religious understanding could cause wrong behaviour' which 'may have been particularly frowned upon in women' (2009, p.90). Stewart went further, suggesting that 'perhaps the Quakers preached equality, but apparently when women spoke up too much at least some were vulnerable of being labelled insane' (Stewart, 1992, p.42). In theory anyone was able to spontaneously preach during worship, but as Stewart writes, 'abundant Retreat records of women who spoke out in Meeting suggest that the rhetoric may not have matched the practice' (1992, p.58) and that 'there was no parallel diagnosis evident for males' (1992, p.43). Further study would be needed to contextualise this gender bias, and it is likely that the selective nature of Quaker record keeping (weighted in favour of those who participated successfully in

Quaker religious life) would prove a barrier to such research. It has been established by Plant that more women than men were drawn to Quaker piety in this period, therefore this imbalance in York Retreat admissions may simply be reflective of that fact (Plant, 2006, pp.228-229).

Nevertheless, questionable ministry was 'frowned upon' according to Lawrence, who cited the case of Martha Dickinson in 1804 as illustrative of this point. The case book shows:

She has been in a state of insanity for 7 or 8 years. Her disorder consists principally of erroneous religious ideas, which have in many respects a very unpleasant and in some way a dangerous influence upon her conduct... although she appears to have upright intentions, they are such to render her frequently unfit for religious, civil or domestic society... Often spoke in meetings in an eccentric way.

Dickinson was discharged in October 1804; 'her husband came and fetched her home having an inclination to give her another trial – she being considerably better' (Lawrence, 2009, p.90; BIA RET 6/5/1/A case 89). The fact that Quakers were more liable to record and retain material relating to successful religious careers, makes the survival of these notebooks highly significant as we seek to understand how religious deviancy was regarded in a community which wholeheartedly affirmed diverse types of spontaneous religious experience, whilst maintaining a strict watch over the content of these revelations.

'Martha Dickinson will fall away and come to nothing'; Letters to Martha Dickinson Dickinson's activities were first recorded by Joseph Wood in 1792. No irregularities were mentioned at this time, only that Dickinson was amongst a number of ministers who 'had each of us a short time' of preaching during a Meeting for Worship (Wood, Vol.3, 23.5; Vol.3, 25.3). By October 1800, Wood recorded that 'Martha Dickinson appeared twice in the forepart thereof having for some time before taken friend's advice to remain silent' (Wood, Vol.4, 33.16). A further memorandum from November 1800 stated 'Martha Dickinson was trouble some time in the meeting, appearing twice but friends took no notice of her, being preserved in that which gives dominion over such hasty, forward ranting spirits' (Wood, Vol.4, 34.1). A series of letters from 1797 to 1803 show Wood's ministrations to Dickinson as he urged her to desist from what he now thought to be erroneous preaching.³⁴ 'However plausible it may appear,' Wood wrote in a letter of

³⁴ Sadly, three letters written to Dickinson in 1797 (eight sides of manuscript text) were removed from Wood's notebooks at a later date. The existence of these letters is known by the index to the

July 1800, Dickinson's ministry was deemed 'after a sufficient time of tryal' by those blessed with a 'spirit of discernment' to have proceeded 'from an unsound heart' (Wood, Vol. 1, 14:11-14:12). Dickinson was making plausible and coherent statements, and it took those with superior discernment (senior ministers and elders such as himself) to determine their unsuitability. Wood's diaries show that a great deal of Quaker ministry in these provincial meetings consisted of the timely utterance and elaboration on passages of scripture. Credibility in these meetings was determined as much in the conduct and tone of the minister as the generic scriptural passages which they delivered. Only well-established ministers had the authority to engage in lengthy addresses, such as those of Samuel Tuke in chapter four. Dickinson's early attempts at ministry were unremarkable, and simply noted without comment by Wood in 1792.

Notwithstanding the redacted letters of 1797, Wood first took issue with Dickinson's ministry in a letter of June 1800, although the letter indicates that Dickinson's ministry had been problematic for some time. In Wood's opinion Dickinson had correctly discerned a message from God, but fell into error when she shared Matthew 7:16 ('Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?') with the meeting:

Thou knows how long, how privately, how tenderly, friends have laboured to convince thee of thy error in standing up to speak in meetings, both the matter and the manner having no other tendency than to expose thy own weakness and burden the spirits of the living. Thou may remember thy first words were Men do not gather grapes of Thistles; this was misquoting the Scripture, but however I'll abide by thy own words believing it to be applicable to thy own state; I believe if thou will impartially view thy conduct, by that light which discovers darkness, thou can no longer be ignorant that thou art in the nature of the Thistle and therefore according to thy own doctrine cannot bring forth good fruit, much less direct others how they may. (Wood, Vol.1, 14.10, 6mo 28th 1800)

Wood continued to argue that Dickinson's preaching against the group was actually God's indictment of Dickinson alone:

After other two equally painful Testimonies thou stood up the fourth time and said, there was a state present that was seeking to make bad appear to be good etc. This I believed to be true and that it was a precious

notebooks, written in Joseph Wood's hand. Sheets of paper have been stuck over pages at the beginning and end of the censored section to prevent the reading of the letters to Dickinson whilst preserving the text on the other side. These two pages become readable if backlit from underneath the page (I used a mobile phone torch). Three further pages (six sides) have been visibly cut out altogether. These are the only pages redacted from the entire 17 volume collection of carefully indexed notebooks.

opening belonging entirely to thyself and applicable to thy own state, and therefore no business to be communicated to another; and had thou sat quietly under it, it might I doubt not have been a season of profit to thee. But O it is a dangerous state for any poor soul to be so far deceived as to imagine that they are whole when alas they are sick, to suppose themselves Abrahams children, when they neither have the faith, nor do the works of Abraham. (Matthew 3:9) (Wood, Vol.1, 14.10, 6mo 28th 1800)

These warnings were of no avail and Dickinson's ministry continued to be unacceptable. She was formally requested to cease preaching by the clerk of the meeting on 17th July 1800 (Wood, Vol. 1, 13.21).

In a remarkable letter of 1801 Wood informed Dickinson of a prophecy made by William Earnshaw, an elderly and respected local minister;

A certain worthy friend gave me a warning, at a time when thou was in thy best state. He said being gathered into a state of solemn silence and his mind divinely covered, he heard as if a vocal voice had spoken it, "Martha Dickinson will fall away and come to nothing, and friends will have abundance of trouble with her." This he told me and another friend in a very awful and solemn manner, at a time when we little expected it to have been the case, but on the contrary believed thee to be coming forward to be extensively useful in the Church, and ornamental to thy profession. But ah! How soon was the truth of this opening from the Lord verified. How soon did evident marks appear that thou was Apostatizing, and what trouble Friends have had with thee since, hath fully manifested the opening to be divine. (Wood, Vol.1, 15.7, 11mo 7th 1801)

It seems harsh of Wood to relay such a message, given the sensitivity of the devout towards being condemned by divine revelation. Yet Wood persistently attempted to awaken Dickinson's conscience and thereby complete her conversion through these severe ministrations. Time and again Wood wrote of his hope that Dickinson would undergo spiritual regeneration after relinquishing the self-will, which in Wood's opinion was the source of Dickinson's ministry:

I firmly believe thou will find the necessity there is for thee to lie with thy mouth in the dust. If so be, there may be hope. [Lamentations 3:29] Thus may thou happily experience the old heavens and the old earth to pass away, and all things to become new, and all things of God [Isaiah 65:17; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Revelations 21:1]. Then there would be less talk, and more humble walking; that brawling, striking, self-willed impatient spirit would be slain in thee; and patience meekness, quietness, humility and love unfeigned, the fruits of a changed heart, would conspicuously appear; this would preach more loudly to others than all the Testimonies thou has ever borne. (Wood, Vol.1, 14:11-14:12)

As well as directing Dickinson towards self-denial and rebirth in the spirit, Wood accused Dickinson of being a hypocrite and a Pharisee using Mark 12:38-39 and Job 42:6, as he urged her towards repentance:

Thy conduct also manifests thee to be like those People concerning whom our Lord and Saviour pronounced the woe against. They made specious pretences to religion, so does thou. They laid heavy burdens and grievances to be borne upon other men's shoulders, so does thou: They loved the chief seats in the synagogues, so does thou. They delighted in being thought more holy than others and boasted of their good works, so does thou... Thou told us in our conversation yesterday, that thou was in heaven already, O sorrowful mistake, Our Saviour took up a little child and Blessed it and declared of such was the kingdom, but by conduct and language evidently manifested thee to be as much a stranger to this child's state as any other profane person. ...O this exalted state, may the Lord in his Mercy be pleased to let thee see it, and enable thee to Repent and abhor thyself in dust and ashes. (Wood, Vol.1, 15. 7, 11mo 7th 1801).

This stands in stark contrast to the narratives of nervousness that were increasingly used at the York Retreat and in spiritual biography. Like Jane Pearson's conversion narrative, wholly religious explanations continued to be sufficient for some during the early nineteenth century. Whilst Pearson's narrative benefitted from the validation afforded by an admirable life in the ministry, Wood placed blame squarely on Dickinson's shoulders, unchecked by the consolation of bodily weakness.

Wood also implied that Dickinson had succumbed to temptation using Luke 11:20-22 and Matthew 12:28-29, again urging Dickinson to submit to God, complete the 'great change' of Quaker conversion and to drive out the Devil. He proceeded in the same letter to suggest that Dickinson was a false prophet, who displayed the false signs and wonders of Matthew 24:24 and colluded with the Great Whore of Babylon of Revelations 17:1-6:

But if thou art desirous to submit to one, unto whom all Power in heaven and earth is given, he would bind the strong man that hath profession of the heart (notwithstanding he is arm'd and fortified with false opinions, and can shew great Signs and lying wonders) and cast him out with all his false visions, and spoil all his goods, yea and cause such a change in thee, as thou would buy of his merchandise no more. Thus would thou be favoured to see how thou had been drunk with the wine of the fornication of that great Whore that sitteth upon many waters, even upon the unstable minds of the People, in which state they cannot excel, and be made to mourn because thereof (Wood, Vol.1, 14:12, 7mo 5th 1800)

Dickinson's ministry came from an overabundance of self will, yet the line between self-will and temptation was ill-defined. Dickinson was simultaneously under the sway of 'the great

monster of self' and tempted by the Devil. In 1797 Wood wrote to request Dickinson leave the Elders gallery in the meeting house before concluding:

*Oh that thou may submit to the turnings and overturings of the holy hand that that great monster of self may be slain in thee and his stronghold entirely destroyed, who has exalted himself above that of God and has been worshipped by thee as God, is the earnest desire of my mind. (LUSC MS 1936/1/1/12 dated 12mo 2nd 1797)*³⁵

Therefore, through his counsel Wood encouraged Dickinson to adopt the modes of self-regard which typified Quaker conversion narratives, in which the devout struggled against overwhelming self-abasement and doubt, and suspected themselves to be under diabolical temptation or under threat of being cast away by God. Wood held Dickinson to be morally culpable for her religious shortcomings, and found himself led to prick Dickinson's conscience to awaken proper behaviour.

In Wood's opinion, Dickinson's failure to conform to the conventions of Quaker piety was closely related to her loss of reason. Dickinson was not in her 'right mind,' and had a 'poor unstable mind' because she had fallen away from her religious commitments, and was under the influence of the 'great monster of self.' Repentance was needed rather than medicine. Moved by 'pity and compassion' Wood entreated Dickinson using Revelations 2:5 to 'consider from whence thou art fallen, Repent, and do thy first works; and experience a being clothed with thy right mind' (Wood, Vol. 1.14.10, 6mo 28th 1800). Nevertheless, divine prerogative was the ultimate arbiter of Dickinson's mental state, as Wood wrote at length in a letter dated 7th November 1801. Wood offered the prayer 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. (Wood, Vol.1 15. 7, 11mo 7th 1801)

Wood continued this letter by advancing an opinion on Dickinson's mental state two and a half years before her York Retreat admission:

I am more clearly convinced than ever, that a degree of derangement attends thee, and on this account a good degree of sympathy cannot but be witnessed by all those who feel for the afflicted... (Vol.1 15.7, 11mo 7th 1801)

³⁵ This passage was covered over by a sheet of paper as discussed in the previous footnote. It becomes readable if backlit from underneath the page.

This concern over Dickinson's mental wellbeing was shared by other members of the community, as shown by a referral letter to the Retreat from Dickinson's husband dated 2nd August 1802 (BIA RET 1/5/1/7). Yet in Wood's opinion, Dickinson's religious failings were the root cause of her lost reason, and were preventing the reconciliation with God that would have healed Dickinson. Wood continued that Dickinson was morally culpable, and that 'the Lord' would restore Dickinson's reason if she repented:

...Yet at the same time I am fully satisfied, that thou hast so much reason left, that if thou wert but willing to stand open to conviction, thou might be favoured to see that the whole of thy conduct and conversation was directly opposite to that of a true disciple of Christ and I have sometimes thought if thou did but experience a real change of heart, which consists not only in being redeemed from the gross pollutions of the world but in experiencing the will to be slain, and the passions subdued, and brought into the innocence and simplicity of a little child, that the Lord would be pleased to remove that dreadful complaint from thee, and again favour thee with perfect reason. (Wood, Vol.1 15.7, 11mo 7th 1801)

Dickinson's mental state was brought into question, yet Wood continued to insist on Dickinson's culpability and the necessity of a spiritual cure, following the proper exercise of Dickinson's religious duties.

Wood's correspondence therefore centres around his intention to awaken Dickinson's conscience and bring about the awful humility which was both the cause and the sign of a divine visitation. This 'great change of heart' would be the cure for Dickinson's outwardly irregular behaviour as well as the means of finding inward renewal. Notable by its absence in these letters to Dickinson was any suggestion of a somatic complaint behind these afflictions. Wood sought to bring the responsibility of the subject to the fore, and he did so by using the language of self-abasement and temptation akin to the conversion narratives of Quaker spiritual biography. Dickinson's reason was to be restored and conversion to be completed simultaneously. 'Derangement' in this case was part of the religious journey, integrally tied up within a religious narrative, and potentially a narrative of spiritual regeneration.

'That all who read it may fear'; Wood's Narratives of Dickinson's Rise and Fall

Religious memoranda played a dual role as a public articulation of faith and a private medium for self-writing and religious soliloquy, as ministers were aware that their private writings would be read by others after their passing. Wood created narratives of Dickinson's progress

and fall in his memoranda to make sense of and reflect upon these events himself, and for the edification of future readers; 'that all who read it may fear.' Wood wrote two such narratives in 1800 and in 1805, either side of Dickinson's Retreat admission of 1804. Wood opened the narrative of 1800 with the moralising tone of his letters:

One instance of which I am free to pen down that all who read it may fear, and be aware of decking themselves with the Lords Jewels, and playing the harlot. Martha the wife of Elihu Dickinson of Highflatts was I believed in a good degree favoured with the precious influence of Truth, and appeared likely to have been a very useful member of the Society; being appointed an Overseer and afterwards an Elder, and had sometimes a few words to drop in meetings. But at the time when she was most in esteemed amongst friends William Earnshaw inform'd me that he was one day set at his work without thinking anything at all about her, when it run thro' him as if a vocal voice had spoken it "Martha Dickinson will come to nothing and be abundance of trouble to friends." (Wood, Vol. 4, 33:10-11)

Scripture was used once again for Wood's heaviest criticisms; paraphrasing Hosea 2:5 and 2:13, Dickinson was 'playing the harlot,' by pursuing worldly goals through attempted ministry, and could be punished for forgetting the Lord following the implications of Hosea 2:13. The spiritual progress which Dickinson had made and the 'esteem' in which she was held was brought to the fore and contrasted with Earnshaw's prophecy. However, this account of the prophesy differed from the version in the letter cited above. In the letter of 1801, Wood informed Dickinson that Earnshaw was 'gathered into a state of solemn silence and his mind divinely covered,' thus implying that Earnshaw's intuition came upon him during worship rather than an arbitrary and religiously neutral time, when he was 'set at his work' as described in 1800. Wood embellished on the prophetic implications of Earnshaw's intuition in his letter of 1801 as part of his campaign to awaken Dickinson's conscience.

Wood continued to describe Dickinson's fall in the 1800 narrative:

Many years afterwards the Truth of this divine intimation was fully manifested; She being a woman of a weak capacity and diving into things above her measure as well as being pushed forward in services she was not qualified for by those who did not know her as they ought, she lost herself, and her esteem amongst friends, hurt her reason, got into a self-righteous exalted state, became exceeding troublesome not only amongst her neighbours but also in our religious meetings, the Monthly meeting put her out of the aforesaid offices.... (Wood, Vol. 4, 33:10-11)

Dickinson's ministry and religious aspirations were acceptable to some who encouraged her in the venture, just as they were initially acceptable to Wood. Dickinson was 'likely to have been a very useful member of the Society.' Similarly to James Jenkins' narrative of

William Crotch's rise and fall as discussed in chapter three, Dickinson had a 'weak capacity,' and became out of her depth due to misguided advice from other Quakers. The responsibility for Dickinson's 'hurt' reason seemed to fall on those who 'did not know her as they ought' and pushed Dickinson into a religious vocation which exceeded her abilities. Yet in this pedagogic account 'that all who read it may fear,' the culpability was ultimately laid at Dickinson's feet, with Wood concluding that Dickinson was not sick but fallen. The light had become darkness, in an echo of Robert Barclay's warning in *Apology* that 'the same divine light now appears as wrath' if the day of visitation was missed (Pyper, 2015, p.218). Wood concluded that:

I have often desired that she might be favoured to see herself and return to her first love, but have not much hope...one would think might convince her she was sick, but indeed we have too often to observe that if the light in man become darkness the darkness is exceeding great. (Wood, Vol. 4, 33:10-11)

Despite her weak capacity and the poor advice which she received, Wood continued to point to Dickinson's moral failings.

The narrative written in 1805 after the Retreat admission takes a more pathological direction whilst maintaining its pedagogic aims, as again Wood opened with an appeal that the reader might extract a lesson from Dickinson's case, encouraging the fearful quality of religious engagement which had become a staple of Quaker piety:

It came into my mind to make a few remarks thereon to leave behind me, and more especially respecting the conduct of Martha Dickinson who had been for a long time past a very great exercise to faithful friends. That others may learn to fear, serving the Lord therein and when favoured to rejoice that it may be with trembling. (Wood, Vol.2, 23.20-1)

Yet this time Earnshaw's prophecy was not mentioned, as Wood instead dwelt upon Dickinson's family heritage. Her father, a Quaker of 'lowish circumstances' and a 'high lofty and turbulent temper' passed these traits on to Dickinson, making her difficult to control as a servant in Quaker families; 'what a favour it is for youth to have their tempers broke and wills crossed in early in life' Wood remarked. Dickinson's 'disposition could bear little controul,' and she had 'very little education.' Yet Dickinson gained 'esteem of Friends' and eventually married above her station. Wood continued:

Soon after her marriage she became very active in meetings for discipline, not from a real concern of heart but because she had married a man of great property in the world and had thereby a better opportunity of attending Meetings for discipline than many of her Sisters in this meeting

had.... She was appointed an Overseer, and sometime after an Elder. (Wood, Vol.2, 23.20-21)

Whereas in the previous versions Dickinson seemed to be a 'good degree favoured with the precious influence of Truth, and appeared likely to have been a very useful member of the Society' (and Wood expressed surprise at Earnshaw's prophetic warning otherwise), here it was suggested that Dickinson's religious engagement was not from a genuine 'concern of heart,' but was a by-product of new social status.

As Plant has found, female Quaker ministry at the turn of the nineteenth century was concentrated amongst wealthy Quaker families. The growing prosperity of Quaker merchant and manufacturing families heralded new opportunities for generations of women to engage in the intense modes of subjectivity, introspection and contemplation required of an eighteenth century Quaker minister, whilst the men became more involved in commerce. It was 'a religious division of labour' according to Plant (2006, p.228-229). Dickinson's lack of education and self-control would have been conspicuous amongst other female ministers, and as a relative outsider it would have been easy for her unpolished ministrations to be received uncharitably at Meetings, or for Dickinson to not understand the mores of suitable ministry and behaviour. Little wonder that Earnshaw foresaw Dickinson's difficulties.

Once again the issue of misleading spiritual advice was raised. An Elder in the Quaker community 'not knowing her as well as us gave her very unsuitable encouragement, by which that part which ought to be slain upon the cross was strengthened.' Thereafter 'she soon lost herself getting quite into a self-exalted, wild Ranting state mixed with a degree of derangement' (Wood, Vol.2, 23.20). Previously Dickinson had not 'lost herself' in 'derangement' to the extent that she was beyond moral admonishment, yet Wood changed his stance by 1805. He now recognised Dickinson as being unwell and therefore not fully responsible for her actions;

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, by their testifying against her extravagant and ridiculous behaviour under the cover of religious duties both in and out of Meetings. At length she became so exceeding troublesome both in meetings, and her own family as well as amongst her Neighbours, that her husband sent her to the Retreat at York. (Wood Vol.2, 23.20-21)

Retreat admission was therefore presented as an alternative to disownment from the Quaker movement. However it is curious to note that through his emphasis on Dickinson's

religious culpability in the earlier correspondence, Wood himself seemed to be amongst those who would have had Dickinson 'disunited with Friends.'

Dickinson's upbringing and temperament, the misleading counsel she received and the 'derangement' which absolved her from disownment were brought into play, departing somewhat from the pedagogical premise of the piece; that the reader might 'serve the Lord with fear and trembling.' However, the 'self-exalted, wild Ranting state' into which Dickinson fell was only 'mixed with a degree of derangement' rather than being the cause or result of derangement, therefore in this narrative Dickinson's afflictions were still partly moral, as a pedagogical warning remained implicit in this account. In Wood's opinion, Dickinson did not rejoice 'with trembling' when she was called to 'serve the Lord,' and her self-exaltation overshadowed spiritual progress, causing her fall from grace.

Conclusion

Once again, this case demonstrates that narratives of conversion, spiritual warfare, temptation and providential affliction were integral to York Retreat admission, and ran parallel to pathological narratives. Behaviour during meetings for worship was a noteworthy or contributory factor in the admission of several patients, particularly in the first years of the York Retreat's opening. In this case at least, the Retreat was used to control a religious deviant, or to avoid having to excommunicate her from the Quaker movement.

Religious conversion, temptation and pathological affliction were closely entwined in Wood's writings on Dickinson. On the whole, Wood made little use of medical discourse at a time when other nonconformists were assimilating pathology into their views on religious affliction. Pathology was often used to justify excess, therefore it was not suitable to Wood's aims of discrediting Dickinson or awakening her conscience.

Wood's treatment of Dickinson is notable for its severity, if we are still operating from the assumption that Quaker values based around the sanctity of the individual led to a distinctive Quaker mode of therapeutics, a 'moral treatment' predicated on an appeal to the innate rationality and 'that of God' within an individual. Yet Wood's approach to Dickinson is unremarkable in the context of Georgian Quakerism. Wood tried to awaken Dickinson's consentience to complete her conversion, in the usual style of Quaker pastoral ministry. As we have seen in chapter one, it was usual for Puritan ministers 'to enlighten

the unregenerate man about the nature of sin, then to lead him to a conviction of his own Guilt before God' (Watkins, 1972, p.7) as a prerequisite for experiencing the Holy Spirit. This self-denial predicated upon corrupt human nature seems to be a world away from the spirituality of benevolence based upon human value which is uniformly assumed by modern writers on the Retreat, as we will now explore.

Chapter Seven - Moral Treatment, Quaker Spirituality, and Foucault

Introduction

This chapter will explore the influence that Quaker spirituality had on the treatment offered at the York Retreat. It will debunk the longstanding misconception that the Quaker doctrine of 'Inner Light' was linked to the principles of 'moral treatment,' and that Quakers were uniquely placed to deliver a revolutionary change in madhouse care due to these religious beliefs. The idiosyncrasies of Quakerism become less important in the genesis of moral treatment if similar therapeutic regimes predating the Retreat can be found. As the chapter will briefly restate, it has long been established that the system of moral treatment was of its time, and not a particular innovation of Quakers at the York Retreat (Scull, 2006, p.46). This alone is a substantive criticism of the notion that Quaker values were instrumental in moral treatment at the York Retreat. Yet we are not flogging a dead horse in continuing to explore the connection between Quaker spirituality and moral treatment. Recently Charland (2007), Lawrence (2009), Cherry (2013) and Mack (2015) continue to make this claim. It will be shown that these classic statements about Quaker interest in mental health care are worthy of revision, due to their lack of contextual understanding of Georgian Quakerism, and particularly their ahistorical usage of the term 'Inner Light.' However, some remarks will also be offered in regards to how Quaker spirituality may have played a curative role at the Retreat.

Foucault's method and conclusions in *History of Madness* (1961, 2009 translation cited throughout) have been polarising but nevertheless hugely influential in the historiography of psychological medicine (Gutting, 2001, pp.49-73). For Roy Porter, *History of Madness* is 'the most penetrating work ever written' on the topic (1990, p.47). Foucault's discussion of the York Retreat in *History of Madness* ('The Birth of the Asylum,' Foucault 2009, pp.463-511) has dominated the historiography of the York Retreat and divided opinion, leading to a historiography in which Foucault's anti-psychiatric critique is set against positive interpretations of the Retreat (Cherry, 2013, pp. 399, 401; Charland, 2007, p.78; Mack, 2015, p.250; Stewart, 1992, pp. 11-14). Although they are often set in opposition, this chapter will show that Foucault's critical interpretation of the York Retreat is based upon the same erroneous premise as accounts by sympathetic historians; that Quaker spirituality

appealed to an inalienable essence of an individual, and was congruent with the principles of moral treatment.

A further dimension of Foucault's encounter with Quaker spirituality will then be attended to. In *Discipline and Punish* (1991) and *Psychiatric Power* (2006), Foucault traces nineteenth century model prisons and asylums back to religious modes of psychological self-discipline, and to Quakerism in particular. Carrette synthesized these points in a reading of Foucault that associates Quaker spirituality with disciplinary and 'panoptical' modes of power and with the physical manifestation of this power in the organizational structures of asylums and prisons. The recent translation of Foucault's 1972/3 lectures *On the Punitive Society* (2015) adds weight to Carrette's assertion that the architectural and organizational forms promoted by Quakers in their model prisons and asylums were preceded by the 'internal spiritual panopticon' of Quaker spirituality (Carrette, 2000, p.120-1). We have indeed seen a wealth of evidence in chapter two and three to link Quaker piety to subjectification and internalized self-discipline. Yet notable differences between Foucault's encounter with Quakerism in *History of Madness* of 1961 and a decade later in writings on disciplinary power will be found, providing a check to such generalizations. It will be shown that Foucault himself did not argue that the discipline of Quaker spirituality was integral to moral treatment at the York Retreat. According to Foucault, the vehicle for discipline at the Retreat was the family and the community, rather than the internalized disciplinary power which in Foucault's writing of the 1970s became associated with Quaker spirituality.

Moral Treatment

Foucault closely paraphrased Tuke's account of the liberation of an enchained incoming patient, in one of the most iconic and memorable passages of Tuke's *Description*, and Foucault's chapter on 'The Birth of the Asylum.' The issues which it gives rise to are at the crux of the divergent interpretations of the York Retreat:

Samuel Tuke tells how he received at the Retreat a maniac, young and prodigiously strong, whose paroxysms caused panic in those around him and even among his guards. When he entered the Retreat he was loaded with chains; he wore handcuffs; his clothes were attached by ropes. He had no sooner arrived than all his shackles were removed, and he was permitted to dine with the keepers; his agitation immediately ceased; "his attention appeared to be arrested by his new situation." He was taken to his room; the keeper explained that the entire house was organized in terms of the greatest liberty and the greatest comfort for all, and that he would not be subject to any constraint so long as he did nothing against

the rules of the house or the general principles of human morality. For his part, the keeper declared he had no desire to use the means of coercion at his disposal. The maniac was sensible of the kindness of his treatment. He promised to restrain himself. (2009, pp.483-484)

The passage hinges upon the novelty of the patient's revolutionary 'new situation;' the recognition of the 'maniac' as a moral subject as he was liberated from his bonds, out of the chains and brutality of dehumanizing bedlam madness and into the compassionate familial atmosphere of the York Retreat. From a sympathetic Quaker perspective this episode is an articulation of the humane values behind the York Retreat, as the kindness and reason of the treatment spoke to and nurtured the same in the patient (Glover, 1985, pp.56-7, 61). Yet in Foucault's interpretation the subject was not liberated, but subjected in both senses of the term by a subtler mode of restraint;

The liberation of the alienated, the abolition of constraints, the constitution of a humane milieu were mere justifications. The real operations were quite different. In fact, Tuke created an asylum where he substituted the stifling responsibility of anguish for the free terror of madness; the fear was no longer of what lay on the other side of the prison door, but what raged beneath the seals of conscience. (2009, pp.484-485)

The outward chains became internalized, as the patient became subject to self-awareness and self-restraint.

Yet such a revolutionary change was not as unprecedented as the above-quoted passage implies. Scull has shown that it was in the interest of nineteenth century reformers, as well as Whig and revisionist historians, to emphasize the novelty of these moments of liberation and to present them in sharp relief to the supposedly brutal methods of the eighteenth century. There is 'something distinctly odd' writes Scull 'about the spectacle of Victorian reformers and twentieth century Whig-historians standing arm in arm with Foucauldians and Anglo-Saxon revisionists to condemn the eighteenth century as a psychiatric dark age' (1993, p.47). From the very start of the proto-psychiatric profession in the early nineteenth century, inflated claims about the novelty and humanity of their institutions were made by reformers to carve out and protect their newfound professional domain (Scull, 1993, pp.47-50). Their narrative of the dehumanized status and brutal treatment of the insane in the eighteenth century has been embraced by contemporary Quaker historians in their assertion that Quaker reformers were revolutionary in their compassion towards the insane. On the other hand, Foucault uses this moment in a subversion of humanitarian narratives, whilst still capitalizing on the novelty of this moment in his presentation of a paradigm shift in the treatment of madness, at the 'birth of the asylum.' The supposed

humanity of these reforms was actually a more subtle and pervasive form of power and control, for Foucault.

It is now well established that it is an oversimplification to the point of inaccuracy to propose that the insane were uniformly thought of as sub-human in the eighteenth century, that their moral status was disregarded or that they were uniformly subject to inhumane treatment. There was an 'extra-ordinarily wide variability' in madhouse provision in the eighteenth century (Scull, 1979, p.50). This provision mirrored similarly complex and heterogeneous responses to madness in which the medical, religious, moral and demonic were 'separately or simultaneously' given aetiological credibility (Scull, 2006, p.43; Porter, 1987, p.280). Acutely insane paupers were indeed provided for on the lowest of terms by parish officials and therefore subject to terrible treatment in workhouses and budget madhouses, as exposed by the reform movement of the 1810s in which Samuel Tuke played a central role (Scull, 1979, pp.50-3). There was indeed a train of thought which regarded this group as animalistic (Scull, 1979, p.64) and numerous insane paupers were indeed kept in 'shit, straw, and stench' (Porter, 1987a, pp.276-7). The mistreatment of insane paupers came about through a combination of factors, notably downward pressure on parish relief and unscrupulous madhouse keeping. This was an era in which paupers lived in appalling conditions in any case, regardless of their sanity: 'Millions of English men, women and children were virtually living in shit. The immediate question seems to have been whether they weren't drowning in it.' (Marcus, 1974, pp.184-5; in Scull, 1979, p.100)

Whilst paupers languished in these conditions, a burgeoning 'trade in lunacy' catered for deeper pockets. Porter and Scull have shown that several institutions for the better-off used innovative psychological techniques similar to moral treatment before the York Retreat (Porter, 1987a, p.110-224; 1992, pp.284-90; Scull, 1979, p.67). These treatments were likewise based upon minimal restraint, comfortable accommodation in familial surroundings, and an appeal to the patients' latent rationality. Leonard Smith has shown that some madhouses had an intensely religious atmosphere (2016). Amongst the squalid confinement of paupers and embryonic moral management techniques were therapies involving extreme physical treatments such as gyrosopic chairs, water shock therapies, induced vomiting, emetics, bloodletting and depletion. Shock therapies such as these grew in popularity and sophistication as the eighteenth century progressed, yet these ostensibly inhumane treatments assumed the curability of patients, and therefore should not be contrasted with moral treatment in this regard. These shock therapies were predicated upon somato-psychic aetiologies which sought to restore severely unbalanced nervous

systems with an equally severe shock to the body-mind. Several campaigners for non-restraint saw no contradiction in continuing to advocate for extreme physical therapies alongside programs of humanitarian reform (Scull, 1993, pp.69-77).

The precise nature and degree of innovation preceding the Retreat has been debated between Porter and Scull (Scull, 2006, pp.38-53), yet Scull summarises that historians have;

long contended that Tuke's well-publicised program at the York Retreat was not an isolated achievement. The whole thrust of this body of work has been directed at demythologising moral treatment, disabusing us of the naïve notion that it was the isolated product of individual genius. (2006, p.46)

The Tukes themselves were 'methodologically agnostic' according to Laffey, in their approach of 'observation based enquiries into insanity' and a 'pragmatic eclecticism' which Tuke laid out in *Description*. The Retreat tried various medical treatments and management techniques based upon inciting fear, before settling on methods based around moral management. These were not as innovative as it is sometimes supposed, neither were they ideologically motivated, Laffey contends, in his reading of Tuke's *Description*:

The Tuke's pragmatic eclecticism also worked to lead them to reject aetiological commitment: so doing neatly and comprehensively obviated an array of metaphysical problems associated with insanity. Theological debates about the nature of the soul, about materialist versus immaterialist views of the mind, or about mentalist versus somaticist frameworks for mental disorder, were all jettisoned. (2003, p.1294)

Nevertheless, it is often suggested that Quakerism was an important factor at the York Retreat. The treatment regime developed 'partly by religious conviction, partly by practical trial and error' according to Porter (2004, p.497). For Digby 'their pragmatic therapy was distinctive precisely because it was imbued with the values of the Society of Friends' (1985, p.26). These remarks reflect *Description of the Retreat* in which general references to the restraining influence of religion, the value of religious community and the curative power of worship were made (Tuke, 1813, p.101-102). However, scholarship in this area has been held back by these religious values being misconstrued, as we will now explore.

Inner Light

Several studies insist on the role of Quaker spirituality in the formulation of moral treatment. Lawrence writes for example, 'the Quaker way of life became translated into the secular term, "moral management"' (Lawrence, 2009, p.72). These arguments revolve

around the notion of 'Inner Light.' This Inner Light is conceptualised as a 'divine spark' (Digby, 1985, p.26), an essential core of rationality and benevolence within all humanity, which Quakers were able to recognise in the afflicted and appeal to through moral treatment. For example, Charland writes in the *History of Psychology* journal, 'the Quaker notion of the Inner Light is the main reason why they believed that the mad were still human despite their condition... the mad were still deserving of benevolence and, indeed, dignity and respect' (2007, p.76). Similarly for Cherry (2013), 'the concept of the Light Within (or light of Christ) was perhaps most important' in the Quaker commitment to psychiatric medicine:

Quakers believe that there is that of God in every person, an indwelling power whose expression should not be hindered by any form of physical or mental oppression... Even the most severely afflicted of the mentally ill, Quakers believe, retain some spark of that Light, which makes them children of God and part of the religious community. (2013, p.397)

Cherry's monograph *A Quiet Haven* states that 'Quakers had a special moral impulse to remove blocks to that Light, especially mental illness' (1989, p.92). Cherry traces how Quaker belief in 'Inner Light' was in his opinion comparable to the enlightened humanism of a litany of thinkers such as Bacon, Descartes, Locke and Hobbes, who, 'redefined humanity, seeing people not as eternal captives of original sin, but as rational animals capable of change, and even perhaps figures of original goodness' (Cherry, 1989, p.59). Quakers, according to Cherry's reading of Inner Light, took up the mantle of this movement. An essential rationality and humanity remained in the depths beneath madness, which could be appealed to through moral management techniques. Lawrence follows suit, again linking the humanistic ideal of Inward Light to the eighteenth-century Enlightenment; 'when Samuel [Tuke] wrote the *Description*, he had a non-Quaker readership in mind. He was explaining William and Jepson's religious understanding of madness in terms applicable to an Enlightened audience, admiring of Locke and Pinel' (2009, pp.109-110).

Stewart follows the implications of this conflation of Inner Light and moral treatment to an extreme:

The ideological foundation for moral treatment was present from the start of the [Quaker] movement; the actual reform, however, would have to wait until the 1790s, when change became possible through economic growth and the rise of new leadership. (1992 p.52)

Whilst this is an extreme interpretation, it is symptomatic of Quaker historiography of the York Retreat which uniformly assumes that modern Quaker values were the driving force behind the Retreat, if not the entire Quaker movement. Likewise, Lawrence compares William Tuke's attitude to mental illness to that of George Fox. 'Both were radical, in that they practiced humane, non-violent treatment and engaged in dialogue with 'the mad' in a way that was atypical of their respective societies and inherent in their Quakerism' (2009, p.113). Mack seems to acknowledge the historical contingency and plurality of Quaker understandings of 'Inner Light,' before appealing to 'the sanctity of all human beings' and thereby reverting to the humanistic interpretation of the light as a God-given essential spark:

Whether defined as conscience, wisdom, the soul, or the voice of God, the Quakers' belief in the Inner Light and the sanctity of all human beings allowed the caretakers at the Retreat to view the smallest human victories – patting an animal, attending a tea party – as openings to a wider and more spiritual engagement with that of God in nature and human society. (Mack, 2015, p.251)

Secular historians have been influenced by this reading of Quaker spirituality, for example Digby in *Madness, Morality and Medicine*:

Those who managed the Retreat were concerned not to ignore any indications that this Inner Light still continued to shine in their patients ... this perception of the 'divine spark' within the mad was exceptional in an era when those who administered public asylums and private madhouses were 'progressive' if they saw the insane as partaking not in animal but in human creation. (1985, pp.28-29)

In *Soul Machine: The Invention of the Modern Mind*, Makari linked 'Inner Light' to the Scottish enlightenment, stating that 'Quakers were always encouraged to embrace the Inner Light, a belief that seamlessly merged with Scottish theories of an inborn morality' (2015, p.186). Makari also presents Quakers as enlightened bourgeoisie rationalists, who pioneered a secular therapeutic environment at the Retreat in which the only contribution of religion was the creation of a shared moral milieu (2015, pp.184-187).

Despite often being set in contrast to charitable interpretations, Foucault similarly links Quaker spirituality with an appeal to an essential spark of inward rationality; 'Religion was part of the movement that indicated that despite appearances there was reason in madness, and it brought people back from alienation to health' (Foucault, 2009, p.483).

Religion at the Retreat served as a substitute for lost reason for Foucault:

In reason's eclipse...religion was the concrete form of that which cannot be alienated, it contained all that was invincible in reason, which subsisted beneath madness as a quasi-nature, and around it was a constant invitation from the milieu. (2009, p.483)

This milieu was literally 'a retreat from the world,' set as it was in the Yorkshire countryside, a space of 'nature and immediate truth,' designed to bring the alienated 'back to their essential truths' (Foucault, 2009, pp. 495, 472). As Mack says, 'that of God in nature and human society' appealed to the same in the patient. Yet writing from a post-structuralist perspective, Foucault of course holds a dim view of these appeals to essential truth. Therefore Foucault writes that Tuke created the 'myth' of 'alienation' by positing such an essence at the core of madness, and by treating the insane as merely 'alienated' from this essence (Foucault, 2009, p.475). The Retreat was a 'deceitful' attempt to present a 'moral system' as 'the liberation of truth' (Foucault, 2009, p.481). The 'reason' which asylums represent, is for Foucault constituted not by human nature or truth, but by conformity to moral, religious and social roles (Foucault, 2009, p.499). The 'alienated' insane, placed in such an environment, 'entered into debate with themselves and their surroundings.' They were forced to come to know themselves as alienated from the truths which the York Retreat represented, and to acquiesce in this totalizing environment in which 'everything is organized so that the mad recognize themselves in the world of judgement which enveloped them from all sides' (Foucault, 2009, p.501).

An appeal to the principal of Inner Light is Mack's response to Foucault's interpretation of the 'coercive aspects' of moral treatment: 'while Foucault's diatribe captured the covert and coercive aspects of Quaker social reformism, it ignored the basic theological and moral precept of the Inner Light, or divine spark, existing in every person' (2015, p.250). Likewise for Cherry, Foucault is guilty of 'overlooking Quaker religious beliefs, especially the concept of the Light Within' (2013 p.402). These responses are not valid for two reasons. Firstly, Mack and Cherry's own interpretation of Inner Light is ahistorical, as we will see. Secondly, Foucault's position is simply a different perspective on this supposed Quaker appeal to the essence of an individual, from a standpoint which is profoundly dubious of essential 'nature, truth, reason and pure social morality,' (Foucault, 2009, p.482) which the other writers celebrate.

The material revealed by our exploration of Georgian Quakerism makes it problematic to posit that Quaker spirituality acknowledged any attribute or essence at the core of an individual, apart from of course Original Sin. Despite refuting the imputation of Original Sin to infants, the wholly depraved nature of the fallen creature was wholeheartedly affirmed

by Georgian Quakers, as shown in chapter one. Examples contemporaneous to the Retreat can be found in Samuel Tuke's ministry on 'the pit of our natural corruption and our natural darkness' (1834, p.8) and in Esther Tuke's copy of *Christian Discourse as Between a Mother and her Daughter* (1815, pp.9-11).

As we have seen, the foremost scholar of Robert Barclay's theology, Hugh Pyper, comments that 'in light of the modern Quaker reputation of humanism and "that of God" in every human being it comes as a surprise to realise that Barclay's view on human nature outdoes the pessimism of Calvinism' (2015, p.214). Nevertheless, Quaker pessimism was not unprecedented. Nonconformist religious narratives typically involved abject desolation at the prospects of the fallen 'creature,' or 'self,' before salvation by the gift of undeserved grace, through no effort from the fallen 'creature' (Porter, 1987b, p.87). In Georgian Quakerism this grace was the Light Within (or Inward Light and synonymous terms). It did not refer to an affirmation of essential human value, but was radically other to the 'creature.' It was the 'inward monitor,' the 'light which discovers darkness,' by illuminating this totally sinful human nature, and the vehicle by which the 'creature' or 'self' was transcended. That of God within was the judgemental aspect of the Puritan God, internalised as a means to self-transcendence; a puritanical conscience that held the entirety of the fallen 'self' as its target. Whilst my elaborations on this have been offered in chapter two, the consensus amongst historians of Quakerism who examine 'Inward Light' critically is that the term was used in this soteriological context throughout early Quakerism and the long eighteenth century. Inward Light was both the grace of the Holy Spirit, and Christ manifesting as the light of the world, to save the fallen 'creature' through undeserved grace and redemption. The Holy Spirit was wholly other than human nature. (Barbour, 1964, p.98; Moore, 2000 pp.80-83; Angell, 2015, 158-9).

Rufus Jones in the early twentieth century was an influential proponent of the modern Inner Light doctrine, in which the Light is interpreted humanism based upon an essential divine spark within. This stands in stark contrast to earlier interpretations, as Damiano states:

According to Fox, the Light is not the essence of God or Christ within us but the activity of Christ. Friends are called to hear, obey and live the guidance of the Inward Teacher. Instead, Jones uses the phrase 'that of God in everyone' to describe humanity's inherent goodness. (1988, p.65)

Similarly for Dudiak and Rediehs:

This more optimistic, humanistic trajectory within Quakerism took the Light Within (rebranded as the 'Inner Light' by Rufus Jones to reflect this new emphasis) as a natural human endowment. 'That of God in everyone' was highlighted as a positive part of human nature ... a doctrine of the inviolability of this divine core in each person. (2013, p.514)

This positive conception of human nature was 'characteristic of the modern period' of Quakerism (Dudiak and Rediehs, 2013, p.514-5). The negative assessment of human nature in Georgian Quakerism has been well established (Jones, 1921, pp. 57-103; Hamm, 1988, p.4; Birkel, 2015, p.151), therefore it is curious that it continues to be overlooked by contemporary Quaker scholars of the York Retreat such as Mack (2015), Cherry (2013) and Lawrence (2009).

The volatile nature of the Inward Light has also been overlooked in histories of the York Retreat. Cherry suggests that 'even the most severely afflicted of the mentally ill, Quakers believe, retain some spark of that Light,' and that a distinctive aspect of Quaker concern for the mentally afflicted was the recognition of the immutability of this essential light (2013, p.397). Yet the Light Within was not immutable; the 'doctrine of the inviolability of this divine core' is a characteristic of modern Quakerism, shown above by Dudiak and Rediehs (2013 p.514). Whilst the Light can indeed be found within all, the nature of this Light was not static. It could transmute from a *vehaculum dai* into a means of condemnation if not attended to (Barbour, 1964, pp.94-126; Angell, 2015, p.158). As George Fox explained, elaborating on John 1:9:

Now the Lord God hath opened to me by his invisible power how that every man was enlightened by the divine light of Christ; and I saw it shine through all, and that they that believed in it came out of condemnation and came to the light of life and became the children of it, but they that hated it, and did not believe in it, were condemned by it, though they made a profession of Christ. (Fox, 1952, p.33)

Similarly for Robert Barclay in *Apology*, the Inward Light was said to transmute if its leadings were not heeded. The 'same light now appears as wrath' to an individual who ignores its guidance. In Georgian Quakerism there was an emphasis on this fall from grace being irreversible, if the 'day of visitation' was missed as we have seen from Robert Barclay in chapter one: 'Many men may out-live this day, after which there may be no possibility of salvation to them, and God justly suffers them to be hardened, as a just punishment of their unbelief.' The light of Christ within 'may, by the stubbornness and wickedness of man's will, be quenched, bruised, wounded, pressed down, slain and crucified' (1827, p.115-6). Grace was not irresistible, and the Inner Light could be extinguished irreversibly. As shown in chapter two and three, a defining feature of Georgian Quakerism was that the

pious became constantly preoccupied by the prospect of falling away from the Light Within completely, becoming a 'castaway.' Again, this is to be found in Samuel Tuke's ministry ('Many who have been called by the Father's love, whom he hath begun to visit, that they fall from that estate' 1834, p.17), Esther Tuke's copy of *A Mother's Advice to Her Daughter* ('I am afraid he has cast me off...' 1815, p.34) and on almost every page of Sarah Tuke Grubb's biography (1792).

Therefore, it is wholly inappropriate that Cherry (2013), Mack (2015), Lawrence (2009) and a host of other writers on the values and motivations behind the York Retreat in the early nineteenth century use 'Inner Light' in reference to an affirmation of essential human value and rationality. These writers have been insufficiently critical of their emic presuppositions, and inattentive to the contingency of contemporary Quaker values. Echoes of this longstanding misconstrual can also be found in Foucault's *History of Madness*. The Tukes never used 'Inward Light' or synonymous terms when discussing the treatment they offered, and there is no documentary evidence to link Quaker writings on moral treatment with the term. As Laffey says, Tuke's pragmatism in *Description of the Retreat* 'comprehensively obviated' metaphysical and theological debates on aetiology and the nature of mind (2003, p.1294).

Georgian Quakers certainly had a benevolent culture and Samuel Tuke certainly reacted with compassion to the suffering of pauper lunatics, and played a key role amongst the other Quakers, Evangelicals and Utilitarians in the campaigns for reform of the 1810s. Yet the notion that Quakers were benevolent towards the insane due to their particular theological commitments is questionable - notwithstanding of course their interest in religious melancholia. Furthermore, the notion that Quakers were uniquely placed to develop moral treatment due to their belief in Inward Light does not withstand scrutiny. It has long been established that moral treatment was not their unique achievement. Further to this, it is now added that the contemporary reading of 'Inner Light' has been incorrectly imputed on to York Retreat history by later Quaker writers. Oft repeated statements such as 'the Quaker notion of the Inner Light is the main reason why they believed that the mad were still human despite their condition' (Charland, 2007, p.67) and 'even the most severely afflicted of the mentally ill, Quakers believe, retain some spark of that Light' (Cherry, 2013, p.397) are incorrect through and through. Firstly the Georgian understanding of the Inward Light has been overlooked, and secondly the role of the Inward Light in allowing Quakers to recognize the humanity of the afflicted 'despite their

condition' exaggerates the supposedly sub-human status of the insane in the eighteenth century to the point of distortion.

It may be well, therefore, to place Tuke's reaction to the suffering of pauper lunatics in the context of Christian benevolence as a whole, of which we can find several examples that precede Quaker and Evangelical involvement in the asylum reform movement. For example Laffey draws attention to a madhouse in Bristol run by Richard Henderson, a 'one-time Wesleyan itinerant preacher.' When he visited the institution in 1781, Wesley wrote of 'a particular art of governing his patients; not by fear but by love. The consequence is many of them speedily recover, and love him ever after' (2001, p.475). Similarly Leonard Smith found a religious atmosphere akin to that found at the Retreat in a study of the 1763 diary of the madhouse keeper Joseph Mason (2016). Whilst the York Retreat advocated progressive and compassionate treatment, it is problematic to suggest that the Quaker doctrine of Inward Light informed its reforms. Scull, Porter, Digby and Laffey move towards framing the Tukes as benevolent pragmatists; a position which is reinforced here, as the link between Inward Light and benevolent interest in psychiatric medicine has been challenged to the core.

Quaker Worship at the York Retreat

William Tuke's rationale for the founding of the Retreat placed emphasis on the need for a religious Quaker environment, making religion 'a central element' of life at the Retreat which pervaded all activities (Digby (1985, pp.32, 99). Digby comments that 'faith in "the Physician in Gilead," whose healing powers were transmitted most directly through religious activities, sustained both patients and staff,' and has found that Samuel Tuke mentioned 'the divine art of healing' required of the superintendent, and regarded George Jepson as one who knows 'experimentally, the religion of the heart' (pp.25-27, 99).

Samuel Tuke suggested that religion promoted 'self restraint' and therefore a cure for madness in two ways. Having been 'imbued in early life' with 'the mild but powerful influence of the precepts of our holy religion,' patients were re-socialized into these values through the religious and moral milieu at the York Retreat. Secondly, worship itself was said to have curative efficacy as the patients' 'accustomed modes of paying homage to his Maker' were considered 'of great consequence as means of a cure.' Patients who were able to attend Meetings for Worship in York were allowed to do so, and services were held weekly at the Retreat. Several chapters of the Bible were read and:

A profound silence generally ensues; during which, as well as at the time of reading, it is very gratifying to observe their orderly conduct, and the degree to which those, who are much disposed to action, restrain their different propensities (Tuke, 1813, p.101-102)

Regarding Tuke's first point, Digby has already noted that a number of patients were admitted for 'moral insanity;' the moral failings of intemperance, bankruptcy, masturbation, promiscuity or 'gaiety' in dress or demeanour, which were a particular concern given the exacting precepts of the Quaker religion (Digby, 1985, pp.88-96). Moral treatment for moral insanity aimed to return such patients to acceptable behaviour. It can be seen as either a moral and religious duty or coercive normalization depending on one's perspective. Given our concern with Quaker spirituality, the focus here will be on the second of Tuke's points, that Quaker practical theology itself had beneficial results for patients.

Snapshots of spiritual advice can be found in case notes and correspondence. For example, Digby cites a letter from an ex-patient to the superintendent Thomas Allis in 1800:

I am following up thy advice to me... In fact I do not remember ever being so well in health mentally and bodily as at this time. I find the greatest advantage to result from silent meditation and the perusal of the Holy Scriptures, and can experimentally say, there is no Physician like the one in Gilead, he is both able and willing to apply a sovereign remedy for all our maladies, and knows the precise character thereof better than any human eye can penetrate (Digby, 1985, p.25)

Similarly the former patient Jane Young, wrote to the superintendent George Jepson after her discharge in 1822, 'my love to all my companions that I have left behind, hoping they will endeavour to take your advice always & to be still' (BIA Ret/1/5/1/26). We have already seen how Hannah Middleton found solace through becoming 'centred in that which is all in all and which alone can serve as an anchor, in the day of trouble' (BIA TUKE/1/21/2/1/3).

These snippets may be testament to pastoral advice and religious consolation, yet there is little further evidence. Based upon *Description*, Porter writes that the Retreat offered no therapeutic 'talking cure' (Porter, 1987a, p.225), but resocialisation through familiar social interactions (albeit imbued with a religious morality), various types of medicine, a good diet and hydrotherapy. As Tuke put it in *Description of the Retreat*, 'In regard to melancholics, conversation on the subject of their despondency is found to be highly injudicious' as efforts were made to distract the patient outwardly (Tuke, 1813, p.96).

The suggestion that worship itself had a curative role at the York Retreat has been made by Charland, Mack, Digby, Glover and Lawrence. Charland quotes Tuke's remarks on worship, in the context of a liberal-humanistic reading of the Inner Light:

It was considered advisable to 'promote in the patient, an attention to his accustomed modes of paying homage to his creator.' This was done by nurturing and appealing to the 'Inner Light' which, through the grace of God, was thought to lead to salvation. (Charland, 2007, p.67)

According to Mack, 'Drawing on the quietist idea of "stillness" or "centring down" into one's deepest self, William Tuke hoped to introduce a feeling of calm benevolence in both attendant and patient' (2015, p.248).³⁶ In a similar vein Lawrence points out that George Fox's epistle to Lady Claypole (quoted above in the conclusion of chapter one: 'be still and cool...') was originally an epistle to relieve the 'physically and mentally unwell' Lady Claypole. This advice was 'almost identical' to the advice which George Fox gave to devotees: 'Silence and stillness would enable both leader and mentally ill patient to hear God' (2009, p.68). For Glover, 'Quakers believe that there is 'that of God' in everyone... life at the Retreat was profoundly affected by this philosophy, worship and way of living' (1985, p.14). There is no detailed discussion of Quaker worship in Tuke's *Description of the Retreat* or in the Retreat archives, hence the shortcoming of these remarks; they do not discuss Quaker worship at the Retreat in historical context.

For this we turn to Mark Holman Shepherd's *Hours of Retirement* (1829), published two years after his spell in the York Retreat, and the chapter 'On Silent Worship' by J.J. Gurney,³⁷ appended in *Hours of Retirement*. It was explained in the introduction to *Hours of Retirement* that 'this silent mode of worship is but little understood' but often alluded to in Holman Shepherd's poetry, therefore it was appended for the reader's edification (Holman Shepherd, 1829, p.vi). As we have seen from chapter one, in 'On Silent Worship' Gurney described how the object of this practice was to 'stay the mind' on an affective response to the idea of God's presence. The 'first and most essential qualification for right spiritual worship of the almighty' was 'a deep humiliation of the soul before the divine Majesty' (Gurney, in Holman Shepherd, 1829, p.187). The sensations which reputedly occurred during worship were interpreted through and arose in dependence upon the Quaker theological framework. As Gurney explained, worship 'cannot be acceptably

³⁶ Mack does not cite a source and to my knowledge William Tuke left no such sentiment on record.

³⁷ Joseph John Gurney's chapter 'On Silent Worship' in *Observations on the Distinguishing Views and Practices of the Society of Friends* (1848).

offered' until the worshipper is aware of the 'relative situation' between the human and the divine:

The worshipper is the creature; the object of his worship is the Creator: the former is finite, ignorant, weak, and helpless; the latter is omniscient, eternal and omnipotent; the former, without grace, is fallen, sinful, and corrupt; the latter is of "purer eyes than to behold iniquity" [Habakkuk 1:13]; the former is capable of either receiving wrath or mercy; the latter is able either to punish or to forgive' (Gurney, in Holman Shepherd, 1829, p.187-8)

For Gurney, worship entailed the mind becoming 'stayed' and 'still' upon an affective response to this theological truth. Whilst awe, fear and self-awareness were part of this response, comfort was derived from the view that such responses were an appropriate way to contemplate the divine, and indicative of the workings of grace upon the soul. Whilst sensations of 'stillness' or 'centring down,' may have been pleasant in themselves, as Mack suggests, they were imbued with religious meaning and often accompanied by these affective reactions.

Holman Shephard's poetry illustrates this point. The poem entitled 'Upon first attending a Friends' Meeting' (therefore written whilst Holman Shephard was at the Retreat) described the 'small still voice' and of calmness which arose from Quaker worship, which:

*Bids our sins and sorrows cease
And calms the mind with heavenly peace
Then silence, solemn silence reign!
Be still, my soul, thy thoughts restrain!
Strength may'st thou find in sitting still
And thus be taught the almighty will (Holman Shephard, 1829, p.2)*

This description captures the element of stillness and centring posited by Mack, alongside the aspect of conscientiousness, self-restraint and subjection to what Quakers believed to be the will of God. These themes were repeated in the poem 'Written during the music festival held at York' in autumn of 1825, again during the period in which Holman Shepherd was resident at the Retreat:

*And learn the Still voice of the Lord to obey,
That warneth in secret within...
Ah no! from the truth we'll ne're wander astray
To follow the pleasures of sin:
But the still voice of the lord will obey
That warneth in secret within (Holman Shephard, 1829, pp.55-6)*

Worship also involved fear and awe, as Shepherd wrote in another poem:

*And fear ye not the worlds dread scorn,
Nor of revilings to be afraid:
But fear ye me, the Lord alone
And let your mind on me be stayed* (Holman Shephard, 1829, p.84)

This fear and trembling could also elicit a tearful response during worship;

*How sweet it is to sit and weep
And wait upon the Lord
And Watch and pray in silence deep
And seek the Living Word
How sweet the silent tears that flow
Adown the moistened cheek-
And sweet the thrill, and fervent glow
When Jesus deigns to speak.
Speak, dear Redeemer! Speak again,
And bid this troubled mind
Forget its sorrow, grief and pain
And rest in thee to find!* (Holman Shephard, 1829, p.48)

These displays of affective piety were not uncommon on Georgian Quakerism, or at the Retreat. In the late 1810s Samuel Tuke started giving Bible readings at the Retreat and recorded such a visit in his journal, in which he describes the beneficial results of readings at the Retreat:

I have not infrequently seen the tear, I believe, of sincere devotion trickle down the cheek of a decided lunatic, whilst I have been reading of the love of God in Jesus Christ, or the delightful effusions of David's piety. I observe, when the reading is over. Some of those who generally speak in a boisterous manner adopt a soft and moderate tone, and are evidently under a degree of comfortable subjection. (Tuke 1860, vol.1, p.303)

Thomas Scattergood, the minister who established Friends Hospital in Philadelphia also recorded a tearful meeting for worship at the Retreat, during his visit in 1797. 'Dined with W. Tuke, and felt a concern to go to the Retreat...We got most of them together, and after we had sat a little in quiet, and I had vented a few tears, I was engaged in supplication' (Cherry, 1987, p.135).

These passages show a variety of responses to a sense of numinous presence during Quaker worship. On the one hand worship aroused fear, trembling and conscientiousness, yet on the other it aroused 'heavenly peace', strength, and a remedy to Holman Shepherd's troubled mind, allowing him to overcome 'sorrow grief and pain.' Quakers gained comfort

and strength from the knowledge that even ostensibly negative affective mental states were correct responses to their conception of the human condition in relation to God - a 'comfortable subjection' as Tuke said. This silence and subjection was saturated with meaning; as we have seen, worship entailed a theologically dependant affective response to the idea of God's presence. Comfort and satisfaction could be gained by knowing that the relative situation between the creature and the creator has been correctly realised, and that correct worship was taking place.

This context provides a check to describing the curative powers of stillness and silence at the York Retreat without reference to the theological frames of reference in which these phenomena were interpreted. It also provides a further check to those who are wont to project contemporary Quaker spirituality upon the early years of the York Retreat.

Foucault, Disciplinary Power and the Family

Stachniewski's likening of Puritan spirituality with Foucauldian subjectification (1991, p.85) has been useful in our exploration of Georgian Quaker spirituality. Quaker spirituality could bring about a numinous or fearful sense of God's presence, an arousal of conscience and an internalisation of self-discipline, as Holman Shepherd's poetry described. On the face of it therefore, there appears to be some mileage in Foucault perspective on the Retreat. Fear, conscience and self-discipline played a central role at the Retreat according to Foucault; 'Tuke created an asylum where he substituted the stifling responsibility of anguish for the free terror of madness; the fear was no longer of what lay on the other side of the prison door, but what raged instead beneath the seals of conscience' (Foucault 2009, p.485). Fear was 'an essential character of the asylum' for Foucault (2009, p.483).

Yet our exploration of Georgian Quaker piety does not equate to a validation of *History of Madness* for several reasons. Firstly, historians have concluded that Foucault overstated the use of fear and coercion at the York Retreat, in the sense that Foucault did not give an accurate account of the source material before him. 'Foucault's judgement seems wilful' in Porter's opinion (1987, p.225). Overtly coercive physical treatments and threatening moral management techniques were experimented with at the Retreat, but were abandoned due to being ineffective (Tuke, 1813, p.111; Charland, 2007, p.65; Glover, 1985, pp.53-6). In any case, the central point made in the following excursus into Foucault's thought is that although Foucault explored the disciplinary nature of Quaker spirituality in the 1970s, he

made no such move in *History of Madness* of 1961. The religious discipline and fear which Foucault associated with panoptical power, radical Christian movements and particularly the Quakers in the 1970s did not feature in *History of Madness*. To associate the Retreat with disciplinary power is to read Foucault's work from the 1970s back onto *History of Madness*. Whilst Foucault referred to the normalizing power of religion at the York Retreat, he ascribed the origin of coercion and fear at the Retreat to the moralising family and community milieu, rather than Quaker spirituality. This puts Foucault's account of the Retreat slightly at odds with his later exploration of disciplinary power and Quakerism. This unresolved tension in Foucault's work means that Foucault's theories of disciplinary power cannot be easily imposed upon the Retreat, as I will now show.

'Foucault's work shows a constant interest in Quaker spirituality' according to Jeremy Carrette in *Foucault and Religion* (2000, p.176). This interest manifested at vital points in Foucault's narratives, particularly those on the development of disciplinary power and early nineteenth century panoptical penitentiaries. 'Disciplinary power' in Foucault's historical narratives was a mode of organizing bodies, space and time wherein those subjected by power became highly visible, whilst the power which they were subject to (and by) was invisible and diffuse. Disciplinary power intervenes if possible 'before the act itself' through 'an infra-judicial interplay of supervision, rewards, punishment and pressure,' which the subject internalises (Foucault, 2006, p.51). Disciplinary power was most fully realised in the built environment through the panoptical penitentiary. A key feature of the panoptical system was the nature of the supervisory power, the 'permanent, exhaustive, omnipresent surveillance, capable of making all visible as long as it could itself remain invisible' (Foucault, 1991, p.214). Those subject to this disciplinary panoptical power in penitentiaries were individually overseen by an omniscient, omnipresent supervisory gaze, whose presence was implied but rarely ascertained due to the central observation tower being so organized to mask the supervisor whilst exposing the subject to constant scrutiny (Foucault, 1991, p.214). Following Carrette, I suggest in chapter two that Georgian Quaker spirituality can be likened to an internalized panopticon (Carrette, 2000, p.121).

Quakers established the hugely influential Eastern State Penitentiary in Philadelphia in 1821, built around the panoptical system. This penitentiary is described in *Discipline and Punish* and *On the Punitive Society* as a manifestation of Quaker spirituality; 'the penitentiary cell is the place of Calvinist, Quaker conscience, fixed by the tactic of internment in a Gothic architecture' (Foucault, 2015, p.73 fn). Carrette posits that Foucault

found similarities between ground-breaking Quaker prisons and asylums. 'As in his study of madness' Foucault found 'Quaker spiritual ideals' to underpin the organization of prisons:

There is a distinct strategic move within Quaker foundations to shift the locus of control from the external environment to the inner world. These puritan models of spiritual orientation are then applied to the organizations of medical and penal institutions. The Quaker technique is to 'encourage the influence of religious principles over the mind' of the mad and the criminal individual. In moral therapy the mad are cured by the religious 'safeguards' of reason, and in the prison the inmate is cured through the power of conscience. (Carrette, 2000, p.121)

Carrette continues 'In both situations [the prison and the asylum] segregation and isolation predominate. Solitude and silence become the coercive techniques of normalizing minds.' The Puritan conscience was writ large on the physical environment of Quaker institutions, as the 'internal spiritual panopticon' showed itself in these organizational and architectural structures (Carrette, 2000, p.121).

In his 1972-73 lectures *On the Punitive Society* (2015), Foucault gave Quakers a central role in the development of the disciplinary society, 'at the heart of the historical movement which would give rise to the prison-form' which would in turn 'be taken up by the privileged classes to organize industrial society' (Harcourt, 2015, p.268). Foucault asked 'how these little men in black, who did not take off their hats, can be seen as ancestors in the genealogy of our morality' (Foucault, 2015, pp.101-102fn; Harcourt, 2015, p.268), and suggested that their discipline and control was occasioned by their spiritual principles; 'if there is good in every man, it is up to everyone to take in hand the task of bringing out this light and making it shine' (Foucault, 2015, p.88). According to Foucault this entailed 'the rectitude of a mind undisturbed by the passions and images of the world.' In enforcing these principles, the Quaker movement 'explicitly adopted the aim of supervision, control and punishment.' This led to the cellular isolation and constant supervision of Eastern State Penitentiary. Convicts were to reflect upon their sins in order for the mind to become 'empty and pure again so that the inner divine light shines out anew' (Foucault, 2015, p.88) and to facilitate 'the relation of the individual with his own conscience and what may enlighten him from within' (Foucault, 1991, p.238). Thus the dungeon or bridewell was transformed into a 'penitentiary' (Foucault, 2015, p.88) and punishment into 'asceticism' (Harcourt, 2015, p.268).

Turning his attention back to asylums in his 1973-74 lecture series *Psychiatric Power* (2006), Foucault traced panoptical power to the 'Brothers of the Common Life,' a radical lay group which from the fourteenth century 'on the basis of techniques taken from monastic life, as

well as ascetic exercises taken from the whole tradition of religious exercises, defined disciplinary methods for daily life and pedagogy' (2002, p.41). This religious discipline was an antecedent to the panoptical model of disciplinary power, according to Foucault:

I think this evolution, which goes from the Brethren of the Common Life, that is to say from the fourteenth century, to its point of explosion, that is to say, when disciplinary power becomes an absolutely generalized social form, ends up, in 1791, with Bentham's Panopticon, which provides the most general political and technical formula of disciplinary power.
(Foucault, 2006, p.41)

Disciplinary modes of organization transferred to radical lay communities from the fourteenth century, and following the Reformation permeated into most aspects of European society and to the disciplinary institutions of the early nineteenth century, particularly aided by the Quaker interest in penal reform (Harcourt, 2015 p.268). Foucault included asylums under the rubric of disciplinary institutions in his lecture series on *Psychiatric Power*:

I have tried to bring out at least some of the underlying disciplinary basis of the asylum, to show you how, from the eighteenth century, a sort of disciplinary network begins to cover society in which a number of disciplinary schemas appear, like the army, the school, the workshop etcetera, and of which Bentham's Panopticon appears to me to be the formalization, or anyway the systematic and purified outline (Foucault, 2006, p.93)

From this reading, as Carrette suggests, disciplinary institutions such as prisons and asylums were manifestation of disciplinary Quaker spirituality. However, this analysis overlooks Foucault's argument in *History of Madness*, and imposes Foucault's theories on disciplinary power back upon material from a decade earlier.

As Foucault himself described in *History of Madness*, and in contrast to Carrette's reading, York Retreat patients were not subject to the 'solitude and silence' of the distant imperceptible power of panoptical supervision, but the immediate gaze and close interaction of the family. Granted, elements of supervision and internalization of self-control which were elaborated upon in *Discipline and Punish* were present in Foucault's writing on the York Retreat in *History of Madness*, and marked the asylum out from previous modes of confinement. In 'classical confinement' the insane 'had been exposed to the gaze, but it had little power of penetration, going no deeper than the monstrous surface of his visible bestiality' (Foucault, 2009, p.486). Nevertheless, the medium through which this 'piercing gaze' was exercised was the simulated family organisation of the Retreat (Foucault, 2009, p.487).

Foucault was unequivocal on the importance of this familial atmosphere; 'The family was both the origin and destination of Tuke's work... Tuke's innovation was to create a simulation of the family around the mad' (2009, p.489-490). Whilst religion 'represented that which cannot be alienated' (2009, p.482) the family was the conduit for these values, and the force through which the mad were re-socialised back into the 'inalienable beneath the alienable' (2009, p.482). Whereas Mack and Cherry celebrate the normality, kindness and respect afforded to patients as they dined and took tea with their warders, Foucault's reading makes these rituals the centrepiece of familial control:

These were English-style evenings, where everyone was to observe the minutiae of social conduct in the strictest possible terms, and where the only object in circulation was an inquisitorial gaze on the lookout for any infringement of the codes. (Foucault, 2009, p.486)

Patients were 'strangers' to the family of rationality, invited to be 'the perfect stranger, ie he whose foreignness is never perceptible' and therefore to adopt the strictures of self-control in a ritual where they were judged on 'all that they might reveal and betray despite themselves' (2009, p. 487).

The Tukes indeed created a religious environment at the Retreat, but religion in *History of Madness* was part of the community milieu which appealed to the supposed essence of the alienated through social interaction. This familial organization and supervision was of a different nature to the inscrutable, invisible superintending power of the panopticon, as Foucault acknowledged in *Psychiatric Power*:

Supervision is not constitutive of but supplementary to the family, whereas permanent supervision is absolutely constitutive of disciplinary systems the family is a sort of cell within which the power exercised is not, as one usually says, disciplinary, but rather of the same type as the power of sovereignty. (Foucault, 2006, p.80)

Like the Retreat, many nineteenth century institutions espoused a moral treatment which involved close familial interaction between superintendents and patients, as Foucault also acknowledged in *Psychiatric Power*. However, Foucault insisted that the disciplinary power associated with Quaker spirituality was of a different nature to that exercised in familial power structures:

I do not think it is true that the family served as the model for the asylum, school, barracks, or workshop. Actually, it seems to me that nothing in the way the family functions enables us to see any continuity between the family and the institutions, the disciplinary apparatuses. (2006, p.80)

Foucault proposed that asylums 'reconstitute' the family cell for their disciplinary purpose, as a 'sovereign' power which exists within the 'disciplinary' institution, despite being 'completely different' from it (Foucault, 2006, p.84).

Therefore, between *History of Madness* and Foucault's publications and lectures on disciplinary power there is a significant shift, as Taylor points out:

In this discussion of the family, Foucault is retracting his own argument, in History of Madness, according to which psychiatric asylums modelled themselves on the family in order to refamilialize the insane. According to the thesis of History of Madness, psychiatrists submitted their patients to a paternal form of power. Fifteen years later, Foucault is saying that the power of paternity is in fact quite different from the [disciplinary] power of doctors. (Taylor, 2012, p.203)

Thus, the familial power which Foucault associated with Quaker efforts to re-socialize patients at the Retreat was of a different nature to the disciplinary power that Foucault later associated with radical Christian movements. Taylor continues:

When Foucault wrote History of Madness, he had not yet distinguished between the forms of power that he would later call sovereign and disciplinary. By 1973, having done so, he came to conclude that psychiatric power, as a paradigm of discipline, was distinct from familial (paternal) power, which he would now characterize as sovereign, and thus psychiatric power could not be paternal or familial. (Taylor, 2012, p.203)

No mention of the Quaker movement or the York Retreat is made by Foucault upon his return to psychiatric medicine in the *Psychiatric Power* lectures, therefore the question of how to interpret the familial atmosphere at the York Retreat in the light of Foucault's association between Quakerism and disciplinary power is unresolved (Philo, 2007, p.154). Nevertheless, the vital point here is that the familial mode of power associated with Quakerism at the York Retreat in *History of Madness* was in Foucault's own analysis different in kind to the disciplinary and panoptical modes of power stemming from radical pietism and Quakerism as described in *On the Punitive Society, Discipline and Punish* and *Psychiatric Power*.

Foucault indeed had a recurrent interest in Quakerism and Quaker institutions. Yet Foucault did not provide a consistent explanation of how Quaker spirituality related to the organizational structure of these institutions. Foucault's thought had evolved to such an extent that by the mid-seventies, there is a 'strain in his reasoning' (Philo, 2007, p.154) and he could be seen as 'retracting his own argument' (Taylor, 2012, p.203) of the early sixties, resulting in different interpretations of the exercise of power in the Quaker institutions that

featured in his narratives. Foucault offered no insight into the distinctive aspects of Georgian Quaker spirituality in *History of Madness*. He simply reworked erroneous readings of Quakerism's appeal to the God-given essence within, from his anti-psychiatric, post-structuralist perspective.

Conclusion

Samuel Tuke's *Description of the Retreat* of 1813 offered a timely, well received articulation of moral treatment. It coincided with a surge in philanthropic interest around the condition of madhouses and a thirst for alternatives, and was catalysed by Samuel Tuke's concern in this area. It 'was unique in the sense of banging the drum and demonstrating what could be done' with ideas which were already in the air, and had a significant impact on promoting moral treatment in Britain, Europe and the United States (Porter, 1987a, p.227). Much of the York Retreat's success owed to 'exceptional Quaker conditions,' (Porter, 1987a, p.227), financed as it was by a national network of Quaker meetings which allowed the poorest patients to be supported at a higher standard than was otherwise possible, offering a degree of financial leeway that was not available in other institutions. The national community of Quakers, held together by financial, familial and pastoral connections, and a network of regional and national meetings, made referral a unique and often personal process.

Nevertheless, Roy Porter and Andrew Scull have established that moral treatment in England was not particular to Quakers at the Retreat (Scull, 2006, pp.38-53). To this it can now be added that the link between Quaker spirituality and moral treatment has been misconceived. Georgian Quaker spiritual ideals were not reflected in the broad principles of moral treatment. Foucault, Quaker historians and secular historians alike have all fallen into this misconception. Clearly moral treatment was embraced in Tuke's *Description of the Retreat*. However, this had very little to do the distinctive principles of Georgian Quaker theology or practice.

Yet *Description of the Retreat* mentions on several occasions that religion was of vital importance in the Retreat's curative atmosphere. Previous studies have viewed this through ahistorical interpretations of 'Inner Light,' uniformly overlooking the dynamics of Georgian Quaker spirituality. This chapter has added further evidence of the curative power of worship at the Retreat, by suggesting that relief was to be found not only from the sensation of 'stillness' and 'centring down' associated with Quaker worship, but also

from the reassurance that a suitable affective response to the idea of divine presence had been achieved – a ‘comfortable subjection,’ self-awareness and a ‘deep humiliation of the soul before the divine Majesty.’ Whilst Foucault developed his analysis of Quakerism in the 1970s, he was also not alert to this aspect of Quaker spirituality in *History of Madness*, and instead explored how the familial organisation of the Retreat was an instrument of normalising power.

Conclusion

This project has fundamentally reframed the link between Georgian Quaker spirituality and the York Retreat. Narratives of humanitarian progress led by Quaker spirituality have been shown to be questionable on several levels, and the Georgian Quaker interest in religious melancholia has been brought to the fore. These findings open up space for further research into Quaker spirituality, religious melancholia and the history of psychiatric medicine. The project has also illustrated the methodological point that a close contextual understanding of religiosity pays dividends in historical research, and is well worth attending to as part of an interdisciplinary approach.

Given the enormous importance which Protestant experiential Christianity placed upon discerning the signs of grace in the soul, we sought to understand what Quakers thought grace felt like, and how it was said to arise. During worship, Georgian Quakers were encouraged towards an affective response to what they thought to be a theological truth – God’s presence in the internal and external world. ‘Silent’ or ‘still’ mental states were pursued, in which the mind became ‘stayed’ in silent ‘awful fear,’ love or ‘watchfulness,’ as the truth of God’s omnipresence became internalised. Beliefs about the fallen human condition required a disavowal of agency in which improvement in prayer was credited to the divine, whilst anything which drew the mind away could be regarded as the ‘creature,’ ‘self’ or the ‘enemy.’ This context revealed the rich implications of remarks made by Samuel Tuke, Hannah Middleton, Holman Shepherd and others at the York Retreat on the ‘stillness’ and ‘stayedness’ of their minds.

This sense of the divine (or lack thereof) was responded to within a soteriological system which emphasised the limited agency that an individual could exercise towards salvation, and the limited opportunities for salvation within a lifetime. In a reversal of received wisdom in Quaker Studies, it has been shown that this mentality was not a result of the supposedly negative or passive influence of Catholic ‘Quietism.’ On the contrary, the internal tensions of reformed theology brought about an unfortunate evolution of theology and practice, leading the devout towards a demanding piety that placed emphasis upon depressive sentiment as an indicator of spiritual progress. Despair, melancholia, restrictive eating and suicidality, were presented as purgative episodes of spiritual growth in Quaker religious narratives. Whilst it was common in experiential Protestantism to see such periods as a precursor to the reception of saving grace, an understanding of the distinctive

Quaker referents of this distress was vital to our reading of these episodes amongst Quakers.

Suffering could be reframed as special attention from the providential or chastening hand of God, purifying the soul of sin and 'self.' Yet Satan could also feature, particularly to explain the extremes of blasphemous despair, restrictive eating or suicidality. Outside of religious biography, a range of opinions existed within the Quaker community as to how these episodes should be regarded, during the tail end of so-called 'Quietist' Quakerism and the explosion of new ideas around mental medicine in the early nineteenth century. Aetiologies of nervous affliction and constitutional weakness were incorporated into religious narratives, to exonerate the sufferer from moral or religious shortcoming, or conversely, in some instances at the York Retreat, to discredit the religious credentials of the sufferer all together.

Historians have wondered at how William Tuke, a bourgeoisie tea-merchant and an 'absolute beginner' in mental medicine, became so single minded in his concern with the York Retreat (Porter, 1987a, p.32). Yet the Tukes were well aware of the Quaker propensity for religious distress, which was undoubtedly a factor in the foundation of the York Retreat. Rather than being demure bourgeoisie rationalists, I have shown the Tukes to be part of a movement which preserved radical modes of experiential religion, including the deep distress of spiritual warfare and conversion. The Tukes were an axial point for Quakerism in late eighteenth-century England and therefore perfectly suited to set up an institution in which, as we have seen, religious madness was common. The Retreat was a space in which the uncertainties of Georgian Quaker piety could be played out; for religious healing or transformation to take place as well as or alongside of pathological healing.

The madness which occurred at the extremes of religious distress was, as Porter emphasised, regarded as '*therapeutic*' in its role of purifying the soul and preparing an individual for a religious calling. This 'madness' was regarded as a religious experience, a providential instrument of regeneration; a necessary and even expected process (1987b, pp.95-99). In some nonconformist circles up to the early nineteenth century, this type of affliction was devoid of the negative stigma associated with the institutionalisation of madness in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

If 'mental illness' or 'madness' is culturally constructed, then naturally our conceptions about 'the asylum' as a curative space for 'mental illness' must be regarded in the same way. The notion of the asylum as a curative or controlling space for the correction of

abnormal minds (and the York Retreat as one of the first such spaces), misses the multifaceted nature of 'madness' and its confinement at the turn of the nineteenth century. There is of course ample evidence that the York Retreat was used to rehabilitate socially deviant or psychologically abnormal Quakers (Digby, 1985 pp.88-104). Yet amongst this 'madness' as deviancy or as a wholly negative abnormality, the York Retreat catered for types of religious affliction which brought a gravitas and authority to the sufferer.

Moral management techniques and a familial atmosphere were adopted by several institutions for the mentally afflicted in the eighteenth century. Further to this, there is also evidence to show that experiential religion was accommodated for and could be intrinsic to treatment in some eighteenth-century madhouses. In such institutions, like those run by Dr. Joseph Mason (Smith, 2016), Dr. Nathaniel Cotton, (Porter, 1987, p.98) and Richard Henderson (Laffey, 2001, p.475) devout doctors provided medical care alongside pastoral support. Patients could achieve reconciliation with saving grace whilst receiving medical treatment; such practitioners tended to the health of the body and salvation of the soul, as George Trosse said (Hodgkin, 2006, p.107). It appears that similar modes of healing, which acknowledged the embodied aspect of religious distress, whilst affirming mental and physical affliction as an intrinsic part of conversion, continued at the York Retreat. However, Samuel Tuke jettisoned the publicly untenable nonconforming paradigm of experiential religion and offered *Description of the Retreat* in line with progressive proto-psychiatry and increasingly cautious evangelical compromise, thus obscuring this aspect of the York Retreat's history.

Our findings echo Schmidt's speculations that moral treatment at the York Retreat was preceded by the efforts of dissenting ministers since the seventeenth century; 'clergymen and moralists often adopted a consolatory tone in addressing melancholics since they recognised that, to some degree, the melancholic was limited by their diseased body' (2007 p.11). Schmidt assumed that the secular 'melancholics' of the York Retreat were far removed from the religious cases found in our study. Nevertheless, the cross over between religious consolation and somatic treatment up to the mid-eighteenth century which Schmidt revealed, was indeed evident at the York Retreat. It should also be noted that medical narratives of nervous affliction and healing were deeply indebted to religious narratives, as Schmidt and Child show (Schmidt, 2007 pp.176-184; Child, 2005). I have allowed for the interaction between these narratives by aiming not to gain an objective answer on the nature of the afflictions under study, nor to conform with contemporary psychiatric or theological norms. Rather, this study looked to bring out the fluid and

negotiable nature of Quaker distress, to reveal multi-perspectival accounts illustrating the ambiguities inherent in the unique phenomena of religious melancholia, during a time of religious and medical change.

Finally, it has become axiomatic that the humanistic approach of the York Retreat was a result of Georgian Quaker spirituality, particularly the notion of 'Inner Light.' As Charland puts it, 'the Quaker notion of the Inner Light is the main reason why they believed that the mad were still human despite their condition' (Charland, 2007, p.67). Similar assumptions continue in monographs on the history of psychology (Makari, 2015, pp.184-187).

Foucault's critique of the Retreat was also based on the premise that Quakerism looked beneath madness to appeal to the essence of an individual; a position which Foucault is philosophically averse to, and attacks. Over thirty years ago, Digby described a 'Janus faced' 'tension' in the York Retreat's historiography since Foucault's critique (Digby, 1985, pp.85-87). Recent articles have done little to extricate the York Retreat from this historiographical rut (Mack, 2015, p.250; Cherry, 2013, p.402). I have demonstrated that generations of historians, Foucault included, have assessed the York Retreat against a belief system which Georgian Quakers did not share. The thesis has cleared the decks of the previous assumptions around the link between Georgian Quaker spirituality and the foundation of the York Retreat, and added a new dimension to the history of this influential institution.

Implications for Future Research

The ambitious scope of this project has wider implications in several fields, and has left avenues open for further research in Quaker Studies, the study of religious melancholia and the history of psychological medicine.

How Quaker devotional practices changed in conjunction with the development of Quaker theology may be a pertinent question for future research. A framework for Georgian Quaker worship was advanced in this thesis, demonstrating a reciprocity between Quaker theology and practice which is seldom appreciated within histories of the Quaker movement. The importance of a close reading of devotional literature has been demonstrated, as the particularities of Quaker worship are not at all obvious from spiritual biography alone. Backhouse's *A Quick and Easy Method of Prayer* and Brook's *Reasons for the Necessity of Silent Waiting* went through more print editions in the nineteenth century than the eighteenth, and were in use well after the soteriological tensions of Georgian

Quakerism had been resolved; but how did these texts function on different theological grounds? Chapter one also raised the question of how Catholic mystical literature was appropriated by Protestant movements, and how a perceived success or failure in worship could be important in shaping narratives of spiritual progress; questions which may well apply to any experiential Christian group in this period.

The Methodist movement may be apt for further research into these issues around devotional practice, and religious melancholia. Since the suicide of one of the founding members of the Oxford Methodists (William Morgan in 1733), Methodists were often charged with causing insanity.³⁸ Walker and O'Connell, (2012, p.xiv) and Hindmarsh, (2005, p.276) have found that periods of religious distress and suicidality were common within the Methodist movement. Yet research into 'methodistical madness' tends to focus on the binary of accusations against Methodism and public rebuttals by the Methodist movement. There may be more nuanced ways to understand Methodist approaches to religious affliction. Wesley had a recurrent interest in medicine, made use of Cheynean approaches, and even used a primitive electric shock machine on members of his congregation, all the while asserting the validity of older dissenting models of sin and demonology (Maddox, 2007; Madden, 2008). In 'John Wesley and Depression in an Age of Melancholy,' Gorman writes that contemporary Methodists have a lot to learn from Wesley's holistic treatment of 'depression' (Wesley himself may have suffered from depression in Gorman's opinion), which included prayer, exercise, diet, bible study and medicine (Gorman, 1999). Bringing these strands together into a study of Methodist approaches to religious affliction (including close reading of the theological and experiential referents of Methodist religious distress) may be a worthwhile contribution to the history of experiential religious practice and the history of psychiatric medicine.

Another fruitful area for further research in these three interrelated areas of theology, nervous affliction and the development of psychiatric medicine would be Friend's Hospital in Philadelphia. Friend's Hospital was established by Quakers 1817, through the efforts of the Quaker minister Thomas Scattergood, who was acquainted with the William Crotch before his suicide in Philadelphia, and indeed wrote a prayer on the occasion of his passing (FHL MISC MSS, undated, box 7). Unlike the York Retreat in its early years, rich records of

³⁸ A pamphlet attributed to William Law was published, to defend the Oxford Methodists from accusations that they had sent one of their members mad; *The Oxford Methodists: being some account of a society of young gentlemen in that city.... With some occasional remarks on a letter inserted in Fog's Journal of December 9th, relating to them* (1733).

the day to day running of Friend's Hospital survive through the superintendent's diaries (HC.MC.1261 item 61-72).³⁹ A striking example of the combination of spiritual and medical approaches to religious melancholia at Friend's Hospital can be seen in the case of the Quaker minister Benjamin White. White was stricken with a guilty conscience, fearing he had returned too early from a journey in itinerant ministry. Whilst at Friend's Hospital, White was offered religious consolation from the superintendent, from visiting ministers and from his local meeting. Yet following his religious meetings he also had small static 'shocks of Electricity passed through his head' from an electric shock machine (HC.MC.1261 vol.1 item 61, from May 25th 1819 to November 20th 1820). A close understanding of Quaker theology would also be necessary for such a project, given the unique concerns of Quakerism in early nineteenth century Philadelphia, which was on the cusp of a schism between the spiritual 'Hicksite' Quakers and the self-called 'Orthodox' Quakers (D'Antonio, 2006, p. 50).⁴⁰

There may also be some contemporary relevance to this project, when considering the interface between psychiatry and Christian theological views on mental health, particularly depression. Scrutton finds that contemporary Christian 'theologies of depression' can be divided into three types; 'Spiritual Illness' in which depression is caused by 'sin or demons;' 'spiritual health' in which depression is 'an indication of, (and means to furthering) closeness to God;' and 'potentially transformative' depression in which suffering is undesirable, but nevertheless can become an occasion for spiritual growth. Scrutton argues for the latter mode on pragmatic grounds, as it combines the most potential for therapeutic self-regard without the pitfalls of the other models. 'Spiritual illness' and

³⁹ These have been explored in relation to nursing techniques by Patricia D'Antonio in *Founding Friends* (2006).

⁴⁰ Other notable patients at Friend's Hospital include Ruth Scott, who made claims of religious insight which were not supported by her community, like Martha Dickinson of chapter six. The case is intriguing due to the fact that she was the daughter of the minister Job Scott, who could be controversially spiritual in his approach (HC.MC.1261 vol. 2, item 62, from 4th October 1821 to 6th May 1823). A biography of the patient William Rickman could also be attempted. Rickman was educated in the Quaker Ackworth School in Yorkshire, (which the Tukes helped to establish) where he became schoolmaster. He was admitted to the York Retreat from 1812. After his discharge he moved to Philadelphia, and was admitted to Friends Asylum on several occasions in the period 1826-31. Detailed admission notes recall how he got into disputes, absconded, and spent periods in solitary confinement under restraint (HC.MC.1261 vol.3 item 63, from 24th July 1826, often daily thereafter). Rickman died in the York Retreat in 1871. Rickman also published several pamphlets on religion, schools and asylums (1828; 1828; 1829) and an edition of his father Joseph Rickman's religious poetry *Religious and Moral Poems* (1828).

'spiritual health' theologies of depression are criticised, as Christian sufferers may be discouraged from complimenting their religious understanding of depression with medical or psychological narratives. Scrutton points out that it is often Evangelical and Charismatic Christian communities who are least likely to incorporate secular therapeutics or biomedical angles into their views on depression (Scrutton, 2015a;2015b). Indeed, a survey from the US found that 48% of self-identifying Evangelical or Fundamentalist Christians believe that 'with prayer and Bible study alone, people with serious mental illness like depression, bipolar disorder and schizophrenia can overcome mental illness' (47% disagree, 5% unsure) (LifeWay Research, 2013). How to regard depression is therefore still a live issue within Christian communities. Christians who find a medical or psychological narrative to be expedient may not be supported in this path to recovery by the religious community to which they belong.

Of course, religious melancholia cannot be equated with modern depression, and there is a vast difference between being a depressed religious person and being depressed about religion. The former does not share the experience of the latter, whose despair is focused around abandonment by God, irredeemable sin and bleak prospects in the hereafter. Nevertheless, this thesis is relevant as it shows that charismatic or radical movements in the Georgian period integrated secular medicine into their narratives on a pragmatic basis, to console and destigmatise the sufferer from the excesses of a purely religious explanation. Medical healing for the body was incorporated into care for the soul as a part of a providential theology, whereas modern fundamentalist movements are now drawn to a one-dimensional, wholly spiritual, view of depression. Following Gorman (1999), Maddox (2007) and Madden (2008), the Georgian Quaker approaches that we have seen, add to a body of evidence to demonstrate the scope for holistic methods including medicine to be incorporated into modern Evangelical or Fundamentalist theologies of mental health.

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Superintendent's Daybook Volume 3, 1824-1829 HC.MC.1261 item 63.

Borthwick Institute for Archives, University of York, EnglandTuke Family Collection:

Account of Samuel Tuke's communication at a Monthly Meeting of Ministers and Elders regarding his sense of his own deficiencies, recorded by J. Backhouse, 15 Mar 1849 TUKE/2/2/6/2/1.

Draft of letter from Samuel Tuke to Susanna Corder, Feb 1846 TUKE/1/20/1/19/22.

Incomplete letter from [Samuel Tuke] to [Josiah Forster], 8 Apr 1845 TUKE/1/20/1/19/18.

Letter from Elizabeth Wheeler (née Tuke) to Samuel Tuke, 23 Nov 1809 TUKE/1/7/1/4/1.

Letter from Elizabeth Wheeler (née Tuke), Mary Maria Tuke (née Scott) and unknown writer to Henry Tuke TUKE/1/7/1/1/2.

Letter from Hannah [Middleton] to Priscilla Tuke (née Hack), 25 Jul 1810 TUKE/1/21/2/1/3.

Letter from Henry Tuke to Mary Maria Tuke (née Scott) 8 Aug 1799 TUKE/1/5/1/3/204.

Letter from Henry Tuke to Mary Maria Tuke (née Scott), 20 Apr 1794 TUKE/1/5/1/3/133.

Letter from Henry Tuke to Mary Maria Tuke (née Scott), Jan 1801 TUKE/1/5/1/3/216.

Letter from Isaac Jacob to William Alexander, and from Ann Alexander (née Tuke) to Henry Tuke, 31 Jan 1807, 6 Mar 1807 TUKE/1/9/1/1/44.

Letter from Lindley Murray to Samuel Tuke, Mar 1813 TUKE/ 1/20/2/1/12.

Letter from Mary Maria Tuke (née Scott) to Henry Tuke, 30 Apr 1794 TUKE/1/6/1/1/35.

Letter from Priscilla Tuke (née Hack) and Sarah Hack to Samuel Tuke, 8 Jan 1810
TUKE/1/21/1/3/14.

Writings on Monthly Review's review of William Rathbone's Narrative , 1805-1807
TUKE/2/1/8/3.

York Retreat Collection:

Letter from Jane Young to George Jepson dated 13th September 1822 RET/1/5/1/26.

Referral letter for Ann Gibbons dated 6th December 1798 RET/1/5/1/3.

Referral Letter for Hannah Prior dated 2nd May 1802 RET 1/5/1/7.

Referral letter for Henry King dated 3rd April 1829 RET 1/5/1/33.

Referral Letter for John Moxham dated 22nd February 1801 RET 1/5/1/6.

Referral letter for Lydia Sanger dated 11th April 1829 RET/1/5/1/33.

Referral Letter from Thomas Crowley dated 15th February 1804 RET 1/5/1/9

York Retreat Case Book, Admission dates 13th June 1796 – 22nd September 1828
RET/6/5/1/1A.

York Retreat Case Book, Admission dates c.1803 - c. early 1820s RET/6/5/1/1B.

Friends House Library, 173-177 Euston Road, London, England

Testimonies Concerning Ministers Deceased Vol.5 YM/TCMD vol.5.

Leeds University Special Collections, Leeds University, England

Leeds Preparatory Meeting Minute Book, 1749-1792, MS/DEP/1979/1/LEE/1/4.

Joseph Wood's Notebooks MS 1936/1. These notebooks have been transcribed and organised into five volumes cited in this project, and are available in pdf at <http://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/pages/notebooks.html> (accessed on 22/3/2017).