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**THE QUAKER UNDERSTANDING OF THE MINISTERIAL VOCATION; WITH SPECIAL
REFERENCE TO THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY**

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This thesis considers Quaker ministry from George Fox through the 18th into the 19th century, and argues that there was a diversion from the conception of Fox, represented by both an increasingly oppressive formal structure, and by shallow lack of considered discernment concerning vocal ministry; as well as a focus on silence at the expense of communication and a morbid obsession with one's own inner condition. This was coupled with a loss of the sense of the inner light as the personal Christ, and a devaluing of history and scripture, at least until the influence of Methodism and the evangelical revival.

Fox's idea of ministry was that it should grow out of a person's conversion: the experience of regeneration should lead to a desire to communicate it to others. Fox's piety had an important personal, historically-rooted Christocentric dimension, as well as the more impersonal inner light, and in this way at least the evangelical inclinations of various later ministers were faithful to him; though their views of the atonement differed somewhat. The authority of the minister resided purely in the message, and the authority for the content of the message depended on its spiritual utility for others. A vocation for ministry should be subject to profound testing, by the individual concerned and by the meeting, and should be deployed with discretion.

Later ministers followed Fox's teaching and example in various ways, but by the c1740s the separate formal authority of eldership and oversight had developed; there followed a marked tendency to police the minutiae of external discipline, and this, along with a reaction to controversy and inordinate enthusiasm and lack of discretion on the part of would-be ministers, had the effect of dampening and discouraging vocal ministry. There was also an emphasis on silence at the expense of communication: silence became an end in itself, and in Beamish's view a 'negation', rather than the soil out of which spiritual identity and vocation to preach grew (as it had been for Fox). Study of scripture was neglected, with anything that smacked of doctrine being suspected as contrary to free inspiration. There was a tendency in the 18th c to focus 'morbidly' on one's own subjective condition, which can be a form of pride, at the expense of showing others how to find the light within. However, the importance of continental Quietism in these developments has been over-stated (notably by Rufus Jones). There was a later revival of ministry in the old more balanced form, up to the time of Rowntree.

Keywords/themes:

Ministry; elder/eldership; overseer/oversight; vocation; vocal ministry; Fox's idea of ministry; silence; discernment; 18th century Quakerism; Samuel Bownas; women's ministry; conviction and

ministry; preaching and prayer; worship and ministry; personal/historical Christ, scripture and the inner light; doctrine and free inspiration; study; Quietism; evangelicals; Methodism; deism (remote concepts of a God who creates but who is distant from the world he has created); latitudinarianism (rational religion); humanitarian; discipline; prophetic; mystical; Spirit/spiritual; introspection; America and England.

Who it would be useful for: Academics working in Quaker studies or on Christian concepts of ministry; social historians of religion/the 18th c; Quakers interested in the history and development of the Society.

Introduction

Ministry, for Quakers, means above all ‘vocal ministry’, and not someone ‘officially charged to perform spiritual functions’. Barclay said someone called to vocal ministry, ‘having received the true knowledge of things spiritual ... and being by the same [Spirit] in measure purified and sanctified, comes thereby to be called and moved to minister to others; *being able to speak from a living experience of what he himself is a witness.*’ My italics, emphasising what Beamish portrays as absolutely basic to this idea of ministry: namely the vocation to communicate to others what you yourself have received. She goes on to elaborate on those who do in fact have practical responsibilities, and what is supposed to underlie that (concern for others, in particular).

Ministers in the former sense, however, ‘have a positive mission to publish Truth, to rebuke sin, and to strengthen faith, by means of the spoken and written word.’ This is in some sense permanent, not temporary, and both men and women have always felt called to it. Beamish poses three questions concerning this: how does it arise; has it undergone any changes since Fox; what content does it have; and what kind of authority is claimed for it?

It is not necessarily the case that a minister is always called to speak in meeting: indeed in 18th c in particular ‘silence was often felt to be *enjoined*’, even after a long journey to visit. Beamish seems a little uncomfortable with this, suggesting a tendency to prefer the 17th to the 18th c, when ‘this strange phenomenon’ was not so pronounced; ‘not is it characteristic today’.

Ministry springs from the Friends’ understanding of worship, which was derived from Fox. Beamish intends in the succeeding chapters to examine Fox and some ministers who immediately succeeded him, who ‘to a considerable extent [shared] his religious thought and experience’; after they passed away, by the middle of the 18th c, she argues that a change came over the ministry, and meetings for worship generally, which Fox would have lamented and which did harm to the Society; his widow warned against it. ‘The reaction of Friends to Barclay’s *Apology*, to Deistic and Latitudinarian influences, and to the message of John Wesley will be seen to have affected their Ministry.’ But she also questions whether continental Quietism was as responsible for the increasing silence of meetings as is often thought, and seeks ‘truer reasons’ for this.

Beamish suggests that a return to the thought of Fox has already taken place among Friends, ‘but needs to be clarified and intensified in the light of present day conditions and needs.’ This should not be an attempt to put the clock back, which would be hopeless and futile. However, she agrees with Rufus Jones that ‘the progress of religious truth during the last [150] years has been towards the Truth which he made central to his message.’ There has been a rapprochement of Christian thought generally with Quaker ideas, concerning the Spirit bringing unity, and the role of laity. *Pace* Jones she argues that Quakerism in 17th and 18th centuries was committed to not one, but two central truths: the historical truth of the incarnation, teaching of and redemption by Jesus Christ; and the availability of

salvation (defined as 'inward illumination, instruction and guidance') to all who respond to and obey 'inward light of the Spirit of Christ.'

Chapter 1: The Vocation of George Fox

Beamish begins with a discussion of the particular character of Fox's ministerial vocation. One contemporary said that the 'innocency and solitude' of his early shepherding was a 'just figure' of his later ministry. Fox held that he received 'direct teaching', even in childhood. 'The Lord taught me to be faithful in all things, and to act faithfully in two ways, viz. inwardly to God and outwardly to man, and to keep to 'Yea' and 'Nay' in all things ... and that my words should be few and savoury, and seasoned with grace.' 'He did not turn to the Bible as to an ultimate authority' but rather 'God made the selection of lessons he must learn', communicated in scriptural language. He received a specific command to forsake and be a stranger to all. This solitude resulted in 'melancholy, sin and fierce temptations to sin'. This led to his negative experiences of various clergymen as spiritual guides, and to the Voice which said there is 'one alone who can speak to thy condition'. Beamish says that at this point he finally grasped the connection between the 'Jesus of history' and the promised Spirit of Truth, and was led out of melancholy into a joy that lasted. Fox uses impersonal metaphors for the divine within – Light, Seed, Power; but he spoke and wrote just as often to a personal Christ. Later ministers adopted impersonal imagery to the neglect of this personal relationship.

Fox accepted the doctrine of the atonement, but Christ was 'Illuminator' and 'Victor' for Fox; he 'showed man his sin and saved him from it', rather than being a sacrifice in evangelical terms. Fox's writings contain a strong sense of deliverance and victory over evil, rather than a sense of guilt; this is an important difference with Bunyan. This 'triumphant optimism' is posited as a basis for Fox's success with many different kinds of people, who found themselves 'released from their loads', and filled with the same 'joy and sense of victory through Christ'. According to Beamish the loss of this sense of joy is why later ministers lost power, and gloom descended over meeting after meeting from 1740. For Fox despair came from an unwillingness to give up oneself wholly to the will of God; and joy in Christ's victory provided a bond of unity for the Society. Fox emphasised spiritual attentiveness and patience, 'waiting on the Lord'; his faith in the Trinity expresses this: he was 'drawn to the Son by the Spirit'. The love of God let him see himself as he was without God.

Fox did not consider himself specially favoured: it was his mission to 'turn people to that inward light, spirit and grace by which all might know their salvation and their way to God', which he had himself experienced.

Chapter 2: George Fox's conception of a Church

Fox always aimed at bringing the convinced into a fellowship. The criterion of authority of the message is the spiritual response it evokes: and this is the basis of a minister's authority in Quakerism, the authority of the message. Ministry is not an 'office' with intrinsic authority. His or her only authority is in the content of the message. Quakerism's peculiar way of worship, type of ministry, organisation and characteristic 'testimonies' all flow from the belief that the Spirit of Christ is alive and at work in those who wait upon him. Acceptance of Christ's historical ministry is traditionally of great importance, but takes second place to his present reality. Beamish expresses the Quaker idea of grace using John Oman's idea of the 'gracious personality' of the indwelling Christ. A sense of forgiveness of sins is less important than the crucifying of self-will.

Chapter 3: The dual character of Quaker ministry

Ministry took two distinct but interdependent forms, for Fox: itinerant preaching, and spontaneous utterance flowing out of silent worship. Silent worship originated in Fox's emphasis on the need for stillness and waiting upon God. Fox was often a man of few words in prayer, despite being an effective preacher. For Fox excess of words carried the danger of pride. Another sense of ministry developed in the context of silent worship: 'not to speak, but to receive, and be ready to speak if the Spirit so moved us'.

Chapter 4: Ministry between 1691 and 1700

Monthly meetings of London ministers began at first to supervise the publication of books and tracts and the distribution of ministers to the different meetings (so all meetings were served, rather than ministers concentrating at some to the neglect of others). In this rudimentary organisation the mantle of Fox had fallen on the whole Society, as he intended. But there was a desire for an Elisha. Whitehead came to the fore as a conservative, but organisationally effective force; Steven Crisp, a much greater preacher, would have exercised a mighty influence, but he died soon after Fox. Beamish elaborates on Crisp's view of ministry: for Crisp, the end of attending meetings is not so much to hear what 'this, that and the other Friend saith, but [rather to find] what you have in yourselves to witness to': the purpose of the ministry is to stir up and lead people to that which is of God in them. This view is reflected in his *Short History of a Long Travel from Babylon to Bethel* (1691). This work is similar to Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* in that it uses the allegory of one man's journey: after being left unsatisfied by various putative guides, he encounters a 'gentle, kindly and tender light', which stays

with him and coaxes him through a series of travails, leading him to a household where he acquires a sense of belonging, peace and vocation. For Crisp, unlike Bunyan, who emphasises the salvation of the individual soul, the end is very much in a community, and the ministerial vocation is a calling to help others down the road one has already travelled. It can even be said that Crisp and others 'regarded the summons to minister as a direct sequence to conviction. Although the approval of the group was desired, to encourage or check the process of Ministerial growth, vocation sprang, essentially, from inward guidance, and was taken, in many cases, to be one of the first steps in the new life.' In some ways bearing witness in meeting was the equivalent of baptism in other churches: a sign that the Cross had been taken up. But it came to be regarded more and more as a heavy cross to be borne.

After the death of Fox and Crisp the note of joyful triumph gradually died down and did not reappear except sporadically for 'well over a century'. Beamish acknowledges that our records of 18th c preaching are meagre. She chooses three examples where the joyful note did persist, the single surviving sermons of three ministers, Stamper, Butcher and Ashby. They lacked the originality of Fox and Crisp but 'followed the same lines of thought and feeling'. Their preaching can be called 'prophetic' rather than 'mystical', in the sense that they seek to communicate a message to others concerning what they have received, rather than seeking contemplative union with God and helping others towards the same. The balance began to shift somewhat with Thomas Story.

Chapter 5: The living message persists: Story and Chalkley

Beamish holds that the prophetic experience of God involves an 'inner voice', and the mystical 'inner illumination'. The latter is a gradual process leading to union, involving contemplation and meditation leading to a love of God surpassing feeling. This was characteristic of 17th c Quietist writers such as Fenelon and Mme Guyon. For Fox and his followers, on the other hand, there was an 'inspirational suddenness.' Just as for the Hebrew prophets, God was experienced as near at hand but also over and against. Fox kept a self-effacing silence about his own love for God. Quaker ministry lost sight of Fox in this respect, and sapped its potential strength by an inordinate introspective subjectivity, which can be a subtle form of pride. This was never a wholly unmitigated process, however. Story asks to be created anew after God's image, and disposed according to his will, to show Him to the nations: this expresses a prophetic, ministerial side to Story as well as the mystical.

Story also describes gratitude for a joy which no tongue can express, that all his past sins were done away, his whole being filled with the divine presence, and for the Love of God that immersed his soul in its depths. Gratitude and praise for all this filled him with a longing to make it known. Beamish relates this to Fox's view of the grounds for the ministerial vocation, and argues that there was a 'dwindling of gratitude' in later ministers. (She cites John Baillie to the effect that

gratitude is the dominant emotion in response to grace, and the main inspiration for Christian action.) It is important that all are given of the divine light; 'but the insistence on this truth to the neglect of God's love and grace in taking human nature upon himself ... may rob His Ministers of that sense of triumphant joy and thanksgiving that alone makes the message of the Gospel convincing.'

For a long time Story was silent in meetings, his heart frequently 'tendered and broken', before attaining confidence in his vocation. He followed Fox in preaching Christ's love in personal terms, and displayed tolerance towards other denominations: Christian unity can stand in 'Christian love only.' Indeed, 'In so far as a man believes in a holy Something, a powerful, persuasive Something, for which he has no name' but on which he acts, he cannot truly be called an unbeliever. This is 'a mode and degree of faith in the Son of God, the Light of the world, working by love.' He emphasised the value of silence: a silence from all 'natural hurries of the mind', allows God to work a change, beginning with little, low things, building us up till we are capable of more. Story was not an ascetic, but argued that it was good to give up even lawful things if God calls us to it - but not out of our own wills.

Chalkley thought the widespread Christian emphasis on being a miserable sinner was incompatible with the gospel, since one in Christ is truly happy. He advocated combining spiritual work with industry in a secular calling. He lacked the prophetic power of Fox but echoed his joyful optimism and personal devotion to Christ.

Chapter 6: Samuel Bownas

In the case of Bownas, according to one contemporary, his 'experience of the love of God and the operation of his Holy Spirit, in gradually purging out the corruptions of his own heart, did excite and augment in him a Christian love to his fellow creatures, attended with an urgency of zeal, and an incessant desire for their conversion.' However, for Beamish he also foreshadows a certain tendency to 'introspection found to a still greater degree in some later Ministers, absorbing their interest to an extent that verges on the morbid, and beguiling them away from the true, objective content of the gospel as preached by Fox.'

Bownas was brought up a Quaker, but became lax as a youth. He underwent an awakening to truth thanks to a denunciation in meeting; once this had occurred it was a natural step to consolidate what he experienced in conversion and pass it on to others. However, Bownas and later ministers misunderstood Barclay's use of 'immediate revelation': they thought it meant 'a sudden, instantaneous revelation, that rendered any previous thought injurious to the message.' On account of this some later ministers neglected the study of scripture 'for fear of hindering the Spirit's 'immediate promptings'.' Beamish compares Bownas's book on ministry with that of the great Presbyterian divine Richard Baxter. They share the idea that a minister must be 'devoted to God'; Bownas also

emphasises waiting on inspiration to acquire authority. Bownas tends to reject preaching set doctrine: 'A spiritual minister is and ought every day to be like a blank paper, when he comes into the assembly of the Lord's people ... his only and sole dependence must be on the gift of the Spirit, to give, and bring to his understanding matter suitable to the present state of the assembly.' Though preparation of mind and heart are required; Beamish suggests that the minister is less a blank slate, than one written on in invisible ink by means of their own prayer and study, which the Spirit then makes legible and fashions into fresh forms. Scriptural parables and allegories are useful for the Spirit to give fresh meaning to and find fresh applications for.

For Bownas, meetings were corporately responsible for pastoral discipline. Ministers who travelled to preach were known as 'publick Friends', but were recognised as authoritative solely on the basis of the value of their preaching for others. Bownas said that the minister must be 'humble and inward with the Lord in spirit'; their purpose is to bring others into 'a right relationship with the Father and His Son out of their own spiritual formation' (Beamish). He says nothing about the content of preaching; that must come from a minister's own total resignation to the divine will. He advises them to beware of the pride this can cause. Preaching out of their own experience and the promptings of the Spirit does not mean a new gospel: rather the object is 'to see a change made inwardly in our souls and the kingdom of God set up within us' by the historical events and doctrines associated with Bethlehem and Calvary. It was taken for granted by Quakers that practice depended on belief, but Beamish says that one can see why other denominations had grounds for suspicion in this respect. Authority for every individual Quaker came from the inner voice, heard in a spirit of humility, not ministers or doctrines or scripture; this is what Bownas wanted preachers to impress on their hearers.

Much caution was required regarding emotion and enthusiasm, notably after the example of Naylor. Fox insisted on 'coolness and calmness.' 'Bownas was the first to demand it of young ministers'; he knew how easy it could be to be deceived concerning inspiration: 'think and consider aright in coolness'. The process of ministerial formation is gradual, and requires careful discernment. Bownas identifies different stages: one begins as an 'Infant', to whom the ministry comes as a birth, and is attended with stumbles and much perturbation; patient and loving support is needed from the meeting, as well as careful testing by them of the minister's gift, considering virtue, benefit to others, and they must be no more hasty to pull down than to puff up. The minister needs this time too, to discern what is revealed for him personally, and what for the meeting generally. No one should be envious of another's gift, nor imitate it. Bownas gives advice on being measured in ministry: one should not stand for too long in meeting, for example, and also maintain a calm and quiet frame of mind. There should be no prepared speech; the minister must desire simply the virtue of the spirit of wisdom directing his mind. Extravagant delivery and affectation are to be avoided. Stereotyped delivery was perhaps becoming a problem in this period since it is denounced. When at the 'Young Man' stage a minister might be called to travel to benefit other meetings, but this requires serious reflection and testing. Bownas gives much wise advice on conduct in travel.

Beamish extends the comparison (and contrasts with) with Baxter: the minister is there to help others on the same way, for Bownas; to teach, for Baxter. For Baxter no man can have grace without solid knowledge; there is no solid knowledge without grace, for Bownas. Bownas had not read Locke, Herbert of Cherbury or Toland, but there seems to be an implicit criticism of deism nonetheless: the Light should not be identified with natural reason.

Bownas's vocation in preaching was to throw fresh light on scripture. Some Quakers were suspicious of 'preaching out of the book': but for Bownas 'old Matter, opened in new Life, was always new'. But Beamish identifies a wider 'loss of balance' beginning: a lack of mental preparation and ordered ideas on the part of ministers lead to a substitution of gesture and cliché. A French free-thinker who observed some Quaker preaching in this mode described it as 'No more inspired than the Sybil, though sincere.'

Chapter 7: The last links with George Fox

For Beamish Bownas was one of the last ministerial links with the vision of Fox. There was also John Fothergill – who 'held the balance between past fact and present experience more evenly than did Bownas'; his preaching was rooted in history, but in historical doctrine as 'felt and known inwardly 'in the Lamb's Spirit''. Like Bownas he was insistent upon waiting for inspiration; and he made a great contribution through pastoral love and care. But he was the 'last in the eighteenth century' who comprehensively carried on the vision of Fox. Fothergill had none of Bownas's introspection; no 'concentration on the attitude of the Minister to the comparative neglect of the message'.

Chapter 8: Criticism from within

'Before the end of the 17th c it became clear that Quaker Ministry was in danger of losing the inspirational quality that had been its unquestioned credential in the time of Fox.' Persecution had charged early ministry with 'urgency and power'. 'Relief from fear of arrest ... brought into being a new type of Ministry, often not worthy of the name.' There was a 'deterioration' of vocation, even a total lack of it at times; exemplified by the interruptions of 'ignorant, blind and self-preferring novices.' Not enough time was allowed for proof of vocation, nor was approval obtained from the meeting. Monthly meetings expressed concern about 'Worldliness, wordiness, and the intrusion of 'loose conversation' and a 'quarrelsome spirit'', as well as those who 'ran where they had not been sent'. John Griffith was a strong critic; though he was overly pessimistic.

Chapter 9: Eldership and Oversight

Nevertheless, it is true that there were changes in 'quality, quantity and influence' of ministry from c1740s, according to Beamish. There was a crystallisation of eldership and oversight as distinct offices. While not bad in itself – there being a difference of gifts in a community where all are priestly - Fox saw eldership as a natural spiritual culmination in everyone. From 'Seers', ministers were apt to become 'Scrutineers' when a more formalised oversight became part of their responsibility. Those with a natural authority were supposed to come to the fore for the whole meeting; instead these positions were often occupied by 'weighty' men and women, who 'came to have a repressing and discouraging influence over young Ministers'.

How did the relative authority of ministers and those with practical responsibility come to be reversed? The separation of oversight was clear cut move, 'to relieve want, rebuke worldliness, and correct conduct'; that of eldership was more gradual and more harmful. Quaker historians debate the causes. There was an attempt to end controversy through central control. Older members were endowed with an authority too swiftly taken for granted, not renewed on merit. The natural human love of order moulds institutions. As a result of controversies, Ministers lost authority, elders assumed an influence that was critical and damping rather than encouraging, and central rather than monthly meetings came to be regarded as rightful wielders of authority over the whole.

Chapter 10: Trans-Atlantic Intervisitation

English ministerial decline is contrasted with American invigoration. Visiting long distances was a ministerial statement in itself, even if there was silence or comparatively little edification on arrival. The visiting minister and those visited often shared trades, which helped bond relations.

Chapter 11: The strengthening of the Discipline

The Society was governed by Queries and Advices not rules; this remains a valuable principle for Friends. Fox intended a persuasive, not coercive, discipline: rules of behaviour that created a society not an institution. However, the Irish Queries became legislation of minutiae, and England moved in a similar direction. Ministry acquired a character of legislative injunction, some of which of was of ethical value, but much more was aimed at outward uniformity not spiritual awakening to the 'Everlasting Gospel'. Women Ministers greatly increased after 1740, and Beamish suggests they found insistence on disciplinary details a congenial subject. The motive was that all life should be brought under Christ's guidance, but in reality much could have been left to individual conscience, and even taste and judgement.

Chapter 12: The swing over to silence

For Fox silence was a pastoral tool, where ministry was unprofitable or there was dispute. This was also true for John Griffith in the 18th c. It was also to provoke spiritual awe, 'luminousness', in the presence of God. While there is no doubt that Quietist authors were widely read by Friends up to the middle of the 19th c, the view that 'no preaching or public prayer should be undertaken without a movement of the Spirit ... with which any attempt to study a subject must inevitably interfere' was already growing without the aid of this influence: it was rather the result of the misunderstanding of the word 'immediate' as used by Barclay, as seen in Bownas. Rufus Jones recognised this but still emphasised the importance of Quietism. Quaker 'Quietism' was corporate not individualistic, unlike the continental variety; Moravian 'stillness' was perhaps also an influence, which is not mentioned by Jones. Beamish compares William Law on seeking or waiting on the inward light with Quaker ideas, and says that continental Quietists were different in that they were more interested in inward peace than the struggle for righteousness, as well as placing far more emphasis on study than the Quakers. Some things in Quaker thought are not peculiar to Quietism, like crucifixion of the self. While Quietist authors were read, then, it is by no means clear that the swing to silence was a simple and direct result of their ideas alone. Rather, the developments seem to have been in parallel.

Chapter 13: Methodist influence on Quakerism

Methodist influence may have been another factor at play. Methodist preachers had a similar evangelistic spirit to Fox, and were hugely successful. There was both interaction and rivalry with Quakers. (One Quaker writer complains that Methodists see regeneration as an 'instantaneous, not a gradual work', and the dependency that should be on Christ alone is placed on man.) Beamish suggests a possible Quaker reaction against the emotionalism associated with the Methodist revival and with the Great Awakening in the colonies. In reaction, Quakers became suspicious of even proclaiming the message to others, or of saying anything at all, as the products of self will. Perhaps Quietist books reinforced Quaker attitudes that were already held. Instead of Fox's exhortation to 'Walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every man', there arose 'gloomy self-isolation', or where there was ministry, 'a censorious spirit, pride and self-aggrandisement'. Again, Beamish associates this with women ministers, such as Catherine Phillips, though she also cites testimony of how remarkable in vocal ministry Catherine Phillips could be; though she lacked humility. She combined a 'Methodist preoccupation with the salvation of her own soul' with a dread of moving without clear guidance.

Chapter 14: What was the general attitude of Quakers to women's Ministry?

Beamish displays a rather ambivalent attitude towards women ministers; she underlines their gifts, but seems to think they were more prone to unprofitable hysteria and rigorism than men.

She summarises her overall argument up to this point at the end of this chapter: As the 18th c progressed elders and overseers stayed within their own meetings, and 'fixed their eyes on shortcomings and delinquencies; the old faith in the possibility of attaining personal perfection was transformed into a passionate desire to keep the Society unspotted from the world. There was no outreach, because the Gospel message was being pushed more and more into the background, though it was never relinquished.' Ministry became more focused on 'upholding those tenets of the Society that distinguished it from other Christian bodies' than 'spreading the truth as revealed in the Christ of history, and in the guidance of his Spirit'. She says this was true of Catherine Phillips. A more hard and fast line was drawn between those who spoke in meeting and those who did not; perhaps in response to unprofitable ministry, to those lacking in the discipline taught by Bownas.

Chapter 15: Samuel Fothergill

Fothergill saw the deterioration that had set in, but he failed to understand the cause of it, 'and so helped the ministry to hibernate, rather than to develop along the deep and generous lines laid down by its first 'Publishers of Truth.' (Quote from the end of chapter 14.) Fothergill's writings portray a rather extravagant and complete repentance right away, and the self-centred attitude this apparently reveals remained characteristic of him. He spoke with devotion, though, and inspired it in others. There may be evidence of the Latitudinarian divine Tillotson's influence: Fothergill speaks of the 'Safe and delightful paths of religion and virtue', and displays a utilitarian ethical bent. He could also be more evangelical in tone, though, and rebutted the Socinian accusation often directed at Quakers. He has a tendency to use scripture regardless of its natural or original meaning, and emphasises spiritual passivity: that is, waiting on God to inspire love. He was a fierce critic on the minutiae of discipline; excessively so, for Beamish, and he tended to moral superiority.

Chapter 16: The Nineteenth Century

Fox concentrated on day to day dependence on the inner light, John Wesley on once and for all acceptance and ensuing assurance. 18th c Friends kept their identity but lost their outreach; while the Methodist and evangelical emphasis on an individual relationship with a personal saviour perhaps

impeded any further light when it hardened into acceptance of this as a set doctrine. A gulf stream of evangelical devotion to the historical Christ began to warm the coldness of 18th c Quaker ministry, however, when it was seen that the Methodist/evangelical intention had been to revive living faith in Christ. This, and the climate of opinion deriving from the French Revolution, helped inspire philanthropy, giving a new impetus to ministry. Divisions (between evangelically-inclined Quakers and latitudinarian Hicksites) hindered this in America, but even so the campaign against slavery gathered momentum there. Many new ministers were converts from other denominations, for whom Quakerism answered a need.

The preaching of three of these ministers in particular is described: it was rooted in direct guidance and silence, but contained an evangelical account of Christ as an atoning sacrifice rather than illuminator and victor. It was effective in that it was widely understood; silence alone could decry the value of the message. It viewed Quakers not as a peculiar people, but as part of the wider body of Christ with an active role to play. [See Beamish's own summary.]

Mary Dudley was not so concerned with her own salvation or the state of the Society as others like Catherine Phillips; she emphasised the unchanging and unceasing love of God, and thoroughly tested her vocation. David Sands was good at speaking to the condition of others and growing communities where others failed, but he helped cause the schism between Evangelical Quakers and those less dogmatic. Shillitoe was keen on 'immediate' guidance and passivity, yet he was narrowly evangelical and an important prosecutor of the split.

The French aristocratic convert Stephen Grellet reconciled the two aspects of Quaker ministry again at last (see chapter 3). He became a minister of Christ from a disciple of Voltaire, having been turned from religion by slavery. For Grellet silence was the way into the Lord's presence, not a negation. Strikingly he travelled with an English Quaker while the two nations were at war. His sincere humility drew people to him. He says he often became 'united in heart and spirit' to priests, monks and nuns, on his European journeys. He had an audience with Pope Pius VII and his entourage, and they sympathised with his views on what spiritual and moral qualifications a minister ought to have. He advised authorities across the continent on penal reform, asylums, and schools, and influenced Elizabeth Fry. He preached an evangelical type theology, but his reaction to Hicks was 'persuasive, not polemical', and he let things rest when he saw it wasn't working and turned to more profitable work. His preaching uses extensive sacramental imagery.

Conclusion

Quaker ministry still has something to offer and something to learn in relation to other Christian ministries. The weakness that attacked it in 18th c was not due to any flaw in Fox's understanding, but a failure to 'enter fully into the significance of his thought'. By the 18th c he was regarded as a bit of a

'primitive and ancient' Friend. But present-day religious thought accepts much of what he believed in: the value of silence, albeit this tends to be meditational not free worship; in the ministry of women; in breaking down barriers of authority and privilege. The danger for Quaker ministers is that their lack of any outwardly recognisable status can make it hard to communicate their message beyond other Quakers. But speech is an integral and essential part of Quaker ministry. Fox held that all committed Christians would experience ministry as part of their calling at some point. 'Recording' had the effect of discouraging those not recorded from speaking. For Fox ministry sprang out of silent, expectant worship and personal sensitivity and experience; a sense of this has been recovered today, but Quakers need a 'still stronger sense of Ministerial consecration', which they should not be afraid to draw from churches with professional ministries. These are no longer 'hireling' ministries; social conditions have changed.

Summary prepared by Andrew Harvey (2012)