

‘CHOOSE LIFE!’ QUAKER METAPHOR AND MODERNITY

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ABSTRACT

In 2003, Grace Jantzen presented the George Richardson Lecture, the annual international lecture in Quaker studies, entitled ‘Choose Life! Early Quaker Women and Violence in Modernity’, which was published in *Quaker Studies*. It was part of her ongoing work on the preoccupation of modernity with death and violence. In the lecture she argued that Margaret Fell and most other early Quaker women encouraged a choice of life over a preoccupation with death, while most male Friends (as Quakers are also called) maintained the violent imagery of the Lamb’s War, the spiritual warfare that would usher in the kingdom. While both men and women developed what became the Quaker ‘peace testimony’ (the witness against war and outward violence), the language used by male and female Friends differed in its description of the inward spiritual life and its consequences and mission. Thus, Grace Jantzen argued that these women Friends were choosing a language counter to modernity, while the male apocalyptic was indeed counter-cultural but still within the frame of modernity. In this article, we take Grace Jantzen’s basic thesis, that a female ‘Choose Life!’ imagery may be set against a male ‘Lamb’s War’ metaphor, and apply it to four sets of Quaker data in other geographic and temporal locations, to explore the extent to which the arguments she sets out can usefully illuminate the nature of Quakerism. This four-fold approach highlights the complexity of the history of Quaker discourse, as well as the continually shifting cultural and social contexts in which Quakers necessarily found themselves embedded. It also brings to the fore how useful an analytical tool Grace Jantzen has given us and not only in situations where we come to agree with her conclusions.

KEYWORDS

Grace Jantzen; Alexander Jaffray; Liliás Skene; Hannah Kilham; suffrage; Quaker Faith and Practice

INTRODUCTION

In 2003, Grace Jantzen presented the George Richardson Lecture, the annual international lecture in Quaker studies, entitled ‘Choose Life! Early Quaker Women and Violence in Modernity’, which was published in *Quaker Studies*

(Jantzen 2005). It was part of her ongoing work on the preoccupation of modernity with death and violence.¹ In the lecture she argued that Margaret Fell² and most other early Quaker women encouraged a choice of life over a preoccupation with death, while most male Friends maintained the violent imagery of the Lamb's War, the spiritual warfare that would usher in the kingdom. While both men and women developed what became the Quaker 'peace testimony' (the witness against war and outward violence), the language used by male and female Friends differed in their description of the inward spiritual life and its consequences and mission. Thus, Grace argued that these women Friends were choosing a language counter to modernity, while the male apocalyptic was indeed counter-cultural but still within the frame of modernity. The Quaker women's emphasis on 'Life' was at odds with modernity's emphasis on death and violence. It led to an alternative mode within the Quaker communities in terms of gender relations and the spiritual equality of the sexes, which extended to the whole range of social testimony and witness (Jantzen 2005).

This thesis in itself raises many questions and requires further research. Sally Bruyneel Padgett's work on Margaret Fell's eschatology (Padgett 2003) does not support Grace's thesis that Margaret Fell had a distinctive approach. Grace was herself clear that not all women Friends fitted her characterisation, and we can point, for instance, to the apocalyptic invectives of Dorothy White (another seventeenth-century English Quaker from the south of England) as a good counter example (Dandelion 2005: 42). However, Catie Gill's recent book on seventeenth-century Quaker women's collective authorship argues that female expression was distinctive in style within the Quaker movement and was particularly characterised by prophecy in the 1650s, and personal testimony in the 1680s (2005: 2). Christine Trevett (2001) has shown that English and Welsh women's prophetic writings were particularly silenced by the actions of Second Day's Morning Meeting³ after 1672; and Phyllis Mack suggests that women Friends placed themselves in a limited and subordinated role in this later period, while at the same time creating a self-affirming literary style that was 'recognizably and consistently female' (Mack 1992: 311). By the late 1700s English Quakers were not using the Lamb's War imagery and their testimony against outward fighting had become part of normative Quakerism. Nikki Coffey Tousley's (2008) work clearly shows how this second generation of Quakers marginalised the eschatological vision or omitted it altogether from their accounts. Their spiritual epistemology seemed less secure and they no longer placed their personal salvation at the heart of a global eschatological picture.

In this article, we take Grace's basic thesis (a female 'Choose Life!' imagery set against a male 'Lamb's War' metaphor) and apply it to four sets of Quaker data in other geographic and temporal locations, to explore the extent to which the arguments she sets out can usefully illuminate the nature of Quakerism. From Grace's lecture we have identified four features around which we explore our material:

- a) the overturning of social symbolism;
- b) the desire to reclaim the world for God in the here and now, with an emphasis on Life and the potential for 'newness and creative change';

- c) God seen in terms of immanence—Life and the Divine is within;
- d) the scope for an ecological approach to life, rather than one of domination and exploitation (as characterised by modernity).⁴

We have deliberately worked collaboratively, following Grace's own research ethos, while each writing the sections closest to our own research specialisms. Betty Hagglund looks at the works of Alexander Jaffray and Lilius Skene, seventeenth-century Aberdeen Friends, to explore whether a Scottish location makes a difference to the gendered division identified by Grace in relation to English Friends, and identifies a public/private dichotomy in writing styles. Edwina Newman extends the study into the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and focuses on Hannah Kilham, whose links with early Methodism, and position as an unusual and late convert to Quakerism, highlight the problem of trying to disentangle a specifically Quaker outlook from a wider historical context. In addition, her involvement in Africa brings into sharp relief some of the most glaring issues of modernity's characteristics of exploitation and domination. Pam Lunn explores the public discourse among early twentieth-century British Friends concerning the militant phase of the campaign for women's suffrage. She shows that in this period, while a gendered discourse may be identified, it does not map neatly onto actual men and women. Pink Dandelion charts the nature of twentieth-century liberal British Quakerism, using the changes in framing the historic Quaker opposition to war as a case study. He analyses the language of the 1995 British Quaker book of discipline⁵ to explore how far it can be argued that the whole Yearly Meeting⁶ is now 'Choosing Life' rather than evoking images of victory or destruction. What does the dominant narrative say about the nature of the Yearly Meeting in terms of how gendered its theology is and how it sits within modernity?

This four-fold approach highlights the complexity of the history of Quaker discourse, as well as the continually shifting cultural and social contexts in which Quakers necessarily found themselves embedded. It also brings to the fore how useful an analytical tool Grace has given us, and not only in situations where we come to agree with her conclusions.

I. SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY FRIENDS IN ABERDEEN: GENDERED DIVISIONS?

Looking at texts by English Quakers written between 1649 and 1700, Grace Jantzen found distinct differences in the writings of men and women. The development of Quakerism in Scotland followed a similar but not identical path to that of English Quakerism and therefore forms a good test case for seeing whether Grace's argument holds true for other geographical and temporal locations. It was not until the English Quaker, William Dewsbury, visited Aberdeen in 1662 that the first documented conversions in that city took place. While English Friends withdrew from public apocalyptic pronouncements after the James Nayler scandal⁷ in 1656 and the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660, Friends in Aberdeen continued to publish prophetic statements and warnings, preach publicly,

disrupt church services and act out 'signs'⁸ until well into the 1680s and beyond. Despite the fact that many of the early Aberdeen converts were well-connected and prominent citizens, and despite being subjected to severe persecutions and repeated imprisonments, Aberdeen Friends did not move to a more inward-looking position until after the persecutions had stopped.

The public actions were carried out by both women and men. Both, for example, wrote apocalyptic letters addressed to magistrates and inhabitants of Aberdeen, warning that if the persecutions did not cease, God, who was on the side of the Quakers, would destroy the persecutors; and as late as 1698 a woman is recorded as disrupting a church service, crying 'Do not believe that deceiver' and warning that God was about to destroy all idolatry and will-worship⁹ (Wilson 1822: 138).

An examination of memoirs, poems and letters by Aberdeen Friends underlines the difficulty of separating an individual's written style from their wider and personal contexts; it also demonstrates the need to consider the intended audience as part of the analysis. In order to test Grace's hypothesis, we look first at the writings of a male Friend, to see if the 'Choose Life' imagery, identified by Grace as particularly likely to be found in women's texts, is present; and, conversely, if the Lamb's War imagery, linked by Grace to texts by men, is equally present; we then look for similar features in a set of texts by a contemporaneous woman Friend.

Alexander Jaffray, one of the first Aberdeen converts, was born in 1614 into a wealthy merchant's family. He became a prominent Covenanter¹⁰ and supporter of Cromwell, and represented Aberdeen in parliament between 1644 and 1650. He gradually moved from Presbyterianism to an Independent church position, organising a separatist church in 1652. From 1661 he found himself increasingly drawn to Quakers, although he did not become a Quaker until Dewsbury's 1662 visit (DesBrisay 2000; Jaffray 1833 [1661]).

Jaffray wrote a memoir of his life, covering the period from 1614 to 1661. Although the memoir ends before his conversion, the final chapters explore his responses to Quaker ideas. He writes of an indwelling Christ, manifested in but separate from outward creation and spiritual practices:

He is to be seen in his works of creation, in his works of providence, and by the judgments that he executes and in the Scriptures there is much of him to be seen and learned by a diligent perusal of them; but *no life* is to be found [merely] by what may be learned from *any* or *all of these*... My life, then, being *only* to be found in Christ, and no where else, in prayer, preaching, nor Scriptures;—where is he to be found? Though Christ may be said to be, and truly is, *every where*, and every where to be found; yet not to the particular end for which he is sought, namely, for mortifying and subduing sin,—*but as enthroned in the heart* (Jaffray 1833 [1661]: 162–63 [original italics]).

He also speaks of the Vine and the running sap, and the infilling of the light, further metaphors of inwardness:

It is his words *in you*, it is the hearing of them *thus*, as they are spoken in you, that will be profitable for you and bring salvation. The branch, by being in the Vine, has sap flowing constantly to it from the root;—so will ye feel *that*, if ye abide in Him;

even as the woman, who felt virtue coming from Jesus... Be...very careful to keep open *this eye*, the light that is in thee, as Christ there calls *that*, the eye of the mind; which being kept open, all the body is full of light (Jaffray 1833 [1661]: 167 [original italics]).

We find, too, a desire to overturn the social order and to reclaim the world for God in the here and now:

And, in order to a desire, put up for direction in this case, I fell to read that excellent place, Rom. xii. 2, 'Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may *prove* what is that good; and acceptable, and perfect will of God'... No conformity to the world...*there's much in that*. The mind is to be renewed, so as even to have it transformed. Old things, then pass away,—all things, to such, become new; new knowledge also,—for they know *more* and *in another manner* than before. These new creatures know what the 'new commandment' means, and in what sense it is new. *Their love* is not now bounded by an external, outward conformity...but now, it is enlarged *far beyond that* (Jaffray 1833 [1661]: 170-71 [original italics]).

His emphasis is repeatedly on light and life, and on passive receiving rather than active striving:

First, to mind the light, as it *begins* to appear and dawn in the conscience; for accordingly as this is done, the day dawns, and the day-star (that is, Christ himself) arises; first, as the bright and morning Star, Rev. xxii. 16, whereby, 'the Day-spring from on high' visits such as 'sit in darkness', Luke, i, 78, 79; and at last, 'the Sun of righteousness' itself arises, Mal. iv. 2, and abides with them. Secondly, The next thing to that of minding the light, is, to wait and stand still from self-willing and acting...the way then to receive the light, and strength by and from it, is, to stand still, in a sober frame of spirit... And thus it is, that the Lord communicates strength; *not all at once*, but *by degrees*, as the light is attended to and patiently waited for; *not by willing and running*, but *by sitting still*... Thus, may I see and behold him, so as even to say or do *nothing* without him, and—may it not be added—by 'beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord', be 'changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord'. 'Now the Lord is that Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty'. 2 Cor. iii. 18, 17 (Jaffray 1833 [1661]: 150-51, 174 [original italics]).

Jaffray's language and imagery in his private writings about his spiritual life, therefore, conform to the 'Choose Life' model, associated by Grace with women's writings.

We find, however, a different picture if we look at those of Jaffray's writings which are addressed to the persecutors outside the movement. Here we find fierce and oppositional statements, warning them of the doom to come if they do not stop their attacks on Quakers:

O fear, fear to be found any more in that guiltiness, which (if persisted in) may make you to be shut out for ever: And let none so look on themselves, as to suppose they are past this hazard, if so be they yet continue, neglecting, opposing, and persecuting, or approving of them who persecute, the growing light of this day, as its come and coming forth with power and great glory (Jaffray 1664: 1).

Consider, if something of the same snare and temptation¹¹ be not on you, as was on them who so zealously contended for Moses and the Prophets; the same was their plea, and upon the same grounds did they go on, to the rejecting and crucifying of Christ, as yee (some of you ignorantly and others more perversely) are in the way to do at this day (Jaffray 1664: 3).

Let therefore the dread and terror of the Lord seize upon all, especially the professing people of this Generation...dreadful is the judgment that is to be met with by such (Jaffray 1664: 4).

Dear Friends, as yee love your peace and safety beware of this, for it borders too near that guiltiness that will not be forgiven (Jaffray 1664: 5).

This belief that God would avenge his people, the Quakers, and destroy their enemies in the same way that he had destroyed the enemies of the Old Testament Israelites is, as suggested above, common to both male- and female-authored open letters by Aberdeen Quakers of this period. Lilius Skene, for example, a woman Friend from a similar religious and socio-economic background to Jaffray, warned the magistrates and inhabitants of Aberdeen that the Lord would 'rise up against Babylon...a destroying Wind' and that the 'Hills and Mountains will not cover you' from the coming wrath of God since 'assuredly the Lord will not hold you guiltless' (Skene 1753 [1677]). Unlike Jaffray, Skene also used imagery connected with battle and warfare in her private writings, when writing about the persecution of Quakers (Jaffray's diary ends before the persecutions began). In a poem written in 1677, she wrote that the Lord

...for his spiritual warfare hath trained bands
 And their provision keeps in his own hands
 A house of Magazine well furnished where
 For every soldier he hath weapons there
 For some a battle axe, a sword, a bow
 As he hath service, weapons he'll bestow
 With some he'll bend the bow with others fill it
 By some he'll wound the beast, by others kill it

and called on Quakers to join in the Lamb's War:

Come all ye mighty men bring forth your shield
 Yee valiant ones appear now in the field
 All ye expect in war gird on your thigh
 Your swords, so as in readiness ye be
 Yea breast plate buckler, helmet & a shield
 That none unharnished¹² may go to the field
 ...
 The Lord will bath his sword in Edoms blood
 And vengeance recompense on all her brood
 Who have engaged in this holy war
 And followers of the Lamb accounted are (Skene 1665–96: 25–26).

It is not until the persecutions cease that language towards non-Quakers becomes more temperate among Aberdeen Quakers, and at that time both men's and women's public writings change in similar ways.¹³

The writings of Alexander Jaffray and Lilius Skene demonstrate the need to consider intended audience and subject matter when analysing early Quaker writings using Grace's model. Both male and female writers may use life-affirming language and imagery when writing private or semi-private texts or when writing to others within the Society of Friends. The same writers may use images and language of guilt, blame, war and destruction when writing to or about those they see as enemies of the fledgling movement.

II. HANNAH KILHAM AND QUAKER WOMEN OF THE LATE EIGHTEENTH AND EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURIES

So far we have looked at Grace's hypothesis only in the context of 'early' Quakerism, the enthusiastic manifestations of the movement in the later seventeenth century. But how well does it help inform our understanding of later periods, especially those marked by the dramatic social and economic change of the Industrial Revolution, and by the rise of the Evangelical movement? From the eighteenth century, Quakers tried to hold aloof from wider society, and tended to form a close-knit community bound by ties of kinship as well as belief. A centralised, largely male control of the Society had been established, but as well as continuing opportunities for Quaker women to minister, there were also separate women's meetings which gave Quakers a level of gender equality that was unknown in other denominations. A thriving manuscript culture existed among Quaker women, and women oversaw the education of Quaker girls very carefully, reading with them and encouraging them in the 'nuances and ways of reading Quaker language and spirit' (Tarter 2005: 186). There were, therefore, networks by which a feminised Quaker theology could be sustained.

However, there are problems in trying to extend Grace's hypothesis into the different contexts of later periods, not least in identifying what might be regarded as specifically or exclusively Quaker. The Society was never entirely isolated from wider social influences, and in the course of notable campaigns from the later eighteenth century, for the abolition of slavery and for penal reform, it became more involved in ecumenical and political activity. Recent scholarship has shown that the insularity of members of the Society has almost certainly been exaggerated and that it is surprisingly difficult to define a typical Quaker in the period (Dixon 2006; Jennings 2006). Moreover, published Quaker literature of the period was rather different from that of the seventeenth century: there was no new prophetic or exhortatory work being published, and edited journals and memoirs had come to predominate. Printed testimonies showed how God was seen to be working in individual lives, and served as useful exemplars to other Quakers. Those outside the Society could buy and read these works, but their purpose was not primarily evangelical as early Quakers' public writings had been. Women no longer had the public voice that they had claimed in the earlier period, and male dominated publishing networks determined which of their writings were worthy of a wider readership.

For a variety of reasons, then, it is difficult to establish the extent to which a distinctively feminised Quaker literary style might be said to have persisted. This section of our study explores some of the developments of this period by focussing on the *Memoir* of one individual, Hannah Kilham. At first glance Kilham might appear to be representative of Quaker women of the period, and she was certainly an inspirational figure for Quakers at the time and subsequently, but a brief biography shows up some difficulties of definition here. Hannah (née Spurr), was born in 1774 of Anglican parents but, after hearing John Wesley preach, she became a Methodist. When the Methodist preacher, Alexander Kilham, broke away from the Wesleyans and formed his own connection, she joined his congregation and eventually married him. Five years after his death in December 1798, Hannah joined the Religious Society of Friends.¹⁴ From her early life she proved herself very adept at challenging social symbolism and gender stereotypes. Her passionate interest in languages at school was considered improper for a girl; her attraction to Methodism at this time would also have had the power to shock. The very act of leaving the Kilhamite Connection after her husband's death was seen as an affront to the respect and obedience due to his memory. Her life thereafter, as one of active mission in Britain and Africa, was not unique but was still highly unusual for the time, as was her decision to support her family by working in the schools she established (Fyfe 2004). Quaker influence in all this can be seen only as marginal at best.

Hannah moved between an increasingly influential, mainstream Evangelicalism and the comparatively enclosed world of Quakers, so it is instructive to trace the development of her perceptions, and to explore these in relation to Grace's 'Choose Life!' metaphor. After going through a fairly typical evangelical conversion experience, she was watched over assiduously by the members of her Methodist band meeting. The focus of Evangelicals was Christ's atoning sacrifice on the cross, and their imagery was soaked in the blood of the Lamb. For Hannah, her new-found faith was clearly a struggle. She wrote that she was 'too much given to a kind of lightness' and had not yet 'got the better of my natural disposition' (Kilham 1837: 18). Her husband-to-be wrote to her of the need to 'look for crosses daily'; 'it is our duty to endure hardships as good soldiers of Christ' (1837: 36, 50). Throughout her life, Hannah had cause to remind herself that 'her natural inclination' needed to be 'crucified' (1837: 7, 370). There can have been few more driven missionaries than she, and yet she balked at excessive self-sacrifice, and hinted that it was a notably male attribute (1837: 276).

So there is a distinct strand in the imagery of the *Memoir* which derived from her experience of Evangelicalism, but there was another strand too, which she was never able or willing to suppress, and which eventually led her to find a spiritual home among Quakers. In the face of personal loss, she seemed always able to find God in the here and now. On the death of her husband, she wrote not in terms of the rewards of an afterlife, but of the 'blessings which yet remain', a feeling perhaps occasioned by her pregnancy at the time. At the end of 1799, a few months before attending her first Quaker meeting, she wrote:

I found in my own spirit a degree of sincerity and love, and it was a conviction more evident, more striking to the mind, than what is brought through reasoning, which convinced me that truth and love had their source in God... I loved Him first because He had given me life; and I felt my existence delightful (Kilham 1837: 66).

From her first Quaker meeting she felt 'as an infant whose opening powers experienced all that could at present be conceived as desirable or delightful in being near its parent' (Kilham 1837: 76). With the death of her daughter in 1802 she found herself unable to pray for a time, but 'afterwards, this prayer was breathed into my heart... "let God live in me"' (1837: 89-90).

The imagery she used was frequently that of colour, light and life. 'Life' was a word she used often, and seemed to mean it in the sense of a divine immanence. 'Oh! That the members of this establishment may be brought to dwell under the feeling of life', she wrote of one school in Sierra Leone, the 'solid feeling which acknowledges the controlling sense of the presence of the Most High' (Kilham 1837: 251). This was clearly a deeply sustaining force in her daily existence. On the other hand, when she spent time in the company of Evangelicals, as she tended to do, for example, when engaged on missionary work for Africa, she was much more likely to revert to the imagery of the battle to usher in God's kingdom. On returning to London from Africa in 1825, for instance, and obviously in a state of considerable inner turmoil, she described how a meeting with 'Dr S.' 'brought powerfully before me the great sacrifice by which comfort is brought to the Lord's people, and through which the warfare must be accomplished' (1837: 265-66). Such imagery appeared to owe more to the crucicentric Methodism she had espoused in her youth than to ideas of the Lamb's War, and, unlike seventeenth-century Quakers, she was silent on the dire consequences that might befall those who failed to heed the call.

It has been noted by other researchers of nineteenth-century European missionary activity in Africa that, while the motives of the missionaries themselves were often conservative, in that they resisted modernity in the context of their own homelands, when once in Africa, their actions inevitably contributed to an agenda that was politically and economically modernising (Meyer 1996).¹⁵ Thus, at home, Hannah Kilham urged the need to avoid the lure of modernity, taking up a concern common among Friends at this time, to live simply, a 'state of affluence' being 'not consistent with our principles' (Kilham 1837: 268).

Hannah was familiar with the writings of John Woolman,¹⁶ and echoed his words in warning against seeking after the world's wealth, urging the need to nurture all creation and 'be stewards of our heavenly father's bounty' (Kilham 1837: 422, 126). Here we see the scope for an ecological approach to life, rather than one of domination and exploitation, as Grace mentioned in her lecture. However, there was a strong paternalistic streak in her approach and she saw her role as that of a shepherd managing a flock. She was entirely sincere in her motives for working for social justice and doing what she could for 'for the present best' (1837: 126). But that was bound up with essentially millennial evangelical notions of conversion and missionary activity, and a belief in *progress*,

developing what she saw as God-given opportunities. To help the poor, something that she argued might once have been 'renounced as visionary and impractical', was now respectable. It need not be considered 'time lost even to the pursuit of business' and would 'afford the most general stimulus to trade at large' (1837: 126-27).

Her emphasis on progress became more pronounced once she was in Africa where she shared the assumptions of many European missionaries that the region was simply part of the 'heathen lands' where 'much darkness dwells' (Kilham 1837: 183). She appeared to regard the very anxiety that had called her and other missionaries to work in Africa as evidence that Africans were in need of knowing about the redemption Christ had won for them in order to be saved. Africans were therefore 'susceptible of improvement' but still 'very remote from a state of civilisation' (1837: 178, 184).

She did not appear to feel that the notion of an internalised spirituality, especially one stripped of outward forms, would be readily understood in Africa (Kilham 1837: 188), and on more than one occasion she debated the necessity of using hymns, devotional readings and sermonising in her schools (1837: 291-92). Her sustained work to ensure that African children had lessons in their own languages was indeed creative. But the use of those languages to transmit a quite narrowly defined biblical Christianity, coupled with her support for the development of cash crops and trade with Europe in manufactured goods, reflected the widely held belief that Africa needed to be 'civilised' (1837: 190, 208). Her work therefore has to be seen as an integral part of European efforts to dominate Africa. In spite of herself, then, Hannah Kilham may be regarded as an agent of modernity.

It is clear from Hannah's journal that Quakers were not united in a concern for missionary work in Africa (Kilham 1837: 342-43), there being a profound unease about such ventures, occasioned not least by the absence of paid ministry in the Society which might have supplied the personnel to undertake such long-term ventures. Nevertheless, her pioneering missionary work was influential on the Society's subsequent direction, which eventually took up 'foreign mission'.¹⁷

So, in the example of Hannah Kilham at least, it cannot be argued that Quaker women were acting within a belief system that was counter cultural. Her example alerts us to considerable methodological difficulties in trying to extend Grace's hypothesis. Hannah Kilham was a Quaker woman, but she was neither born nor brought up a Quaker, did not appear to have the kind of female Quaker networks that were important in maintaining particular values and was very open to the influence of the wider Evangelical movement at a time when many in the Society were just beginning to change their theological perspective. Her writings do not present a consistent picture, shifts occurring in relation to the company and context in which she found herself. She certainly played an important role in furthering the cause of gender equality. Her emphasis on life did at times challenge much of a prevailing religious imagery of death and spiritual warfare, and it was her creative and life-affirming spirituality that seems to have attracted her to Quakers. But her long-term participation in the endeavours of the

Evangelical movement prevented these insights from flourishing into any sort of alternative cultural ethos within the communities in which she worked.

However, there is much in Grace's hypothesis that points us to identify a distinctive spirituality and literary style that *is* clearly reflected in Hannah Kilham even if it is not always consistently expressed. Moreover, Grace's 2003 lecture encourages us to consider the ways in which Quakers choose to construct their own narratives. It is perhaps significant that in the current book of discipline (analysed in more detail below), Quakers choose to remember Hannah Kilham in the following lines, written on one of her sea voyages: 'It is "life" only that can lead to life, and no forms are availing without it. Seek the life in all things, and cherish it by all authorized means' (Kilham 1837: 386; *Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995: 21.26).

III. POLITICISED DEBATE ABOUT GENDER IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

Turning now to the very early years of the twentieth century, we take as a case study the involvement of Quakers in the militant phase of the women's suffrage movement in Britain (1906–1914).¹⁸ This episode is of particular interest since the women's suffrage campaign as a whole spurred a public debate about the nature of gender differences, and the militant campaign added to this a wide-ranging discussion of gender and violence. Among British Quakers, both men and women participated in public debate about women's suffrage *per se* and about militant tactics. There were both men and women on each side of the debate.

We have used as sources the views expressed by Friends in the public domain. Thus we consider articles and correspondence in *The Friend*, *The British Friend* and *The Friends' Quarterly Examiner*, and other publications (pamphlets and tracts) by individual Quakers. We compare published statements by men and women at different stages of the militant campaign. This topic was not, for most of this period, a major focus of attention in these journals, so the pace of the public debate here may appear rather surprisingly leisurely.

Comment did not appear in Quaker publications in the immediate aftermath of the formation by the Pankhursts of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) in 1906, but in 1907 a male correspondent wrote:

We should be very sorry that it should appear that our sympathy in this important question needed stimulating by these violent measures, for we have never understood how anyone brought up in Quaker traditions could be other than a supporter of women's suffrage; but we recognise that the heroic self-sacrifice of some of those women who have gone to prison for the cause they have so much at heart must be an increased stimulus to all who believe their cause to be just (*The British Friend* 16 [1907]: 73).

And in 1908 Sarah Tanner, a well-known Quaker woman, had an article published in *The Friends' Quarterly Examiner*:

If we believe in the equality of men and women in spiritual things, we can hardly deny their equality before human law, because the greater includes the less... In

these days when controversy is raging...we do well to remember that the movement began with calm philosophic reasoning, and that it stands based on logic and the principles of justice and truth (Tanner 1908: 401).

In both these extracts we see an assumption that the idea of 'equality' should be automatically accepted among Quakers; and in both, a clear contrast between the 'violence' or 'controversy' attendant upon the campaign at large, and the presumed 'heart' of the matter—justice and truth. Interestingly, it is the man who uses the term 'heroic' for the women who were, by then, going to prison for their cause.

As the militant campaign progressed, the debate became sharper, and the concerns about the violence greater. A man wrote:

The unruly and violent conduct of these women appears unfortunately to find so large an amount of feminine support, and to be so seldom unreservedly condemned by those who strictly confine their own action within constitutional lines, that I regard these distressing occurrences as sufficiently symptomatic of a wide-spread lack of mental balance, to form a serious factor in the question (*The British Friend* 18 [1909]: 260).

And a woman:

The great spiritual power behind the Suffrage movement is not the desire for the vote as an *asset* or a *right*, but the intense earnest longing of thousands of women for a share in the responsibility of framing the national laws, by which they, with men, are governed, and some of which at present are so hopelessly unjust to women... Friends in the past have been in the front of many a moral fight, but there is an apathy, and even intolerance on the part of many men Friends regarding the present demands of women, which is very difficult to understand... (*The Friend* 50 [1910]: 210 [original emphasis]).

So here we start to see some contrast between a man's anxiety about the 'violence', and the failure he perceives in others to condemn it; and the woman's restating of the principles of the whole campaign. This letter was the first instance of direct comment about gendered attitudes to this issue within the Religious Society of Friends.

As well as correspondence and articles in the journals, there were pamphlets published, to be distributed at public meetings. A substantial (23 pages) tract was written by Gulielma Crosfield (who subsequently became president of the Friends' League for Women's Suffrage) entitled *Friends and the Women's Movement*. It is closely argued, with the author opposing all violent methods, on the grounds that if 'women have anything to give to our generation, it is because we claim a higher plane of service than of force' (Crosfield 1911: 15).

A tract of similar length was published by Philip Bellows two years later, when the controversy over violent actions was raging even more strongly:

Possibly the Quaker way of non-resistance is the better way, but the militant spirit of self-sacrifice is incomparably a more beautiful thing than our present day Quaker spirit, which seems to have lost the power to do anything but...join the mob, the Government, and the Press, in the infliction of cruel sufferings upon the most unselfish women in the land (Bellows 1913: 20).

So here, in different ways, a man and a woman both assert the high moral ground for the suffrage campaign, but the passion is stronger in the man's words—he, of course, was less likely than a woman to be accused of mental instability for displaying his passion.

Throughout the debate among Quakers, the issue of the militants' violence took up far more space than the underlying question of women's suffrage. In 1913 and 1914 there was pained correspondence from both men and women, deploring the violence. Isabella Sharp, for instance, wrote:

Many members of our Society have been looking in vain in our periodicals for a protest from our leading Women Suffragists against the wild actions of the militant party in destroying property and endangering human life. Are we to conjecture from this silence that many of our friends are more in sympathy with the militant law-breakers than we had hoped was the case?... Many of us...who would gladly have joined...in reasonable methods of agitation, are now so scandalised with the action of the militant party, as to be ready to forgo the desired privilege rather than appear even to countenance such action (*The Friend* 53 [1913]: 158).

An alternative way of thinking about the violence was proposed in a letter from Lucy Gardner:

It is very inconvenient to have our letters destroyed and to feel a sense of insecurity with regard to our property; it is distressing to read of women who are rightly and suitably punished for making war upon our material possessions, having so little sense of the justice of their punishment that they prefer to starve rather than submit... But what if, in some sense, they are right? What if they see more deeply into the heart of things than those of us who are content to give—not ourselves—but what we can spare easily from our normal life? What if they are the prophets and have a vision of a world redeemed by suffering and selflessness that we have not? (*The Friend* 53 [1913]: 573).

Here we have women holding two opposing views, and the second has more in common with those men who wrote of the campaign in terms of heroism and self-sacrifice. What Lucy Gardner adds here is a strong religious overtone in her choice of language, especially in the last sentence, thus implicitly laying claim to spiritual authority for the campaign.

In the following year the concern about violence was still uppermost. A man wrote:

I understand that members of our Society support the propaganda of the Suffragettes by purse and person. They march in their processions; they attend their meetings; they do not deny having sent them money. One lady Friend, a most charming young married woman, assured me that she had not the courage to break windows herself, but honoured and envied those who did... It is evident to me that the Pankhursts and not Millicent Fawcett are the true and trusted leaders of the movement to which the Society of Friends has now...been in a way committed... The example of their leaders, though fortunately not imitated to the full, has, if I may say so, measurably tintured the behaviour of their followers... I doubt if the Woman's Question will regain a fair hearing until all symptoms of the feverish and lawless methods prevalent today have died down, and respectable women have ceased to palliate crime, whilst professing to deprecate it (*The Friend* 54 [1914]: 115).

There is here an echo of the 1909 male correspondent who wrote of 'lack of mental balance', as well as a tone of condescending superiority.

Shortly after this, a male correspondent (*The Friend* 54 [1914]: 206) asserted that there was a Friend suspected of arson, and deplored hearing militancy condemned purely on tactical, rather than moral, grounds. In the same issue a Quaker militant finally declared herself: Ethel Impey wrote to explain her position, that constitutional methods had been exhausted and she, like other militants, now felt compelled by conscience to act: 'We do not support the militant party for amusement nor out of contrariness, but because conscience bids us, and it is a most serious thing to find one's judgement at variance with many of those one most esteems' (*The Friend* 54 [1914]: 207).

The claiming of 'conscience' has been a powerful and resonant theme among Quakers since the earliest days, so the use of this word at this stage of the debate sends a powerful spiritual signal, in contrast with the constrained legalism of some other contributions.¹⁹ A week later a slightly shocked man responded:

One is already too sadly aware of the increasing spirit of violence and lawlessness, which is characteristic of the present time, but one was not prepared to have it openly defended by a woman 'Friend' in your last week's issue... How is it possible to reconcile [the advices to Friends] with the acts of militancy, which are being conducted almost daily—to the injury and loss of many innocent people?... If our Society owes a duty at all at the present juncture, rather than raise 'its united voice' against the sufferings of women now in prison for their own acts, and who have the remedy for forcible feeding in their own hands, should it not record its solemn protest against their commission of such crimes, and express its sympathy with the innocent victims? (*The Friend* 54 [1914]: 222).

After this date there was no further significant correspondence on the suffrage question. Internal procedural matters (about women's place in the governance of the Society of Friends) became prominent and then, with the outbreak of war, suffrage campaigning was suspended and many Quakers (women and men) turned their attention to war relief work.

So, from this representative selection of extracts, can we draw any clear distinction between the style of discourse of the men and the women? It seems to us that the distinction is more between those broadly supportive of women's suffrage, both men and women, who viewed militant tactics in the broader context of a just and necessary outcome; and those who were neutral or opposed in relation to the outcome, both men and women, who straightforwardly deplored militancy and were condescending about women in general.²⁰ The difference is not so much between discourses of life and death, as between energy and passion for justice and equality,²¹ over against constraint, legalism and support for the *status quo*. There is, of course, an argument that these latter characteristics may be mapped, respectively, onto the larger categories of natality and necrophilia. Grace Jantzen, in her article with which this paper is in dialogue, hints at this. She writes: 'It is my contention that modernity takes its shape from the choices that were made [in the seventeenth century]: choices to construe the

divine as other-worldly, to rank people...into hierarchies of domination and exploitation' (Jantzen 2005: 153).

Those Quakers who were passionate about the cause of women's suffrage—and who wrote of it in terms of heroism, justice, truth, self-sacrifice, prophecy and redemptive suffering—were both laying claim to and actively creating an immanent, engaged spirituality; they were locating the divine in the mess and conflict of real-world politics. Overall, there were more Quaker women than men who embodied this position, but the men were not absent. A gendered trope does not map exactly on to actual men and women.

IV. BRITISH LIBERAL QUAKERISM: CHOOSING LIFE

Moving now to the present day: British Quakerism in the twenty-first century is technically described as 'Liberal'. Its fundamental values and perspectives are rooted in a Quaker version of Liberal Christianity, an attempt at a rational form of faith developed at the end of the nineteenth century. This was a Quakerism enjoying full citizenship for the first time after 1870²² and seeing itself as part of a robust non-conformity that was a participant in civil and world affairs. It was this kind of Quakerism which debated the suffragette issues in the terms we have just explored.

Liberal Quakerism was set up at the end of the nineteenth century on four guiding principles. These both tied Quakerism back to its distinctive seventeenth-century heritage and also symbolised a sense of moving into a new century. The first principle was that spiritual experience was considered to be primary in terms of religious authority. This was a traditional Quaker position but one that had been threatened by evangelical influences in the nineteenth century. Unlike seventeenth-century Friends, Liberal twentieth-century Quakers did not claim that Scripture would necessarily confirm revelation. Experience was deemed sufficient. The second principle was that faith needed to be relevant to the age. These Quakers wanted to be 'of their time' and able to adapt, rather than being constrained by anachronistic practices such as the earlier traditions of wearing only 'plain' clothes and using 'plain speech'. The third principle was that Quakers needed to be open to theological innovation. The fourth, linked to this, was that more of God was known in each age, the doctrine of 'progressivism', which set up a temporal authority to revelation. Quakers in a decade's time would necessarily be better informed than those of a decade past.

Taken together, these principles offered a Quakerism which outwardly appeared similar to the original (the style of worship was not altered, for example), and yet was radically innovative in the freedoms it afforded for Friends to abandon tradition altogether in the name of fresh revelation or 'new Light'. The rational underpinning of Liberal Quakerism gradually created resistance to explicit corporate theology, and theology increasingly became an exercise in individual interpretation.

British Friends freed themselves from the theological constraint of any text or tradition, and increasingly through the twentieth century, they used the Bible for devotional purposes rather than as a book of authority. Their main textual authority was and is the 'book of discipline'. First published in 1783, and revised every generation or so, this is a book of extracts chosen to nurture Quaker faith and guide the individual Quaker in their daily life. Until the twentieth century, committees selected the extracts and produced a prescriptive book. In the twentieth century, in line with the changed culture of the movement, the process, and hence the content, became democratised. British Friends, then corporately named 'London Yearly Meeting',²³ replaced the section on 'Christian Doctrine' with 'Illustrative Spiritual Experiences of Friends' in their 1921 revision of the book. As early as 1930, the question was aired as to whether a Quaker needed to be a Christian. Quakers were allowing themselves to become a diverse religious group for the first time. When it came to producing a version of the book of discipline in the late twentieth century, a large committee, explicitly diverse in its theology, spent nine years requesting and selecting extracts, and consulting on the final selection. The book was adopted in 1994 and published in 1995 as *Quaker Faith and Practice*. The book of discipline always has reflected Quaker orthodoxy (Dandelion 1996: 19), by indicating both its 'centre of gravity' and the extent of its 'circumference'; but the 1995 book gives us a perspective on British Quakerism generated by a greater proportion of Quakers than previous editions. Given the increasing diversity within the Yearly Meeting and the emphasis on spiritual experience, it is not surprising that this book is longer than previous editions. Additionally, it is descriptive rather than prescriptive.

Quaker attitudes to war and outward violence, as represented in the book of discipline, provide a useful touchstone to explore Grace's model against modern British Quakerism. Jung Jiseok, building on the unpublished work of Elaine Bishop, has carefully articulated four key shifts in the way Quakers reinvented their historic opposition to war in the early part of the twentieth century. First, they renamed their 'testimony against war'²⁴ as 'the peace testimony'. Second, the basis of the testimony moved from being purely Christian to being Christian *and* non-Christian *and* non-religious. Thirdly, it moved from being part of a prescriptive Quakerism to one option within a permissive Quakerism. Fourthly, the focus shifted from being 'against' war to being 'for peace', from a narrow focus to a broad and diffuse field of involvement (Jiseok 2006: 32). To explore twentieth-century British Quakerism in relation to 'Choose Life!' theology, we take these four shifts in war/peace testimony and link them to an analysis of the 1995 book of discipline.²⁵

Part of Grace's argument was that even within an ostensibly pacifist group, the language of warfare (such as the Lamb's War), tied the Quakers who used it to a modernist mindset rooted in violence and the death of beauty. The renaming of the testimony against war in the twentieth century connotes, then, a shift away from such preoccupations towards a more positive and life-giving approach. 'War' appears far less often than 'peace' in the 1995 book of discipline and when it does appear, it has a wholly negative connotation. This absence of 'war imagery' is

connected with the shift to theological pluralism within British Quakerism. Quaker Christianity has been replaced by a broader range of theological interpretations. Specifically Christian ideas such as the 'Lamb's War' do not appear in *Quaker Faith and Practice*. They have not been selected because they no longer resonate with the sensibility of the majority of British Friends.

At the same time as there was a shift away from a normative Quaker Christianity, Quaker theology became not only pluralistic but also marginal to Quaker identity (Dandelion 1996). Survey results give varying accounts of the numbers of Quakers who state that they believe in God, but it is clear that late modern Quakers describe God in many and various ways. In a 2003 survey, 73% affirmed a belief in God and 15.8% claimed that God was 'best not described' (Rutherford 2003). Individual authors debate how far God is 'beyond' (Dandelion 2004: Chapter 4; Wildwood 1999) but attributes of God, other than benevolence and the ability to guide, are not explicit within the current book of discipline. However, in line with developments in popular liberal theology, it is clear that Quakers in the twentieth century have moved away from notions of God being 'out there and up there' (Dandelion 2004). Immanence is a more popular motif, though also rarely stated in explicit terms. In line with Grace's analysis, modern British Quakers are increasingly choosing a more subjective and inward spirituality over the outward and transcendent. The following extract, written autobiographically, but in the third person, epitomises the continuing centrality of the Quaker sense of inward encounter:

Without visions or the sound of speech or human mediation, in exceptionally wide-awake consciousness, she experienced the great releasing inward wonder. It was as if the 'empty shell' burst. All the weight and agony, all the feeling of unreality dropped away. She perceived living goodness, joy, light like a clear, irradiating, uplifting, enfolding, unequivocal reality from deep inside.

The first words which came to her—although they took a long time to come—were, 'This is the great Mercifulness. This is God. Nothing else is so *real* as this.' The child who had cried out in anguish and been silenced had now come inside the gates of Light. She had been delivered by a love that is greater than any human love (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995: 26.05).

At the same time, the historic opposition to what is 'outward' has relaxed—for early Quakers the 'world' was a pejorative term which referred to anything 'not-Quaker'. As Creasey (1962) and Bauman (1983) have shown, a central part of early Quaker theology was that the Light of Christ operated inwardly and that communion, and the experience of the unfolding Second Coming, was interior. The outward was 'worldly' and apostate, and the place of authenticity was inward. This influenced the Quaker approach to liturgy and the sacraments as well as to speech and silence. The location of the workings of Divine agency in the 'inward parts' (after Jer. 31:31-34²⁶) was common to all early Friends.

Part of the declaration of testimony against war to Charles II, made in 1661 on behalf of the Quaker movement, clearly makes the distinction between the outward and the inward, and is retained in the 1995 selection:

Our principle is, and our practices have always been, to seek peace, and ensue it, and to follow after righteousness and the knowledge of God, seeking the good and

welfare, and doing that which tends to the peace of all. All bloody principles and practices we do utterly deny, with all outward wars, and strife, and fightings with outward weapons, for any end, or under any pretence whatsoever, and this is our testimony to the whole world. That spirit of Christ by which we are guided is not changeable, so as once to command us from a thing as evil, and again to move unto it; and we do certainly know, and so testify to the world, that the spirit of Christ which leads us into all Truth will never move us to fight and war against any man with outward weapons, neither for the kingdom of Christ, nor for the kingdoms of this world (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995: 24.04).

The following 1908 extract, written by Quaker doctor Hilda Clark, also connects the 'outward' with the 'worldly' but—in the spirit of the new liberal theology becoming dominant in British Quakerism at the time—is less critical of the material world and seeks to work with it: 'Justice is of the Spirit, not of the outside world—but our understanding is so wrapped up in outward things that we can only grow spiritually by applying spiritual things to material ones—therefore we must be just though Nature is not' (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995: 26.07). A 1987 extract, also written by a woman, also speaks of balancing inward and outward:

The duty of the Society of Friends is to be the voice of the oppressed but [also] to be conscious that we ourselves are part of that oppression. Uncomfortably we stand with one foot in the kingdom of this world and with the other in the Eternal Kingdom. Seldom can we keep the inward and outward working of love in balance, let alone the consciousness of living both in time and in eternity, in timelessness. Let us not be beguiled into thinking that political action is all that is asked of us, nor that our personal relationship with God excuses us from actively confronting the evil in this world. The political and social struggles must be waged, but a person is more and needs more than politics, else we are in danger of gaining the whole world but losing our souls (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995: 23.04).

Thus, 'outward' is no longer linked either to the wholly apostate or the wholly transcendent. Inward and inner are still the motifs of spiritual authenticity, but the outward is a context within which the faithful work, rather than being seen as something to be conquered or destroyed. The testimony *for peace*, in terms of Quaker opposition to war, is open to individual interpretation as well as rejection. It is no longer prescribed although it still symbolises a counter-cultural Quakerism, reinvigorated by a century of passionate opposition to war.

The term 'victory' is used in four extracts, three of them written before 1920. Similar to the use of the term 'victory', the term 'won' is used in its military sense only in historical passages, such as this from 1900:

...the staunchness of early Friends and others to their conscientious convictions in the seventeenth century won the battle of religious freedom for England. We covet a like faithful witness against war from Christians today (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995: 24.07).

These historical passages are still 'alive' for British Friends because they transmit values and create a Quaker identity, while not binding present-day Quakerism. Indeed, the shift of focus from 'war' to 'peace' has broadened the interpretation of the testimony, not just in relation to the meaning of a refusal to fight, but also in relation to the meaning of 'peace' itself. 'Peace' has been extended beyond the opposition to war to accommodate a wide variety of 'Choose Life!' positions, including vegetarianism, anti-sexism, anti-racism, concern for the environment, fairtrade and anti-capitalism. While this allows some Quakers to pick and choose the consequences of their Quaker life, it is nevertheless a powerful system of mutual reinforcement and value transmission. In terms of Grace's analysis, these can all be seen as present-day modes of the overturning of social symbolism and the desire to reclaim the world for God (or 'God') in the here and now, with an emphasis on Life and the potential for 'newness and creative change'.²⁷

In summary, there is a total lack of imagery in *Quaker Faith and Practice* relating to spiritual warfare or spiritual victory over and against an apostate world. Rather, present-day British Friends, of both sexes, inhabit the 'Choose Life!' theology attributed by Grace Jantzen to the founding mothers of Quakerism. In Liberal Quakerism's selective reinterpretation of its founding heritage, it has privileged the experiential, the centrality of love and grace and a social gospel of equality and justice. Theology is plural and marginal. God is perceived as immanent and/ or unknowable. In reinterpreting the testimony *against* war to a wider testimony *for* peace, these Quakers have in place a mechanism which both affirms and accommodates numerous aspects of a 'Choose Life!' theology.

CONCLUSION

Ultimately, we argue that Grace's analysis of the very first Quaker writings along gendered lines does not necessarily carry over into other geographical and temporal settings. In the 1670s, we find Alexander Jaffray using 'Choose Life' language for his private writings and Lilius Skene writing to Friends' persecutors with a message of guilt and destruction. By the early nineteenth century, the writings of female Quaker convert Hannah Kilham do not fit into Grace's counter-cultural template. Kilham's work, like the earlier public writings of Jaffray and Skene, tends to conform to the dominant dualistic cultural model, which Grace ascribed only to Quaker men in seventeenth-century England. It also alerts us to the need to consider how different theological discourses came to influence Quakers. The categories of the public debate among Friends over women's suffrage at the start of the twentieth century cannot simply be mapped on gendered lines. In these ways, we find a less straightforward division of gender and theological language as we move from the seventeenth century, as explored by Grace, to the early twentieth century. However, in the late twentieth century, we find British Friends, in their most authoritative text, immersed, across the gender binary, in the language of natality and life.

Considering the examples used by Grace in her analysis, this current stance follows the witness and writings of the early women Friends more than those of the early men. This may imply a feminising of modern British Quakerism and its expression. It certainly is counter-cultural and, purely within the dichotomy of 'Life' versus 'death and violence' which Grace set up, places British Quakerism as counter-modern. The movement's preoccupation is not at all with death and violence, exploitation and domination, but is concerned with respecting the integrity of all creation, and working for the realisation of that ideal in wider society. Bryan Wilson labelled twentieth-century British Quakers a 'perfectionist' sect, in that their salvific goal, insofar as any remains, is to change the consciences of those around them (Wilson 1970). These Quakers have opted to focus on the early Friends' metaphors of 'Love' and 'the Light in their consciences' (Moore 2000), rather than those of 'the Lamb's War'. They have, as the title of Grace's lecture puts it, chosen Life!

NOTES

1. Including Jantzen 2004.
2. Margaret Fell (1614–1702) was a gentry convert to Quakerism in June 1652. She became one of the key leaders of the movement and carried out an extensive correspondence with Quakers everywhere, including many she had never met. Her pastoral skills were matched by her theological and administrative ones. Her husband, Judge Thomas Fell, never became a Quaker but helped protect the movement.
3. Second Day Morning Meeting was a publications committee set up in 1672. Only works passed by the committee could be published in the name of Quakers. 'Second Day' referred to the fact it met on a Monday, second day in Quaker parlance, where days and months were numbered rather than named to avoid the use of pagan nomenclature.
4. This last concept is least elaborated here, as lack of space prohibits the necessary examination of it in an historical context.
5. The 'book of discipline' is an authoritative book of extracts, revised every generation or so, which seeks to convey the current thinking of the Quakers. In Britain, the first book was published in 1783, the latest in 1995.
6. The 'Yearly Meeting' is the name given to the Quaker organisation, in this case, in Britain.
7. James Nayler (1618–1661) was a leading Quaker, along with George Fox and Margaret Fell. In 1656 he both fell out with George Fox and enacted a 'sign' (see n. 8) of Christ coming again by riding into Wells, Glastonbury and Bristol on a horse, with other Quakers waving branches before him. Enacting signs was not unusual but the public disagreement with Fox gave his actions an air of defiance. In Wells and Glastonbury, his action passed unnoticed but in Bristol, the authorities were looking to undermine the burgeoning Quaker movement. Nayler was accused of believing he was Christ and was tried for blasphemy. He narrowly escaped with his life but was sentenced to flogging, branding, the boring of his tongue and imprisonment. The case was a grave and divisive moment for the early Quaker movement.
8. A 'public performance of shocking, dramatic actions, intended to convey, by nonverbal means, an expression of moral reproof and/or prophecy' (Bauman 1983: 84).
9. Worship according to one's own will or fancy, or imposed by human will, without divine authority.

10. A Scottish Presbyterian who supported either of two agreements, the National Covenant of 1638 or the Solemn League and Covenant of 1643, intended to defend and extend Presbyterianism

11. Temptation.

12. *The Scottish National Dictionary* (1974) gives 'unharness' as the Scottish form of English 'unharness'.

13. This may reflect a response to the cessation of persecution; it may equally be the result of the passage of time, with the writings of the second generation of Aberdeen Friends coming to the fore.

14. According to Rose (2005: 644), Hannah was 'a former Quaker who returned to the Society of Friends after his [Alexander's] death'. However, this information is not repeated in the biographical accounts of Hannah herself, and given that her parents were Anglican, it seems unlikely that she would have omitted to mention in her Journal a connection with Quakers before her move to Methodism.

15. This is a study of the influence of the German Pietist *Norddeutsch Mission* among the Ewe in West Africa.

16. John Woolman (1720–1772) was a Quaker from New Jersey, USA. He is best known for his campaigning against slavery, but this extended into what would now be termed ecological concerns, focussing attention, for example, on the environmental damage caused by the dyeing industry.

17. Friends' Foreign Mission Association came into being in 1868 but, according to Punshon, was carrying out concerns 'in advance of the thinking of Yearly Meeting' (1984: 216). It was not formally acknowledged by the Society until 1873, and did not submit its first report to Yearly Meeting until 1881.

18. For a full historical discussion, see Lunn 1997.

19. Indeed, setting 'conscience' in opposition to obedience to the authority of the state dates back to the earliest days of Quakerism, for both women and men. Edward Burroughs, for example, writing in 1661: 'For conscience sake to God...we must be obedient [to the law of the land]...but...if anything be commanded of us by the present authority, which is not according to equity, justice and a good conscience towards God...we must in such cases obey God only...and patiently suffer what is inflicted upon us for such disobedience to men' (quoted in *Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995: 23.86). This is the first of 17 extracts in *Quaker Faith and Practice* under the heading 'Friends and State Authority'. The extracts range from 1661 to 1987; six are written by individual men, three by individual women and the remaining eight are corporate statements.

20. There were Quaker women, as well as men, who believed that it was inappropriate for women, due to their weaker nature, to vote and be involved in public decisions.

21. Lack of space prevents a full discussion of this point—there was considerable concern among the upper-class Quaker women suffragists about the plight of poor women; the suffrage campaign was, in their view, about justice in relation to social class and economic status, as well as gender.

22. Non-conformists could enter the professions and Universities of their choice after this date without compromising their faith.

23. London Yearly Meeting was renamed as Britain Yearly Meeting in 1995.

24. 'Testimony', in Quaker parlance, refers to a tradition of collective witness.

25. An electronic word search was used for key terms: 'war', 'peace', 'victory', 'winning', 'inward', 'inner', 'outward', 'Life' and 'death'.

26. These verses speak of the new covenant being written on people's hearts.

27. 'Life' as a theological category is rarely used by present-day British Friends. Only one extract uses it explicitly, quoting Scripture in much the same way as did the early women Friends instanced by Grace in her analysis: 'From the earliest days of Friends, we have known

that safety cannot be defended in our own strength, but only in God's... And we don't have to do it with tools of our own fashioning, ever more elaborate technological juggling acts, ever more devastatingly destructive bombs... [We can] learn to lay down carnal weapons, practising with weapons of the spirit: love, truthsaying, nonviolence, the good news of God's birth and rebirth among us, imagination, vision, and laughter... It's messy, muddy and sometimes painful—but the other way, the search for some kind of mechanical invulnerability, for some kind of scientific guarantee against physical death, that way I am sure lies the death of the Spirit. We know the choice—we've known it all along—and we make it every day... "I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live (Deut 30:19).'" (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995: 23.55) Elsewhere, 'life' is used in a descriptive sense; similarly 'death'. These are no longer regularly used motifs of dualistic theology. However, it is clear that 'Choose Life' theology is embedded within *Quaker Faith and Practice* and can be considered normative.

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The authors all work for the Centre for Postgraduate Quaker Studies, the University of Birmingham and Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre, with specialisms between them in sociology, history, women's studies and literary studies. They chose to collaborate on this article knowing Grace Jantzen's preference for this mode of academic investigation. A version of this article was presented by Pam Lunn and Betty Hagglund at the symposium organised in April 2007 to celebrate Grace Jantzen's scholarship.

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