

John William Graham and the Evolution of Peace: A Quaker View of Conflict before and during the First World War

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Abstract

John William Graham was the author of *Conscription and Conscience* (1922), the official history of the No-Conscription Fellowship. The commission to write it was based on his status as advocate and activist in the cause for peace, dating from well before the First World War, and continuing until his death in 1932. Yet he never committed himself to an absolute pacifism. This article attributes this stance mainly to his belief in social evolution: God was working within human beings to bring about universal peace, but this progress had to take place slowly and in stages. War had been necessary in the past to develop human character and political organisation, but now it was obsolescent. Quaker pacifism bore witness to an ideal of peace that was to be fulfilled hereafter. Quakers were to lead the way, but meanwhile the use of force could not be universally abjured. Relativism was built into the evolutionary outlook.

Keywords

evolution, First World War, John William Graham, pacifism, Quaker Renaissance, war.

Introduction

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a critical mass of British Quakers turned their backs on evangelicalism, on a literal approach to the Bible and on some Christian dogma, and adopted a liberal theology, open to scientific advances and modern biblical criticism. Thomas C. Kennedy, the historian of this movement, known as the Quaker Renaissance, has credited it with much of the moral and spiritual strength that inspired many young Quakers to resist conscription

during the First World War.¹ John William Graham (1859–1932) was a leading member of the movement. He and his compeers were eager to renew what they saw as key insights of early Friends, especially their emphasis on ‘Inward Light’ as opposed to outward authority. In facing the conflicts of their day, they drew on early Friends’ declarations on the subject of peace—statements like that of George Fox when offered a commission in the parliamentary forces: ‘I told them I lived in the virtue of that life and power that took away the occasion for all wars.’² They had the same sense as Fox had: that they obeyed a higher authority than the laws of the state.

Graham was active all his life in the cause of peace. Most of this activity took place in Manchester, where he was appointed Tutor in Mathematics in 1886 and then, in 1897, Principal, at Dalton Hall, a residential establishment founded in 1876 for Quaker students at Owens College, which was to evolve into the University of Manchester. There he remained until his retirement in 1924. He became known for the number and vehemence of his letters to the *Manchester Guardian* combatting militarism, both before and during the First World War: indeed, he was called the ‘most belligerent little pacifist in the city’.³ His interest in matters of war and peace, however, dates back at least to 1882, when he was a student at Cambridge. It was in that year that the Quaker journal, *The Friend*, published a long letter from him under the title ‘Our Position about War’,⁴ written in the context of the current military campaign in Egypt, under the Liberal Prime Minister, W. E. Gladstone.⁵ He returned to the subject repeatedly throughout his life, campaigning against increasing bellicosity in the nation in the lead-up to the First World War, acting as chaplain to conscientious objectors in Strangeways Prison in Manchester during the War, and eventually writing the official history of the No-Conscription Fellowship.⁶ He was the first Clerk of the Northern Friends’ Peace Board from its inception in January 1913.⁷

1 See Kennedy, T. C., *British Quakerism, 1860–1920: the transformation of a religious community*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 9. See also his ‘The Quaker Renaissance and the Origins of the Modern British Peace Movement, 1895–1920’, *Albion* 16 (1984), pp. 243–72.

2 *The Journal of George Fox*, Nickalls, J. L. (ed.), Philadelphia: Religious Society of Friends, 1997, p. 65.

3 Obituary in *The Friend* (28 October 1932), p. 943. See also Sutherland, G.A., *Dalton Hall: a Quaker venture*, London: Bannisdale, 1963, p. 57. A number of Graham’s letters to the *Manchester Guardian* are collected in the John William Graham Papers (JWGP) in the Rylands Library, University of Manchester, Box 4. Sutherland succeeded Graham as Principal of Dalton Hall in 1924.

4 ‘Our Position about War’, *Friend* (1 December 1882), pp. 303–04.

5 See Brown, S. J., *Providence and Empire: religion, politics and society in the United Kingdom, 1815–1914*, Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2008, pp. 301–02.

6 Graham, J. W., *Conscription and Conscience: a history, 1916–1919* (CC), London: Allen & Unwin, 1922. See Preface by Clifford Allen, leader of the No-Conscription Fellowship, for Graham’s credentials.

7 See NFPB website, <http://www.nfpb.org.uk/news/2013-01-29/nfpb-marks-centenary>, accessed 08/02/2016.

Yet Graham's attitude to war and peace was from the start ambivalent. His son, Michael, in his biography of his father, apologised for the 'incompleteness of his pacifism'.⁸ When war broke out in 1914, Graham hovered about the degree of duty owed to the country as against the traditional Quaker refusal to bear arms.⁹ Later, to the dismay of G. A. Sutherland, his successor as Principal of Dalton Hall, he even defended the warlike sentiments voiced by Ruskin in his speech to trainee army officers at Woolwich Barracks, as printed in the *Crown of Wild Olive*.¹⁰

In this essay, I consider first Graham's actions and attitudes respecting the War itself. I then take an overview of his writings on war and peace throughout his career. I consider different possible causes for his non-absolutist position, arguing that the most significant factor was his belief in evolution. Like many contemporaries, he believed that evolution applied beyond the field of biology and that it provided an underpinning for trust in progress, especially progress towards a state of universal peace. In Graham's eyes, this progress was guaranteed because it was planned and directed by God, not in the older sense of an external Providence, but in the sense of a force for good, active in all forms of life and especially in humankind.

World War

Graham's belief in steady evolution towards peace made him believe right up to the onset of the First World War that it would not take place. His book of 1912, *Evolution and Empire*,¹¹ argues that war is out of date for modern industrial nations.¹² The argument, he acknowledges, depends largely on his reading of the social philosopher Herbert Spencer (1820–93).¹³ Spencer taught that a 'militant' stage in social evolution is necessarily followed by an industrial stage, such as has now been reached in Britain and America.¹⁴ Industrial societies are characterised by peaceableness, co-operation and relative freedom for individuals, whereas militant societies tend to despotism in government and in private life 'revenge,

8 See Graham, M., 'Spokesman Ever: Lancashire Quaker J. W. Graham, 1859–1932 and the course of reforming movements' (typescript, 1964, in Friends' House Library), 4.17. Michael Graham originally wrote 'non-pacifism', but crossed it out.

9 See Kennedy, *British Quakerism*, pp. 322–23, 326–27.

10 See Sutherland, G. A., obituary of Graham in *The Daltonian* 109 (December 1932), p. 9. Sutherland is referring to John Ruskin's *Crown of Wild Olive*, 'Lecture 3: War (delivered at the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, 1865)', Orpington: George Allen, 11th edn, 1898, pp. 115–71. For Graham's views, see John W. Graham, *The Harvest of Ruskin*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1920, chapter 8, pp. 203–21.

11 Graham, J. W., *Evolution and Empire (EE)*, London: Headley, 1912.

12 *EE*, pp. 28–35.

13 In the Preface to *EE*, Graham says this talk contained the 'nucleus' of the book.

14 See *EE*, pp. 75, 84, 5. For the characteristics of the 'militant society' see *EE*, chapters 3, 4 and 5, pp. 36–72.

ferocity, painful insecurity of life and property, contempt for labour and trade, submission to routine, lack of enterprise'.¹⁵ Societies like this could not endure.

By 1912, Spencer might have been seen as 'old hat'.¹⁶ Graham supplemented his account from more recent writers such as John Fiske¹⁷ and D. G. Ritchie,¹⁸ on whom, Graham acknowledged, he had drawn in earlier essays.¹⁹ Before the publication of the book, however, a new and exciting influence appeared in the shape of Norman Angell, author of *The Great Illusion* (1911).²⁰ The bulk of Angell's book was given to arguing that war between Germany and other European powers would not take place because it was so manifestly against the economic interest of all parties. Prosperity depended on trade, which did not depend on the possession of overseas territories and would be destroyed by war. Therefore the expense of annexing far-flung lands and building up navies was sheer waste.²¹ Modern conditions of interdependency among nations meant that old ideas about the efficacy of war were out of date, retained only because people were trapped in a vocabulary that no longer fitted the situation: 'Our terminology is a survival of conditions no longer existing, and our mental conceptions follow at the tail of our vocabulary.'²² So impressed was Graham by Angell's arguments, that he included a chapter on them in *Evolution and Empire*.²³ Graham became so well known as an advocate for Angell, that when two prizes were offered by a certain Thomas Barningham for essays on Angell by university students, Graham was asked to select the subject and help mark the entries.²⁴

15 *EE*, p. 67.

16 For Spencer's own sense, at the end of the nineteenth century, that his doctrine of progress was fallacious, see Mingardi, A., *Herbert Spencer*, New York: Continuum, 2011, p. 110.

17 Author of *The Destiny of Man Viewed in the Light of his Origin* (1884). Michael Graham credited Fiske with helping Graham to see war and conquest as anti-evolutionary (Graham, 'Spokesman Ever', 5.6.).

18 Author of *Darwinism and Politics* (1889). See Crook, D. P., *Benjamin Kidd: portrait of a social Darwinist*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984, p. 73. According to Crook, Ritchie denied that 'evolution' could be identified with 'progress'. Graham cited both Fiske and Ritchie, along with Walter Bagehot, author of *Physics and Politics* (1872), in his early essay, 'War and Evolution' (p. 306).

19 See *EE*, 'Preface', p. 5.

20 Angell, N., *The Great Illusion: a study of the relation of military power in nations to their economic and social advantage*, London: Heinemann, 3rd edn, 1911. The book was first published in 1909, under the title *Europe's Optical Illusion*, expanded and reissued under the later title in 1910. Angell had an enormous influence, not least among Quakers: Kennedy gives him much of the credit for the establishment of the Northern Friends' Peace Board in 1913 (Kennedy, *British Quakerism*, p. 303).

21 Angell, *The Great Illusion*, pp. 27, 28 and *passim*.

22 Angell, *The Great Illusion*, p. 43.

23 *EE*, p. 6 and chapter 18, pp. 193–203.

24 Letter to Richard Graham, 3 February 1913, JWGP, Box 16.

After the delusions fostered by Angell were proved wrong by the outbreak of war, Graham might have been expected to be subdued. Hardly. In writing to the American journal *The Friends' Intelligencer*, his tone was almost exultant: 'The war has brought marvelous access of new life and influence to our Meetings here in Manchester... All the meetings here throb with the tides of the Spirit', while outside the meetings 'The temper of the nation is admirable... The streets are quiet and the people earnest, dignified and responsible.'²⁵ It would take more than a Great War to dampen the hopefulness of John William Graham. A slightly earlier essay in *The Friend* expressed some ruefulness at being proved wrong, but even here he would not eat his words: 'Events have shown how right we were when we spoke of the utter abominableness of all war... War, exactly as we have been saying, is unfit for the modern world and brings no well-being to conqueror or to conquered.'²⁶ He used the very horror of the war he thought would never happen to claim that he and his Friends were right.

Moreover, the war, with all its 'abominableness' was a spur to unflagging action. Graham became known as an indefatigable champion of the anti-conscription cause and for his practical help to conscientious objectors, both when they stood before their tribunals and when they were in prison.²⁷ It was, initially at least, hard for him to understand the 'absolutist' case:²⁸ the view propounded by Clifford Allen, the Chairman of the No-Conscription Fellowship,²⁹ and by leading lights in the Friends' Service Committee, like Alfred Barratt Brown and John Fletcher.³⁰ These men were convinced that to undertake any work at the behest of the Government, even if it did not contribute directly to the war effort, was to compromise the no-conscription principle.³¹ It was the absolutists who suffered

25 'English Friends and the War', *Friends' Intelligencer* (3 October 1914), p. 623.

26 'Friend and Citizen', *Friend* (25 September 1914), p. 701.

27 'Tribunals' were the judicial bodies appointed to judge individual claims for exemption from war service. See *CC*, chapter 3, pp. 68–109. Graham told his son Richard Graham, 'I held a specimen tribunal and cross-examined five or six applicants' (letter 12 February 1916, JWGP, Box 16). Earlier he recorded in his diary acting as chairman of a conscientious objectors' meeting and the setting up of 'mock tribunals' (diary entry, 15 February 1915, JWGP, Box 15). For COs in prison, see *CC*, chapters 8 and 9, including incidental references to Graham's personal involvement.

28 Kennedy draws attention to the split between the younger Friends who took the view of the Friends' Service Committee that only absolute exemption would meet the requirements of their consciences and older Friends like Graham who 'looked upon the Friends Ambulance Unit as the crowning jewel in their Society's efforts to provide useful national service for young men while avoiding open support for the war' (Kennedy, *British Quakerism*, p. 331).

29 Clifford Allen, Baron Hurtwood (1889–1939). See Vellacott, J., *Bertrand Russell and the Pacifists in the First World War*, New York: St Martin's Press, 1980 and Kennedy, T. C., *Hound of Conscience: a history of the No-Conscription Fellowship, 1914–1918*, Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1981.

30 Vellacott, *Bertrand Russell*, p. 30.

31 The position of the 'absolutists' is well illustrated in a letter to the NCF periodical

at the hands of the military and from a hostile populace.³² Graham was anxious that his son should not be an 'absolutist', and risk going to prison.³³ No doubt his attitude was influenced by paternal concern, but it was in keeping with views expressed elsewhere. He found fault with the man who declared before the Salford tribunal that he 'would not rescue or pick up a wounded soldier, and would do nothing towards any organised work which might restore men to the firing line... Friends may surely be content to serve their fellow men and leave to the soldier himself the responsibility of what he does when he is well.'³⁴ In the end, Richard agreed to accept work with the Friends' Ambulance Unit (FAU).³⁵ 'Laus Deo' was the response of Graham senior.³⁶

For all his doubts, Graham was a devoted friend to absolutists, especially those in prison in Manchester, where he was 'chaplain' to the Quakers, generally imprisoned for refusing any kind of 'alternative service'.³⁷ So unsparing of himself was he on behalf of the war resisters that he may have permanently damaged his health. He suffered a severe attack of angina pectoris in 1919, and his son believed that he never recovered his old 'sparkle and zest'.³⁸

In the middle of the War Graham produced a book, *War from a Quaker Point of View*, largely incorporated in his major theological work of 1920, *The Faith of a Quaker*.³⁹ Writing before conscription was introduced under the Military Service Act of January 1916 became law, he anticipated resistance to it by many Quakers. Referring to the experience of Australia and New Zealand, where compulsion had already been tested, he wrote: 'Of this wide-spread resistance, the little body of Friends forms the steel spear point. If conscription were tried in England, no one in the Society has any hesitation whatever in promising the Government a similar experience on a larger scale.'⁴⁰ Although Graham never had to decide

the *Tribunal*, by B. J. Boothroyd. Boothroyd replied to pleas from T. E. Harvey and Gilbert Murray (both sympathetic to the NCF's cause) that COs should be prepared to serve their country in pacific ways by arguing that it was the element of compulsion to do work imposed by the State that was the sticking point: 'By refusing to allow men to be free to continue to do useful work even after they have shown that they are nothing but impediments when forced into the army, the State has shown that it is not our service that they want but our subservience to the military law' (quoted by Boulton, *Objection Overruled*, p. 193).

32 As documented in detail both by Graham (see especially CC, chapters 4, 7, 8, 9 and 10) and by Boulton, who takes many of his details from Graham.

33 Kennedy, *British Quakerism*, pp. 332–33.

34 Letter to Richard, 8 March 1916, JWGP, Box 16.

35 For the FAU see CC, pp. 157–59. Boulton, *Objection Overruled*, pp. 54–57. Carnall, G., *Gandhi's Interpreter: a Life of Horace Alexander*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010, p. 26.

36 Letter to Richard, 1 May 1916, JWGP, Box 16.

37 See Graham, CC, chapter 6, pp. 215–20.

38 See Sutherland's obituary, p. 10. Michael Graham, 'Spokesman Ever', 8.44.

39 Graham, J. W., *The Faith of a Quaker*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1920 (FQ).

40 Graham, J. W., *War from a Quaker Point of View*, London: Headley, [1915]. Compulsory

for his own part whether or not to resist being compelled to fight, he took up metaphorical arms on behalf of those who did so resist with all the zeal of his combative nature. Nevertheless, his pacifism remained less than absolute.

Relative Pacifism

‘A thing which is not absolutely right may in its time and place be relatively right.’⁴¹ This was the principle enunciated by Graham in a speech on ‘War and Evolution’ at the Universal Peace Congress held in London in 1890.⁴² Graham’s view of progress entailed paradox and ambivalence. Yes, it was the divine purpose to bring about lasting peace on earth. Yet the corollary of this was that there was a ‘meantime’,⁴³ during which something less than peace had to be endured. War, Graham believed, had been necessary and right in the past: it had built up that very spirit of co-operation which was now making it obsolete.

This is the key principle elaborated in *Evolution and Empire*. Polygamy is wrong now, but it was an improvement over having no marriage regulations; slavery is wrong now, but it is better to enslave your enemies than to eat them: ‘Men ate their prisoners before they domesticated them.’⁴⁴ It was indeed wrong to revert to a more ‘primitive’ stage in evolution: ‘To practise habits of this obsolete type is sinful, because it is retrogressive; it is the undoing of the Divine creative doing.’⁴⁵ But Graham left open the question how far humankind had advanced towards a state of universal peace. Certainly, not all human beings were there yet. Even in his own day, Graham noted, the natives of Australia, according to Sir George Grey,⁴⁶ considered that ‘the holiest duty of man is to avenge the death of his near

military training for men was introduced in Australia in 1909, although efforts to bring in conscription to fight in the First World War were defeated. (See Shaw, A.G.L., *The Story of Australia*, London: Faber, 1972, p. 214.) In New Zealand, when a national register taken in 1915 asked men of military age if they were willing to serve overseas, a large proportion said they were not, and later many conscientious objectors were subjected to imprisonment and other punishments. (King, M., *The Penguin History of New Zealand*, London: Penguin Group, 2003, p. 302.)

41 Republished as ‘War and Evolution, A Paper Read at the Friends’ Conference, Asbury Park, 1902’, p. 307 (JWGP, Box 7). This is the only version of the paper that I have found.

42 See *Friend* (1890), pp. 215–24; Laity, P., *The British Peace Movement*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001, p. 122.

43 For ‘meantime’ theology among early Friends, see Dandelion, Pink, *An Introduction to Quakerism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, p. 57.

44 *EE*, p. 23.

45 *EE*, p. 23. The same idea is set out in ‘War and Evolution’ (p. 108): ‘For men to practise [slavery or polygamy] now, would be to give way to what may truly be called “Original Sin”, for sin is a going back to an original condition—an obedience to a “Law in the Members”.’

46 Sir George Grey (1812–1898), explorer of Western Australia and Governor of South Australia, 1841–5 (*ODNB*, accessed 05/10/2014). Graham also quotes John Lubbock’s *Origin of Civilisation* (1870).

relation'.⁴⁷ And in *Evolution and Empire*, Graham wrote a positive paean to the glory of warfare in olden days:

In warfare the foundations of our strongest and best elements of character were laid. Virtue and valour were the same word... The rude necessities of obedience in the field, and the survival of the more disciplined races gave our ancestors that first training from which all loyalty, allegiance and internal order have had their beneficent development.⁴⁸

Yet the kind of virtue that is synonymous with valour is not the ultimate standard to which humankind should aspire. This far-off goal is set forth in the Sermon on the Mount, where evil is met with love and forgiveness, or in the Peaceable Kingdom of Isaiah, Chapter 11. But humankind was not yet ready for such a consummation. Graham's position is clearly set out in a two-part essay of 1896, 'Whence Comes Peace?':

We oppose force to force, inflict fines, exact damages, and curb the evil-doer in the convict prison. Our consciences entirely permit this... Perhaps the solution of this enigmatical contradiction may be sought, and partially found, in the great fact of Evolution in Ethics... The complete realization of the Christ ideal must be the hope of a future more blessed than our own time.⁴⁹

There were indeed 'eccentric' voices, such as those of Tolstoy, advocating a more absolute Christian discipleship here and now: the abjuration of all force, all government. Graham respected such impracticable, 'prophetic' teaching as possible harbingers of a better future.⁵⁰ But practical politicians, ready to use force on appropriate occasions, were of more immediate use than visionaries like Tolstoy, and Cromwell and Gladstone receive plaudits accordingly, rather than Sir Harry Vane and the Marquis of Montrose, whose 'usefulness is in the inspiration of their names, not in the harvest of their deeds'.⁵¹

Graham continued throughout his life to work out the implications of this position. Evolved humanity, he believed, had already made great advances in the practice of peaceable, as opposed to martial, virtue. Relative progress could be measured in terms of humanitarian sentiment and practice, of kindness to man and beast: 'Duelling has been abandoned in [England and America] first. We play football where German students cut themselves with swords. Anti-vivisection is a symptom of sympathetic feeling, with its strength in these non-military countries.

47 'The Distant Prospects of the Peace Party', *FQE* (1884), pp. 82–96; 161–71, p. 161. Against this may be set Herbert Spencer's contention, cited by Graham, that certain 'primitive' tribes are peaceable, and reap great benefits from this condition (*EE*, pp. 73–74).

48 *EE*, p. 26.

49 'Whence Comes Peace?' *British Friend (BF)*, February 1896, pp. 27–29; April 1896, pp. 77–80, p. 28.

50 'Whence Comes Peace?' p. 28.

51 'Whence Comes Peace?' p. 78.

Italy is a horror for its treatment of animals.⁵² Yet everywhere the question had still to be asked whether any particular society or nation had reached the point in evolution where war had become obsolete, and whether any particular war was right or wrong. Thus, Graham's views allowed him to teach the history of the English Civil Wars without qualms about Cromwell's justification for pursuing right with might.⁵³

Darwin and War

Although Graham believed that evolution was working towards a condition of peace, he was well aware that the idea of evolution, especially Darwinian natural selection, could be invoked as a justification for war.⁵⁴ He took it on himself to do battle with the Darwinian pessimists. Darwin himself was 'cautiously optimistic' about the implications of his theory for hopes of a peaceful world. He believed that the moral sense among human beings, based on social instincts, would grow.⁵⁵ War, moreover, is inherently dysgenic, since it is the finest and strongest young men who tend to get killed in battle, leaving the weak or cowardly to propagate their kind.⁵⁶ This was a point eagerly reiterated by Graham. Remarking that 'We are beginning to apply the tests of eugenics to every public issue', he goes on to give documentary evidence for the claim that it is the physically and morally weak who survive war, with the result that 'the cowards and the weaklings who remain, determine the next generation'. Such factors, he claims, may account for the decline of Greece and of France after the Napoleonic Wars.⁵⁷

Even if it is in some sense true that war 'selects the fittest', it might be questioned whether it was the qualities of the best fighters that modern society most needed. Edward Grubb maintained the contrary. In his book, *The True Way of Life*,⁵⁸ a rebuttal of St Loe Strachey's pre-war newspaper campaign in favour of the National Service League and of military conscription,⁵⁹ he suggested

52 *EE*, p. 75.

53 See Graham, 'Spokesman Ever', 4.17.

54 See Crook, D.P., *Darwinism, War, and History: the debate over the biology of war from the 'Origin of Species' to the First World War*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, for ways in which Darwinism could be invoked to advocate or to refute the necessity for war.

55 Crook, *Darwinism*, p. 23.

56 Crook, *Darwinism*, p. 24, quoting Darwin's *Descent of Man*. Crook adds related points made by Darwin: that soldiers are 'often tempted into vice' (with deleterious effects on their health), and that they are 'prevented from marrying during the prime of life'.

57 *EE*, pp. 111–14.

58 Grubb, E., *The True Way of Life*, London: Headley, 3rd edn, 1915 [1909].

59 Article on Strachey in *ODNB*, accessed 05/10/2014. The National Service League was led by Lord Roberts (Frederick Sleigh, first Earl Roberts [1832–1914], veteran of the Indian Mutiny, the Second Afghan War and the South African War of 1899–1901). See *Friend* (13 January 1905), p. 26. See also Kennedy, *Hound of Conscience*, pp. 10, 13.

that although war might in some sense make for the survival of ‘fitter races and peoples’, what tended to survive was their animal nature, which humankind is outgrowing.⁶⁰ Walter Bagehot, by contrast, declared in his *Physics and Politics* of 1872: ‘The characters which do win in war are the characters which we should wish to win in war’, for ‘the greater a tribe’s disciplined coherence, the better its chances of triumphing in battle and carrying on its success’.⁶¹ Bagehot clearly had in mind a theory of group selection (‘the tribe’) rather than the selection of individuals. Here it was not necessarily the more obviously warlike characteristics, such as courage, strength or ferocity, which made for success in war, but rather ‘disciplined coherence’. This is close to the ‘co-operation’ which those who wish to promote a more benign view of evolution emphasise over against the ruthlessness of the ‘struggle for existence’.⁶² Graham agreed that in warfare ‘men were led to abandon their family selfishness and work for the state’,⁶³ so that war was instrumental in enabling the building of nations, but co-operation might equally well be fostered in the peaceful conditions of industrial society, and was indeed becoming more important than competition.⁶⁴

In the immediate lead-up to war Graham felt constrained to attack the pro-war Darwinism of the German militarist General Bernhardt, author of *Germany and the Next War* (1914),⁶⁵ and the American ‘General’ Homer Lea.⁶⁶ Graham was patronising towards the latter:

General Homer Lea has heard of Darwinism, but has learnt it imperfectly. He says, in his *Valour of Ignorance*, ‘National entities in their birth, activities and death are controlled by the same laws that govern all life, plant, animal, or national—the law of survival’. It would, I dare say, surprise the General to know that the struggle for existence as Darwin taught it has nothing to do with war, but is concerned with the ability to find food, to run away from enemies, and to have large families; and but little study of human evolution would have shown him that this brute law of survival has long ago been overridden in the case of man by co-operation, by effort, sympathy, and intellectual power—by all which makes life worthy and strong.⁶⁷

60 Grubb, *True Way*, p. 65. Grubb here quotes *EE* as an authority.

61 Desmond, A., and Moore, J., *Darwin*, London: Michael Joseph, 1991, p. 557.

62 See Crook, *Darwinism*, pp. 106–12.

63 ‘War and Evolution’, p. 308.

64 *EE*, pp. 20, 110.

65 von Bernhardt, F. A. J., *Germany and the Next War*, trans. Powles, A. H., London: Edward Arnold, 1914. Laity says that in Britain the First World War was ‘presented as a crusade to eradicate the doctrines of Bernhardt and Treitschke, in H.G. Wells’s phrase, “the blood and iron superstition of Krupp, flag-waving Teutonic Kiplingism”’ (*British Peace Movement*, p. 226). Crook says that Bernhardt used Darwinism not as a major inspiration but as ‘a useful adjunct to his main ideas for German hegemony’ (Crook, *Darwinism*, p. 33).

66 Homer Lea (1876–1912), author of *The Valor of Ignorance* (1909). See Kennedy, T. C., ‘Homer Lea and the Peace Makers’, *The Historian* 45 (1983), pp. 473–96. Kennedy doubts that Lea had any right to call himself a ‘general’ (‘Homer Lea’, p. 475).

67 ‘The Moral Sequelae of Conquest’, *FQE* (1913), p. 401.

General Bernhardt was treated more seriously, if only because 'he is on the German General Staff'. Graham quoted him as saying, 'War gives a biologically just decision, since its decision rests on the very nature of things'.⁶⁸ By 'biologically just', Bernhardt seems to mean that war follows the same 'laws' as nature, by which 'the fittest' survive regardless of any humanly imagined moral order: 'might is right'.⁶⁹ Graham contended that such a statement revealed a misunderstanding of the nature of Darwinian biology, according to which, notions of justice are irrelevant: 'Biological law will destroy thousands of swallows in a summer drought, because it has previously destroyed their insect food. There is neither conscious justice nor injustice here.'⁷⁰ Those, like Bernhardt, who used Darwinian theory to justify war would have us revert to this 'brute law'.

Towards the end of the war Graham had to contend with a more formidable opponent, closer to home than Homer Lea or Bernhardt. This was the distinguished American Quaker biblical scholar, George A. Barton.⁷¹ Barton deployed the evolutionary argument for war in a religious context: 'In all his work in nature God empties the nest by hatching the eggs. One organism is developed to carry on a function before an old organism is cast off.' From here Barton took a long leap into the situation among civilised nations in the twentieth century, but unlike Graham he did not see any sign that civilisation would bring a halt to war: 'From the evolutionary side there is no hope that men will be cemented into one brotherhood, that a United States of the world will be organized, that a general and permanent peace will prevail without the employment of force.' Shockingly, he continued: 'God sooner or later, takes every life that he gives', and we are not required to be 'more perfect than God!'⁷²

Both Edward Grubb and John William Graham wrote replies to this essay.⁷³ Grubb countered Barton's argument from evolution by reference to T. H. Huxley's 'Evolution and Ethics':⁷⁴ 'To the late Prof. Huxley the "Cosmic Process" revealed in nature seemed the antithesis of the "Ethical Process" manifested in human life.'⁷⁵

68 'Moral Sequelae', p. 402.

69 According to Crook, Bernhardt 'rejected any higher law or power above the state, which was entitled to act according to the laws of self-interest and survival. Like organisms the state must dominate or degenerate' (Crook, *Darwinism*, p. 83).

70 'Moral Sequelae', p. 402.

71 A note in *BF* (February 1902) ('General Notes', p. 26) describes him as 'professor of Biblical Language and Literature at Bryn Mawr College'. Bryn Mawr was a Quaker college in New England, founded in 1884.

72 Barton, G. A., 'The Official Quaker Testimony against War Re-Examined', *FQE* 52 (1918), pp. 13–31, 18–19. (The essay is dated 20 October 1917.)

73 Grubb, E., 'A Rejoinder', *FQE* (1918), pp. 33–38; Graham, J. W., 'Dr. Barton on War', *FQE* (1918), pp. 151–56.

74 See *Evolution and Ethics: T. H. Huxley's Evolution and Ethics (1893), with new essays on its Victorian and sociobiological context* by James Paradis and George C. Williams, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989.

75 Grubb, 'A Rejoinder', p. 37.

Grubb did not entirely accept Huxley's view of nature, but he insisted that the Christian's guide to ethics must be not the poorly understood natural processes but the example of Christ's life and sacrificial death.⁷⁶ As for Graham, he distinguished between an amoral 'nature' and the God who empowers human beings to overcome the cruelty inherent in natural processes, as he was to do in detail in his theological work, *the Divinity in Man*.⁷⁷ He wrote of

the confusion in Dr. Barton's paper between 'Nature', with its soulless cruelty, and the master-power over human action. They are treated as one, and called God... [But] Against the cruelty of nature, I dare to say, God has set the heart of man; and the only God whom, for practical purposes, I know anything about, is the God of Love there revealed and active, the God of all mercies, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.⁷⁸

Barton, moreover, had not realised that evolution, however it might have worked in the past, was now working towards the abolition of war: 'War is a back number, very far back. "Evolution" desires nothing half so much as it "desires" its speedy abolition.'⁷⁹

Patriotism and other Obstacles to Pure Pacifism

There were other reasons besides evolution why Graham was ambivalent about war. After the Relief of Mafeking and of Ladysmith in 1900, Graham gave an address on 'Patriotism' to Old Scholars of Bootham School in York,⁸⁰ deploring the 'easy', flag-waving emotion that had greeted these events. True patriotism, he said, meant awareness of the nation's shortcomings as well as of its glorious heritage; of such features of national life as the miseries brought upon city-dwellers by smoke and destitution,⁸¹ and it entails energetic action to reduce such ills. Yet he still proclaimed, 'We too are for the flag, the country, and the Empire.'⁸² He quoted approvingly the words of his hero John Ruskin, from the latter's inaugural address as Slade Professor at Oxford, uttered in 1861:

There is a destiny now possible to us—the highest ever set before a nation—to be accepted or refused. We are still undegenerate in race; a race mingled of the best northern blood. We are not yet dissolute in temper, but still have the firmness

76 Grubb, 'A Rejoinder', p. 38.

77 Graham, J. W., *The Divinity in Man*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1927, especially chapter 4, 'Dualism and Bridges', pp. 64–80.

78 Graham, 'Dr. Barton', p. 153.

79 Graham, 'Dr. Barton', p. 154.

80 See *FQE* (1900), pp. 410–22. See also Graham's long letter to the American Quaker journal, the *Friends' Intelligencer*, under the title, 'England and the Transvaal' (*Friends' Intelligencer* [1900], pp. 192–93), explaining why he and others oppose the war.

81 'Patriotism', p. 416.

82 'Patriotism', p. 413.

to govern, and the grace to obey. We have been taught a religion of pure mercy, which we must either now betray or learn to defend by fulfilling.⁸³

Quentin Bell, in his book of 1978, quotes these words as an instance of ‘moments when Ruskin fills us with horror’. Bell goes on, paraphrasing Ruskin: ‘England was to fulfil the religion of pure mercy by “Seizing every piece of fruitful waste ground she can set her foot on, and there teaching these her colonists that their chief virtue is to be fidelity to their country, and that their first aim is to be to advance the power of England by land and sea.”’⁸⁴ Graham had the grace to refrain from quoting this part of the speech, although some of his own early comments about indigenous peoples are equally horrifying. In 1886, when he was teaching in Scarborough, he took part in a debate on ‘foreign policy’ in which he defended British expansionism, proclaiming:

Let us then not fight against our destiny, but be proud and be glad that it is the function and duty of England to found young communities rich in the treasures of an old yet a living civilisation, and in the institutions of a self-reliant people; and to banish poverty stricken savagery and hopeless darkness from all the waste places of the world.⁸⁵

Graham repeated these views as late as 1902, when he gave his ‘War and Evolution’ speech to the Quakers at the Conference at Asbury Park, New Jersey.⁸⁶ Given the view of evolution that Graham espoused, this was a legitimate application of the doctrine of ‘natural selection’, even though Graham would not allow a similar argument to be used in support of war.

There was more. In *Unto this Last* Ruskin wrote that people rightly honour fighting men because of their willingness to die in the course of duty.⁸⁷ Worse still, in the *Crown of Wild Olive*, Ruskin made claims for war and a warlike state as foundation and necessary condition for art and for ‘all the high virtues and faculties of men’.⁸⁸ In *The Harvest of Ruskin*, Graham relayed faithfully, though not uncritically, Ruskin’s statements about the beneficial effects of war on a nation’s art as well as its character, including war undertaken ‘for play’.⁸⁹ Yet Graham was able ultimately to claim that Ruskin ‘is to be found among the Peace Advocates’ by explaining that his praise of war excluded ‘modern war waged by multitudes

83 ‘Patriotism’, p. 414.

84 ‘Inaugural Lecture’, in *Library Edition of the Works of John Ruskin*, Cook, E. T., and Wedderburn, A., (eds), London: George Allen, 1903–12, vol. xx, pp. 41, 42, quoted by Bell, Q., *Ruskin*, New York: George Braziller, 1978, p. 134.

85 JWGP, Box 6.

86 ‘War and Evolution’, p. 315.

87 *Unto this Last*, in Wilmer, C., (ed.), *Unto this Last and other Writings by John Ruskin*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985, p. 175.

88 Quoted by Graham in *The Harvest of Ruskin*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1920, p. 204 (HV).

89 HV, pp. 203–21.

of conscript or other soldiers, machine guns, and chemical explosives.⁹⁰ It is one of the odd paradoxes in Graham's thought that belief in evolutionary progress towards a condition of universal peace co-existed with nostalgia for the days when war and patriotism were entirely honourable. 'We have fallen', Graham sighs, 'from Tennyson with his "Love thou thy land, with love far brought / From out the storied past"... to Rudyard Kipling with his "give 'em hell, boys, give 'em hell", as the Maxims mow down the Soudanese [*sic*].'⁹¹ It is no wonder that Graham allowed his children to play at war, so long as they fought only with imaginary 'archaic bows and arrows': guns, though equally 'invisible and silent', were forbidden.⁹²

Besides Ruskin, Graham was challenged by William James' teaching that war was, for soldiers, 'a school of strenuous life and heroism' and 'the only school that as yet is universally available'. We need 'the moral equivalent of war'.⁹³ Graham sometimes insisted that modern life provided opportunities to exercise virtues of courage and self-sacrifice without the need for war: 'So long as diseases are fatal and infectious, but must be nursed, so long as Society suffers from poverty, from drink and degrading vice, the need for Paladins, for knights errant and honourable women, presses daily upon us.'⁹⁴ Yet even here, the hankering for the glamour of old-time war is palpable in Graham's language.

The supreme recent example of 'beautiful characters' formed by war was, for Ruskin, Sir Herbert Edwardes, who wrote an account of his career in India from which Ruskin drew the material for *A Knight's Faith*.⁹⁵ Graham appealed to this work in the school debate at Scarborough cited above.⁹⁶ From it, he drew such sentiments as the following: 'Where Britain goes, there goes order, there goes law, there goes peace. At no time have so many people lived in peace as now under the

90 *HV*, pp. 219, 220.

91 'Patriotism', p. 412.

92 Sturge, R. G., *The Shining Way*, Gloucester, Fellowship Press, 1969, p. 65. This is Graham's daughter's memoir about growing up in the Graham household in Manchester.

93 James, W., *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (Gifford Lectures, 1901–2), London: Fontana, 1960, pp. 355, 356. James' views are worked out in his 'The Moral Equivalent of War' (1910), reprinted in *Memories and Studies*, Cambridge, MA: Longmans & Co., 1911. For James' influence on Friends, see *Friend* (22 May 1925), p. 446. See also Harvey, T. E., *The Long Pilgrimage: Human Progress in the Light of the Christian Hope* (Swarthmore Lecture, 1921), London, published for the Woodbrooke Extension Committee by Robert Davis, 1921, p. 61, for the 'chivalry and unselfishness' evoked by war which the Christian church must find ways to inspire in times of peace.

94 Graham, J. W., *The Faith of a Quaker*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1920 (*FQ*), p. 384. Graham is drawing here on an essay of 1915, 'War as a Moral Tonic' (*The Friend* (16 April 1915), pp. 283–84, one of a series of five written in response to the outbreak of war.

95 *A Knight's Faith: passages in the life of Sir H. Edwardes* (extracted from Edwardes' work 'A Year on the Punjaub Frontier' [1851]); collated by Ruskin, J., in *Bibliotheca Pastorum*, vol. iv., London: Allen, 1876–85.

96 See account of the 'Foreign Policy Debate, 15 March 1886', in JWGP, Box 6.

Pax Britannica.’⁹⁷ The ‘Pax Britannica’ had, of course, to be defended by armies: peace depends on ability and willingness to fight. It is not so surprising as it seems at first glance that Graham found himself, near the end of his life, standing with ‘war Friends’, such as Henry Marriage Wallis, in defending British imperial policy in India against Gandhi and against his old associates in the ‘peace party’. ‘Strange company I see thee in, John Willie’, commented the Clerk of Yearly Meeting in 1930, during the debate on India that took place that year,⁹⁸ but the grounds for this stance had already been laid in Graham’s old attachment to ‘the true glory and joy of the Empire’.⁹⁹ Since writing this, Graham had produced *Evolution and Empire*, a whole book denouncing empire along with conquest and warfare. Yet somehow the old prejudices resurfaced in Graham’s later days. Wallis, defending a pro-military stand in 1906, wrote of the blessings of the ‘Pax Britannica’ in India, and pointed out that these ‘blessings’ were conferred and maintained by fighting men, not by Quakers.¹⁰⁰ Graham came to agree that India needed British government, and knew that it must be maintained by force. Although he changed his views on war and empire over the course of his life, his evolution was neither straightforward nor complete. Ruskin’s admiration for soldierly qualities continued to exert a hold on him. But yet he was sure that humankind was developing other and finer qualities than those of the soldier: the qualities comprising the ethical vision of Christ.

Christianity and War

Some conscientious Friends in days before those of Graham had difficulty with those parts of the Old Testament where war and conquest are shown as being sanctioned by God. Early in the nineteenth century, the Nantucket-born Quaker Hannah Barnard (1754–1825) had been denied a certificate to ‘travel in the ministry’ in England and disowned in America, in part because she voiced doubts as to this bellicose representation of the deity.¹⁰¹ Similarly, Abraham Shackleton was disowned by London Yearly Meeting in 1801 for maintaining that God could not have sanctioned the wars of the Old Testament.¹⁰² In Graham’s day British Quakers addressed the dilemma by asserting that the Old Testament represented a primitive

97 ‘Foreign Policy Debate’, p. 4.

98 See Geoffrey Carnall, *Gandhi’s Interpreter: a life of Horace Alexander*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010, p. 86.

99 ‘Patriotism’, p. 411. Quoted, to Graham’s disadvantage, by Brian Phillips in his ‘Friendly Patriotism: British Quakerism and the imperial nation, 1890–1910’, PhD thesis, Cambridge University, 1989, p. 39.

100 Wallis, H.M., ‘A Twice Interrupted Colloquy’, *FQE* (1906), pp. 311–23, 537–56 and related correspondence, *FQE* (1907), pp. 163–72. For Wallis as a ‘war Friend’ and his place as such within London Yearly Meeting, see Kennedy, *British Quakerism*, pp. 391, 393.

101 Barbour, H., and Frost, J. W., *The Quakers*, Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1988, p. 170.

102 Laity, *British Peace Movement*, p. 216.

phase in the understanding of God. W. C. Braithwaite could declare in 1895 that 'some of the rudimentary phases of revelation, as, for instance, the Old Testament teaching on the subject of war, or polygamy, or slavery, may be quite devoid of direct authority amid the fuller light of to-day'.¹⁰³ Some Friends went further than this, arguing that war might have been according to God's will in Old Testament days but was no longer: an anonymous editorial article in *The Friend*, 'The Old Testament as Seen from the New', concluded that God must indeed have authorised Joshua's wars, though not the 'excess of cruelty' which the Israelites sometimes practised; these should be classed 'with their lapses into idolatry and other heathen abominations'.¹⁰⁴ Graham's approach was in line with his argument that war had been necessary in the past in order to build up certain human characteristics as well as nations. 'The vigilant eye, the cunning brain and the victorious patience in suffering are the precious fruits of generations of war-ridden men... No wonder true saints of old invoked the help of the Lord of Hosts and prayed for the utter destruction of their enemies, with full confidence in the Divine approval.'¹⁰⁵ The war waged by the Maccabees 'for religious liberty and national independence will always remain one of the great chapters in the history of the world'.¹⁰⁶ Bible history, like history in general, was a lesson in relativism.

The divine intention, however, Graham believed, was that war should eventually cease. And there are signs that the day is drawing nearer:

There seems no doubt that the spirit of Divine Wisdom, which is always working in the world, and leading the race of man, in whom it dwells, and through whom it works, stage by stage to power and happiness—there is no doubt that this spirit, acting as the spirit of the age, is making strongly for arbitration instead of war.¹⁰⁷

Arbitration is hardly the Peaceable Kingdom, but it is a necessary step on the way. If the lion is to lie down with the lamb, nations must first learn to submit to arbitration rather than go to war.¹⁰⁸ Meanwhile, the teaching and example of Christ show what humankind is ultimately to aim for.

In Graham's thinking, the teaching of Jesus, although 2,000 years old, does not represent an earlier stage in evolution but rather foreshadows the consummation of human moral endeavour, to be attained at some unspecified future

103 Braithwaite, W. C., 'Some Present-day Aims of the Society of Friends', *FQE* (1895).

104 *Friend* (2 March 1891), p. 51.

105 'War and Evolution', p. 309.

106 *FQ*, p. 54. The Maccabees were heroes of the Jewish resistance to Greek rule in the second century BCE. Their deeds are recorded in the two Books of Maccabees, considered apocryphal in Protestant tradition, but included in the Catholic Jerusalem Bible. See Coogan, M. D., (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Books of the Bible*, 2 vols., Oxford: Oxford University Press, vol. ii, pp. 1–34.

107 *EE*, p. 98.

108 'Arbitration' was a watchword of the nineteenth-century peace movement. In 1883, the largely Quaker Peace Society changed the name of its organ from *Herald of Peace* to *Herald of Peace and International Arbitration* (Laity, *British Peace Movement*, p. 92).

time. Graham might argue that this day was not yet, but he still maintained that Christianity forbids fighting. There are, however, difficulties for the pacifist within the New Testament. Was Jesus a pacifist? There is the 'two swords' passage in Luke's Gospel, the subject of Graham's essay, 'Christ and Swords'.¹⁰⁹ Graham applied some ingenious analysis to conclude that 'Dean Alford' was wrong to assert that 'the passage forms a decisive testimony against the views of the Quakers and some other sects on this point.'¹¹⁰ Then there is the 'cleansing of the Temple' episode, recorded in all four gospels, where Christ drives out the money-changers and those who sold animals for sacrifice.¹¹¹ The Johannine version has Jesus making a 'scourge' of cords (King James version) with which to do this. How to square the 'scourge' with Quaker opposition to violence? In 1896, Graham cited the passage to argue for a relative pacifism,¹¹² but by 1920 he had had another idea: in *The Faith of a Quaker*, he neatly brought in a reference to the military tribunals before which he had tirelessly defended COs during the War. 'To attempt to drive a crowd of strong drovers out with such an implement is a plan which would only appear reasonable to a tribunal in difficulties with a conscientious objector', he declared, asserting that 'the scourge was needed for the animals; then the men had to follow... The whole story is one of moral suasion with nothing physical to back it.'¹¹³

In the end Graham relied not so much on detailed verbal exposition of Bible passages as on the impression to be derived of Jesus' preaching and personality in the Gospels as a whole. 'The whole meaning and spirit of the teaching is irreconcilably hostile to all war. We cannot imagine Jesus Christ working a machine gun and mowing down His brethren.' This image no doubt owes something to the eloquent evocation of 'Christ in khaki' in the Quaker Alfred Salter's anti-war speech of 1914, quoted in full by Graham in his *Conscription and Conscience*.¹¹⁴ Graham wished to be seen as standing for Christian and Quaker pacifism.

Quakers and War

In spite of the traditional association of the Religious Society of Friends with pacifism, its position was never clear-cut. Quakers like to invoke the spirit of early Friends with their declaration, 'All bloody principles and practices we do

109 'Christ and Swords', *FQE* (1910), pp. 113–18.

110 'Christ and Swords', p. 116. The argument is repeated in *FQ*, p. 334. Henry Alford (1810–71) was a biblical scholar and Dean of Canterbury (*ODNB*, accessed 04/07/2014). Lubenow, W. C., *The Cambridge Apostles, 1820–1914: liberalism, imagination, and friendship in British intellectual and professional life*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, pp. 367–68.

111 Mt. 21:12–13, Mk 11:15–17, Lk. 19:45, Jn 2:13–15.

112 'Whence Comes Peace?', p. 28.

113 *FQ*, p. 331.

114 Reported in the *Labour Leader* (24 September 1914). See *CC*, pp. 45–50.

utterly deny, with all outward wars, and strife, and fightings [sic] with outward weapons'.¹¹⁵ Yet the historically minded among them know that Quakers had not always been pacifists. The young Graham, writing on 'our position about war' in 1882, inveighed against a pacifism that depended on "the creed of the Church", the opinion of our ancestors, or, say, "the ancient principles of Friends".¹¹⁶ He went on to transcribe with relish words from 1659 of the early Friend Edward Burrough, exhorting Cromwell's army to take up arms against the Papists. This is not mere youthful defiance of the old guard, for he came back to Burrough's fiery words in the *Faith of a Quaker*, and repeated for good measure words of George Fox addressed to Cromwell deploring Cromwell's failure to use arms to subjugate the 'Hollander', the King of France and the Pope.¹¹⁷

For Fox, Graham believed, clarity on peace and war came during a ten-week period of mental suffering in Reading in 1659: he thought 'that in that loneliness he was working out for us his solution of the puzzle caused by the rival loyalties to the nation and to God'.¹¹⁸ Fox's solution was formulated in an Epistle telling Friends that fighting is incompatible with the spirit of Christ.¹¹⁹ Nevertheless, even after this, Friends of the seventeenth century did not condemn all war or all use of force. Isaac Penington, who did not join the Friends until 1658,¹²⁰ but was, according to Graham, 'always a leading spokesman for the Society',¹²¹ believed that fighting was sometimes necessary: 'I speak not against any magistrates or peoples defending themselves against foreign invasion or making use of the sword to suppress the violent and evil-doers within their border, for this the present state of things may and doth require.'¹²² Yet it was right for some who had progressed beyond the 'present state of things' to refrain from fighting, despite the accusation that they are profiting from other people's willingness to fight for them, for they are the earnest of a better time to come: 'This blessed state which shall be brought forth in the general in God's season must begin in particulars, and they therein are not prejudicial to the world, but emblems of that blessed state which the God of Glory hath promised to set up in the world in the days of the gospel.'¹²³ With Penington to support him, Graham felt free

115 *Declaration of the Harmless and Innocent People called Quakers, against all the Plotters and fighters in the World* (the 'Declaration to King Charles II' of 1660). Printed in abridged form in *Quaker Faith and Practice*, London: Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain, 1995, 20.04.

116 'Our Position about War', p. 303.

117 Quoted by Braithwaite, W. C., *The Beginnings of Quakerism*, rev. Cadbury, H. (2nd edn), York: Sessions, 1981, p. 440.

118 *FQ*, p. 355. See Fox, *Journal*, pp. 353–54; Braithwaite, *Beginnings*, p. 357.

119 *FQ*, p. 356.

120 Braithwaite, *Beginnings*, p. 504.

121 *FQ*, p. 375.

122 Quoted in *FQ*, p. 376.

123 Quoted in *FQ*, p. 376.

to assert that pacifists are called to foreshadow that blessed state ahead of the general population:

The moral sense of our population is represented by a long and wavering column, pushed back and forward, and the whole nation can only act at or behind the centre of gravity of the column. Nevertheless those who are working at the head of the line for better things are the greatest helpers of the nation.¹²⁴

And Quakers are in the forefront of the pacifists. For Graham, they were ‘the steel point... at the end of the softer metal of the general peace party.’¹²⁵

In essays like his ‘Whence comes Peace?’, of 1896, Graham took a similar view to that of the ‘war Friend’, Henry Marriage Wallis, who argued that absolute pacifism was untenable because a society cannot subsist without the use of force.¹²⁶ Nevertheless, he had considerable sympathy with those like Joseph Rowntree, who took a more absolutist stance. Rowntree, in an essay of 1907, rejected Wallis’ argument that because there is no clear dividing line between a police force and an army, therefore an army, and hence warfare, are acceptable. He also rejected the evolutionary argument, as voiced by the theologian William Sanday, that the present age must be content with a ‘dilute Christianity’; that a more perfect obedience of Christ’s law must await a better day. If Fox and the early Friends had been content with a ‘dilute’ witness they could never have had the influence they have had. It was the part of present-day Friends to take the first Friends for examples of uncompromising adherence to principle and to oppose war and militarism with no ifs or buts. Progress itself demanded this: ‘There have always been two voices, one calling men up to the seemingly impractical, the other bidding them follow the easy path of conventional morality—and looking back we can see that the first is (broadly speaking) the voice of God and the call to progress.’¹²⁷

There was much in this that Graham held in common with Rowntree. He had a half-grudging respect for Tolstoy’s rejection of all use of force. In a review in the *Manchester Guardian* in 1895, he warned against foregoing ‘some of the world’s too scanty stock of prophetic endowment’ by dismissing the Tolstoyan dream.¹²⁸ What seems an impossible fantasy in one age may become the reality of another. Quakers are called to lead the way to such a better reality.

124 *FQ*, p. 376. Similar words in Graham’s essay ‘A Divided Loyalty’ (*Friend* [23 April 1915], pp. 301–03) end: ‘those at the front need not obey the average man. They see further’ (p. 202).

125 Letter to Richard Graham, 11 February 1913, JWGP, Box 11 (quoted by Laity, *British Peace Movement*, 179).

126 In ‘A Twice Interrupted Colloquy’, cited above.

127 ‘Principles’, p. 464.

128 Review of Tolstoy’s *Four Gospels Harmonized and Translated*, in *Manchester Guardian*, 13 April 1895, JWGP, Box 4, no. 8. (The contents of Box 4 consist of numbered cuttings pasted into a book.) But see Graham’s ‘Limits to the Use of Force’, *Friend* (2 April 1915), p. 247, and *FQ*, p. 367, for his opposition to Tolstoy’s extremes.

Fighting Militarism

Accordingly, on the eve of the War, Graham issued a rallying call to his fellow Quakers to undertake a 'new crusade' for peace, at the Conference in Leeds at which the Northern Friends' Peace Board was launched. He described this speech in his diary as a 'Paper on duty to extend Peace work to Evolution Methods'.¹²⁹ Evolution, Graham said, was gathering speed: the 'meantime' might be drawing to a close: 'Evolution glides with the car and the train, where once she rumbled with the bullock-cart.'¹³⁰ Evolution, however, could not be left to work on its own: Quakers should be on board that car or train, indeed helping to drive it. Their opponents were many and vociferous. Samuel Hynes has written of the deluge of warnings to the British people about the need to be vigilant and strong against the threat of military aggression.¹³¹ Some leading Edwardians feared that Britons were becoming soft and weak. The early defeats in the 1899–1902 South African War fuelled these fears, in spite of the final victory. Rudyard Kipling ascribed these defeats to a decline in martial spirit:

Ye hindered and hampered and crippled; ye thrust out of sight and away
Those that would serve you for honour and those that served you for pay.
Then were the judgments loosened; then was your shame revealed,
At the hands of a little people, few but apt in the field.¹³²

There was evidence of physical decline, especially among the urban poor.¹³³ Such fears led to the formation of organisations like the Boys' Brigade and, later, the Boy Scouts, expressly designed to counter 'the deterioration of our race' and create a phalanx of fighting men to preserve the British Empire.¹³⁴ There was a rash of 'invasion novels', fantasies centring on an invasion of Britain, usually by Germans,¹³⁵ although in the best-known of these, H.G. Wells' *War of the Worlds* (1898), the invaders are Martians. Wells came down to earth with his *War in the Air* of 1908.¹³⁶

Graham met his own personification of these trends in Colonel Frederic Natusch Maude, who was appointed in 1905 to a lectureship in 'military

129 Diary entry, 29 January 1913, JWGP, Box 15.

130 'Our Call', p. 241.

131 Hynes, S., *The Edwardian Turn of Mind*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968.

132 See Kipling, R., 'The Islanders' (first published in *The Times* [4 January 1902]). Hynes draws attention to this poem (*Edwardian*, p. 38).

133 Hynes, *Edwardian*, p. 22. Hynes cites a report in the *Contemporary Review* of January 1902, maintaining that 60 per cent of Englishmen were physically unfit for military service.

134 Hynes, *Edwardian*, pp. 25–26. For details on the Boys' Brigade, founded in 1883 but enjoying renewed vigour in the early twentieth century, and on other militaristic youth movements, see Kennedy, *Hound of Conscience*, pp. 22–26.

135 Hynes, *Edwardian*, pp. 34–43.

136 Hynes, *Edwardian*, p. 43. See also Stevenson, R., *Literature and the Great War, 1914–1918*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013, p. 28.

subjects' at the University of Manchester.¹³⁷ Maude gave an address, reported in the *Manchester Guardian*, warning that Britain was in danger from failing to take enough account of the Clausewitzian¹³⁸ principles of war. He listed five of these, including the statements: 'War is an act of violence as natural and legitimate as all other acts pertaining to commerce, industry, etc.>'; 'It is an act which exalts the people who engage in it'; 'Every idea of philanthropy in war is a pernicious error.' Maude claimed that Clausewitz's book was 'the standard book of Germany'... 'which had now become the text book for all Europe'.¹³⁹ An outraged Graham took it upon himself to confront Maude in the name of peace. In a letter to the *Guardian*, he appealed to Christian morality: 'Where, I wonder, does the glory of the Crucifixion come in?', then quickly went on to invoke ideas of evolutionary progress:

Colonel Maude treats Napoleon and Bismarck as though they were epoch-makers in the general trend of things; the fact is that they were belated barbarians long out of date; they were highly-placed reversals to the savage type. We have got rid of the curse of Napoleon, and we shall outlive the curse of Bismarck.¹⁴⁰

There followed some spirited correspondence in the *Guardian*, much of it supportive of Graham. Then, in November 1905, a debate took place at the University between Colonel Maude and our hero on the proposition, 'Militarism blocks the way to national welfare'. The headline of the report in the *Guardian* read 'Militarism and Progress'. The report of Graham's speech described him as passing briefly over the Christian and humanitarian objections to war to focus on its obsolete character. Bizarrely, Graham claimed that the present day was simply unfit for war:

In the Middle Ages war was just as easily gone in far [*sic*], and perhaps more easily reached, than a general election to-day. But a war in England nowadays would mean that we were endeavouring to carry on gymnastic operations in a raincoat and a crinoline, and that we were not properly dressed for the purpose.¹⁴¹

Maude took up the fact that Graham had spoken of Russia as the likely enemy, and said that Germany was the power to fear. This was because the Germans cultivated the military spirit and the virtues of self-sacrificing patriotism. Maude won the debate.

Graham returned to the fight in a hostile review in *The Friend* of Maude's book, *War and the World's Life*, under the heading 'The Gospel of War'. He showed his

137 See JWGP, Box 4, nos. 26–34.

138 The Prussian military thinker Carl von Clausewitz (1780–1831), author of *On War*, published in 1832. Maude translated this work into English, in a version of 1911.

139 Maude, F. N., 'National Defence', *Manchester Guardian* [undated: 1905], JWGP, Box 4, no. 26.

140 JWGP, Box 4, no. 26.

141 *Manchester Guardian* (11 November 1905); JWGP, Box 4, no. 30.

confidence in the agreement of his friendly readership by simply quoting without attempt at refutation Maude's invocation of the deity in support of war:

We proceed to a higher authority than even the Germans. 'It is God's will that wars should arise, and God's will also that the soldier will do his utmost [including the slaughter of thousands] in that station of life to which it has pleased Him to call him. The responsibility he leaves to the Almighty; and if he is wrong, well, he can only be damned once, and there are no two eternities.' This is the biggest sporting chance I know of in literature.¹⁴²

Evolution was also invoked in ways which became habitual with Graham to excoriate Maude for assuming that 'struggle for existence' means 'conscious warfare'.¹⁴³ He reserved for the end 'Maude's central doctrine' that 'peace demoralises', using heavy-handed sarcasm while insisting as always on the need for strenuous effort in humane causes: 'War [Maude] describes as a fever which cleanses the system from corrupt germs.' This could be so if 'peace meant idleness and self-indulgence', but, in the modern industrial world, '[Peace] leads to the organisation of society, to co-operation, and to common humanity between nations; it needs no moral assistance from bomb-shell and grape-shot, none of the winning tenderness of submarine mines, none of the *Dread-nought's* civilising evangel.'¹⁴⁴

Graham pursued this vein in essays right up to the eve of war, insisting that 'the "stars in their course" always fight for peace in the long run'.¹⁴⁵ More specifically, Germany was not a threat, as Graham argued in two essays in the *Friends' Quarterly Examiner (FQE)*: 'Germany ever since 1871 has been feeling her way... from militarism and aristocracy to industrialism and social democracy.'¹⁴⁶ The build-up of the German navy is because 'they want to count in diplomacy'... 'they do not expect to have to fight England with it'.¹⁴⁷

Conclusion

Graham did not abandon his belief in the evolution of peace when, against his confident predictions, war broke out in August 1914. On 9 September, he spoke to Mount Street Meeting on the need to believe in 'God acting through man', at a time

142 'Gospel of War', review of Maude, F. N., *War and the World's Life*, London: Smith, Elder, 1907, in *Friend* (13 December 1907), p. 823.

143 'Gospel of War', p. 824.

144 'Gospel of War', p. 824. It was unfortunate for Graham that his adored Tennyson represents Peace as 'sitting under her olive... cheating in business, adulterating food and oppressing the poor', as Graham acknowledges in *EE*, 81. See Tennyson's 'Maud', Part 1, I, stanza 9.

145 'The Coming Age—Peace or War?', in *One & All*. No date, but it is filed with papers from the beginning of 1906. JWGP, Box 4, no. 41.

146 'Building against Germany', *FQE* (1909), p. 175.

147 'Towards an Understanding with Germany', *FQE* (1912), p. 121.

when 'Faith in God may have been shattered'.¹⁴⁸ War helped him to concentrate his energies in combatting the militarism that had now culminated in actual fighting. It did not destroy his faith that human society was evolving away from its animal, internecine, origins towards a benign state where competition would give way to co-operation in 'housing, feeding children, educating those who cannot afford to educate themselves'.¹⁴⁹ Progress would be, is being, made. Despite the carnage, Friends were right about the nature of war, and their views must in time prevail.

Human beings were not to expect a sudden irruption of God into the world to judge and transform it; rather they must obey their divine inner endowment and thus enable the eventual coming of the Kingdom. Quakers did not now isolate themselves from the world and all worldliness as earlier generations of Quakers had done while awaiting the Second Coming: Graham and those who thought like him sought to be fully active in improving the world they found themselves in and encouraging it to move towards that better place reserved for the human race, not just the 'saved'. But that meant compromise, a compromise that could be 'noble'.¹⁵⁰ War had once been a means of progress; even now compulsion and other infringements of Christ's injunctions were necessary for the good ordering of society. Visionaries like Tolstoy might provide a useful tonic,¹⁵¹ but the world needed practical people. Arbitration was an improvement on war; although it was not the pure selflessness called for by Christ and demonstrated in his life, it was a step forward.¹⁵²

Graham was seen as a rallying force in the Religious Society of Friends' stand for peace, in his leadership in movements like the Northern Friends' Peace Board and in his wartime work with conscientious objectors. His views, however, though forcibly expressed, were shifting and equivocal, illustrating the difficulties of a belief that the world is necessarily evolving towards a condition of world peace. It is hard to stand firm if you are not sure where you are on the evolutionary time-line. Add to that the sense, derived from youthful reading, from Ruskin and, no doubt, from temperament, that war is or has been 'noble', and the trumpet could hardly give forth a certain sound.¹⁵³ On a more positive note, he opened up some of the many complexities surrounding questions to do with pacifism and challenged his contemporaries to consider where they stood on the spectrum between Tolstoyan absolutism and a position like that of John Bright, whom Graham praised for claiming 'he has never opposed any war because he believes all war to be sinful... but has attacked each individual war on its own merits'.¹⁵⁴ Every age, every conflict, demands a rethinking of the peace Testimony.

148 Diary entry (20 September 1914), JWGP, Box 15 (Graham's emphasis).

149 *EE*, p. 111.

150 'Whence Comes Peace?' 2, p. 78.

151 'Whence comes Peace?' 1, p. 28.

152 See *EE*, p. 98.

153 See 1 Cor. 14:8 (King James Version).

154 'Our Position about War', p. 304.

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