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Friends Becoming Enemies: Philadelphia Benevolence And The Neglected Era Of American Quaker History

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FRIENDS BECOMING ENEMIES: PHILADELPHIA BENEVOLENCE AND THE NEGLECTED ERA OF AMERICAN QUAKER HISTORY

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At the end of the 1820s, American Quakers suffered a bitter and long-term division known as the Hicksite schism. Following a boisterous and caustic Philadelphia Yearly Meeting in April 1827, a group of Quaker reformers separated themselves from the main body of Friends, and formed their own independent meeting. The schism in the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting spread rapidly outward in concentric circles disrupting other Quaker meetings throughout North America. By the end of the decade, Philadelphia Quakers had divided into two distinct and hostile factions. Each group became known by the epithet given to it by the other, but their names represented well their differing positions within the Society. Those who retained leadership of the Yearly Meeting and the allegiance of a majority of urban Friends in Philadelphia were known as the "Orthodox" party for their attachment to traditional Protestant doctrines. The other faction acquired the label "Hicksite" for their sympathy with the ministry and teaching of Long Island Quaker Elias Hicks. Each side considered itself the legitimate Society of Friends.[1]

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[1] The best sources on the Hicksite separation are H. Larry Ingle, *Quakers in Conflict: The Hicksite Reformation* (Knoxville, TN, 1986); Robert W. Doherty, *The Hicksite Separation: A Sociological Analysis of Religious Schism in Early Nineteenth-Century America* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1967); Bliss Forbush, *Elias Hicks: Quaker Liberal* (New

Explanations of the Hicksite separation have focused on the twin issues of doctrine and authority. Orthodox Friends perceived a threat to traditional Christian orthodoxy in the popular preaching and writing of Elias Hicks. News of his heretical views—at times resembling the rationalism of Unitarians—spread quickly through Quaker channels despite few written sermons that pinned down his heterodoxy. Hicks was frequently assailed for rejecting the authority of the Scriptures and for denying the divinity of Christ. He reportedly preached that Jesus was "no more than a man." During a sermon in Philadelphia, Hicks belittled the blood atonement of Christ, stating, "The actual blood of Christ in itself was no more effectual than the blood of bulls and goats."[2] Meanwhile, Hicksite Friends considered Orthodox publications linking the earliest Friends with traditional Protestant doctrines as blatant attempts to impose a creed upon Quakerism and squelch the spirit of the Inner Light. They described the Orthodox creed as "an engine of oppression and restraint, against the freedom of mind which is the characteristic of a genuine Quaker." Hicksite Quakers viewed this doctrinal conformity as merely another example of the way Orthodox leaders exploited their authority in the Yearly Meeting, "clearly evidencing the evil fruits of their domineering and tyrannical principles."[3] So, while the Orthodox felt Hicksites were compromising their connection to a historic Christian faith, Hicksites were convinced that powerful Orthodox leaders were more concerned about preserving their power than preserving the mystical nature of the Quaker experience.

A socioeconomic interpretation has also been posited to explain the divisions between Philadelphia's Quakers. Robert Doherty's quantitative analysis suggested that Orthodox and Hicksite Quakers differed in their social status and their attachment to a commercializing economy. Doherty's study confirmed what Quaker historians had long assumed: the Orthodox position was stronger among urban Friends, while Hicksites flourished in rural areas. The distinctions within Philadelphia were more subtle. Orthodox Friends possessed slightly greater wealth, lived in more

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York, 1956); J. William Frost, "Years of Crisis and Separation: Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 1790-1860," in *Friends in the Delaware Valley: Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 1681-1981*, ed. John M. Moore (Haverford, PA, 1981).

[2] "The Elders of Philadelphia and Elias Hicks," *The Friend*, 1 (12th mo., 22, 1827), 77; Ingle, *Quakers in Conflict*, 77.

[3] *Hole in the Wall; or A Peep at the Creed-Worshippers. Embellished with cuts by the Author* ([Philadelphia], 1828), 3, 13, 17; *Extracts from the Writings of Primitive Friends, Concerning the Divinity of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ* (Philadelphia, 1823); *The Berean*, (Wilmington, DE), May 4, 1824.

prestigious neighborhoods, and more commonly engaged in higher-status occupations. Hicksites, in contrast, were newer to the city, lived in outlying wards or districts, and were likely to be artisans and craftsmen. Doherty argued that Hicksite Friends felt alienated and threatened by changes in Philadelphia's economy, particularly by the specialization of labor and the decline in artisanal status. Yet Doherty's conclusions are not entirely convincing. Social differences between Orthodox and Hicksite Quakers in Philadelphia were not very dramatic. Little written evidence survives to confirm Doherty's assertion that Hicksites were experiencing a sense of economic alienation, or that the Orthodox were plagued by status anxieties. Moreover, the connection between the social distinctions and the doctrinal controversy among Friends has not yet been demonstrated adequately. Orthodox and Hicksite Quakers each had a particular vision of what an ideal Quaker religious community should be, but these competing world views cannot easily be reduced to economic determinants.[4]

This is not to say that much does not ring true in these various explanations of the Hicksite schism. Rather the problem lies in a narrowness of historical vision that views the schism as an isolated event within a small sect whose numbers were declining, and which does not appear to be especially relevant to the religious history of the early republic. In part, the cause of this myopia rests with the manner in which historians have focused on Quakers. A significant analytic gap exists in our understanding of early nineteenth-century developments among Friends. As far as most American historians are concerned, including historians of religion, Quakers were significant only during the colonial era. Not surprisingly, the bulk of the historical literature on American Quakers has concentrated on the colonial period. The primary historical narrative has been the story of their privileged but tolerant leadership in founding the Pennsylvania colony, followed by a simultaneous political crisis and revitalization of the sect beginning in the 1750s, and finally their emergence as the leading benevolent and reforming group in late eighteenth-century America. The era from the 1780s to the dramatic separation of Hicksites in 1827 and the decade beyond that has remained

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[4] Doherty, *Hicksite Separation*, 33-50. Doherty's findings do not seem to match the experiences of other Yearly Meetings outside Philadelphia; see Thomas Hamm, *The Transformation of American Quakerism: Orthodox Friends, 1800-1907* (Bloomington, IN, 1988), 16-17. Doherty's conclusions were also based upon an analysis of probated wills, some as late as 1867, throwing doubt upon his interpretation of status anxiety and economic alienation forty years prior to that; for this critique, see T. D. Seymour Bassett, review of *Hicksite Separation*, by Robert W. Doherty, *Quaker History*, 57 (Spring 1968), 52-54.

the neglected period of American Quaker history. This is so because no one yet has successfully connected the eighteenth-century story of Quaker benevolence with the central causes of the Hicksite schism.[5] This essay is an attempt to connect these two disparate narratives of Quaker history, while at the same time suggesting that divisions within a sect of declining numerical importance can add a great deal to our understanding of religious change in the new nation by illuminating the ways in which various groups responded to a democratized religious culture and to the growing hegemony of evangelical institutions and practices.

A fuller explanation of the heated division within the Society of Friends, then, requires a look at the different perspectives on benevolent activism that each opposing group held, as well as their attitudes toward the evangelical religious culture surrounding them. Religious benevolence had been a defining feature of Quaker identity since the mid-eighteenth century. But the remarkable expansion of evangelical churches and reform societies during the revivals of the Second Great Awakening had transformed the nature and definition of religious benevolence in America. Both groups of urban Friends in the early nineteenth century tried to make sense of the Quaker experience in light of an encroaching evangelical constituency. As evangelical associations expanded, Philadelphia Quakers made explicit choices regarding what they deemed appropriate religious activism in an effort to define the nature of the Quaker religious experience and community. Individual decisions regarding which benevolent societies to support largely determined the side one took in the great division within Quakerism in 1827.

Although under the surface much of the time, contrasting visions of Quaker spirituality remained alive during the decades that followed the American Revolution reinforcing the tensions within the ranks of Quakers. Friends in Philadelphia seemed to be divided by the complex

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[5] See, for example, Frederick Tolles, *Meeting House and Counting House: The Quaker Merchants of Colonial Philadelphia, 1682-1763* (Chapel Hill, 1948); Sydney V. James, *A People Among Peoples: Quaker Benevolence in Eighteenth-Century America* (Cambridge, MA, 1963); Jack Marietta, *The Reformation of American Quakerism, 1748-1783* (Philadelphia, 1984); Jean R. Soderlund, *Quakers and Slavery: A Divided Spirit* (Princeton, 1985); J. William Frost, *The Quaker Family in Colonial America: A Portrait of the Society of Friends* (New York, 1973); and Barry Levy, *Quakers and the American Family: British Quakers in the Delaware Valley, 1650-1765* (New York, 1988). Two recent exceptions to colonial-centered Quaker historiography are Hamm, *Transformation of American Quakerism*, and Ingle, *Quakers in Conflict*. A cursory glance at the journal *Quaker History* over the past two decades reveals that articles on the eighteenth century far outnumber articles on the nineteenth century, perhaps as much as three to one.

centrifugal forces unleashed during the early republic. Urban Friends had to confront not only a more commercialized and industrialized economy, but they also encountered a popular egalitarian sensibility that increasingly placed its stamp upon religious life in the North. As historians have recently noted, an expanding marketplace of religious ideas and groups corresponded with a market revolution that transformed social and economic relationships at the beginning of the nineteenth century. A spirit of entrepreneurial and technological opportunity produced new strategies and institutions for religious action, but it also spawned a determined group of opponents who invoked other facets of this new democratic ethos to justify their ardent resistance to those new market-oriented practices.[6]

It was within this context that two competing "revitalization movements" were at work within the Society of Friends in Philadelphia, each seeking to determine the direction of Quaker spirituality in the new nation. Growing numbers of Friends wished to see Quaker doctrines and practices remain within the traditions of Protestantism, not greatly at odds with those expressed by their Episcopal, Presbyterian, or Methodist neighbors. Other Friends hoped to return the Society to what they perceived to be its mystical and quietist roots, and to its strict testimony on plainness and simplicity. These rival visions of Quaker religiosity could be witnessed most clearly in the differing reactions to the growing power and influence of evangelical benevolent societies. Hicksite hostility toward evangelical benevolence, in particular, exposes an important, although rarely examined, opposition among religious folk against evangelical reform during the early nineteenth century.

Quakers had been active in benevolent societies for three-quarters of a century before the 1827 schism. The first private charities in colonial Philadelphia grew out of an expansive benevolent vision among urban Quakers.[7] Following the Revolution, Quaker men joined with men of

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[6] Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven, 1989); Charles Sellers, *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815-1846* (New York, 1991); Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York, 1991), chap. 18. See also George M. Thomas, *Revivalism and Cultural Change: Christianity, Nation Building, and the Market in the Nineteenth-Century United States* (Chicago, 1989); R. Laurence Moore, *Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans* (New York, 1986); and Moore, *Selling God: American Religion in the Marketplace of Culture* (New York, 1994).

[7] James, *A People Among Peoples*, 205-12; Carl Bridenbaugh, *Cities in the Wilderness: The First Century of Urban Life in America* (New York, 1938), 235-36; Carl

other denominations in humanitarian associations for manumitting slaves, reforming prisons, educating poor children, and rehabilitating "fallen" women. Friends exerted a guiding influence that far exceeded their declining proportion among the city's religious groups. Between 1780 and 1800, Quakers played a central role, often outnumbering members of other churches, in the Pennsylvania Abolition Society, Philadelphia Society for Alleviating the Miseries of Public Prisons, First Day Society, Philadelphia Dispensary, and Magdalen Society of Philadelphia. They also helped establish charity schools in and around the city, and founded a Friend's boarding school in Westtown, Pennsylvania. These efforts placed Quakers like Caleb Lownes and Thomas Harrison alongside Episcopalian, Lutheran, and Presbyterian reformers, such as Benjamin Rush and Robert Ralston, whose reforming vision had been shaped by a melding of republicanism and Christianity. Quaker women also carved out a public space for themselves during the 1790s by creating new benevolent societies operated solely by women. A close circle of young, unmarried Quaker women led by Ann Parrish established the nation's first female charity society in 1795 and followed that quickly with two charity school societies for instructing black women and poor children.[8] This was just the first spark in a larger outburst of women's activism following the Revolution. Ten years after the first women's organization, female charitable societies had been organized up and down the eastern seaboard. These actions placed Philadelphia Friends at the pioneering forefront of voluntarism: the unique dualism of individualistic and associational impulses in American religious life expressed through voluntary benevolent associations.[9]

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and Jessica Bridenbaugh, *Rebels and Gentlemen: Philadelphia in the Age of Franklin* (New York, 1942), 233-35, 244-47.

[8] Among the many sources on Quakers and late eighteenth-century benevolence are the minute books of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society, Philadelphia Prison Society, First Day Society, Female Society for the Relief of the Distressed, and Society for the Free Instruction of African Females. Margaret Morris Haviland, "Beyond Women's Sphere: Young Quaker Women and the Veil of Charity in Philadelphia, 1790-1810," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 51 (July 1994), 419-46; James, *A People Among Peoples*; and Marietta, *Reformation of American Quakerism*. For the transatlantic connection of commerce and reform among Friends, see David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770-1823* (Ithaca, 1975), chap. 5; and Thomas L. Haskell, "Capitalism and the Origins of the Humanitarian Sensibility," *American Historical Review*, 90 (Apr., June 1985), 339-61, 547-66.

[9] A Significantly, Philadelphia Friends created these voluntary associations outside the oversight of Monthly or Yearly Meetings, thereby opening the door for Quaker involvement with non-Friends, and heightening tensions already brewing among reforming

These new Quaker philanthropic endeavors have provoked two seemingly contradictory interpretations of the motivations behind Quaker benevolent activism in the late eighteenth century. Sydney James has argued in *A People Among Peoples* that benevolent activity provided Philadelphia Friends with a continued opportunity to gain respect from non-Friends and to demonstrate the truth of Quaker principles following their divorce from political power in Pennsylvania in the 1750s. Rather than remove themselves completely from "the world," prominent Friends hoped that they might maintain an outward and public influence upon Philadelphia's religious culture. Benevolent institutions gave prominent Quakers an outlet for shaping the city's political and social agenda, even while they remained outside the electoral power structure in the new republic. In James's words, benevolent societies "taught non-Friends how to do good and think well of Friends." Jack Marietta challenged James's thesis in *The Reformation of American Quakerism*, arguing that eighteenth-century Quaker philanthropy represented a desire to withdraw from the community rather than to maintain a visible public role. Benevolence was merely part of the internal reformation of the Society of Friends, maintaining their identity as a distinct sect. Quakers chose Indians, prisoners, and slaves as the objects of their benevolence because these groups operated outside the boundaries of white society; they were kindred outcasts in revolutionary America. In Marietta's view, Friends' activism remained "consistent with the Quaker withdrawal" that marked their sectarian reformation in the mid-eighteenth century. The Quakers whom Marietta described had no desire to maintain a public presence within the city's religious culture.[10]

Friends. Perhaps the Yearly Meeting refused to support these charities, as it did the Friends Asylum for the Insane in 1816, and the Adephi charity school society between 1808 and 1820; Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Minutes, 1816, 274, as cited in Frost, "Years of Crisis and Separation," 62; William C. Kashatus III, "The Inner Light and Popular Enlightenment: Philadelphia Quakers and Charity Schooling, 1770-1820" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1993), 238-39.

[10] James, *A People Among Peoples*, 193-215 (quotation at 214); Marietta, *Reformation of American Quakerism*, 111-27, 272-79 (quotation at 273). A complementary argument to James's can be found in Richard Bauman, *For the reputation of truth: politics, religion, and conflict among the Pennsylvania Quakers, 1750-1800* (Baltimore, 1971), 159-229. Richard Ryerson's recent disclosure of a continued Quaker political presence two decades after the 1756 withdrawal should lead to a reconsideration of Friends' public actions; Richard Alan Ryerson, "Portrait of a Colonial Oligarchy: The Quaker Elite in the Pennsylvania Assembly, 1729-1776," in *Power and Status: Officeholding in Colonial America*, ed. Bruce C. Daniels (Middletown, CT, 1986), 106-35; see also Margaret Morris

James's and Marietta's interpretations offer not an impassable divide, but rather two different but perhaps complementary ways to glimpse the dynamic nature of Quakerism in the early republic. These scholars have identified two centrifugal forces at work among Philadelphia Quakers, and as a result, two opposing visions of the Quaker experience drawing Friends in competing directions since the mid-eighteenth-century revival. One was inward, withdrawn, and sectarian; the other was outward, public, and instrumental. Beneath those two competing impulses lay several subtly different layers of motives and intentions. Jean Soderlund has contrasted Friends' "tribalistic" and "humanitarian" reform traditions in her analysis of the antislavery actions of eighteenth-century Pennsylvania Quakers. Friends whose principal objective was justice for African Americans evinced a humanitarian impetus, while other Quakers adhered to a tribalistic desire to purify the sect from the evil of slaveholding. Yet their goals proved complementary. By the 1780s and 1790s, however, the humanitarian desires of Friends increasingly came into conflict with tribalist desires, as many Quakers turned their concern for social justice into a shared public activism with non-Friends in benevolent societies. Hence, when the meaning of benevolence began to change in the early republic, when humanitarian reforms gave way to evangelistic benevolence, and when perfectionist and "ultraist" reforms challenged the limitations of benevolence, urban Friends faced several divisive alternatives. Whether inward or outward, sectarian or public, tribalistic or humanitarian, these competing impulses offer an intriguing starting point for examining the history of Philadelphia Quakers between the Revolution and the 1827 schism. Both forces remained active among Philadelphia Quakers in the early republic, offering different motivations for benevolent activism. Although certain Friends were able to act within both traditions, others were more likely to associate themselves with one or the other of these impulses. Some Quakers gravitated toward the outward public role that cooperation in benevolent operations gave them. Others wished to remain benevolent yet insulated from other Protestant groups, and moved toward associations comprising exclusively Friends. These two competing visions of the Quaker experience usually remained latent, not producing discord or opposing parties of Friends until the 1820s, when an evangelical awakening reached a fever pitch, forcing Philadel-

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Haviland, "In the World, But Not of the World: The Humanitarian Activities of Philadelphia Quakers, 1790-1820," (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1992), 34.

phia's Quakers to take a stand in relationship to a changing religious culture that increasingly placed them on the margins.[11]

The Second Great Awakening had a pervasive impact on Philadelphia's religious culture, as evangelicalism influenced the life experiences of various social groups and classes. Philadelphians witnessed nearly all facets of America's religious awakening: quiet and sedate revivals similar to those in New England; controversial "new measures" promoted by urban revivalists like Charles Finney; perfectionist and utopian communities; iconoclastic preachers; and, most prominently, a multitude of voluntary associations for evangelizing the lost and curbing their vices. Both groups of Friends were forced then to confront an ascendant evangelical presence in the city's religious culture. As evangelical associations expanded, Orthodox and Hicksite Friends reacted to the strategies and successes of evangelical reforms in different and opposing ways, each trying to define a true Quaker religious experience and community. Each side's response to evangelical benevolence also revealed the competing Quaker reactions to the commercialized democracy developing in the early nineteenth century. Yet responses to a religious marketplace in the 1820s and to the new institutional forms it produced proved to be more complex than a simple conflict between innovators and traditionalists. Both groups of Friends embraced various but different aspects of that democratic culture in order to pursue their objectives for controlling the destiny of the Society of Friends.

Between 1800 and the 1820s, evangelical Protestants borrowed voluntary association techniques pioneered by eighteenth-century Quakers and adapted them for their own goal of converting Americans to an evangelical view of salvation and Christian morality. Evangelical converts embraced a new, individualistic conception of the self—a "new birth"—marked by the achievement of self-mastery over sinful desires and behavior. Yet an evangelical's conversion experience also demanded a collective expression, an identification with a mission. Benevolence was the logical outcome of that dynamic, the fruit of one's new birth. Baptist minister William Staughton described the ideal benevolent evangelical before a meeting of the Philadelphia Missionary Society. "He is led forth by a conviction of the value of a soul, by the attractions of divine love," Staughton declared, and "goes out with the joy which springs from

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[11] Soderlund, *Quakers and Slavery*, 170-87; John L. Thomas, "Romantic Reform in America, 1815-1865," *American Quarterly*, 17 (Winter 1965), 656-81; Nancy A Hewitt, *Women's Activism and Social Change: Rochester, New York, 1822-1872* (Ithaca, 1984), chaps. 2-4; James, *A People Among Peoples*, 215.

benevolence. . . . None of us liveth to himself, none of us dieth to himself."[12] Even those evangelicals who felt uneasy about the excesses of revivalism, found in benevolent societies a way to express the soul-winning zeal of their evangelical identity. Sunday schools, along with Bible, tract, and missionary societies quickly became popular methods for spreading a nationwide evangelical awakening.

Evangelical benevolent activity accelerated after 1810. Thousands of new evangelistic organizations arose seemingly overnight in all regions of the country. In Philadelphia alone between 1808 and 1817, evangelicals founded a new Missionary Society, Bible Society, Auxiliary Bible Society, Female Bible Society, Tract Society, Female Tract Society, Female Episcopal Tract Society, and Female Domestic Missionary Society; and forty-one new evangelical Sunday schools opened under the umbrella of the Sunday and Adult School Union. By the early 1820s, one in every four school-age children in Philadelphia was enrolled in a Sunday school. Local societies soon became interconnected with a national network of evangelical organizations. The American Bible Society, American Tract Society, and American Sunday School Union developed into major publishing enterprises, spearheading a commercial revolution in cheaply printed materials. Evangelical societies exhibited in their behavior the social transformations that shaped the early republic. Voluntarist activism, combined with commercial and entrepreneurial ideologies, harmonized the changing lives of thousands of middle-class Americans with a new definition of spiritual community in an industrializing society. Evangelical activists demonstrated that they were not backward-looking reactionaries; instead, they emerged frequently as leaders in new economic, political, and religious developments in antebellum America.[13]

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[12] William Staughton, *Missionary-Encouragement: A Discourse, Delivered . . . before the Philadelphia Missionary Society and the Congregation of the Baptist Meeting House, Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1798), 13, 15. See also Joseph Pilmore, "Sermon at St. Paul's Church, Text of Amos 7:2," [June 1816], Joseph Pilmore Sermons (Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia); and James Patterson, *A Sermon Preached for the Young Ladies' Missionary Society, of Philadelphia, in the First Presbyterian Church, of this City, on the 26th of Feb., 1826* (Philadelphia, 1826), 11-12.

[13] Bruce Allen Dorsey II, "City of Brotherly Love: Religious Benevolence, Gender, and Reform in Philadelphia, 1780-1844" (Ph.D. diss., Brown University, 1993), chap. 2; Anne M. Boylan, *Sunday School: The Formation of an American Institution, 1790-1880* (New Haven, 1988), 10-11; *The Third Report of the Philadelphia Sunday and Adult School Union* (Philadelphia, 1820), 59; population of school age children is from Everett S. Lee and Michael Lalli, "Population," in *The Growth of the Seaport Cities, 1790-1825.* Proceedings of a conference sponsored by the Eleutherian Mills-Hagley Foundation, Mar.

Most Friends shared a similar set of attitudes in their initial reaction to the new evangelical benevolent societies in Philadelphia. As a rule, Quakers responded to the growth of evangelical societies by trying to remain faithful to the Quaker testimony on plainness and simplicity and to avoid compromising the Society's unique beliefs. Quaker attitudes toward the earliest Bible societies provide a good example of this. Philadelphia Friends remained intentionally aloof from participation in evangelical Bible societies because of their offense at what they described as the "complimentary speeches" and "tone of exaggeration" that characterized those societies' public meetings. The millennial fervor of evangelical rhetoric was particularly foreign to the Quaker experience. Many Friends feared that by participating in these societies, they "were in danger of being drawn into a spirit of ostentatious benevolence." Benevolence, they believed, should be carried out with greater modesty and less pomp. Philadelphia's Quakers kept their distance from the city's Bible societies for yet another reason emerging from Friends' peculiar language about the Scriptures. They rejected Bible societies' reference to the Bible as the "Word of God," a title they reserved only for Jesus Christ himself. What might appear as a trivial distinction was a telling example of Quaker efforts to maintain their own identity and beliefs amidst the onslaught of a rapidly growing evangelical religious culture. Quaker benevolent activity, like much of the rest of the Quaker religious experience, was driven by a desire for unity and harmony. They continued to organize associations composed exclusively of Friends in the early republic to ensure that unity they could not experience within interdenominational societies. The Association of Friends for the Instruction of Poor Children justified its exclusive Quaker membership and peculiar Quaker business methods as the only guarantee that the society would be managed "with harmony and advantage." Even the simple procedure of calling for a vote was foreign to many Quakers' experience, since Friends preferred to make decisions based on the "sense" of the assembly. Interdenominational societies were far from raucous and disorderly assemblies of disunion and strife. Participation within them, however, required compromises that many Philadelphia

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17-19, 1966, ed. David T. Gilchrist (Charlottesville, VA, 1967), Table IV, 34-36; David Paul Nord, "The Evangelical Origins of Mass Media in America, 1815-1835," *Journalism Monographs*, 88 (May 1984), 1-31; Charles I. Foster, *An Errand of Mercy: The Evangelical United Front, 1790-1837* (Chapel Hill, 1960); Wood, *Radicalism of the American Revolution*, 328-36.

Quakers at the beginning of the nineteenth century were unwilling to make.[14]

The emergence of two factions among Philadelphia Friends corresponded with a more fervent articulation of opposing perspectives on the dominant evangelical culture and particularly on evangelical reform activities. The battle lines between the Orthodox and Hicksite parties became drawn, in part, around the institutions and goals of evangelical benevolence. Orthodox Friends could see no harm in associating with the successful enterprises of their evangelical neighbors. One Quaker woman expressed this Orthodox perspective in her antebellum diary: "What reason is there, that we should not unite in benevolent works, because we unite our efforts with a Christian who has a different name?" Hicksite Friends, on the other hand, simultaneously opposed both the methods of evangelical benevolence and Orthodox Friends' infatuation with those new benevolent societies.[15]

Philadelphia Quakers were well aware of Elias Hicks's opposition to Bible and missionary societies. Hicks had preached on numerous occasions in the city that these organizations were an evil that Friends should shun. Although nearing seventy, Hicks's quietism made him anything but quiet. Although his friends may have characterized his public speeches as evoking a "humble Christian spirit," his written works could be biting and fierce. Hicks's contempt for evangelical benevolence could not easily be missed: "All these associations," Hicks declared, "these Bible Societies, and Missionary Societies and Associations, set up in the wisdom of man, must all fall to the ground; they must be broken to pieces." Friends must "have no fellowship with those works of darkness." On another occasion, Hicks wrote in a Philadelphia magazine that Bible and missionary societies "are more pernicious to the real spread of the true gospel of Christ, and more oppressive, than all the gambling and horse racing in the country."[16] Throughout the 1820s, Philadelphia's

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[14] *The Friend,* 1 (2nd mo., 2, 1828), 122; 2 (10th mo., 3, 1829), 404; Benjamin Ferris, *Letters of Paul and Amicus, Originally Published in the Christian Repository* . . . (Wilmington, DE, 1823), 10; *A Sketch of the Origin and Progress of the Aldelphi School in the Northern Liberties, Established Under the Direction of the Philadelphia Association of Friends for the Instruction of Poor Children* (Philadelphia, 1810).

[15] Ann Taylor Updegraff Diary, 10th mo. 7, 1844, Updegraff Family Papers (Quaker Collection, Haverford College, Haverford, PA), cited in Hamm, *Transformation of American Quakerism,* 25.

[16] Elias Hicks, *A Series of Extemporaneous Discourses, Delivered in the Several Meetings of the Society of Friends, in Philadlephia, Germantown, Abington, Byberry, Newton, Falls, and Trenton* . . . (Philadelphia, 1825), 291; *The Reformer,* 2 (June 1,

Hicksite Friends continued to repeat long-standing Quaker objections to joining these societies. They alluded to reports that English Friends had been swept into the circle of evangelical societies, and "were tickled with the plaudits bestowed upon them." They feared that Philadelphia Friends just as easily might be tempted to abandon Quaker principles of modesty for social acceptance in the broader community. Yet at the same time, Hicks and his supporters began to express new and pointed arguments against evangelical benevolence. This critique gives us a glimpse of the Hicksite vision of the Quaker experience, as well as their critical perspective on the prevailing religious culture in Philadelphia.[17]

Hicksites feared that involvement with other denominations would corrupt the purity and distinctiveness of Quakers. Too many urban Friends, they sensed, had already begun mirroring the religious culture around them. Joining in evangelical benevolent enterprises would be one more breach in the wall separating Friends from other Christian neighbors. Hicks lamented that evangelical Quakers had "quieted their consciences so as to get along easy in the Mixture with the multitude," lessening in his opinion "our usefulness as a peculiar people called to hold forth to the world of mankind pure and peculiar testimonies." Hicksites further argued that evangelical societies had become too easily corrupted from the outside, willing to accept financial support from influential persons who could be characterized at best as only nominally Christian.[18]

Hicksite opposition to evangelical benevolence also was fueled by a strong tinge of democratic anticlericalism. Evangelical institutions, they argued, had been designed to further the power and authority of those they called "hireling Priests." Hicks and his followers expressed anticlerical sentiments that reflected a wider assault on aristocratic pretensions, a common feature of many religious movements in the new American democracy. A host of popular religious movements emerged in the antiauthoritarian climate of the early republic with voices more in tune with the egalitarian aspirations of ordinary Americans. Whether "Christ-ians," Campbellites, Universalists, primitive Methodists, or antimission Baptists, these religious movements shared a broad-based appeal to common folk and a contempt for Calvinism. They exploited a

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1821), 138; Anna Davis Hallowell, ed., *James and Lucretia Mott: Life and Letters* (Boston, 1884), 80.

[17] Ferris, *Letters of Paul and Amicus*, 19-28, 34. See also *The Berean*, 1 (Mar. 9, 1824), 31; *ibid.*, (Aug. 31, 1824), 185-87; *ibid.*, (Mar. 22, 1825), 399-400; *ibid.*, 2 (Mar. 21, 1826), 289.

[18] Ingle, *Quakers in Conflict*, 73-75; Forbush, *Elias Hicks*, 153; *The Friend*, 1 (2nd mo., 2, 1828), 122.

new breed of leadership—populist religious promoters and entrepreneurs without the elite pedigree of well-established clergy. They branded under the derogatory term "Orthodoxy" all the pernicious beliefs and practices of the Calvinist tradition: predestination and election, religious intolerance, creed-making, an educated and over-paid clergy, and anything that smelled of theocracy.[19] Philadelphia attracted many of these new itinerant religious leaders who assailed "Orthodoxy" at every turn. Elias Smith, the Connecticut-born ex-Baptist and founder of the Christian Connection, organized a Christ-ian congregation in the city in 1807, and there he published his weekly newspaper *The Herald of Gospel Liberty* from 1812 to 1816. With the nation's first religious newspaper as his forum, Smith attacked religious intolerance, "priestcraft," ecclesiastical authority, theological seminaries, and opulent meeting-houses, while challenging churches to return to the simplicity of Christ. Within Smith's vision, synods, presbyteries, associations, and missionary societies were all artificial "engines" corrupting the church and usurping the work of the Holy Spirit. A tireless pamphleteer and publisher, Smith became one of the founding spirits behind a blossoming antimission sensibility. Lorenzo Dow, the wild and outspoken Methodist itinerant, also ministered briefly in Philadelphia after 1815. Dow shared Smith's disdain for Calvinist theology and clerical authority, though his talents resided more in the spoken than the written word.[20]

The most caustic and forthright critic of evangelical benevolence in Philadelphia was Theophilus Ransom Gates, a self-affirmed and thoroughly non-sectarian preacher and polemicist. Like Smith and Dow, he also had been born on an impoverished Connecticut farm. From the earliest age, young Theophilus was consumed by nagging doubts about his own assurance of salvation. He wrestled within his family's Calvinist faith in order to satisfy his longing to know for certain whether or not he was saved. As a young man he threw a stone at a tree to resolve the issue once and for all: "If I hit it, it was to signify that I should be saved; but

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[19] Hatch, *Democratization of American Christianity*, 44-46, 99-100, 170-79.

[20] J. Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, *History of Philadelphia, 1609-1884* (3 vols., Philadelphia, 1884), II, 1402-03; Hatch, *Democratization of American Christianity*, 36-40, 68-81, 125-41; Elias Smith, *The Life, Conversion, Preaching, Travels and Suffering of Elias Smith* (Portsmouth, NH, 1816); William G. McLoughlin, *New England Dissent, 1630-1833: The Baptists and the Separation of Church and State* (2 vols., Cambridge, MA, 1971), II, 745-49; Lorenzo Dow, *The Dealings of God, Man, and the Devil: As Exemplified in the Life, Experience and Travels of Lorenzo Dow . . .* (1833; rep., New York, 1856); Charles Coleman Sellers, *Lorenzo Dow: The Bearer of the Word* (New York, 1928).

if I missed the tree or stake, it was a sign to me that I was lost." Whether or not he hit the tree, Gates did not record, only that the test did not satisfy him, and over the next half-dozen years he tried it "a thousand times or more." Eventually, Gates abandoned his parents' poverty (along with their Calvinism) and set off on a physical and spiritual pilgrimage from New England to the South, where he eventually found an "experimental knowledge" of God's love and a conviction that true Christianity could be experienced only outside the structures that men, not God, created. He rejected the sacraments, ceremonies, creeds, and hierarchy of organized religion. Gates had developed a completely nonsectarian faith, bordering on Christian anarchism, by the time he settled in Philadelphia in 1813.[21]

In 1820, Gates began publishing *The Reformer*, a monthly journal that served as the clearinghouse for those dissatisfied with the direction of America's religious culture during the Second Great Awakening. Under Gates's editorship, *The Reformer* attracted national attention for its scathing assaults on the institutional pillars of evangelical benevolence. For fifteen years Gates collected and disseminated opinions critical of clerical designs and pretensions, ecclesiastical hierarchy, theological seminaries, and especially the new institutions of the evangelical awakening. *The Reformer* operated as the most important organ for the opposition cause in America throughout the 1820s. Gates's journal became a central exchange for the numerous books, journals, and correspondence flowing from the enemies of evangelical benevolence. *The Reformer* thus served as a voice of rage for an unlikely company of religious dissidents—antimission Baptists, reformed Methodists, Universalists, free-thinkers, German Lutherans, and Hicksite Quakers. Since Gates spoke for no sect in particular, each group saw in the pages of *The Reformer* an ally for its own fears of the looming dangers of evangelical predominance in America's religious culture.[22] Many of Philadelphia's Hicksite Quakers undoubtedly contributed and subscribed, or at least had

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[21] Theophilus R. Gates, *The Life and Writings of Theophilus R. Gates* (2d ed., Philadelphia, 1818), 15-55 (quotation at 11); Charles Coleman Sellers, *Theophilus, the Battle-Axe: A History of the Lives and Adventures of Theophilus Ransom Gates and the Battle-Axes* (Philadelphia, 1930), 11-50; Byron Cecil Lambert, *The Rise of the Anti-Mission Baptists: Sources and Leaders, 1800-1840* (New York, 1980), 155-61.

[22] Lambert, *Rise of the Anti-Mission Baptists*, 186, 174, 204-05, 214-26; Hatch, *Democratization of American Christianity*, 96-97, 174-79; Paul E. Johnson and Sean Wilentz, *The Kingdom of Matthias* (New York, 1994), chap. 2; Deborah Vansau McCauley, *Appalachian Mountain Religion: A History* (Urbana, 1995), 22-27; *The Reformer,* 5 (Apr. 1, 1824), 79-82.

some exposure, to *The Reformer,* or to journals of a kindred spirit, such as *The Berean* published in Wilmington, Delaware.

The Reformer's hostility toward the activities of evangelical benevolence expressed the widespread populist, anti-Calvinist sensibility in the early republic, which Hicksite Quakers found especially attractive. True religion, these opponents asserted, could not be found in the outward forms and practices commonly associated with Calvinist Orthodoxy. "Nearly all that now passes for virtue and religion in the world," voiced *The Reformer*, whether it was Sunday schools, missionary, or Bible society activity, "is but a specious show." Instead, true religion must be an inward experience, "a real heartfelt acquaintance and co-operation with [God]" unattached to outward forms, "independent of creeds"; a faith of simplicity, piety, and divine light. The spectacular growth of evangelical societies, their critics argued, did not signal an expanding piety within the community. Equating the spread of Bible and missionary societies with a general diffusion of religious sentiments and expecting the imminent dawning of a millennial age were merely overwrought delusions. Contributors to *The Reformer* embraced a much more pessimistic view of the state of religion in America than their evangelical counterparts. "True piety and righteousness," suggested one woman, "were never at a much lower ebb." Another charged that "Holy Alliances, missionary associations, and all other combinations formed either by political tyrants or corrupt priests," rather than hastening the millennial day, would "be only obstacles in the way of its taking place." A truly Christian society should be marked by humility, simplicity, and restraint from luxury and economic exploitation, more genuine signs of Christian conduct than the large sums donated to evangelical enterprises.[23] Little wonder, then, that Hicksite Quakers embraced this assault upon evangelical benevolence, particularly when it was voiced in a rhetoric that resonated with Quaker testimonies on simplicity and inward piety that they so strongly admired.

Hicksites and other critics were most angered and offended by the fundraising practices of evangelical societies. Combining an antipathy to a hired ministry with a paternalist sense of benevolence, Hicksite Friends repeatedly criticized what they perceived as the money-grubbing of evangelical organizations. In a sermon preached in Philadelphia in 1824, Hicks stressed the Christian's call to plead the cause of the widow: "How

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[23] *The Reformer,* 1 (Jan. 1, 1820), 6, 12; *ibid.*, (May 1, 1820); *ibid.*, (June 1, 1820), 129; *ibid.*, (July 1, 1820), 146-47, 153-54; *ibid.*, (Oct. 1, 1820), 224-28; *ibid.,* 5 (Jan. 1, 1824), 3; Hatch, *Democratization of American Christianity*, 162-89; Hamm, *Transformation of American Quakerism*, 25.

can those who are taking from the widow to aggrandize themselves be complying with this requirement? Is this not the case with Missionary Societies and those connected with them?" These "hirelings," he contended, "draw or wrench by their pious frauds, every little pittance they possibly can." Hicksite Friends certainly read the frequent vilification of evangelical fundraising in *The Reformer* and *The Berean*. Benevolent activists had perverted Christianity, these critics charged, by reducing it to the balance of an accounting ledger. Ministers were "grinding the face of the poor," duping the people "with their pious frauds," and robbing the widow to enrich themselves and their institutions. Clerical fundraising was dubbed "saintly swindling," and charity sermons described as "milking the goats." "Money is the main-spring of the vast machinery" of the missionary empire, assailed one opponent. It is their sole object, "for according to the plenitude of money which they receive, so they reckon the flourishing state of their affairs and of religion in the world."[24]

Hicksite Friends further distanced themselves from Orthodox Quakers with their fears that the whole enterprise of evangelical benevolence was a well-designed plot to forge a union of church and state, and establish a national religion in America. Religious periodicals sympathetic to the Hicksites were filled with articles on religious toleration, free inquiry, and church and state. Three national evangelical organizations founded in the mid-1820s—the American Sunday School Union in Philadelphia, the American Tract Society, and the American Home Missionary Society—signified a plan to create one national faith and coerce uniformity of religious thought. These societies' boastful language, ringing out with millennial expectancy, further fueled their critics' fears. What evangelicals called the beneficial spread of gospel literature, their opponents described as an insidious design to usurp religious liberty and coerce acquiescence to a single expression of faith. When an anonymous circular in 1825 predicted that the nationwide distribution of religious tracts would produce "a wise *National Creed*," it further exacerbated those fears. Finally, in the same year that schism developed among Philadelphia's Friends, Philadelphia's Presbyterian minister Ezra Stiles Ely confirmed the worst suspicions of evangelical opponents when he delivered a sermon

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[24] Hicks, *Extemporaneous Discourses*, 26-27; Elias Hicks to Willet Hicks, Apr. 25, 1821, quoted in Forbush, *Elias Hicks*, 193; *The Reformer,* 3 (Sept. 1, 1822), 205; *ibid.*, 2 (Apr. 1, 1821), 91-92; *ibid.*, 7 (Jan. 1826), 10; *ibid.*, 4 (Mar. 1, 1823), 63-65; *ibid.*, 5 (Mar. 1, 1824), 57; *The Berean,* 2 (Mar. 21, 1826), 289; *ibid.*, (Oct. 17, 1825), 126; *ibid.*, 1 (Oct. 12, 1824), 232-34.

calling for "a Christian party in politics." In this context, it was an easy step for critics to link Ely's sermon with the American Sunday School Union's request just six months later for an act of incorporation from Pennsylvania's legislature, depicting both as part of a church-and-state conspiracy, a strategy which garnered enough support to see the ASSU's charter soundly defeated. Like dissenting voices elsewhere in America, Hicksite Friends were deeply afraid that the hegemony of evangelical institutions made the movement toward an established religion not only possible, but perhaps even probable.[25]

The Hicksites' conspiratorial vision echoed a persistent social critique rooted in eighteenth-century republicanism. Critics of evangelical benevolence employed not only the language of republicanism—"power," "slavery," and "liberty"—but also its assault on privilege, hierarchy, and luxury associated with aristocracy. In the midst of the schism, Hicksites accused the Orthodox faction of aristocratic tyranny and religious slavery. Hicksite Friends undoubtedly perceived a dangerous parallel between the Orthodox's insistence upon doctrinal conformity within the Society of Friends and the bold claims of evangelical leaders promising "a wise National Creed." Orthodox leaders in Philadelphia, they argued, had imposed "the influence of an aristocracy" on the Society, and forced the rest of the Quaker community to endure "the very worst of slaveries; the subjugation of the mind." Satirical illustrations published in a pamphlet entitled Hole in the Wall; Or a Peep at the Creed-Worshippers in 1828 expressed similar sentiments (Figures 1 and 2).[26]

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[25] Boylan, *Sunday School*, 70; Nord, "Evangelical Origins of Mass Media," 1-30; *The Berean*, 1 (Mar. 9, 1824), 31; *ibid.*, (July 24, 1824), 140; *ibid.*, (Nov. 9, 1824), 154; *ibid.*, 2 (Sept. 20, 1825), 270; *ibid.*, (Oct. 3, 1825), 332; *ibid.*, (Oct. 17, 1825), 349; *ibid.*, (Oct. 31, 1825), 99-101; *ibid.*, 1 (Mar. 22, 1825), 399-400; *The Reformer*, 1 (May 1, 1820), 115-27; *ibid.*, 6 (Aug. 1, 1825), 126, 129-32; Hatch, *Democratization of American Christianity*, 174-79; Ezra Stiles Ely, *The Duty of Christian Freeman to Elect Christian Rulers: A Discourse Delivered on the 4th of July, 1827, in the Seventh Presbyterian Church, in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1828); Dorsey, "City of Brotherly Love," 309-15; Joseph L. Blau, "The Christian Party in Politics," *Review of Religion*, 11 (1946), 18-35; Bertram Wyatt-Brown, "Prelude to Abolitionism: Sabbatarian Politics and the Rise of the Second Party System," *Journal of American History*, 58 (1971), 316-41.

[26] *Hole in the Wall; or A Peep at the Creed-Worshippers*, 32-36; H. Larry Ingle, "The Hicksite Die is Cast: A Letter of Thomas McClintock, Feb. 1827," *Quaker History*, 75 (Fall 1986), 122.
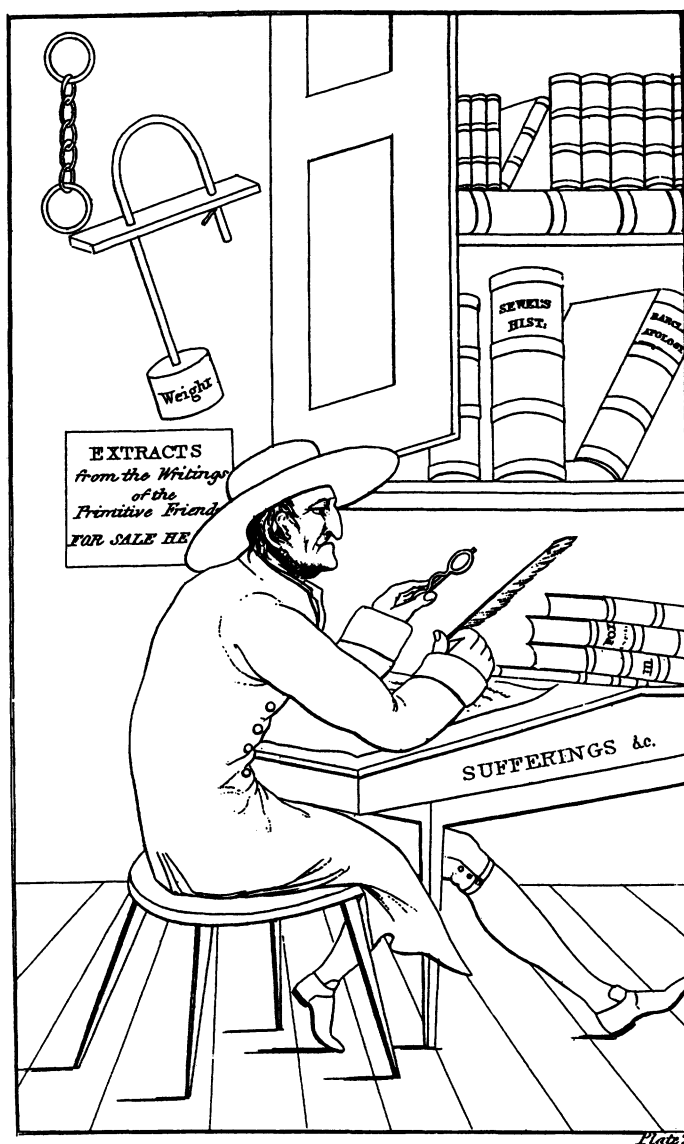
CREED MANUFACTORY

Fig. 1

Hicksite Friends evoked images of religious enslavement and tyranny (*i.e.*, shackles) and a critique of market forces within American religious culture (*i.e.*, "manufactory") in this satirical illustration. *Hole in the Wall: or, A Peep at the Creed-Worshippers* ([Philadelphia], 1828).

Courtesy of Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College.

The appeal of an establishment plot also demonstrated the deep-seated attachment to denominational diversity in American society among antiorthodoxy religious groups. Within a generation of the Revolution, many Americans came to see the amazing proliferation of sects in America not as a chaotic expression of factionalism, but as a prerequisite for the protection of American liberties. An abundance of denominations in America ensured that no one sect would possess power and privilege inaccessible to the others. For many of these religious groups, the interdenominational activity of evangelical associations threatened to undermine the protection of religious liberty in America which denominationalism guaranteed.[27]

The Hicksites' republican critique also evinced an antimaterialist sensibility among those Friends who lamented the decline of Quaker distinctiveness in the city. Peculiarities of dress, language, and social behavior, so greatly prized by Friends in previous centuries, gradually eroded during the early nineteenth century. One English traveler observed that "many of those who retain the name of the sect have laid aside some of the peculiarities by which the more rigid are distinguished." More than a declining use of "thee" and "thou," some Quakers feared that an increasingly commercialized economy undermined the testimony of their fellow Friends. Quakers too frequently "engaged in trade and commerce" and were enticed by the ostentatious wealth and luxury such commercialism encouraged. "The desire to imitate, in expensive habits and modes of living, those whose means are more abundant," they feared, had led many Friends into bankruptcy and financial ruin. Quakers had always struggled with the conflict between the temptations of wealth and fashion and the spiritual life, a struggle which Anthony Benezet described as the "endeavor to reconcile those two contrarities the World and Heaven." But a market revolution and new patterns of widespread consumerism in postrevolutionary Philadelphia—the basis for an emerging middle class—critically exacerbated these tensions. Many urban Friends had become harder to distinguish from any of their other Christian neighbors. That Quakers shed their distinctiveness, not just socially but

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[27] James Madison argued in *The Federalist,* No. 10 that by extending the sphere of factions "you make it less probable that a majority of the whole will have a common motive to invade the rights of other citizens"; *The Federalist Papers*, ed. Clinton Rossiter (New York, 1961), 83; Sidney E. Mead, *The Lively Experiment: The Shaping of Christianity in America* (New York, 1963), 103-33.
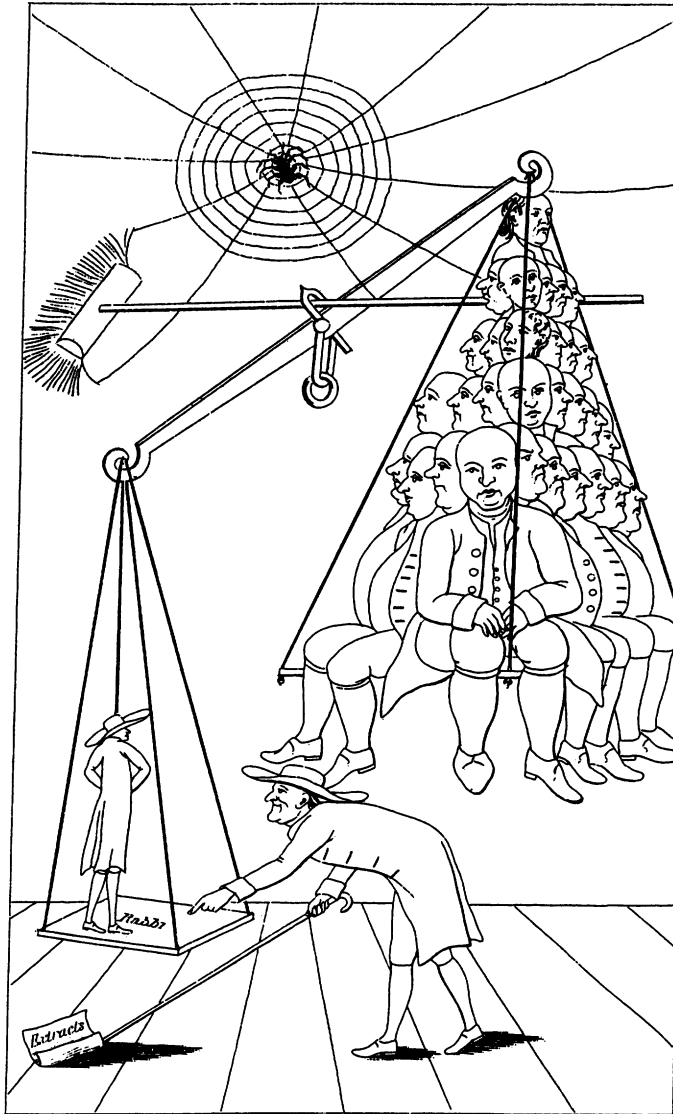
WEIGHT of MEMBERS

Fig. 2

An anti-aristocratic caricature of Orthodox Friends and the Clerk of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting evince the democratic sensibilities of Hicksite Friends. *Hole in the Wall: or, A Peep at the Creed-Worshippers* ([Philadelphia], 1828).

Courtesy of Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College.

also in their theology and religious behavior, was a significant, if as yet
a poorly documented, nineteenth-century phenomenon.[28]

In light of this determined Hicksite opposition to evangelical
benevolence, the drama of schism among Friends played itself out on the
stage of benevolent activism. Patterns of participation among Philadel-
phia Quakers in the city's numerous benevolent societies prior to the
schism exposed the distinctions between Orthodox and Hicksite perspec-
tives on religious benevolence. Decisions by individual Friends regarding
which societies to support often foreshadowed the side they would take
when the Society split in two.

Friends who were active in benevolent societies with non-Quakers
were much more likely to remain in the Orthodox party when the
separation occurred. Two out of every three Quaker men who were
involved in the Abolition Society, First Day Society, Philadelphia
Dispensary, or Magdalen Society (and lived in Philadelphia through the
schism) aligned themselves with the Orthodox party. Quaker activists in
the Prison Society sided almost entirely with the Orthodox, outnumbering
Hicksites by ten to one. Quaker-only organizations, however, did not
enhance tensions mounting within the Society of Friends the way
interdenominational societies did. Associations restricted to Friends-only
membership, like the Adelphi charity school, Friends Asylum for the
Insane, and even the evangelical-modeled Tract Association of Friends,
usually contained an even mix of future Hicksite and Orthodox Quakers.
Exclusively Quaker societies kept alive the tribalist reform tradition, while
at the same time provided a benevolent outlet for Friends.[29]

Quaker women's experience differed from that of the men. Almost
no Quaker women were involved in interdenominational female societies

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[28] Thompson Westcott, *A History of Philadelphia* in 5 volumes (originally published
in the *Sunday Dispatch* 1837-), IV, ch. 514 (American Philosophical Society,
Philadelphia); *Address of the Monthly Meeting of Friends of Philadelphia, To Their
Members* (Philadelphia, 1812), 3, 7; Anthony Benezet to Jonah Thompson, Apr. 24, 1756,
cited in George S. Brookes, *Friend Anthony Benezet* (Philadelphia, 1937), 220; Ingle,
Quakers in Conflict, 73-74; Hallowell, ed., *James and Lucretia Mott: Life and Letters*, 64-
65; Tolles, *Meeting House and Counting House*, 142-43; Anna W. Wood, "Daniel B.
Smith," *Quaker Biographies, Series II* (4 vols., Philadelphia, 1926), I, 8-9, 30-31;
Nicholas B. Wainwright, "The Age of Nicholas Biddle, 1825-1841," in *Philadelphia: A
300-Year History,* ed. Russell F. Weigley *et al.* (New York, 1982), 289.

[29] Of the eighty-six Quaker supporters of the First Day society, forty-six lived through
the schism, and Orthodox Friends accounted for thirty-four (seventy-four percent) while
Hicksites comprised only twelve (twenty-six percent); thirty-five Quakers participated in
the Prison Society, twelve lived through the schism, eleven Orthodox (ninety-two percent)
and one Hicksite (eight percent).

prior to the antebellum antislavery movement. Many female associations existed from which women Friends could choose: the Female Hospitable Society, the Philadelphia Orphan Society, or any of the women's evangelistic societies in the city. They chose instead to express their philanthropic and benevolent aspirations in association with other Friends. All those who had worked in the first Quaker-only female societies of the 1790s and survived to the schism remained within the Orthodox party. The reasons for these differences are elusive. Perhaps the transition from relief models of benevolence to evangelistic ones alienated Quaker women prior to 1830; or perhaps, as Nancy Hewitt recently has suggested, the Hicksite schism resulted in Quaker women gaining greater authority within Friends' meetings, thereby opening a door for new reform activity following the separation.[30]

Despite the alarm raised by Hicksite Friends, Orthodox Quakers did not flock in great numbers into the city's interdenominational evangelical societies. The records of the larger evangelical societies in Philadelphia reveal few Quaker managers or members. Quakers, in fact, accounted for less than one percent of the supporting members of Bible, tract, and Sunday school societies founded by Philadelphia's evangelicals, and the leaders of the Orthodox party could not be found among them.[31] Hicksite accusations expressed more accurately their own fears than the actual behavior of Orthodox Friends. Evangelical hegemony in Philadelphia's religious culture, however, still dramatically influenced the mounting divisions within the Society of Friends. Although Hicksites complained that Orthodox Friends too frequently were joining together with urban evangelicals, it was a more common strategy of Orthodox Friends to establish within the Society of Friends the type of religious societies that they saw thriving in the city. They advocated Quaker Bible, tract, and Sunday school societies more strongly than participation in interdenominational organizations dominated by Presbyterians and Episcopalians.

In 1816, while new evangelical societies were sprouting up throughout the city, reform-minded Quakers organized the Tract Association of

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[30] For the shift in benevolent activism from humanitarian to evangelistic societies, see Dorsey, "City of Brotherly Love," chaps. 2-3; and Nancy A. Hewitt, "The Fragmentation of Friends: The Consequences for Quaker Women in Antebellum America," in *Witnesses for Change: Quaker Women over Three Centuries*, ed. Elizabeth Potts Brown and Susan Mosher Stuard (New Brunswick, NJ, 1989), 93-108. Hewitt's essay signals a call for further research on Quaker women during the early republic.

[31] Based on an analysis of a database of over 4,800 men and women benevolent supporters and activists in Philadelphia; see Dorsey, "City of Brotherly Love," appendix.

Friends to print and distribute religious pamphlets that would "explain and enforce the doctrines of the Christian Religion." The Tract Association consisted of a young group of Quaker reformers whose adult experiences were distinctly shaped by the nineteenth century. Over half of the founding managers had been born after the Revolution, and over three-quarters of them were in their twenties or thirties when they formed the organization. For much of the first decade, the managers were evenly divided between future Hicksites and Orthodox, but on the eve of the schism, Orthodox Quakers like Daniel B. Smith and Abraham Pennock held a firm grip on the Tract Association. Only one Hicksite remained on the Board of Managers in 1826. The Tract Association printed not only Quaker theology and Friends' biographies, but also the popular pamphlets of evangelical reform. Early tract titles included Benjamin Rush's *Inquiry into the Effects of Ardent Spirits*, Mason Weems's *Anecdotes of Gamblers*, as well as pamphlets entitled *On the Holy Scriptures*, *What Shall We Do to be Saved?* and memoirs of pious deceased youths, an evangelistic staple designed to arouse young people to deeper faith by reminding them of the possibility of early death. Association members also distributed tracts aboard steamboats and package ships, and at prisons and poorhouses, much as evangelical tract activists were doing. By 1820, nearly 150,000 tracts had been printed and distributed by the Friends' Tract Association.[32]

Bible societies—the definitive expression of evangelical benevo-lence—proved to be an even sharper dividing line for Philadelphia Friends. The theological battle over whether Friends were a people of the Word or a people of the Inner Light became magnified by the attachment of Orthodox Friends to the evangelical goals of Bible and tract societies. Bible societies represented the way in which evangelism-minded Protestants moved to the forefront of technological and consumer advances in a new print culture. Although no Quakers played a part in the founding or early leadership of the Bible Society of Philadelphia, (America's first Bible society) a small handful of Friends were financial contributors. Four Friends did assist in the creation of the New York-

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[32] *Abstract of the First Annual Report of the Committee of Management of the Association of Friends, for the Printing and Distribution of Tracts on Moral and Religious Subjects* (Philadelphia, 1817), 6, 9-12; *Abstract of the Third and Fourth Annual Reports of the Committee of Management of the Association of Friends, for the Printing and Distribution of Tracts on Moral and Religious Subjects* (Philadelphia, 1820), 3; Edwin B. Bronner, "Distributing the Printed Word: The Tract Association of Friends, 1816-1966," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 91 (July 1967), 342-48.

based American Bible Society in 1816, including John Warder of Philadelphia, who was appointed to the first Board of Managers.[33]

Still, many Orthodox Quakers admired and promoted Bible societies in the city, and they were especially offended by Hicksite opposition and criticism of this activity. The Orthodox journal *The Friend* praised those activists who had "devoted their lives to this great work," concluding that Bible societies were "entitled to our warmest praise." Orthodox Friends accused Hicksites of defaming Bible societies "as an engine of priestcraft and superstition." They have been "classed with agricultural societies, horse racing, and canalling," wrote a contributor to *The Friend*, "and included in the sweeping denunciations that were pronounced against everything done, in what was conveniently called the wisdom of man." According to Orthodox Quakers, Hicksite opposition to Bible societies represented merely a veil covering an underlying antagonism "against the book itself." As a contributor to *The Friend* stated, "They know that the diffusion of the Scriptures is a powerful obstacle to the prevalence of their heterodox notions; and they would conceal their enmity to the Bible under the pretence" that such societies were unfit for the work, "yet the secret ground of their concern is the fear of the doctrines of the sacred volume."[34] Orthodox alarm about Hicksite attitudes toward the Bible must have escalated when word arrived that an uprising and Bible-burning had occurred among Hicks-sympathizing students at Westtown Boarding School, a month prior to the 1827 Yearly Meeting which provoked the separation. An evangelical English Quaker minister recounted it this way:

> . . . last evening we received accounts of an insurrection at Weston [Westtown] School near Philadelphia. It seems the Boys chiefly from 12 to 14 years of age refused to comply with the rules of the School in reading the Scriptures. Every means were used by argument & persuasion . . . , but they persisted urging their right to freedom of opinion, calling the New Testament the "Popes Book," till they began to cut up their Bibles & burn the new Testament.

Although the administration and faculty of the school had sided with the Orthodox, many of its students came from Hicksite families.

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[33] *The First Report of the Bible Society Established at Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1809), 2, 20-29; Edwin B. Bronner, *Sharing the Scriptures: The Bible Association of Friends in America, 1829-1979* (Philadelphia, 1979), 6.

[34] *The Friend,* 1 (2nd mo., 2, 1828), 122; *ibid.*, 2 (10th mo., 3, 1829), 404; *ibid.*, 3 (11th mo, 21, 1829), 48; *ibid.*, 3 (9th mo., 11, 1830), 379-81; 3 (9th mo., 25, 1830), 394-95.

Apparently when Elias Hicks had last preached in the vicinity of the school, he reportedly made some comments about the New Testament remaining in the hands of the Pope for hundreds of years, which stimulated the young boys' actions. Certainly these twelve-to-fourteen-year-olds could have mistaken Hicks's sentiments and taken them out of context. But it was also easy for the Orthodox leadership to be convinced that a boarding school Committee's description of the boys' attempt "to bring the Holy Scriptures into contempt & ridicule" reflected Hicks's views on the Bible, and to assume that the "disorder" and "insubordination" by which they labeled the boys' actions accurately depicted the dangers of the Hicksite separatists. The boys' demand for "their right to freedom of opinion" also clearly indicated that the students had not mistaken the democratic religious sensibility that the Hicksite critique of Orthodoxy embraced.[35]

Two years after the schism, in 1829, Orthodox Friends organized their own Bible society, the Bible Association of Friends. It expressed clearly the Orthodox view that recent divisions among Quakers could only be explained by inattention to the Scriptures. Why else could so many Friends have been so easily swayed by the supposed heresies of Hicks, Orthodox Friends argued, unless they had neglected the study of the Bible within their homes? And what could better explain this neglect but a real shortage of copies of the Scriptures among Friends? Hence, the Bible Association of Friends decided first to distribute Bibles to everyone within the Society of Friends. After that, if money and desire remained, they would begin supplying Bibles to the non-Quaker poor.[36] A "tribalistic" reform impulse persisted even among the Orthodox. Though evangelical Bible societies in the city were concerned first and foremost with using Bibles for proselytizing non-believers, the Orthodox Bible Association placed denominational conformity at the top of its agenda.

A cadre of powerful Orthodox leaders, central figures in the Society's recent and dramatic split—Jonathan Evans, Samuel Bettle, Thomas Stewardson, and Leonard Snowden—topped the list of the Bible Association's founding members. Evans had initiated the conflict between

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[35] Stephen Gould to Thomas Thompson, Apr. 16, 1830 (Westtown Boarding School Archives, Westtown, PA); and Westtown Boarding School, Minutes, 4th mo., 4, 1827, quoted in Margaret A. Hogan, "The Schoolhouse and the Schism: The Influence of the Hicksite Separation on Friends' Central School, Friends Select School, and Westtown Boarding School, 1827-1845," (B.A. thesis, Swarthmore College, 1992), 86-87 (Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College).

[36] George Vaux, *Historical Sketch of the Bible Association of Friends in America* ([Philadelphia, 1896]), 3.

Philadelphia elders and Elias Hicks as early as 1819, when he encouraged the men's section of the Pine Street Monthly Meeting to adjourn and leave the building while Hicks was momentarily addressing the Women's Meeting in another room. Lucretia Mott cynically referred to Evans as "the pope of the day." Bettle had been clerk of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting during the divisive year of 1827. During the heated exchanges of that Meeting, Bettle refused to relinquish his position as clerk, or to recognize a majority vote to replace him with Hicksite John Comly. Rather, he gathered that "the sense of the meeting," by which he meant the influential Orthodox elders, did not wish for him to step down. And Snowden intensified the bitter conflict by refusing to be removed as an elder of the Green Street Meeting, a Hicksite enclave in the city, for his opposition to Hicks. Also, Friends who had been active in a number of the city's benevolent enterprises were noticeably present among the founders of the Bible Association, including Quaker activists Roberts Vaux, Thomas P. Cope, and Abraham Pennock. Many Orthodox Friends, such as these men, had little interest in the theological quibbles between Orthodox and Hicksite Quakers. Cope, a prosperous shipping magnate, and Vaux, whose wealth and temperament made him a full-time philanthropist, supported the Bible Association because they desired to utilize the successful benevolent techniques developed in the city. If evangelical strategies worked, they thought, then Friends should adapt them for their own purposes.[37]

Philadelphia's evangelical culture exerted an obvious influence upon the Bible Association despite its sectarian goals and membership. The association's annual reports and addresses embraced a language similar to evangelical benevolent societies. *An Appeal to the Society of Friends* published by the Bible Association in 1832 employed the common evangelical strategy of alerting its audience to the ever-present possibility of death. Without warning or preparation, "the pale messenger" may come "with his undeniable summons," forcing thoughtful Friends to cry out: "What shall I do to be saved?—Who shall deliver me from the wrath to come?" None of the "many outward helps" to strengthen one's faith, the *Appeal* declared, was more blessed "than the daily and devout study of the Bible." These Quaker Bible advocates also shared with many

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[37] Margaret Hope Bacon, *Valiant Friend: The Life of Lucretia Mott* (New York, 1980), 43; *Constitution and Address of the Bible Association of Friends in America* (Philadelphia, 1829), 9; Ingle, *Quakers in Conflict*, 17-25, 84-86, 136-37, 186-200; Eliza Cope Harrison, ed., *Philadelphia Merchant: The Diary of Thomas P. Cope, 1800-1851* (South Bend, IN, 1978), 39-40, 75, 215.

evangelicals an anxiety about the West and other "newly settled and remote districts," seeing the Bible as the chief instrument of civilization and culture in those regions. Orthodox Quakers also emphasized, along with urban evangelicals, the importance of children and reaching children with religious teaching at a very young age. Soon after the schism, they were arguing that Friends should begin organizing Sunday schools similar to those adopted by evangelicals in the city.[38]

The Bible Association quickly became an instrument for advancing the Orthodox party's evangelical vision of the Quaker experience, and further extending the divisions within the Society of Friends. A circular from the Bible Association's corresponding committee in 1830 encouraged Orthodox minorities within Quarterly Meetings to become involved in organizing Bible societies even if they encountered Hicksite opposition. If just five or six Friends favored the idea of the Bible Association, they urged them to organize in the face of Hicksite disapproval.[39] Clearly, evangelical benevolence not only helped incite the split among Quakers, but it also became the mechanism for continued struggles between competing visions of Quaker spirituality.

If the Orthodox believed that they could create conformity and harmony within the Society by these measures, they were soon disappointed. By the 1830s, Orthodox Meetings throughout America were beginning to divide further between those who advanced the evangelical agenda too far (Gurneyites), and those who still wished to maintain some distinction of Quaker quietism (Wilburites). During the 1830s, English Quakers Hannah Chapman Backhouse and her cousin Joseph John Gurney (brother of English prison reformer Elizabeth Gurney Fry) devoted their extensive visits to America to encouraging Bible societies and First Day (Sunday) schools among American Friends. But Gurney and Backhouse also provoked a vocal opposition led by John Wilbur of Rhode Island. With even fewer doctrinal disputes than the Hicksite schism, the Wilburite separation might be best interpreted as a delayed reenactment of the Hicksite drama in New England and the West. Although Wilbur had opposed Hicks's rationalist theology, his critique of evangelical benevolence could just as easily have come from Elias Hicks's pen or from any of the contributors to *The Berean* or *The Reformer*. Wilbur denounced

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[38] *An Appeal to the Society of Friends in Behalf of the Bible Association of Friends in America* (Philadelphia, 1832), 3-6, 8; *Constitution and Address of the Bible Association of Friends*, 6; Ingle, *Quakers in Conflict*, 69-70; *The Friend,* 3 (8th mo., 7, 1830), 344; (8th mo., 21, 1830), 359-60.

[39] *An Appeal to the Society of Friends*, 18.

"the formation of Bible Societies composed of Bishops, priests and people of divers other denominations," objected to Friends involvement "with the hireling clergy and others," and criticized these "worldly" associations as organs of centralized authority. The inward and outward (tribalistic and humanitarian) impulses of Quaker benevolence continued through the 1840s and 1850s to push Friends in opposing directions. Philadelphia's Orthodox had opened a Pandora's box with their embracing of voluntarism, only to experience first-hand the continuous denominational splintering that characterized nineteenth-century American Protestantism. By 1857, the Orthodox Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, unable to decide which New England meeting (Gurneyite or Wilburite) to recognize as legitimate, severed correspondence with all other Meetings in an effort to isolate themselves from denominational quarreling.[40]

Bible societies came to embody for both sides the differences between their ideals for revitalizing the Society of Friends amid an evangelical culture. The Orthodox viewed Bible societies as tools for preserving doctrinal orthodoxy within the society, maintaining the Society's standing among other Protestants, as well as expanding Quaker involvement in a print and associational revolution that was quickly passing them by. Hicksites viewed these societies as engines of corruption designed to coerce conformity to a creed and dilute the peculiar distinctiveness of the Society. Bible societies also came to represent the new entrepreneurial and technological developments in American religious life. They ushered in an antebellum media revolution thriving on cheaply printed materials, and they established themselves as religious enterprises that rivaled large-scale businesses while aspiring to a uniform national religious culture. Both aspects help explain the simultaneous revulsion and attraction that opposing groups of Friends felt for Bible societies. Ironically, Hicksite Friends unleashed a populist assault, utilizing cheap publications and other techniques within a competitive religious marketplace to advance an explicitly antimaterialist, antimarket critique of the "money-grubbing," market-driven actions of the evangelical associations they opposed.

Perhaps nothing better demonstrates the complexity of Quaker responses to new developments in religious benevolence and makes a more compelling case for further research in this neglected era of Quaker

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[40] Rufus M. Jones, *The Later Periods of Quakerism* (2 vols., London, 1921), I, 488-540 (quotation at 512); Elbert Russell, *The History of Quakerism* (New York, 1942), 329-56; William Hodgson, *Society of Friends in the Nineteenth Century: A Historical View of the Successive Convulsions and Schisms Therein During That Period* (2 vols., Philadelphia, 1875-1876), I, 229-349; Hamm, *Transformation of American Quakerism*, 28-34.

history, than the differing perspectives the two Friends' parties held
regarding the slavery problem and abolitionist reform in antebellum
America.[41]   Both Orthodox and Hicksite Friends opposed slavery, yet
their differing approaches to the new abolitionism, which emerged in the
aftermath of their separation, create even further complications for
historical interpretation.   Nearly all Philadelphia Quakers were cognizant
of Elias Hicks's persistent antislavery stance throughout the early
nineteenth century.   Hicks pioneered a movement renouncing the
consumption of any items produced by slave labor.   He published a
pamphlet outlining his "free produce" ideas as early as 1811, and
preached regularly on this topic in Philadelphia throughout the 1810s and
1820s.   It even became part of the lore of Elias Hicks that while semi-
conscious on his deathbed he still possessed the resolve to refuse a cotton
blanket and request a wool one in its stead.[42]

Still, the relationship between Hicks's abolitionist principles and the
broader religious and cultural divisions among Friends remains more
problematic.   In the 1850s, Lydia Maria Child alleged that the antislavery
and free produce issues were among the principal causes of the schism;
a century later, Hicks's biographer Bliss Forbush argued that Hicks
"linked opposition to Bible Societies with his concern for the American
Negroes."   Yet, evidence to confirm either of these conclusions has not
yet been discovered.   What is apparent is that Hicks's free produce ideas
generated turmoil among Hicks's opponents as well as his supporters in
Philadelphia.   Orthodox leaders, such as Jonathan Evans, expressed their
unmistakable contempt for Hicks's high moral stance on slave produce,
and a Free Produce Society dominated by Hicksite Friends emerged in the
same year as the schism.[43]   But even Hicks's most loyal and famous

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[41]   J. William Frost's observation in 1978 that research and writing in Quaker history
since 1950 revealed that "historians have been more interested in Quakers and slavery in
the colonial period than after 1800" still rings true at the end of the twentieth century.   J.
William Frost, "The Origins of the Quaker Crusade Against Slavery: A Review of Recent
Literature," *Quaker History*, 67 (Spring 1978), 58.

[42]   Elias Hicks, *Letters of Elias Hicks, Including Also Observations on the Slavery of
the Africans and Their Descendants, and on the Use of the Produce of Their Labor*
(Philadelphia, 1861); Barnabas Bates, *Remarks on the Character and Exertions of Elias
Hicks, in the Abolition of Slavery* . . . (New York, 1830), 10-11.

[43]   Lydia Maria Child, *Isaac T. Hopper: A True Life* (Boston, 1853), 273-86;
Forbush, *Elias Hicks*, 193; Emmor Kimber to Elias Hicks, Jan. 25, 1829, cited in Ingle,
Quakers in Conflict, 20, 255; *Constitution of the Free Produce Society of Pennsylvania*
(Philadelphia, 1827).   On the free produce movement, see Ruth Ketring Nuermberger, *The
Free Produce Movement: A Quaker Protest Against Slavery* (Durham, NC, 1942);   and

supporters, Lucretia and James Mott, antislavery activists in their own right, took a circuitous route to the free produce position. Surely the Motts had listened intently when Elias Hicks proclaimed his free produce message in Philadelphia both in 1812 and 1819. Yet, Lucretia waited until 1825 to adopt a free produce stance for her own household, and James remained in the cotton commission business, buying and selling the products of slave labor, from 1822 until three years after the schism in 1830, despite his position as an officer of the Free Produce Society.[44]

One might naturally expect that Hicksite Friends, who had remained so adverse to joining societies with non-Quakers, would remain aloof from the new abolitionist societies in Philadelphia modeled after Garrison's American Anti-Slavery Society. They might have feared that an evangelical influence could seep into the Society of Friends as it had when English Quakers became involved in the antislavery movement. Yet, it was the Hicksites, not the Orthodox, who more commonly filled the ranks of Philadelphia "immediate" abolition societies, joining with men and women of various religious persuasions including evangelicals. Hicksite Friends comprised between sixty and seventy percent of the known Quakers in Philadelphia's male and female antislavery societies during the 1830s. Apparently Hicksite Friends put aside their reservations about "worldly" reform associations to express their outrage at the injustice of southern slavery and the sinful support of the institution in the North. Perhaps the separation also made them less fearful of outward corruption, freeing them to join with non-Friends in abolitionist societies. In either case, their presence heightened the critical "come-outer" spirit among abolitionists that challenged the intransigence of "orthodox" churches on the slavery issue.[45]

Norman B. Wilkinson, "The Philadelphia Free Produce Attack Upon Slavery," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 66 (July 1942), 294-313.

[44] Hallowell, ed., *James and Lucretia Mott: Life and Letters*, 70-71, 86-87, 106; *Constitution of the Free Produce Society of Pennsylvania*, 7-8.

[45] Edward Grubb, *The Evangelical Movement and Its Impact on the Society of Friends* (Leominster, MA, 1924). Of the twenty-five known Quakers in the Philadelphia Anti-Slavery Society, sixty-eight percent were Hicksites, twenty percent Orthodox, and ten percent unknown. Hicksite women comprised thirteen of the original seventeen white women abolitionists in the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society (three of the other four were Orthodox Friends), and Hicksites accounted for over seventy percent of the Quaker women abolitionists during the Female Society's first fifteen years. Jean R. Soderlund, "Priorities and Power: The Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society," in *The Abolitionist Sisterhood: Women's Political Culture in Antebellum America*, ed. Jean Fagan Yellin and John Van Horne (Ithaca, 1994), 69-70. On the "come-outer" spirit, see John R. McKivigan, *The War Against Proslavery Religion: Abolitionism and the Northern*

Even so, Quaker involvement in immediate abolitionism is filled with incidents difficult to explicate, demanding an interpretive framework that encompasses religion, gender, culture, and race. Orthodox Friends, after all, also had a presence within abolitionist circles. Abraham Pennock, a respected Orthodox leader, served as an officer in the Free Produce Society, the Philadelphia Anti-Slavery Society, and the American Anti-Slavery Society. Both Sarah and Angelina Grimké moved within the circle of Orthodox Friends in Philadelphia before and after the schism, until Angelina's marriage to Theodore Weld (not their antislavery activism) severed that connection. From the opposing camp, many Hicksite meetings looked askance at the abolitionist activities of some of their members. Hicksite abolitionist Isaac T. Hopper, a Philadelphian at the time of the schism, was disowned by the New York Hicksite Meeting in 1842 for his antislavery radicalism and for disrupting the harmony of the meeting by publishing critical remarks on an antiabolitionist Hicksite minister.[46] Finally, the dynamic of gender and public activism among Quaker women reformers begs for explanation, especially in light of Lucretia Mott's strange description of the founding of Philadelphia's Female Anti-Slavery Society in 1833. Mott wrote that she and the other women had no experience "in any assemblies of the kind," being unfamiliar with "preambles, and resolutions, and votings." Since no woman was capable of taking the chair and organizing the meeting, she claimed, "we had to call on James McCrummel, a colored man, to give us aid in the work."[47] What is surprising about this statement is that

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Churches, 1830-1865 (Ithaca, 1984); and Lewis Perry, Radical Abolitionism: Anarchy and the Government of God in Antislavery Thought (Ithaca, 1973).

[46] Gerda Lerner, The Grimké Sisters from South Carolina: Rebels Against Slavery (Boston, 1967), 57-95; Hallowell, ed., James and Lucretia Mott: Life and Letters, 204-22; Isaac T. Hopper, Narrative of the Proceedings of the Monthly Meeting of New-York, and their Subsequent Confirmation by the Quarterly and Yearly Meetings, in the Case of Isaac T. Hopper (New York, 1843); Margaret Hope Bacon, Lamb's Warrior: The Life of Isaac T. Hopper (New York, 1970), 122-41. Hicksite opposition to abolitionist activism spawned a further splintering of the Hicksites when the Pennsylvania Yearly Meeting of Progressive Friends was organized in 1853.

[47] Was it possible that a group of women (including Lucretia Mott), who were most responsible for the advocacy of women's rights before the Civil War, had been untouched by the female culture of politics and benevolence which historians have described for a whole generation of middle-class women in America? This is just one of the many provocative queries that an attention to Quaker history in the early republic might resolve. These women abolitionists (as Quakers and as Hicksites) indeed had little experience with voting and interdenominational societies. Their reform careers had just begun, but not their political actiivism. Two years earlier in 1831, Lucretia Mott and five other women submitted a petition to Congress with more than 2,300 women's signatures calling for an

thousands of Philadelphia women, including Quakers, had labored in voluntary associations for nearly forty years by this date.

The Hicksite schism was painful for Philadelphia Friends, particularly with their overriding desire for "harmony" and "unity." Significant cultural changes within American society, especially within cities like Philadelphia, influenced the division. Yet, at the heart of the schism were competing ideas about Quaker spirituality and competing conceptions of benevolence. The principal forms of evangelical benevolence—Bible societies, tract associations, and Sunday schools—signified to quietist reformers like Hicks, and his sympatnizers in Philadelphia, that many of their fellow Quakers had succumbed to the powerful and encroaching dominance of evangelicalism in the religious culture of Philadelphia. Orthodox Friends feared less harm from the adaptation of the new methods of religious activism than from the threats to Christian orthodoxy posed by Hicks and his followers.

If we continue to look at Quaker history in the early republic as only the Hicksite schism, and see that schism only as a matter of differences within Quaker theology, or Friends' polity, or status anxiety among Quakers, then we tend to ahistorize nineteenth-century Quakers and separate them from the broader developments in American society and culture during these years. Instead, as this study of Philadelphia Quakers and religious benevolence reveals, there is a historical significance to those groups whose overall numbers did not increase during the era of evangelical revivalism, but who nevertheless struggled to respond to the new religious culture that confronted them. From that standpoint, we can begin to see the complexities in the ways certain groups dealt with a commercialized and democratic culture, an explosion of a marketplace of religious ideas and groups, and an ascendancy of evangelical benevolent and reform associations in the early republic. The history of Quakers in this era should not remain neglected any more than the numerous other

end to slavery in the District of Columbia. Hallowell, ed., *James and Lucretia Mott: Life and Letters*, 121; Hewitt, "The Fragmentation of Friends," 99-105. For women's culture and benevolence, see Mary P. Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: the Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865* (New York, 1981), 105-44; Suzanne Lebsock, *The Free Women of Petersburg: Status and Culture in a Southern Town, 1784-1860* (New York, 1984), 195-236; Anne M. Boylan, "Women in Groups: An Analysis of Women's Benevolent Organizations in New York and Boston, 1797-1840," *Journal of American History*, 71 (Dec. 1984), 497-523; Boylan, "Women and Politics in the Era Before Seneca Falls," *Journal of the Early Republic*, 10 (Fall 1990), 363-82; Lori D. Ginzberg, *Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality, Politics, and Class in the Nineteenth-Century United States* (New Haven, 1990), 36-66.

nonmajority sects—universalists, free thinkers, antimission churches, and spiritual and utopian communities—who were also both a product and an agent of the democratized religious culture of the new nation.