

INTRODUCTION

Practical Friends

All true religion is directed to practical ends.

—Joseph John Gurney

In 1794, George Dillwyn created *A Map of the Various Paths of Life* to outline the religious experience of Friends.¹ This allegorical image envisioned a landscape of the spiritual dangers and comforts Quakers would encounter as they trod the road to righteousness. Accompanying the map was a letter, written by an anonymous parent to his or her children, requesting that they “attend to the sketch” lest they fail “by neglecting to take heed to their steps.” The letter outlined the inherent dangers that await young Friends. Starting out well at “the Love Learning Garden” did not preclude being distracted by “Novel Flower Bed,” which led to “Levity Walk” and “gay company” at “Vanity Fair.”² Once past these temptations, children could easily reach “Knowledge Pastureland” and “Promotion Mount” but still make a stop at “Flatterer Haunt,” which would take them to the town of “Braggington.” Youth faced possible snares, such as “Perplexing Parish,” that could lead to “Decoy Theater” and “Spendthrift Ordinary,” which, in turn, segued into “Gamblers Hotel,” then on to “Losing Vale” and “Misery Square.” “To the great grief” of parents and companions, these Friends might find themselves at “Conviction Court” and “Dungeon Bottom.” Even those who avoided these pitfalls still struggled to navigate this geography; Friends who were seen “at Merry Hall in the evening” could end up at “Sorrow Chamber in the morning.” To attain the “Temple of Honour” and arrive at “Happy Old Age Hall” required attendance at “noble-deeds Plains” and frequent stops for “refreshment” at “Devotion Grove” (see fig. 1).³

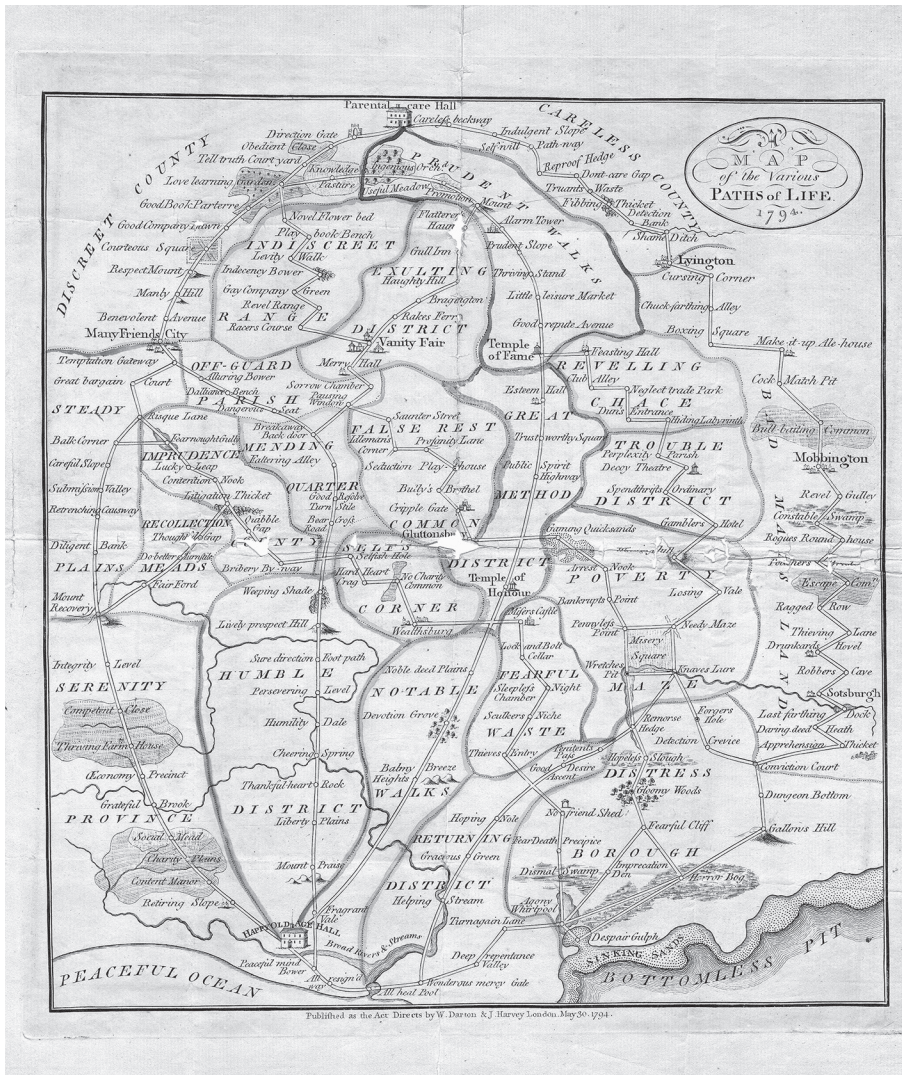


FIG. 1 | George Dillwyn, *A Map of the Various Paths of Life* (London: W. Darnton & J. Harvey, 1794). Quaker Collection, Haverford College.

Dillwyn’s map provides entrée into the spiritual world of Friends during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. With these descriptive names, Dillwyn evoked the trials his fellow believers faced to attain the “Inward Light and Truth.”⁴ While Quakers could easily go the wrong way, there was always the prospect they would return to the right passage. This image substantiated

the Quaker conception of religious faith as an unremitting, lifelong enterprise with ever-present perils; they had to be vigilant in their attention and steadfast in their observance. Believers confronted a series of meandering pathways that they could follow to advance and retreat repeatedly before reaching their journey's end. The map illustrated the means to attain a godly life, with specific reference to spiritual progress from birth to death. Furthermore, the letter foregrounds the parents' importance in instructing their offspring in proper spiritual conduct. The map was used for the moral education of children. For example, Mary Drinker Cope asked her son, Francis, while he was at Westtown School, whether he studied his copy of the "[map of] the paths of life and where they lead."⁵

As a "cultural text" that can be "read," *A Map of the Various Paths of Life* divulges the metanarrative embedded within it.⁶ The story it tells is one of danger and safety, risk and reward, worldly disorder and spiritual repose, as Friends traveled a terrain that could provide solace as well as engender sin. They could go down several avenues that led to trouble and discontent as well as consolation and peace. If Friends remained on the righteous way, they attained liberty, harmony, and succor; those who strayed encountered despair, disorder, and poverty. The hazardous ramble outlined in this image demonstrated the need for the pious to be ever watchful and to keep their convictions through the ordeals of an earthly life. The map outlines Quaker spiritual practice as a vigorous undertaking.⁷

Several Friends employed the metaphor of the path to depict their spiritual progress. English Quaker Sarah Tuke Grubb emulated Dillwyn's vision to alert others to the difficulty of pursuing a righteous course: "But how apt are we to turn our feet from the path which is narrow; being unwilling to make straight steps, a thing most repugnant to our unregenerate wills! We therefore cull out every discouragement, and stumble at the smallest stone; each prospect appearing in its gloomiest colours, or rather, our eyes being dimmed by the glitter of worldly objects, and inexperienced in the joys accruing from faithfulness, we see them not."⁸ Esther Tuke portrayed her spiritual trek as both "intricate & dangerous"; following the right path required "care & caution" to find safe passage. John Hunt worried that the "inward travel" necessary for true growth was difficult to achieve, while Susannah Judge equated her religious practice to a strenuous ordeal: "I am traversing a long and dreary wilderness, through repeated disobedience."⁹ When Samuel Mifflin gave a benediction for the first time, he mentioned the ambulatory nature of Quaker spirituality: "O Lord, we pray thee, enable all those whom thou hast favoured to see the beauty of

thy paths, therein to walk with fear turning neither to the right hand nor to the left.” Thomas Evans educed the image of “the tribulated path” that Friends followed on the way to the “crown of eternal, holy life.”¹⁰ For Ann Jackson, “the narrow path is the path in which we must all tread.” John Comly employed similar language to describe the “dreary wilderness” the “Christian traveler” must pass through and “remember that his every sigh is numbered, and all his tears are treasured, and that however trials and afflictions may be permitted, as they are patiently endured they will end toward a furtherance in the great object of life.” This was a demanding task, for “strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leads to life eternal.”¹¹

This map is important to the study of popular religion because it provides graphic evidence of Friends’ spirituality that—as inward, silent, and atomized—is not always readily discernible. The “various paths of life” reflect the spiritual geography that defined the Quaker community. They called one another “fellow travelers” on similar yet singular treks. Borders and boundaries were essential to their concept of religious connection. The word “hedge” separated Friends from the outside world. George Fox found this concept useful, particularly after the Restoration, when English Quakers faced increased persecution. Isaac Penington referred to the “holy hedge of his power and wall of salvation” that encompassed those with whom God had made a covenant; by remaining within the “holy limit” they would be set apart. As Pink Dandelion points out, “the hedge” had multiple meanings that changed over time. It connoted both a demarcation between Friends and the outside world and the division between the “pure” and “impure” in their own Society. This image of the hedge would prove meaningful in the first two centuries of Quaker existence, and the internal process of navigating a spiritual topography exemplified one of many religious customs utilized by American Friends.¹²

A Vivifying Spirit: Quaker Practice and Reform in Antebellum America examines the spirituality of American Friends during a period of dramatic development owing to internal and external forces: schism, industrialization, western migration, print culture, and reform activism. Quakers labored to preserve their religion amid rapid change.¹³ This book also investigates reform, both in terms of social activism and in the reformulation of Quakerism. American Friends modernized their religious society as they adapted to inward fracture and outward transformation. With a particular focus on the mid-Atlantic region, this monograph will explore how nineteenth-century Quakers put spirituality into action—not only in the evolution of religious doctrine

and practice but also in response to a mutable social and political context. Quaker piety comprised a range of activities that underwent change as well as continuity due to factionalism. Fed by growing materialism, doctrinal dispute, and class difference, an 1827 schism imposed creedalism upon a religious society that traditionally emphasized behavior over belief. Additional controversies broke out to further complicate matters. From the “Great Separation” of Hicksite and Orthodox Friends in the 1820s through divisions during the 1840s and 1850s, new forms of Quakerism developed—Gurneyite, Wilburite, and Progressive—to broaden their spiritual expression as well as renovate their religion.

To trace the course American Friends followed during the antebellum era entails analysis of (1) how Quaker religious practice changed in the wake of schism; (2) how evangelicalism altered Quakerism by the mid-nineteenth century; (3) how continued division reorganized Quakerism into multiple variants; and (4) how reform activism engendered further spiritual refinement. Exploring the increasing complexity of Quakerism during the mid-nineteenth century will show that American Friends pursued a vital religiosity driven by deeply held convictions. For example, the decision to join progressive reform, or not, was predicated upon a faith that moved some to engage and others to retreat. Through the widespread influence of evangelical Protestantism, Friends reimagined their religious tradition and sectarian history at the same time they justified involvement in social reform; these changes revised and revived American Quakerism. This practical approach embodied spiritual ideals that modernized their denomination and aided their adaptation to and participation in a burgeoning American republic.¹⁴

The antebellum era was a transitional period for American Quakerism between the tribalism of the eighteenth century and the worldliness of the later nineteenth century. The historical experience of Friends epitomized the major political, cultural, and religious changes occurring within American society from 1780 to 1860. With the advent of voluntary associations, utopian societies, and new sects, along with an explosion in print culture, a growing transportation sector, and expansion in the market economy, American society was progressing and diversifying. This rapidly changing environment reflected the convulsive nature of the Quaker community—from schism and division to nonresistance and “come-outerism”—and the larger culture. Though Friends remained distinct, the same social, cultural, and economic developments that affected other Protestants also impacted American Quakers in profound ways.¹⁵

Practical religion was a common trope of early modern religious writing, and the phrase “practical Christianity” was utilized in many religious tomes. This topic was popular with Protestants of all types. As Charles Hambrick-Stowe has shown, treatises like Lewis Bayly’s *The Practice of Piety* went through more than fifty editions by the end of the seventeenth century. Other titles, such as *A Call to the Unconverted, An Important Case of Practical Religion, The Whole Duty of Man*, and *Important Truths Related to Spiritual and Practical Christianity*, would follow in the eighteenth century. Many of these publications would be reprinted in the nineteenth century. These books offered practical advice on how to enact a dynamic spirituality, such as specific prayers and meditations. This set a pattern of rigorous piety that characterized Quakerism. Ongoing interest in this topic is evident in a comment by Mary Jackson in 1829: “Oh how I love to peruse the ever-interesting theme of practical religion with which thy kind letters abound.”¹⁶

Quakerism was based on what Paul Connerton terms “incorporating practice” and “inscribing practice.” The concept of “incorporating practice” includes bodily conduct and interaction that transmits information about the group, while “inscribing practice” alludes to “written communication that transfers words to page to intentionally contain their meaning.”¹⁷ Friends participated in the former when they attended meeting, enacted “holy walking and conversation,” wore simple dress, used plain speech, and pursued social interactions with family, friends, and relations. They articulated “inscribing practice” through writing in a variety of forms—for example, letters, diaries, testimonies, memorials, and the like. I employ the term “practical Quakerism” to describe this process. American Quakerism was practical in two ways. First, Friends were “practical” in the historical meaning of the word. To be practical was to practice—being a practicing Christian as opposed to a nominal one.¹⁸ To be practical was to engage in specific acts. Second, the term “practical” indicates the decisions American Friends made to construct a workable concept of Quakerism responsive to the transformations occurring during the early nineteenth century, including class formation, progressive reform, gender separation, racial tension, territorial expansion, and sectional conflict. Their practicality constructed viable forms of spirituality. Though I use the terms “practice” and “practical” to explain Quakerism, this does not mean it was routinized. Ideal spirituality was spontaneous, heartfelt, and pious—even when contested. The antebellum period presented many challenges to Friends both

internally and externally. Quaker piety was complicated by inward division as well as by outward cooperation and competition.

As scholars have argued, religion is not something “contained” within an individual; rather, it is a “set of shared and varied social practices, distributed throughout social interactions.” This creates “a dynamic, ever-shifting religious field” that involves both sacred and secular exercises. Belief is not solely a “state of mind” but rather enacted and embodied; both the mind and the body were essential to a religious regimen. In addition, devotion does not take place only in sacred spaces; it occurs within households, neighborhoods, and communities as religion is lived out day-to-day within familial, communal, and regional affiliations. As one author contends, it is a “daily struggle” for the faithful to negotiate “their belief in the context of webs of social relationships.”¹⁹ Belief and behavior are relational entities, not distinct categories, just as Quaker spirituality was not an either/or proposition. It was both individual and communal; public and private; separate and united. To compartmentalize Quakerism is to misunderstand the Religious Society of Friends. Quakers embraced a faith that was a daily and even hourly event; walking the righteous path was emotionally draining and spiritually demanding, but it yielded heavenly results.

QUAKER SPIRITUALITY

Friends utilized personal and communal means in a constant endeavor of spiritual practice. Quaker spirituality was based on conviction—that is, the belief in God as both the passive reception of grace and an active awareness of human sin, as one became convinced of “the inward truth and light” provided by God. Spiritual conviction transpired through everyday mindfulness. Conviction was comparable to the evangelical term “conversion”; however, unlike the latter, it was not a one-time event but a “lifelong process.” Both “inward and outward consolation” were required in the performance of piety. Quakers privileged the inner self as a source of spiritual perception and access to God. By opening one’s mind and practicing silence, a Friend could obtain the divine within. This internal process was complemented by outward behavior. They endorsed plain language and dress to mark themselves and literally embody their faith. Their corporeal presentation of restraint and calm mirrored their interior condition. Quaker religious exercises ranged from conversation, prayer, meditation, and dress to reading and writing. They kept journals and

commonplace books not only to document their religious struggles but as a form of contemplation to center their minds on spiritual matters. Friends enacted individual devotion and sought out others for spiritual solace. They attended meetings, conversed about religious topics, and met in household gatherings. As Larry Ingle states, the Quaker religion was more “a way of life than a series of statements about dogma.”²⁰

As internal and silent, Quaker spirituality was deceptive. Their reserve did not mean their faith was dour and lifeless. Rather, it necessitated immense patience and dedication; often arduous and taxing, it entailed unending attention to one’s spiritual state. Only by quietly waiting on the Lord in stillness could the Inward Light come through. As one Friend remarked, “How good it is to retire into stillness! As food to the body, so is quietude to the mind.” Quietness spoke volumes; one Friend extolled, “Silence is the loudest preaching we have.” No outward displays were needed to establish the importance of religious concepts. Church ordinances were unnecessary; the individual believer would be as a “living epistle.”²¹ One’s life was a sacrament as well as a testament of faith, and after a life well lived, a Friend could die without complaint or remorse.

The Quakers rejected all Christian rituals and their material accoutrements, unlike other seventeenth-century English Protestants. Taking simplicity to its logical conclusion, they stripped the meetinghouse of the dominating cross, elevated pulpit, and robed cleric. Their services were plain and often silent. As a “priesthood” of believers, all Friends were potential ministers. This rational approach was evident when George Fox acknowledged the leadership role of women in the sect during the seventeenth century. In the eighteenth century, female ministers traveled extensively in the Atlantic world as women members held separate business meetings. Dedication to spiritual equality expanded their treatment of other races, and Quakers became leading advocates for Indian rights and the abolition of Black enslavement.

Quaker religious practice changed significantly from the time of the first generation of Friends of seventeenth-century England to those of mid-nineteenth-century America. While the founding generation displayed somatic exercises—that is, “quaking”—these had dissipated by the early eighteenth century. Public demonstrations, such as going naked as a sign, died out as quietism and rationalism took over.²² As Hugh Barbour and J. William Frost contend, the “rational Quakerism” of the eighteenth century was a “compromise” between “reason and revelation” and was most prominent among British

Friends. While quietism was more popular among their American counterparts during the eighteenth century, Friends on both sides of the Atlantic followed similar activities. Quaker devotion was deeply mystical; access to the Holy Spirit occurred through immediate and progressive revelation as well as through rational application. The mind was an essential tool for spirituality, as amending one's emotional relationship to God required mindfulness. Interiorization merged with the Quaker plain style to craft a spirituality that was reflexive and humble. The prominence of practical Quakerism continued into the nineteenth century, but with an evangelical twist. Ruptures in the Religious Society of Friends, beginning in the late 1820s, would lead to diverse forms of practical piety.²³

SPIRITUAL LANGUAGE

Friends used specific language to describe spirituality. Many of these phrases were inherited from the founding generation, such as “deep baptisms,” “baptizing seasons,” and “deep dippings.” Baptism was an internal and experiential trial when the believer toiled to access the Holy Spirit. Though painful and distressing, such spiritual suffering was purifying. The seventeenth-century English Friend Robert Barclay defined baptism as “a pure and spiritual thing,” not an empty church ritual performed on children. Experiencing a “baptizing season” signaled the experience of “dipping” deep to find reassurance in the spirit. The term “divine openings” reflected the inner occurrence of direct revelation but also the insight gathered from contemplation. These “impressions” served as conduits for entry into the spiritual realm. Conversely, the phrase “drooping soul” conveyed the harshness of spiritual effort, and “drooping mind” denoted a low level of faith.²⁴ Additionally, the metaphor of the seed designated when God's grace was evident; the believer had to be ready to receive it. As J. William Frost asserts, “By preaching the seasonal availability of grace Friends brought an immediacy to the quest for holiness while warning of the dangers of procrastinating repentance.” This led to periods of barrenness as members underwent cyclical change that signified a work of grace in the individual's heart. Before harvesting, the seed needed to be nurtured in the proper soil; likewise, the heart needed to be prepared and the will made obedient for a work of grace to occur.²⁵ Another essential term was “the creature,” which referred to the earthly self. When Quakers spoke of “creaturely

habits,” it meant they were too much in the world. As one Friend declared, “Too few are divested of *self*, in various shapes and workings. There is warmth and animation that proceeds from creaturely activity; and that seems to pass with many for gospel power. But there is a vast difference between this creaturely warmth and the animation and power of the true gospel of Christ.”²⁶

Friends utilized metaphorical language to articulate belief as an internalized landscape. Susanna Judge envisioned her spiritual state as “dwelling” in a “barren land,” where there seemed to be “neither dew, nor rain, nor fields of offering.” John Comly depicted his faith as a room where his mind went to pray; by “getting into the closet of devotion, and shutting the door against all intruding cares and passions; and when all obstructing things are shut out, the mind centered in holy calm and quietude, the door of prayer is opened.”²⁷ One minister invited listeners to enter “the fields of their own hearts” to recognize that spiritual riches far exceed outward wealth. When they achieved communion with the Holy Spirit and with each other, no words were needed. Believers heard with their “spiritual ear” as God spoke through and within them. With their minds “disengaged from the world, the powerful overshadowings of the Holy Ghost was more frequently and evidently felt amongst them to the tendering their hearts and coveting their spirits even to tears and trembling.”²⁸ Such sweet communion cemented Quakers together in bonds of love.

The characteristic language of Friends persisted after the onset of division in the early nineteenth century. After 1830, Orthodox Friends retained traditional Quaker phrases, such as “drooping,” “baptisms,” and “the light,” but combined them with evangelical ones, such as “born again,” “dear Redeemer,” and “the blood of the Lamb.” Evangelical Quakers bridged the gap between traditional doctrine and contemporary usage. For example, evangelicals like Joseph John Gurney specifically joined practical religion to Christ’s sacrifice: “What is practical religion? Is it not the work of God’s Spirit upon the soul of man, bringing it to a spiritual knowledge of the Saviour, and redeeming it from all sin?”²⁹ While Orthodox ministers referenced evangelical principles in their sermons, such as “the purifying power of the blood of a crucified savior” in the 1830s, by the 1850s, Gurneyites would demand an explicit conversion experience as evidence of the new birth. By emphasizing the redemption achieved by the “atonement made by Jesus Christ,” as well as salvation and sanctification, evangelical Friends sanctioned mainstream religious concepts of American Protestantism propagated through the Second Great Awakening.³⁰

The history of the Religious Society of Friends traditionally has told a tale of strain and strife to adaptation and success—from seventeenth-century founders who, as prophetic agitators, became pragmatic accommodationists and then evolved into economically successful but apolitical actors by the eighteenth century.³¹ This narrative has been contested by scholars who have investigated the tension between the separation Quakers sought versus their integration into their wider societal context. Sandra Holton argues that the “quietism” of the eighteenth century was an anomalous diversion from the Quaker activism of the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. Geoffrey Plank contends that the insularity that eighteenth-century Friends became known for was unintentional. The “Quaker Reformation” was a model of moral purification aimed to attract new converts. Friends’ outreach to Indians was a form of “evangelization.” Quakers occupied the world, held meetings with non-Quakers, and took a prominent stance on traditional moral issues (drunkenness, theater-going, cardplaying) as well as political disputes (Indian rights, the slave trade, abolition). The decision of most to stay out of the American Revolution was costly and painful yet was still a political decision based in religious belief. This was not new; as Plank asserts, Friends have always been “political players.”³²

Sarah Crabtree’s *Holy Nation* declares that American Quakers preserved their sense of community despite radical change during the revolutionary and early national periods. Basing their beliefs in “religious transnationalism,” Friends conceived of themselves as “a holy nation,” steeped in the Hebraic tradition, which displaced the new republic “as the primary means of social and political organization.” They actively resisted the forces of nationalism by remaining faithful to their theology. This theme of preserving a separate status in the new nation is also discussed by A. Glenn Crothers in *Quakers Living in the Lion’s Mouth*. Friends in northern Virginia had a “bifurcated identity” as they balanced the “strictures of their faith” against the “social, political and cultural commitments of the broader society in which they lived.” Though they became “southern,” their status became less and less tenable as the sectional crisis evolved. While many Southern Quakers chose outmigration to escape this dual status, some Friends stayed to uphold their religious principles alongside their increasingly suspicious neighbors.³³

By the antebellum era, keeping separate from the world proved less meaningful in a nation built on religious freedom and political independence,

especially for Quakers in the mid-Atlantic region. Northern Friends urged their fellow citizens to be responsive to issues of spiritual equality and civil justice, but they were also drawn by their historical context to adopt popular means of religious expression, as with the growing influence of evangelicalism. The assiduous nature of Quaker spirituality required believers to walk a narrow path between their peculiar brand of faith and the inculcation of beliefs and behaviors popular among other Protestants. This tension was evident during the Hicksite schism of 1827. This harrowing event destroyed spiritual communion and forced Friends, for the first time, to clearly define what they believed. This division caused great grief, but it also provided the freedom to devise new forms of devotion. While scholarly Quakers have traditionally viewed the early nineteenth century as a low point in their history, Friends' perseverance in varied forms was reflective of American society, incorporating them into the larger religious culture. This schism opened new possibilities in American society; from quietism and withdrawal to activism and engagement in political change, it aided Quakers' adaptation to the major transformations of nineteenth-century America.

Quaker practice and identity expanded after 1830, as separation from within allowed for integration without. Several forms of Quakerism evolved. While Hicksites retained the traditional quietism, their Orthodox counterparts adopted some aspects of evangelical religion, Gurneyites became ultraevangelists, and Wilburites advocated an austere piety. Progressive Friends enacted their piety through political reform, such as involvement in the temperance and antislavery movements. Some who left or were pushed out of the Society for their activism turned to other religious expressions, such as Spiritualism, to support their moral efforts, as social reform became a means of spiritual duty. Over the course of the early nineteenth century, American Quakers moved away from some traditions, such as plain dress and language. This external disposition had lost its meaning and, for some, had become an empty gesture devoid of vibrant spirituality. The increasing diversity in doctrine and practice proffered several avenues for American Friends to follow by the mid-nineteenth century.

FRAMEWORK

This book is organized into three sections: "Seed Time," "Fruitless Exercise and Distress," and "A Work of Redemption." These phrases have been taken

from unpublished work by George Dillwyn to exemplify the individual and communal paths traveled by Friends during the antebellum era. The first section addresses Quaker practice from early childhood to old age as believers traveled the “path of righteousness.” Dillwyn described “seed time” as “the passage from light to life—from the conception to the production of every heavenly birth in the soul.”³⁴ This notion engendered nurturance throughout one’s life to sustain faith that came from within and without. Quaker piety demanded regular engagement to access “the Inward Truth and Light” through multiple venues, such as prayer, meditation, conversation, and meeting. Parental oversight and a “guarded” education put young Friends on a straight course. As a crucial phase in an individual’s religious development, “seed time” denoted the beginning of one’s spiritual journey as well as its ending, as Friends prepared to make their final trek to the world beyond.

The second section explores the several divisions that occurred among American Friends in the antebellum era. A theological whirlwind blew through Quaker meetinghouses in the early nineteenth century. Contradictions came to light over what it meant to be a Friend in both belief and behavior. But, as Dillwyn observed, Quakers needed to be careful in calling out others for infractions, for “minds fearful of erring through unfaithfulness, sometimes occasion no small degree of fruitless exercise & distress.” How Friends dealt with discrepancies led to schism, which devastated their Society. Families divided, friendships ended, and community relations dissolved. Men and women who had shared religious communion during worship, in household gatherings, and at business meetings became opponents who snubbed, ignored, and ostracized one another. The Quaker connection, built over generations, crumbled as conflicting views emerged to separate their Society irrevocably. The internal dissension of the 1820s recurred in the 1840s and 1850s to shatter Quaker unity in antebellum America. Yet these disagreements yielded spiritual benefits to chart new ways to practice piety.

The last section surveys Quaker spirituality through two primary means: (1) manuscript and print culture and (2) history and remembrance. Though “religions are various, & discordant,” according to Dillwyn, true religion was “a work of redemption.” The use of the word “work” is suggestive in two ways—that is, work as in the spiritual effort necessary to sustain faith, and work as in a manuscript or publication. Quakers performed this labor through writing, reading, and memorialization. Like other Protestants, Quakers read books for religious understanding. Their journals and commonplace books recorded their thoughts and tracked their activities. They wrote letters to report

family news as well as to affirm relationships. As a mode of devotion, writing focused the mind, regulated emotion, and strengthened the spiritual self. In addition, in the pursuit of their own history—both personal and communal—Friends studied their past to make sense of their present. They employed memory to commemorate dead relations, to emulate founding members, and to defend their version of Quakerism amid the debate and division of the antebellum era. Before his death in 1820, George Dillwyn feared that tensions within the Quaker community could lead to disunion. As he wrote, “Great care is therefore necessary that we do not . . . become as a house divided against itself.” He warned his fellow travelers of the perils posed by “the tide of prosperity” evident in the early nineteenth century. He hoped that most Quakers would “hold their course” but expected they would “experience an alteration for the better.”³⁵ Dillwyn’s prescience, however, could not have foreseen how excruciating this experience would be or how irretrievably his religion would change by 1860. The multifarious forms of Quakerism that emerged would produce a rich but complicated history of the Religious Society of Friends in America.