Conscience, the Quaker Community, and the French and Indian War

The French and Indian War in Pennsylvania has usually attracted the attention of historians because of its political consequences—the alteration in the composition of the Assembly and the "Quaker party," the role of Benjamin Franklin, the encroachments of the Assembly on the Proprietor. "To focus exclusively on the actions of Quaker political leaders," noted Ralph Ketcham in 1963, "and on differences between pacifists and defense advocates, however, overlooks important soul-searching within the Society of Friends." Particularly, to focus on the Friends who resigned from the Assembly or those who remained is to neglect church history and to overlook yet other discord within the Anglo-American Quaker community which after 1755 divided it into three recognizable groups, threatened it with schism, and initiated a new era in American Quakerism. The history of this discord is not exclusively church history, but rather the complement of the better-known political history of Pennsylvania in the 1750's. It is precisely because the Society of Friends in Pennsylvania became intimate with the politics and government of Pennsylvania that a crisis within the church occurred, accompanied, as it was, by some of the most intensive soul-searching attempted by colonial Quakers.

The interrelationship between political action and religious questions is clearly apparent in the issue of taxation, specifically the tax of July, 1755, passed by the Pennsylvania Assembly to support the expense of war with France and the defense of the province. Some Friends found themselves ethically bound to pay the tax; others thought themselves bound to refuse. The difference between the two groups originated in the inadequate Quaker pacifist ethic and in the novel role of Quakers in Pennsylvania government.

First, other than prohibiting personal assault by man against his fellow man, the pacifist ethic ignored the numerous hypothetical and historical contributions that Friends might make to war even though forebearing any personal participation in the conflict. The possibilities for disagreement over the ethical nature of such moot actions were as numerous as the ethical code was brief.2

Enhancing the possibility of disagreement over pacifism was the duty of Friends to support civil government, even in wartime, and especially in the manner of paying taxes that supported warfare. The injunction of George Fox and other Quaker patriarchs—"To the earthly we give the earthly things: that is, to Caesar we give unto him his things, and to God we give Him his things."—was obeyed and respected by most eighteenth-century Quakers, especially those who supported a larger engagement in government.3

The English and American Friends who defended greater support of war found that the patriarchal injunction adequately illuminated their path through the obscurity of the pacifist ethic. They recognized no inadequacy in their ethic or moral dilemma in their historical situation, despite the occasional objections to their conduct by some brethren.4 But the code was nevertheless deficient, the under-

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2 Jack D. Marietta, "Ecclesiastical Discipline in the Society of Friends, 1682-1776" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1968), chapter 5. By the pacifist ethic, however, some Friends were permitted to make defensive preparations; see Hermann Wellenreuther, "The Political Dilemma of the Quakers in Pennsylvania, 1681-1748," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, XCIV (1970), 141. Wellenreuther's recent article is an intensive and fresh inquiry into the origins and nature of Quaker pacifism, for which this author is indebted.

3 Wellenreuther, 141-144.

4 On two occasions Friends objected to the actions of their Quaker brethren who controlled the Assembly. The first occurred in 1711 when Thomas Maule and several sympathizers refused to pay a tax levied to support indirectly Queen Anne's War. Maule completely refused the "Lump of Sophistry" which was Fox's demand to "render unto Caesar." On the second
standing of the satisfied brethren was superficial, and a potential dilemma, at least, did exist for the church in Pennsylvania.

Within the injunction of George Fox existed a much neglected premise that civil government and Quakerism were mutually exclusive: government was “Caesar” and the Society of Friends was its antithesis. Likewise, the mores of statecraft and the ethics of Quakerism were largely antithetical. Whereas Fox’s hidden premise described the historical situation of English Friends legally prohibited from public office, the situation of Pennsylvania Friends—the Holy Experiment—contradicted Fox in theory and in fact. Pennsylvania Friends who created and oversaw, in part, the provincial government dissolved the disjunction between government and Society, and, unless they carried their own ethics to the practice of governing, they became “Caesar.” (They hoped, of course, to practice their ethics in public office, thereby succeeding in their experiment.) Fox’s instructions to support the state, not anticipating the congruence of profane government and religious Society, apparently demanded that Friends support the state even if it required Quaker officeholders to prosecute wars.

Although the degree of Quaker intimacy with war varied in the several contests between Great Britain and France, the unmistakable trend from 1692 to 1755 was toward greater complicity with warfare. In the vanguard of the Friends who were accepting increased responsibility for the prosecution of the colonial wars were the Quaker assemblymen who controlled the legislature. Over five occasion, John Churchman in 1748 objected when the Assembly showed its conventional willingness to contribute indirectly to the expense of warfare. Votes and Proceedings of the House of Representatives of the Province of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania Archives, Eighth Series (Harrisburg, 1931-1935), hereinafter cited as Votes, II, 985-991, 993-1001; The Laws of the Province of Pennsylvania Collected into one Volume by Order of the Governor and Assembly of the said Province. Printed and sold by Andrew Bradford in Philadelphia 1714, 168-173; Thomas Maule, Tribute to Caesar, How paid by the best Christians, and to what purpose. With some remarks on the late vigorous expedition against Canada. Of civil Government, how inconsistent it is with the Government of Christ in his church, compared with the ancient, just and righteous principles of the Quakers, and their modern practice and doctrine. With some notes upon the discipline of their Church in this province, especially at Philadelphia. By Philalethes (Philadelphia, 1712?), 2-4; Colonial Records of Pennsylvania (Harrisburg, 1851-1853), V, 248-251; Votes, IV, 3188-3190; An Account of the Gospel Labours and Christian Experiences of a Faithful Minister of Christ, John Churchman, late of Nottingham in Pennsylvania, Deceased (Philadelphia, 1779), 68-69.
decades, these aggressive, Whiggish legislators had enhanced the power of the Assembly at the cost of the executive—an innocuous activity had the constitutional powers that they engrossed not included that of directing appropriations for war. Because of the use the Assembly made of taxes in 1755, scrupulous Friends objected that their brethren in office had become nonpacifists and had assumed the role of “Caesar.”

Scrupulous Friends quite correctly understood that the July, 1755, act of Assembly, all its features considered, was unprecedented. It levied a property tax in order to raise £50,000 in support of the current war with France, the first such tax since 1711. Secondly, it appointed members of the Assembly to oversee the use of the money, among them no less prominent a Quaker than Isaac Norris II, Speaker of the House. Finally, a novel feature which caused political problems for Friends, although it posed no additional problems for their consciences, was the provision which taxed the Penns’ lands—yet another encroachment on the proprietary prerogative. The first two provisions combined to raise an outcry from conscientious Friends, for by the second, Quakers were essentially dictating the management of the war and not humbly obeying “Caesar”; by the first, the tax, Quakers throughout Pennsylvania were accomplices to the errors of the brethren in office. Given the Quaker sense of community, especially among the most pious and sensitive, this degree of complicity was sufficient motive for protest.

While the unconscionable provisions of the July appropriations act were opening a fissure in the Pennsylvania Quaker community, the tax on the Penns’ lands kept provincial government at an impasse; since 1753, Assembly and executive had divided over

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5 To illuminate this increased intimacy, the appropriation of 1692 may be compared with those of 1754, when the Assembly completely directed the use of the money it had independently raised. Votes, I, 129, 133, 137-138, 140, 151; V, 3841, 3870, 3874, 3877-3878, 3893-3894. Anno Regni Gulielmi & Mariae Regis & Reginae. An Act for granting to King William and Queen Mary the Rate of One Penny per Pound upon the clear Value of all the Real and Personal Estates, and Six Shillings per Head upon such as are not otherwise rated by this Act. To be employed to the Governor of this Province of Pennsilvania and Territories thereof, for the Time being, towards the Support of this Government. New York, Printed by William Bradford, 1693.

6 Votes, V, 3877-3878, 3893-3894. The other appointees were James Hamilton, Benjamin Franklin, Evan Morgan, and Joseph Fox.
numerous issues of which the land tax was the latest. The proprietary or anti-Quaker party in the province attempted to use the impasse to destroy Quaker control of the Assembly; inadvertently, the attempt opened a second fissure within the Quaker church.7

The Reverend William Smith—Anglican, Provost of the Academy of Philadelphia, and skillful propagandist of the anti-Quaker party—perceived that a false issue might be raised from the impasse between Assembly and Governor which could capture the attention of persons not normally hostile toward Friends or the Pennsylvania Assembly, but who were anxious for the defense of the British dominions. If such persons could be persuaded that the Quakers, comprising a majority of the Assembly, had refused to appropriate defense funds because it violated their Quaker pacifism, Smith could suggest that British authorities should remove all Friends from the Assembly in order to defend Pennsylvania. The superficial cogency and merit of this false explanation might even eclipse the constitutional debate so that the Proprietor's role in the fiscal impasse might never be noticed. If British officials or Parliament accepted Smith's explanation and excluded Friends, they would accomplish by fiat what the Proprietors' friends in Pennsylvania had never succeeded in doing at the polls: ousting the Quakers from the Assembly.8

By February, 1755, Smith had offered the foregoing explanation of the troubles in Pennsylvania to the British public in his pamphlet, A Brief State of the Province of Pennsylvania.9 Although it was read and discussed in Britain and Pennsylvania in early 1755, Smith's pamphlet did not move the policy-makers in Britain to accept its suggestion for Pennsylvania. After the defeat of General Braddock in August, 1755, however, the ministry either took to heart the Brief State, or accepted substantially the same historical gloss on events from numerous petitions and official communications sent from Pennsylvania which described the desperation of Pennsylvanians on the frontier left undefended by the Quaker Assembly. The Privy Council, in the winter of 1755–1756, took under consideration the

7 Votes, V, 3637–4164 passim.
8 Theodore Thayer, Israel Pemberton, King of the Quakers (Philadelphia, 1943), 113, 114.
suggestion made in the *Brief State* that a test oath be established in Pennsylvania in order to eliminate permanently Friends from the Assembly. Official and legal prohibitions were avoided only because Lord Granville, Lord President of the Council and friend of several important Quakers in Britain, mediated the crisis and procured from English Friends the promise to secure the temporary, voluntary resignation of Friends from the Pennsylvania Assembly. By this compromise the Pennsylvania Assembly would, after Friends' withdrawal, appropriate funds for defense, and, once the war had ended, Friends would be able to return to the Assembly.\(^{10}\)

The English Friends who helped to mediate the crisis in Pennsylvania belonged to the London Meeting for Sufferings and were fulfilling the Meeting's duty of protecting Friends from public danger.\(^ {11}\) Because the utility of the Meeting for Sufferings was enhanced by staffing it with men of consequence, it is not surprising to find that the members in 1755 and 1756 were prominent in trade and the professions, and who, although disbarred from public office because they were dissenters, were acquainted with men in public office. Among the most important members of the Meeting were Dr. John Fothergill, physician to Lord Halifax and friend of the Penn family; David Barclay, merchant, banker, and wealthiest Quaker in London; John and Capel Hanbury, merchants who conducted a large part of the tobacco trade of Virginia, practically controlled the tobacco trade of Maryland, and were financial agents for the governors of several American colonies; and Thomas Hyam, Baltic merchant and friend of Lord Granville.\(^ {12}\)

While several members of the Meeting had mercantile interests which depended upon the safety and prosperity of the British Empire, John and Capel Hanbury had become deeply interested in a particularly volatile and precarious area of the empire, the Ohio

\(^{10}\) John Fothergill to Israel Pemberton, Mar. 16, Apr. 3, 1756, Pemberton Papers, II, 10, 11, Etting Collection, HSP.

\(^{11}\) John Fothergill to Israel Pemberton, Mar. 16, 1756, *ibid.*, II, 10. The London Meeting for Sufferings was an executive body created by London Yearly Meeting to attend to the interests of the Society of Friends in political matters and to conduct relations between the Society and the British government. The Philadelphia Meeting for Sufferings fulfilled a similar purpose in Pennsylvania.

River Valley lands coveted by Britain and France. The Hanburys were the principal Englishmen among thirteen to twenty men, mostly Virginians, who founded the Ohio Company to settle and obtain the fur trade of the area. John Hanbury was crucial to the operation of the Company: he was the principal English member, its financial agent, solicitor, and, most importantly, its powerful lobbyist who conducted Company business with the Board of Trade, the Privy Councilors, Lord Granville, the Duke of Bedford, Thomas Penn, and others. In promoting the Ohio Company's petitions, Hanbury explained how the Company, while pursuing its objectives, expanded and secured the British Empire against the encroaching French; in effect, private interest complemented imperial policy.\(^\text{13}\)

Hanbury also co-ordinated with Thomas Penn the Company's and Pennsylvania's plans for settlement and construction of a projected fort on the Ohio for defense. The financial burden of constructing the fort was to fall on the Pennsylvania Assembly, according to Hanbury's and Penn's agreement. However, because of the pacifist members of the Assembly and the deadlock between Proprietor and Assembly, the House would not provide for a fort.\(^\text{14}\)

It is doubtful that Hanbury's economic interests and imperial designs, as well as those of other members of the Meeting for Sufferings, comported well with his Quaker pacifism. Even less defensible is Hanbury's indirect attempt to have the Quaker Assembly enhance his own policy and interest. John Fothergill, too, in the summer of 1755, advised Pennsylvania Friends to pass a £50,000 appropriation as the governor desired; submission was wisest he assured his American brethren.\(^\text{15}\)

The motives of the Meeting for Sufferings in mediating the 1755–1756 crisis mixed altruism with personal economic security. The London Friends sincerely desired that their Pennsylvania brethren would not be permanently disqualified from public office; in the present situation temporary disqualification might remove


\(^{14}\) Mulkearn, 410; Thomas Penn to James Hamilton, Mar. 9, 1751/2, and July 13, 1752, Thomas Penn Letter Book, III, 113–114, 140, HSP.

\(^{15}\) John Fothergill to Israel Pemberton, Oct. 4, 1755, Pemberton Papers, II, 5–6, Etting Collection.
enough petulant, Whiggish Pennsylvanians from the Assembly so that appropriations for defense might be passed and property protected. Additionally, London Friends would not be embarrassed by their American brethren, their patriotism would not be questioned, and their influence in governmental councils and utility to the Society would not be diminished. Therefore, the London Meeting for Sufferings, anticipating reluctance and recrimination from Quaker legislators, but expecting ultimately to prevail, deputized two English Friends to travel to Pennsylvania with the plan of withdrawal. John Fothergill wrote to Israel Pemberton, Jr., Clerk of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, the news of the compromise plan.16

Before July, 1755, Friends in Pennsylvania had rarely criticized the performance of their brethren in the Assembly in the contest over defense appropriations; Quaker meetings even stated that by this contest the Proprietors were attempting to infringe on the rights of Pennsylvanians and that Quaker legislators best defended the charter rights of Quakers and all Pennsylvanians. Every election reaffirmed Pennsylvania's confidence in the Quaker Assembly.17 As for the Brief State and the false issue of Quaker scruples against defense appropriations, Pennsylvanians recognized the specious logic of the pamphlet, the party spirit and motive of its author, and the joint responsibility for the impasse over appropriation bills. The Brief State caused no difficulty, and Quakers continued to be returned to the Assembly. Until so informed by John Fothergill in June, 1756, Pennsylvania Friends were oblivious to the crisis created in Britain by the Brief State and the petitions imitating it.

The acts of the Assembly, even including the June tax to raise money for war, do not sufficiently explain the unsurpassed indignation that conscientious Friends expressed in 1755. Only twice since 1692 had any Friends complained against the increasingly thoughtless Assembly and they were politely dismissed. Fully as important as the tax and the pressure of English Friends in producing the crisis of 1755 was the new leadership in the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting and the reformation of the church in the 1750's; reformed

16 John Fothergill to Israel Pemberton, Mar. 16, Apr. 3, 1756, ibid., II, 10, 11.
17 Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting to London Meeting for Sufferings, Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting minutes, May 5, 1755, Friends Records Department, 302 Arch Street, Philadelphia.
Friends arose to object to practices which had been typical of Quakerism in the second quarter of the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{18}

In the 1750's the Society in Pennsylvania underwent a fundamental change that began no later than 1755, but which might be dated from 1750. In that year, John Kinsey, Clerk of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (its highest position), Speaker of the Pennsylvania Assembly, and Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, died. Kinsey, more than any Friend after William Penn, suffered and typified the tension between church and state, the Quaker pacifist ethic, and the Quaker obligation to support government, for Kinsey held the highest offices available in his church and in the representative branch of government.\textsuperscript{19}

During King George's War, Kinsey demonstrated that he favored expanded participation in government to a cautious disengagement for the sake of pacifism. Upon his death, his further, and clearly censurable, disregard for Quaker ethics was revealed: he had misappropriated at least £3,000 from the General Loan Office for his own use. Kinsey embarrassed the Society in general but may have left a deeper impress on Israel Pemberton, Jr., who succeeded him as a leader of Pennsylvania Friends. Pemberton was also appointed by Governor Hamilton as one of the executors of Kinsey's estate—an office in which Pemberton labored for years to settle Kinsey's business.\textsuperscript{20}

Kinsey's offices were divided upon his death, which ended the reconciling function he performed and enhanced the possibility of greater tension between church and state. The next speaker of the House was Isaac Norris II, a nominal Quaker who held no church offices nor performed any important role in the church. The next clerk of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting was Israel Pemberton, Jr.,

\textsuperscript{18} See note 4. For the character of Pennsylvania Quakerism before 1750, see Frederick B. Tolles, \textit{Meeting House and Counting House} (New York, 1963), chapters 6, 10; and Marietta, chapters 9, 10.


\textsuperscript{20} In 1748 Kinsey volunteered the assistance of the Quaker-controlled Assembly in the defense of Pennsylvania, rather than respond to orders to the Assembly from non-Quaker executives. \textit{Colonial Records of Pennsylvania}, V, 248-251; \textit{Votes}, IV, 3188-3190.
who sat in the Assembly until June, 1751, and whose last public act was to report the defalcation by Kinsey.21

Signs that the changes of 1750 presaged additional and widespread change in the Society and a quickening of conscience among Pennsylvania Friends frequently appeared, and multiplied in 1754 after Samuel Fothergill, brother of John, and one of the foremost ministers of the Anglo-American Quaker community, arrived from England. Fothergill spent two years traveling at least 7,000 miles in America, visiting Quaker meetings and ministering to Friends, sharing his ministry and experiences with the most vigorous and central members of the church—Israel and John Pemberton, John Churchman, Anthony Benezet, John Smith, Mary Peisley, and Catherine Payton. His message was that of Jeremiah, his intention to reform Quakerism from the "sorrowful" state, the "stupidity of heart," the "crooked footsteps of the old professors," and the "lethargy of the morally clean," which he unstintingly described and decried.22

The travels and preaching of Fothergill and others in part prepared the Society for a reform of its offices and administration which was undertaken at the Yearly Meeting of September, 1755. A new discipline was drafted at that meeting by a committee which included Fothergill, Churchman, and John Woolman. Suffixed to the discipline was the admonition for "elders overseers and all others active in the discipline to be zealously concerned for the cause of Truth and honestly to labour to repair the breaches too obvious in many places that there may be some well grounded hopes of the primative purity of the Church may be restored." To secure obedience to the new discipline and learn the state of the Society, the Yearly Meeting demanded that at least once every three months a list of queries about the conduct of Friends be read in every preparative meeting and that every Monthly Meeting "distinctly and particularly" answer the queries at each Quarterly Meeting. The


22 George C. Crosfield, Memoirs of the Life and Gospel Labours of Samuel Fothergill (Liverpool, 1858), 167, 152–257 passim; George S. Brookes, Friend Anthony Benezet (Philadelphia, 1939), 220–221; Mary Piesley to Francis Parvin, Jr. [?], 1755, Cox-Parrish-Wharton Papers, V, 11, HSP.
Monthly Meetings responded quickly and effectively; in the first year after the issuance of the new discipline the number of prosecutions of delinquent Friends soared beyond previous annual amounts—and continued to increase for two decades thereafter. Many Friends did not submit to the reinvigoration of the discipline by overseers and Monthly Meetings, and they, consequently, were disowned (i.e., severed from membership). In fact, the membership was more than decimated in the two decades after 1755.23

In the same decades, as well as reinvigorating old articles of discipline, the Society was pressed to adopt several novel articles of discipline and testimonies. John Woolman, Anthony Benezet, John Churchman, and others desired that the Society eliminate slave-holding or slaveholders from its ranks; overcoming substantial resistance, they succeeded by 1776 in making antislavery an article of discipline. Under the leadership of Israel Pemberton, the Society expanded its philanthropic activity, notably through the Friendly Association, which because of its controversial influence in Indian affairs was also criticized. It was in the context of a revival and reformation, and the introduction of new and questionable practices that Friends were confronted in a decisive way with the dilemma of their support of government—as practiced by the Quaker Assembly in the 1750's—and their pacifism. Not surprisingly, in these years of self-scrutiny, jeremiads, and disownments, the liberal practice of 1692-1754 was regarded as another evidence that the Society had declined.24

John Woolman left the fullest account by a pacifist Quaker of his convictions and objections to the 1755 tax. He wrote: "I believed that the Spirit of Truth required of me as an individual to suffer

23 Philadelphia Yearly Meeting minutes, Sept. 20, 1755, Friends Records Department; Marietta, 147-156, 172-209.

24 Marietta, 117-123, 155; Thomas E. Drake, Quakers and Slavery in America (New Haven, 1950), chapters 3, 4; Sydney V. James, A People Among Peoples (Cambridge, Mass., 1963), 170-173, 178-215. Maule, Churchman, and, after 1755, numerous other Friends, believed that the practice of the Assembly, 1711-1755, violated pacifist doctrine, and represented decline. Because of the vagueness of the pacifist doctrine, their allegations remain a moot point. However, there is no doubt that regarding adherence to the disciplinary code as a whole, Quakerism did decline between approximately 1710 and 1755, and that the leading Friends in Pennsylvania in the 1750's were fully aware of their faltering ethical performance. Marietta, chapters 9, 10, and pp. 172-209; Tolles, 234-243.
patiently the distress of goods, rather than pay actively." But Woolman had in view, as well, the collective conduct of Pennsylvania Quakers, as he forthwith stated:

Some of our members who are Officers in Civil Government are in one case or other called upon in their respective Stations to Assist in things relative to the wars, Such being in doubt whether to act or crave to be excused from their Office, Seeing their Brethren united in the payment of a Tax to carry on the said wars, might think their case [nearly like theirs, &c] so quench the tender movings of the Holy Spirit in their minds, and thus by small degrees there might be an approach toward that of Fighting, till we come so near it, as that the distinction would be little else but the name of a peaceable people.25

Woolman understood the tension suffered by Friends in government, but beyond their dilemma he saw the responsibility that lay upon Friends in general; if they did not resist the tax and lead their officeholding brethren, then not only would the officials err, but the whole church would lose its integrity.

Anthony Benezet perceived a crisis as much as Woolman, and offered a prescription in terms more ascerbic than Woolman's:

Many of our Friends begin to rouse from that Lethargy in which they have been too long plunged, throu' a love of this World, and endeavour to reconcile those two contraries the World & Heaven. . . . Friends begin to see, what they might long ago have seen, if the God of this World, the deceitfulness of wealth & Honour had not blinded their Eyes viz. the impossibility for us, as a People . . . in times of War . . . to maintain the Government & be honest & true to that noble, evanglike Testimony which God has given us to bear as a People, the Beauty and Lustre of which will never be recovered amongst us, but by, I fear, great sufferings. . . .

With regard to the need of suffering because of Friends' testimony in matters of state that some Friends thought equivocal, Benezet wrote in 1757:

I know some are for limiting this to suffering in what is generally called religious matters, but that's a device of the enemy. There is no distinction in Christianity between civil and religious matters. . . . The most sensible suffering is to give up our interest, and suffer matters to go contrary to our judgment, in common affairs.26

While the Quaker-controlled Assembly and Governor Morris acrimoniously debated the provision for taxing the Penns' lands, Benezet, John and Israel Pemberton, Churchman, and sixteen other Friends, in November, 1755, protested the whole bill to the Assembly. Although they would freely pay taxes toward the costs of government, they said, "Yet as the raising of sums of Money & putting them into the Hands of Committees who may Apply them to Purposes inconsistent with the Peaceable Testimony, We profess and have born to the World, appears to Us in its Consequences to be Destructive of Our Religious Liberties. We apprehend many among Us will be under the necessity of suffering rather than Consent ing Thereto by the payment of a Tax for such Purposes. . . ."  

The Assembly, in reply, questioned whether the petitioners spoke for any Friends other than themselves and whether they had any right to claim that they did. Moreover, it found that the petitioners were unacquainted with the practice of the Assembly, especially the act of 1711 granting £2,000 to the Queen for her use, and that the protest was "unadvised and indiscreet." Whether the Friends knew it or not, the parallel between 1755 and 1711 was not an exact one, for the Assembly controlled the disposition of the money in 1755, whereas it did not in 1711.

The following month, still without the tax being enacted, twenty-one Friends (including John and Israel Pemberton, Benezet, Churchman, and four others who had signed the petition to the Assembly, plus Woolman, Samuel Fothergill, and others who had not) issued to their fellow Quakers a letter drafted by Woolman in which they declared their refusal to pay taxes for the promotion of war. Although some of the objects of the expenditure were praiseworthy (e.g., support of the Indians), the signators wrote, yet "being painfully apprehensive that the large Sum granted by the late act of the Assembly for the King's use is principally intended for purposes inconsistent with our peaceble Testimony, we therefore think that as we cannot be concerned in wars and fightings, so neither ought

27 Pennsylvania Archives, First Series (Philadelphia, 1852), II, 487-488. Woolman and Fothergill may not have signed this petition because neither was a citizen of Pennsylvania, Woolman residing in New Jersey. The Assembly stated that the petitioners numbered twenty-three, although the copy of the petition in the Archives lists only twenty. Votes, V, 4173.
28 Votes, V, 4173; II, 985-991, 993-1001; The Laws of the Province of Pennsylvania Collected into one Volume by Order of the Governor and Assembly of the said Province. Printed and sold by Andrew Bradford in Philadelphia 1714, 168-173.
we to contribute thereto by paying the Tax directed by the said Act. . . .” The private, unofficial nature of this “Epistle of Caution” revealed that the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting—“in a Conference the most weighty that ever I was at,” wrote Woolman—was too divided in 1755 to take a position on the tax bill when asked to do so by the scrupulous Friends.\(^{29}\)

The day after the “Epistle of Caution” was issued by the twenty-one Friends, Israel Pemberton wrote to John Fothergill and showed little Quakerly patience with his brethren in the Assembly. The Quaker Assemblymen had been privately warned, he wrote, that if they passed a tax on individuals some of their brethren would refuse to pay the tax in order to protest the military measures the Quaker Assemblymen were pursuing. Passage of the bill was “very imprudent & a violation of the Trust reposed in them, especially as they had reason to believe they might have raised the mony in another manner not liable to the same exceptions but this would not gratify their Darling scheme of gaining some Advantage over the Governor & Proprietor, for the sake of which every other Consideration seem’d to be little regarded. . . .” Pemberton became more specific about his complaints with the assemblymen and their July bill: “We think their Conduct in general hath evidenced a designed neglect of the Principles they profess, and their entring into these measures to be carried into Execution by a Committee of their own Nomination a manifest inconsistency and not to be reconciled to our Profession—it not appearing to be done in Consequence of any Demand of Tribute from the King nor to be appropriated by him or in pursuance of any Directions he has given.” Pemberton, regarding the committee to oversee the expenditure, had perceived the difference between the 1711 and 1755 bills which the Assembly had not. As early as 1754, Pemberton wrote, he and like-minded Quakers had perceived that the Quaker assemblymen had no concern for their own Quaker ethics and therefore had refused to vote for them or to recommend them

\(^{29}\) Gummere, 205-210. Two committees were appointed by the Yearly Meeting in September to consider the issue and the committees could not reach an agreement. The issue was proposed again in September, 1756, and not taken up. In 1757 the Yearly Meeting appointed a committee to consider the issue, and it reported that no position was or ought to be taken and the Friends with differing opinions on the issue ought to be tolerant toward each other.
to any other voters. Because they passed the bill, the assemblymen had, in Israel's opinion, separated themselves from the Society, shattered the strength of the Society, and proved themselves to be hypocrites before impartial Pennsylvanians and their political adversaries.30

By the close of 1755, then, the Society was divided into three obvious groups—the London Friends, the reformist Pennsylvanians, and the Quaker assemblymen. The third group, just emerged, comprised the Friends who sat in the Assembly—except ten who would later resign—and were led by Isaac Norris. Although the two groups in Pennsylvania had already clashed, all three had not learned by December, 1755, how deeply divided they were, nor of the magnitude of the concerns separating them: London Friends did not yet know about the pacifist scruples of the protesting Pennsylvania Friends, nor of the obdurateness of the Quaker politicians; the conscientious Pennsylvanians knew nothing of the anxiety of London Friends over the exclusion crisis; the Quaker politicians knew nothing of the compromise and withdrawal that London Friends had planned for them. Subsequent exchanges between the three groups raised the possibility that if any one of them completely obtained its way it would be at the cost of schism in the Society.

In May, 1756, Israel Pemberton learned from John Fothergill of the crisis provoked by Smith and the proprietary party and of the compromise formulated by Lords Granville and Halifax.31 However, Pemberton and other conscientious Friends had already considered withdrawal of Friends from the Assembly, not from reasons of political expediency but from a desire to prevent or end the violation of pacifist ethics by Quaker legislators. Pemberton had boycotted Quaker assemblymen at the polls for at least a year; the Philadelphia Committee for Correspondence (which became, in 1756, the Philadelphia Meeting for Sufferings) on May 21 wrote to the London Meeting for Sufferings that to keep their principles unblemished, Friends ought to withdraw from the legislature in wartime.32 The

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30 Israel Pemberton to John Fothergill, Dec. 17, 1755, Pemberton Papers, II, 8, Etting Collection.
31 John Fothergill to Israel Pemberton, Mar. 16, 1756, ibid., II, 10.
32 Israel Pemberton to John Fothergill, Dec. 17, 1755, ibid., II, 8; Philadelphia Meeting for Correspondence to correspondents for London Meeting for Sufferings, Philadelphia Meeting for Suffering minutes, May 21, 1756, Friends Records Department.
Meeting explained that only the fear that the Proprietors would abuse the charter rights of Pennsylvanians and Quakers if the Quakers withdrew, the check upon the power of the Proprietors being sacrificed, had prevented some Quaker legislators from withdrawing already. The following month the concern for the pacifist ethic overcame other considerations in the minds of six Friends and they, including James Pemberton, resigned. These six Quakers, Israel Pemberton stated, had not been guilty of voting for the offensive tax, but they considered that by their presence in the Assembly they helped comprise the quorum needed to transact business. To them such complicity in lawmaking was an error sufficient to require withdrawal. Their absence must not be construed as their attempt to prevent a quorum and the passage of offensive laws, for it was apparent that their seats would immediately be filled by persons less conscientious than themselves. Their concern was the preservation of the Testimony of Friends against war. In these Quakers, the sectarian concern to preserve the purity and integrity of their group predominated over mundane considerations, even honorable ones such as preserving something of Quaker ethics in politics.

In October, 1756, four more Friends withdrew from the Assembly. They, however, had little in common with the six who had already withdrawn, as they made clear in the speech they delivered to the House upon withdrawing. They were obeying not the leadings of their consciences but orders from London and the two emissaries of London Yearly Meeting. All the entreaties of English and American Friends could not persuade the remaining Quaker assemblymen to withdraw. But now, at least, Quakers were only a minority in the Assembly and London Friends might assure their critics that Quaker pacifists could not obstruct the defense of the Province. Ironically, the conscientious, pacifist Pennsylvanians who had helped to persuade the ten assemblymen to withdraw had implemented the

33 *Votes*, V, 4246; Israel Pemberton to John Fothergill, June 26, 1756, Pemberton Papers, II, 14, Etting Collection; Benjamin Franklin to Peter Collinson, June 15, 1756, Leonard W. Labaree, ed., *Papers of Benjamin Franklin* (New Haven, 1963), VI, 436. Pemberton probably erred; one of the six, William Callender, had voted for the tax when it was incorporated into a bill in November, 1755. *Votes*, V, 4159-4164.

34 *Votes*, VI, 4385; Richard Peters to Thomas Penn, Feb. 14, 1757, Peters Letter Book.
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compromise and the political and economic objectives of London Friends.

The unwitting co-operation and tacit friendship sustained by ignorance between London and the conscientious Pennsylvania Friends ended in June, 1756, when further communications between the two revealed their disagreement over pacifist conduct in the war. The “Epistle of Caution,” with a preface by the Reverend William Smith, had been published in England, caused “great disgust at Court,” and deeply embarrassed Friends there. John Fothergill wrote that among these angry English Friends, “There were divers who wanted not inclination to have sent a very explicit censure against it [the “Epistle”] and to have loaded the authors with blame to the utmost of their power.” The reputation of the Society was the reason offered by the angry Friends for their contemplated censure; however, added Fothergill, “Some private reasons operated on a few.” Although Fothergill did not name the “few,” the embarrassed, weighty members of the London Meeting for Sufferings who pursued the defense of the empire, while protecting Pennsylvania Friends from permanent disability, now would have found that the refusal of their Pennsylvania brethren to pay taxes both inhibited the defense of the empire and endangered the influence of English and Pennsylvania Friends in politics.

The angry Englishmen were forestalled from censuring the Pennsylvanians in part because a more temperate means of correcting the pacifists was devised: John Hunt and Christopher Wilson, the two Friends selected by London Meeting for Sufferings to go to Pennsylvania and induce Friends there to withdraw from the Assembly, were also to demand that Pennsylvanians pay their taxes. The order to the Pennsylvanians was unmistakable: appended to it was a list of five London Yearly Meeting minutes and seven acts of Parliament dating from the reign of William and Mary through 1732, all to prove that Friends had paid taxes (“to Render unto Caesar the Things that are Caesar’s”) when they knew “the Taxes are for Carrying on a War,” and that Pennsylvania’s pacifists were violating

the injunction of the Bible and the historical practice of the Society. The indictment rings true only because the London Meeting, through ignorance or design, omitted from it any mention of the great difference between the role of English Friends in government and that of Pennsylvanians. If not intentionally, then in effect, English Friends demanded that their American brethren pursue the economic interests of the English at the cost of American consciences.

At the time when the London Meeting for Sufferings was preparing the orders for Pennsylvania Friends, Israel Pemberton was writing John Fothergill his refusal to obey any such orders:

if they [Hunt and Wilson] are only to labour with Friends here to decline being chosen into the Assembly again that thing will be agreed to or may I say is already the result of a Majority of the present members but if they should think we ought to be active in choosing Others or in any Manner of expressing our Approbation of the measures lately pursu’d by our Brethren in profession, they will directly contradict the Judgment of the most weighty experienc’d Friends amongst us.

When English Friends learned of the resolve of Pemberton and his fellows to disobey the order, the more temperate among them demonstrated an understanding of the peculiar position of Quakerism in Pennsylvania, as well as a misapprehension of the dimensions and severity of the challenge.

John Fothergill proved his understanding when he extenuated the error of the Pemberton group. Fothergill perceived that the situation of Pennsylvania Friends in 1756 was neither their own historical one, nor analogous to that of Friends in England: "it was not altogether the payment of the tax but that the tax should be raised, directed and the use allowed by an assembly the major part whereof were of our profession that gave the offense," wrote Fothergill.

In his interpretation of the scruples of the Pennsylvania protestors, Fothergill was partly right: some Friends had refused to pay the tax in 1756 only upon understanding that the Quaker Assembly had transgressed the traditional safeguards against participation in war,

36 London Meeting for Sufferings minutes, July 9, 1756, Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore, Pa.
37 Israel Pemberton to John Fothergill, July 26, 1756, Pemberton Papers, II, 15, Etting Collection.
38 John Fothergill to Israel Pemberton, Aug. 2, 1756, ibid., II, 16.
thereby making the occasion exceptional and distinguishable from that of earlier Friends in Pennsylvania and contemporary Friends in England. But that concern for consistency, historical practice, and the sensibilities of English brethren was the sole motive of the protestors was disproved the following year when Friends, though less than those in 1756, refused to pay a second property tax which had none of the exceptional circumstances of the 1755 tax. It was passed by an Assembly in which Friends were no longer the majority. Quakers were not forcing Quakers to pay; those who paid were not accessory to the Quaker offenders who distributed it for war. These protestors of 1757 were undeniably repudiating the dictum of George Fox and the practice of their colleagues in England. Their lesson for English and American Friends became explicit: any war tax, whatever the circumstances of its passage, must not be paid.  

The intemperate English opponents of the Pennsylvania pacifists were not satisfied with the orders given to Hunt and Wilson (who were, meanwhile, failing to have the orders obeyed in Pennsylvania). "Some indeed," wrote an English country Friend, John Griffith, to John Pemberton, "particularly most of the London friends censured those much who made a stand against the payment of the tax, and would have sent amongst you such epistles as in all likehood would have done you great disservice had they not been strenuously opposed by some here who judged favorably of the case from the known worth of most who made the stand at first." These London Friends urged that the obdurate Pennsylvanians be brought under consideration by London Yearly Meeting at its 1758 session, and censured for having broken with the practice of the Society and the example of the English. At that very time, Friends in England were paying property taxes that supported the war with France.

If the peculiar relationship of Pennsylvania Friends to their government was ignored, the example of the English Friends was pertinent: both Pennsylvanians and English were charged with property taxes to support the war with France, yet Pennsylvanians....

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40 John Griffith to John Pemberton, Feb. 9, 1758, Pemberton Papers, XII, 99.
refused to pay and the English paid. The insidious difference in conduct meant that English Friends were less conscientious and pacifistic than their American brethren. That reflection, plus the sheer insubordination of the Pennsylvanians, offered London Friends grounds upon which the Pennsylvanians could be censured in 1758. The Yearly Meeting never did censure the Pennsylvanians, however, because Samuel Fothergill demonstrated to the angry Londoners that he could use the protest of the Pennsylvanians to the disadvantage of the Londoners. Fothergill explained to Israel Pemberton that

I have never yet seen cause to recede from the Judgment of Friends [including himself] who signed the Epistle of Love & Caution, and I believe Our Yearly Meeting will scarcely decide the point or meddle with it. I have intimated to several Zealous for paying the tax, & to have it decided by our Yearly Meeting, that if they forcibly bring it into the Y. M. to be controverted there, it may perhaps be a means of throwing some observations out which may create a dissent from the payment of the Land Tax here & occasion a division in the sentiments & Practices of Friends here as to induce those Friends to guard against every thing, or measure, which might bring it to publick discussion.41

Since the yearly meeting of 1755, at least, the potential for a split between London Friends and their English country brethren over the tax issue had existed; on that occasion some Friends entered into a discussion of paying taxes in wartime, but the meeting made no determination.42 Fothergill, in 1758, demonstrated to the London group that the issue was still alive and that by discussing it in reference to Pennsylvania, they would only quicken the tender pacifist consciences of their English brethren and provoke a protest at home. The Londoners avoided even mentioning the tax.

The reformation that Pennsylvania Friends were experiencing was to a degree being duplicated in the London Yearly Meeting, for on three significant issues of discipline the London Friends, pressing for relaxation of discipline, were soundly defeated.43 The probability,

41 Samuel Fothergill to Israel Pemberton, Mar. 1, 1758, *ibid.*, XXXIV, 69, 70.
42 William Foster to John Smith, Oct. 4, 1755, John Smith Papers.
43 John Griffith to John Pemberton, May 21, 1758, Samuel Emlen, Jr., to John Pemberton, May 28, 1758, and Samuel Fothergill to Israel Pemberton, Sept. 7, 1758, Pemberton Papers, XII, 118, 122; XXXIV, 82.
then, of that Yearly Meeting censuring Pennsylvanians, had London Friends proposed it, was small.

After 1758 London Friends and the London Meeting for Sufferings never again threatened the conscientious Pennsylvanians; the sympathy that was shown the Pennsylvanians by English reformers and country Friends dispelled the danger of a split in the Atlantic Quaker community. The differences between the Quaker reformers in Pennsylvania and their brethren in politics, however, were not as easily settled.

In Pennsylvania no signal victory, such as occurred in London Yearly Meeting, was gained by either the pacifist followers of Israel Pemberton or the Assembly colleagues and kindred-minded brethren of Isaac Norris. Instead, differences persisted and animosity "smoldered" while both groups abstained from pressing in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting for a final affirmation of their respective positions. The zealous Pemberton group occupied the offices of the Yearly Meeting and staffed its committees; their opponents, judged by their record of participation in ecclesiastical affairs, were nominal Quakers. The Pemberton group might easily have proposed that the Yearly Meeting support them. But they understood, perhaps from a life of waiting upon the "sense of the meeting," that precipitous action and overbearing leadership was un-Quakerly and, in this case, might well lead to schism.

On the eve of the Yearly Meeting in 1757, Israel Pemberton, knowing of the differences between the two groups, especially on the question of the property tax which was going to be brought to debate in the Meeting, wished that the Friends who planned to reopen the tax issue "will be cautious of offering it again: for my own part as the discoveries of what I now conceive to be my duty have been gradually made to me. I am convinced it is necessary to wait with patience on others. . . ." The issue was, nevertheless, brought before the Meeting and submitted to a committee which contained, among others, such conscientious pacifists and signers of the "Epistle of Caution" as Woolman, Churchman, Benezet, William Brown, and Joshua Ely. The committee unanimously reported, and the meeting adopted, "the Judgement, that it is not proper to enter into a public Discussion of the Matter, and . . . that Friends every where endeavour earnestly to have their minds covered with fervent
Charity towards one another.” The issue would not be raised again in Yearly Meeting and neither zealots nor politicians could claim their position on tax payment was the orthodox Quaker ethic.44

While the Assembly continued to tax the province after 1757, and the Yearly Meeting attempted to check the breach that the property tax had created within the Society, other issues arose, generated by the war, and aggravated the difference between the groups who had taken sides over the tax issue. The most serious aggravation concerned the supply of General John Forbes’ expedition in 1758. Forbes desperately needed wagons and teams to transport his army across Pennsylvania to attack the French at Fort Duquesne, and the Assembly in April, 1758, passed legislation to obtain the wagons and teams. The Quakers in the Assembly evidently felt no compunction in supporting this legislation and Quaker magistrates did not refuse to urge and enjoin Pennsylvanians and Quaker brethren to provide wagons and teams. Some Friends supplied wagons, most of them later alledging to their Monthly Meetings that they did so without thinking or had presumed that they were not deviating from Quaker pacifism. Many also alleged that Quaker magistrates had allayed any misgivings they had and assured them that they were not violating the church discipline.45

The strict pacifists were certain that supplying Forbes was breaking the discipline, and they ultimately appealed to the Yearly Meeting in September, 1758, to reaffirm their position. Unlike 1757, the Meeting in 1758 decisively and unanimously declared that supplying military expeditions with wagons—or anything else—was an error; that any Friend who persuaded or enjoined his brother to do so erred; and, finally, that if any Friend occupied a public office which bound him to so persuade or enjoin his brethren, he must decline the office. This new article of discipline contained provision for its application beyond the question of military supplies; Friends

44 Israel Pemberton to Samuel Fothergill, Sept. 14, 1757, ibid., XXXIV, 61. Woolman said the issue was reopened because some Friends who were magistrates were distraining the property of Friends who refused to pay the tax. Gummere, 210; Philadelphia Yearly Meeting minutes, Sept. 23, 1757, Friends Records Department.

45 Votes, VI, 4766, 4784; Philadelphia Meeting for Sufferings minutes, June 2, 1758, Friends Records Department; [James?] Pemberton to John Hunt, June 29, 1758, Pemberton Papers (Box 3); Marietta, 89, 135.
were to decline offices that required them to force anyone to obey "any act which they may conscientiously scruple to perform. . . ."46 The article was something of a milestone in the relation of the Society of Friends to the state (in Pennsylvania): it revealed an apprehension, at least, that Quaker ethics, especially pacifism, were incompatible with occupation of civil offices. Yet the 1758 article was equivocal and subject to interpretation in each case—the incompatible civic offices and duties were not specified. Also, the penalty prescribed for any Quaker officeholder who fell under its injunction and refused to resign his office was not disownment, but exclusion from the disciplinary and business meetings of the Society. The application of the article likewise proved equivocal, for although thirty-two Friends who supplied Forbes were treated and forgiven upon acknowledging their error, no Quaker officeholder was disciplined between 1758 and 1775.47 The article of 1758, then, long preceded the determination of Friends in Pennsylvania to enforce it and to decline insidious offices in government.

Whatever peace had been established in 1757 was broken by the issue of 1758 and the new disciplinary article: acrimony was undisguised. James Pemberton wrote to John Hunt in June that, "unless the inconsistency of Choosing any undr our profession for posts in government be more generally seen & avoided, it must 'ere long produce a general anarchy among us or an open Schism, either of wch will be of fatal Consequence."48 Some English Friends, though they dared not bring their displeasure with zealous Pennsylvanians into London Yearly Meeting, privately denounced the divisions in the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting and barely concealed their dislike of the Pemberton group. One such Friend, Samuel Spavold, told the Pennsylvanians that they were in great danger of splitting & suffering great hurt from an over zealous Spirit which was for imposing its sight on others which was of a sour, bitter, destroying nature. . . . [he] warned friends of it [overzealousness] as one of Satan's devices & snares, intimating that ye Head of ye Society,

46 Philadelphia Yearly Meeting minutes, Sept. 28, 1758, Friends Records Department. Emphasis added.
47 Marietta, 89, 135.
48 [James?] Pemberton to John Hunt, June 29, 1758, Pemberton Papers (Box 3).
men of elocution, active members, were in danger from this snare, exhorting
them not to overdrive least a flame should be raised that would destroy
all before it.49

And John Fothergill wrote to Israel Pemberton: "From what I hear,
some amongst you are straining at gnats, and swallowing camels.
Rigorously insisting upon points which are disputable, and a man
may be very good and think either way, whilst rancour animosity
and fiery ignorant zeal is tolerated nay commended."50

Although the struggle continued, schism did not occur in Penn-
sylvania, perhaps because success came neither to the Pemberton
group nor to the Norris politicians. After 1758 the Quaker politicians
levied more taxes and raised the penalties for nonpayment; they
ignored and avoided their brethren who came to the Assembly to
plead their case regarding a militia law in Pennsylvania; and they
and their kindred-minded friends in Monthly Meetings opposed
everything that Pemberton advocated for preserving Quaker ethics.51

In 1760 and 1762, the Yearly and Monthly Meetings again at-
ttempted to have assemblymen and magistrates resign. Following
the example of Speaker Isaac Norris, none resigned in 1760 and by
1762 their number had even increased. By then Friends might have
composed half of the House.52

With the end of the war and of Pontiac's Rebellion, many of the
conditions making government inimical to pacifism had passed.
Even James Pemberton found that he could safely return to a seat
in the House in 1765. It had never become the policy of the Yearly
Meeting that government was always and continually inimical to
Quaker ethics, but only that some public offices in wartime were
irreconcilable with Quaker pacifism. During the war some Friends—
Woolman, Benezet, and Israel Pemberton, for example—appeared
to suggest complete separation. Pemberton had written:

49 Anthony Benezet to John Smith, John Smith Papers, V, 268. This letter is undated,
but from references in it it could not have been written before September, 1758, nor later than
March, 1759.

50 John Fothergill to Israel Pemberton, Apr. 9, 1759, Pemberton Papers, II, 40, Etting
Collection.

51 Israel Pemberton to John Hunt, Jan. 18, 1759, Pemberton Papers (Box 3).

52 Philadelphia Meeting for Sufferings minutes, Apr. 17, 1760, "Friends Records Department;
James Pemberton to John Fothergill, Dec. 10, 1762, Pemberton Papers, XXXIV, 121.
tho' we must as members of society steadily endeavor to fulfill the duties of our stations in the concerns both of this & our future life, almost every Event of our Endeav’r determines me in the conclusion that Infinite wisdom is directing us to a more inward self denying Path than we or our most immediate Predecessors have trod in— it seems at times as if our Enemy were employ’d to instruct us in this lesson, at least their unjust Treatment should . . . tend to alienate us from the desire of seeking the Friendship or honour of Men. . . .

But the lesson was apparent to only a very few Friends, and was disregarded after 1765.

In the judgment of the Pemberton group, the peace of 1765 may have concluded an unsatisfactory record of Quaker pacifism in wartime: struggle, acrimony, equivocation was the record, and the trials that the acrimony betokened had not been crowned with success. The reform of the Society was not complete; nominal Friends were still in the Society and in good standing. However, the peaceful setting of 1765 served but to close one phase and to introduce the dawning of yet another war and yet another trial.

55 Israel Pemberton to John Fothergill, Nov. 22, 1758, Pemberton Papers, II, 34, Etting Collection.