

THE CREATION OF
QUAKER THEORY

PINK DANDELION

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The last forty years has witnessed a 'golden age' of Quaker Studies scholarship, with the bulk of this work into the history and sociology of Quakerism being undertaken by scholars who are also Quakers. For the scholars involved, their Quakerism has both prompted their research interests and affected their lives as Quakers.

The Creation of Quaker Theory presents a unique study into Quakerism: it draws together the key theories of Quaker origins, subsequent history, and contemporary sociology, into a single volume; and it allows each of the contributors the opportunity to reflect on what led to the initial choice of research topic, and how their findings have in turn affected their Quaker lives. The result is a unique contribution to Quaker theory as well as to the discussion on insider/outsider research. This book is invaluable to anyone interested in Quakerism, research into religion, notions of outsider objectivity within academia, and areas of theology, religious history and sociology in general.



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The Creation of Quaker Theory

Insider Perspectives

Edited by

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*Centre for Postgraduate Quaker Studies in association
with the University of Birmingham, UK*



Routledge

Taylor & Francis Group

LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2004 by Ashgate Publishing

Published 2016 by Routledge

2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

The creation of Quaker theory : insider perspectives

1. Society of Friends – Doctrines 2. Society of Friends –

Historiography

I. Dandelion, Pink

289.6

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

The creation of Quaker theory : insider perspectives / edited by Pink

Dandelion.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references (p.) and index.

ISBN 0-7546-3158-3 (alk. paper)

1. Society of Friends. I. Dandelion, Pink.

BX7732.C82 2003

289.6'09–dc21

2003044386

ISBN 13: 978-0-7546-3158-3 (hbk)

Typeset by Owain Hammonds, Ceredigion.

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Foreword by Arthur O. Roberts

Why publish a book about the creation of Quaker theory? Questions about purpose are usually in the minds of readers, as well as writers, so let us consider the question. If I were an *outsider*, a non-Friend, I might propose one or more of the following answers to that question:

- 1) a coterie of scholars is eager to do religious research;
- 2) there is an accessible repository of Quaker documents;
- 3) the complex nature of seventeenth-century English Christianity stimulates intellectual inquiry;
- 4) the disparate character of modern Quakerism invites re-examination of its roots;
- 5) the movement is sufficiently moribund to encourage writing its intellectual memoirs;
- 6) Quakerism has a contemporary relevance that merits examining its historical context.

But I am *not* an outsider. *I am an insider* – on several counts. My paternal Welsh ancestors fled to Penn's colony to find religious freedom. At my personal conversion as a youth, Christ Jesus 'spoke to my condition' (similar to the way Christ spoke to Fox, as I learned later from reading the *Journal* (Nickalls, 1952)) and I shared with my spiritual ancestor the joy of experiencing Christ inwardly as well as knowing about the Saviour outwardly. Elders, teachers and ministers of the Greenleaf, Idaho, Friends Church, along with my parents, nurtured me in the Christian faith. I was recorded a minister of the Gospel by Northwest Yearly Meeting nearly sixty years ago. I cherish, and seek to be worthy of, that prayerful discernment of divine appointment. Northwest Yearly Meeting continues to be my immediate 'family of Friends'. As a Quaker scholar, based at George Fox University in Oregon for half a century, I have lectured widely and written numerous articles and books on Quaker history and thought, and have also preached and taught and served in pastoral capacities in various Northwest churches.

My interest, understandably then, is piqued by the subtitle of this book: *Insider Perspectives*. So let us ask the question again, why a book about the creation of Quaker theory? As an insider I surmise the answers in the first list may explain to some extent why and how some Quakers do Quaker scholarship. I would, however, add to that list the following possible answers, which combine, to various levels of coherence, spiritual advocacy and scholarly objectivity:

- 1) some want present-day Quaker witness to be less internally conflicted;
- 2) some want Quakerism to supplant Christianity in nurturing spirituality among seekers;
- 3) others want Quakerism strongly to affirm and follow its normative Christian faith.

So what makes a Quaker an ‘insider’? Answers vary. For some, being a member or participant in a Friends meeting suffices. For them process, not doctrine, defines affinity. For some persons, the Quaker circle encloses Christianity as one of several subordinate circles. ‘Spirituality’ limns the borders. For others, Quaker affinity is one group within the larger enclosing Christian circle, interlinked and sharing the Christian heritage and core faith convictions, and committed to particular understandings of biblical faith and practice that they believe enhance Christian faithfulness. From my in-group ‘pedigree’ you can rightly infer that I find my place within this affinity group that locates Friends as one important covenant circle within the compass of Christian revelation.

In reading the chapters of this book one discovers differing patterns of affinity among the contributors and diverse interpretation of Quaker theory. The reader will need to grapple with variant and sometimes conflicting points of view. I suggest, however, that these Quaker scholars do share one important conviction, namely that Truth is greater than data and logical entailment. It implies openness to, and a search for, divine guidance. As insiders their scholarly goals include objectivity *and* advocacy. If the word ‘advocacy’ sounds too political, try the word ‘witness’. ‘Publishers of Truth’ are not averse to advocacy, even in the twenty-first century. They want their scholarship to witness Truth expressed by voice and in print. They examine their heritage through the lens of modern culture knowing that this culture, like others, is no definitive test of truth. So picture God looking over the shoulders of these Quaker scholars and whispering hints as they acknowledge presuppositions, as they seek to frame credible hypotheses, to educe logical implications, and to apply these theories appropriately to real persons within actual situations. If insider status entails spiritual bonding and not just formal association, these scholars seek a wisdom from Above that includes but also transcends sense, reason and intuition. In the Quaker tradition based upon the biblical metaphor of Christ as the true shepherd whose voice calls to faithfulness, they resist becoming hirelings, hawking truth to the highest cultural bidder. From attending their scholarly conferences they understand the force of the following poem, ‘Hireling Historians’, and they struggle valiantly with a tension between secular scholarly demands and calls to spiritual faithfulness.

Hooked upon hypnotic lore,
 historians of a certain kind
 expose the past,
 shattering its solitude.
 They heave aside
 accumulated social debt
 to quarry stories
 long interred in time.
 Dilettantes, they frolic
 (vicariously, of course)
 among the sins and hopes
 the old ones suffered through.
 From sunny ledges
 of protected time
 they merchandise faiths

found by floundering up
 steep and unmarked slopes.
 Hirelings they are,
 not companions on the climb,
 hirelings, hirelings. . . .

Arthur O. Roberts (1985, p.86)

Do the Friends whose thoughts grace the pages of this book wish to be known as ‘companions on the climb’? I hope so! The climb is especially exhilarating, and challenging, because Jesus Christ treks with his companions, his ‘Ffriends’. Readers do well, therefore, in the same spirit of godly inquiry to ponder what these ‘insiders’ have written, noting thoughtfully the sociocultural milieu within which they have formulated their theories. Collectively these scholars are Anglo-American men and women representing diverse and sometimes opposing theological perspectives, a characteristic of that group of people. Within this milieu Quakerdom is barely holding its own, with memberships dwindling in Britain, Europe and North America, and struggling to accommodate its witness to Western culture without compromising Truth. Numerically speaking, and in respect to spiritual vigor (recently tested by martyrdom), the torch of scholarly leadership in the Quaker future may well be handed over to Friends living south of the Equator, in Latin America, Africa and Asia, where most of today’s 350 000 Quakers worship and witness their Christian faith. In the meantime, however, *The Creation of Quaker Theory* may help trigger a Quaker reawakening in the West. For such an outcome I would be grateful to God, and I think many other Friends would be, too.

Notes on the Contributors

Richard G. Bailey teaches at Queen's University, Kingston, Canada. He specializes in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century European and British intellectual history with broadening interest in the history of the concept of immateriality in both eastern and western thought.

Hugh Barbour is the author of many books and articles on Quaker history, including *Quakers in Puritan England* (1964) and, with Arthur Roberts, *Early Quaker Writings* (1973). He and his wife Sirkka served as Resident Friends in Friends Meeting, Cambridge, MA, 1991–95. He is an Emeritus Professor of Earlham College, where he taught Quaker, Church and religious history for 38 years.

Pink Dandelion is Programmes Leader, Centre for Postgraduate Quaker Studies (Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre in association with the University of Birmingham). His books include *A Sociological Analysis of the Theology of Quakers: the silent revolution* (1996), *Towards Tragedy/Reclaiming Hope* (with Douglas Gwyn, Rachel Muers, Brian Phillips and Richard E. Sturm (2004)) and *The Liturgies of Quakerism* (2004). 'Ben' was co-editor of the *Historical Dictionary of the Friends (Quakers)* (Abbott *et al.*, 2003), is convener of the Quaker Studies Research Association and editor of the journal *Quaker Studies*.

Martin Davie is both a Quaker and an Anglican. Following twelve years as a lecturer in theology he now works for the Church of England at Church House, Westminster, where he is the Theological Consultant to the House of Bishops and Theological Secretary to the Council for Christian Unity. He is married to Alyson, who is a parish priest in the Church of England, and they have one son, William. They live in Hertfordshire.

Douglas Gwyn is Quaker Studies tutor at the Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre, Birmingham, England. An American Friend, his doctoral work was in biblical studies at Drew University. He has been a pastor in the evangelical Quaker branch, a writer for the American Friends Service Committee, and a teacher at the Pendle Hill Quaker Study Center near Philadelphia. He has worked with Mennonite and Brethren theologians in renewing Historic Peace Church witness to the wider Church. His books include *Apocalypse of the Word: the life and message of George Fox* (1986); *A Declaration on Peace* (with John Howard Yoder, Eugene Roop and George Hunsinger) (Gwyn *et al.*, 1991); *The Covenant Crucified: Quakers and the rise of capitalism* (1995); *Seekers Found: Atonement in early Quaker experience* (2000); and *Towards Tragedy/Reclaiming Hope* (with Pink Dandelion, Rachel Muers, Brian Phillips and Richard E. Sturm) (Dandelion *et al.*, 2004).

Thomas D. Hamm is archivist and professor of history at Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana, where he has taught since 1987. A lifelong Friend, he is active in Quaker affairs in the United States. He is the author of three books and numerous articles and essays on Quaker history. His most recent project is a book on modern American Quakerism to be published by Columbia University Press.

Rosemary Moore was brought up as an Anglican and discovered Quakers while reading Philosophy, Politics and Economics at Oxford. She later followed this with a London external degree in Theology. Having taken early retirement from schoolteaching in 1985, and wishing for some exercise to the brain, she took up research into early Quakerism. A PhD dissertation, 'The Faith of the First Quakers' (1993), was later developed and enlarged to become *The Light in Their Consciences: the early Quakers in Britain 1646–1666* (2000). She is currently engaged in a study of Isaac Penington.

Gay Pilgrim is currently a PhD student in the Department of Theology, Birmingham University. She has previously been a part-time lecturer in Sociology and Social Policy at Wolverhampton University, and is at present an Associate Tutor at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre, Birmingham, England. Her research interests include religion and identity, religious/faith community, alternative spiritualities and pilgrimage.

Until 2002, **John Punshon** was Professor of Quaker Studies at Earlham College and the Earlham School of Religion. He was educated at Oxford and London universities, and went to the USA from Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre in Birmingham, England. He has had a varied career, including teaching school, journalism and the law. He is a member of First Friends Meeting, Richmond, Indiana, and is a Recorded Minister in Indiana Yearly Meeting. Among his publications is a Quaker history, *Portrait in Grey* (1984), an introduction to worship, *Encounter with Silence* (1987), and his 1987 Johnson Lecture at Friends United Meeting, *Patterns of Change* (1987). In his Swarthmore Lecture for 1990, *Testimony and Tradition*, he examined the nature of the Quaker testimonies (1990). His most recent book, *Reasons for Hope* (2001), outlines what he sees as the prospects before the evangelical branch of Friends.

Glen D. Reynolds combines freelance journalism/writing with parliamentary and legal advice. Glen was educated at Brabeouf Manor College, Surrey and the Universities of East Anglia and London, and has just submitted his PhD at the Centre for Quaker Studies at the University of Sunderland. He acted as a solicitor and investigative journalist in London for 15 years and is currently solicitor for the Campaign Against the Arms Trade. Additionally, Glen acts as World Development Officer for the Diocese of Durham with a seat on the Board of Social Responsibility and the Diocesan Synod, and also sits on the Board of Christian Aid Churches Advisory Group.

Arthur O. Roberts began teaching at George Fox University, Newberg, Oregon, in 1953. He currently holds the position of Professor-at-large. His Quaker publications

include *Through Flaming Sword* (1959), *Early Quaker Writings* (with Hugh Barbour, 1973), and *Tomorrow is Growing Old: stories of Quakers in Alaska* (1978). He is a former editor of *Quaker Religious Thought*. His general writings include five books of poetry and one study of spirituality, *Messengers of God: the sensuous side of spirituality* (1996). In 2003, HarperSanFrancisco published his study of the afterlife, *Exploring Heaven*.

Carole D. Spencer teaches Church History and Spiritual Formation at George Fox Evangelical Seminary in Portland, Oregon. She is completing a PhD in Quaker Studies at the University of Birmingham, UK. She has published articles on Quaker theology and history in *Quaker Religious Thought*, *Quaker History* and *Quaker Studies*. She is a Recorded Minister in Northwest Yearly Meeting of Friends.

Michele Lise Tarter teaches early American literature and women's and gender studies at The College of New Jersey. She has published numerous articles on Quaker women's prophesying and writing. Her most recent book, *A Centre of Wonders: the body in early America*, is a co-edited collection of essays on early American cultural studies (Lindman and Tarter, 2001) and includes her own work on transatlantic Friends and their spiritual practice of 'Quaking in the Light'. Michele is a member of Rancocas Friends Meeting in New Jersey.



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Introduction

Pink Dandelion

The last forty years and particularly the last ten have seen a huge growth in the number of Quakers working within the academy on Quaker topics. Major conferences on William Penn in 1981, and George Fox in 1991 and 2002, have been part of this groundswell of scholarship and publication (Dunn and Dunn, 1986; Mullett, 1994). Postgraduate centres on both sides of the Atlantic have helped develop a healthy research culture. The Quaker Studies Research Association and its fully-refereed journal, *Quaker Studies*, are in its ninth year and the journal sits alongside the other major publishing initiative in this area, the Edwin Mellen Series in Quaker Studies. However, at the same time, the consequent flow of theses and theories about Quakerism are divergent and at times incompatible.

This book takes a selection of these recent *Quaker* Quaker-Studies scholars, in particular those who have expounded a theory about Quakerism, and sets their work out side by side, allowing the reader an accessible overview of competing and contrasting perspectives on the history of Quakerism. The book is divided into three. The [first part](#), 'Quaker Historiography', reflects on the nature of Quaker Studies, the second, 'Theories of Early Quakerism', comprises theories relating to seventeenth-century Quakers; the [third part](#), 'Early Friends and Beyond', comprises scholars whose theories reach or start beyond that period.

In addition, as Quaker scholars working in Quaker Studies, they include in their contributions reflection on the ways in which the researcher was drawn to the topic and the ways in which her or his findings affected their faith. In other words, each author comments on what it has been like to be 'an insider'. In sociology, the methodological issues raised by insider research are now well rehearsed (for example, Hayano, 1979; Heilman, 1980; Homan, 1991; Collins, 1996b; Nesbitt, 1999; Arweck and Stringer, 2002). The reversal of the traditional anthropological ideal of the researcher as 'stranger becoming native', 'native becoming stranger', is now accepted. More critical, currently, is the interface between researcher and researched, and the researcher's ability to reflect critically on motives and biases. Each author has been asked to undertake this task here in order to give a range of perspectives on and from within insider research. The themes raised by the book in terms of motive, research stance, insiderness, and how far we can talk about a 'truth about Quaker history', are drawn together in the Conclusion, 'The Nature of Quaker Studies'.

This book does not include Quaker scholars whose work was outside their academic specialism, such as Rufus Jones, whose professional life was as a philosopher, or Lewis Benson. Neither does it include non-Quaker scholars who have added so much to the field, such as Geoffrey Nuttall (1946), Christopher Hill (for example, 1958, 1972, 1978), Jack Marietta (1984), Barry Reay (1985), Nigel

Smith (1989), Phyllis Mack (1992), James Walvin (1997) or Thomas Kennedy (2001). Nor does it include Quaker scholars of Quakerism whose work has tended to the particular rather than the theoretical, such as Jerry Frost (1980), Larry Ingle (1986, 1994), or where the Quaker data have led to more generalized theories, such as Elaine Hobby (1995), or theories about aspects of Quakerism (Collins 1996a, 1996b). Having said this, the authors here represent a larger group of theorists. Kathryn Damiano's thesis that the eighteenth-century Quakers were still living a realizing eschatology (1988) would fit well within this volume, although she works outside the academy.

The book began as part of a project entitled 'The Truth About Quaker History'. The plan was to set up a series of seminars held in different locations over four years, each event concentrating on a century of Quakerism. The logistics were difficult to organize but another factor emerged in the course of the first (and then only) of these weekends, held at Woodbrooke, the Quaker Study Centre in Birmingham, England, in August 2001. Carole Spencer, John Punshon and Doug Gwyn each expounded their theories with myself in the chair seeing myself as needing to act as a cross between a breakfast TV host and a boxing referee, only to find that none of the three felt able or willing to contradict the others. Certainly there were some interesting insights. Most historians suggest that, after 1660 or 1666, Quakerism waned. John Punshon suggested that the pragmatism of this period associated with, for example, Reay (1985), was merely a continuation of earlier pragmatism, that in each age Quakerism has chosen how to present itself. Further he suggested that, if anything, the second period and beyond represented a more mature Quakerism. However, what emerged most was a disciplinary separation of emphasis and a surprising lack of direct conflict. It brought to mind the well-known postcard: 'I am a Quaker. In case of emergency, please be silent.' Were these Quaker scholars simply being polite? Certainly when Larry Ingle critiqued Doug Gwyn's *Apocalypse of the Word* in *Quaker Religious Thought* (1991), it was suggested by some that, whilst such a forceful critique might be acceptable in purely academic circles, it was not how Quaker scholars normally behaved towards each other. Hence a further question emerged alongside the understanding of the theories and the personal reflections of the theorists, that of the nature of Quaker Studies.

In a later course at Pendle Hill in April 2002, I decided to present each of the theories in this book with some additional commentary, a dry run for this text. I am indebted to the company of students on that course (as I am to the writers here) for their encouragement and good humour. They helped me see that Quaker Studies can best be described as an isosceles tetrahedron (see 'The Nature of Quaker Studies' at the end of this book). The experience also suggested that I should insert some commentary between the chapters and this can be found at the start of the [second](#) and [third parts](#) of the book. This commentary is largely confined to my attempts to help the reader see and understand the key differences between the approaches taken, but there are also places where I offer views and insights from my own work. This is usually about Liberal Quakerism and its twentieth-century transformation into 'liberal-Liberal Quakerism'. However, this is not intended to give the book an overtly Liberal bias. Only Martin Davie's chapter focuses solely on that tradition; most of the authors here are concerned with the period of Quakerism held in common by all branches, or the Orthodox Tradition of the nineteenth century.

Modern Quaker Studies begins with the work of Robert Barclay of Reigate with his unfinished 1876 publication, *The Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth*. It seemed fitting then that the opening chapter of this volume should be a reprint of Thomas Hamm's paper to the 1991 George Fox Tercentenary Conference, organized by Michael Mullett at Lancaster University in England, on the seminal influence of Barclay's work on later renderings of the tradition (1994). I am grateful to Michael Mullett for his permission to reprint the paper as part of this collection.

Like Barclay, who used history to justify personal theological preferences, Liberal Friends such as J.W. Rowntree believed an understanding of Quaker history was the key to a (Liberal) Quaker revival (Hamm, 1988, pp.154–5). When Rufus Jones and W.C. Braithwaite took on J.W. Rowntree's vision for a comprehensive and complete history of Quakerism as a means to this revival, the Victorian Barclay was the author they used as both a foundation and a departure point for their own interpretation of the essence of Quakerism. Rather than posit Quakerism as essentially evangelical with George Fox and the valiant Sixty as proto-pastors, Jones in particular presented Quakers as essentially, and foremost, mystical (Braithwaite, 1912, p.xxxiv).

Jones' view has since been much challenged. Melvin Endy concisely summarizes the competing interpretations of Quakerism in his article in *Quaker History* (1981), between Jones' view which located the beginnings of Quakerism with church mystics and the Nuttall/Cadbury/Tolles/Barbour view that Quakerism can be best understood as a wing of puritanism (though Tolles also suggested that Quakerism was neither protestant nor Roman Catholic but a third way: Tolles, 1948). This view of a Quakerism rooted in puritanism, what I call the 'Puritan School', gathered pace in the middle of the twentieth century and Hugh Doncaster wrote a new introduction to replace Jones' for the 1955 edition of Braithwaite's *Beginnings of Quakerism* (1955). Wilmer Cooper is also lucid on the history of ideas of Quakerism and Jones' place within it (1994).

Hugh Barbour, who is the author of [Chapter 2](#) of this volume, began his influential doctoral thesis in 1950 (published in 1964), following Geoffrey Nuttall's book (1946) on the interplay between the radical nature of Puritanism and the emergent Quakerism of the seventeenth century. As Barbour writes in his chapter here, 'Most recent students of early Friends have overlooked the spiritual depth and vitality for three generations of the Puritans, the dominant religious movement in England.' This view places Quakerism as a movement which continued and intensified the revolutionary processes of the 1640s, one of many Christian revival movements which benefited and drew from what had gone before.

A third strand of interpretation emerged in the 1950s when Lewis Benson began a lifetime's work of trying to communicate a more prophetic understanding of what Quakerism was about. Drawing on the writings of George Fox, Benson and the New Foundation movements he was to nurture on both sides of the Atlantic argued that to see Friends in terms of mysticism alone was insufficient. Quakerism, Benson argued (1968), was about the inward experience of the Light of Christ *and* the universal (hence the 'catholic') mission which was led and fed by this experience. His prophetic Christianity was about a dialogical relationship with God, of hearing and obeying, and he framed Quakerism within a more biblical sense of history than Jones.

In his chapter, Barbour focuses on the last sixty years of scholarship, offering us an overview of the scholars, Quaker, including Benson, and non-Quaker, including Christopher Hill and the materialist school he pioneered, who have contributed to this growing field of Quaker Studies.

The final chapter in the introductory section of the book is by John Punshon, who reflects on the different nature of types of historical interpretation. As with Barbour, Punshon does not dwell on his own thoughts and opinions such as those in his recent book (2001), but suggests an overview of the ways in which different types of history start from different premises and lead to different results. It is an interesting reflection from a scholar Cooper (1994, p.23) claims represents a fourth approach alongside Jones, Nuttall/Barbour/Tolles, and Benson.

What [Part I](#) lacks is a feminist overview of the historiography. In her chapter, Michele Tarter quotes Christine Trevett (1991, p.30) on the way in which male historians have treated Martha Simmonds, key supporter of James Nayler, often in an attempt to keep (the male) Nayler pure. This treatment of some of the more enthusiastic women Friends, particularly those whom Fox spoke up against, has been all too readily accepted by a succession of historians and, alas, can be found in books on Nayler and Fox printed even after Trevett's critique. I am sorry that Christine Trevett was unable to contribute to this volume.

[Part II](#) of the book, 'Theories of Early Quakerism', concentrates on theories concerned with the seventeenth century alone. Rosemary Moore builds on her thesis and book research which looks in such exacting detail at the first years of Quakerism, only taking material published during the period as evidence. Moore makes a number of points about the nature of early Quakerism and suggests why, perhaps, its success was inevitable. Hers is a history which in its detail acts as a partner to Larry Ingle's work on George Fox (1994). Between them, and with Bonnelyn Kunze (1994), they have answered the need for a diachronic history of Quakerism and academic biographies of Fox and Fell, which Ingle had earlier identified (1987, 1991). Indeed, since Endy's and Ingle's earlier analyses, the debates have moved on.

Richard Bailey, as part of this newer arena of discussion, presents a metaphysical view of early Quakerism. His doctoral work established Fox's concept of 'celestial flesh' as a way of describing divine indwelling. Bailey also offered a theory of the divinization of Fox in the 1650s and 1660s and the de-divinization of Fox after 1670. Fox was brought down to the level of an Apostle, other Friends to the state of believers.

Bailey's work has been partnered by that of Michele Tarter, who has looked in particular at the experience of early women Friends (1993, 1995, 2001). In this, she is part of a movement which has rightly placed the experience of women at the heart of Quaker history. Other scholars in this vein are Maureen Bell (1988), Elaine Hobby (1989, 1992, 1995), Phyllis Mack (1989, 1992), Christine Trevett (1991, 2000), Patricia Crawford (1993), Bonnelyn Kunze (1994), Rebecca Larson (1999), Catie Gill (2001), Sandra Holton (1994, 1996, 1998, and, with Margaret Allen, 1997), Pam Lunn (1997) and Elizabeth O'Donnell (1999). Together with Hobby, and Gill, Tarter engages literary theory, significantly bringing those tools of analysis to the study of Quakerism (see also Graham *et al.* (1989), Susan Wiseman (1992), Margaret Ezell (1993), Hilary Hinds (1996) and Elspeth Graham (1996)). Her work

characterizes early Quaker spiritual experience as embodied, the body ('celestial flesh') acting as a site and expression of religious experience, a feminization of worship later censors would try to hide.

Glen Reynolds concurs with this metaphysical interpretation of Quakerism, up to a point, and also with the work of Tarter and Bailey in suggesting that later Quakerism censored the early writings. However, he claims that Bailey (1992) in particular overemphasizes the physical in relation to the working of the spirit. In his work claiming that George Fox was a quasi-gnostic, the physical dimension, along with the ethical and the moral, is secondary to the salvation of the soul through a metaphysical process of perfection and unity with God. For Reynolds, Fox's deification and his concept of the Light is not about making the flesh holy but about reunion of the divine in the individual with Christ and God. Fox's eschatology, like some Gnostics, emphasizes salvation on earth yet seemingly acknowledges a futuristic component in the immortality of the divine in the soul.

Part III of the book, 'Early Friends and Beyond', deals with the scholars whose theories span the centuries or are concerned with a later time period. If Jones, the 'Puritan school', and Benson were the key theorists of the first half of the twentieth century, Doug Gwyn has emerged as the fourth main Quaker theorizer of Quakerism of the twentieth century. His doctoral work on 'apocalyptic' and his complementary and contrasting approaches to understanding the nature of Quakerism has been seminal to most of the more recent work presented here. Gwyn alone, though with the later agreement of Timothy Peat and myself (Dandelion *et al.*, 1998), and Moore (2000a), argued that early Friends were living out a realizing eschatology, that is, an unfolding endtime. Timothy Peat has suggested that George Fox was essentially fulfilling a correct understanding of Pauline prophecy. My work in this area has been to characterize early Friends as a 'Second Coming church' with a Second Coming structure, in contrast to those churches holding themselves between First and Second Comings in the 'meantime' with an interim theology. In the meantime, prior to the global transformation of the world, humanity still needs help with its relationship with God, reminders as to what they are about. A separated priesthood, outward sacraments, set-apart buildings – churches – and a liturgical calendar are all fairly standard choices of a church which by its own admission is in waiting (Dandelion *et al.*, 1998, p.156). The challenge for Quakers historically has been how to fulfil these reminder functions once the experience of the unfolding Second Coming disappeared. For the Quietists, the discipline acted as a reminder to faithfulness. For evangelical Friends, the pastoral system replaced this. For Liberal Friends, there has been nothing so explicit (Dandelion, 2001). In all of his work, Gwyn is similarly trying to understand how Friends compensated for the defeat of the 'Lamb's War' (from the Book of Revelation) and how they sustained themselves following those early years.

Not all scholars agree with this view of early Friends and few place the same emphasis on eschatology. Most argue that Friends were *not* talking about the Second Coming when they claimed 'Christ is come to teach his people himself' (Nickalls, 1952, p.107) but rather a mystical experience appropriate to (one of a number of) Christian revival movements. John Punshon, for example, claims that early Friends' use of Scripture was symbolic and that 'millennial speculation has never been a prominent feature of Quaker thought' (2001, p.309). Additionally, Punshon sees the

early Quaker experience as individualized rather than an unfolding of global change (ibid., p.311). However, Gwyn's framework is compelling, particularly when laid out across time to explain the current challenges facing Quakerism.

Carole Spencer is another of those who wishes to play down the central emphasis Gwyn gives eschatology and the apocalyptic. For her, this is only one element of seven which characterize early Friends' theology, a collective group of characteristics which she sees as unmistakably holiness in character. Early Friends preached a radical protestant holiness which in time was imitated by Methodism (although Barbour, 1994a, identifies five distinct ideas of perfection and distinguishes Wesley's from Friends'). Radical within Quaker Studies, Spencer claims that this holiness theology is a thread which runs throughout Quaker history. The Holiness Revival of the 1880s is not foreign to Quakerism, as Hamm suggests it is in his *Transformation of American Quakerism* (1988), but rather a return to essential Quaker beliefs. Only the outward form is different but, she argues, form is of secondary importance in Quaker tradition. Her work rewrites the family tree of Quakerism as she places the Revival as central in the genealogy of the Quaker traditions. Who draws the tree of course is always a moot point. For Jews the 'Judeo-Christian tradition' is a Christian fiction and, similarly, Christians do not count Islam as a development of their tradition. Spencer's work is exciting because of this consequent rewriting of history.

Thomas Hamm's work sits in contrast. He claims not to have a theory in his second piece in this book. Hamm describes his significant output of research rather in terms of trying to contextualize American Quakerism within its host culture and of trying to explore parts of the Quaker past underexplored by others. It is an ecumenical project in many ways, both within Quakerism and between Quakerism and the outside world, and a project wary of purity or purifying trends. By his own admission, he believed his work would undermine the intellectual foundations of the pastoral tradition. The contrast with Spencer's holiness emphasis, and also Gay Pilgrim's theory of a separatist Quakerism (see below), is clear.

Martin Davie is an evangelical Quaker. In his work he has placed Quakers as essentially orthodox Christians (in a way that Spencer does, except that she places more emphasis on mysticism than many evangelicals would be happy with). In his doctoral work, Davie took the thinking of Fox, Barclay and Penn and other early Friends as complementary, essentially Christian and trinitarian (1997). Gurney's theology (marginal in Spencer's tree because it strays from the holiness thread even while it later accommodated its resurgence) is an echo of this normative Quaker Christianity, later disregarded by the liberal Quaker theological enterprise. Whether or not scholars agree with his premise, Davie's charting of Liberal Quakerism and its theological shifts is invaluable. Other than Davie, only Collins (1994, 1996a, 1996b, 1998), Plüss (1995), Pilgrim (2003) and Dandelion (1996, 2001, 2002) have published academic work in the area of twentieth-century Liberal Quakerism (see also Heron, 1992).

Gay Pilgrim, as a sociologist, rightly stays away from the debate over the content of Quaker theology. For the sociologist, this is irrelevant. What is interesting is the way in which the group operates and the ways in which power is contested. Gay Pilgrim takes a term developed by Foucault (1977, 1986) and Hetherington (1996, 1998), 'heterotopia', as the basis for her theoretical framework. Heterotopia

represents the place of Otherness, a space of alternate ordering, a place from which utopia can be imagined but not realized. She claims Friends have historically occupied this space, constructing themselves as alternate to 'the world'. We can see this in the law breaking and then the peculiarities of the first two centuries of Friends. In the nineteenth century, Quakers rid themselves of many of the peculiarities but remained a distinctive people. However, in the twentieth century, 'the world' started to adopt some of the remaining Quaker distinctives, such as not using titles, and with Liberal Quakerism increasingly individualistic and worldly, the ability to establish a corporate heterotopic site became more and more difficult. What happens, Pilgrim suggests, is that the heterotopic impulse becomes turned in on itself and operates within the group. Quakers start to construct difference *within* the group. A single Quakerism divides into three: the exclusivists who leave, the inclusivists who stay and hold the corporate discipline in their own distinctively Liberal way, and the new breed of syncretists who are masked by the permissiveness of the group on, for example, attendance or faith confession but whose rereading of Quakerism is countercorporate.

In the concluding [chapter I](#) first of all consider the nature of insider research and the degree to which different scholars have produced theories which confirm their own theological preferences or which can be located within their own cultural milieu. Larry Ingle has been particularly critical of a partisan historiography, and of one too prone to seek respectability at the cost of truth (1991). Are the writers here Robert Barclays of their time? By their own admission, some of these scholars have researched their passions and have presented their findings placed at the centre of their view of Quakerism. I also consider, using McCutcheon's fourfold typology of research stances (1999), the degree to which the researchers are operating similar ideas of the relationship between researcher and subject.

Second, I explore, given the variety of interpretation of Quakerism, the degree to which the academic study of Quakerism by Quakers mirrors the individualistic 'liberal-Liberal' Quaker theological project. If scholars are wary of contradicting each other and absolute truth claims remain elusive, is each scholar free to find their own truth and present it in their own words? I argue that the parallels are limited and that, rather, the theories presented in this book can be grouped into four clear schools: where Quakerism is seen as part of a wider Christianity (Barbour, Punshon, Hamm, Davie); where it is seen to be to do with union between humanity and God (Bailey, Tarter, Reynolds, Spencer); where it is about the Second Coming of Christ (Moore, Gwyn); and where, whatever the theology, it is seen to be about the social construction of difference (Pilgrim). These different schools, the 'mainline', the 'metaphysical', the 'metatemporal' and the sociological, share the same data sets and approach, but vary in emphasis, discipline (history, church history, literary theory, theology and sociology), and interpretation. They also link to each other, so that, rather than being islands of academic originality, they tend to rest one on another, at the edges of their suggestions at least. And they all reflect a sincere and passionate bid to better understand something loved by these researchers, their Quakerism. This coalition of concern and the friendship and respect held between these scholars has forged a community of interest with a shared language and shared goals. Indeed, this book is a result of this kind of cooperation as scholars wrestle with the truth about Quaker history. Liberal Friends often like to talk of spiritual

experience as akin to light refracted through a prism. The cover design is an attempt to illustrate how the Quaker academic scholarship on Quakerism (represented here by the background picture of Swarthmoor Hall) can almost be seen to represent a reverse of this process. Instead of this branch of scholarship ending up with innumerable theories and ideas, the analysis of the data can be seen to cohere in terms of the four identifiable schools outlined in the conclusion, represented as a tetrahedron.

Thirdly, then, I ask what effects the domination of Quaker Studies by such insiders, often working in concert with each other, has on the field. Fourthly, I ask what effect this insider work has on Quakerism and how its reception affects the researchers. Finally, I consider again the original premise of the project, to find the truth about Quaker history.

This book is unique and timely. It offers an overview of these theories and adds to the small literature on the insider nature of much of Quaker Studies. Each of the theories here is described in brief, with the reader needing to accept unseen the evidence behind the grand claims. But all the work here is based on doctoral work and the evidence is in the public domain. The comprehensive bibliography represents an excellent place to start further reading, while journals such as *Quaker Studies* and *Quaker History* keep those interested up to date as new theories and ideas emerge. If the last forty years have represented a kind of ‘golden age’ of scholarship about Quakerism, it is not over. At the Centre for Postgraduate Quaker Studies (Woodbrooke/University of Birmingham) alone, there are currently nearly twenty postgraduate research students. Four new titles came out in 2002 in the Edwin Mellen series in Quaker Studies (Mendlesohn, 2002; Scully, 2002; Thomas, 2002 and Tonsing, 2002) and mainstream publishers continue to publish work on Quakerism (for example, Kennedy, 2001; Tarter, 2001). The quest continues.

Notes

All Biblical quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version, unless otherwise stated.

The Nag Hammadi Library is referred to as ‘NHL’. NHL references are made throughout this book by reference to Nag Hammadi Codices ‘NHC’ with recognized standard scholarly abbreviations for each Coptic text included in the NHL. The citation ‘NHC’ in this book will therefore be followed by a colon and the Codex (Roman numeral), tractate (italicized numeral), page and (if necessary) line number. All NHL references in this book are to those based on the texts of the Nag Hammadi Library in English (NHLE) (Robinson, 1978).

The Library of the Society of Friends, Friends House, London, is referred to as ‘LSF’.

The Swarthmore manuscripts, mentioned by Moore, Tarter and Reynolds, are Quaker letters and papers from 1650, mostly thought to have been collected and annotated under the supervision of George Fox in 1675–76. The John Penington manuscripts, mentioned by Moore, are the letters and papers of Isaac and Mary Penington and other early Quakers, copied by John Penington, Isaac’s and Mary’s eldest son, in 1681–82.

I QUAKER HISTORIOGRAPHY



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George Fox and the Politics of Late Nineteenth-century Quaker Historiography

Thomas D. Hamm

If, as many of our colleagues have assured us, all history is political, or at least all acts of doing history are, it is no surprise that an examination of Quaker historical writing shows us that concerns of ecclesiastical polity and politics have shaped it. From the impulse that led Friends early in the nineteenth century to gather memorials of the ‘First Publishers of Truth’ and William Sewel to record the ‘Several Remarkable Occurrences’ that accompanied the ‘Rise, Increase, and Progress of the Christian People Called Quakers’ (1722), to the magisterial tomes of ‘scientific’ history by Rufus Jones (1914), William C. Braithwaite (1912, 1919) and Elbert Russell (1942), Friends have written to preserve, protect and defend, not just the memory of those who had gone before, but also their own visions, accepted or heterodox, of what Quakerism was.

As all students of Quaker history know, Quaker historical writing did change, even while it remained the province of Friends. For instance, there is a distinct difference between the work of Sewel and John Gough in the eighteenth century and the scholarly, ‘scientific’ work that the Jones–Braithwaite series inaugurated, and which in turn set the terms of discourse for recent Quaker historical writing, including the work of Hugh Barbour (1964), Geoffrey Nuttall (1946) and John Punshon (1984). My argument is that the transitional period of Quaker historiography came in the 1860s and 1870s in the work of two evangelical Friends in England, William Tallack and Robert Barclay. Just as evangelical Quakerism of the Joseph John Gurney variety eventually gave rise to the modernist liberalism of *A Reasonable Faith* (Frith *et al.*, 1884), so the evangelical history of Barclay in particular laid the foundations for modern Quaker historiography. By exploring manuscript sources unused by other historians, by attempting to place Friends in the context of the English Civil War, and especially by recognizing that religious ideas do not rise out of a vacuum, showing the connection between the ideas that George Fox and others among the first generation of Friends set forth, and those of other sects, Barclay anticipated the features that we associate with modern Quaker historical scholarship. At the same time, however, Barclay was deeply committed to an evangelical Quakerism, and his work reflects that faith. His was a conscious, articulate and ultimately very influential attempt at revisionist history, one that was to change Quakers’ understanding of their origins and thereby bring a new vision to Quakerism, or at least to some Quakers. That, too, anticipated a significant portion of the Quaker historical writing of the first half of the twentieth century.

Just when Friends began to think in such terms is too difficult to determine. While the generation of Friends in the first half of the nineteenth century turned out masses of doctrinal tomes and of memoirs, they produced few works on historical subjects. When stimulus did come, it came from outside. Friends of all persuasions reacted furiously in the 1850s to Thomas Macaulay's unflattering portraits of William Penn and George Fox in his widely read *History of England* (1849).¹ Among them was Samuel M. Janney, the Hicksite minister from Loudoun County, Virginia, who published lives of William Penn (1852) and George Fox (1853). The former was received enthusiastically on both sides of the Atlantic by Friends of all shades of opinion. Orthodox Friends, however, perceived the biography of Fox as contaminated by Janney's Hicksite 'heresies', and journals like the *Friend* in London and Philadelphia as well as the Philadelphia *Friends' Review* condemned it.²

This re-consideration of Quaker origins was stimulated further by ferment in London Yearly Meeting, particularly by the competition in 1858–59 to identify 'causes of the decline in the Society of Friends'. Although varied in their prescriptions for reversing the decline (they ranged from a recommendation that Friends join the Methodists to blasts at the 'withering influences' of Gurneyism), most of the authors agreed that the first generation of Friends had possessed missionary zeal and evangelistic fervour that their own generation lacked. As Edwin Bronner has suggested (1990, pp.356–71), this set the stage for a wide-ranging debate on reform in London Yearly Meeting and on what shape reform would take.

It was against this background that, in 1868, William Tallack, a prominent London Friend with a variety of books to his credit, published *George Fox, the Friends, and the Early Baptists* (1868). Tallack was quite open in his sectarian pride, and a considerable portion of his work consisted of a review of what he termed 'the remarkable influence of Fox and the Friends in the various departments of Philanthropy, Social Progress, Political Reform, Literature, Science and Commercial Enterprise'. Along the way there were also swipes at slavery, protectionism, Herbert Spencer and the Established Church.

Tallack's main concerns, however, were to elucidate the origins of Quakerism, and to show how Fox had appropriated many 'distinctive' Quaker practices from the Baptists. They included the peculiarities of language and dating; the system of ecclesiastical discipline; continuing revelation; the use of queries; opposition to music and singing; and commitment to plainness and pacifism. 'The main and characteristic principles arrived at and promulgated by George Fox and his followers,' Tallack wrote, had 'with little exception been previously the characteristics of the Baptist theology also.' Amidst the tumult of the Civil War, in his conversations with various believers and his contacts with Baptist relatives and converts, Fox had arrived at the main principles of Quakerism (Tallack, 1868, pp.67, 160–61).

Tallack did not allow his pride in the achievements of Friends to blind him to their shortcomings, in Fox's day or his own. He condemned the actions of James Nayler as 'positive blasphemy', but did see one good result: the Nayler case was a 'sharp but salutary lesson' for Fox on the 'dangerous ambiguities of some of the Quaker practices, particularly that of the "Christ Within"' which substituted 'for the Holy Scriptures the asserted superior certainty and divinity of inward voices'. This pernicious tendency, Tallack asserted, was even more apparent in the works of Penn

and Robert Barclay, and had been corrected only with the rise of evangelical Quakerism in his own lifetime (*ibid.*, pp.36–7, 117–18).

Tallack found other deficiencies as well in Fox's attitude towards the ministry of women. In Tallack's view, Quaker practice was clearly unscriptural: 'There was no female apostle, nor any female missionary sent forth by our Saviour or by the Apostles as a public preacher,' he argued. Instead, women were intended to 'minister edification and consolation in the more private circles of the church, and by household visitation or family influence'. Friends, he concluded, were thus violating sound doctrine by placing the ministry of men and women on an equal basis and were suffering from giving their women ministers 'too great liberty' (*ibid.*, p.166).

Interestingly, what many saw as the greatest failure of contemporary Quakerism, its inability to evangelize the masses, was for Tallack no weakness. The religious instruction of the poor, he wrote, was better done by 'a rough and ready ... comparatively uneducated, yet zealous working man'. Moreover, 'the evangelisation of the great masses of mankind' required 'the "one-man system"', hearty congregational singing, untrammelled zealous preaching, outwardly visible sacraments, settled pastorates and paid ministries', which were, of course, 'the very agencies which the Friends' deprecated. Tallack, however, saw another mission for Friends: 'a valuable protest' against 'hierarchical and ritualistic assumptions'. It was not, then, for Friends to lower 'their high and noble standard' in a 'vain attempt to grasp at numerical extension'. Quakerism was 'too restraining and too eclectic' for the many. Instead, its special role was that of 'indirectly influencing the world for good through the medium of a comparatively few disciplined independent spirits' (*ibid.*, pp.9, 188).

Even as Tallack was comfortably consigning the work of the evangelization of the masses to the rude and less educated, another Friend with an impeccable Quaker pedigree was working in the Field Lane Refuge in London and pondering the most efficacious means for the christianization of the metropolis. His name was Robert Barclay, stationer by trade, chemist by avocation, a direct descendant of *the* Robert Barclay, and an intensely evangelical Quaker (Barclay, 1878, pp.1, 34–5).

Barclay was born at Croydon in 1833, the son of John Barclay, who died when Robert was but five years old. We know little of the religious influences of his childhood: he was educated at Epping and Grove House, and in his youth was active in Bible study groups there. A cousin wrote piously after his death that 'from a child he went about his Master's work'. In 1850, he entered the firm of William Tanner in Bristol, and in 1857 made a suitable marriage to Sarah Matilda Fry, daughter of Francis Fry of Bristol, a Friend of considerable wealth and influence and one with an intense interest in Quaker history (*ibid.*, pp.1–7, 29).

Barclay was firmly committed to the evangelical Quaker vision that Friends like Edward Ash and Joseph Bevan Braithwaite were enunciating in the 1860s. In the first few years after his marriage, he devoted himself to non-denominational work, mostly with Dissenters, winning the friendship of Charles Spurgeon. His personal piety was intense; Sarah Tanner, the wife of his master at Bristol, wrote that 'he was one whose mind seemed so remarkably little in the things of this world'. About 1864, he began to preach in meeting, although he was never recorded as a minister. Significantly, he prepared his sermons in advance; his widow later published the

manuscripts. They emphasized the themes dear to evangelical Friends: the Atonement, the necessity of the New Birth, the authority of Scripture. In 1865, he published his first work, a new edition of Archbishop Whateley's *Lessons on the Truth of Christianity* (ibid., pp.viii–xi, 10–15, 27, 59–60; Isichei, 1970, pp.3–15)

By 1868, Barclay was focusing his study on two problems: the most effective means for evangelizing the masses, and the relation of the Society of Friends to that desirable end. At Yearly Meeting that year, he lectured 'On the Position Occupied by the Society of Friends in Relation to the Spread of the Gospel in This Country during the Last Sixty Years'. Barclay's concern about his own day, however, was leading him to the study of the past. 'I have long thought that a more thorough knowledge of the religious history of the times in which Fox, Penn, and Barclay lived would conduce to more unity of sentiment among us as a society,' he wrote to a friend. Already Barclay had read Tallack's work, but his conclusion on a vital score was diametrically opposed to Tallack's. He was convinced that George Fox had been an extraordinarily successful evangelist, and that a more thorough knowledge of him and his times would result in a rebirth of Quakerism: 'I constantly see assertions on both sides respecting [the early Friends'] views, which have, I believe, no basis in fact. How few Friends understand the object of the early Friends' controversial writings' (ibid., pp.11, 34–5, 45–6). And so Barclay plunged into the research that underlay *The Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth* (1876).

The depth and breadth of Barclay's research cannot be dismissed. It took him into nooks and crannies of Anabaptist and Mennonite history, his correspondents ranging from the most erudite of German scholars to Schwenckfelder elders in Pennsylvania. In addition to the standard works of the early Friends, Barclay systematically read through the Swarthmore manuscripts and the minutes of dozens of seventeenth-century monthly and quarterly meetings. He also read extensively in the Thomason Tracts to gain a sense of context for the controversial writings of Friends in the 1650s and 1660s. The cast of characters and variety of sects – Familists, Brownists, Barrowists, Johnsonists, Presbyterio-Independents, General Baptists, Schwenckfelders, Ranters, Seekers, Waterlander Mennonites – is exhaustive (Barclay, 1878, pp.68–9, 93; 1876, pp.xi–xii). Indeed, it is not until page 253, over a third of the way through the work, that we encounter a Quaker.

When George Fox and the 'Children of Light' do appear, Barclay warns his reader that his research has revealed facts that will challenge their inherited ideas about the origins of Quakerism. The sources, he claims, 'tend to exhibit various matters connected with the rise of the Society of Friends, in a new light'. The same would also 'more clearly explain the real causes of the decline of the Society of Friends'. Five hundred pages later, Barclay had not only redefined forever the terms of debate about Fox and the early Friends, but had done it in such a way as to strengthen evangelical Quakerism (Barclay, 1876, p.253).

Much of Barclay's work is simply accepted truth among historians of Quakerism today (Barbour, 1964; Hill, 1972; Punshon, 1984; Reay, 1985). That Fox was deeply influenced by the religious atmosphere of his time, that the earliest Friends were intensely evangelistic, that their conception of the 'Inward Light' was not a testimony to innate goodness but rather an illumination of sin, that the discipline of the earliest generation was different and in many ways less concerned with minutiae

than that of the eighteenth century, all these points have been affirmed by the last two generations of Quaker historians and scholars. Other interpretations, such as Barclay's emphasis on the influence of the Continental Anabaptists and mystics, such as Jacob Boehme, on Friends, would become cornerstones of the historiography of the Jones–Braithwaite school. What attracted the most attention at the time, and are still the most novel features of the work, were Barclay's assertions about the nature of the ministry and authority among Friends in the seventeenth century and the causes of the subsequent Quaker decline.

Barclay argued that Fox's message, and that of the early Friends generally, had been the necessity of a conversion experience. For Barclay, the best way to understand the spirituality of the early Friends was by looking at the career of John Wesley: 'Fox meant, by the technical phrases he used, which now sound quaint, to express views of real spiritual religion, akin to those of Wesley,' Barclay asserted. The substance of their preaching was much the same, although the Wesleys, in Barclay's opinion, not being as extreme in their reaction against Calvinism, stayed closer to Scriptural truth in their teachings (Barclay, 1876, pp.266, 597).

To spread these truths, Barclay wrote, Fox created a system of field preaching. In it 'we see all the features of the great Methodist revival ... The character and gifts of the preachers, the multitudes who listened to them ... the entire change of character which was permanent they effected,' he concluded, all resembled the Methodist revivals of 75 years later, even down to the 'physical effects' (ibid., p.311).

Even more surprising than this was Barclay's portrayal of ministerial authority. Fox was, in Barclay's words, 'the centre of [a] vast religious organization'. First, Barclay wrote, 'the early Society of Friends possessed a system of circuit, or itinerant preaching ... nearly as complete as that of the Wesleyans'. Fox made decisions about where ministers were to travel, and he assigned them to specific localities 'in the same sense as the London Missionary Society'. By 1658, Barclay wrote, Friends had their own 'home missionary fund'. Moreover, just as Fox sent out missionaries, so he assigned ministers to specific places. As Barclay put it, 'preachers were supplied for congregations ... they were displaced or "called in" – were sent to particular places where their gifts were specially likely to be useful'. This function eventually came to be lodged in the Morning Meeting in London (ibid., pp.268–9, 339–40, 348).

Within the congregations, Barclay argued, ministers exercised pastoral authority, claiming that early Friends deemed it a 'slander' that they did not have pastors: 'The Church is compared to a flock, an army, a kingdom. There are: no flocks without shepherds; no armies where men are indiscriminately privates and officers; no kingdoms where rulers and subjects are convertible terms.' Barclay, the Apologist, and all the other early Friends, had acknowledged the 'vital distinction' between 'regular ministry', the province of the pastors, 'and the occasional prophesying of a church member'. In Fox's day, the Yearly Meeting had consisted only of 'Apostles' and 'Elders': the ministers and a 'lay minority', in whom properly rested church power. Barclay commended 'the strictness with which the church power was held in the hands of those only who could be trusted with it ... an adult membership carefully sifted by human skill' (ibid., pp.365, 389–90, 394, 434–5, 444–5).

Along the way, Barclay took aim at a 'variety of other peculiarities'. Early Friends, he wrote, had acknowledged music and singing as part of worship; they

objected only to choirs and singing by the unsaved, as was the practice in the Established Church. Barclay thought that the evangelicals Dwight L. Moody and Ira D. Sankey were reviving early Quaker practice. The early Friends also had had latitudinarian views on church ordinances. While they did not require them, neither did they object to them. Barclay cited one case in which Fox encouraged a believer who felt led to undergo water baptism. Barclay did take aim, however, at the equality of women in the ministry, much as Tallack had done: 'There was a strong general objection to women preachers,' he claimed, 'and the ministers strongly caution Fox against employing them too freely.' In keeping with sound Scriptural practice, the early Friends 'did not allow women ministers to "usurp authority" over the men' (*ibid.*, pp.344, 372–3, 451–2, 462).

Just as he was definite on all other issues, Barclay was emphatic on the causes of Quaker decline. He saw it in the influence of ex-Ranters, many of whom had become Friends. Opposed to all authority, they worked to undermine the power of the ministers. This first broke forth in the heresies of Story, Wilkinson and Perrott, and was strongest in the meetings under Ranter influence. Gradually a series of innovations was introduced that deadened Quaker spiritual life. The institution of elders effectively restrained the general ministry, and silence became the rule. The institution of birthright membership, along with the Quaker revulsion against any sort of formula, led Friends not to require a converted membership. Instead, Friends became absorbed in regulating the secular lives of their members: marriage, education, business practices, occupations: 'The whole life of man, from the cradle to the grave, was legislated for by the church. Nothing was too great or too small.' In such a system power flowed to members with 'administrative talents' rather than 'gifts of grace for the edification of the flock and the propagation of the Gospel'. Friends lost their vitality and became inbred and quietist (*ibid.*, pp.352–3, 468–9, 492–3, 500, 545).

At this point Barclay ended his work – and his life, dying of a stroke early in 1876, before making final revisions in the last chapters. Thus we do not know whether he intended to offer specific prescriptions for reform. But to anyone who read his work the message was clear: Friends had only to return to first principles to become again a great evangelistic organization (Barclay 1878, p.98).

Barclay's book created a sensation among Friends when it appeared. The most critical responses, predictably, came from the guardians of Philadelphia Quaker conservatism, Charles Evans and William Hodgson, both of whom were publishing their own historical works about the same time, Hodgson on the havoc that Hicksism and Gurneyism had wrought in the nineteenth century (1875–76), Evans on fidelity of non-evangelical conservatives to Fox, Penn and other seventeenth-century Friends (1875). Both Evans and Hodgson found virtually every facet of Barclay's work objectionable, and flung at it the sort of vituperation only a Philadelphia Wilburite scenting Gurneyite innovation could offer. Barclay, Hodgson charged, was 'not a true Friend ... who has been dipped into the very depths of that baptism of the Spirit, of which our worthy forefathers in the truth had to partake' (1886, pp.399–400). Barclay's goal was 'to endeavour to give support to the modern fabric of those who have been revolutionising the Society of Friends' (*ibid.*, p.429). Evans expressed incredulity that for two centuries no one had understood the origins of Quakerism, 'nor yet why it was at all called into existence by the Great Head of

the Church, until this author was specially prepared to take it in hand' (1878, pp.3–4). Both found fault with Barclay's use of evidence, but above all they objected to any suggestion that Friends had taken any of their distinctive beliefs and doctrines from others. That in their minds was implicit denial of the divine origins of Quakerism.

Most reviews, however, were more favourable. The *British Friend*, which was conservative on most theological questions, devoted parts of three issues to a review that was effusive in its praise of the depth and scope of Barclay's research (2nd Mo. 1, 1877, pp.48–9; 3rd Mo. 1, 1877, pp.71–3; 7th Mo. 2, 1877, pp.203–6), although later in the year it also published a scathing attack by William Hodgson (12th Mo. 1, 1877, pp.313–15). The London *Friend* also ran a lengthy review by Francis P. Balkwill, who called Barclay's book 'an invaluable addition to the Church history of the past', 'very readable and interesting' as well as 'highly instructive'. Balkwill did temper his enthusiasm by venturing that 'perhaps we cannot agree with every sentiment of the writer', but he was confident that 'the practical good sense which the Society eminently possesses will enable it ... to derive substantial gain from the calm contemplation of what has been honestly and fairly brought before it' (London *Friend* 3rd Mo. 1, 1877, pp.64–7).

The reaction of American Quaker evangelicals is more interesting, since in the 1870s many of them were putting Barclay's ideas into practice by bringing the techniques of Wesleyan revivalism into their meetings. The *Friends' Review* in Philadelphia devoted considerable space to a summary of the work, venturing only mild criticism of Barclay's views on elders (7th Mo. 28, 1877, pp.785–8; 8th Mo. 4, 1877, pp.801–3). West of the Appalachians, the *Christian Worker*, the voice of revival Quakerism, was quick to find in Barclay's work irrefutable proof that evangelical Quakerism was indeed a return to the power and fervour of the early Friends: 'There is a very remarkable coincidence between the line of thought and action of the earnest workers who founded the Society of Friends, and those of the present day who are earnestly laboring to propagate the same blessed principles of pure and spiritual religion,' wrote the editor Daniel Hill. Opposition to revivals, Hill concluded, came from proponents of the same mistaken ideas of 'refined spirituality' that had hindered Fox (4th Mo. 12, 1877, p.233).

That leads us to the obvious question: was there a relationship between the publication of Barclay's work and developments among American Friends? One would not want to claim too much: David B. Updegraff, Luke Woodard, John Henry Douglas, Esther Frame and the other proponents of the revival had already shown that they were not too much dependent on Quaker history to justify their practices. But there is evidence that some who had qualms about the direction of orthodox Gurneyite Friends in the 1870s found Barclay's work reassuring. Barnabas C. Hobbs, the clerk of Western Yearly Meeting, apparently was one, judging from the notes in his copy of *The Inner Life*.³ And Charles F. Coffin, the clerk of Indiana Yearly Meeting and another of the incipient doubters, wrote that he considered Barclay's work 'the most valuable book that has been published in our Society for many years' (Barclay, 1878, pp.103–6). During an earlier conference of Friends in Baltimore, he had found that it and its claims were the chief topics of conversation. Moreover, one has to wonder if in one area the book's impact was critical. By 1878, some of the revivalist Friends, led by Woodard and Updegraff, were beginning a

campaign to introduce toleration of water baptism and physical communion among Friends (Hamm, 1988, pp.130–31). Their reasoning was based on their holiness theology and commitment to a biblical literalism, but one fact is striking. When Updegraff argued publicly for the ‘Waterite’ position on baptism, his references were always to the same early Friends whose positions on the subject Barclay had cited (Updegraff, 1885, pp.22–32).

Thus *The Inner Life* is a seminal work. In the United States, it may have helped lay some of the intellectual groundwork for evangelical Friends. Its defects, as we see them now, have a contemporary ring to them, as increasingly many historians see their work not as an objective recounting of past realities, but as instruments for change. Barclay tried to use history similarly and, in the area nearest to his heart, he did not entirely succeed. But Barclay’s work also mapped out areas of historical research, and ways of understanding Quaker history, that we can still explore with profit.

Notes

¹ For typical reaction to Macauley, see, for example, ‘T.B. Macaulay and His History’, *Friends’ Review*, 4th Mo. **21** (1849), pp.490–94; Editorial, *ibid.*, p.488.

² For a typically hostile review of Janney’s biography of Fox, see editorial, *Philadelphia Friend*, 3rd Mo. **11** (1854), pp.206–8.

³ Hobbs’ copy of Barclay (1876) is at Earlham College.

Sixty Years in Early Quaker History

Hugh Barbour

The writings of the first Friends have been for three centuries a treasury of personal religious experiences and dramatic narratives. In our time, converted evangelicals, secular radicals, ethical reformers and modern mystics have each seen early Friends in their own image. All these groups share a central concern for Friends' intense and joyful directness of experience and ethical commitment and creativity, but each group sees in original Quakerism what corresponds to its members' own experiences of radically inward worship and apocalyptic social change. Yet we do not 'create Quaker History', but, according to our varied abilities, we listen sensitively to whatever people partly different from ourselves tell us in their own languages about their events, ideas and experiences, trying to share them as we write about them.

The editor of this volume, asking for an essay on new approaches to the early Friends, accepted my modifying an introduction I had written for a new edition of *Early Quaker Writings* (with A. Roberts, 1973). Summarizing new research on early Friends and the movements from which they rose, I stripped it of most narratives and of periods and events familiar already to scholarly readers. Then Ben Pink Dandelion urged me to get personal. Thus it has become a chance for me to look again over my whole life since graduating from college in 1942, and my topic and title became 'Sixty Years in Early Quaker History'.

I joined Friends while in college, believing they gave the clearest witness in English of direct personal religious experience. This was shaped by my childhood background in China, where my geologist father's field partner was the Jesuit Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, by my having attended a Quaker boarding school in England, and at home by my mother's teaching of non-violence in school, and sharing patterns of the 'Oxford Group' (later miscalled 'Moral Rearmament'), such as a daily 'Quiet time' and commitment to 'absolute honesty' and 'absolute truth'. My own intense turning point experience through the Student Christian Movement, a call to help each other find God, though not Christ-centered, turned me from a medical or scientific career like my brothers' and my grandfathers' to graduate religious study, hoping to use a rigorous discipline like a scientist's in interpreting my own and others' religious experience.

I had long felt that Friends witnessed to a relationship with God without mediation by priests or fixed creeds, and had expressed themselves more clearly than anyone else writing in English, and made more creative responses to social need and injustice. For my doctoral thesis in Church History, I chose to work under Roland Bainton at Yale, asking what experiences underlay 'The Early Quaker Outlook upon "the World" and Society', as I was unconvinced by assumptions that Quaker ethics stemmed simply from faith in humanity. Reading about fifty tracts

and journals by Friends other than Fox, however, was a transforming experience, and guided my practice of Quakerism as self-examination under God. My 600-page thesis of 1952 was digested into *The Quakers in Puritan England* (1964), whose central chapter was on 'the Terror and Power of the Light'. Its Yale editor turned me away from titling the book 'The Lamb's War', but in that decade of the Civil Rights and Vietnam War struggles, this phrase of Nayler's took on a life of its own among Friends, and his 1658 book on *The Lamb's War*, which Toronto Meeting asked me to republish, became the nucleus of the *Early Quaker Writings* (1973). The unity of the struggle of the Spirit – we may also say Truth – against evil in the human heart and in society still seems to me the heart of Quakerism, based on each person's ability to recognize truth and light, bearing the pain because of God's love, shown in Jesus and his followers. Faith and clear thinking depend on each other.

To understand early Friends we need to scan the horizon within which they lived. When the Quaker movement broke out it was part of the national crisis of 1641–61, variously called the English Revolution and the Puritan Revolution, which also reshaped in distinct ways Scotland, Ireland and the American colonies, and their complex relationships to England. In each European country until then (and some still) 'the nation on its knees' had expected the local parishes of a single national church to include all citizens under a Christian ruler and schools. The Protestant Reformation of Luther and Calvin in the sixteenth century did not overturn these hopes, though personal faith, biblical preaching and congregational worship replaced the authority, sacraments and wealth of the corrupted Catholic bishops. In some places the power of princes replaced or overruled Church hierarchy. In Britain, Germany and Scandinavia, the Reformation renewed national languages, literatures and cultures. Bitter wars in France and the main parts of the Netherlands, Germany and Hapsburg lands broke out where unity was impossible, but usually led to the expulsion or forced conformity of the usually Protestant losers.

Over against both Protestant and Catholic inclusive national churches, however, small congregations of committed adults gathered by families, often learning spiritual worship and equality from communities of monks and nuns. Such 'separated' fellowships were typical of the early Church under Roman persecution throughout the Middle Ages. Some grew out of regional mass movements of religious awakening. Such awakenings occurred in St Francis' Italy and Luther's Germany. A growing literature about religious awakenings followed the studies of nineteenth-century America by Timothy L. Smith (1957) and William G. McLoughlin Jr, (1978); see also my bibliography in D. Neil Snarr and Daniel L. Smith-Christopher (Barbour, 1994a).

Few Europeans have developed such patterns. The great twelfth-century ferment in Italy included the rise of the followers of Arnold of Brescia, the Waldensians and 'spiritual' Franciscans, and later of Wyclif's Lollards in England and Jan Hus' Czech and Moravian followers. Each movement centered on lay preachers, prayer without liturgy, and the Bible in vernacular languages, and stressed apostolic poverty and Christ's call to ethical perfection. Thirteenth-century Waldensians, fourteenth-century Lollards and sixteenth-century Mennonites focused on strict outward keeping of the Sermon on the Mount. By contrast, other perfectionists, such as the Franciscans, Friends of God and Brethren of the Common Life, stressed humility and mysticism. In Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Holland, a

movement arose in 1524–27, in response to Luther's reformation and to the Peasants' Revolt, becoming known as Anabaptists, since they rejected the need for infant baptism for salvation, and baptized committed adult members. The history of George H. Williams (1958, 1992) calling the Anabaptists and their forebears *The Radical Reformation* has standardized this name for historians.

My article on 'The Sermon on the Mount in the Radical Reformation' (1996) could cite, besides primary sources such as the thirteen volumes of the *Quellen der Geschichte der Täufer* (1951–72), eleven secondary works on Wyclif, three on the Hussites, and many on the Anabaptists. Besides classic works, Williams' distinction between kinds of Anabaptists was developed by Werner O. Packul (1977). The Mennonite historians have naturally long claimed early Friends as Menno's disciples, which may apply in part to Stephen Crisp and Will Caton, but not to Fox or many others except through some strong influences by way of the English Baptists, as noted by Michael Mullett (1980). Much recent writing has studied these radical movements, notably on the Waldensians in Italian and central Europe by the Czech Amadeus Molnar (1980), but since Rufus Jones (1914) few besides Nigel Smith (1983) and Douglas Gwyn (2000a) and some Mennonites have explored their links to Friends. Milan Opocensky's 'Prag Consultations' in 1986, 1987 and 1989 brought together scholars on the 'First or Radical Reformation' from Waldensians, the Czech Protestant churches, Friends, Mennonites, Brethren, European Moravians and the Bruderhof movement.

Early Friends such as Penn knew that such movements were persecuted by the established churches for denying that their nations and rulers were Christian and saying that the 'Established Church' was in apostasy. In England, by contrast, after Henry VIII's death in 1547, the rising Protestant movement begun by Tyndale and led by Bishops Cranmer, Ridley, Hooper, Rogers and Latimer, went briefly beyond Henry's partial reforms to create under the boy King Edward VI the 'Episcopal Prayer Book' and articles of belief. When he died after six years, his Catholic sister 'bloody' Mary Tudor took the throne, married her cousin King Philip of Spain and tried to force the Church of England back to Roman Catholicism. She burned to death the five leading Protestant bishops, twenty-one other clergy and 220 layfolk, including twenty-six women. Had she lived longer, all English Protestants might have been driven overseas or stamped out, as they were by her kin ruling in Spain, Austria and Italy. Instead, both Friends in the next century and the whole Church of England, notably those who escaped to Geneva and returned after her death as Calvinists, had a heritage of martyrs such as only Anabaptists claimed in Germany and Switzerland. With these Puritans returned John Knox, who led the Scottish Kirk into Presbyterianism. Their Protestant movement towards reform and purity of life and parish worship had meant to include the whole national Church in each land and thus had to accept compromises with rulers. A century later, radical Puritans, Baptists and Friends would believe that the apostasy of kings and bishops, begun by Constantine, was only partly overcome by Mary's English successors, Elizabeth, James I and Charles I. All three aimed to keep firm royal control over a Church of England just broad and shallow enough to satisfy most English. Apart from Puritans, few 'Anglicans' within it were as saintly as John Donne and Lancelot Andrewes.

Most recent students of early Friends have overlooked the spiritual depth and vitality for three generations of the Puritans, the dominant religious movement in

England. Their clergy studied at Cambridge University, while they waited in vain to be invited to make over England and its Church. They provided the pastors and preachers of the most active parishes, published their sermons, kept spiritual journals and encouraged lay prayers and Bible study. Where they could, they omitted or simplified liturgies, decorations and vestments. All these concerns Quaker and Baptists extended.

When Charles I tried to halt them after 1624, many frustrated puritan clergy and lay leaders (as Penn did fifty years later) left secure homes and pulpits to set up a model 'New England' in Massachusetts and Connecticut. Meanwhile, within the English parish churches, particularly in London and East Anglia, Puritan layfolk in various ways took local control in Presbyterian or Independent patterns. The Puritans wanted purification of the national Church from all 'Papist' ceremonies and superstitions, but England's separating from Rome opened the way for those wanting to separate themselves from the compromises of the Church of England. Puritan doctrines of conversion and election had turned Church membership into an issue for individuals, though God's Elect expected to be elected together to rule. Puritan separatists, though at first imprisoned or driven abroad, like the 'Pilgrim Fathers', wanted the basis of each congregation to be Independent or Congregational, and its members to be committed by a covenant or adult baptism. Most still hoped the whole Church could be radicalized.

In *The Quakers in Puritan England* (1964), I rooted Quaker backgrounds in the studies of Puritanism of a generation of such scholars as William Haller (1938, 1955), Marshall Knappen (1939), Edmund Morgan (1963) and Norman Pettit (1966). These were linked to Friends by Geoffrey F. Nuttall (1946) and Rufus Jones' disciple Theodor Sippell (1937). Several studies have been added on the life and theology of individual Puritans, fewer on the whole Puritan movement. Of nearly a hundred books on Richard Baxter, Geoffrey Nuttall's (1965) still heads the field. Much less has been written on Friends' debt to the ideas of the 'spiritual puritans' William Dell, John Everard and John Owen studied by Nuttall and Sippell. On the swarm of English sects and churches of the 1640s and 1650s, however, especially in London, Bristol and Newcastle, and their roles in the Puritan Revolution, English Civil War and commonwealth, books have mushroomed. Denominational historians up to 1950 claimed these groups as the founders of the Congregational and Baptist churches that survived after 1662. Yet John Bunyan, a generation after William York Tindal (1934), continues to draw such sensitive scholars as Monica Furlong (1975), Christopher Hill (1988) and Ola E. Winslow (1961). But Murray Tolmie (1977) saw as central their separatism from the established Church of England in both its Anglican and (briefly) Presbyterian forms. Many Friends, and Fox himself, had passed through these informal congregations.

Social revolution and civil war were climaxing as the Baptists and the Quaker movements arose. These reshaped the monarchy, nobility, Parliament, the Church of England and religious groups outside it, reflecting also changes in the economy and class structure. These processes had been at work for a century before Parliament, with the 'Root and Branch' Bill, removed (for the time being) bishops and the House of Lords. Charles I, trying to impose English rule on Ireland and bishops and prayer books on Scotland, faced two armed rebellions. His need to raise funds and troops led to countermoves by the alliance of the city merchants and craftsmen, with

Puritans and members of Parliament (often the same people), who meant to control taxes and the militia, and to reform the Church. By 1642, this led to open civil war in England. By 1644, the fairly even balance of Royalists and Parliamentarians was shifted by Oliver Cromwell's volunteer regiments of 'Ironsides'. After sharing victory, the separatist congregations and believers in a remodeled parish system found their split deepened.

The disciples of Christopher Hill (1972) such as Barry Reay (1985) standardized for us Marxist insights that these working-class congregations, with spontaneous prayers and lay preachers, usually rejecting university-trained clergy and providing mutual aid, were related to the Puritan officers, gentlemen and members of Parliament, as were the French Jacobins to the Girondists and the Russian Bolsheviks to the Mensheviks. Young working men such as Bunyan and Fox wandered from town to town. Only lately have such scholars as Douglas Gwyn (1986), Maryann Feola (1996) and David Neelon (2001) followed Henry Cadbury (1948a) in looking into the roles of James Nayler, William Dewsbury and George Bishop in Cromwell's army and government, fighting for a millennial new age of liberty and justice. That generation of Puritans looked for God's purposes in all events, as did Cromwell himself, with millenarian hopes for the 'Parliament of Saints' in 1653. The radical 'Fifth Monarchists', studied by B.S. Capp (1972), building on work by Louise Fargo Brown (1912), hoped for the Kingdom of the Saints, wanting a total reform of English laws, based on the Old Testament. Their violent revolt in 1661 turned Friends from such theocratic hopes.

Many modern scholars have revisited John Lilburne and William Walwyn, who inspired London working men and Levellers in the army to debate against their officers, and to petition for equality of all home-owning men within the electoral and legal systems. Outside the system, Gerard Winstanley's mystical pantheism was noted by George Sabine (1941) and Gwyn (2000a, [ch.5](#)), but ignored until 1978 by Hill, in favor of his social and economic critique. Winstanley shaped a group of landless squatters on Kingston Common into a commune. Local troopers dispersed these Diggers, as Cromwell did the Levellers when they revolted. After failing, Lilburne and Winstanley became Friends.

In the national crisis years 1647–52, two groups drew English men and women anguished in spirit. Douglas Gwyn (2000a) has explored the Seekers, who rejected all existing rituals and church structures. He distinguishes Seekers who expected new revelations for replacing 'dead' forms from others who called outward forms permanently unnecessary, contrasting Caspar Schwenckfeld and Sebastian Franck in Germany to distinguish these types, though missing Franck's apocalyptic vision. Especially in the north of England, they met to meditate and pray in silence, but without the experience of inner purging and power that early Friends found in this process. For some modern Friends, spiritual quest is lifelong, and these early Seekers are ancestors. Some indeed became Friends, such as the group meeting in 1652 on Firbank Fell.

The Ranters were by contrast individualists, for whom salvation was freedom from any conventional morality. Some first met in Coventry jail. Nigel Smith (1983; 1989, chs 3 and 5) has explored the lives, tracts and language of Abiezer Coppe, Laurence Clarkson, Joseph Salmon and Jacob Bauthumley with a special sensitivity and thoroughness in editing. Jerome Friedman (1987) lists four types of Ranters,

and Gwyn (2000a, chs 4, 6 and 9) expands on individuals. To Marxists, working-class morality is liberating. Ranter perspectives are popular with some liberal Friends who believe only in 'that of God in every person', and with rejecters of Puritan morality, such as A.L. Morton (1970) and Christopher Hill (1972). This is one form of antinomianism. Yet the Puritan outlook centered on conversion and inner experience, believing that surrender to God's grace, after inner awareness of sin, was the heart of salvation. Predestination was the ultimate rejection of self-righteousness. Calvinists differed on the way grace would affect daily conduct. William Ames' cautious theology taught that one fruit of salvation was God's covenant to change the conduct of the elect. Thus many Puritans searched their hearts and their own conduct for signs that God was at work. Others went further. Isaac Penington, son of a Puritan father who was Lord Mayor of London, went through a period when the Civil War events made him accept God as beyond good and evil. Then he met Fox and Nayler and became a Friend. By contrast, the antinomian Ranters felt God to have merged with the self within them, so that their inner impulses to curse, drink or indulge in sexual 'free love' came from God's Spirit. Abiezer Coppe and 'Theaureaujohn' Tany bordered on insanity. They too proclaimed their gospel in speeches and tracts, and paralleled Scripture in describing experiences, visions and symbolic gestures. Shocked by such immorality, Cromwell's Parliament passed a Blasphemy Act in 1650, under which Fox himself was imprisoned. But Fox argued against Ranters, wherever he met them, that the Spirit exposed evil, and led each person to sit down under the Light in quaking self-searching. Friends combined the Puritan and Ranter insights.

Phyllis Mack (1992) and Christine Trevett (1991) note that the tradition that women might be prophets, given visions and express irrational divine truths without challenging the social order in their outward lives, made their visions and messages easier for other radical Puritans to accept and opened the way for the equalitarian role of women. Mary Garman's Introduction to *Hidden in Plain Sight* (Garman *et al.*, 1996) includes also the best bibliography of recent works on women Quaker writers in early Quakerism (discussed below).

Alastair Hamilton's (1981) and Christopher Marsh's (1984) studies of the Familist followers of Henrik Niclaes in Holland and Elizabethan England show that their tracts passed on to the Ranters the language of being 'goddied' by the immanent God, who is present in every living thing, but that they seem to have died out even in Ely before 1640, though some of Nayler's disciples were from Ely.

New searches continue into Friends' roots in the backgrounds of European mysticism, first deeply explored by Rufus Jones (1914). The *via negativa*, or apophatic mysticism, negating all things finite for the sake of unity with the Absolute, was no part of early Quakerism. The 'positive mystics' sense of God's or Christ's inward presence did not need books to inspire it. Lacking evidence of direct contact of Fox or the earliest 'Publishers of Truth' with either books or men, the links seem to be ideas that were 'in the air' in Ranter circles. The works of Meister Eckhart, Tauler and Suso were known to 'spiritual Puritan' pastors such as John Everard and John Saltmarsh, and to later-convinced Friends such as John Perrot and Isaac Penington.¹ There is no record of Friends reading Boehme until Perrot and Penington, but Geoffrey Nuttall has shown that the Grindleton congregation gathered by Nayler's friend, Roger Brerely, seem to have known works of Boehme and

Everard. Nigel Smith, who edited also Fox's *Journal* and a sensitive exploration of the individual Ranters' doctrines and psychology, did in (1989) a definitive search of the doctrines and editions of Familist and Boehme's works in English. Giles Calvert and his family, who published the Familist tracts in 1649–52 and twelve ethical Boehme tracts after 1647, underwrote Friends for three generations. Despite sharing mystical words and ideas, early Friends were prophetic rather than centrally mystical, presenting messages from God in impersonal phrases: 'I was led' or (for more universal truths) 'it was opened to me' (Barbour, 1994b). They witnessed to the Word within, much more than to a 'New Man', much less to formative visions or 'mountain-top experiences'. Fox looked *out* from Pendle Hill.

The generalizations in *Quakers in Puritan England* (Barbour, 1964, [ch.3](#)) about the northern churches' backwardness and that of the 'First Publishers of Truth', have held up fairly well under the more careful studies of English counties by Barry Reay (1985) and Richard Vann (1969), who showed that the earliest Friends were neither paupers nor aristocrats, their leaders less likely than those of even the Baptists to be well educated or well-to-do merchants. Farmers in the north, who had led the 'Pilgrimage of Grace', and weavers and traders in and around London, Bristol, Norwich and Colchester were drawn to Friends and gentry who were already radical Puritans. George Fox's own Puritan boyhood and youth have been presented in much more detail by Joseph Pickvance (1970) and Larry Ingle (1994).

This survey of new light on the setting and ideas among which Quakerism arose leads us on to re-examine the intense experiences of early Friends themselves. Through frustrated efforts to get counsel about his despair from parish pastors, Fox distrusted all men in religious authority. He replaced their efforts at guidance in his temptations with trust for the inward voice of the tempted 'Jesus, that can speak to thy condition'. He found within himself the 'ocean of light and love' and its victory over the 'ocean of darkness', which was 'the natures of dogs, swine, vipers, of Sodom and Egypt ... These I saw within [myself, though] I was never addicted to commit those evils' (Nickalls, 1952; Penney, 1911, vol.1, p.19). Perhaps anger against his father was one of these uncovered inner drives. His triumphant message called for submitting to the judgment of this Light of Christ which 'shows a man evil' (King, 1940, *passim*) and its power to transform the world. Of many good recent books on Fox, Rex Ambler's (2001, 2002) come for me closest to hearing Fox's message that every person knows already the healing power and challenge of truth faced within, and the sin and self in all motives. Fox, rugged and 'straight as a board', seldom spoke about love, and would tell a hearer: 'To the Light in thy conscience I appeal ... thou child of the devil ... which will witness me eternally and thee condemne,' (Penney, 1911, vol.1, pp.90, 99). Yet his awareness of the spiritual 'states' of individuals led to his tenderness to those like John Banks (1712), who recovered from paralysis after a dream where he was healed by Fox. Whatever rebels against piety may wish, early Quakerism was at heart a totally ego-shaking experience. Those who had lived through tears felt more strikingly the Light, joy and love that finally broke out among them.

Fox identified the Light with Truth (as in John's Gospel), which needs more study in relation to modern language about 'reality testing', 'truing up', and truthfulness in our era of truth's relativity. We should study the relation of therapy – group processes to the gathering by early Friends of the 'convinced' (that is, self-

convicted) into small Meetings, where members who had been through the period of inner struggle could reassure others that it was not final. Shared experience made the concurrence of leadings of conscience important, and the 'Sense of the Meeting' central in shared decisions. It also made ethical disagreements, such as over Nayler, Perrot, Wilkinson and Story, more threatening. Early Friends shared ethical judgments condemning cheating merchants, unjust and class-conscious judges, and paid and proud ministers (and tithes), which reflected this sense that the Sermon on the Mount's teachings about oaths and violence were Truth. Modern awareness that class and regional relativism affect our rebellions against authority may mislead us. The telling of events in Larry Ingle's *First Among Friends* (1994), should be illuminated by Rosemary Moore's *Light in Their Consciences* (2000a), restraining conjecture and responding to inner experiences.

Wilmer Cooper's (1990) is the most balanced and thorough of recent studies of Quaker doctrinal issues. Douglas Gwyn (1986), Nigel Smith (1989), Richard Bailey (1992), T.L. Underwood (1997) and Rosemary Moore (2000a), have focused on Quaker claims that the Spirit of Christ within them made possible moral perfection, as well as infallibility in judging others. The role of openness to new leadings in 'convincement' is close to the later Methodist doctrine of sanctification. Both movements claimed moral perfection as a possibility (Margery Post Abbott, 1997; and work in progress by Carole Spencer outlined in [Chapter 9](#)). The teaching of Discipleship, by Lewis Benson (1968) comes closer to Mennonite doctrines, though it brought many Friends back to Fox's actual writings, and his identifying of the Spirit with Christ. Benson made 'radical Protestant' claims for the uniqueness of Quakerism as he understood it. Leo Damrosch's study of James Nayler as *The Quaker Jesus* (1996) goes beyond Gwyn's *Covenant Crucified* (1995) by examining Nayler's reliving of Jesus' life, believing he was indwelt by Jesus' Spirit. Even the Cross is a continuing burden laid upon every Christian.² More metaphysically, Fox spoke of becoming one with the 'celestial flesh' of Christ, and some Friends hoped the Spirit would provide them with healing powers like the Apostles'.

Charges of blasphemy were thus inevitable, and only partly answered by Friends' insistence that they were simply describing a possibility for all humans. They agreed with radical Puritans that the 'letter' of the Scriptures has no saving power, but they did not agree that Scriptures and the Spirit that gave them must always work together. Friends' claim of direct inspiration often made Scriptures seem unnecessary. Early Friends were thus a threat, not only to all clergy, but to the salvation others believed they had reached. At first Fox spoke of becoming one with the 'celestial flesh' of Christ. However, he treated the earthly life of Jesus as a 'type' or prototype for all Christian lives, though in a 'prepared body' whose human will was gone. Fox also united Father, Son and Holy Spirit, denying that God is 'three He's'. Penn was thrown into the Tower of London for repeating this statement, and freed when he convinced Bishop Stillingfleet that he did not deny the divinity of Christ (Barbour, 1991, p.207). Alan Kolp (1981) and others see sacramental parallels to Friends' 'unity with the Creation', but also see that they rejected powers in outward elements. In accusing Penn of dualism, detaching the 'spiritual' from the physical, Melvin Endy (1973) missed early Friends' dynamic sense of the power of the Spirit over the material. Some Friends hoped the Spirit would provide them with

foreign languages as at Pentecost or with healing powers like the Apostles'. Even Barclay's dualism, like Fox's, and eighteenth-century Friends', stressed more the contrast of God's will and human self-will, thus perhaps justifying John Punshon (1984, [ch.5](#)) in placing ever-active Barclay with the eighteenth-century Quietists.

The events of the Quaker Awakening of 1652 in northwestern England, the nationwide outpouring of 'the Camp of the Lord' from 'the Quaker Galilee' through England and Ireland in 1653–56, and the well-supported Quaker missions to Holland, Barbados, Maryland and New England, are told in more detail by Ingle (1994) and Moore (2000a) than even by William C. Braithwaite (1912) and Elfrida Vipont (Foulds) (1975) who are accused of loyalty to the biblical and Quaker 'sacred tradition' of the 'valiant sixty' or seventy apostles. However, the newer works provide less insight about individual preachers apart from the key roles of Margaret Fell (Ross, 1949; Kunze, 1994) and James Nayler, whose complex life had previously been studied mostly regarding his 'fall', trial and as a rival to Fox (Gwyn, 1995; Damrosch, 1996).

By contrast, the relationships of Friends to 'the Experience of Defeat' of the English visions of equality and democracy as the Commonwealth collapsed in 1658–60 have been thoroughly researched. Alan Cole (1955), Christopher Hill (1984), Barry Reay (1985) and the historian of pacifism, Peter Brock (1990), noting that some Friends praised Cromwell's victories and a few remained ready to stand to arms in 1659, have suggested that the Quaker Peace Testimony dates only from its first collective statements in 1660 and 1661, and was a failure of revolutionary nerve. This view ignores the intense nature of 'the Lamb's War', fought 'not with carnal but with spiritual weapons' (2 Cor. 10:4). Isaac Penington, though suffering repeated jailings and the loss of two homes under persecution, showed that violence was the devil's distraction from the real struggle of good and evil within human hearts (Barbour and Roberts, 1973, pp.224–41, 371–80).

Recent studies add little to Barbour and Roberts (*ibid.*, pp.388–405) on Friends' visits to the returning king, warning him that God had overthrown each ruler before him for failing to carry out his will. Friends found in 1662 that they and all 'Dissenters' or 'Nonconformists' to the established Church faced prison sentences and, after 1670, ruinous fines under the Conventicle Acts and other laws of the 'Clarendon Code'. No-one has improved on Besse (1753) in listing at least 5000 Friends imprisoned: 850 out of the 1240 Dissenters imprisoned in London in 1664 were Friends. Friends saw the plague epidemic of 1665 and the Great Fire of London in 1666 as God's judgments upon English persecutors for conscience. But the unrepentant Anglicans did not lighten the pressure. Rosemary Moore regards this as the end of 'the Lamb's War'. The Second Conventicle Act of 1670, though briefly suspended by the King in 1672, added a burden of huge fines and paid informers. Craig Horle (1988) and others have shown how Friends turned from apocalyptic warnings and proposals for reforms in church and state to using processes of law as weapons to gain toleration. Penn's tracts for toleration, beginning with his *Great Case of Liberty of Conscience* in 1670 (Barbour, 1991, Part V), though from the start combining theocratic, moral and pragmatic arguments, moved in the same direction.

Much writing has continued about Robert Barclay, by Elton Trueblood (1968) and Arthur Roberts and Dean Freiday (2001), who have renewed interest in his

theology,³ and a flood of books about William Penn⁴ celebrated Pennsylvania's tercentenary. When out of jail in 1672–74, these men and George Whitehead debated doctrines with Baptists and Anglicans, in public and in books: Barclay's *Apology* and Penn's *No Cross, No Crown*, verbally renewed 'the Lamb's War'. Then they travelled through Holland, the Rhineland and North Germany with Fox and George Keith, who surveyed Quaker West New Jersey, before the latter, as a schoolteacher, challenged the Philadelphia Elders for overspiritualizing the life of Christ (Frost, 1980).

Modern listings of just four to six basic *Quaker Testimonies*, for example – Integrity, Simplicity, Equality, Justice and Peace – lump together many specific practices regarding oaths, titles, dress, selling, fighting and lawcourts, that were all part of the committed life witness of 'the Lamb's War'. For each testimony, there were biblical, Puritan, logical and regional bases, making them universal Truth for early Friends to witness to. Their simple dress had been simply Puritan dress with a working-class accent. The Quaker 'Thee and Thou' was ordinary speech between working-class friends, as it still is in French and German. In living memory, ignoring of titles has been a shock tactic used by Afro-Americans. Friends' refusal to bargain in the marketplace was 'a dread and terror to the unjust' but pioneered price tags (Barbour and Roberts, 1973, pp.353–4). But these in turn promoted their later becoming uniform, unquestioned, standards in Quaker communities. The years of persecution added pressure to show loyalty by visible acts, Friends' freedom to worship after 1689, and their exclusion from court circles where Quaker dress and speech would have been a direct challenge, turned 'testimonies' into quaint badges of a 'peculiar (God's own) people'. Popular customs changed and, in dress, pronouns and speech, left Friends behind. Fred Tolles' works (1948, 1960) on the relation of transatlantic Quaker lifestyles to business life has been matched by J. William Frost's *Quaker Family* (1973), excellent also on history and doctrines.

Friends did not wish to outrun the Toleration Act, officially only for Christians, and Barclay, Penn and Fox made public statements to prove their basic orthodoxy. One approved by Fox, written on board ship by the group headed for Barbados, continues to be loved as a creed by some evangelical Friends.

Toleration also allowed freedom to publish folio volumes. Fox's *Great Mystery* (1659) and Samuel Fisher's *Rusticus ad Academicos* (1661) had already been 750 page folios, using point-by-point arguments and rebuttals. After 1690 appeared the histories of Friends by Gerard Croese (1696) and William Sewel (1722), Besse's *Sufferings* (1753) and the folios of the lives and writings of the Friends of the first generation, all published in London, many by Tace Sowle: Edward Burrough (1672), Samuel Fisher (1676), Francis Howgill (1676), Fox (1694) and Penn (1726), plus smaller but fairly complete volumes of the works of Camm and Audland (1689), Banks (1712), John Burnyeat (1691), Elizabeth Bathurst (1695), Barbara Blaudgone (1691), Crisp (1694), Edmondson (2nd edn, 1774), Fell (1710), Nayler (1716), Parnell (1675) and Joan Vokins (1691).⁵ Quaker literacy arose within a nation and generation steeped in the Bible, a people aware of the new Acts of the Spirit of Christ.

Meetings' care, from 1656 onward, to oversee weddings and burials, to guide or restrain moral offenders and to cover financial needs, led to minute books and epistles. Earlier in the twentieth century, Norman Penney printed 'First Publishers of

Truth' (1907), the responses of local Meetings to Fox's request for reports on their origins; Arnold Lloyd's *Quaker Social History, 1660–1738*, in 1950, and Russell Mortimer's (1937) study of the Bristol Meeting's minutes set models for similar recent works. Responsibilities for records and for Friends who moved or emigrated produced a new generation of servants of the Meetings, such as George Whitehead and Ellis Hookes, who need further study. Queries, which Fox sent out to make sure that the beginnings of each Meeting and the names of the sufferers were kept, became instruments for the self-examination of the lives and spirits of members. The rights of central committees and 'weighty Friends' like Fox to restrict or discipline Quaker groups were attacked by John Perrot, John Wilkinson, John Story and John Rogers under Charles II as vigorously as by any modern 'Universalist Friend'. The responses even from such younger men as Penn and Whitehead noted that such individualists about lifestyles and times of worship were thereby escaping public persecution. The Meetings' early custom to 'disown' public Friends' actions which discredited 'the Reputation of Truth'⁶ were later used against those who 'married out' with a non-Quaker or before a parish priest, as their children could not be counted on to be raised as Friends. But the last two decades have seen a renewal of emphasis by conservative Friends on 'Gospel Order', which links Matthew 1:8 with current Quaker and Mennonite processes of visiting, guiding, 'eldering' and 'disowning' behaviour. More liberal Friends and non-Quakers such as Sheeran (1985) have replaced this with concerns about 'Quaker Process' and 'the Sense of the Meeting', and the processes of sharing personal and group guidance by the Light or Spirit.

This study has not included the relatively untouched field of the collecting and republishing of the first generation's writings after 1689. Some excellent recent papers have been on Quaker emigration to America and on specific colonies, by Barry Levy (1988) and Seth B. Hinshaw (1984). The journals of Thomas Chalkeley from 1695 and of Mary Paisley and Mary Weston fifty years later have lately been noticed among dozens of travel narratives which enlivened dull First-days for later Young Friends. On Quaker women travellers, see Garman *et al.* (1996); on Friends in Pennsylvania, see Frost (1973); on New York, see Barbour *et al.* (1995); on Maryland's 'eastern shore' Kenneth Carroll (1970a) and on New England, especially Arthur Worrall of Colorado, working in Rhode Island archives on *Friends in the Colonial Northeast* (1980).

Women's Meetings have been increasingly studied, presented in their writings by Garman's team (1996), as part of the larger women's movement by Boulding (1976), Ruether and McLaughlin (1979), Moore (2000a, [ch.10](#)) and lively Antonia Fraser (1984), and described in Margaret Fell's active life by Christine Trevett (1991), Mack (1992) and Bonnellynn Young Kunze (1994). Though mainly done lately, to place so late in this study our discussion of the vital role of women in early Quakerism seems unfair, but except for the widespread ministry of travelling women ministers in the 1650s, their work centered on writing and local organization. A relative shortage of minute books may explain the lack of studies of the actual working of Women's Meetings, for whose guidance Sarah Fell wrote in 1675 an 'Epistle' of guidance only printed in 1975. Quaker women wrote in all the forms of tracts that men did, though their Proclamations were shorter and more fiery and their theological writings fewer. Few faith communities have been so well served by their own writers.

The power of Quaker silence in worship, told vividly in Barclay's *Apology* (1678), has been grounded in the inner surrender to the Light's testing by Richard Bauman's study, *Let Your Words Be Few* (1983). With appropriate early Quaker quotations, this has been applied for modern Friends by spiritual counselors such as Rex Ambler (2001) and Patricia Loring (1999). In the eighteenth-century, such Quietism guided but did not limit the divine Calls individual women as well as men felt to travel in ministry and counseling to other lands and their meetings.

This chapter has not discussed the often unnoticed summaries of the life stories of the 'Valiant Sixty' and James Nayler by Geoffrey Nuttall (1946, 1952, 1954, 1965, 1992), the major pathbreaking Quaker historian after Rufus Jones, Penney and Braithwaite, or the more vivid but fragmentary materials by Henry Cadbury (1972) and Richard Greaves and Robert Zeller (1984). This survey also does no justice to the steady flow of Pendle Hill pamphlets, and articles in *Quaker Religious Thought* and, more recently, in *Quaker Studies* and *Quaker Theology*, most of which quote or present the ideas of Fox and other early Friends more explicitly than they cited each other. But historians should notice how early Quakerism looks from Yearly Meetings outside Britain and the eastern United States. Evangelical Friends such as Walter Williams (1962) naturally notice the parallels between the early Quaker missions and mass meetings and the revivals continuing from the American Awakenings. John Punshon on the Friends Church (2001) more deeply relates conversion and convincement under the Light. But, except for Jamaica, the histories of Friends in Africa, Cuba and Latin America necessarily jump from Fox and Barclay to the twentieth century: in Kenya, I heard an old 'M'zee' report that 'Quakerism began in 1902.' Few apart from Tom Hamm at Earlham have surveyed Quaker historiography (see the chapter above). Quaker history has been created by the worship and actions of Friends in many periods and cultures, and can only be recorded truthfully by historians sharing appreciatively in their lives.

To sum up, the latest generation of historians of early Friends, working mainly with already known records, have widened the boundaries of our understanding, but have not, for me, moved its center. I hope Friends concerned for social and economic justice will never lose sight of the insights on the English revolution from Carl Bernstein to Christopher Hill. Douglas Gwyn and others returned us to the spiritual dimensions of apocalyptic hope. It is not surprising that Friends have been eager to study the inward explorations of Karl Jung and psychotherapy. Other Friends have balanced Friends' intense concern for inwardness and ethics with new appreciations of 'Unity with Nature', art, music and the Sacraments. But the diversity of Quakerism, reflected even in histories of early Friends, leaves a Quaker historian praying that the Spirit will keep us centered. A nearly fatal heart attack in 1996 found me feeling gratefully fulfilled that I had just reported to the Central Committee of Friends General Conference that the Triennial of Friends United Meeting had for the present overcome the 'Realignment' conflict intended to separate them, partly through wise suggestions by representatives of Yearly Meetings belonging to both bodies. In the present renewal of war and militarization, however, we must ask if the common core of Quakerism can again provide the unity and strength we found we needed in two world wars and those in Vietnam and the Persian Gulf, and fifty years of 'mutually assured destruction' in nuclear 'cold war'. Truth or God's love may again overcome the anger and despair we find in ourselves

and so many others, lately focused in the Near East. At best the slow, hard process will outlast our lifetimes. Yet Quaker history too is long and a witness to grace.

Notes

¹ 'M.S. for B. Allen' had published *Two Theosophical Epistles* of Boehme in 1645, and many Latin and German editions were available to scholars. The kabbalistic theosophy of Boehme 'the teutonic philosopher' was translated in 1763 by William Law, whose ethics shaped Wesley's life.

² Brian Drayton assembled key *Selections from the Writings of James Nayler* (1994) from the only inclusive *Collection of Sundry Books* by Nayler (1716) but omitted his debate tracts.

³ Older works were by J. Phillip Wragge (1948) and Leif Eeg-Olofson (1954), theses by Maurice Creasey (1951) and Dorlan Bales (1980), and Dean Freiday's modern-English version of Barclay's *Apology* (Freiday, 1967).

⁴ Basic are the notes as well as the texts in the first four volumes of the *Papers of William Penn* ((Bronner and Fraser, 1986) to which Edwin Bronner added as a fifth volume an index of his printed works in 1986), *William Penn on Religion and Ethics* (Barbour, 1991) and Edwin Bronner's edition of *The Peace of Europe and Fruits of Solitude* (1993). To the classic biographies by Catherine Peare (1956), William I. Hull (1937) and Edward C.O. Beatty (1939) have been added, on Penn's politics, Edwin Bronner's *William Penn's 'Holy Experiment'* (1962) and Mary Maples Dunn's *William Penn: politics and conscience* (1967); and, on his doctrines, Melvin Endy (1973) and the essays in Mary and Richard Dunn, *The World of William Penn* (1986).

⁵ These journals and collected works are not included in the references, except those quoted or discussed elsewhere, but major quotations are in Barbour (1964), Barbour and Roberts (1973) and Garman *et al.* (1996).

⁶ Richard Bauman's 1971 book of this title actually concerns the revival of Quaker Meeting discipline and the Peace Testimony toward Native Americans in 1750–1800.

The End of (Quaker) History?

Some Reflections on the Process

John Punshon

My main qualification for writing about history is that I have lived through a lot of it and know of what I speak. Advancing years bring drawbacks like the inability to digest garlic any more, but they do have the great consolation that in them one can reflect on the meaning of one's own life, and the longer chain of events of which it is an inseparable part. I am not entirely happy about having had to live most of my life in the twentieth century, but then, Germany during the Thirty Years War was probably worse, and the Black Death even worse than that. I certainly do not believe in the good old days.

The history I have lived through is exciting. I am a child of the Raj and grew up while the British Empire was still a reality. I took part in both the blitz and the Battle of Britain (as one of the targets, be it said), and I was one of the beneficiaries of the social revolution that followed the war. I have lived through the demise of European fascism, the collapse of communism, the rapid development of the European Community, globalization and the rise of international terrorism. At one point I nearly entered full-time politics, but was mercifully prevented from doing so. I am best described, I suppose, as a sympathetic bystander. I am attracted by the complexity of the process and the personalities of those who, in the old phrase, 'make history'. History is a mirror for human nature. That is why it is fascinating, and why it is not self-explanatory.

I suppose, having changed my mind on a number of matters over the years, my approach to the study of the past reflects this experience. I have never envisaged history as a desiccated study designed to display 'what really happened'. There is an element of this in historical writing, of course, and it is a necessary part of the discipline. The failure of the French to capture the farmhouse at Hougomont on the afternoon of 18 June 1815, is a matter of record, and without that record no judgments can properly be made. But whether, and to what degree, that failure contributed to the Allied victory and the fall of Napoleon Bonaparte is a matter of judgment, but a matter of no less importance. History deals with both kinds of question. Perhaps the second kind of question is the more important, but, without the first, there are no data with which to work. Punctiliousness over detail is an essential part of the discipline. So historical study and writing must give proper attention to both detail and the broader view. There are those who would like history to be a science, and I would agree with them to the extent that we are under a duty to protect the integrity of the data, notwithstanding the fact that it is not always easy to separate fact and opinion. On the other hand, we should remember that there is a muse of history, and since ancient times people have recognized that the study has

been touched with divinity. One might define history as the study of our encounter with the truth about ourselves extended over time. However scientific we may wish to be, history is quintessentially one of the humanities.

So, when I think about my own life, I have a sense of having lived in a world which is part of a rational process (however morally opaque) rather than one subject simply to the ebb and flow of changing events and circumstances. One can take exception to this conclusion, claiming that it reflects more of my own convictions than of external reality, but it is not that simple. I am quite ready to admit that personal motives influence my reading of history, but I am certainly not prepared to admit that history is full of sound and fury signifying nothing beyond whatever meaning I choose to drape it in.

For the moment I want to think about one fairly short period in English history, the civil wars of the seventeenth century and their aftermath. These are the years which see the rise and development of what we might anachronistically call the Society of Friends or, somewhat more loosely, 'Quakerism'. The former term is easier to deal with. Though it was coined some time later, it refers to an institution we can identify clearly and talk about with little difficulty. The latter term is more problematic. The outlines of early Quaker faith and practice look on the surface to be fairly clear. The matters of controversy between the first Friends and their Puritan contemporaries are on the record, and from the negatives we can build up a picture of the positives. The boundaries between Friends and others can be drawn reasonably accurately.

However, not everything the early Quakers said is consistent or intelligible, and there were differences of opinion among them over fairly major matters. Two of these matters divide the Society to this day. The first concerns the status of Scripture and the degree of authority it should enjoy compared with other sources of authority like the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The second matter is implicit in this, namely, what authority, if any, can properly be exercised by the gathered church when individual members claim the direct leading of the Holy Spirit in another, and perhaps contrary direction.

It is not necessary to make a judgment on these matters here. What I am concerned to do is to argue that early, or original, Quakerism did not enter the world fully armed from the head of Jove, but developed rapidly during a period of rapid general change, during which it had to come to some kind of consensus on these matters. Quite apart from any intrinsic claim it might have to our loyalty because we share some of its early principles, it was a movement in the first flush of enthusiasm, was to some degree experimental, and contained its own internal dynamic. We may have our own religious reasons for studying early Quakerism, but they will give us less than the truth about our origins unless we take a wider view and relate the early Quaker movement to its own natural environment, namely, the development of English society in the middle of the seventeenth century.

We have, in other words, to come to terms with a revolutionary period, and reach some kind of assessment of how the circumstances of the time might have influenced the religious thought of the first Friends. There is unlikely to be a direct connection, but the early Friends may, for example, have been predisposed to certain attitudes because of their position in society. One straightforward example of this is the extent of impropriation and the injustice of the system of tithes. Tithes may have

been a reasonable way of securing an income for the church in a settled, agrarian and fairly homogeneous society, but at a time of change, particularly when the practice of impropriating tithes was widespread, it came to resemble little more than a property tax. The system was objectionable on two counts – one was that it provided an unearned income for those for whom it was not intended, thereby becoming a form of exploitation, the other was that it failed in its primary purpose, to provide adequately for the ministry. What was originally designed for the upkeep of the clergy ended up supporting the gentry.

Echoes of this period still resound, even if *diminuendo*. When I was a child, as I have already pointed out, England was at war. My father was abroad in the army and I was taken to live in the country well away from the bombing. My family had political convictions, and I thereby absorbed a sort of idealism and historical perspective with my upbringing. It was rudimentary, to be sure, but was based on a mild form of class-consciousness allied with a species of religious radicalism. I did not need to be told that after the war things would be different, and a better world would emerge. When I read *The Children of the New Forest* (Marryat, 1996), I automatically felt uncomfortable. I knew I was supposed to sympathize with the Cavaliers, but my gut told me the Roundheads were the good guys. At eight or nine years of age!

My point is that this is not accidental. I was brought up among people who were committed to the idea of progress – that they were part of a process of (in the case of England) gradual but irreversible improvement in social and political conditions. Questioned as to the basis of this belief, they would probably have agreed with the sentiments of W.C. Braithwaite, who wrote,

Or, to illustrate this conception of progress from the fountain-heads of our Western Civilization, we may say that the conserving genius of Rome, the humanism of Athens, the forward-reaching faith of the Hebrew race ... are all needed, in their due combination, for the upward growth of man. They flourish best in an atmosphere of self-controlled freedom, since this allows a great variety of temperaments and capacities to serve the commonwealth. (1919, p.630)

When I first began to think about the nature and significance of the past, I relied entirely on the historical presuppositions of the world I had been brought up in, which gave me a framework for understanding this kind of thing, both generally, and in connection with particular events. Later on, I learned that these presuppositions constituted the so-called ‘Whig Interpretation of History’. If there was a shadowy influence known as ‘progress’ guiding human affairs, it manifested itself in the ultimate victory of right and justice in the great conflicts of the nation’s history. In these terms, the process began in the ancient institutions of jury trial and representative government, and matured into the protection of private property and personal liberty from arbitrary rule, then giving rise to equality before the law and universal suffrage. If these are seen as the most significant political advances since the medieval period, one can write English history in terms of the Saxon constitution, the Norman reaction (which many early Friends would have recognized as ‘the Norman Yoke’), the reassertion of freedom with the Magna Carta, the gradual decline into autocracy under the Tudors and Stuarts, the brilliant

reassertion of the Good Old Cause during the civil wars, further reaction under Charles II and James II, and the break even point in the Revolution of 1688. Thereafter, at any rate in the liberal view, the democratic consequences of the Revolution have been worked out in the extension of the franchise to working men and then to women, and finally in the struggle for economic as well as formal political equality.

It is easy to see that this general framework provides an overall way of looking at the significance of the Civil War period, and portraying it as a significant stage in this longer development. Obviously, if the rise of Quakerism is an associated historical phenomenon, and is viewed as something that we necessarily have to contextualize, the explanation we give of the mechanisms of change will influence the explanation we give of the rise of our Society, and the estimation we make of its importance in religious history.

An excellent illustration of this principle is the thesis of Rufus Jones (1863–1948) that early Quakerism appeared when it did because Christianity produces a countervailing current of mystical awareness in periods of strong ecclesiastical discipline and doctrinal orthodoxy. Fox's doctrine of the light within can easily appear as an example of this process. If the early Friends were protesting against the rigidities of Puritanism, and the light within is a reality which is simultaneously human and divine, Jones' conditions are satisfied and we have a long-term perspective which makes Quakerism rather more significant than just another of the radical protest movements of the mid-seventeenth century.

There is a problem with this analysis, though. If the writings of early Friends reveal themselves, on re-examination, not to display this understanding of the light within, then the perfectly plausible claim that they are mystics will need to be established in some other way. This is partly a matter of the definition of mysticism, and there are conceptual problems in providing a definition of this term. Nevertheless, both intense inward experience and what would now be recognized as apophatic spirituality are essential components of such a definition. Both are integral to the Quakerism of both the early and middle periods. On this basis it is possible to say that, while Rufus Jones' reasoning is open to revision, he was essentially correct in characterizing the early Friends as mystics.

But this adjustment of the Rufus Jones thesis deprives us of the historical dynamic essential to its formulation. If we grant, for the sake of argument, the link between rigid theology and mystical reactions to it, we are clearly looking at a long-term pattern of development, but one which has theological rather than historical significance in the usual sense of the term. It presupposes that mysticism is of one sort only, which is the essential condition for the continuity, and also presupposes a prior belief in the truth claims of Christianity, in both its mystical and theological forms. While we may be tempted to accept these presuppositions as a matter of personal faith or the world-view of our religious community, we may also have to accept that Quakerism, with its radical and egalitarian sympathies, can be contextualized quite satisfactorily within the Whig interpretation of history. (It is even conceivable that Quakerism developed fortuitously when these two separate streams converged in the period under discussion.)

To see the course of history in Whig historical terms, then, requires us to regard the seventeenth-century crisis as a conflict between progressive and conservative

forces and to locate the conflict in the differing ideas and ideals possessed by the royal and parliamentary interests, respectively. If this is the case, early Quakerism, which was closely allied with the parliamentary cause, can be read as a progressive force. This conclusion can give powerful endorsement to many Friends' contemporary theological and political positions. If we prefer the rational and the gradual, the Whiggish kind of Quakerism is for us.

But we might not. No sooner had I become a Friend and begun to explore the community I had joined than I became aware of an apparently very different explanation from the above. The personalities of the seventeenth century lived in a thought world in many ways different from our own, but at the same time there are significant continuities in the political and religious ideas which gave substance to their disputes. I came to the conclusion that in many ways we share a community of interest with our seventeenth-century forebears, and certain matters, in politics and religion, form a useful and congenial bridge to the past.

Chief among these was a sense that not all participants in the process of history are high-minded. The past, just like the present, shows the influence of very human desires and appetites on the political process, even in movements with aims that one is naturally inclined to endorse. This has always seemed to me to be the strength of the 'great man' school of historical interpretation. At the same time, it appears that the options open to an individual or a particular group at any particular juncture are conditioned to a significant degree by economic influences. We do what it is in our interest to do, and our choices are circumscribed by the position we occupy in society. When we look at those who became the first Friends we can see that not many were wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble. They were largely of the yeoman or artisan class and had the political and economic attitudes one would expect, being highly critical of wealth and, unofficially, at any rate, having considerable sympathy with the programme of the Levellers.

Against this background it is easy to see the appeal of what we might call 'materialist history' as a framework to understand the Civil War period and the rise of Quakerism. It was once explained to me that this term is preferable to 'Marxist' or 'Marxian' and I think that is right, for the latter two terms carry baggage that we do not need. Nevertheless, the point of the term – and the analysis – is that one can look at the middle of the seventeenth century as exemplifying the transition from feudalism to capitalism, and find the dynamic of the period in changing economic conditions and class conflict. If this is the case, early Quakerism can be seen as an essentially radical, populist movement and, if we prefer the radical and the political, the progressivist kind of Quakerism is for us.

The groves of Academe contain rabbit holes as well as trees, of course, and from time to time creatures emerge which spoil the beauty or symmetry of what has hitherto been believed. One such animal is the school of thought, variously described, which turns away from the grand ideas of progressive idealism or materialist dynamics to find an explanation of the events of the seventeenth century in terms of the financial and administrative challenges faced by the governments of the day rather than in ideology or economic circumstances.

From this standpoint, the English civil wars can better be seen as part of conflicts dividing the peoples of the British Isles as a whole, and not just the English. Moreover, when continental parallels are considered, the whole thing seems a lot

less distinctive than many were brought up to believe, and far more attributable to imperfect human judgment and institutional malfunctioning than conscious design or implacable unseen processes. On this analysis, the rise of Quakerism is fortuitous, being one manifestation of the circumstances of the time, rather than being in some sense entailed by intellectual progress or a continuing radical tradition. If we are of a sceptical disposition, a revisionist kind of Quakerism is for us.

These three ways of looking at history are of considerable importance, and we have to learn their lessons. First, they provide different frameworks in which to interpret the rise of Quakerism, and we should note that more than one interpretation is therefore possible. If we wish to be clear in our own minds about our origins, we must first engage each of these viewpoints instead of adopting the orthodoxy *du jour*. Whether we do end up with one or other of the theories is immaterial. Historical honesty requires that we go through the process and then be able to give reasons for our conclusions.

This is because Friends are an historical people, and we derive much of our identity from our tradition. It is therefore incumbent on us to give the very best intellectual effort we can to the understanding of that tradition and the circumstances in which it originated and developed. This necessarily involves going beyond the narrow history of the Society of Friends into broader fields. The writing of annals, important though they are, is not the same as writing history. The challenge, the interest, the excitement – and the pitfalls – arise out of the subsequent process of contextualization and interpretation. This is the point at which we usually think history speaks to us.

And so it does. In ancient times Clio entered the souls of her devotees, and the writers of history therefore practised a sacred art. That is why the discipline must be treated with respect and why its practitioners are under a moral obligation to tell the truth. This is not so much a matter of making sure that history is not misused (though this is part of it) as of stepping aside from the process and allowing history to speak in her own voice. Not to do this – to silence the voice of the past – is a crime against humanity. We may not always succeed in our endeavours to do this, but we have to make the attempt with all our powers. We must as far as possible allow events to speak for themselves, and then exercise both imagination and caution in seeking to discern their wider significance. We also need to allow for the limitations on our own powers of understanding and the uncomfortable possibility that history may speak with several, not always consistent, voices.

By definition, almost, we cannot find the wider significance of events unless we move beyond the immediate and the concrete and ask whether there are patterns in what we discover. Comparative studies are an essential component of history. It is when we stand back that we can see change occurring and measure it, but, at the same time, we open a door through which our own biases can enter and distort the picture. This is part of the moral discipline. Understanding unfolds over time and, indeed, changes. If our response is simply to cleave to the orthodoxy of our youth, Clio will desert us and we will have betrayed our calling.

The problem of change is central to a long view of Quaker history, which, as we have seen, can be written in more than one idiom. However, in recent years a challenge of a different kind has been thrown down to the major schools of thought

we have been discussing, the point of which is the claim that history in the sense we have presupposed it, the uncovering of the truth about the past as best we are able, is an illusion because we lack the means to do so. It follows that grand narratives like these wider explanations of the significance of history are a mirage. What then can we say about history and the condition of postmodernity?

If, as postmodernists say, reality is constituted by language, there is nothing beyond the forms and conventions of human discourse. In these circumstances, what we call truth can be no more than the interests and preferences of the powerful, whose verbal artefacts must be deconstructed to reveal the self-interest that underlies them. The task of the historian is therefore to subvert the dominant paradigm rather than to discover the truth. History in the sense we have been understanding it hitherto is an impossibility: we do not have the data since there are no value-free 'facts', and we bring too many socially constructed presuppositions to our study to achieve the degree of independence and objectivity that our previous understanding requires.

The consequence of this analysis is disconcerting. There is certainly a sense in which the study of Quaker historiography involves a measure of deconstruction. Two examples spring immediately to mind. One is the re-examination of the place of women in the early Quaker movement and the extent to which practice did not measure up to profession. The other concerns the weight to be given to Fox's *Journal* as a source for the history, as opposed to the romance, of the early period. In both cases, modern scholars are revising our understanding at significant points and showing how, with the best will in the world, our story has usually been written from the standpoint of some orthodoxy or other.

However, that does not exhaust the significance of the older viewpoints, because there is more to them than just motive and social position. The fact that W.C. Braithwaite was a banker, wrote at the beginning of the twentieth century and belonged to the Rufus Jones school of thought may cause us to qualify some of his judgments, but does not displace him from his position as the Quaker historian at whose feet we all sit. And here we return to where we began. Underlying what he wrote there is another story of which the Quaker detail is both a part and an epitome, and it is this kind of narrative which postmodernists deny as a possibility. There cannot be an epitome because we cannot see the big picture.

Friends with an historical turn of mind need to grasp very clearly that postmodern principles represent a challenge to many of the habits of thought to which they are accustomed. One only needs to think about the religious education Friends give their children to realize that Quaker history is highly significant for the self-identity and continuity of the body. Hence to occupy a defensible historical position is essential, and historically inclined Friends are under a duty to consider and then articulate the principles on which these stand.

In this connection it needs to be said that, contrary to what many think, immediate acceptance of everything new is not a Quaker principle and we are not obliged to approach our denominational history in a postmodern spirit. Like most ideologies, postmodernism is the victim of its own critique, since it is itself based on a prior philosophical position, and is in this respect no different from other positions whose methods and principles it dismisses. It is quite possible to agree that language may influence our understanding of reality, but not agree that it determines

what that understanding is going to be. The question that is debatable is not that grand or metanarratives are impossible, but whether sound reasons can be given for preferring one rather than another.

Particular Quaker narratives usually draw their strength from these wider theories of the nature of the historical process, whether they recognize it or not. Today, we all need to consider the mystical, Puritan, materialist and revisionist pictures of the origins of our Society. Also available to us is the early Quaker interpretation of Church history as one of apostasy and restitution, or what one could envisage as an evangelical Quaker understanding of history and our place in it as a continuous series of religious relapses and revivals. Each of these theories can relate us to the Christian (or other) grand narrative in a different way. But, ultimately, it is our choice of connection which determines the view of our history that we adopt.

My personal preference is for the theory of relapse and revival, for reasons that should be explained, because they are intimately related to my whole approach to the writing of Quaker history. In brief, it seems to me that distinctive religious communities like the Society of Friends always face the problem of accommodation to changing circumstances, and they always throw up traditionalist and revisionist points of view. For whatever reason, be it temperament, upbringing, education or some other cause, I generally find myself in the revisionist corner, but still traditional enough to suspect that, if I adopted a postmodern outlook, I would have to go back on much of what I have believed throughout my life. So let me explain how modern hermeneutics and the concept of narrative provide my personal way of reconciling tradition and change, and link my faith with the historical studies that have become an unavoidable part of my academic life.

I take it that Quakerism, the tradition of basic principle, argument and subsequent development to which present-day Friends belong, originally represented a radical departure from much of seventeenth-century English Protestantism. It has proved itself sustainable and intellectually defensible by having maintained a continuous, consciously separate existence for at least three centuries. Certainly there were social and political influences at work to produce the conviction among early Friends that separation was inevitable and right, but these influences conditioned the departure, they did not determine it, unless one accepts a more materialist explanation than I am ready to adopt. The reasons for the departure, it seems to me, were primarily theological.

This is why the controversies of the seventeenth century are so important. There is a school of thought which sees early Quakerism as a generic spiritual movement which took Christian form for the lack of any other conceptual framework, but having no essential connection with historic Christianity. The problem here is to see how the spiritual content of early Quakerism can be separated from its vocabulary, which is in turn part of the common discourse of the period. On the contrary, the controversies of the seventeenth century bind Quakerism securely into the ongoing traditions of the Christian faith. To understand how, it is necessary to grasp the main elements of early Quaker thought, place them in some kind of order, and trace their onward trajectory giving due attention to precursors, originators and subsequent commentary and development.

It seems to me that this latter course is the appropriate one for the academic study of Quakerism, and why I originally found the mystical interpretation so attractive.

As I have already indicated, I think it has its drawbacks, but it nevertheless provides just such an account of the rise of Quakerism in the seventeenth century by relating it to a much longer process of development. In other words, it has the merit of providing a narrative, which is essentially theological, and which therefore requires an attitude to history which finds its meaning in principles derived from elsewhere, and sets forth an account of what those principles are. In plain English, it makes Quakerism an essential part of the grand narrative of Christianity.

Each of the schools of thought I have been discussing has some such set of principles, and we have all benefited from their application to a discussion of the origins of the Society of Friends. Indeed, it is hard to see how one can have an informed opinion about seventeenth-century Quakerism unless one has come to some kind of accommodation with them. But none of them is the last word, I think, the reason being that the last word is religious, and only a synthesis derived from faith will enable us to approach the truth of our origins in the fullest possible sense. History can tell us about the circumstances that gave rise to Quakerism, but cannot tell us about Quakerism *itself*. For that we must turn to faith.

If I had to hazard some sort of estimate of the effect of my studies upon my own faith, then I would say that this is the conclusion it has brought me to. I have never seen any good reason to depart fundamentally from the Whig understanding of the course of English history, but my study of the seventeenth century has shown me that liberty is not self-justifying. It is not the product of idealism or the by-product of class interest, but a necessary corollary of the covenantal theology that was characteristic of the times. And this is the point at which I opt for the relapse and revival theory of Church history. Standing on this eminence I am able to see the route by which I got to this point, and the features of the surrounding terrain. The point is that I belong here in this landscape. I am traversing, and not escaping from it.

In terms of this essay, the landscape is of course Christianity. I find it hard, considering two thousand years of development, to believe that there is one generic kind of Christianity, though I recognize that others will disagree with me about this. I guess I am of this opinion because my formative influences have been Protestant ones, and my sensibility from my earliest years has been ecumenical. When I look at early Friends, I see people who have what I know in my heart of hearts to be the true faith, and who follow a path which I recognize as true discipleship. That, indeed, is why I joined the modern Society of Friends.

But I feel under no compulsion to conclude that they are the *only* people with true faith and true discipleship. The landscape in which I stand contains many such groups. But there are also swamps, quicksands, mirages and the *ignis fatuus* in the landscape of Christianity and experience suggests insistently that these are a permanent part of the scene. In terms of historical sequence, they represent those places and thoughts to be avoided, those mistakes that we are permanently prone to, and which God raises up prophets to warn us about, and to lead us out of. Hence the idea of relapse and revival. This is how I square it with myself to belong to the quintessential sect and at the same time claim a place in the longer, wider story of Christianity.

I guess the sense of distinctiveness that characterized (and characterizes) Friends has two main sources. First, as a movement of protest, Friends have always needed to provide a critique of the status quo in order to justify their departure from it.

Second, in order to do this, they appealed to tradition, which in their case was their distinctive understanding of where Christianity had gone wrong in the past – an essentially historical undertaking. It might have been this latter process which led to the development of an intense inward conservatism of dress, speech and deportment in which what had been done in the past was considered normative.

This historical interest is alive and well. The design features of the major American periodicals, *Friends Journal* and *Quaker Life*, are replete with historical allusions. The children's programme in most meetings is based upon major incidents and personalities in Friends history. One wonders what other denomination the size of Britain Yearly Meeting would have produced such an impressive historical work as the Quaker Tapestry at Kendal. One can read the Quaker publications and talk to individuals and come away with the clear sense that for many Friends a sense of the Quaker past is an integral part of their identity, or self-awareness as Friends. We must think clearly about the significance of these things. If they are simply a part of the heritage, they do not matter. It is enough that we enjoy them. But if they are, even partly, definitive of our faith, then they must take account of what historians, Quaker and non-Quaker, have to say about their truth.

This is particularly important for the period of Quaker origins, the English Civil War and its aftermath. Earlier I discussed three different ways in which we can look at the English Civil War period and suggested that each might support a particular view of Quaker history. I implied (though the implication is not strictly relevant to the point I was making) that these interpretations have succeeded one another as our understanding has developed, and there are certain points of contention between them. The debate seems to arise not so much out of the data as out of the kind of interpretations the data will support, and inevitably, therefore draws us into the more difficult terrain of constructing a grand narrative that will withstand informed historical critique.

It is therefore important for Friends to take part in the continuing dialogue about the seventeenth century, and to do so responsibly. There is, if the postmodern option is rejected, a difference between discerning the origins of Quakerism as a part of a grander narrative and seeing those origins as a reflection of our own pre-existing commitments. Since there is a tendency to argue our contemporary theological differences in historical terms, Friends should recognize and resist that temptation, or at least should be open and say that such and such a result is inevitable, granted certain presuppositions, and then argue the case for the presuppositions rather than the reading of history dependent on them.

Personally, I do not see how one can have a narrative without some kind of theory, because it is in the theory, oddly enough, that the humanity lives. If we are interested in the historical process basically because it is the story of what human beings have done, we will inevitably arrive at some kind of estimate of what it means to be human. That includes consideration of choices and opportunities, possibilities and impossibilities, action and inaction, foresight and obtuseness, creativity and destructiveness, caution and enterprise and naïveté and wisdom and many other things besides.

So a history that does not go beyond the conditions of the seventeenth century, or does not believe that the continuing debate can add significantly to our

understanding of ourselves, is ultimately unsatisfactory, fascinating though it may be in itself. Quakerism can be seen as part of the Christian grand narrative or, indeed, part of the enlightenment grand narrative, and a case can be made for each. Honesty says that neither is perhaps required, unless it can be proved, a difficult task at that degree of abstraction. But that is precisely the task of theology, for a faith position can operate like a powerful light, illuminating all kinds of things that are otherwise invisible. These are usually the things we live by, and we will stop the conversation about them at our peril. We have by no means reached the end of Quaker history.

II

THEORIES OF EARLY QUAKERISM



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Commentary

In the three chapters in [Part I](#), ‘Quaker Historiography’, Thomas Hamm, Hugh Barbour and John Punshon have introduced three different aspects of the nature of Quaker history. Tom Hamm has presented historical research on the founding historian of the modern period of Quaker Studies, Robert Barclay of Reigate, and has introduced, by default, the concept of insider history and its potential shortcomings.

Hugh Barbour has given us a detailed bibliographic essay, outlining the variety of approaches and historical landscapes in which Quaker history is carried out. Finally, John Punshon has thoughtfully taken us through a set of theoretical approaches to Quaker history, while also reflecting on his own position within that complex. [Parts II](#) and [III](#) of the book are devoted to more detailed theories of Quakerism. [Part II](#) concentrates on theories concerned solely with the seventeenth century, [Part III](#) with those theories which span longer or later periods.

These theories, it will be immediately obvious, do not add up to a comprehensive history of Quakerism. Other than Rosemary Moore’s chapter in this [second part](#) of the book, the very detail that the scholars argue over almost precludes the description of a more general (assumed) history. Only Carole Spencer, a church historian, in her chapter in the [third part](#) of the book, returns to the basic elements of this early Quakerism.

Moore brings a new periodization to Quaker history. Reay (1985) sets 1660 as a key transition moment from one kind of spiritual expression to another, coining the phrase ‘Restoration Quakerism’. Moore argues that, as early as 1653 or 1654, and again after the Nayler incident in 1656, there are changes of emphasis in the presentation of some of the grand claims of early Quakerism (2000a). She also adds that it is 1666 that marks the real change of direction and the end of early eschatological hope. In this aspect, she shares Gwyn’s emphasis on early Quaker history as being situated within an unfolding endtime theology.

Richard Bailey claims that Fox cannot be situated within seventeenth-century orthodoxy (contrary to the thinking of Nuttall and Barbour). Bailey also argues that Fox represented only one of at least three Christologies amongst early Friends, assessing Christology in terms of the ideas used to explain the connection between the inward Christ and the human form. For Fox, Bailey claims, the indwelling Christ was so pervasive that all distinctions were lost and, in turn, that the soul was part of God. Penn on the other hand later claimed that Fox had intended to say of the soul and God, ‘not divided’ rather than ‘not distinct’. Anne Conway created a third distinctive Christology, dualistic in its treatment of God, Christ and ‘the creatures’ but one in which she believed everything, material or immaterial, shared a common essence.

Moore has claimed that Fox was accused of spiritualizing Christ and having no place for the historical Jesus (2000a). The Quaker response to this criticism lay

behind some of the later moderation (see Barbour's chapter above, also Tarter and Reynolds in this volume). Bailey concurs with Moore in the idea of the denigration of the historical Jesus, claiming Fox saw himself as a revelation of a pre-existent Christ. In this he denies a Second Coming aspect to Fox's thought (as the pre-existent Christ had always been present). Fox is more like an avatar, though Bailey does cast him in the role of announcing the coming of the Kingdom. Bailey is also unique in his view that Nayler saw himself as revelation/reincarnation of the historical Jesus: most scholars see Nayler's actions in terms of enacting a sign to 'the world' (for example, Damrosch, 1996, p.93) even to the point of seeking martyrdom (Spencer, 2001). Unlike Spencer, but with Punshon, Tarter and Gwyn (though each for different reasons), Bailey distinguishes clearly between the teaching of Fox and Barclay. In direct contradiction to Spencer, Bailey claims Fox's doctrine of perfection was different from that of the *Apology*. For Bailey, Barclay and Penn are key criminals in the moderation and alteration of Fox's message, a point taken up by Tarter and Reynolds, and also by Ingle outside this volume (1991). Bailey states that it was the question of divine substance which was at the heart of the need to censor the writings of Fox and other early Friends but follows, too, the idea that it was the claims of resisting sin which most troubled Quaker opponents and caused anxiety amongst those Friends seeking respectability and toleration.

Michele Tarter takes one of Bailey's Christologies, his analysis of Fox's minimal dualism between humanity and God, as normative for the first generation of Friends. For her, Friends became 'celestial flesh', their quaking a manifestation of their changing nature. Tarter calls this unity of body and spirit in worship 'the Quaker theory of the body', and agrees with Bailey on a literal interpretation of the language of early Friends. Unlike other historians of this period, Bailey and Tarter do not believe that Nayler was innocent of the charges put against him after his entry into Bristol, but that such charges were themselves apostate. Significantly, Tarter, along with Crawford (1993), claims that the subsequent censorship by a Quaker hierarchy keen to survive fell particularly hard on the writings and status of women within the movement, a point affirmed by Christine Trevett's recent study of the minutes of Second Day's Morning Meeting (Trevett, 2001). Barclay's *Apology* (1678) is no reflection of the early insights of a literally Spirit-filled movement but a systematic formalization and moderation of the first message. Similarly, she claims the historians of the 1670s performed for the Quakers then a denominationalizing role similar to that of Robert Barclay of Reigate in the 1870s. Tarter, and Crawford too (1993, p.172), claim that some recent histories of the seventeenth century have not portrayed women's role positively but have continued a misogynist approach. Hobby explains the same period in terms of women being forced into new roles (1995). In her PhD thesis, Tarter writes that 'Prophecy, once a spontaneous and God-driven act, soon became a fusion of divine inspiration and personal interpretations at the moment of speech', but that women's roles became 'sites of conscious gender performance in which they extended the boundaries of women's socio-religious roles in the seventeenth century' (1993, p.4). Both Hobby and Tarter end with positive appraisals of these women's ministries even as the Quaker women were encouraged and forced to moderate them.

Tarter's claims of censorship are interesting to compare with Moore's sense that organization was one of the elements of Quaker longevity and Punshon's idea that

the second generation created a more mature expression of spirituality, one as pragmatic as the first (see the Introduction to this book). As I suggest below in the notes to [Part III](#), commentary, of this book, Barclay introduced a Quaker spirituality of anxiety and his dualism was to shape the attitude to God and the world held by the Quietistic Quakers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Barclay and Penn, managing the defeat of the Lamb's War, also laid out a different attitude towards eschatology, although Tarter has even less to say about the endtimes than Bailey: their scholarly emphasis is elsewhere.

Glen Reynolds follows Bailey's and Tarter's literal interpretation of the presence of Christ in the individual in contrast to what he claims is Gwyn's symbolic interpretation, which emphasizes moral and ethical outcomes as characteristics of the presence of Christ. So, in the way that Punshon sees the phrase 'Christ has come to teach his people himself' as symbolic, thus denying a Second Coming message to Fox's theology, Gwyn, while taking that phrase literally, does not take the idea of Christ inhabiting the body literally. For Reynolds, though, the union of Christ and the individual is metaphysical and to that extent non-figurative, with the moral outcomes only a consequence. Reynolds therefore has a particular view on the nature of the deification of the individual that is distinct from that of Bailey and Tarter, one far less corporeal. For Reynolds, the deification process is metaphysical rather than embodied. Rather than make the flesh divine, Reynolds argues that Fox was talking about attaining divinity through the reunion of the soul with God through the workings of the light. In other words, rather than filling the body with Christ in a corporeal sense, the goal of spiritual perfection involved the spiritual metaphysical union of the light of Christ or soul in the individual with God. Significantly, this is a process that is fully achieved for everyone only after death. Reynolds states that Fox believed in the immortality of the divine in the soul. In this way, he acknowledges that, for Fox and within Gnosticism, whilst perfection and divinity is a realizable aim on earth, the experience is fully completed only after death. This denies the full perfection of humanity on earth and thus maintains a very different view on eschatological completion from Gwyn and the idea of the inward Second Coming, the Lamb's War and the global coming of the Day of the Lord and the Kingdom. 'Flesh and Bone' language, for Reynolds, is allegorical of a more individualized process of union and eschatological completion which is not fully realized until after death.

The Inevitability of Quaker Success?

Rosemary Moore

I took up Quaker research almost by accident. I was brought up in the Church of England, and discovered Quakers fifty years ago while at university. I read Philosophy, Politics and Economics and followed it with a London external degree in Theology. Presently I married and, like many women of that generation, I combined raising a family with a certain amount of schoolteaching. At Christmas 1985, I took early retirement and found myself at the age of fifty-three with time on my hands. I needed to exercise my brain, and after resurrecting my long-lost theology and doing some writing on the New Testament for Quaker publications, I wanted to go further. A good friend suggested a PhD, so I had to think of a subject. My main interest was, and remains, the early church with special reference to the Pauline epistles, but I had to face the fact that inadequate language skills made any serious contribution to research in that area an impossibility.

The early history of Quakerism had always interested me, so I put forward the proposal of looking at the similarities and differences between Paul's church at Corinth and the early Quakers, and maybe comparing both with another charismatic body. However, when working with John Punshon at Woodbrooke, I found that this topic was not viable because of the lack of agreement among experts as to the nature of early Quakerism. I read Barry Reay's *Quakers and the English Revolution* (1985) and Douglas Gwyn's *Apocalypse of the Word* (1986) almost at the same time, and they set me thinking. Here were two books, both derived from recent PhD dissertations, yet they were so different that it was impossible that both authors were giving a full and accurate picture of early Quakerism. For Reay, Quakers were a revolutionary political group with several leaders. For Gwyn, they were rediscoverers of primitive prophetic Christianity, with one dominant leader, George Fox. Nor were these the only theories of early Quakerism. The standard interpretation at the time was that associated with Geoffrey Nuttall (1946) and Hugh Barbour (1964), who both looked on the Quaker movement as the most radical branch of the Puritan reformation. This view had been challenged in recent years by Christopher Hill's secular approach (1972), which underlay Reay's book (1985). Rufus Jones' theory (1914), linking Quakerism with sixteenth-century spiritual movements on continental Europe, was then in eclipse, but still had to be taken into account.

So I decided to change my subject to 'The Faith of the First Quakers', with a view to attempting an objective examination of the leading early Quakers and their ideas. I had acquired a distaste for grand theories and preconceptions of any sort, considering that these were probably the chief cause of the confused state of Quaker studies. I intended as far as possible to use only contemporary sources from the 1650s, and my main material was the Quaker pamphlet literature, this being a

discrete, almost complete, body of information that had not been tampered with. I also studied the anti-Quaker literature, for these books provided valuable information as to which Quaker ideas and personalities were best known to the public. I read as widely as possible among contemporary manuscripts, but the number of them is huge, and much remains to be done in that area. As a result of this work I was able to identify a number of themes in Quaker thinking, and also several leading figures. By looking at developments year by year, a three-dimensional model of early Quakerism was built up, showing variations in the important personalities and in matters that were of interest to Quakers.

By paying careful attention to method but eschewing theories, I found that all the theories of Quakerism contained elements of truth, while none told the whole story. Early Quakers were both politically and spiritually revolutionary. They belonged to Puritan England, but showed the influence of the European radical reformation of the previous century. They were also *sui generis* and, on the matter of leadership, there was no room to doubt that George Fox was pre-eminent from the very beginning. Nayler was almost his equal, and was better known to the general public until he disappeared from centre stage in 1656, but some special features of Quakerism, such as their unusual respect for women, notably serious demeanour and emphasis on truth in all its forms, could best be explained as deriving from the idiosyncracies of George Fox (Moore, 2000a, pp.6–7, 118–19, 121).

My PhD was completed in 1993, and up to this time I had not attempted to follow Quaker history beyond the Restoration of Charles II. For the longer term, I knew that 1660 was not a satisfactory finishing point, as the Quaker movement changed gradually during the next few years rather than having a sudden break. So as time allowed I read further, and came to the conclusion that a better stopping point would be 1666, when Fox was about to start his major reorganization of meetings but before William Penn and Robert Barclay arrived on the Quaker scene. My book (Moore, 2000a) therefore covered the period from 1646, when the early Quaker movement was forming, up to Fox's release from Scarborough castle in the autumn of 1666.¹

This present chapter is a contribution to a compendium of different approaches to the creation of Quaker theory, and I have argued that no individual theory is wholly satisfactory. Nevertheless, there has to be an explanation, or explanations, for the runaway success of the Quaker movement in its early days, and for the fact that it was still a force to be reckoned with after successive governments had tried, for nearly forty years, to suppress it.

In the early years of Quakerism, up to the Restoration, there were four main factors that worked in favour of Quakerism, while at the same time revolutionary groups such as the Levellers and Winstanley's Diggers were promptly crushed, and the Ranter movement dwindled away. First and foremost was the personality of George Fox. Contemporaries witnessed to his power over others (Higginson, 1653, p.19). It was Fox's influence which in 1651–52 welded together a number of Seeker or Separated congregations in Yorkshire and Cumbria, thus providing a critical mass with the strength to expand over the entire country and beyond. Fox also knew the importance of having a proper organization, and the beginnings of the Quaker system of linked meetings, on a Baptist model but stronger, can be traced to his early years in the Midlands. In the north he found a number of existing congregations

whose members already met from time to time, so that it was easy to strengthen and formalize the links between them (Moore, 2000a, pp.11–14).

Secondly, Fox's message resonated with the wants and feelings of many people. His main call was for the renewal of the church, and in particular he attacked paid ministry, which was at that time funded by the tithing system. Tithes were extremely unpopular, and Fox thus aligned himself with a considerable weight of popular protest (Moore, 2000a, pp.13, 65, 117–18). He preached a strict and pure ethic, and there is evidence that this appealed to people who had had a surfeit of Ranters (Moore, 2000a, p.117). He criticized the society that allowed extreme poverty to exist alongside great riches, yet he respected the rights of private property, and therefore retained the support of some rich and influential people (Moore, 2000a, pp.64–5). Above all, the charismatic meetings allowed participants to feel the power of God among them and within them. They could withstand the attacks of organized civil society, and they could discount political disappointments such as the failure of the Nominated Parliament in 1653, so that they did not turn to violent revolution and ultimate annihilation, like the Fifth Monarchists (Moore, 2000a, pp.66–7, 72–3).

The third factor in early Quaker success was the quality of some of the individuals who joined the movement in its early stages. Prime among these was Margaret Fell, for without Swarthmoor Hall as a base it is unlikely that there would ever have been a Religious Society of Friends. Fell provided an administrative centre, receiving reports from travelling ministers, raising funds and in some cases dealing with discipline. Besides Fell, the Quaker movement attracted an extremely competent preacher, debater and self-trained theologian in James Nayler. Richard Farnworth provided a good second string to Nayler, and he grew in stature as the years passed. Others, like William Dewsbury, Thomas Aldam and others, helped to consolidate the meetings. Even before this time, the first of the powerful Quaker women, Elizabeth Hooten, had thrown in her lot with Fox, and her example must have helped to convince doubting male Quakers of the contribution that could be made, and was made, by women (Moore, 2000a, pp.6–7, 11–12, 14–15).

Finally, it was important that the first growth spurt took place in the north. It may have been fortunate for Quakers that they did not flourish noticeably during their early years (approximately 1646 to 1651) when they were only a small east midlands sect. The north was remote from the seat of government, and developments there did not attract the same immediate attention as Levellers and Diggers in the south. Moreover, influential northern gentlemen such as Margaret's husband, Judge Thomas Fell, were willing to give some assistance to Quakers, thinking them a useful counterweight to the Catholics and Royalists who were still strong in the area (Moore, 2000a, pp.14–15). Some, notably Gervase Benson and Anthony Pearson, actually joined the Quakers. Consequently, Quakers had the opportunity to consolidate their early gains by putting down deep roots. By the time that Quakers were recognized as a serious challenge to conventional society, there were too many of them to be easily eradicated, and even the attempts to eliminate all dissent after the Restoration proved ineffective.

None of this, of course, amounts to a theory of Quakerism. The Quaker movement was born at a time when many new ideas were bubbling. It was a combination of factors, some of them chance occurrences, that allowed the Quakers

to grow and develop into a national movement during the 1650s. Their survival beyond the 1660s needs further examination.

From 1661, the government made a serious attempt to destroy religious dissent. Persecution, intermittently severe, was renewed from time to time up to the death of Charles II in 1685. The older dissenting groups, Presbyterians, Independents and Baptists, were severely shaken, for they had been among the ruling parties during the Interregnum, and moreover the republican government had agreed to the Restoration on the understanding that the existing church settlement would be respected. On the whole, these dissenters obeyed the new regulations, their ministers, perhaps, repeating their sermons several times to small groups so as to stay within the law (Watts, 1978, pp.224–32). They had a wide and deep following in the country, and survived. The Fifth Monarchists attempted revolt, and paid the penalty, and since they were also Baptists, other Baptists were considered guilty by association and suffered for it (*ibid.*, pp.222–4). Any remaining sects, small groups except for the Muggletonians and Quakers, simply disappeared. The survival of the Muggletonians was in part due to their self-effacing nature, for they did not actively seek converts and were willing to conform to laws regarding church attendance. The capabilities of their leader, Lodovick Muggleton, were another factor (Hill *et al.*, 1983).

Quakers had one great advantage over other dissenting sects in the matter of surviving persecution: they were already accustomed to it. The first Quakers had disturbed church services, refused to pay tithes, abused church ministers, walked the streets naked as a sign to the wicked and refused honour to persons in authority. The behaviour of Quaker women seemed particularly outrageous. Conventional sections of the community were affronted. Alarm at the strange Quaker doctrines led to several trials for blasphemy. Parish ministers whose services were disrupted and tithes unpaid used doubtfully legal methods to collect their dues. Magistrates were enraged by Quakers who addressed them as ‘thou’ and would not remove their hats, thereby challenging their authority. Examples of the antagonism of ministers and magistrates to Quakers can be found in any account of Quaker sufferings (for example, Penney, 1913, pp.37–93). Often both ministers and magistrates failed to restrain, or even encouraged, hooligan elements who turned upon people who were different and were thought to be easy game. After the imposition in 1655 of the Oath of Abjuration, an oath against Catholicism which Quakers would not take because of their objection to all oaths, the Quakers came to the notice of the national authorities as a potentially subversive movement, possibly linked with Jesuits. When the laws on vagrancy and on interrupting church services were tightened, it was Quakers who were the intended targets, and in consequence there was an increasing number of clashes with the authorities during the late 1650s (Moore, 2000a, pp.69–71, 155–7). So, by the time persecution became serious, in 1661, Quakers had developed several strategies for minimizing its effects. Quakers knew that they could be involved in law breaking and suffer the consequences. Theirs was not a faith for the timid.

The first Quaker response to persecution had been to issue calls to repent because the Day of the Lord was arriving. They delivered fierce warnings of coming doom, such as Francis Howgill’s pamphlet *A Woe against the Magistrates, Priests, and People of Kendal ... which may warn all the persecuting Cities and Towns in the*

North, and everywhere, to Repent and fear the Lord (1654). This begins, 'The Word of the Lord came unto me, saying, write and declare against that bloody town of Kendal', and was written during Howgill's imprisonment in Kendal in 1654. Early Quakers wrote a number of similar denunciations, but apocalyptic imagery gradually faded away after the Restoration, as it became apparent that the Kingdom of God in visible completeness was not going to come immediately (Moore, 2000a, p.215). However, by then Quakers had passed from merely threatening disaster to finding actual examples of it. As was normal at that time, they believed in the active intervention of God to punish evildoers (Thomas, 1971, pp.78–112). The fall of the Protectorate in April 1659 was understood as a clear case of the Lord intervening on behalf of his people. The Protectorate had persecuted the Children of Light, and it had been swept away, and the governments that succeeded, including the restored monarchy, were warned not to go down the same path (Moore, 2000a, pp.177–8). The London fire and plague in 1665 and 1666 were considered by many other dissenters besides Quakers as God's punishment on an ungodly people (Watts, 1978, pp.238–9).

Early in their history the Quakers discovered the power of the press to further their cause (Peters, 1995). Pamphlets, often at the rate of several a week, proclaimed the Quaker message, replied to opponents, sought sympathy for Quaker victims of official oppression, and argued the unlawfulness of action taken against them. Some pamphlets attempted to enlist the sympathy of readers with descriptions of violent acts and unjust processes of law (Moore, 2000a, pp.157–9). A new genre of Quaker pamphlet developed, so extensive that it forms a separate section in Joseph Smith's *Catalogue of Quaker Books*, 'Sufferings of Friends for the Testimony of the Truth' (Smith, 1867). After the Restoration the amount of relevant material greatly increased. Quakers wrote accounts of their trials and suffering, addressed both to the government and to the public, and suggested that much of what was happening was illegal. Broad sides brought the state of the Quaker prisoners to public notice, 3179 imprisoned and 32 dead up to 1660, and 5000 imprisoned and 22 dead within the next two years (*For the King and Both Houses of Parliament the True State and Condition of the People of God called Quakers*, 1661, and others). When juries came under pressure to find Quakers guilty, the details were publicized (*The Cry of the Innocent and Oppressed for Justice*, 1664, and other pamphlets with similar titles). In the eighteenth century these accounts, published and unpublished, were collected together and issued in two large volumes (Besse, 1733–38).

Quakers also wrote pamphlets giving a good and positive image of Quakerism. William Smith, in *Some Clear Truths Particularly Demonstrated unto the King and Council and both Houses of Parliament ... why Quakers ought not to be Banished out of their Native Land* (1664), wrote that Quakers are 'serviceable people in their place', being righteous people, and 'just dealers'. Many such pamphlets were published, giving descriptions of Quakers as useful citizens, not rebels, and explaining why it was that Quakers could not pay tithes or attend church. As the years passed, the defence became more secular in tone, emphasizing that Quakers were good and principled citizens rather than religious eccentrics (Frost, 1986, pp.303–32).

Quakers soon learnt to turn the law to their own purposes, making direct appeals to the government of the day, and attacking the legality of what was done to them.

Considerable experience was available by 1676 when the Meeting for Sufferings was set up to coordinate Quaker protest, a development that has been described as pivotal (Horle, 1988, p.162). Quakers were uncompromising. There are records from the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century of Friends recording their refusal of tithe, not allowing others to pay their tithe for them, and following up members of their meeting who were thought to be weak in this witness (Morgan, 1993, pp.194ff). The holding of meetings for worship was illegal during much of the latter part of the seventeenth century, but Friends were rarely deterred. This leads to another weapon used against persecution, the Quaker theology of suffering. Quakers made much use of their belief that suffering is the way to the kingdom of God and came to see themselves as standing in the tradition of earlier British martyrs (Hookes, [1664], [1665]).

Perhaps the most important factor of all in Quaker survival was the strength of their organization. Modern British Quaker organization, consisting of preparative, monthly, general and yearly meetings linked to central committees and secretariat, had reached something recognizably like its modern form by the late 1670s. The professional core was then small and the committees few, but the sometimes tense relationship between centre and periphery is quite recognizable to modern British Quakers (Braithwaite, 1919, p.292). The beginnings of this structure can be traced back to the very origins of the Quaker movement in the East Midlands around 1646–47. At this time many people were experimenting with different kinds of churches, forming various groups ‘separated from the national worship’ (Penney, 1907, pp.242, 244). Most of the people who became Quakers had passed through one or more of these small local churches, and brought their experience of church organization with them.

The ‘separated’ churches based their church life on the Bible, and specifically on the hints given in the New Testament about the structure of the apostolic church. From the First Epistle to the Corinthians, the sectarians found that there should be church meetings at which only men were entitled to speak (1 Cor. 14:34–5). However, there are many references in the New Testament to women helping to organize churches, and also to women prophesying, so this much participation by women was acceptable (Acts 16:14–16; 21:9; 1 Cor. 11:5). The Epistles to Timothy and Titus speak of elders and overseers, otherwise translated as presbyters and bishops, the elders/presbyters being people in charge of a local church, and the overseers/bishops in charge of a district (1 Timothy 3:1, 5:17; Titus 1: 5–9). The Gospel of Matthew gives the church authority to expel people who disobeyed the rules and then refused to respond to friendly approaches, and this provision was built into the seventeenth-century church practices (Matthew 18: 15–17). In case of doubt about a right course of action, the sectarians would pray for guidance and maybe draw lots, as the Apostles did when looking for a replacement for Judas (Acts 1:26; Underhill, 1854, pp.187–90). So, from these limited guidelines, the little churches of the mid-seventeenth century developed their organization.

The church record books of several Baptist churches of the 1650s, contemporary with early Quakers, have survived (Underhill, 1854; White, 1971–74, 1996). Baptists were particularly important in early Quaker history, as they provided many Quaker converts. The problems they dealt with were similar to those described in the Quaker minutes of twenty years later: members failing to attend church,

misbehaviour such as drunkenness, and marriages to 'enemies of the truth'. There is a description of business procedure without voting, similar to Quaker practice (Underhill, 1854, pp.187–90). Voting, especially by the unenlightened, was looked on somewhat askance in the mid-seventeenth century, as not necessarily leading to the will of God (Watts, 1978, pp.142–4). Where there were a number of similar churches in a reasonably compact area, they would set up a district organization, but the local churches remained autonomous. Some Baptists appointed 'messengers' to watch over an area, but their function was only to give advice and provide support (White, 1996, pp.30–31). It was a 'bottom-up' system, with considerable variation between churches.

This was the background in which the Quaker organization evolved. The first Quakers seem to have come mainly from east midlands Baptist churches, but as the Quaker movement spread north and west, it picked up people from other church backgrounds, and sometimes whole congregations with their minister. The Quakers' organization was built on their previous church experience, but was also influenced by the particular needs of the radical and uncompromising Quaker movement. The upheavals of the Civil War and the coming of the republican government had led many people to believe that the Kingdom of God was about to be manifested on earth, but Quakers went further, and proclaimed that the Kingdom was 'come and coming', that to an extent it was truly present among them (Moore, 2000a, p.68). Consequently, unity was more essential within the Quaker movement than it was among other churches. Local Quaker meetings were not autonomous, for Quakers were living in the Kingdom of God, and must therefore be visibly united as one.

In practice, the administration developed in a rather ad hoc way, led by the three chief personalities. George Fox looked after the overall plan. Margaret Fell dealt with the details, raising funds, seeing that bills were paid and often acting as court of last resort in difficult cases of discipline. James Nayler was the 'front man' and trouble-shooter. By the end of 1653, local Quaker meetings were established over much of the north and, like the other separated churches, Friends began to hold district meetings, which they called 'general meetings', or 'monthly meetings' if they were held on a regular monthly basis (Moore, 2000a, pp.135–7). Such meetings may well have existed several years earlier in the east midlands. The business would have included the needs of poor Friends, finance, discipline, general arrangements for meetings, and assistance to Friends in trouble for non-payment of tithe and other practices that brought them into conflict with the law.

In 1654, Quaker missionaries, known later as the 'Valiant Sixty', went two by two all over England and Wales spreading the Quaker message, and had enormous success. By 1655, there was a form of regional organization, as members of the 'Valiant Sixty' took responsibility for the areas where they were working. They were called 'overseers', which led opponents to make rude remarks about Quaker bishops, since the word is the same in Greek (Moore, 2000a, pp.136, 275n.40).

As Quakers grew in numbers and moved into new areas, the practice of holding general meetings was introduced wherever there were sufficient established local meetings. London required special treatment, for attacks on Quakers in the popular press had to be answered, and these answers, with titles such as *Slanders and Lies being cast upon the Children of Light* (1655) were usually signed by a number of leading London Friends on behalf of 'the people called Quakers'. Men Friends in

London held regular meetings from about 1656 onwards, and this group took on some of the functions of a national committee. The Quaker movement had grown too quickly to be properly consolidated, Friends were often disputatious and, especially around 1655 and 1656, there are many references in the Quaker correspondence to divisions among Friends (Moore, 2000a, p.275n.28). Much depended on the quality of local leadership, and Francis Howgill sent this advice to 'Fathers, Elders and honourable Women':

Watch over the Flock of Jesus Christ in every place where the Lord has set you, and govern them in all wisdom and righteousness. And take care of them willingly, knowing that the Lord requires this of you, and nourish the plants, and the young ones, and the babies: that everyone may know their place. Watch and instruct in all wisdom, and correct and reprove in the name and power of our Lord Jesus, that no rebellious nor slothful may grow up nor be harboured among you. (Howgill, 1655, p.16)

Church order soon developed to the stage of including regulations for marriage, which was an affair of the church, not just of individuals. The Quaker practice, of a man and woman taking each other in their own meeting before a number of witnesses, goes back to their early times and is based on regulations for civil marriage issued by the parliamentary government. Fox gave instructions that those who wished to marry were to declare their intentions 'to the elders of the church where they are, that it may be examined'. If the elders agreed, the marriage could 'be published in the meeting when the church of God is gathered', but, if the rightness of the marriage was not clear to 'the elders and overseers of the church', the couple were to wait (Swarthmore mss. 1655, 2.28).

The developing organization worked well so long as leading Friends were in harmony, but major damage was caused to the Quaker movement by the open dispute between Fox and Nayler in the summer of 1656, followed by Nayler's abortive triumphal entry into Bristol and subsequent high-profile trial, conviction and punishment for blasphemy. Nayler himself, described as the Quakers' 'archbishop', attracted much undesired publicity (Dodd, 1658, p.3). The rift among Quakers caused further adverse comment, for Quakers had prided themselves on their unity in the spirit, yet the two leading Quakers were now publicly at odds. Moreover, there was a good deal of support for Nayler among the Quakers themselves. Something had to be done quickly.

Fox had been in prison when the trouble broke out, and when he was released he at once arranged a series of general meetings to try and bring Friends back to unity, and to teach the right way of running Quaker meetings. The most important was a large regional meeting at Balby near Doncaster, where Quakers were already well organized. This gathering, which Fox entrusted to William Dewsbury and Richard Farnworth, two of his leading assistants, produced the first Quaker disciplinary document, known as the Epistle of the Elders of Balby (Moore, 2001). Modern Quakers know the postscript well:

Dearly beloved Friends, these things we do not lay upon you as a rule or form to walk by, but that all, with the measure of light which is pure and holy, may be guided: and so in the light walking and abiding, these may be fulfilled in the Spirit, not from the letter, for the letter killeth but the Spirit giveth life.

The epistle as a whole, a long and highly prescriptive document, is not well known today, though many of its provisions can be traced in the modern British *Quaker Faith and Practice* (1995). It covers the whole life of Quakers, public and private. The postscript was presumably added as an afterthought. Were such detailed instructions as these just approved really appropriate for a movement led by the Light of Christ? The amount of prescription that was compatible with direct guidance by the Light was always a difficulty.

During the next two years the Quaker administration was completely overhauled. In addition to the problems caused by Nayler, the Quaker centre of gravity was shifting, and London was becoming the centre of Quakerism instead of Cumbria. Problems arose in managing Quaker finances from Swarthmoor now that much Quaker work was handled in London. Northern Friends became restive about providing most of the funds, while at the same time their accounting methods were criticized. It was therefore agreed that local Friends should be responsible for the upkeep of their own meetings, and that only overseas missions should be paid for out of general funds, this to be organized in London (Moore, 2000a, p.140).

The regions had to be kept in touch with the centre, and during 1658 Fox sent letters to all areas, asking Friends to organize themselves on a county-by-county basis to make it easier to report their 'sufferings' to London. London Friends could then arrange protests to the government (Swarthmore mss, 2.97 and 2.99). At the same time, national gatherings of ministers were called, probably in each of the years 1658, 1659 and 1660. A clerk, a young man named Ellis Hookes, was appointed to help with the additional work. He counts as the first 'Recording Clerk' of Quakers in Britain, though that title was not yet in use.

These developments were interrupted by the political upheaval that followed the death of Cromwell in August 1658, leading finally to the restoration of the monarchy in May 1660. During the following years the royalists and Anglicans, powerless during the Interregnum, viciously repressed all kinds of religious dissent, with Quakers taking the brunt of the persecution. Several leading Quakers died in prison, and others, the victims of show trials, were imprisoned for long periods. Fox was held in Scarborough castle under conditions which would have killed a physically weaker man. National meetings perforce came to an end, though there is evidence that some form of district organization survived (Moore, 2000a, pp.180–92). The publication of books and pamphlets became very difficult, but continued owing to the ingenuity of Ellis Hookes and of a young Quaker minister called George Whitehead, aided by a system of underground printing presses that was employed by all disaffected groups (Greaves, 1986, pp.207–25).

Friends also had internal problems, and the leader of this dissension was one John Perrot, who thought that Quakers were losing their dependence on the Spirit (Carroll, 1970b). The immediate point at issue was whether men should remove their hats during prayer, a custom of all churches which Friends had retained (Moore, 2000a, pp.196, 287n.6). Perrot considered that this should be abandoned, like other formal practices, but Fox saw Perrot's behaviour as a breach of unity, and declared, 'You have given occasion to the world to say, that the people of God called Quakers are divided, some with their hats on, and some with them off' (Fox, 1663, postscript 3). The weight of Quaker opinion, both among travelling ministers and in the London men's meeting, was behind Fox. Such Friends became increasingly

exasperated by Perrot's followers and, Fox being immured in Scarborough castle, it fell to a group of the remaining leaders to deal with the situation. They met in London in May 1666, and issued a lengthy document on church government. It has no title, but it is usually referred to as the 'Testimony of the Brethren' (John Penington, mss 4.43; Barclay, 1841, pp.318–24). A short quotation gives the essence of this paper, which set the tone of Quakerism for the next two hundred years. Free spirits were not welcome:

If any difference arise in the church ... we do declare and testify that the church, with the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ, have power, without the assent of such as dissent from their doctrines and practices, to hear and determine the same. And if any pretend to be of us, and in the case of controversy, will not admit to be tried by the Church of Christ Jesus, nor submit to the judgement given by the Spirit of Truth in the elders and members of the same ... then he or she ought to be rejected, having erred from the truth.

This document marks the end of the early Quaker movement. The grip of the leaders of the movement on expressions of the Spirit, which had been implicit in every paper ever written by Quaker leaders on questions of discipline and organization from the beginning, was formalized as never before. Given the need for discipline perceived and wanted by many Quakers, as a necessary outward expression of the corporate spiritual unity in which they believed, some such development was probably inevitable. The political situation, with the necessity of maintaining unity in the face of persecution, made the imposition of discipline more urgent.

There were several years of relative freedom from persecution after 1667, and Fox took advantage of this to reorganize the British Quaker movement, providing a strong interlocking structure that would make it more difficult for internal dissent to take root, and that would also stand up to the persecution which continued sporadically into the next century. Fox overhauled the existing system of monthly and county meetings, founding new ones where necessary, and renaming the county meetings as 'quarterly meetings', a term already in use in some areas. He coined the phrase 'Gospel Order' for the new arrangements. He ordered that careful records should be kept. In the autumn of 1667, he started a progression through the country to encourage Friends to adopt these arrangements, and many new minute books start with a note that Fox was present at the first recorded meeting (Penney, 1911, vol.ii, pp.111–26; Fox, 1990, vol.8, no.264; Braithwaite, 1919, pp.251–6). At first the separate functions of monthly and quarterly meetings were not well defined, but in time quarterly meetings came to deal with national matters, and monthly meetings with more local affairs. Quarterly meetings were replaced by the present general meetings in 1968. Once the men's meetings were working, Fox attempted to persuade all Friends to set up women's business meetings alongside the men's, as was already the practice in London and possibly in some other areas. This was a cause of major controversy for many years.

After the Great Fire and the loss of their main meeting places in London, Friends needed a new headquarters. They took rooms in a mansion called Devonshire House, in a part of the city which had escaped the fire, and it suited Friends so well that when the freehold came up for sale they bought it, and built premises that served as Quaker headquarters for 250 years. Ellis Hookes became in effect the

chief executive, serving as clerk to the various London and national meetings that were set up during the years following. Six Weeks Meeting was the first of these, in 1671. It still survives, and manages the property of meetings in the London area. It was the only one of these early business meetings which had both men and women members. A new London men's business meeting was formed in 1672, the powerful Second Day Morning Meeting, with special responsibility for publications and for arranging ministry in the whole London area. Ministers from other parts of the country had the right to attend its meetings, and it acted occasionally for Friends as a whole in cases of urgency, acquiring something of the status of a national executive. It was responsible for starting the collection of Quaker and anti-Quaker publications that became the foundation of Friends House Library. Meeting for Sufferings, founded in 1676, was made up of London Friends together with quarterly meeting representatives where possible, and was thus the first formally constituted national body.

A national meeting of ministers took place in 1668, and plans were made for further annual meetings, but it was not until 1678, after several years of experiment, that regular yearly meetings of quarterly meeting representatives, alongside a meeting of ministers, became the regular practice. The function of the Yearly Meeting was to advise and provide fellowship, and it was not opened to men Friends in general until the middle of the eighteenth century. The women's Yearly Meeting was an eighteenth-century development.

Opposition to this organization, and notably to the women's business meetings, disrupted British Quakerism for the rest of the seventeenth century (Braithwaite, 1919, pp.290–323, 469–94). There were many people attracted to the Quaker faith who loathed the tight, restrictive organization, and George Fox, as instigator of it, in particular. The organization was, indeed, set up quite as much for internal disciplinary purposes as for its value in binding Friends together in a hostile setting. But it was very strong, and was supported by the most influential Friends and at least tacitly by the majority of the rest. It proved indestructible.

The question remains whether the Quakers would have survived if the efforts to exterminate them had been applied consistently over a long period. There is a strained note in some of the pamphlets published towards the end of the worst period of persecution, as in this epistle written from the gaol at Bury St Edmunds during 1665, which continues for several pages in the same vein:

Oh when will the Lord cause the days of my mourning to be over, and the night of my soul to pass away ... The thing which the Lord ... has determined must be fulfilled in spite of all the powers of darkness ... Oh dear God keep all thy people retired in thy name, that so whatever thou suffer to befall their bodies, their souls may be bundled up in the bundle of life. (Bennitt, 1666, pp.6, 24)

Fortunately, persecution was not applied consistently, much depending on the attitude of local authorities. In the event it eased generally in the middle 1660s, and the interlude that followed gave all dissenting bodies a chance to reorganize. The Second Conventicle Act of 1670, although fearsome in its provisions, was not applied evenly all over the country (Butler, 1988). It was often difficult to get convictions. There was *de facto* toleration during the later 1670s, when Isaac

Penington wrote to the King and Council that, 'It hath pleased God, who hath the supream ordering of things, that your government of late years hath been most moderate and tender towards dissenting and tender consciences, than ever was enjoyed under those, who gave large promises thereof' (John Penington mss, January 1678, 2.252). There was another burst of persecution in the 1680s after the Rye House plot, in which Quakers were thought to be involved, but it was not long-lasting.

So, was Quaker success inevitable? And what does one mean by 'success'? Quaker survival, given the factors operating in their favour, was always probable, and assured by 1666. The chances of human mortality, always important in the seventeenth century, certainly worked in their favour, and in favour of the model that eventually emerged. George Fox enjoyed robust health and lived to a good age. If he had died in Launceston prison in 1656, what might have happened? Would the whole movement have disintegrated in the aftermath of Nayler's trial and punishment? If he had died in Scarborough castle in 1665, the movement might well have survived in some form, but would probably have split into warring factions. This would have been especially likely if George Bishop of Bristol had lived, instead of dying in 1667. Bishop was a man of good social position and strong personality, one of the most influential early Quakers outside the original circle of northerners, and he made clear his opposition to the 'Testimony of the Brethren' and other centralizing moves (Moore, 2000a, pp.226, 292n.28).

But whether the Quakerism that emerged from the seventeenth into the eighteenth century, disciplined, organized, conservative in its habits, is a 'success' story, depends upon one's point of view.

Contributors to this volume were asked to consider how their research has affected their own life as a Quaker, and my answer to this will be brief. Apart from time spent addressing gatherings about early Quaker history, the effect has been small. I am still juggling a selection of the usual Friendly jobs, clerk, treasurer, elder, overseer, committee member, as so many Friends do. Certainly, I am particularly interested in the organizational structure of British Quakerism, both in its beginnings and as it is today, but it would be hard to say which is the chicken and which the egg. The seventeenth and the twenty-first centuries illuminate each other. At gatherings of Friends, I hear echoes of early controversies, of the respective merits of freedom or uniformity in belief or practice, of a tight or a loose organization, of the periphery's suspicion of the centre, and the centre's attempts to manage the periphery. I see George Fox's system, in spite of the passage of centuries and a number of changes, still doing its job of making it very difficult for any new ideas to take root in Britain Yearly Meeting. I am probably a more useful member of Meeting for Sufferings because I know all this, but I do have to be careful about pointing it out in public!

We were also asked to consider whether it is better for research into a religion to be handled by adherents of that religion, or not. My answer is that it is best to have both, and in relation to Quakerism this can be well illustrated by considering the faults and virtues of the secular historians' approach, as demonstrated particularly by Christopher Hill and Barry Reay. Scholars of this school placed the early Quakers fairly and squarely among the political revolutionaries of the mid-seventeenth century, thus opening up vistas which are missing in the work of earlier

historians. Yet, although these historians knew well that politics and religion were two aspects of the same entity in the seventeenth century, the general tenor of their work did not give due weight to the influence of religion as such, and the fact that George Fox's view of society derived from his understanding of the church, which was his prime interest.

This criticism would probably be less valid today than it was when I started my research. Recent material such as Alistair E. McGrath's admirable *Reformation Thought: an introduction* (1988) now provides basic theology for historians, enabling them to come to terms with the influence of religious belief within their field of study. McGrath writes: 'To study the Reformation without considering the religious ideas which fuelled its development is comparable to studying the Russian Revolution without reference to Marxism. Historians cannot cut themselves off from the language of their era of study' (1988, pp.ix-x). Christian theologians on their side are reaching out to secularists, as does for instance Gerd Theissen in *A Theory of Primitive Christian Religion*, which 'seeks to describe the content of that religion in such a way that it is accessible to men and women whether or not they are religious' (1999, p.xiii).

So do the personal beliefs of researchers really matter so much after all? Do careful historians of Quakerism, working at the beginning of the twenty-first century, give the same account of events, whether or not they were in membership? And come to that, would an American conservative Quaker give the same account as a British Universalist Quaker? Overall, it is probably best that the work should be done by people from different backgrounds and with different interests, if a rounded picture is to emerge, and this in itself is a justification for the present volume. And in the next generation, starting from a different outlook, the work will doubtless have to be done all over again from the beginning.

Note

¹ Moore (2000a) is the main source for the present chapter, and not all page references and references to underlying primary material are given. The paragraphs on the early development of Quaker organization relate most closely to a recension of Chapter 10, with some additions, published in the *Friends Quarterly*, 32(2), April 2000, under the title 'The Foundations of the Gospel Order' (Moore, 2000b).

Was Seventeenth-century Quaker Christology Homogeneous?

Richard G. Bailey

Man is continually developing new forms of insight, which are clear up to a point and then tend to become unclear. In this activity, there is evidently no reason to suppose that there will be a final form of insight (corresponding to absolute truth) ... Rather, in the nature of the case, one may expect the unending development of new forms of insight ... this means that our theories are to be regarded primarily as ways of looking at the world as a whole ... rather than as absolutely true knowledge of how things are. (David Bohm, 1980, p.5)

I

As an historian of radical religious dissent and esoterism in the West, I critically receive that tradition and integrate it into my own experience and aspirations.¹ I initially trained in a non-denominational religious college and saw myself following in the footsteps of my great-grandfather, an evangelically oriented Church of England bishop who laboured in the remote and icebound diocese of Athabasca in northwest Canada in the nineteenth century. But neither 'Anglicanism' nor Protestant non-conformity appealed to me. Like Francis Mercury van Helmont, I would later pass through the Quaker experience only to emerge a seeker again.

It was during my reading of history as an undergraduate at university that I was first drawn to the history of radical religious dissent and later esoterism in the West. Why I personally resonated with the history of dissent and esoterism (and still do) is not entirely clear to me. The first research paper I wrote at university was under the direction of a distinguished Mennonite professor. The paper was titled 'The Franciscan Spirituals: A New Society'. A door was opened and before me lay a new world of ideas and people who stole my spirit. That was nearly thirty years ago and I have spent the larger portion of my student and professional career studying the voices for alternative civilizations whose visions for new societies have become interwoven with the larger tradition of western civilization.

I reached seventeenth century Quakerism through study of Early Christian, Medieval and Reformation radical religious dissent. Working closely with the original sources it became apparent that Quakers selectively edited their writings (Bailey, 1992). I discovered that the bowdlerized material spoke of a power that was meant to undergird and sustain the Quaker vision for a new society. It was a world transformative, suprahistorical power that was excised, although remarkably the

vision for a new society remains to the present, sustained by the less radically sectarian doctrine of a universal inner light *cum* divine presence.

I have been asked to summarize my research paradigm and provide some concluding theoretical comments on confessional history in general. My initial inquiries (Bailey, 1992) into the Christopresent (not just Christocentric) world of early Quakerism continue through an analysis of their debates with the Muggletonians and individuals generally associated with the Puritan milieu. The debates tell us a great deal about conflicting Christologies. This is where the idiosyncrasies of each view are most passionately argued. When Fox read Bunyan, for example, what exactly was he looking for, and vice versa? What patterns of thought and interpretation were being brought to the reading material? There was of course no need to argue so passionately over those areas where there was widespread general agreement. The essence of theological opinion, in this instance Christological opinion, may be extracted from areas where disagreement occurred, where Quakers and their critics insisted on clarifying their views over against the views of their adversaries.

The nature of seventeenth-century disputation is foreign to the modern ecumenical mind. But the diatribe between Quakers and their critics cannot be ignored because it remains a leading source of information, telling us how each side formulated very difficult concepts of who Christ was, where he was located and whether such a thing as immaterial form and substance existed at all. The debates used a certain style of language to help explain the spiritual process, the 'unseen', metamorphosis. The language was primarily drawn from Scripture but it was couched in the framework of classical and medieval philosophical disputation, especially as the debate focused on 'immateriality [as] the highest type of reality', to borrow Etienne Gilson's phraseology as he used it with reference to Origen (Gilson, 1980, p.39).

The majority of first-generation Quakers were not university-trained, though most were literate or semi-literate. When, as a young man, George Fox sat in hollow trees he claimed to listen to the very voice of God in a way that transcended the literal words of the Bible. He created a new language to describe his experience, a language that sounded ominously like the language of the ancient seers and philosophers who were scorned by the classically trained Puritans of Fox's day.

Fox's answer to the classic Puritan dilemma posed by the doctrine of election was not unique, although his inward Christ was different from the conceptions of others such as the Cambridge Platonists whose inward Christ was tied to the life, work and death of the historic Christ. In mid-seventeenth century England there was an alternative climate of opinion that was not Puritan and which struggled at length with difficult issues like the pre-existence of the soul, the exact nature of the soul, and how Christ dwelled in the saint. Unlike Puritans, leading thinkers like Joseph Glanvil, Henry More, Lady Anne Conway and Mercury van Helmont were more open to using the ancient philosophers, Egyptian Hermeticism and Jewish Kabbalism to help them find answers to these difficult questions.

The broader intellectual context for the Christological debates between Fox and his Muggletonian and Puritan detractors is set by picking up the long-standing debate over the nature of material and immaterial substances in western thought. The debate over the nature of the unseen, of invisibility, has a genealogy that goes

back to the ancients. In the English context of the debate, for example, the Cambridge Platonist, Henry More, accused the majority of Quakers of being in league with Familist views, by which he meant, technically, that to hold the immaterial substance of Christ within implied that the saint was transformed into deity – that is, God. More was well aware that by the 1670s there was a formidable effort within Quaker ranks to adjust Fox's Christology and align it with more orthodox views, but he remained skeptical that the sophisticated theology of university-trained Quakers like William Penn and Robert Barclay ever reached the rank and file. Most Puritans, on the other hand, did not believe that spiritual extended substances existed and they relentlessly attacked Fox's notion of the inward Christ.

The historical overview of the debate over immateriality sets the context for a more informed reading of the Christological debates between Quakers and their critics. Such an overview may also help suggest lines of continuity and discontinuity. I am looking at metaphysics and the problem arises when one tries to conceive of the immaterial – of a purely immaterial being. Is it even possible for material beings to grasp the notion of immateriality? Origen said that the notion of immateriality was beyond intellection (Gilson, 1980, p.37). Nor can an immaterial being be of the material world – hence the need for celestial flesh. Prior to Origen, Christian thinkers hesitated to attribute immortality to the soul precisely because it was not a spiritual substance and to do so would be to demean and insult God.

Augustine was less concerned with the Aristotelian 'isness' of things and more with the Platonic essence of things in the abstract (Augustine, 1978, bk. IX:II and bk. X:VII). For example, the spirit is not a material thing. It does not exist in space. It is not extendable through space. Spiritual substances are not extended substances, they are unextended substances. They do not spread out in an area and fill a space. I have investigated Augustine's notion of substance and essence and determined that he was inconsistent in his use of these terms. But the main point is that, for Augustine, *spiritus* was (as for Plato) immaterial and unextended in space and time.

Who among our conflicting parties shared Augustine's ontological sense of the spirit as substance? Fox learned a great deal from the Puritans he debated and they were Augustinian in many aspects of their theology. But where did they stand on the immortality of the soul and the immateriality of divine being? Why were Penn and Barclay more acceptable to the theologically orthodox than Fox? How did their schooling in Augustinian/Reformed theology shape their views? Where did the Puritans and Cambridge Platonists differ and where did each differ from Fox? I have been wrestling with these questions for many years and they continue to attract my attention.

Explaining Fox's notions of celestial inhabitation and celestial flesh remains the most distinctive feature of my work. It is one thing to speak of Christ's spiritual presence in the believer and quite another to speak of a 'flesh and bone' presence as Fox did. Fox's ideas were informed almost exclusively from his visionary experiences and his extensive knowledge of Scripture, and so it is Scripture that we must first consult for clues to help us determine the source of Fox's thinking about the inward Christ.

For the apostle Paul the powers under which man is enslaved are, as in Gnosticism, the cosmic powers: the elements of the world, the astral spirits (*τα*

στοιχεία του κόσμου of Galatians 4:3,9), the dominions, the principalities and powers (Romans 8:38; Colossians 1:16). They are the 'rulers of this world', or even the 'god of this world' or the 'prince of this world' (I Corinthians 2:6; II Corinthians 4:4; John 12:31), all of which are Gnostic terms. The whole material world was seen to be governed by an evil power, which was literally infused into the world. Only when the Spirit was ingested were the elementary spirits displaced. Endogenetic notions were of course not unique to Paul or George Fox. Anthropologists trace endogenetic notions back to primitive religions (Smith, 1927, Lectures 7–10). For Paul, once one ingested the spirit, one received a variety of magus powers (I Corinthians 12). One also received magus powers through the vehicles of love, prayer and repentance (I Corinthians 12–14 must be read together). These were postures of behavior, mental behavior, that empowered one, not by the natural order but by the supernatural order. For Paul these postures of mental behavior opened magus powers to everyone and only later was this kind of empowerment either neglected or deliberately suppressed by orthodoxy. The question before us is whether Fox saw the elements in Pauline fashion. Certainly Augustine, Luther and Calvin did. But what about Fox? Why did he cast out demons? Was this a sign that the Christ within was displacing the devilish elements?

Fox held some beliefs (especially ethical) to which no Puritan would have taken offense. But if Fox was so well within the fold of theological orthodoxy, what explains the glaring fact that as long as he was alive he was considered by most leading Puritans to hold grossly unorthodox, unbalanced and even blasphemous views about Christ. To discover the reason for this is one of the purposes of my research. Fox provoked the ire of his critics, who were not all being malicious for the sake of being malicious. In my opinion the two erstwhile Quakers Francis Bugg and John Gilpin, in addition to Charles Leslie, are examples of malicious opponents (Bailey, 1992). However, one detects no maliciousness in the learned critiques of Henry More or John Bunyan. Lodowick Muggleton falls somewhere in between. He saw in Fox a real threat to his own role as the foremost prophet in the latter days.

By focusing on the debates between Quakers and their adversaries what becomes apparent is that it is not possible to situate Fox within the pale of seventeenth-century orthodoxy. The debates tell us that much. For example, John Bunyan, John Owen, Henry More and, later, George Keith, had grave concerns that Fox's Christ was not the orthodox Christ. Lodowick Muggleton and John Reeve (hardly orthodox themselves), were nonetheless convinced that Fox was talking nonsense when he said the 'flesh and bone' of Christ could be circumscribed within every believer (Fox used the Hebrew term from the opening chapters of Genesis, as opposed to the New Testament usage of 'body and blood'). For his efforts to draw Quaker attention to the historic Christ, George Keith was excommunicated. One senses Keith's frustrations in his repeated attempts to engage Quakers in debate, efforts which were met either with a wall of silence or with concerns that had more to do with unity and decorum, a sign that Quakerism in the 1690s had shut tight the lid on its earlier excesses but still no sign to critics that such action was to be equated with veritable and substantive theological change.

Other questions continue to occupy my research. Why did Judge Fell have to go through such legal and intellectual acrobatics to relieve Fox of very serious blasphemy charges at the Lancaster Sessions (Bailey, 1992, pp.101–10)? And why

did Fox say, without apology, that he was equal with God (Fox, 1653, p.8)? He never recanted this statement. And why all the exalted language towards Fox, including John Stubbs' 1660 letter where he called Fox the everlasting Father, using the Hebrew letters often reserved, though not exclusively, for God's fatherhood?² It was a peculiar thing to do: 'very forced,' said one professor of Hebrew I consulted. And why, as late as 1675, do we find Thomas Lower referring to Fox as 'the seconde appearance of him who is blessed for ever' (Lower, 1675)? Silence does not help us to answer these questions in a substantive way, within the forum of open debate. And as a sequel to the letters by Stubbs and Lower we observe that Fox endorsed both letters in his own hand. And both letters also bear the marks of tampering.

Quakers did eventually, through the delegated efforts of the Second-Day Morning Meeting established in 1672, succeed in dowsing the flames of extremist language and transformed their Christ into a much less innocuous inward, mystical Christ, but it was not always so. Early Quakerism displayed all the characteristics of a charismatic movement led by one who claimed divine status as *the* Son of God and it is a testament to Fox that he brought the excesses within his movement under control through organization. Yet Stubbs and Lower are testaments to the fact that strict discipline and organization do not always equate with theological change. The more orthodox views of Penn, Barclay, Samuel Fisher and George Whitehead do not erase the fact that, as long as Fox lived, his christological views and the exalted views of many of his followers (including those in his most intimate circle) were never substantially altered. Henry More railed on this point to the end of his life. Had he actually seen the letters written by Stubbs and Lower, or the 1656 letter written by Margaret Fell to James Nayler, where she called George Fox 'him to whom all Nations should bow' (Fell, 1656; Bailey, 1992, p.163), his intuitions would have been confirmed. These statements may offend modern orthodox religious sensibilities but they are still part of the written record. Certainly, not all Quakers used exalted language or shared Fox's exact views on the meaning of the inward Christ. Other views on the inward Christ were expressed within the Quaker movement.³ I am now investigating the possibility of the existence of several (at least) Quaker 'Christologies' in the seventeenth century. This is the theme of the [second part](#) of the chapter.

II

The transmutability of seventeenth-century Quaker Christology implies a non-normative Christology. What I mean by this statement is that, if we want to know the meaning and function of Fox's inward Christ then, to borrow a phrase from Marjorie Hope Nicolson, 'the answer must be sought in the individual Quaker' (Nicolson, 1930, p.37). At best there were spheres of influence that were focused on individual charismatic personalities, each claiming to know the true function and meaning of the inward Christ. The core of Fox's message was his personal belief that his declaration of the everlasting gospel meant a return to the state Adam was in before the Fall. To understand the Adamic prelapsarian state is to understand how Fox personally envisioned the relationship between God and believers. And to grasp this fact is to grasp the fundamentally radical nature of his message which bore the

fruit of social radicalism. Early Quakerism was a thaumaturgical (signs and wonders) movement and new thaumaturgical movements are by definition movements of social protest:

New thaumaturgical movements represent a deviant religious response – a sectarian religious response – largely because of the *newness* of their ritual procedures and organizational forms. They become a protest against traditional religious practice – itself highly thaumaturgical – because they pit new measures, and (often) new conceptions of social nexus, against the old. (Wilson, 1973, p.192)

Early Quakerism was a new thaumaturgical movement and at its core was Fox's 1648 vision into divine mysteries when the prelapsarian language of Adam, so coveted by John Dee, was revealed to him (Nickalls, 1952, pp.27–8; Harkness, 1999, [ch.5](#)). His later queries into Hermetic esoterica demonstrate a view of reality that was already shaped by his 1648 vision (Cadbury, 1947, p.191). Out from this vision emerged Fox's phenomenal magus powers and his vision for a new society.

My use of terms like 'shaman' or 'avatar' to describe Fox has met with some disapproval (Bailey, 1992, pp.xi–xii). These terms have a universal quality that is rooted in the most primitive religious experience. In ancient Chinese religious lore, for example, the process whereby rain occurred was linked with the ritual power of the shaman. The Hebrew prophet Elijah had similar power. In his *Journal*, Fox ascribed that same power to himself: 'It was a noted thing generally amongst people that when I came, still I brought rain ... as far as Truth had spread in the north there was rain enough' (Nickalls, 1952, p.293). Fox's shamanic powers were commensurate with being one with the divine *substance*. In *Something in Answer to Lodowick Muggleton's book ... The Quakers Neck Broken* (1667), Fox said: 'If the Being of Christ, or his Essence, or Nature, or Power be not in thee which is in the Saints, and was revealed in the Apostles, that spoke in the Person of Christ, thou hast manifested thyself to be no Minister of him' (Fox, 1667, p.14). The terms used by Fox are revealing because they tell us about a substantive and not just spiritualized indwelling. The Being and essence of Christ is in the believer to the extent that Christ was *not distinct* from the saints: 'Is Christ distinct from the saints? then how come they be of his flesh and bone?' (Fox, 1667, p.14). The notions of non-distinction as well as the flesh and bone language belong to Fox. What he meant by them is of course at the root of the transmutability of Quaker Christology: the answer must be sought in the individual Quaker. But our focus at the moment is on what Fox meant when he used flesh and bone language. Flesh and bone is very graphic language, even more graphic than body and blood. And the saints were part of Christ's flesh and bone to the extent that Fox is telling us there was no distinction between Christ and the saints.

The idea before us is of a *substantive* divine indwelling that was so pervasive that all distinctions were lost. And that divine indwelling commenced the moment God breathed life into his creatures. For example, Fox believed that the soul was part of God – it came from God and it would return to God again: 'God breathed into man the breath of life, and he became a living soul ... And is not this [breath of life] that cometh out from God, which is in Gods hand, part of God, of God, and from God, and to God again?' (Fox, 1659, p.100). It was incorrect, he added, to believe that the

soul was created, human or earthly. It was immortal, a part of God's being. Fox believed that a part of the *divine substance* came into us when the breath of life was breathed into us by God. Fox said that the soul was part of God's being, just as he said that the being and essence of Christ was in the saints to the extent that there were no distinctions.

My reading of the meaning of Fox's words is what his accusers believed he meant – that the soul was a part of God. William Penn had a different, maybe more sophisticated reading and one that represents another Christological position:

G. Fox sayes thus, God breathed into Man the Breath of Life, and he became a Living Soul, and is not this of God, of his Being? &c. and is not this that comes out from God, part of God, & from God? Where nothing can well be clearer than that G.F intends that Divine Life, Power and Virtue, by which Adam in Soul & Body came to live to God ... Breathed, that is Inspired: Breathed being the English Word, Inspired borrowed from the Latine *Inspirare*; the Greek has it ενεπνευσεν, as *Joh* 20:22 hath breathed into, enlivened, quickened; the Hebrew *neshamah* and he breathed or blowed: on which R. Nachmanni and the Author Hiskuni in P. Fagins's Comment on the Place, speak thus, That God inspired Man with something of his own Substance; that he contributed something to him, and bestowed something of his own Divinity upon him, and that God did inspire Man with the Holy Ghost; and that *nashamah* is a proper Word for it. Which is as much as can be collected or justly concluded from what G. Fox hath said concerning Man. (Penn, 1673, pp.65–6)

Penn is saying that what Fox meant is that, when God breathed the breath of life into man, he inspired man with something of himself. These of course are not Fox's words, they are Penn's. Fox never used the word 'inspire'. Penn roundly attacked Fox's accuser ('T.H.') for inferring that when God breathed life into Adam's soul it became part of God's own being and substance. But Fox's enemies had good reason to infer this meaning. We have already seen that Fox used 'not distinct' and flesh and bone language on several occasions in the *Great Mystery* (1659). Nineteen years later, Penn would attack another of Fox's accusers who said that Quakers 'confound God and His Saints'. The reference was to 'a Passage in G.F.'s *Mystery*' and Penn added that Fox's accuser was deceived. The page had not been quoted 'but we know the Place: We suppose it is a Mis-printing gives you that Apprehension; Distinct for Divided; they are Distinct, but not Divided. And this is that which was intended' (Penn, 1726, vol.2, p.802). Penn blamed the misunderstanding emanating from Fox's *not distinct* language on a misprint. There were numerous occasions in his writings when Fox used *not distinct* and *flesh and bone* language to explain the union of Christ and saint (Fox, 1659, pp.68, 174, 207, 246, 247, 322; 1667, pp.6, 14). Should we read *not divided* instead of *not distinct*? Or was Penn tampering with Fox's meanings? Judge Fell used similar linguistic acrobatics to defend Fox at the Lancaster Sessions (1652) where Fox's accusers were saying that lack of distinction between Christ and believer implied unity and equality. Judge Fell argued that there can be unity without equality. Fox was off the hook (Penney, 1911, I, pp.63–7). But shortly thereafter, in 1653, Fox did say, 'he that hath the same spirit that raised up Jesus Christ is equal with God' (Fox, 1653, p.8). To what extent does tampering with Fox's language (adding the word 'inspire' in one instance, or reading *not divided* instead of *not distinct* in another, or saying

that unity does not imply equality in another) compromise the integrity of his language and indeed his entire theology?

Fox's soul first came out *from* God, was *part of God* and returned to God. Taken in the context of the rest of his *not distinct* language I conclude that Fox meant what he said when he said the soul was part of God and his accusers were correct in saying that he believed God and saint were therefore not distinct and equal. Penn's view won the day, first by divesting the soul of its divinity and secondly by negating Fox's *not distinct* language. As a result it could not be inferred that the believer was in any way part of God's being and substance. The debate was as old as Christian doctrine itself. For example, one thinks of the marginalizing of Gnostic writings during the formation of the Canon, or the fourteenth-century controversy over Hesychasm which raised the question about the implications of an intensely intimate relationship between Christ and the believer. This was a significant debate in Eastern Christendom. The Monks of Mount Athos were, through remarkable meditative practices, able to enter into states of ecstasy wherein they could see God, the divine and formless Light, and in this state were able to achieve union with the uncreated, transcendental God. Only under enormous pressure from the Western Church did the Hesychast monks of Mount Athos concede to differentiate between the energy of God which is knowable and within the realm of experience and the essence of God which is unknowable and beyond experience (Pelikan, 1977, pp.252–70). Shortly after this debate the final break between the Eastern and Western Church occurred.

Penn's understanding of the divinely bestowed life within was similar to Barclay's 'spiritual, celestial, and invisible principle' which 'exists as a seed in all men' and which 'inclines the individual toward God' (Freiday, 1967, p.85). According to Barclay, 'Some call this the *vehiculum Dei*, or the spiritual body of Christ, the flesh and blood of Christ, which came down from heaven' but he was very clear in his view that the seed did 'not refer to the proper nature and essence of God' (ibid.). It was a divine presence which informed the conscience and was sufficient for salvation. Penn and Barclay could speak of the Christ within but their Christ within was not Fox's Christ within. Their inward Christ was a divine presence contained in the seed, a created vehicle, which was used to draw people back to God. Christ was mediated to the saints as a divine principle enclosed *within* the *vehiculum Dei* which was kept distinct from the believer's soul. Christ was within in the spiritualized sense that his presence within was mediated to the believer through the *vehiculum Dei*.

Fox's radical position was that the believer's spiritual body or soul – he made a distinction between the spiritual body and the carnal body (Fox, 1659, p.322) – was *not distinct* from Christ who was also a spiritual flesh and bone body, a spiritual substance. Francis Howgill and Edward Burrough, Josiah Coale and Robert Rich are outstanding examples of important early Quakers who used Fox's *not distinct* and *flesh and bone* language (Howgill and Burrough, 1654, p.11; Coale, 1671, p.332; Rich, n.d., p.6). The spiritualist view that was one dominant current of twentieth-century Quaker theological interpretation is inadequate as a tool for interpreting Fox's *not distinct* and *flesh and bone* language (Jones, 1914; Nuttall, 1946, 1954; Smith, 1989). More recently, Leo Damrosch tried to get at 'the meaning of the Nayler affair' (Damrosch, 1996, p.2) and he came close to the true sense of

the matter when he said that the divine indwelling was ‘no metonym but a literal fact’ (ibid., p.73). He then drew back from the more concrete language used by Fox and Nayler. The ‘merger into unity,’ he said, maintained distinctions between God and man (ibid., pp.94, 95). This was the same argument used by Penn and Barclay: distinct but not divided. Fox, as we have already seen, said that the ‘being’ and ‘essence’ of God was *in* the saints and asked, ‘Is Christ distinct from his saints? then how come they be of his flesh and bone?’ That some Quakers maintained a distinction between God and believer is beyond dispute. But other Quakers did not maintain such a distinction.⁴

Many images of Quakers have appeared over the centuries: quietist, pacifist, social reformer, mystic and radical Puritan. Handling the bowdlerized texts, and presently working through the controversies over the nature, location and character of Christ, a new set of questions arise. How, exactly, did Quakers explain the spiritual process, the unseen metamorphosis? Did they all explain it in the same way? What percentage of the roughly 60 000 Quakers in 1660 subscribed to Fox’s *not distinct and flesh and bone* language? Were Paul’s ‘Christ in me’ passages (Romans 8:10; Galatians 4:19) the source of this language? Did Fox misunderstand Paul? Was it left to trained theologians like Penn and Barclay to correct the mistake? Did Fox have a correct understanding of Pauline theology in general? For example, did he miss Paul’s emphasis on futurity – the idea of the coming of the Holy Spirit as a pledge of future reality? Was not Fox a new theophany, chosen to declare that the future reality had now come to fulfillment? If so then this was a radical break with the Christian past, and with the Christian view of things. If we think in terms of modes of revelation and try to follow Fox’s thought we discover that the predominant aspect of his Christological thinking was not the historical Jesus but the pre-existent Christ – the one Jesus referred to when he said of himself ‘before Abraham was I am’ (John 8:58). The historical Jesus was likened to a new high priest which Fox tied to Melchizedech (Fox, 1659, pp.51, 73, 126). Fox was a new theophany, yet another mode of revelation of the *pre-existent Christ*. In this sense of things, Fox and Nayler were two very different epiphanies. Fox was another mode of revelation of the pre-existent Christ. Nayler was a revelation of the historical Jesus.

Anti-clerical, anti-academic, illuminist heresies (Knox, 1950) believed that the spirit of God lived within and one heard the voice of God within through the Spirit. The Spirit had primacy over the Word. The physical trappings of religion were often not necessary for salvation. But Quakerism was a Christological heresy, not a spiritualist heresy, even though it had characteristics of the latter. Christology is the key to understanding Fox and the ferocity of the Muggletonian and Puritan attacks against him. What distinguished Fox from his opponents was this: his logos-son, the pre-existent Christ, had always been present on earth, manifesting himself in specific modes of revelation. One wonders whether these modes of revelation coincide with moments of revelation: the pre-existent Christ speaking creation into existence, the historic Jesus announcing the coming of the Kingdom, and now Fox announcing the actual arrival of the Kingdom. Or, perhaps, Jesus announcing its arrival and Fox its culmination. These modes of revelation represent changing historical theophanies and, as a new theophany, Fox was able to use orthodox terminology to appease his enemies (or confuse them) without having openly to

admit to his more radical theology except when pressed hard and placed under enormous duress, as at the Lancaster Sessions where he admitted, 'My Father and I are one' (Penney, 1911, I p.66).

To render the presence of Christ within to an impersonal spiritual empowering or a very close divine presence without a merging of essences, as Penn and Barclay constructed it, made it difficult to sustain Fox's prelapsarian perfectionist theology. Fox's perfectionism, rooted as it was in his *flesh and bone* notions, was more immediate, widespread and permanent than Barclay's view of perfection which reminds one of later Wesleyan-Holiness perfectionist theology with its talk of slow growth towards spiritual maturity. Our intentions and our lifestyle can be purified to the extent that we have perfect love for God and humanity, but the possibility of succumbing to the taint of sin is ever-present and hence the need for vigilance (Freiday, 1967, pp.155-65). By dedivinizing the soul, Penn and Barclay also weakened the sufficiency of the inward light for salvation and this led to calls, especially from George Keith, for re-emphasis on the external, historic Christ (Keith, 1699; Bailey, 1992, pp.251-2). Their theology also leaves one with no good explanation for some of the high language and exalted behavior that could only have been the product of the notion that Quakers were *not distinct* from Christ. One thinks of James Nayler's messianic ride into Bristol, John Gilpin's identification with the crucified Christ (Gilpin, 1653, p.8) and the aforementioned exalted language of Stubbs, Lower and Margaret Fell.

Why all the Puritan and Muggletonian rage if they knew all along that Fox's *not distinct* language was only a figure of the Christ within, an emanation of spiritual power from a distant Christ living in a distant heaven? This was not Fox's Christ. His theological radicalism was his theology of non-distinction that bore the fruit of social radicalism, including gender equality and in some instances a Gnostic styled inequality. The wife of one of James Milner's followers said that she was the 'eternal Son of God'. When she was reproved for making such a statement, if for no other reason than that she was a woman, so how could she be Christ, her response was that unbelievers were women but 'I am a man' (reported in Higginson, 1653, pp.3-4). Unbelievers were women because they failed to recognize the truth of non-distinction. One thinks of the closing words in the Gnostic Gospel of Thomas:

Simon Peter said to them, 'Let Mary leave us, for women are not worthy of life.' Jesus said, 'I myself shall lead her in order to make her male, so that she too may become a living spirit resembling you males. For every woman who will make herself male will enter the kingdom of heaven.' (NHC: II, 2, 114)

Women were seen to be in a condition of apostasy.

Problems arise whenever we try to explain how Christ indwells his creation. Traditionally Christianity has been both a transcendent and an immanentist religion. Nineteenth-century Theosophists who liked the idea of God being in the world committed themselves to building a British version of Hinduism. They were considered to have a distinctly non-Christian view of things. This is because, for the Christian, creation is an inadequate revelation of God. God can only be known in part through the Church, nature and the indwelling Holy Spirit. The error of Theosophists, for Christians, is that immanence can never imply that God's absolute power can be

known. There are similarities between the Indo-European view and Fox's Christology that can be disturbing, depending on one's religious preferences. Penn's and Barclay's concerns were as legitimate as More's concerns. Quakers were to avoid the Familist error (or, in twentieth-century terms, the Theosophist error) of blurring the lines of distinction between God and his creation. Otherwise, in the case of Quakerism, one finds a variety of embarrassing public actions and statements. As we have seen, Nayler and John Gilpin thought they were some sort of reincarnation of the historical messiah. Another believed that the Christ within destroyed the distinction between male and female. Robert Rich criticized Fox for allowing himself to be exalted above all others even though the exalted Christ within made the movement radically egalitarian (Rich, 1678, p.40). In this respect the notion of non-distinction also leads us into the bizarre world of Quaker messianic language which spoke of Fox as 'thou Son of God which the world knoweth not', 'thou god of life and power', the one who 'owns the world', 'to thee shall all nations bow and bend', 'first and last' and 'the second appearance of him who is blessed forever' (Burden, 1663; Sale, 1655; Holme, 1654; Lower, 1675). If we think in terms of modes of revelation then Fox as a new theophany was indeed set apart from other Quakers.

Many of the sources that contained exalted language were tampered with (Bailey, 1992). My own view is that they were part of a natural discourse that emanated from Fox's own notion of non-distinction. A close inspection of these texts enabled me to make sense not only of Quaker deportment in society but of its charisma and language, as well as the Puritan attacks on Quaker Christology.⁵ Upon approaching the sources in question I asked what sort of notion or belief would prompt the highly exalted language towards Fox. Why did early Quakerism experience such a widespread revival of charismatic behavior? Why is this fact about Quakerism generally ignored? Why did early Quakerism appear to be a recrudescence of one aspect of Gnosticism – the divine in humanity? Our most important Gnostic sources were only rediscovered in the twentieth century, but did Fox, with his finely tuned religious sensibilities, actually manage to salvage overlooked Gnostic elements from the New Testament?

Gnosticism invokes for us a 'physics of matter', since orthodoxy separates spirit and matter. The latter point leads us into the research and writing of Michele Lise Tarter. Tarter's work focuses on corporeal openings to the inner, divine, non-material world. Gods and goddesses, prophets and prophetesses, shakings and quakings, revelations and inner mystical experiences require bodies – material bodies. Tarter's thesis is that any understanding of the charismatic genre, its functions and meanings, cannot be achieved without some sense of how early Quakers (her focus is on Quaker women) used their bodies as sites of divine performance (Tarter, 1993; 1995; 2001; see also the next chapter). Our work is complementary. Fox's notion of Christ's *flesh and bone* within the saints was an assertion about the spiritual rather than the carnal body. But he was making a statement about human metamorphosis as well. Celestial inhabitation induced a change in bodily deportment. What seems to us as eccentric language in fact reveals to us a conception about human and historical change that is uniquely different from the expectations of orthodox religion.

Another Christological view within Quakerism may be situated somewhere between Fox and Penn/Barclay. It was related to a philosophical position called

‘essentialism’ and was concerned primarily with the penetrability of substances – material and immaterial. This line of thought is generally associated with Anne Viscountess Conway and Francis Mercury van Helmont, both of whom were concerned to demonstrate that Christ as an immaterial substance could be present and yet distinct within the believer.

When Anne Conway became a Quaker, a unique and short-lived nexus occurred between Cambridge Platonism, the alchemical–kabbalistic tradition of Continental Europe, and Quakerism, a nexus definitively described in the recent monograph of Allison Coudert on the life and times of Francis Mercury van Helmont.⁶ By 1677, it was public knowledge that both Anne Conway and van Helmont had become Quakers (Coudert, 1999, pp.179, 182, 212). Anne Conway was deeply affected by the quiet and serious demeanor of Quakers who visited her residence at Ragley Hall. She also believed that she had found a like-minded group of friends who shared her own philosophical musings about how the body of Christ could inhabit the human creature. What could have led her to such a conclusion?

Through some of her letters and writings light is cast on the continued strain that notions of Christ within placed on the Quaker community in the 1670s. In a letter to Henry More dated 29 November 1675, Anne Conway remarked on ‘this new notion of G. Keiths about Christ’ (Nicolson, 1992, p.408). She was referring specifically to his receptivity to Kabbalism and the notion of the extension of the soul of Christ as one means of explaining how Christ dwelt in the saints (*ibid.*). The new metaphysical opinions being adopted by Keith at this time (1675) are an indication that he was adjusting his theology in order to answer critics who accused Quakers of denying the importance of the redemptive work of the historical Christ, and who pressed Quakers to explain the mechanics of how the *flesh and bone* of Christ dwelt within the saint while at the same time occupying a space in heaven.

On 4 February following Anne Conway wrote to More again. She had found More’s rebuttal of Keith’s notion of the extension of Christ’s soul convincing. Then she made a remarkable statement:

Your Letter to him containes very sober and usefull cautions and as you say, I think, it will be very hard for them to prove from involuntarie paine or greif experimentally felt, that there is another living-being in them distinct from their own souls. The places of Scripture interpreted by you, as alledged by them in favour of their opinion, doe certainly fall short of proof of any such far extended soul distinct from the Deity, as G.K. supposeth, whether they be to be understood just so as you have explained them or not. But I cannot think that he would be understood to meane, what you would infer from his Letter to you (though I confesse his expressions have given you just occasion to take that advantage of him) that the lesser soul of Christ is onely plactical and not of the same nature with the souls of other men. (Nicolson, 1992, p.420)

She believed the Quakers’ position was that Christ was in them as another living being who was distinct from their souls, but their experience alone could not prove it. As she was apparently unaware of Fox’s *not distinct* language, her conversations with Keith led her to believe Quakers generally held his position. Keith, in an apparent attempt to explain how Christ could be in an external heaven and at the same time within the saints, had attached himself to the idea, probably through van Helmont, that the lesser soul of Christ (which was distinct from the Deity) extended

itself from heaven into the saints. This led to a curious question, which More raised: how could there be another living being within the saints that was distinct from their own souls? For Fox the answer was simple. Christ was *not distinct* from the spiritual body of the saint. Keith was trying to find a way to explain how it was that Christ was in the saint but at the same time distinct from the saint. He got tied into knots by trying to make distinctions between the soul of the believer, the lesser soul of Christ (which he confused with More's teaching on the plastic nature of the soul which was what harmonized the soul and matter and shaped celestial vehicles into terrestrial forms) and the Deity itself. More shredded this notion of multiple souls as well as Keith's weak use of Scripture to support his view. In an attempt to support Keith, Anne Conway suggested that More had misread him (*ibid.*). She understood Keith to say that the lesser soul of Christ was made of the same substance as the human soul. This provided a viable explanation for the way Christ lived in the believer without the taint of blasphemy. Believers shared Christ's lesser created soul even as Christ also shared the essence of God.

Anne Conway had her own views on the subject of immaterial substances. Her book *Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy* (1690 in Latin; 1692 in English), which included discussions of Descartes, Spinoza and Hobbes, was published posthumously.⁷ Her philosophical thought, influenced not only by her long correspondence with Henry More but by the Kabbalist thought of van Helmont, bears remarkable resemblances to the thought of Leibniz (Coudert, 1999, pp.179, 200). Substances are graduated along a spiritual continuum whereby matter was only a grosser or coarser form of spirit. There is only one instance of God who is a wholly incorporeal, extendable substance (*contra* Plato and Augustine, for whom only spiritual unextended substances existed). There is also only one instance of Christ who acts as the creative agency between God and man. All other creatures contain greater and lesser degrees of spirit and corporeality (Conway, 1996, pp.28–40, 50). It is not a matter of either spirit or body, for all created beings are a mix of the two on a graduated scale. Anne Conway categorically rejected Cartesian dualism.

Conway claims that substances we ordinarily think of as immaterial (that is, angels) possess some degree of corporeality. Apart from God there is no such thing as a disembodied spirit (*ibid.*, p.42). Every creature, corporeal and immaterial, shares a common essence and has a common substance. There are only 'modal' or 'incremental' degrees of difference between corporeal and immaterial (*ibid.*, p. 40). Every substance is in some measure *essentially* spirit and, in one instance, that of God, a substance that is *essentially* and wholly incorporeal.

Corporeality was also related to moral qualities. The more virtue, the less corporeal (*ibid.*, pp.42–3). A virtuous human could have a greater degree of non-corporeality or be soft to the touch (*ibid.*, p.44). This view was consistent with her overarching view that argued for degrees of spirit, which had both mass and extension (*ibid.*, *ch. VII*) through a graduated shading of states from the most ethereal (subtle body) to the most corporeal. Her discussion of the penetrability of bodies one with the other belonged within this overarching view that spirit and matter existed on the same continuum. If one thought of penetrability in terms of degrees of more spirit and less spirit (hence more corporeal) then bodies could be penetrable. Since spirit and body shared a common essence (no dualism) the

problem of penetrability was resolved. Notably a lighter more ethereal body 'is able to penetrate a more gross body' (Conway, 1996, p.51). The philosophical ground was prepared for Anne Conway's case that the body of Christ inhabited creatures.

Christ must be *within* in order for creatures to be united with God (ibid., pp.25–6). This was necessary in order to close the chasm between God and the creatures: 'if he were not present everywhere in all creatures, there would be an utter chasm and gap between God and creatures in which God would not exist' (ibid., p. 26).⁸ Anne Conway also spoke of Christ's 'inward appearance in men' for the purpose of salvation (ibid., pp.27, 25–6; Coudert, 1999, p.203). However, no creature, even with Christ within, can attain equality with Christ or God (Conway, 1996, pp.15, 21). Fox's notion that the *essence* of Christ (and hence of God) was in the saints who were therefore *not distinct* from Christ and were *equal* with God would have been rejected by Anne Conway.

Quakers in general remained closed to the philosophical 'way out' of blasphemy charges that Anne Conway provided. That is, there was a good theological reason why Christ had to be in the creature. There was an acceptable philosophical position (essentialism – concern with the essences of things) to explain how Christ could be in the creature. And no creature could assume the essence of God. All Quakers, including Fox, could accept the first point. The second point, with its talk of the lesser soul of Christ appearing within the believer, would have been rejected by Fox on the grounds that any attempt to limit Christ's *flesh and bone* presence in the believer was unacceptable. On the other hand, Penn and Barclay would have found essentialism too unorthodox, with its talk of penetrability of spiritual substances. Fox would have rejected the final point on the grounds that he did not believe the saint's spiritual body had a separate *essence* from God. In the *Great Mystery*, Fox said, 'Doth not Christ dwell in his saints, as he is in the person of the Father, the substance? and are they not of his flesh, and of his bone?' (Fox, 1659, p.247). The Father (and Christ) was a spiritual substance, and because He (and Christ) dwelled in the saints then there was no distinction at the level of spiritual substance, either between Father and Christ or between both and the saints (ibid., pp.174, 207, 322). Elsewhere Fox said, 'Gods Christ is not distinct from his Saints, nor his bodies, for he is within them; nor distinct from their spirits' (ibid., p.207). The statement that the Godhead was not distinct from the spirits of the saints was in contrast to Anne Conway's and Mercury van Helmont's (as well as Penn's and Barclay's) efforts to maintain an essential distinction between God and the saints.

Anne Conway's essentialist philosophy is useful for the light it sheds on those aspects of Quaker Christology that appealed to her. Her interest in the penetrability of substances to explain how Christ could inhabit the bodies of believers helps to explain why she was initially attracted to Quakerism. She shared the Quakers' concern to bridge the Puritan chasm between God and man and must have sensed common ground between Quaker views on the Christ within and her own essentialist thought.

One of the perennial problems that confronted seventeenth-century Quakers was how to balance belief in the historical work of Christ with the salvific necessity of Christ within. Failure to put sufficient emphasis on the redemptive work of the historical Christ as sufficient for salvation was a constant source of debate and tension between Quakers and their critics. The question posed a dilemma that both

George Keith and Robert Barclay tried to resolve. In 1676, they declared that a distinction must be made ‘between “saving” faith and “historical” faith; the first was essential, the latter helpful, but not absolutely necessary’ (Coudert, 1999, p.192). Where Keith began to part from Barclay, especially after his meetings with van Helmont in 1675, was his embrace of the kabbalistic doctrine of reincarnation (transmigration of souls), which enabled him to retain the important historical doctrines of the Fall, suffering and evil and redemption, while at the same time retaining the Quaker belief in the efficacy of the Christ within (Keith, 1675).⁹ Eventually everyone would reincarnate into a fully redeemed state. Keith’s enthusiasm with Kabbalism led van Helmont to the impression that Quakers in general were receptive to the Kabbalah and ‘an alliance between Quakerism and the Kabbalah was entirely feasible and might provide the basis for the universal Christian Church he so much wanted to see in existence’ (Coudert, 1999, p.183).

Van Helmont’s thought in his *Cabbalistical dialogue* (Latin, 1677; English, 1682) is beyond the scope of this chapter,¹⁰ but some of his alchemical observations suggest to us aspects of Quakerism that might have appealed to him. He spoke of sinking shafts into mountains and finding precious stones therein. He talked at length about what had already been found beneath the earth in mines (Helmont, Sloane MS. 530, fol. 5v). He even wondered whether it would be possible to know the virtues of any of these precious stones before they were dug out of the earth (ibid., fol. 64). He speculated that their value was intrinsic (prior to the mining). It was also potential and only when mined was the potential realized. Man, he said, was a microcosm of all this (ibid., fol. 11v) and his talk about digging precious things out of the earth is analogous to George Fox’s talk of digging for the pearl in the earth (the Christ within).

Van Helmont reasoned that the Earth was a product of quicksand and water and proposed an experiment to prove it. He began by explaining how the Earth, when nourished by water, caused each grain of sand to spring to life. He said that, if great vaults were dug into the Earth and then filled with water, quicksand would be created,

so that we must allow that the quicksand and water going out from this cortex and is in due natural and possible proportion supplied by the return of some luminous spiritual being coming into the vacuity of the water gone out before therefrom. For since the coming in of anything must be answerable to the going out, and bodies cannot penetrate bodies, this supply must needs be made by that which can penetrate them viz. light, fire or Spirit, which we must suppose either to remain Spirit or else to be transmuted into water, but it cannot remain Spirit because it cannot abide unactive and idle. The Spirit is the influenced light of all the stars. This sphere of quicksand and water must be as a living eye looking every way globularly, whose centre is infinite, incomprehensible, eternal and for (per) fact, in which the Creator hath placed his tabernacle. For out of this sphere is continually made and framed a Waterstone, out of which all the great and high mountains are ... made. (Ibid., fols 4–5)

This alchemical passage is an earnest attempt to explain the dynamics of the penetrability of bodies. Van Helmont believed that everything was made of spiritual substance with varying degrees of lightness and coarseness or grossness. Matter was a grosser form of spirit and each differed from the other only gradually. Otherwise

one was controvertible into the other (ibid., fol.29, no.82).¹¹ Following his imagery of a great cavity dug into the earth and then filled with water which would disperse as quicksand was formed, the amount of water and quicksand that was dispersed through the cortex of the cavity would have to be filled in equal measure with something else. But since a body cannot penetrate another body (presumably of equal coarseness) then what must penetrate the cavity which still contained a certain amount of water and quicksand must be of a lighter and more ethereal substance, equal to that which went out, but still mixing with the coarse body of water and quicksand remaining in the cavity. He describes this substance as some luminous spiritual body.

Once a spiritual body penetrated a coarse substance of water and quicksand, van Helmont then proposed the possibility that the spiritual body would adopt the properties of water; that is, it would be transmuted into water. But this could not be, for were that the case Spirit would no longer be Spirit, and Spirit was the active agent in the universe, the influenced light of all the stars. What in fact must occur, according to van Helmont, is that the sphere of water and quicksand takes on the characteristics of something like Barclay's *vehiculum Dei* wherein the active influence of the light of the Spirit resides. The cavity dug out from the earth is, by analogy, the cortex of the human body into which the Creator has placed his tabernacle (think of the *vehiculum Dei*). For van Helmont, God was in the creature in the form of the influenced light of all the stars, but God himself was distinct from the creature. Like Anne Conway, van Helmont maintained a separation between God and creature (Coudert, 1999, pp.201, 203). So the center of divinity within, this Hermetic style living eye which looks globularly in every direction, is infinite, incomprehensible and eternal. And out from it emerges all the material creation (the greatest mountains) for, according to van Helmont, everything is spiritual according to varying degrees, everything descending and ascending, from spiritual bodies (light and ethereal) to material bodies (heavy and coarse). Spirit has extension. Spirit and matter are not two different substances but exist together on a graduated plane from the ethereal to the coarse, all receiving life force from the Hermetic-style living eye within. Van Helmont had discovered an incredible truth. Matter is both an extension of spirit and penetrated by spirit. And he thought that Quakers shared this view of reality.

Van Helmont's concern was to explain the dynamics of the way the spiritual and the corporeal could coexist, wherein both existed in the same space at the same time. If Quakers had been more receptive to his teachings on spiritual substances he might have helped them solve a very thorny problem which refused to go away – how Christ could simultaneously be distinct and within. Instead, Fox asked the Second-Day Morning Meeting to censor van Helmont's books because they were too esoteric and speculative.¹² Rather than embracing van Helmont's ideas about spiritual substances, Quakers marginalized him until he left the movement altogether.

Anne Conway provided the opportunity for the gathering of a mixed group of Quakers, Kabbalists and Cambridge Platonists to coalesce at Ragley Hall between 1675 and 1679. It was not a formal Quaker meeting, although Allison Coudert raises the specter of a 'Helmontian' group of Quakers (ibid., pp.180, 250). The dynamic influence during this brief and unusual episode in the history of Quakerism was van

Helmont. He was the intellectual force behind the wide speculative discussions that took place between himself, Anne Conway, George Keith and Henry More. Van Helmont thought he had at last found the religious community he had been looking for. George Keith, who was more receptive than other Quakers, was able to use van Helmont's kabbalistic thinking to resolve the problems inherent in trying to explain the relationship between 'historical' faith and 'saving' faith. Henry More, who looked upon himself as a physician treating Quakerism for its ills (Nicolson, 1992, p.415) also allowed himself to be drawn into an unusual relationship with Quakers. William Penn and Robert Barclay, who had no interest in van Helmont's speculations, found More a useful public relations tool, pressing him to publish something on behalf of Quakers that would improve their image and, one would think, lessen their suffering.

Seventeenth-century Quakerism was a multifarious movement that experienced more than one transformation at different levels in order to survive the seventeenth century. This, of course, is not a new thought and is widely enough accepted. What remains an unresolved problem for historical research is what the different groupings were, where the finer lines of demarcation are to be drawn, and when each transformation occurred, beyond the movement's embrace of pacifism. It was not as simple as Henry More thought – that there were two groups of Quakers: one rustic and mechanic (which was the majority) who embraced the *not distinct* language of Fox, and one refined and educated (which was a tiny minority) which retained the distinction between God and creature. There was too much movement between the lines to justify such an ironclad separation. The difficulty of pinning down a normative Quaker theology is best summarized by Marjorie Hope Nicolson: 'In the early days of the movement it is difficult to say with certainty what theory of man's nature the Quakers held; the answer must be sought in the individual Quaker' (Nicolson, 1930, p.37). In summary, there was no normative Quaker Christology at least until after the death of Lady Conway, the departure of Mercury van Helmont and, later, the death of Fox and the excommunication of George Keith. The views of Penn and Barclay slowly begin to take root and become the normative interpretation of Fox's inward Christ among a new generation of leadership.

III

When Hans Jürgen Goertz, speaking of Anabaptist history at a 'History and Theology' symposium in 1978, said that 'the fundamental principles of a coercive society collide with the principles normative in the kingdom of God', he was addressing the problem of religious motive (Goertz, 1979, p.188; 2002, pp.29–42). Goertz's comments call questions to mind for me. Can the profane historian adequately assess the role of religious motive? Must one experientially be a part of the struggle of the Lamb's War in order fully to understand it? Must one have visionary experiences in order to understand visionary experiences? On the other hand, is the confessional historian open to 'determining preconditions' (Goertz, 1979, p.186) other than faith when considering religious motive? What role do we assign to 'the use of theology as a conceptual aid' (*ibid.*, p.188)? Should it even have a place in historical interpretation? Or, more to the point, what role should one's

faith have in historical interpretation? Goertz cautioned that the confessional historian needs to be aware of the danger of 'theologizing' or 'abstracting' history in the interests of constructing a normative conception of one's own religious history (ibid., p.189).

My following thoughts are prompted by Goertz's own reflections on history and theology, and continue the discussion in light of recent thought on the subject of historical imagination and historical realism. The problem of how to deal with a historian's personal values is not unique to religious history. If we could take a camera and aim it at the events that we study, would it bring us any closer to historical reality? How much would it alter the way we approach history? If Burke, Comte, Hegel and Marx had been able to watch the events of the French Revolution on camera, and then discuss these events among themselves, would it have changed their interpretation of the events? If those of us who are historians of Quakerism could watch on camera as George Fox healed, or cast out demons, or was in one of his lengthy trance-like states, would it alter our interpretation of these events? One would say that it was all primitive shamanism. Another would say that it was the power of true belief. Another would say that it was all just hysteria. Another would say that it was a 'coping mechanism' to help people deal with the hardships of life and the fear of death (Buckman, 2000, pp.59–111).

Historical writing is a creative re-enactment (Collingwood, 1974, pp.282–302; Dray, 1995) that attempts to make sense out of the data that are given equally to each of us. The mountain of data that has accumulated and which we all mine to tell the human story comprises our knowledge of what some of us at least think is reality. However, the chasm between knowledge and reality may be too wide to bridge except for great thaumaturgical individuals like Buddha or Jesus, or Fox, for whom there was no chasm between knowledge and reality. Knowledge and reality were the same thing. Certain esoteric traditions teach that not one thought separates the knower from the known. Fox said that the saints actually saw the face of Christ within them (Nickalls, 1952, p.159). Now we are speaking about another form of knowledge and another way of knowing that is quite distinct from historical knowledge. Ultimately charismatic knowledge will always trump historical knowledge. There is no discourse at the deepest levels of such experience – what Christian mystics describe as *raptus* or ecstasy (a vision of God that surpasses sensory experience), or what Buddhists describe as enlightenment achieved through various extraordinary meditative means which enable one to awaken to the fundamental relationship between form and emptiness as well as the distinction between conventional and ultimate truth. In these examples historical knowledge is superseded by suprahistorical knowledge honed by certain suprahistorical experiences which are beyond the reach of the tools we use to create historical knowledge today. Postmodernist thinkers might make the case that what I call suprahistorical knowledge is also a *form* of discourse and hence has some historical meaning. Otherwise historical meaning only enters the picture the moment the thaumaturge makes an effort to communicate their experience and make it applicable to human experience generally.

One side of the debate over the philosophical implications of quantum physics sternly warns against the perceived arrogance that asserts the knowability of ultimate truths and seeks for Cartesian absolute clarity. We can only know reality

through a darkened glass. What darkens the glass is Heisenberg's uncertainty principle and the observer effect. For the historian, what darkens the glass is human discourse shaped by the observer effect of human experience, which in turn shapes our personal interests and values. We use our experience and knowledge to organize, to impose structure and to highlight certain aspects of the sources in order to make sense out of the data that history has bequeathed to us. As a result the interpretive castles we build, although designed to bring us closer to historical reality, distance us from historical reality. Astronomers study the same data and yet cannot agree on whether our universe is the result of a Big Bang or has always existed as a plasma universe. Historians study the data from the French Revolution and cannot agree whether it was an inevitable result of class struggle or the result of Voltaire and Rousseau gone to seed. Which of these examples is the historical reality?

At best, schools of thought are formed which go in and out of vogue. A consensus will prevail until dislodged or dismantled, as Aristotelian physics was after the scientific revolution. Following this line of thinking, knowledge is not reality. World-views are chosen because they best represent what we *think* is reality, or is the best approximation of reality, until a better explanation of why things are the way they are comes along. Writing history is a creative exercise in narrative, in redescription, in story telling with a twist. On the latter point I would agree with Hayden White's critique of Collingwood's view that the task of the historian is to discover the 'true' story buried within the 'apparent' story:

no given set of causally recorded historical events can in itself constitute a story; the most it might offer to the historian are story *elements*. The events are *made* into a story by the suppression or the subordination of certain of them and the highlighting of others, by characterization, motific repetition, variation of tone and point of view, alternative descriptive strategies. (White, 1998, p.18)

Historical narrative is a complex, multilayered creature. But to try to separate the imaginative from the real in the narrative is not helpful. The very distinction is a false one:

In point of fact, history – the real world as it evolves in time – is made sense of in the same way that the poet or novelist tries to make sense of it, i.e. by endowing what originally appears to be problematical and mysterious with the aspect of a recognizable, because it is a familiar, form. It does not matter whether the world is conceived to be real or only imagined; the manner of making sense of it is the same. (Ibid., p.31)

The act of recreation implies the use of the tools of the story teller. The possibility of historical realism would challenge what it surmises is the artificiality of the imaginative approach. By historical realism is meant 'the idea that history exists as a determinate, untold story until discovered and told by the historian' (Norman, 1998, p.155). Once the story has been told, a terminus to historical inquiry is reached. Once the facts are brought to light and relayed, we move on, in positivist fashion, building fact upon fact.

The new narrativist history of Hayden White (1987) and Jacques Derrida (1978, pp.3–30) implies that we never reach a 'definitive account' of our subject because

‘in practice the more powerful and authoritative an historical interpretation is the more writing it generates – endlessly into the future’ (Fell, 1991, p.80). Everything comes down to endlessly new informed points of view: Nietzschean perspectivism (Nietzsche, 1910, Third Essay #12). This was Heisenberg’s case against Einstein and Russell, who said that everything was knowable (or would be knowable) with clarity in accordance with causal and/or mathematical laws of physics (Russell, 1961, [ch. 6](#); Einstein, 1954, pp.267–8). Heisenberg brought some restraint into the discussion when he argued that laws of cause and effect do not work at the quantum level. Science was limited and but a small part of the edifice of human knowledge which is informed largely by what he called our natural language. Our natural language is the way we think, based on our experience. It is durable. It provides us with *points of view* (Heisenberg, 1958, pp.80–82; 195–206). In this respect no one who deals with historical knowledge can claim epistemological privilege. We might ask, what is the value of writing history if historical reality eludes us and everything comes down to point of view? History may empower social activism, validate a faith experience, give added meaning to life or describe the Foucaultian battlefield.

Regardless of point of view and what we expect to glean from history, objectivity is essential: not objectivity in Peter Berger’s sense that requires the historian of religion to be a ‘methodological atheist’ (Goertz, 1979, p.186) or, in the more extreme sense, that history must speak through us as some believe the Holy Ghost spoke through the Apostles without one errant thought interfering in the process. That would be neutrality and ‘objectivity is not neutrality’ (Haskell, 1998, pp.299ff). Objectivity is not value-free. In the Weberian sense there is an ‘interconnection between a scholar’s values and the selection of subject matter for research’ (Goertz, 1979, p.185). Objectivity does not require that an historian set aside her or his values, passions and point of view. Lionel Rubinoff’s definition of objectivity is the best that I have encountered in my reading on the subject:

What is meant by objectivity lies somewhere in the peculiar relationship that exists between the past and historian’s point of view, a relationship which exists in the historical imagination. What then do we mean when we praise a historian for being objective, or say that one historian is more objective than another? We mean that he applies the right standard of significance, and applies it in the right way, that is to say, in a way that invites debate and criticism from those holding alternate points of view. We mean first of all, then, that the historian is able to free himself or herself from personal biases, of the sort which do not provide good reasons for selecting and interpreting the facts in one way rather than another. Secondly, it means that the historian has a sense of direction, which, by applying it to the selection and organization of the facts, helps illuminate features of the past which might otherwise go unnoticed. (Rubinoff, 1991, pp.149–50)

Objectivity does require that one’s point of view be reasonably restrained by standards that give the historical profession its credibility. Historians who are apologists for the Holocaust denial movement might be cited as an extreme example of lack of objectivity (Guttenplan, 2000, pp.45–66).¹³ True objectivity requires a type of minimal ascetic renunciation, or ‘detachment’ from one’s personal views long enough to engage in meaningful scholarly dialogue. In Thomas Haskell’s words, it also calls upon the historian

to do such things as abandon wishful thinking, assimilate bad news, discard pleasing interpretations that cannot pass elementary tests of evidence and logic, and, most important of all, suspend or bracket one's own perceptions long enough to enter sympathetically into the alien and possibly repugnant perspectives of rival thinkers. (Haskell, 1998, p.301)

Then, let a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend.

Notes

¹ I wish to thank Don Akenson, Paul Christianson and James Stayer for helpful advice at various stages of the writing of this chapter, and Michael Mullett for his generous support over the years.

² Fox and Stubbs (1660). Inside the front cover is glued a letter from John Stubbs to George Fox relating to the publication of *A Battle-Door* (London: Friends Reference Library, Assec. #L073.7 with #9409 inside the front cover). The original letter is in the Crosfield Collection, but the incriminating first sentence is missing.

³ There is room for more than one view here. Of course not all early Quakers adhered to Fox's views as represented by his opponents, and even as astute an observer as Henry More recognized that fact. It is not clear just how many early Quakers fully understood Fox's Christological views. The ranting actions of James Milner, John Toldervev and John Gilpin suggest that not all did, although it is noteworthy that not one Quaker denounced Nayler for proclaiming he was Jesus. They denounced Nayler for shameful decorum, creating disunity within the ranks and publicly humiliating the fledgling movement. The spirit blows where it lists and this is nowhere truer than with charismatic movements. Henry More was convinced that the majority of Quakers held to Fox's more Familist views, while only a few took exception. I am not saying there is only one view to take on early Quaker Christology. Rather, on the side of those early Quakers who chose to view the inward Christ in a manner that provoked the use of exalted language, the attempt to minimize or negate that view (as offensive as it may seem) does Fox and many of his early followers a great disservice.

⁴ Rosemary Moore (2000a) avoids Fox's most radical language as well as the most exalted language used towards him, but she is the first Quaker scholar of Quakerism openly and honestly to study some of the bowdlerized texts and exalted language in an objective manner – objective as I define it in the last section of this chapter. Her work is highly commendable.

⁵ All discussed at length in Richard Bailey (1992). The best recent study on the Quaker–Puritan controversies is Ted Underwood (1997). Underwood builds his thesis around the differing emphases with respect to the inward/outward tension that was the defining feature of each group's apprehension of primitive Christology.

⁶ Coudert (1999) is the best full-length treatment of van Helmont available in English and takes its place alongside Marjorie Hope Nicolson's timeless *Conway Letters* (Nicolson, 1992). Taken together they provide an unsurpassed, definitive and eloquent description of the stellar cast of intellectuals who gathered at Ragley Hall in the 1670s. The added dimension of Coudert's monograph is the manner in which van Helmont's life (like that of Erasmus before him) becomes a window onto the wider world of seventeenth-century intellectual and courtly life.

⁷ Coudert and Corse (Conway, 1996) have provided the best critical edition available and the one I am using here. The 'Introduction' provides valuable historical background to Anne Conway's philosophical thought, her Quaker connections, and the wider influence of her treatise and its connections to the thought of Leibniz (ibid., pp.xxx–xxxiii). The 'Introduction' to Peter Lopston's edition of Anne Conway's *Principles* (Conway, 1982) is more effective in explaining the 'essentialist' dimension of her thought. Coudert also discusses the *Principles* in *Impact of the Kabbalah* (1999, pp.201–8).

⁸ Orthodoxy would say that the chasm is filled by the *Spirit* of God.

⁹ Keith's position was outlined in the 'Appendix' to the second edition of his book, *Immediate Revelation* (1675). Other sources that discuss Keith's acceptance of kabbalist teachings are found in letters between Henry More and Anne Conway (Nicolson, 1992, pp.408, 415).

¹⁰ The contents, especially those that influenced Anne Conway's *Principles*, are briefly discussed in Coudert (1999, pp.200–201). Francis Mercury van Helmont (1614–98), the son of the famous physician and Paracelsian Jan Baptista van Helmont, arrived in England in 1670 with his background in Kabbalah. He met Henry More, and through More was introduced to Anne Conway. Through Anne Conway, van Helmont became acquainted with some leading Quakers, including George Keith (Coudert, 1999, p.180; Nicolson, 1992, p.323). For the events leading up to van Helmont's meeting with Anne Conway, see Nicolson (*ibid.*, pp.378ff). He was a Quaker for a brief period prior to his departure from England in 1679, when he resumed his life as a 'wandering eremite' which was how van Helmont described himself in 'Extraordinary Passages' ('Dr. Foote's Translations of van Helmont's Works', London, British Library, Sloane MS 530). Van Helmont met Quakers on the Continent as early as 1659 and may have met George Fox during a diplomatic mission to England in 1660 (Coudert, 1999, pp.36–7).

¹¹ Coudert (1999, pp.200, 204, 205, 234) explains van Helmont's position on the continuity between matter and spirit.

¹² 'Memorandum from George Fox to the Second-day's Morning Meeting, 19–11 mo. 1683' (London: Friends' Reference Library); Robert Barclay, 'Letter of Robert Barclay to Francis Mercury van Helmont', (17 November 1676), in *Reliquiae Barclainae* (London, 1870, pp.9–10). For an excellent discussion of the Quaker censoring of van Helmont, see Coudert (1999, pp.257–70).

¹³ I am referring to David Irving's libel suit against Deborah Lipstadt.

‘Go North!’ The Journey towards First-generation Friends and their Prophecy of Celestial Flesh

Michele Lise Tarter

The Inward Voice

Sitting in the silent Reading Room of the British Library, nestled between two diligent and well-seasoned scholars, I plunged into the pile of rare books that I had just ordered at the circulation desk. The men on each side of me were the epitome of inspiration, deeply immersed as they were in the pages of their archival materials; it was clear to me that they had been coming to this hallowed room for many, many decades, seeking answers to the mysteries of centuries ago. I was rather new at this: a University of Colorado PhD candidate with a travel fellowship to study Quaker manuscripts in England, yet without any idea of my particular focus. As an attender of Boulder Friends Meeting, I was eagerly seeking answers, too, trusting that spirit would lead me in the work of reconnecting to the past. My advisor, Mary, who had studied under Elise Boulding at Dartmouth years before but who was not a Quaker herself, directed me in this path: ‘Jump in and swim,’ she said with a gentle smile. With no predetermined agenda, then, I set forth with open eyes, ears and heart, waiting to see what might draw or move me. This, I knew, was true Quaker practice.

The pile of books in front of me was an odd amalgamation of materials that I had felt initially drawn to read. Published at the beginning of the Quaker movement, they were primarily accounts of the earliest Meetings for Worship, as described by Friends and non-Friends alike. The pages were old, brown and crinkled; as I turned each leaf, I could hardly believe that these same texts had circulated in the 1650s, and here I was in the late twentieth century reading them with curiosity and reverence. What I noted almost instantly was that the descriptions of the Meetings were unlike anything I had ever read or heard about in Quaker histories. With hundreds of Friends gathered at a time, and with Meetings lasting anywhere from six to eight hours, men and women would wait for spirit to pour onto flesh and then quake with the living testimony of God. Gleaning from one tract after another, I found that their ‘quaking’ was the most celebrated and yet the most controversial aspect of these worship gatherings, depending on who was writing the account; and yet, I noted, there is not even a trace of this religious practice in Friends’ Meetings for Worship today. Utterly stunned to find such accounts, and trying assiduously to envision and comprehend such scenes in my mind, I suddenly heard a loud, piercing voice which shook me out of my intellectual inquiry.

'Go North!'

I jumped and looked around, trying to find the person who would so defiantly break the sacred silence of the Reading Room. All I found were men and women deep in their studies, with no one budging save me. I was puzzled, but also uncertain as a novice in this long-esteemed academic institution. I turned back to my reading and dismissed this as a strange, unexplainable event.

A few minutes later, and three more pages into Francis Higginson's tract on the Yorkshire Friends' Meetings, it came again, as clear and loud as ever: *'Go North!'* This was very disconcerting to hear, but even more disturbing was the fact that, as I turned to see if others had heard it, not one person had so much as blinked in response to this appalling interruption. 'What is happening to me?' I began to wonder. 'Am I losing my wits, and of all places, in *here*? What, exactly, is in these crinkled brown pages I am turning?'

The third time the voice bellowed, *'Go North!'* I slammed my book shut, and without any reserve left, I turned to the elderly scholar on my right. Breaking all academic protocol, I interrupted him and whispered, 'Excuse me, sir, but did you hear that voice that said "Go North"? He peered at me over his bifocals, ever so slowly, and took a long, pregnant pause before he answered. I waited anxiously, almost desperately. The smallest, ornery grin then appeared on his face, as he responded, 'Well, no, my lass – but I certainly wish I did!' As he turned back to his books, I automatically packed mine up and returned them to the front desk, mortified by my admission to hearing voices in the British Library.

That voice would not leave me alone. It followed me through the busy streets of London, as I wandered aimlessly, trying to figure out what to do. Fifteen minutes later, I looked up and there was the Friends House on Euston Road right in front of me. Without a second thought, I walked in and approached the receptionist. 'Excuse me – uh – I know you're going to think this is crazy, but – uh – well, I'm hearing a voice and it's telling me to "Go North", and I really think I need some help with this. Can you help me?' He stared at me blankly. 'One moment, please,' he replied, reaching ever so slowly for his phone receiver. His fingers automatically dialed a number, and then I heard him say, 'Mary, you better come down here – quick.' I realized what an odd American he must have considered me, and humbly retreated to a bench.

Within minutes, a Quaker elder descended the stairs, and she was the vision of gentle light and kindness. I followed her to an alcove, where she turned to me and said, 'So tell me, dear, what is it?' I began the same way: 'I know you're going to think this is crazy, but—', and with that, I rambled on about the British Library, the Quaker tracts, the voice, the scholar beside me. When I finished speaking, she asked thoughtfully, 'What, exactly, were you reading, dear?' I told her all about the Meetings of First Generation Friends, and then we sat in silence together. Quite suddenly, she exclaimed, 'But of course you're being told to "Go North!" Why, that is where it all began! That is where the movement was born!' She spoke with the joy and enthusiasm of someone who has figured out a puzzle or a mystery. I stared at her, stultified. But just as quickly as she pronounced this revelation, she also declared, 'Let's go call Melvin!' Although I had no idea at the time, he was the Warden of Brigflatts, the meeting house built by Fox, right in the heart of 'Fox Country'.

‘Melvin,’ she said, as she reached him by phone, ‘there is someone I’d like you to speak with.’ Suddenly, I was on the phone with this stranger, confessing my story all over again, as Mary nudged me along: ‘I know you’re going to think this is crazy, but—.’ Melvin listened attentively, and was silent for only a moment when I had finished. ‘Right!’ he affirmed confidently, ‘surely you’re being called here, and let me tell you, you’re not the first. If you take the train to Oxenholme, I’d be happy to pick you up and bring you to Brigflatts. You can stay in the meeting house bed-sit for as long as you like and see why you’re supposed to come here.’ I was stunned by his willingness and openness to accept my ‘voice’. ‘But Melvin,’ I reluctantly replied, ‘I have plans to go to Scotland this weekend, and then I have so much research still to conduct in the London libraries. I just don’t think I can drop everything and “Go North!”’ ‘Well,’ he quickly replied in gentle admonishment, ‘I wouldn’t wait, if I were you. Cheerio, then! Bye bye.’

To Know Experimentally

Melvin was right. I had virtually no peace until I surrendered and listened to that voice. Within two days, I was on a train to Oxenholme, where he welcomed me to ‘Fox Country’. As we drove through the northern Yorkshire countryside, I could almost envision the First Generation Friends congregating under the ancient trees in the distance. As Melvin shared with me, they would just *know* when a Meeting was gathering, without any notice, pre-planned schedule or itinerary. Rather, they were that deeply connected in the spirit (some might even say clairvoyantly), wholly open to each other and to the divine source moving within them. This was an incredibly powerful, revolutionary movement, as thousands of Quakers operated beyond the rational and intellectual domain and ventured to live by the promptings of the spirit above all else.

Theirs was a vast network: despite a person’s social status, privilege, educational background, ethnicity, gender or race, these men and women surrendered all for their love of God and for God in each other. Miracles happened moment by moment in this web of connection, in this true fervor of primitive Christianity. In fact, Melvin introduced me to Fox’s *‘Book of Miracles’* (Cadbury, 1948b), a record of all the hands-on healings the founder and other Friends performed as they walked in the footsteps of Christ. As I will explain later, this book mysteriously disappeared after Fox’s death, although he had written that he wanted it published for posterity. New to this history, I strove to understand the mystical experiences of the early Friends. My work at hand was to remain open and breathe in the palpable spirit and wonder of this ancient land, where the movement was born.

On the day I journeyed to Firbank Fell, I finally realized why I had been called to the north. Following a footpath map which Melvin had given me, I crossed hill and dale as the Friends would have done centuries ago. It was a clear day with big, blue sky and bright sunshine, and the sheep were plentiful as they grazed in the fields. Yet, when I reached the base of Firbank Fell and looked up to ‘Fox’s Pulpit’, where he preached in 1652, converted a large number of Seekers, and subsequently gathered the Society of Friends, I noticed that the skies were changing dramatically. This, of course, is not uncommon in England. However, I also knew that I had to

ascend the mound. My entire body shook with that knowledge. Forging against the strong wind, I inched my way up the hill, step by step, with my heart pounding as it does when I am moved to speak in Meeting for Worship. A storm seemed to be coming in, and the sky looked ominous, but I had only one leading: all that I had ever experienced since the voice in the British Library brought me to this place, and I was moving forward, upward, northward.

At the pinnacle, I stood and envisioned the crowds Fox might have witnessed as he preached from this point. This, I knew, was the place that Friends today come and visit as a sort of Quaker pilgrimage. I stood there silently, openly, thankfully. And then it happened: what felt like a current of bright, endless light surged through my feet, up my body and to my head, and then it planted itself in my heart. My body trembled and quaked with pulsating force. Instantly, I knew I could not stand another moment, and gently negotiated my way to the ground, lying still on my back. Peace and serenity radiated through my entire body, and I felt as if I were soaring all at the same time. I closed my eyes and felt connected to the generations of Friends across the ages, in what was certainly one of the most mystical experiences of my life. Never before and never again have I felt such a pure oneness with all of humankind; the depth and breadth of Fox's message flowed through me, body and soul – *and this I knew experimentally*.

Indeed, George Fox had preached that he and all Friends must know their faith 'experimentally': that is, first-hand, experientially and viscerally (Nickalls, 1952, p.11). The knowledge I had gained on Firbank Fell was not intellectual at all; rather, it had penetrated deep into my flesh. Now I was able to understand more poignantly what it meant to feel the spirit as the earliest Friends described such motions in their Meetings. This was not something I could simply digest from books or learn in a library. Listening to the inward voice and stepping beyond the rational, I gained a life-transforming education of what it meant – and still means – to be a Quaker. And this revelation has informed every step of research I have since completed, as I strive to integrate my personal spiritual experience with my intellectual rigor and study. It is no easy task to build a bridge between these two realms, but now I realize I must; for, by 'going north', I was given the opportunity more sensitively to understand and connect with my spiritual ancestors and the potential power of their prophecy.

Returning to London, I alternated between the British Library and the Friends House Library, reading voraciously the tracts, broadsides, pamphlets, letters and extant accounts of the earliest Quaker Meetings, looking at all of them through my newfound lens. As I read piece after piece, I instantly recognized the striking attention paid to the 'quaking' body and the physicality of Quaker worship. Friend Charles Marshall, for example, described the corporeal manifestations of spirit taking place when hundreds of men and women would gather at a time:

But, ah! The seizings of soul, and prickings at heart, which attended that season! Some fell on the ground, others cried out under the sense of their states, which gave experimental knowledge of what is recorded in Acts ii.37. (Marshall, 1689, p.167)

Anti-Quaker spectators, equally drawn to and repulsed by such demonstrations of physical worship, likened the quaking to animalistic and satanic behavior in their aggressive campaign to discredit the movement:

And very observable it is ... sometimes one, sometimes more, fall into a great and dreadful shaking and trembling in their whole bodies and all of their joynts, with such risings and swellings in their bellies and bowels, sending forth shreeking, yellings, howlings and roarings, as not only affrighted the spectators, but caused the Dogs to bark, the swine to cry, and Cattel ran about, to the astonishment of all that heard them. (*The Quaker's Dream*, 1655, pp.3-4)

As I gleaned from the plethora of primary manuscripts describing the earliest Friends' unique and controversial 'quaking', I was most startled because I had never encountered such fascinating material in any of the books I had studied. In fact, the quaking body became the most blatant missing link in so much of Quaker history and theory. Traditional Quaker studies, that is, have all but erased the corporeal element of prophesying, dismissing such practices as ancillary and wayward. For historians, this aspect of worship seems to be a source of embarrassment or, at the very least, confusion. Even in such a well-respected book as *Visionary Women*, historian Phyllis Mack unfortunately interprets that Quaker women preached as 'disembodied spirits' and that they perceived their prophesyings as a transcendent, self-annihilating experience (Mack, 1992, pp.134, 173). This misunderstanding does not end with Quaker histories. Although we as a society are called Quakers, it is precisely what we no longer do: *quake*. Nor do we speak or theorize about quaking. Indeed, the body has become a much overlooked or forgotten component of spiritual experience and expression, and yet, at the root and heart of our religious movement, this is exactly where Friends located, experienced and expressed the living testament of God.

My own work in feminist studies has enlightened and informed my reading of the early Quaker tracts, particularly where scholars address the sacred connection between the body and the spirit. (Spelman, 1995; Bal, 1986). As feminist theologians explain, traditional Aristotelian dualism of western culture separated the sexes by associating men with the soul and reason and women with the body and emotions. Upheld by most Judeo-Christian religions, such patriarchal dualism constructed woman as flesh, owing to her identification with Eve, the first transgressor. As a result of humankind's fall from grace and resulting expulsion from paradise, men were expected to resent women for carnal desire and suffering. In their battle between flesh and spirit, men subsequently located the female body as the site of disobedience, sinfulness and the punishment of corporeal mortality. With such inherent sexism, the woman's body as flesh was marginalized and disempowered by the dominant sexual ideologies of church and state. Feminist scholars argue that such dualistic strategies were exceedingly destructive for all of humankind, resulting in a long history of misogyny in Judeo-Christian religious systems (Johnson, 1992; Moltmann-Wendel, 1995; Fiorenza, 1983; Ruether, 1983; Christ, 1980).

This denigration of the body carried far into the seventeenth century, when Calvinists and Puritans expressed a deep hostility toward the flesh as the site of original sin and innate depravity. As one Puritan minister graphically described, 'all the members of their bodies are only instruments of sin, and all their senses, seeing, hearing, tasting &c., are only inlets and outlets of sin, channels of corruption' (Greven, 1977, p.66). At war with the flesh, Puritans in George Fox's own time often attempted self-inflicted bodily mortifications in the name of disassociating themselves from the flesh. When Cotton Mather urinated one morning, he records

in his diary that he was filled with disgust and despair at 'the beastliness of human nature, and the loathsomeness of the inner man' (ibid., pp.65–73) Minister Edward Taylor referred to himself as 'a dirt ball ... a dung hill, a dot of dung, a varnished pot of putrid excrements ... guts, garbage, and rottenness' (Koehler, 1980, p.18). In such a state of flesh-loathing or somatophobia, Puritans believed that only death would free them from entrapment in the human body. As the figure of the body, identified with despised sexuality and immanence, women thus suffered severely for being situated as the trope of flesh and sin in the human world.

Yet, in the midst of such a misogynist religious mindset and culture, George Fox radically rejected traditional dualism and proclaimed an embodied spirit theology with the establishment of Quakerism. While his vision was extremely threatening and seemingly heretical to both religious and political sectors in British society, Fox declared such a revolutionary message by drawing from Joel 2:28–9: 'And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy ... Even upon the menservants and maid-servants in those days, I will pour out my Spirit.' In Fox's theology of Christopresentism, when spirit poured onto flesh, Friends magnified the 'indwelling Christ' and became 'celestial flesh'.¹ In this moment of transmogrification, Quaker men and women experienced a visceral, tangible conviction, a corporeal manifestation of God, and they quaked with tremor and force as testimony of the divine moving in them. With perfection proclaimed, First Generation Friends believed that they were ushering in primitive Christianity with revelation and agency. Their Meetings were the site of divine opening and possibility; their quaking bodies, the site of God's presence on earth (Tarter, 2001, pp.146–7).

In a state of 'enthusiasm', or divine indwelling (Nuttall, 1948, pp.23–4), Friends pronounced that their bodies were the living Christ, quaking with the power of prophecy and heavenly promise. This was reflected in Fox's healings and miracles, in his message of knowing experimentally, in his call to let go of 'Reason', priests and 'steeplehouses' (Sharman, 1991, p.59) and to open, rather, to the inward voice. Fox urged Friends to listen to their bodies (their holy temples) in reverent supplication, for this was the source of all that is divine. As he proclaimed, 'The way of Christ is found in us, God in our flesh!' (Hill, 1972, p.155). Friends embraced this message with ecstatic, prophetic authority. Rebecca Travers, for example, wrote in one of her tracts, 'every one wait in the light to feel the power, and life in the Son of God manifest in your bodies' (Travers, 1658, p.4). Martha Simmonds concurred that it was time to 'make your bodies fit for himself to dwell in' (Simmonds, n.d., p.4). In the religious society's tract, *Saul's Errand to Damascus*, they offer a list of the many previous prophets who fell down and trembled at the Word of God, including Daniel, David and Isaiah, and then, with biblical evidence, they encourage Friends to take part in such apostolic action (1653, p.5). For Quaker men and women, the physicality of their worship was perceived as the affirmation of the living Christ in a millennial age. The experience of quaking, above all, ushered in apocalyptic revelation and celestial presence on earth. As Dorothy White proclaimed: 'the time cometh that a day of Quaking shall pass over all that have not yet known Quaking, the earth shall be terribly shaken, and not the earth onely, but the Heavens also' (White, 1659, p.8). It was their vision and desire to see everyone quaking humbly and forcefully with the testimony of God.

With the advent of Quakerism, a world of possibilities opened to women as a result of Fox's theological vision. Whereas in the seventeenth century they were generally ecclesiastically disempowered (originating with St Paul's injunction that women keep silent in the church), Quakerism invited women not only to worship, but also to quake, prophesy, travel, preach and write in the beginning of the Quaker movement. Women Friends held authoritative roles as 'Spiritual Mothers', giving birth and then nursing the Children of Light with their 'Milk of the Word of God'.² Numerous pamphlets exist which describe these women swooning during Meetings for Worship, then falling to the ground, and howling in travail as their bellies swelled up 'as though blown up with wind' (Higginson, 1653, p.15).³ In effect, they were graphically simulating birth, or the second birth of Christ in their sacralized bodies. The literal and metaphorical melded together with accounts of women experiencing painless childbirth, a testament to their no longer living under the curse of Genesis but rather existing in a perfect and prelapsarian state.⁴ Accounts also exist describing men Friends who longed to travail like a woman in worship and sometimes feeling the fruits of such labor (Gilpin, 1653, p.3). These First Generation Friends celebrated the feminization of worship, positioning the sacred body as the very opening to God.⁵

Discovering the earliest Friends' unity of the body and spirit in religious worship – which I have since named the Quaker theory of the body – became a pivotal moment in my life, as both a feminist scholar and a Friend. Here, at last, were a group of men and women rejecting dualism, celebrating corporeal prophecy, upholding the authority of both sexes in the church, and sanctifying the experiences of women. In my academic studies, I had already discovered the long and painful history of misogyny and sexism inherent in Judeo-Christian dualism. Indeed, modern feminist theologians are now striving to reconnect the body and spirit in religious study and worship, arguing that only when the body is once again sacralized will harmony be restored to the church, to the state, to the sexes and to the earth. With much excitement and joy, then, I found that Friends were modeling an embodied spirit theology over 300 years ago, with astounding and dramatic consequences in their world. Yet I concomitantly asked myself why I had never been given such an affirming and exciting history before, and why it had to take nearly 25 years of reading, studying, attending Quaker schools and worshiping in Meetings finally to uncover this material, locked deep in the archives of London. While percolating with excitement to find such a treasure of Quaker experience, I was also suffering with the revelation that these manuscripts had been intentionally censored, buried and kept away from generations – centuries – of Friends. The real journey began as I asked myself, 'Wherever did the body go in Quaker history and Quaker worship – even to this day? When did things change so dramatically, and more importantly, *why*?'

Quench not the Spirit

There is a very disturbing history of censorship within Quakerism that quickly surfaces in the archives. In the transition from First to Second Generation Quakerism, I have found that all traces of enthusiasm were intentionally censored

and excised from not only Quaker Meetings but Quaker manuscripts as well. Scholar Richard Bailey attributes this shift to the fallout of the Naylor incident in 1656. Looking at the original letters of Fox and Friends, Bailey discovers (and recovers) the celebration of primitive Christianity extolled by Quakers. There he finds a language and an impassioned expression of men and women who positioned Fox as an avatar. Ann Burden, for example, addressed Fox as 'thou Son of God which the world knoweth not'; Thomas Curtis as the one 'who was dead and is alive, and forever lives'; Richard Sale as 'thou god of life and power'; and Frances Howgill and Edward Burrough as the one 'who art with the Father' (Bailey, 1992, p.128). In the ecstatic prophecy and worship of the First Generation, the founder declared that all were the living Christ, the celestial flesh to redeem the world. The Naylor incident was yet another extension of this *scriptura rediviva*,⁶ with apostolic Quakers reliving Christ's entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. James Nayler, whose initials were J.N. (as in Jesus of Nazareth) and who physically looked like stereotypical portraits of Jesus Christ, rode on a donkey into Bristol in 1656, while men and women Friends sang *Hosannah* and waved palms before him (ibid., pp.117–20, 158). This, of course, was received by mainstream British society as a blatant performance of blasphemy and heresy.

In the aftermath of the Naylor incident, during which Friends were brutally persecuted for their 'heretical' prophecy of divine indwelling and enthusiastic authority, Quakers responded with an internal wave of discipline and a tight rein on displays of enthusiasm, primarily aimed at the women who had most commonly manifested such corporeal prophecy in Meetings. There is a long history of Quaker men who blame Martha Simmonds, for example, for bewitching and seducing Nayler to ride into Bristol.⁷ In fact, historian Phyllis Mack contends that the only true outcome of the Naylor incident was 'a more suspicious attitude toward female prophets on the part of the Quaker leadership' (Mack, 1992, p.256). Scholar Christine Trevett has carefully studied this historiography and concludes:

the actions of the disgraced Nayler have frequently been presented as due to manipulative and hysterical women. Students (such as myself) of the ancient heresies of the patriarchal Church are very familiar with presentations of this kind ... It is striking, too, that (with notable exceptions among specialists on the seventeenth century who have made a detailed study of Nayler) scarcely a writer refers to those *men* who figured in what happened – no less extravagant or 'hysterical' in their actions. (Trevett, 1991, pp.29–30)

Consequently, women's voices were generally silenced within the Quaker sect as a result of the Naylor incident, and enthusiasm, henceforth associated with Ranterism and schism, was no longer tolerated.

The Quaker suspicion surrounding prophesying resulted in a series of tracts written by men Friends which were printed and spread widely throughout the religious society, instructing members to wait and test their leadings before giving them voice or movement. In *An Epistle to Friends Coming Forth in the Beginning of Testimony*, Charles Marshall, the same Friend who had previously longed to travail like a woman in prophecy, tells Friends to 'wait diligently, not only to know and favour every Motion, but also to know the appointed time and season when the

same Motion should be brought forth', lest a Friend speak or move too soon, resulting in an 'untimely birth' (Marshall, 1675, pp.2–3). As early as 1660, William Britten gives an even more elaborate scheme for testing a leading. First, he writes, Friends should have 'a Spiritual Watch' for the 'true calling'. Then, if moved, they should bring the calling to 'a Spiritual Touchstone' for trial, to see 'whether it be good or bad': 'Yea, note in words themselves, how sometimes they are too many; sometimes unsound and untrue ... sometimes too short ... Therefore let them first be tryed by the Spiritual Touchstone, before they proceed out of thy mouth' (Britten, 1660, pp.2–3). Finally, Britten writes, they should use 'the Spiritual Scales' in order 'to weigh, ponder, or consider all things to be spoken or done, before they passe from thee'. Otherwise, he concludes quite vehemently, Friends will be 'lyars ... to be amongst Doggs, and Whoremongers!' (ibid., p.10). With so many regimented steps to check a leading, Friends inadvertently began to fear and doubt if they were ever truly being moved to prophecy or speak.

By the 1670s, the Quaker leadership had institutionalized a conformity of spiritual practice throughout the religious society. First, men Friends determined to routinize Quaker ministry, documenting the codified standards for ministers in a comprehensive Epistle sent to all the Ministers and Elders of the church. Ministers, they deemed, were advised to 'avoid all imagined, unseasonable and untimely prophesyings'. They were neither to strive beyond their gifts by speaking too much nor to quench their ministry. Rather, they were to be still and 'wait till life arise to bring forth its own testimony'. And yet the Epistle cautioned them 'to avoid all vain repetitions, imitations, and formed habits' (Barclay, 1678, pp.332–4), reflecting the more spontaneous, less formalized expressions of divine utterance in the beginning of the movement. Finally, the Epistle delivered a program for ministering to non-Friends, a systematic way of speaking to such an audience which actually contradicted the original Quaker tenet of preaching by divine inspiration with the leadings of God. This censoring wave of men Friends clearly reversed the original vision of Quaker worship and simultaneously destroyed any possibilities for openings in the spontaneous realm of worship.

Next the Friends issued a new stipulation for all traveling ministers, requiring certificates of these women and men before they could preach the Word abroad. Indeed, as Richard Bauman writes, 'this would have been unthinkable in the first flush of the Quaker movement' (Bauman, 1983, p.147). According to this new mandate, Friends could no longer preach as they were so moved. Rather, to ensure that they were pouring forth sound doctrine, they first had to appear before a ministry committee of their local Monthly Meeting and discuss the prospects of travel, family circumstances and the strength of their ministry. Such regulation confirmed the routinization of Quaker prophesying which was well established in the 1670s.

Finally, this program of censorship extended to the Quaker press with the creation of the Second-day's Morning Meeting (SDMM) in 1672. This committee of men Friends was set forth to determine every tract and book to be issued by the religious society. The Minutes of the SDMM reveal that these censoring editors worked to ensure that the Friends' 'weakness and nakedness may not be expressed in print to the whole world'.⁸ The men, that is, were reinventing their national identity, in hopes of dignifying the movement and restoring their reputation.

Resorting to traditional dualism and patriarchal conventions, they no longer valorized the tender leadings of God pouring forth spontaneously and in print; it was their intention to stamp out any such 'weakness' or 'nakedness' and ultimately excise feminized enthusiasm altogether. Records clearly document how mystical or prophetic writings, primarily written by women, were rejected with the committee's notorious stamp, 'This is not mete to print.'⁹ Women such as Mary Ellerton responded with quite prophetic warning to the committee, however: 'Quench not the spirit neither despise prophesying, least you be found fighting or striving against the work of God.'¹⁰ Jackson Cope writes that the SDMM particularly 'repressed' anything 'chaotic in expression', such as the incantatory style which Fox and the early Friends had espoused at the movement's origin. Twenty years later, ministers were being told to put a stop to such repetitions in their prophecy, and writers were being told to be still and quiet. Cope poignantly concludes:

And when the Morning Meeting listened to the ancient voices of the First Publishers of Truth, they heard only an 'abrupt and broken' uncouthness where once God had spoken, and strong hearts had quaked in the glory of the sound. (Cope, 1971, p.227)

As Margaret Hope Bacon concurs, these men had surely forgotten their ancestors (Bacon, 1969, p.84).

In writing about *The Literary Life of Early Friends*, Luella Wright reflects on this period of censorship and notes that the work of this committee led to 'eighteenth-century exclusiveness and barrenness in literary productivity' (Wright, 1932, p.97). Her metaphor of barrenness could not be more fitting or appropriate, for, in stamping out all enthusiasm or expressions of divine indwelling, the Friends created a barrenness among the once fecund Spiritual Mothers. The creation of the Word, rooted in spontaneous, corporeal prophecy of the earliest Friends, had been patrolled and utterly stifled.

Quaker history was also intentionally rewritten in the 1670s, and again after Fox died, with all evidence of quaking and avataristic language being removed from publications. Bailey looks at the violent ways in which Quaker history was 'bowdlerized' with its revision project that sought to cut out enthusiasm altogether:

The manuscripts show evidence that Fox personally tampered with the sources. He made deletions with broad ink strokes. He made corrections that are indisputably in his own hand. He struck out extravagant phrases of adoration and substituted more moderate phrases. In places whole patches were ripped from the sheets ... the jagged edges still revealing the broad ink crossings-out. (Bailey, 1992, p.186)

The revisioning of Quaker history did not stop with Fox's editing of the Swarthmoor Manuscripts. Upon his death in 1691, the male leadership went one step further by censoring Fox's own writings. The SDMM assigned Thomas Ellwood to edit Fox's journals for publication. Bailey's close analysis of the original manuscript journal and Ellwood's final edition reveals that a great many of Fox's visions and messages 'came under Ellwood's editorial knife'. Bailey describes the passages 'cut out' (Bailey, 1992, p.63) of the Ellwood edition in a further wave of violent censorship, and Luella Wright refers to the editor's 'excisions' (Wright, 1932, p.106). Such material of Quakers' earliest prophetic experiences will remain unknown, as a

result. As Christine Trevett notes, there is so much about our spiritual ancestors we will never even know about, as a result of the 'process of "cleansing" Quaker history which occurred in the final decades of the century' (Trevett, 1991, pp.25–8).

Fox's *Book of Miracles* is a lasting reminder of this loss. When Fox died, he left a letter detailing all of the manuscripts that he wanted to be printed – including his book of 'merrekeles' – but leaving all final publication decisions to the SDMM. Henry Cadbury writes, 'they took considerable liberty to omit or edit' Fox's works, and this *Book of Miracles* was suspiciously lost and never found (Cadbury, 1948b, p.39). It is important to note here that Cadbury reconstructed this book, on the basis of all of the miracles he could discern through scrupulous study of the original Quaker manuscripts. The SDMM committee abandoned the idea of releasing all of Fox's works, and most especially his controversial *Book of Miracles*, after publishing only three folio volumes (his *Journal* in 1694, his *Epistles* in 1698, and his *Doctrinals* in 1706). This wave of censorship and controlled historiography primarily directed by the SDMM eradicated all traces of enthusiasm, or Fox's message of divine indwelling, and concomitantly silenced women in the Society of Friends.

Reverting to a traditional theology of dualism, the Second Generation of Friends separated the body from the spirit, fearing and no longer trusting the spontaneous corporeal experiences of prophecy, and instituted this theology with Robert Barclay's *Apology for the True Christian Divinity* (Barclay, 1678). In this book, which was published first in Latin by the Friends in 1676 and later distributed in English to all Meetings, Robert Barclay rewrote Quaker theology by setting up a traditional binarism of the body and the spirit. Removing spiritual worship from authentic and visceral religious experience, from its performance through the feminized body, that is, he replaced the experiential concept of Quaker worship with a philosophical and rational one. Severing the 'inward' from the 'outward', Barclay disempowered the original Quaker notion of celestial flesh by replacing Fox's literalization of spirit with a more traditional and figurative hermeneutics of religious worship (Creasey, 1962, p.23).

In fact, the notorious anti-Quaker pamphleteer Charles Leslie expressed his support of this change in Quaker theology and practice, thus revealing the absolute reversal and quite contradictory stances that Friends were taking. In his satirical tract, *The Snake in the Grass: or, Satan Transform'd into an Angel of Light*, Leslie ridicules: 'What! Are they asham'd of their former Quaking? Or have they not now so great a degree of Inspiration as they had before?' (Leslie, 1696, pp.xxxvi–xxxvii). Leslie, in effect, pinpoints the absolute erasure of the quaking body in Friends' worship; he then supports the revised religious, dualistic doctrines and enforced practices of the new Quaker leadership.

By the 1670s, the male leaders of the Friends no longer advocated the corporeal sense of an indwelling Christ, and religious experience became a scheme of thought and reason imposed on all Quakers. A hierarchical structure of Meetings was set up to oversee the quality of preaching, and widespread conformity was enforced throughout the redefined religious sect. As a result of such enforced hegemony and conservatism, a general suspicion of ecstatic prophecy prevailed, and order and control over worship were implemented. Maurice Creasey poignantly crystallizes how Barclay and second generation Friends therefore replaced Quakerism's

corporeal, experiential spirituality with a rational, philosophical one, ‘moving [worship], so to speak, from the Meeting to the Study’ (Creasey, 1962, p.11). Indeed, Friends’ spiritual practice had moved not only from the Meeting to the study, but from the mystical body to the rational mind. And, I would argue, this has affected the quality of their ministry and worship even to this day. Encountering this material as a twenty-first-century Friend, I felt saddened and robbed of my spiritual heritage, longing to mend these rifts, silences and gaps by unearthing and resurrecting first generation Friends’ revolutionary prophecy of celestial flesh and sharing it not only with my religious society but with academia and society at large.

‘He Opened us a Book’

My research journey, integrated with my spiritual autobiography as a Friend, seeks to reconnect with the Quaker past and reclaim its vitality and spirit for the future. I know that this is no easy feat, and I realize that both twenty-first-century Quakers and academics at large may look suspiciously upon this project. For Friends, the theory of the body is most likely a foreign concept to their experience as Quakers. When I speak at Monthly, Quarterly and Yearly Meetings, I find that very few have ever even heard of this buried history of quaking, prophesying and censorship. In the academy, I simultaneously find that autobiography is a peripheral and much less accepted genre for criticism, while spiritual autobiography is even more suspect and censored. I can understand the reasons for all of these Quaker and academic reservations, and yet I nevertheless feel compelled to move forward in this project. It surprisingly called out to me with a voice in the British Library, a bastion of academic integrity and tradition, and it has led me, quite remarkably, to every supporting document and scholar on this mystical and affirming path of recovery and reclamation. To censor or squelch such a leading would be the gravest mistake of all.

There is a powerful moment in Quaker history which accentuates the potential and the importance of including spiritual autobiography in one’s work. When George Fox first prophesied and convinced Margaret Fell, the ‘Nursing Mother of Quakerism’ (Ross, 1949, p.45), she writes that she was so moved by his ministry that her entire body began to tremble with the power of God’s Truth. As Fox turned to her and others, he asked, ‘What canst *thou* say? You will say, “Christ saith this, and the apostles say this,” but what canst *thou* say?’ Fell responded to this provocative and quite personal query by declaring, ‘He opened us a book that we had never read in, nor indeed had never heard that it was our duty to read in it (to wit) the Light of Christ in our consciences, our minds never being turned to it before.’¹¹ In effect, Fox’s message proclaimed the importance of each person’s own voice, leading, ‘book’ – autobiography. Invoking the words and wisdom of Fox and Fell, I find that spiritual autobiography becomes a key component in the creation – and reclamation – of Quaker history and theory.

In the academy, there are also places for autobiography and autobiographical criticism, although this remains a controversial idea even to this day. Friend Michael Heller, Chair of Roanoke College’s English Department, recently put together a panel at the Conference on College Composition and Communication, which he

titled 'Teacher, Is it OK to say "I"?' Each of our essays addressed the pedagogical premises behind suppressing the 'I' in students' writings, which, we concurred, ultimately teaches them to distrust their own inward voice. As a Quaker, I find that this can fast become quite destructive and hypocritical work in education. Moreover, as a scholar, I find that our own academic criteria for publication sorely reject, or at the very least suspect, the 'I' or any autobiographical framework in our writing.

My own dissertation is a case in point. With a focus on Quaker women's prophesyings and writings, I spent years researching manuscripts in England and Philadelphia and connecting, both intellectually and spiritually, with the Spiritual Mothers I was studying. As I began to write my thesis in fall of 1992, I met an advisor and excitedly shared how my academic research and spiritual autobiography were overlapping. She stopped me dead in my tracks: 'You will not put anything autobiographical in this dissertation, or else I will not work with you.' Bred out of Ivy League schools, she found this notion of autobiographical criticism, let alone spiritual reflection, to be antithetical to proper academic training. I followed her advice, certain that I could save this writing endeavor for later in my academic career. However, during the week before submitting my dissertation to committee, I could not hold back another moment. The voice was too strong, once more: 'Tell your story.' Over and over it kept calling from within.

I sat down on the night before submitting the 350-page manuscript and wrote an appendix which was the story of hearing the voice in the British Library and being led to unbury this material (Tarter, 1993). I felt lifted and enlivened after doing so and submitted the dissertation to all five readers in the morning. Then I waited anxiously.

At the dissertation defense, I had no idea how everyone would react to the appendix, yet I knew in my body, mind and spirit that I had listened attentively and upheld the calling to tell and honor the story. Only a few minutes into the two-hour defense, my professor, Mary – the same professor who had worked with Elise Boulding and who had told me to 'Jump in and swim' at the British Library – pronounced, 'Michele, I was very struck and moved by your appendix. This is where your writing lifts off the page and speaks with powerful voice. When you revise this manuscript into a book, I suggest that you move the appendix into the introduction, and then weave your own story all the way through your research and scholarship. It is too special and powerful to tuck away in an appendix.' I looked around the room to see others nodding and concurring – perhaps afraid to speak it, but nevertheless agreeing – all save the first advisor, who said nothing at all. Her silence, rather than adamant rejection or criticism, was enough affirmation for me. I had learned a valuable lesson about the place of autobiography and inward voice in the academy on that special day.

As a scholar and as a Friend studying Quaker manuscripts, I come to these materials from two distinctly separate worlds: academia and religion, scholarship and faith. I realize that I am treading the fine line between insider/outsider as I study these materials. The academic in me has been trained to be extremely suspicious of several experiences I have already encountered: hearing voices, leaving behind libraries to follow mystical leadings, and incorporating too much of an 'I' in my scholarly writing. Positioned as an 'outsider', I am trained to look at texts with the resources of feminist theory, poststructuralism and cultural studies. However, the

Quaker in me, educated at Haddonfield and Moorestown Friends schools in New Jersey, convinced on Firbank Fell and subsequently a member of Boulder Friends Meeting, is well versed in the mystical experiences of the earliest Friends. As an 'insider', I have been seasoned to remain open and listen to the inward voice – a voice that lifted me up and out of the intellectual realm of the British Library and led me to northern Yorkshire, the birthplace of Quakerism. Appreciating Fox's message of experimental knowledge, I ventured forth, not certain of why I was going or what I would find. I trusted Mary at the Friends House, Melvin at Brigflatts, and the invisible web of Friends across the ages who all seemed to be suddenly present and accompanying me on my journey north. Ultimately, I find that there are many advantages to occupying the spheres of academia and religion simultaneously.

Yet the striking revelation came as I discovered that my insider's history was not authentic and my outsider lens ironically led me back to the original Quaker theory of the body. Indeed, the outsider position became imperative to my insider faith, for it provided me with the resources necessary to question, challenge and interpret Quaker manuscripts in new, refreshing ways. My focus on feminist studies and the body, for example, inspired me to read the primary manuscripts with an enlightened understanding of dualism and embodied spirit theology; my study of early modern women broadened my perception of Quaker women in the context of church and state, family and politics. Without such academic tools, I might have followed in the same footsteps of Friends and accepted blindly the long-held, unchallenged, yet reinvented history of second generation Quakerism. This is potentially the dilemma of insiders doing research on their faith: myopia, or even tunnel vision.

For centuries, there has been mainstream Quaker acceptance of a history that was actually rewritten in the 1670s in order to dignify the religious movement. Excising enthusiasm and corporeal prophecy and enforcing a conservative, dualistic rendition of Quakerism, second generation Friends established a new identity for their religious society, and we have propagated their myth ever since. Moreover, with a history written primarily by men, we have subscribed to a patriarchal portrait that rarely considers the thousands of Quaker women who existed besides Margaret Fell. Quaker scholars have subsequently accepted the traditional reading of gender and texts and have inadvertently generated old mythologies, upholding the well-established, 'corporate' interpretation of Friends' history and worship. By integrating the insider/outsider positions, I have essentially been able to listen to the inward voice, not be influenced by mainstream views and, with the help of academic resources, return to the source of First Generation Friends and their prophecy of celestial flesh.

I must, however, confess that I find the insider position to be a critical and compelling one in many ways. As a Friend with decades of experience in worship and a vocabulary steeped in early Quaker texts, I deeply understand the meaning of being open to leadings, of listening to the inward voice, of knowing experimentally – of so many things the earliest Friends wrote about and shared. When I read a scholarly study about the Quakers written by someone who has never even attended a Meeting for Worship, I have often intuited that the scholar does not fully comprehend or interpret the true meaning of the spiritual experience, in historical or contemporary terms. I have discussed this with Quaker colleagues who have all

noted the same concern. For this reason, an insider position can be very fruitful in seeking the fullest understanding of Quaker texts, but this is certainly not an exclusive criterion, in my opinion. For, even if the scholar is a Friend, it is imperative that he or she resist subscribing to unchallenged beliefs or generating old mythologies. This I have learned, above all.

I share the Quaker theory of the body wherever I am led to go, trusting that, as Friends would say, ‘way will open’ and that the invisible network of first generation Friends will guide me in this mystical path forward. Over the years, there has been a spectrum of responses to this recovered history and theory of the body. As I have mentioned earlier, when I share this material at Quaker gatherings, there are always those who have never heard of such a history; it seems to threaten the very framework of their spiritual path, and they become offended and sometimes even hurt or angry. Yet, on the other hand, there are far more who feel excited and enthusiastic, for at last, they tell me, their physical experiences in worship suddenly have a history to which they can connect. One young woman of Guilford College’s Quaker Leadership Scholars Program confessed that her hand and arm pulsate each time she is moved to speak in worship; another at Pendle Hill, the Quaker Center for Study and Contemplation in Pennsylvania, spoke of swaying forward and backward as she feels spirit moving within her. At a Quarterly Meeting, another spoke of his heart beating rapidly and his body quivering before he is moved to speak in a Meeting. Interestingly enough, this last man confessed that he does not feel safe sharing such mystical experiences with most members of his Monthly Meeting. As a result, he and a small group of mystical Quakers – all of them feeling censored by their home congregations – gather secretly at their Quarterly Meeting to share their stories of corporeal prophecy and support one another. There are many, many more who embrace the Quaker theory of the body with joy, longing to know the oldest, purest, uncensored stories of their spiritual ancestors. They equally long to see more corporeal prophecy and enlivening spirit in their Meetings, where youth attend less and less, and where numbers are dwindling.

The vestiges of censorship have smothered the living testimony and enthusiasm of Friends over the centuries, and now I find that we are being called back to the origins of our spiritual family. The most affirming knowledge I have yet received is that QUIP, Quakers United in Publications, has recently decided to reissue Henry Cadbury’s edition of *George Fox’s ‘Book of Miracles’* (Cadbury, 2000). Although Cadbury’s study has been out of print for several decades, the Society of Friends is reprinting it because of the surge of interest among members to reclaim Quakerism’s long-buried history. Moreover, other wonderful books have been released which celebrate the connection of the body and spirit in Quaker spirituality, most notably Sheila Ruth’s *Take Back the Light*.¹² I am equally excited to find that Pendle Hill conducts a weekly Meeting for Worship for Healing, which practices hands-on healing in the same manner as the earliest Friends. Many other Meetings are beginning to uphold such ancient practices of our spiritual ancestors. As a transatlantic religious society, Friends are invited to tap into the myriad resources available to all and reconnect the body and spirit in Quaker worship. My own journey northward became a living testament of this message; my dissertation, an extension of bridging this spiritual and academic work or, more precisely, the insider and outsider within me. Indeed, this recovered history beckons Friends to

open and listen to the inward voice, to know experimentally, to quench not the spirit, and to go north, listening to our spiritual elders in unity with their faith and practice. Such resources of vitality and spirit offer the religious society hope and promise as we turn daringly towards the future of Quakerism.

Notes

¹ See Bailey (1992, esp. ch.3), also Nuttall (1948).

² The terms 'Spiritual Mother' and 'Milk of the Word of God' were used prevalently by George Fox, Margaret Fell and numerous First Generation Friends. For example, Fox wrote 'To the Men and Women's Meetings' in 1673: 'So a Mother in Israel brings forth to God, and nurses upp the Children of God, as the Mother amongst Christians ... A mother gives suck, and can suckle, and nourish and teach the young ones the Truth, and strengthen for she has the breasts and the milk of the Word' (LSF, Mss. vol.47). For more on Spiritual Mothers, see Tarter (2001, pp.149–50) and Barbour (1986, pp.41–60).

³ Descriptions of women in Quaker Meetings include those in Francis Higginson (1653), *The Quacking Mountebanck* (1655), *The Quakers Fiery Beacon* (1655) and *Quakers Meer Obbists* (1678).

⁴ Reports of painless childbirth were perceived as a sign that women had returned to a prelapsarian state of perfection, no longer under the curse of Genesis 3:16. The report of Mary Clements is in a letter from Thomas Salthouse to Margaret Fell, 9 July 1657, LSF, London, Swarthmore mss. 3:158.

⁵ On Quakers' 'feminine' religious style and the feminization of Quaker worship, see Tarter (2001), Marietta (1984, p.31) and Mack (1985–86).

⁶ For more on *scriptura rediviva*, the resurrection of Scripture through embodiment, see Cope (1971, p.273).

⁷ Three Quaker men (John Perrot, Humphrey Norton and William Shaw) resorted to traditional, misogynist claims when they wrote that Simmonds had bewitched and seduced Nayler: 'the agents of J[ames] N[ayler] have come creeping on their bellies to be owned yea: Martha their miserable mother, this day hath been [at] us, and all her witchery and filthy enchantments is set at naught ... and fleshly liberty was their overthrow' (letter to William and Margaret Blanch, Ireland, April 1657, as cited in Mack, 1992, p.257).

⁸ Friends House Library, London, mss. Morning Meeting Minutes 27: 3rd Month 5th, 1678.

⁹ See, for example, the case of Judith Bowlbie and her censorship of the Second Day Morning Meeting. LSF, London, mss. Morning Meeting Minutes 18: 4th month 6th, 1690. See also Wright (1932, pp.102–4).

¹⁰ LSF, Epistle of Mary Ellerton to the Morning Meeting, 23 September 1699, Portfolio mss 1/100.

¹¹ LSF, Spence mss. III: 135.

¹² See, for example, Hodges (1995), Ruth (1994).

George Fox and Christian Gnosis

Glen D. Reynolds

My Research, My Journey

I was a thin, unconfident child frequently bullied at school. Every bedtime involved a ritualized kneeling and praying to God for some relief from the pain of a hostile world. I lived in London suburbia with about half the population Jewish. In the 1970s I watched on our new colour television, episode six of *The World at War*, which was entitled 'Genocide'. Its imagery has haunted me all my life: a hostile world, the inhumanity of its occupants, and a dependence upon loving parents who would one day be taken from me. I could not figure out what and where God was in all this chaos. I had entered into a dialogue with God, which I have drifted in and out of ever since.

Following Church of England Confirmation classes (which I happily volunteered for), and choir practice three times a week, I entered the world of cubs and scouts. I remember one evening saluting the Union flag, and felt the stirring of rebellion for the first time. At twelve years of age I joined the Young Socialists. A few years later I retreated into the obscurity of the Young Communist League, having the *Morning Star* delivered to the safety of my suburban home, and watched with awe the anarchy of the punk movement as it shocked and spiralled in and out of the news. What I loved about all these movements was the idealism of immediate and radical change.

In 1982, I married a Quaker and gradually became convinced that I had picked up my spiritual roots developed in childhood and had discovered a mature, unorthodox faith in which I felt at home. I was revisiting my dialogue with God.

I concentrated far too much upon a legal career, which put me on the crest of a very selfish and hedonistic wave. After or during a 'burn out', I succumbed to the reality of reaching the lowest part of my life, spending time in hospital with depression and loneliness, feeling suicidal but not really having the guts to do anything about it. Psychiatric units can be very conducive to spiritual development. I was visited by Quakers from Maidenhead Preparative Meeting while I was in hospital, who gave me love, strength and perspective. This was, I believe, my own period in the wilderness, a time during which I read *Quaker Faith and Practice* (1995), and *The Quaker Reader* (West, 1992), provided by members of Devonshire House and Tottenham Monthly Meeting. I had an overwhelming sense of being held in the care of a Quaker Meeting and community. The following passage speaks to me on this point:

Precisely because there is no trained human pastor available to nourish, guide, and counsel unprogrammed friends, it is all the more important that our meetings for

worship be centers of living spiritual power, a fellowship alive to the Spirit. Only when meetings are thus truly alive in Christ, said George Fox, is it possible for them to experience what he called the Gospel Order, which included the Spirit-given ability to meet specific needs of a specific situation and time, including Spirit-guided pastoral care. (Taber, 1989, p.24)

After several months of reflection, I started to attend Bunhill Fields Preparative Meeting in London and I attended Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre in Birmingham, an experience that changed the nature and direction of my life. Woodbrooke was certainly a place of retreat, but was also a place of spiritual education with wonderful resources. I had opened to me the study of theology which, as a lawyer, was new to me. A course entitled 'Heaven on Earth' (Dandelion *et al.*, 1998) studied the apocalyptic nature of early Quaker and Pauline thought, filling me with excitement and an interest in study which I had never encountered before. It was the sense of a realized eschatology in the theology of early Quakers which enthused me, and I believe led me to examine this eschatology in other movements (including Gnosticism) by way of comparison.

I began, through studying, to feel that my own relationship with God was being revealed to me in a new way. I also had a sense that, at Woodbrooke, there was a community that wanted to teach and enrich:

As Quakers we have a long tradition of taking responsibility for our own religious development ... we all have a responsibility to ourselves and to our religious community to educate ourselves for our religious calling. (Lunn, 1994, p.918)

I also attended the lectures given by the historian Larry Ingle, who, with a different perspective from that of the theologian, allowed me to indulge in a form of cynicism, questioning what was religious and what was politically motivated in the development of early Quakers. Ingle (1989, p.265) states that the theology of Fox incorporated a 'hidden faith', broadly illustrated in terms of Fox's claims to divinity or God-possession. Saints were not distinct from Christ as far as Fox was concerned.

Herein lies the central profound truth that led Fox to found a new religion and it 'was later literally ripped from the record in the name of respectability' (Bailey, 1992, p.224). I noted that Ingle, amongst others (Creasey, 1956, p.157; Walker, 1983, p.186; Samuel, 1985, pp.297–322; Bailey, 1992, p.xii; Brooks Saxl, 1999, pp.55–65), claimed that there was (in the deifying nature of a transforming Light) a similarity in Fox's message to aspects of Gnosticism.

None of the above references to Fox sharing a theology similar to the Gnostics were explored in any detail. Following Ingle's claims as to the embarrassment of a 'hidden faith', I was intrigued by one of Fox's contemporaries (John Owen) who with the combined effort of two texts in 1655 (Goold, 1853b, p.12) and 1679 (Goold, 1850, p.38) likened Quaker theology to Christian or the 'Valentinian' School of Gnostics. Owen, a leading Puritan and Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University, was unique in making this observation. I embarked on my examination of a Christian (Valentinian) Gnostic comparison with Fox in the context of doctoral research.

George Fox: a Christian Gnostic

Gnosis is an individual's discovery through revelation and baptism that they are divine, with a part of their body (soul, seed, light) being consubstantial to the redeemer figure of Christ. The theological implications arising from Gnostic revelation include (a) supernatural union of the divine element in the individual with Christ and the individual becoming aware of their divinity resulting in spiritual perfection and freedom from the power and temptation of sin on earth; and (b) the devaluation of calendrical time/events (as significant aspects of theological exegesis) in pursuance of an anti-cosmic/historical emphasis upon inward revelation, thus limiting the authority of Scripture and of communion and baptism to the extent that they are historically particular outward rituals.

In my research I argue as follows:

- a) Fox claims to restore primitive Christianity, yet unconsciously attempts to renew aspects of early church Christian (Valentinian) Gnosticism. His quest for divinity, perfection and a realized eschatology is readily transferable to the early church context of gnosis in which (in opposition to the authority of the developing orthodoxy) reunion with God is a realizable eschatological aim on earth.
- b) The concept of union with God is a 'keystone' of Foxian theology and incorporates the use of 'Light' in an eschatologically motivated metaphysical dynamic. Previous scholarship has generally emphasized 'Light' and 'union' in Fox's theology as merely ethically motivated concepts. The conclusions of my research place Fox's quest for divinity and theology in a Gnostic context, as opposed to the apocalyptic framework identified in current research.
- c) Save for an isolated reference by Fox to Gnostic-Hermetic concepts, there is no evidence that Fox used or was influenced by Gnostic mythological texts. This fact, together with a difference in scriptural/sacramental exegesis between Fox and Gnosticism, results in my work concluding that Foxian theology is remarkably *similar* to Christian (Valentinian) Gnosticism.

The context of my work arises from the following reference by Owen in a preface to a paper delivered in 1655:

all to be watchful against this great, and I hope the last considerable attempt of Satan (by way of seduction and temptation) against the foundation of the gospel.

Those then, who of old opposed the doctrine of the Trinity, especially of the Deity of Christ, his person and natures ... to be those who are commonly esteemed to be followers of Simon Magus, known chiefly by the names of Gnostics and Valentinians. These, with their abominable figments of aeons, and their combinations, conjugations, genealogies, and unintelligible imaginations, wholly overthrowing the whole revelation of God concerning himself and his will, the Lord Jesus and the gospel, chiefly, with their leaders, Marcus, Basildes, Ptolemaeus, Valentinus secundus (all following or imitating Simon Magus and Menander), of all others most perplexed and infected the primitive church ... I shall not separate them from Montanus, with his enthusiastical formal associates in whose abominations it was hoped that these latter days might have been unconcerned, until the present madness of some, commonly

called Quakers, renewed their follies, but these may pass ... and those of the like fond imaginations, that ever and anon troubled the church with their madness and folly. (Goold, 1853b, p.12)

Owen is essentially accusing Quakers, amongst others, of devaluing the historic and eternal Christ (as revealed in Scripture and the institution of the church), by the emphasis placed solely upon revelatory Light as Christ. Owen clarified his criticism in 1679. The clarification expands upon the generalized earlier observations without deviation from his central criticism concerning the Quaker and Gnostic emphasis upon Christ experienced by revelation alone, and the subsequent saint-like deification of the recipient. Owen viewed the primacy of authority attached to revelation as promoting the idea of freedom from sin and temptation, stating in 1677:

But when anyone shall pretend unto spiritual actings or enjoyments which are neither prescribed nor promised in the Scripture, nor are investigable in the light of reason, no man is upon this mere profession obliged to give credit thereunto; – nor can any man tell what evil effects or consequences his so doing may produce; for when men are once taken off from that sure ground of Scripture and their own understandings, putting themselves afloat on the uncertain waters of fancies or conjectures, they know not how they may be tossed, nor whither they may be driven. (Goold, 1853a, p.333)

The comments of Owen relate to the recurring Puritan query as to the nature of the Quaker means of revelation as it applies to the principle of a universal saving 'Light' and its relation to the Trinity. Owen never suggests early Quaker use of Gnostic mythological texts but asserts that the Quaker interpretation and use of revelation (which Quakers believed was universally available) was Gnostic as it devalued if not negated the Trinity and the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, and the authority of Scripture. Owen's comparison of early Quaker theology with that of early church Gnostics can be summarized by the following list of shared characteristics resulting from the nature and function of 'Light':

- 1) a spiritual and divine perfection claimed by the individual further to receipt of gnosis through revelation,
- 2) an anti-historical emphasis as a result of the authority attached to gnosis obtained by revelation,
- 3) a devaluation of the authority of Scripture and the external aspects of communion and baptism.

Points 2 and 3 above are consequential to the overriding principle contained in point 1, and this chapter confines its analysis to the perfectionist principles of Fox, resulting in metaphysical union with God and the appreciation of the individual that they are divine. Prior research has generally emphasized the 'union' function of Foxian Light in terms of ethics and conduct (King, 1940, p.85; Brinton, 1952, p.30; Gwyn, 1986, pp.57–81; Wilcox, 1995, p.32; Carter, 1999, p.246, that is, group unity arising from individuals holding collective beliefs resulting in fellowship and similar patterns of behaviour. This is in contrast to the emphasis within gnosis where the 'light' is thought of in terms of 'a state of being', and the unity element

emphasizes the divine in the individual uniting with the consubstantial divine of the redeemer figure of Christ. In Gnosticism, conduct and ethical/moral considerations are secondary to union with God and divinity of the individual. However, the metaphysical dynamics of gnosis incorporates conduct and ethics as relevant as to whether the recipient would receive and continue to receive gnosis and salvation (Logan, 1996, p.212).

Metaphysics and Gnosis

In gnosis, conduct and morality are a consequential aspect to the metaphysical state of being, arising through the revelatory light. The state suggested is a spiritual transformation of the individual arising from ontological union of the divine element in the individual with the consubstantial divine aspect of the redeemer figure of Christ. The transformation affects the physical body only in so far as the body includes the divine essence. This essence (the divine light, seed or soul in the body) is trapped in the material body until freed in a process of increase and decrease (as if on a spiritual sliding scale) by a union with the light of Christ. This organic process does not exclude conduct or morality for the Gnostic. Stroumsa (1984, p.17) states that there is within gnosis 'an obsessive preoccupation with the problem of evil' in order to preserve gnosis when received. This concern leads to conduct and sin-related considerations within gnosis and Gnostic communities.

The prior research emphasis upon ethics rather than a divine state of being in Fox's 'light' theology is in stark contrast to the identification with the divine by Fox when stating of God: 'As he is, so are we in this present world' (Fox, 1990, vol.1, p.65). For Fox, my research claims, ethical and moral issues were consequential to the spiritual transformation that occurred through a supernatural union with God. In essence, without the spiritual transformation, the ethical significance is redundant. As King notes, concluding with a reference to 1 John 3:9:

Regeneration for Fox is a change of state. A sum of good deeds does not make a good man, but he only is a good man whose whole will has turned towards the light in obedience, which act brings man into a state in which he can be supernaturally born again. The regenerate man is born of God and does not commit sin, neither can he. (1940, p.46)

Filoramo illustrates well the metaphysical approach to 'light' dynamics within Gnosticism, with which Fox's theology is comparable:

The presupposition of the Gnostic theory of enlightenment is a metaphysics of the light that arises and is established throughout the Christian era. Instead of simply being a means of knowledge, a 'how' of existence, as is typical of the classical tradition, the light becomes its privileged object. It is transformed in fact into a force, a power that is life, incorruptible divine life ... A desire is born, an acute longing to open itself to that light world of the divine life, to return once again to rest in the calm, tranquil bosom of primordial light. In its more radical formulations, this nostalgia for its openness means only the drive to become and to be light, to participate in that particular life to the point of identifying with the divine light that constitutes the

substance of the world of the pleroma – that is, of the fullness of the divine reality. (1990, p.44)

Fox (1990, vol.1, pp.74, 84) identifies himself with the Light as evidenced by his fully realized eschatology, his perfection and the state of paradise in which he found himself in 1648 and thereafter. Fox's ultimate relationship of unity is one of fellowship, 'but more intimate than this – God and man are now at one ... It is near to the deification of man' (King, 1940, p.46).

Fox's sense of union (1990, vol.3, pp.34, 165, 233) and consequent salvation is further described by King in terms of 'the deification of humanity' (1940, p.68). However, King's conclusions are inconsistent when also stating that 'Fox's unity with God is never the merging of the human with the divine, never a swallowing up of the human in the divine' (ibid., p.120). King appears reluctant to accept that Fox pursued a theology that incorporated an aspect of divinity, perhaps an illustration of the caution of scholars suggested by Ingle (1991, p.17).

Union with Christ

In relation to the type of transformation envisaged by Fox, the unity advocated is that reached via the divine light, soul, spark or seed that exists as Christ within all individuals. Within Gnosticism there is a belief (and experiential realization) that individuals in their true or perfect nature are akin to the divine or true God, with something identical to the divine or true God (the object to be united with God) being held in the human body and subjected to the hostile powers of the earth (McL. Wilson, 1968, p.4).

Fox describes his regeneration and union with God in terms of a physical sensation and process, that Christ gives his blood to the Saints constantly for their nourishment (1990, vol.3, pp.49, 345). This is not simply figurative, as Fox asserts that he can mystically feel the blood within as he can feel the Light within (ibid., p.268). This transformed state is the 'extreme and atypical position of Fox' (King, 1940, p.69), leading to the unqualified claims for the sinlessness and perfection of regenerate individuals as referred to in *The Great Mystery* (Fox, 1990, vol.3, pp.268, 374, 440).

This distinctive position adopted by Fox (as to the supernatural workings of light), is similar to that of gnosis and illustrates Fox's belief in recognizing the presence of saint-like divinity and perfection within. This theology of Fox has not been analysed in terms of gnosis within the general conservative approach of previous research.

Creasey (1956, p.160) observes that Quakers regard 'perfection' as a genuine possibility in proportion to the measure or degree that the Light was obeyed and followed. Fox's greater calling as evidenced by his formative revelations in 1647 and 1648 (Fox, 1990, vol.1, pp.74, 84) was recognized by other Quakers as Fox having a greater union with Christ than they did:

in principle all Quakers were sons or daughters of God and united with Christ, but everybody's 'measure' was not equal and Quakers recognised that some people had a

special calling as Elders or Ministers to the flock. George Fox had an extra special calling, and few Quakers quarreled with this assumption. (Moore, 2000a, p.44)

As evidence of metaphysics in terms of mechanics and imagery in pursuit of 'fullness', in the following 1658 publication Fox also includes cautionary guidance against activity and declarations which are beyond a person's spiritual 'measure':

Every man that hath a measure of the spirit of God, in the least measure or degree, it is infallible, and so far may they teach infallibly, and know scriptures; but they cannot know all scriptures, but as they attain to the full measure of the spirit of the prophets and apostles, and to the measure, and stature, and fullness of Christ. And if they do not attain to all this, they are not able to know all the scriptures. And take heed of any of you going beyond your measure. (Fox, 1990, vol.3, p.347)

From the above it is clear that individuals may fail in attaining paradisiacal perfection yet come close to it, or fall back on the way as if on a metaphysical sliding spiritual scale. The cautionary addition about exceeding one's measure relates to those who claim a degree of spiritual or scriptural understanding without merit; that is, through arrogance or hypocrisy.

What is significant in this context of a comparison with gnosis is that Moore (2000a, p.109), believes that a real union with Christ, however expressed, was fundamental to Fox, indeed, the 'keystone' of Foxian theology. In a comparison with Fox's contemporary, the controversial Quaker James Nayler, Moore states that:

Nayler's writing did not show the intensity of personal religious experience of Fox, but, like Fox he wrote of a real union with God, although he understood this as a rather static, mystical union, while for Fox it was a dynamic take-over related to his own prophetic call. (2000a, p.79)

In 1650, Fox employed a distinctive language of 'unity with Christ' not discernible in his later published Epistles: 'The more extreme language describing union with God or with Christ was confined to letters, while material for publication was more cautiously expressed' (Moore, 2000a, p.78). Such enthusiasm was at risk of being found contrary to legislation, that is, the Blasphemy Act of 1650 which prohibited anyone to claim to be equal to God, or to possess a substance equal to that of God in them.

The earliest Quaker teaching was mainly concerned with direct union with Christ or with God, expressed in terms of the body of Christ, or of divine indwelling. This direct union was not just a vague sense of undefined spiritual unity; body and spirit together were one with Christ. Fox employed a language which linked the spiritual with the physical: 'The blood of Christ which satisfies the Father, which the saints drink, and his flesh which they eat' (Fox, 1990, vol.3, p.227).

In contrast to Fox's use of 'unity', some influential early Quakers avoided such terminology in expressing the regeneration that occurs within the person (Farnworth, 1653b, p.15). Fox (despite the Blasphemy legislation) continued to think of salvation in terms of divine sonship and used contentious language. He would express it in terms of New Testament text: 'You that are turned to this light which doth enlighten you, you are turned to Christ the power of God ... and you that

receive the Light, shall receive power to become the sonnes of God' (Fox, 1656, p.1).

Ingle states that early Quakers were 'enthusiasts', that is, they believed they were possessed by God:

Two of their central teachings, that Christ was present to teach and lead his people and that every person possessed the Inward teacher, easily shaded over into the view that Christ was within each individual. Hence the Quaker assertion that the divine Christ lived in them seemed an obvious attempt to identify with the messiah, perhaps even to claim divinity. (Ingle, 1989, p.266)

Fox continued to use the expression that he was, and others could be, sons of God (Penney, 1925, p.17). He agreed with the charge that he was the son of God at Carlisle in 1653 (*ibid.*, p.33) and stated as much in a letter to Oliver Cromwell in 1654 (Penney, 1911, vol.1, pp.161–2, 425–6).

The 'son of God' language (while rare), may grant a better understanding of the early union with God theology of Fox than that published at the end of the seventeenth century (Moore, 2000a, p.76). The following 1653 Epistle was addressed to 'Margaret Fell and evry [*sic*] other friend who is raised to discerning' and represents a statement of Fox's belief in God-possession following his revelations of 1647/8:

According to the Spirit I am the Sonne of God and according to the flesh I am the seed of Abraham which is Christ, which seed is not many but one, which seed is Christ and Christ in you. The mystery which has been hid for ages is now made manifest ... which seed bruised the serpents head ... According to the spirit I am the Sonne of God before Abraham was, before Jerusalem was, the same which doth descend, the same doth descend. (Swarthmore Manuscript, 1655, II.55)

The metaphysical aspect to Fox's belief in a real spiritual presence of the divine within is illustrated in his distinctive quasi-Gnostic interpretation of the relationship between God/Christ, the soul and the divine within.

The Reunion of the Divine Soul

An illustration of the position of Fox has been noted by King:

It seems to me that Fox comes the nearest to giving an explanation for this change in being [to a regenerated state of spiritual perfection] in his theory of the soul, which always has human connotations but is so intimately connected with God as to be practically an emanation from God. The divine is supposed to be in man and of man but it is in death before regeneration. Thus this unity of man with God, which is spoken of as fellowship, would seem to involve, or at least to have overtones of, a certain amount of identity of being of man with God. (1940, p.121)

As mentioned above (Goold, 1850, p.38), Owen had identified what he perceived as an emanation concept in the Quaker concept of the Light. The following will

illustrate that it is the workings of the Light upon the soul that proves Owen correct in this observation. In 1653, Fox stated:

And know the word of God abiding in you, which was in the beginning, and brings to the beginning; which word being ingrafted, it saves the soul, and hammers down, and throws down, and burns up that which wars against it. (Fox, 1990, vol.7, p.30)

This statement of Fox graphically describes how the Light, the Word of God, affects the soul in a literal organic sense, becoming part of the soul or of the soul's metaphysical being. Rufus Jones states that Fox believed that 'there was something of God, which may be called a divine seed or a divine Light, laid down in the nature and disposition of the soul' (1924, p.10).

The caution suggested by King, above (regarding the potential for deification of the soul in Fox's theology) is not reflected in the following language used by Fox in 1658 which emphasizes the pre-existence of the divine in the individual (in the context of Fox's written response to principles posed by opponents):

[Fox restates the principle of an opponent] 'That is the weak, ignorant, dark, and the wicked sect of the devil, that maintain an equality with God; the soul to be one being with God, or part of God.' And saith, 'The Quakers say, there is no scripture speaks of a human soul, and the soul is taken up into God and God is all in all.'

[Fox answers] The assembly, or synod of priests, put forth a catechism, and say that the holy ghost and the son are equal with the Father in power and glory: and this they put forth that people should learn it: then, if any come to witness the holy ghost, they come to witness that which is equal in power and glory with the Father? If any come to witness the son of God revealed in them, (which he that hath not, hath not life,) do they not come to witness him who is equal in power and glory with the father? This is your own catechism. And is it blasphemy to confess your own words, that ye have given people to learn? God breathed into man the breath of life, and he became a living soul. God, who hath all souls in his hand ... And is not this [breath of life] that cometh out from God, which is in God's hand, part of God, of God, from God, and goes to God again? Which soul Christ is the bishop of. And dost not [opponents of Quaker theology] speak of a human soul, an earthly soul, and is earthly immortal? Cannot it die nor be killed? And is not that which came out from God, which God hath in his hand, taken up into God again, which Christ the power of God is bishop of, is not this of God's being? And dost not the Scripture say, God is all in all?

[Fox restates another principle] He saith 'It is a wretched doctrine to say men have not a human soul in them, and to say that the soul is part of the divine essence.'

[Fox answers] Is not that of God that came out from him? and is not the earthly and human of the ground? and is that not mortal? and is that which is immortal human? And dost thou say it is human, and is that not earthly? And where doth the scripture of the prophets, Christ or the apostles, tell people of a human soul; and of Christ having a human body in heaven? And doth not the apostle speak of his glorified body? (Fox, 1990, vol.3, p.181)

Fox is clear in the above that his view is that the soul receives part of the divine essence at the birth of the individual. He emphasizes that 'God breathed into man

the breath of life', not the possibility that God may do so. In a Gnostic context, Filoramo has stated:

revelation is possible only because within the Gnostic there somehow pre-exists a disposition, a capacity, a potential fitted for testing and getting to know that particular reality [the revealer, that is, Christ]. Only like can in fact know like. Only spiritual beings can perceive, receive and understand the spiritual. (1990, p.40)

For Fox, this 'disposition, a capacity, a potential' was the divine essence breathed into the soul in the individual, as recognized by Jones, above, who refers to something of God in the 'nature and disposition of the soul'. This is illustrative of the ontological perspective, that is, the significance of the nature and quality of the divine component within a metaphysical analysis. While available to all from birth, that of God in the soul was still capable of being rejected by the individual who would be reprobated (Fox, 1990, vol.1, p.349).

The divine aspect to the soul was a separate entity, by which it came out from God and shared the divine essence to the extent that it was equal with God in nature and substance. In the subsequent process of de-gnosticizing Fox's theology (beyond the scope of this chapter), Bailey has asserted 'that it was the glorified soul that Quaker theologians de-divinized from Fox's message' (1992, p.228).

By way of example, and illustrative of the change in interpretation sought by William Penn in 1673 (as part of this de-gnosticizing), Penn states:

George Fox says: 'God breathed into man the breath of life, and he became a living soul; and is not this of God, of his being, &c. And is not this, that comes out from God, part of God?' G.F. intends that divine life, power, and virtue, by which Adam in soul and body came to live to God: not that the soul of man, as a mere creature, created capacity, is of God's own being and substance. (1726, vol.2, pp.521-2)

However, Fox's view of the eternal nature of the immortal divine soul within the individual, consubstantial with Light and alien to darkness, is graphically represented in the following:

The ministers of the spirit watched for the soul, the prophets and apostles knew its state, and knew Christ the bishop of it, and saw when the soul was in death, and saw when God saw pleasure in it, when it lived ... For who have the mysteries of the gospel, which is the power of God, which gives liberty to the captive soul ... Such a one is a true workman, that divides his work aright, and is not ashamed of his work, of his building, but presents his soul to God, and knows when it is in death, and when it is living. And so they who are come up into the bishop, Christ, are one soul, they know the hand of God which the soul lives in (which is the power) and so know it from eternity to eternity ... And so what fellowship hath the light with darkness? It hath no fellowship with it ... And you are stumbling at such as are become the sons of God, adopted sons and heirs, and of the flesh and bone of Christ, and of his mind and spirit, who are in possession of the scriptures, the durable life of the saints ... The soul is that which came out from God, and is in God's hand ... And appetite and pleasure are human; these are not immortal, which the soul is. (Fox, 1990, vol.3, p.371)

In 1677 (following Penn's reinterpretation above), Fox appears to adjust his position regarding the nature of the soul: the individual's spirit, body, mind, soul and conscience were identified with the created human body until lit by the revelatory Light of Christ:

And so Christ, who is the light, who enlightens every man that comes into the world with his divine light, which is called, the life in the word, which was in the beginning, who is the light of the world; which is not a natural light, or a created light, but a spiritual, heavenly, and a divine light, which enlightens every man's spirit that comes into the world, his candle; for the spirit of man, is the candle of the Lord, and the candle stick is every man's body, mind, soul and conscience, that with this spirit their candle being lighted, and set up in its candlestick, they may see all that is in the house; and with this light they may see Christ that died for them, and is risen for them: so come by this light, which is life in the word, to be grafted into Christ the word, which was in the beginning, which lives and abides, and endures forever. (Fox, 1990, vol.5, pp.341–81)

The spirit of 'man' (not the Holy Spirit), was the candle, that is, a vehicle (natural and created) which was present from birth and, when receptive of the Light of Christ, enabled the believer to be grafted into Christ and perfected. But the natural and created soul still contained something of the divine essence, with the potential for divinization as it awaited receipt of the divine Light. As Bailey notes: 'the soul was divinized at the birth of Christ within ... Fox's inner light never changed. It always remained the presence of the celestial Christ' (1992, p.228fn.25).

In terms of a similar approach within gnosis, the soul becomes distinct from the natural and created body in its possession of the divine essence or heavenly Light. Jonas (1958, p.44), identified the soteriological significance of the soul within Gnostic texts in which it is viewed in negative terms as a product of hostile or cosmic powers. However, identical to Fox's concept of the soul, enclosed in the natural human soul is the portion of the divine substance which, in various complex schemes within Gnostic literature, awakes to the presence of the light-power (ibid.).

In relation to the Gnostic text *Apocryphon of John*, Logan (1996, p.259) identifies the light-power which descends and works upon the soul present in humanity to ensure its essential salvation. Rudolph (1987, p.115) suggests that, in Gnosticism, perfection is only capable of completion and fully realized at death, when the spirit or soul, as descriptions of the divine particles of light, are separated from the body. This process is illustrated in the Gnostic text *The Book of Thomas the Contender* (NHC: II, 7). The light withdraws to its true beginning and its true liberation (NHC: II, 7, 139, 28–30).

The ascent of the soul after death is an inseparable constituent of the Gnostic hope of redemption, regarded as an eschatological component, which makes real what the Gnostic has already obtained through knowledge. Judging by Fox's experiences of 1647 and 1648, above, Fox did not contemplate the deferment of eschatological goals to after death, but claimed completion in life.

My research suggests that Fox's view is that of emanation as suggested by King and recognized by Owen, above. It incorporates an immortal soul consubstantial with heavenly light emanating from God, trapped in a realm of darkness and awaiting the return to God, to the realm of the eternal Light.

The metaphysical language employed by Fox (1990, vol.3, p.181) to illustrate his principle of the soul's reunion with God is indicative of the metaphysical union of the consubstantial divine light with God in Gnosticism.

This Chapter and Current Scholarship

An examination of similarities in Foxian theology and early church gnosis advances existing scholarship in its metaphysical analysis of the workings of Foxian 'light'. Despite the observations of John Owen, no detailed comparison of Fox's theology with Gnosticism has been made in previous research.

The current scholarship surrounding the nature and interpretation of Fox's apocalyptic message is fuelled by the ambiguities and contradictions inherent in Fox's adoption of the inward light as the rule of faith (Knox, 1950, p.152). However, Brinton's remark that 'Fox had no consistent system of philosophy or theology into which he could fit his doctrine of the Light Within' (1952, p.20) is no longer justified in view of the similarities with the dynamics of gnosis indicated in this chapter.

A reluctance to examine Fox's theology in terms of the alleged 'heresy' of Gnosticism arises because, as Ingle states, Quaker theologians have 'been at pains to present to the public a definition of [early Quaker] faith that would not cast them or it in a bad light' (1991, p.17). The 'hidden faith' in Fox's theology (broadly illustrated in terms of Fox's claims to divinity or God-possession) is that knowledge in and of the light, similar to gnosis.

A metaphysical, supernatural or visceral approach to Gnostic and Quaker light (as opposed to a purely figurative or metaphorical interpretation) is fundamental to establishing the hypothesis of any theological similarities. Some contemporary scholars have specifically denied a metaphysical dimension to Fox's theology of the Light. Gwyn, for example, has stated that 'Fox's sense of union with the divine is ethically defined, not a matter of philosophical, metaphysical speculation ... Their [early Quaker] preoccupation with concrete sinfulness cannot simply be shrugged off'.¹ However, the weakness in this argument is seen in the reference Gwyn makes to a potential charge of Gnosticism against Fox (1986, p.115). Gwyn confirms that Fox's negation of the outward material world is potentially Gnostic, but states that Fox escapes such a charge on the basis that Quakers (unlike Gnostics, according to Gwyn) were given an active role in establishing a new world order. It is a view of Gnosticism which negates or devalues Gnostic interest in communal, ethical and moral behaviour.

However, the evidence from the NHL illustrates the importance of ethical (Logan, 1996, p.212) and communal (Brown, 1994, p.282) aspects to Gnosticism. The communal and ethical consequences of guidance from Gnostic texts which include 'Love your brother like your soul, guard him like the pupil of your eye' (NHC: II, 2), cannot be discounted. *Poimandres*, for example, mentions the importance of conduct to the recipient in maintaining gnosis (Nock, 1945, 1:18.). This is illustrated also by the *Gospel of Philip*:

He who has the knowledge (gnosis) of the truth is free. But the free does not sin. For he who sins is the slave of sin ... Those to whom it is not permitted to sin, the world

calls 'free' ... knowledge lifts up[their]hearts, which means it makes them free, and makes them be lifted up above the whole place [of the world]. But love [agape] edifies. But he who becomes free through knowledge is a slave for love's sake to those who have not yet been able to take up the freedom of knowledge. But knowledge makes them worthy so that [it causes them] to become [free]. (NHC: II, 3, 77, 15–35)

Rudolph (1987, p.264), emphasizes that 'Christian' gnosis fully justifies its epithet on the grounds that the Gnostic and Christian ethos can be seen as non-contradictory. The same Gnostic that is free from the world and has dominion over sin is also the Gnostic that can love those without gnosis until they too are free.

The Gnostic is thoroughly conscious of the provisional situation of the redeemed up to the realization of redemption after death. Otherwise, as Rudolph notes (*ibid.*, p.117), the extant literature which relates to existential and ethical behaviour is inexplicable. The right conduct of the bearer is essential to preserve gnosis. Logan (1996, p.212) states in relation to that knowledge of God which is gnosis: 'We do not come to such knowledge by rational investigation and philosophical enquiry; it is a religious knowledge; it has ethical connotations.' R. McL. Wilson suggests that 'Gnostic ethics is dominated by a concern for purity, for the restoration of a lost ideal, for the recovery of primal innocence, and is therefore in the main of an ascetic or encratite character' (1986, p.449).

Nor is Gnosticism devoid of community and leadership (Rudolph, 1987, p.213). Indeed, Logan (1996, p.302), has identified the significant aspect of community eschatology within Gnosticism as that fully completed eschatology when all individual divine lights have returned to the heavenly realm or Pleroma, at the end of the world.

In summation, Wink (1993, p.41), observes that Gnostics were 'probably indistinguishable in most cases from orthodox Christians, with some celibate and ascetic, others married and continent, others married and producing families'. The Gnostics were (in their liminal state) obliged to consider their life on earth as individuals and collectively, albeit, as in case of Fox (Ingle, 1992, pp.189–200), reluctant to engage with earthly structures in doing so.

Whereas previous research has emphasized the ethical and behavioural aspects to the unity dynamic of light, more recent research is identifying Fox's use of 'light' in a more than figurative sense, in which similarities with gnosis are discernible. Moore (2000a, p.109) supports an analysis of Fox's message in which a real sense of supernatural union with God was the keystone of Foxian theology. This view, and that of Bailey, Smith and Tarter, below (as opposed to Gwyn and others, mentioned above) is similar in its appreciation of Fox's theology (regarding the literal presence of Christ in the body) to my understanding of it as a characteristic of gnosis.

Cope (1956, p.747), recognizes the graphic approach to the divine within, in relation to Fox's 'measure of perfection'. In a similar approach to the Gnostic imagery surrounding the fall of the ontological divine or spark trapped in the individual (McL. Wilson, 1968, p.4), Mather states of the Quaker spiritual 'measure':

There is in every man ... some remainder of the divine image, left by the compassion of God upon the conscience of man after his fall; and this principle the Quakers called, a measure of the Man Christ, the light, the seed, the word. (1702, p.452)

During the 1650s, the definition and comprehension of concepts relating to matter and substance, the body and its relationship with the soul, were at the heart of the sectarian debate and very early Quaker writing expressed an interest in such matters in common with the milieu of the time (Smith, 1995, p.65). Fox imagined that he had transformed his entire being, stating that he 'was very much altered in countenance and person as if my body had been new moulded or changed' (Penney, 1925, p.165). Indeed, the regeneration (which I suggest is the recognition and growth of the divine within through a process similar to gnosis) is at its 'most extreme' (King, 1940, p.69)² in the perfectionist message of Fox, and was correctly observed by Owen in his comparison of Quakers with Gnostics.

Gwyn (1986, p.55) argues against any metaphysical dimension motive by stating that Fox developed the doctrine of celestial flesh (that which assimilates the individual into Christ's celestial nature), merely to speak of the perfecting power of Christ in people's lives with far-reaching moral, social and even political implications. However, the sense of union with God which Fox promoted, was an acknowledgment of the divine within and its metaphysical union with God and moral/ethical outcomes were consequential to spiritual perfection, as they are within the process of gnosis.

Examples of the Gnostic identification with the divine are contained in numerous Gnostic texts; in the *Treatise on the Resurrection* (NHC: I, 4, 45, 29–39) the believer is embraced by Christ and 'wears' Christ in this world. *The Second Treatise of the Great Seth* (NHC: VII, 2, 67, 31–4), and in terms of the heavenly bridal chamber and spiritual union (NHC: VII, 2, 57, 12–18). In *The Tripartite Tractate* (NHC: I, 5) the Gnostic shares the body and essence (NHC: I, 5, 122, 12–15) of the Saviour as if like a marriage (NHC: I, 5, 122, 15–17, 136.1) because of the unity and agreement with the Saviour. *The Gospel of Philip* (NHC: II, 3) refers to union with the Saviour and the community in the bridal chamber with the believer clothed in Christ and becoming like Christ (NHC: II, 3, 67, 26–7).

As gnosis involves the experiential identification of the divine element within the individual, it is important to emphasize that the revelatory process involves the relationship of the consubstantial heavenly Light/Christ outside the body with the divine or heavenly element within the body. Gnosis is an identification with and realization of, the heavenly component in the body, which in Foxian and Gnostic thought is the soul of the divine in the soul. The metaphysical state suggested is therefore a spiritual transformation of the individual and affects the physical body only in so far as the body becomes of, or includes, the divine essence and nature of God.

Bailey suggests the term 'Christopresent' (based on celestial adoption or inhabitation) to indicate Fox's claims that he was the very Son of God:

Fox was casting himself, not only as an eschatological prophet but as a magus, avatar – a new incarnation of Christ representative of the culmination of God's dealing with human history ... It was his claim to divinity above all else that prompted the charges of heresy and blasphemy. (Bailey, 1992, p.19)

Bailey states that Fox's emphasis upon unity is similar to gnosis: 'like some ancient Gnostics, Fox stressed unity and identity with the divine rather than distinctiveness

from the divine' (ibid., p.xii). However, Bailey interprets the potential for deification of the individual in Fox's theology as a result of celestial inhabitation, believing that 'deification was a natural corollary to celestial inhabitation' (ibid., p.81). But Bailey's interpretation is more corporeally orientated to the physical and fleshly aspects of the body, in contrast to the spiritual and metaphysical aspect of gnosis. The divine in the individual within gnosis, however expressed, is a metaphysical component of spiritual light as opposed to a corporeal physical presence.

However, there are Gnostic aspects to Bailey's interpretation upon which this chapter agrees. Fox believed that there were no distinctions in the Godhead and further, a crucial interpretative point, that 'leading early Quakers refused to separate Christ's body and Christ's spirit' (ibid., p.78). The literal, as opposed to figurative, presence of Christ in the theology of Fox occurs because early Quakers had a tendency to combine reference to the earthly creature with the glorified inner being of the believer (Fox, 1990, vol.3, pp.206, 243–4, 291–2, 340, 397, 399, 402). By way of example, Fox states:

And you say the spirit is distinguished from the Father and the son from eternity, and Christ saith it proceeds from him and the Father, and he is the God and the Father of all spirits of all flesh, and the substance of all things ... And are there not three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the word, and the spirit, and are they not all one? How then are they distinct? ... And Christ saith, 'I and my father are one' ... and he is in the saints and so not distinct. (Fox, 1990, vol.3, p.180)

For Fox, and early Quakers generally, there was little distinction between the physical and the spiritual; the relationship between Christ and the believer was very close, described as being 'flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone' (ibid., pp.2, 46, 51). Fox typically combines the two in the following text:

for he that holds up priests which receive tythes according to the Law, and now doth deny Jesus Christ come in the flesh, and who loves the light that he hath give them, witnesses Jesus Christ come in the flesh. (Fox, 1654, p.4)

Bailey (1992, p.80) uses the term 'Christopresentism' to describe the displacement of the human body when the spirit or Light was in the believer: this term means as in 'flesh and bone' or 'in fact' rather than 'in essence'.

However, it is the Gnostic realization of a divine element within (the potential for salvation by nature) and its reunion thereafter with the external consubstantial divine (through a process of grace) which is fundamental to gnosis. The Gnostic mechanics of salvation are missing from Bailey's emphasis upon the divine corporeal outcome (as opposed to the process fundamental to gnosis). In addition, the object of salvation in Bailey's interpretation – the divinization of 'matter', that is, flesh and bone as distinct from the soul – would be anathema to Gnostic spiritualized soteriology. The process and mechanics of gnosis are seen in Fox's distinctive concept of the relationship of the individual to the light and the soul.

Whereas Bailey observes that 'deification was a natural corollary to celestial inhabitation' (ibid., p.81), gnosis is not concerned with making the *flesh* holy, which is at the heart of Bailey's argument. Gnostic soteriology, and that of Fox, is primarily concerned with salvation of the soul or the divine element 'sown' into it.

As Fox (1990, vol.3, p.181) suggests, salvation for early Quakers (and similarly for Gnostics) involved returning to God that which belongs to God, in a process of reunion.

Bailey (1992, p.19fn.53) is correct to assert that Creasey (1956), Benson (1968) and Gwyn (1986) view 'Christopresentism' in Fox, yet fail to draw out the most radical implications of Fox's celestial adoption theory. But Bailey is incorrect to state that, while employing the scriptural imagery of 'flesh and bone' (Genesis 29:14, Ephesians 5:30), Fox necessarily meant that the individual was corporeally transformed to the same flesh and bone as Christ.

Smith is surely correct in saying that 'body and language were inextricably linked as the sites in which the workings of the inner light were known ... [however,] the possibility that the inward Light makes the flesh holy seems an exaggeration or the result of too willing an ear given to Fox's Puritan opponents' (1995, p.57).

In following Bailey's corporeal emphasis upon the effect of the light on the body, Tarter's concept of 'fusion' of Christ with the believer (1993, p.27) is more akin to that of Gnostic spiritual union. In particular, the idea that 'The eternal Christ was located within every human being and accessible to any who waited and listened in silence to feel the voice of inward Light' (*ibid.*, pp.27-8), is similar in concept to the Gnostic spiritualized union of the redeemer and the soul, spark or seed within the individual. However, Tarter retains the 'flesh and bone' language that Bailey identifies in Fox, and this chapter suggests such literal interpretation concerning the physical as opposed to the spiritual is inappropriate, for the reasons suggested by Smith, above.

Scriptural language (such as the 'flesh and bone') becomes an allegory for the workings of the inward light and the change in anatomy for a regenerate Quaker (Smith, 1995, p.57). This may explain Fox's interest in and allusion to Hermetic writing (Nuttall, 1947) as illustrated by Hermetic texts; that is, what is usually seen as metaphorical becomes something much more challenging: a real transformation. However, the transformation was spiritual and not identified with the physical. Fox emphasizes salvation to an eternal protological state, rather than an eschatology resulting in created and physical matter: as Brinton has stated, 'As philosopher, Fox followed the Hellenic tradition, apprehending the inner Unity which exists beyond time and space' (Brinton, 1952, p.21).

Epilogue: My Research and My Faith

I never studied theology in detail until I embarked on the 'Heaven on Earth' course at Woodbrooke, out of which grew the interest in my research. I believe that there has been a reluctance to discuss the metaphysical aspects of Foxian theology owing to an aversion to acknowledging a similarity with the alleged Christian heresy of Gnosticism, recognized by Fox's contemporary, John Owen. As a Quaker, I witness through my research the distinctive radical nature of a revolutionary message subsequently moderated in order to survive. I see how the interpretation of early Quaker faith has promoted a version of theology distanced from its early quasi-Gnosticism, as identified by Owen.

As an insider (a Quaker), I have conducted my studies through a spiritual and subjective lens of my own making. I have sought out the radical nature of early

Quakerism in order to seek the truth, yet at the same time not to damage that which is so precious to me. If I were not a Quaker, I might have been more sceptical in my analysis. I might have displayed the cynicism of historical objective analysis as opposed to accepting a theological perspective to the exclusion of seventeenth-century politics. Most of my reference material has been written by Quakers about Quakers, each author with their own interpretation of events, based on their own personal agenda as to how early Quakers should and could be portrayed. My work has enabled me to learn about and question the theology now termed 'Quaker'. It has enabled me to examine my attitude to my faith and how it has transformed me and my life. I have had wonderful access to resources and personnel which, if I were not a Quaker, I might not have known about, or have been able to reach.

I was attracted to my research as I found the Gnostic/Foxian comparison exciting and yet, ultimately, a little dangerous. I am not sure if I like what I discovered. The Gnostic negation of nature and material beauty, of the body and the Creation (in contrast to the obsessive emphasis upon the transient and spiritual) was an approach I find just unpalatable. It is an approach which I think was equally disliked by the majority of early Quakers, if not by Fox himself.

Notes

¹ Private correspondence between Douglas Gwyn and Glen Reynolds, 20 June 2000.

² King (1940, p.69) states: 'The unqualified claims for the sinlessness and perfection of regenerate individuals occur ... where he [Fox] is pushed to extremes in combating his Calvinistic opponents who declare that, although the saints are fully justified by God, yet in this veil of tears the actual progress to moral perfection is slow and incomplete.'



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III
EARLY FRIENDS AND
BEYOND



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Commentary

Doug Gwyn's description of his work covers numerous publications and the development of a number of lenses through which to view Quaker history. His *Apocalypse of the Word* (1986) took a synchronic view of Fox's writings and concluded that Fox had a particularly strong relationship to the book of Revelation in his apocalyptic message. For Gwyn, unlike Bailey and Tarter, the Light of Christ works through the conscience rather than the flesh. It operated to show those early Quaker converts who they really were, that is, their sinful natures, but also, as Gwyn says, 'their true meaning and destiny'. For Gwyn the consequent Lamb's War was a specific invitation from God at a specific moment in human history, 'a moment of crisis, judgement, and decision', individually and corporately. Typically in his work, Gwyn used this apocalyptic framework to understand all aspects of the early Quaker church. In this, his work is unusual. The Second Coming understanding of early Friends neatly explains all aspects of form and practice, as well as offering a lens with which to view later periods of Quaker history. Other scholars understand aspects of early Quaker practice as pragmatic or contextual rather than theological imperatives. For Spencer, for example, forms are secondary to a consistent holiness theology. In her thinking, they appear as marginal, if not accidental. Certainly, they appear as human choices. Tarter explains the quaking aspect most fully but other aspects of Quaker form and doctrine in most of the work of the authors in this book are seen as consequential or, in Pilgrim's case, specifically socially constructed.

Gwyn answered critics of his work such as Larry Ingle (1991) with a diachronic approach to the sociopolitical context in which Friends arose in *Covenant Crucified* (1995). In his work on covenant, Gwyn placed himself on the outside of the 'Puritan School' of Nuttall and Barbour in particular by suggesting that the Quaker covenantal vision was 'profoundly different from the Puritan covenant of grace'. The failure of the Lamb's War puts a pause on eschatological completion. In this, Gwyn (unlike Spencer and Davie), along with Barbour, Punshon, Moore, Bailey, Tarter and Reynolds, though for different reasons, agrees that, by the 1670s, Friends had become something different from their predecessors.

Gwyn's third major work, *Seekers Found* (2000a), located early Friends within the 'Spiritualist' wing of the protestant reformation. In this analysis, some of the spiritual 'ancestors' are shared with Rufus Jones' interpretation of Quakerism as having its roots in continental mysticism. Where Gwyn and Jones disagree is over how significant this becomes in determining the theological nature of the whole movement. At the August 2001 event at Woodbrooke (see the Introduction), John Punshon and Carole Spencer both claimed Jones was right but for the wrong reasons. For Spencer, Jones' analysis of mysticism as central was correct but incomplete. For Punshon, Jones' analysis was useful in its time for trying to make sense of early Quakerism. However, Jones' affirmative mysticism does not fit with Punshon's sense of the dualism of early Friends, and the idea of collective

mysticism is hard for Punshon to understand. In this way, Spencer feels Jones did not go far enough; for Punshon, in an almost Gurneyite response, Jones went too far. Doug Gwyn responded that he thought Jones had been wrong for the right reasons. In other words, Quaker spirituality does share an ancestry with some of these thinkers but it was not the whole or final story. For Gwyn, as well as for Bailey, Tarter and Reynolds, mysticism is almost taken for granted, rather than a way of designating a whole movement.

Gwyn develops the idea of two kinds of Seeker, Type A and Type B, groups which become melded in the formation of the Quaker movement. Seeker A looked to restore a primitive Christianity and looked towards a new Apostle to restore the church. Seeker B argued that God would not take the faithful backwards, particularly when those earlier forms and structures had so easily fallen into apostasy. Rather, they looked for a new dispensation. These two forms of seeker are clearly visible in the modern Quaker landscape. (In the liberal–Liberal tradition, I have argued (2001, p.179) that they are joined by a Seeker C type, a group who prefer to seek rather than to find.)

Barclays' description in his Proposition 5 and 6 (1678) of a single day of visitation, after which there could be no redemption, reveals that Friends did not believe salvation was available on request. I believe that Fox and early Friends also felt that humanity could not summon up conviction, although it is unclear to me whether Fox was as forthright about there being only one opportunity. Barbour and Roberts present the individual day of visitation as a personal day of judgment, a precursor to the global day of judgment the newly convinced would consequently preach (1973, p.28).

Gwyn talks of Puritanism as 'a spirituality of anxiety' (1995, pp.80–81, and in his chapter here) because of the uncertainty about who was part of the elect. Barclayan theology certainly could lead to very real terrors about missing the moment. The children of the first Friends would long for a conviction experience of their own:

I saw closely in that Day ... that unless I came to be acquainted with the same Power that had Wrought a Change and Alteration in my dear Parents, ... I should be miserable and undone forever. (Deborah Bell, 1715, as in O'Shea, 1993, p.45)

Hugh Barbour reports that conviction is close to a Methodist doctrine of sanctification. John Punshon suggests we can look at conviction in a Wesleyan frame of reference as the second blessing, since it appears that the early Friends to whom it came were already converted (2001, p.267). Spencer would agree with this perhaps, but it is of note that Gurney was criticized by Wilbur for separating justification and sanctification into two distinct experiences. Equally, Tom Hamm's account of the life of David Updegraff cites clear and separate experiences of conversion in 1860, and sanctification, when 'every vile affection was nailed to the cross' (Hamm, 1988, p.78), in 1869. Updegraff had also been raised a Friend. Scholars need to define these terms more closely.

The Quaker position moved from one in the 1650s of co-agency with God against 'the world' to one in which Quietist Friends were both God- and world-fearing. Stuck on the natural plane while seeking to be elevated to the supernatural one, Quakers were at the same time facing a corrupt and corrupting world. In the absence of the experience of the first-generation Friends and without the standardized ways in which the church helps humanity in the 'meantime' (between First and Second Comings of Christ) such as outward sacraments, a separated priesthood and set-aside times (the Christian calendar) and places (churches), Friends needed to construct a way of helping the true church remain faithful. The increase and codification of the peculiarities was the 'meantime' response of a Quaker church which had lost the sense of imminent Second Coming or of founding revivalism. Gravestones were proscribed, as was theatregoing, the reading of fiction, and so on. Endogamy was enforced. Bankruptcy was a disownable offence. Jack Marietta's book on the 'reformation' of American Quakerism is excellent in charting the way in which increased regulation and policing brought higher levels of delinquency (1984). Damiano sees this Quietist period as one in which the endtimes were still unfolding with the Quaker vanguard led by Christ (1988). For me, this third period of Quakerism (after the 'early enthusiasms' and 'restoration Quakerism') was explicitly 'meantime'. It is interesting to note that Barclay's final Proposition (1678) is not concerned with eschatology but with 'salutations and recreations'.

Carole Spencer argues that Holiness Quakerism with its emotional revival meetings and encouragement of a pastoral system merely continued a tradition of mysticism, perfection, deification and holiness already in place. It is interesting to note that Wilmer Cooper's father, a Conservative, secretly parked his buggy close to camp revivals (Cooper, 1999, pp.62–3). For Spencer, this makes sense as she draws strong connections between Quietist and Revival theology. For her, Gurneyite and Liberal theological visions are the odd ones out. Gurneyism was anti-mystical and anti-experiential, Liberal Quakerism modernist in a different way. All that was new about Revival Quakerism was the outward form. Here she uses the unprogrammed tradition's eschewal of outward forms as an argument for their irrelevance when it comes to judging doctrinal integrity. From the perspective of meantime and endtime, the pastoral system was simply a replacement 'meantime' practice for the peculiarities. It was sufficient in itself, and other church forms such as a separated priesthood, outward sacraments, and special times and seasons did not automatically follow. Only Updegraff and his sympathizers adopted the toleration of water baptism. The Richmond Declaration of Faith in 1887 outlawed this practice and offered a clear distinction between Quaker evangelicalism and worldly variants.

Thomas Hamm charts the continuity and change of nineteenth-century Orthodox Quakerism brilliantly in his *The Transformation of American Quakerism* (1988). Hamm, like Spencer, sees holiness as central to that movement. What they disagree on is the extent to which Holiness Quakerism is something new and alien to traditional Quakerism. Hamm admits that his work was designed, in those younger days, to 'undermine, if not utterly destroy, the intellectual foundations of pastoral Quakerism'. His work could be seen to be in the same vein as Barclay's in its desire to write a history of Friends that validated a personal theological position. In a sense, Spencer, and Punshon (2001), and Williams (1962) before them, are defending that very same programmed tradition. No scholars doubt the importance

of David Updegraff, Luke Woodward, Seth Rees and Esther Frame. It is a question of how their lives are analysed.

Martin Davie takes a Gurneyite perspective, but from within a British and unprogrammed perspective. It is not the form of Quakerism which Davie finds so difficult, but its belief content. In particular, he grieves the loss of the Christian Quakerism, evangelical in nature, which he finds so implicit in Fox. In this analysis of Fox, he is in accord with Spencer, although they differ in their interpretation of Barclay. For Spencer, Barclay merely reflects Fox's Holiness insights in a systematic and Holiness way which will later be picked up by William Law and John Wesley and then fed back into Gurneyite Quakerism. For Davie, Barclay distorts parts of the gospel message. For Davie, Gurneyite Quakerism, clearly linked to early Quakerism and sharing a protestant heritage via radical puritanism, did not need its Wesleyan injection. Neither did it need modern thought weakening its popularity in the late nineteenth century or Liberal Friends distorting the tradition, particularly on the key issues of the centrality of Christ and His unique power to save. Benson's attempts at revival were misplaced, too sectarian, and too limited. Davie admits Fox was calling Quakers into a new covenantal formation and in this agrees with Gwyn. But Davie's interpretation of the risen Christ is not identified with the Second Coming. His view of the sacraments at the end of his chapter confirms this point. Davie argues that outward sacraments are scriptural but the injunction, in 1 Cor. 11:26, to break the bread until the Lord comes again, becomes anachronistic in the Second Coming model. Neither does Davie see the advent of Quakerism as a particular moment in the history of the relationship between God and humanity. In this, his view is opposite to that of Gwyn, and more in line with Punshon and Spencer. Finally, Davie does not share the periodization of seventeenth-century Quakerism into two or more parts.

The current decline in Liberal Quakerism was symbolized acutely for Davie when Swarthmore Lecturer Janet Scott responded to the question whether Quakers need be Christian with 'It is not the label ... but the life' (Scott, 1980, p.70). In many ways, Scott's comment is not far removed from Fox's doctrine of the Light being able to operate in even those who did not know the name of Christ. However, Davie suggests that, in the twentieth-century context, such a statement could only validate what was already a growing pluralism within British Quakerism. As early as 1966, draft membership regulations were rejected by London Yearly Meeting as being too overtly Christian, as not all present could call themselves Christian. Scott claimed elsewhere in her lecture that God is revealed through all religions, and she denied the unique legitimacy of Jesus Christ. This fuller ecumenism is frustrating and upsetting for the Christian Davie. Davie sees the victorious Liberal/Modernist project of Rufus Jones, with which Hamm's work on Orthodox Quakerism ends in 1907, as containing within it the seeds of later post-Christian Quakerism.

Jones was converted to modernism on a holiday in Switzerland by his new and dear friend J.W. Rowntree. Jones led the campaign in the USA, Rowntree and his friends pioneered discussion of the new ideas in Britain. (It is a wonderful friendship to read of (Allott, 1994), sadly ended after only eight years by the premature death of Rowntree. They are buried next to each other in Haverford.) Jones, as far as I can tell, introduced the term 'inner light' instead of the traditional 'inward'. He and other Liberal/Modernist Friends emphasized pure experience as the means to God and as the basis for spiritual authority. They argued that faith

needs to be relevant to the age and emphasized continuing and progressive revelation, that is that new revelation would necessarily have greater authority than old. Elizabeth Isichei says she first comes across this idea in Quaker writings in 1874 (1970, p.34): certainly George Fox did not hold to the idea, especially when faced with the fresh revelations of John Perrot (Carroll, 1970b). Originally, Liberal Quakerism was Christian but it was to transform itself into a 'liberal-Liberal Quakerism' after the 1950s. Along the way, in a point which echoes John Punshon's analysis (1984, p.248), Davie claims Quakers rejected the Barthian solution to an increasingly fragile Liberal theology. Davie argues that what calls itself Quakerism in Britain today has little connection with its seventeenth-century forebear.

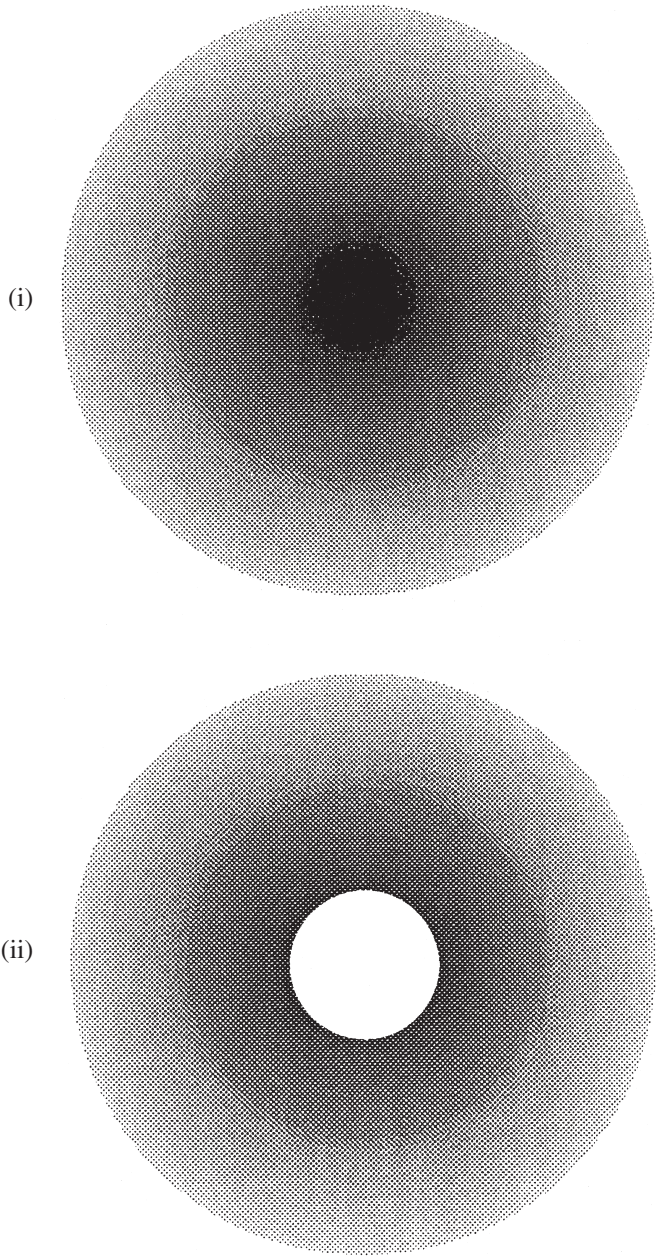
Certainly it is my opinion that twentieth-century Liberal Quakerism and what came from it is the real deviant amongst the traditions. Within the Second Coming framework developed by Doug Gwyn, Timothy Peat and myself, these Friends have fallen out of the frame (Dandelion *et al.*, 1998; Dandelion, 2001). Paradoxically, some believe they are still part of a Second Coming group with a slowly unfolding endtime, and that the continuing Second Coming structure and 'liturgy' of the unprogrammed tradition is still theologically justified. This still may not help Davie's ecumenical vision. If this were true, either Quakers have an earnest of the Second Coming which they are holding in trust for the other churches, who then rightly still carry on their 'meantime' practices, or it is a state available to all, in which case the churches are misled and misleading in holding on to their outward forms and separated priests, buildings and times.

Under another analysis, liberal-Liberal Friends are involved in a delicate negotiation of boundaries and meaning, involving all the recognized stages of grieving and loss (Dandelion, 1996, pp.179–92) within their pluralistic culture. Thomas Kennedy (1989; 2001) has argued that it was the Peace Testimony which cemented British Quakerism between the wars. However, the Peace Testimony had been freshly developed out of the 'Testimony Against War' in the first years of the twentieth century. This bigger vision, for peace as opposed to being against war, as with Jones' modernist project, would only lead to problems of boundary maintenance. Today, while the Peace Testimony is part of the form of Quakerism and is not disputed, its content is individualized and is a site of pluralism.

It is the pluralism of liberal-Liberal Quakerism which so interests Gay Pilgrim. In 1993, the Yearly Meeting of the Friends in Christ broke away from London Yearly Meeting, a group who they felt had gone awry.

After much grief at the apostate condition of London (now Britain) Yearly Meeting, where there are now many who deny the Christian basis of our religious Society and who are not prepared to accept Jesus Christ as their living saviour, by God's grace we have come together humbly, conscious of our own failings as his children, in the love of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Part of 'A Statement from Friends in Christ', 1993, as in *The Call*, 1, 1996)

Such 'exclusivist' believers, in Pilgrim's terms, and they can be of any theological persuasion, leave present-day British Quakerism. The Quakers who are left are 'inclusivists' and 'syncretists'. British Quakerism, unlike other Yearly Meetings, operates a hierachical arrangement where Yearly Meeting holds authority over constituent Monthly Meetings. The inclusivists are those who uphold this



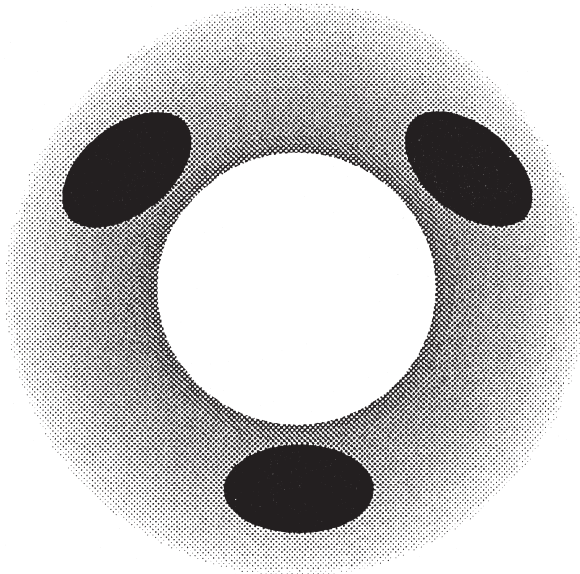
Source: Warren (1992).

Figure 1 Models of the influence of Quaker orthodoxy: (i) 1660s, (ii) 1990s (projected)

corporatist position while operating a permissive attitude to believing and, indeed, to the syncretists. This latter group see themselves on a personal path which Quakerism can help, perhaps personifying the Seeker C mentality described above in my comments on the work of Doug Gwyn. They are not corporatist and, if they do get involved in business meetings, are more likely to hold a congregational view.

The pluralism and the increased diversity amongst Friends are, Pilgrim argues, a result of a heterotopic impulse, that is, a desire to construct 'Otherness'. This idea of Quakers creating sites of alternate ordering certainly resonates with some of Gwyn's work on the way Friends envisioned a utopia they could never create. For three centuries, this impulse has operated a hedge between Quakerism and 'the world', visible in the peculiarities and their legacy. The distance between modernist Quakerism and 'the world' has diminished and participants, most of whom now join as adults, are committed in a greater variety of ways and on a greater variety of levels. British Quakerism is now more worldly. In this reduced gap between group and host culture, Pilgrim argues that the heterotopic impulse has been turned inward. Difference/Otherness is now constructed internally rather than externally.

This brings to mind the models of Quakerism put forward by Emlyn Warren (1992). Warren argued that a central core of Quakerism had been lost. He signified this by using a figure akin to a jam doughnut full of jam in its middle being transformed into a ring doughnut ([Figure 1](#)). Warren's prediction for the future was that a multiplicity of cores could emerge within the Quaker culture ([Figure 2](#)).



Source: Warren (1992).

Figure 2 Projected model of Quaker belief in the 1990s

Pilgrim's model is similar, although more sophisticated. The 'jam' has become individualized or atomized, with the ideological or theological space within this form of Quakerism expanding as each atom begins to repel its neighbours in its own construction of difference. Pilgrim's work brings to mind my comparison of the British Quaker group with the Chicago Methodist congregation studied by Robert Stauffer (1970). He asked everyone in the congregation what they believed and also asked how normative they thought their beliefs were. He found a highly diverse set of beliefs amongst a group of people who thought they were all similar. I discovered in contrast that, within the British Quaker group, respondents were very unclear as to how normative their beliefs were (Dandelion, 1996, p.309). For Stauffer, the congregation found cohesion through their ignorance. I argued (1996) that cohesion was found through form. What Pilgrim is arguing is that, instead of just tolerating difference, British Quakers are seeking it. They are operating an intentional heterodoxy and it is that shared quest which brings cohesion.

Pilgrim's work differs from mine in that her analysis of the twentieth and twenty-first century liberal-Liberal Friends is part of an overarching model of Quakerism which extends back to the earliest days. In my writing, I have suggested that the freedoms the Evangelicals won in terms of the abolition of the peculiarities in the 1850s and 1860s (including the prohibition of gravestones and the enforcement of endogamy, plain dress and speech) and the lowering of the hedge to the world they signified underpinned the subsequent advent of Liberal theology (Dandelion, 2001, p.176). The other factor, for me, was the end of the Quaker self-perception in the 1830s as the one true church (see also Kennedy, 2001, p.46). (This also coincided with the end of a single world Quaker community.) Martin Davie has tended to view the Manchester Conference as key in accommodating and supporting the growth of Liberal Quakerism and puts its roots in modern thought outside the Society.

Unlike Davie's and my work, however, Pilgrim's theory can usefully be applied to all Quaker traditions across time. Tom Hamm writes that what transpires within the Quaker Orthodox tradition in the nineteenth century is a debate about how to respond to 'the world'. (There is the wonderful quotation from the *Holiness Friend* that 'football is unworthy of the attention of the sanctified and union cards are the mark of the beast' (Hamm, 1988, p.164).) We can see that same tension in Esther Mombo's work on Quaker Missionaries in Kenya (1998), in the disownment of the Free Quakers (Kashatus, 1990) or in the British 'Quaker renaissance' of the late 1890s (Phillips, 1989; Kennedy, 2001). It would be fascinating to take Pilgrim's theory of heterotopic impulse to the London Yearly Meeting of 1910 (held on the same day as the funeral of King Edward VII), so well described by Brian Phillips (1989), as Friends disputed the degree to which they were part of a nation united in grief or not. Also Pilgrim's theory does not contradict those other theories based on theological analysis. As we shall see in the conclusion, it operates in a different kind of way from the other theories we have presented in this book.

Apocalypse Now and Then: Reading Early Friends in the Belly of the Beast

Douglas Gwyn

I write as corporate and military interests have taken decisive control of the federal government of the United States, as they move to consolidate power and to bend not only the American people but the nations of the world to their will. Thus I write as the Antichristian forces of finance-driven capitalism, multinational corporations and technomilitarism have reached a decisive stage of conflict with the basic needs of the world's majority of people, with the sustainable future of the planetary creation, and thus with the covenantal purposes of God in history. I write of what I have seen and witnessed among the lengthening and deepening shadows of the past 33 years. Although my writing about early Quakerism has seldom overtly addressed these issues, they have been a primary framework and a key motivating force for my scholarship and writing. Over the years, the apocalyptic vision of George Fox and early Friends has become my guide for living with some measure of faithful Christian witness in this growing darkness.

Calling, Theological Training, Ministry

I was called to be a minister in September 1968. If ever there was an apocalyptic year in my lifetime, it was 1968. It was a crisis point of conflict and change in American society and around the world. That year included the Tet Offensive in Vietnam, the Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy assassinations, the May riots in Paris, the rampage of the Cultural Revolution in China, race riots in American cities, the chaos inside and outside the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, massive protests against the Vietnam War, the election of Richard Nixon (self-styled Quaker), the Beatles' white album and much more. I was a student at Indiana University, studying zoology and staying out of the military. I had grown up in a mild-mannered stream of pastoral Quakerism in Indiana, where neither Christian faith, nor pacifism, nor social justice had been pressed very hard upon my youthful conscience. I had never considered a vocation in ministry. When I received the call, alone in my dormitory room one evening, it was *à propos* of nothing I was thinking at the time (I was reeling from a breakup with my first love). Certainly, it was a resounding non sequitur to the chaos overwhelming the world around me. The call came quietly, but so distinctly (simply the words, 'be a minister'), there was no reason to doubt – and no reason not to follow. I received it with baffled joy and abided in quiet simplicity with it. I realized that my interest in science was more a matter of nature mysticism than laboratory zeal or analytical prowess. I was without

anyone to stay for, or anything to uphold. So I began to slip away. I began a new life that was both an *exodus* of personal liberation and Christian witness, and an alienating *exile* from my home. I began a vocation that could be characterized as both *errantry* (quest) and *errancy* (prone to mistakes). I began on a path of revelation the French Situationists of that day called *dérive*: drift.

The obvious choice for theological training in Quaker ministry would have been Earlham School of Religion in Richmond, Indiana, but, at the suggestion of my pastor in Indianapolis, I enrolled at Union Theological Seminary, a bastion of both Neo-Orthodox theology and radical, liberationist politics in New York City. Like the calling to ministry, the thought of leaving Indiana for a cosmopolis like New York had never occurred to me; but it too had an instant recognition quality I immediately followed. Although Indiana would remain my primary sense of home, I began in 1971 a life of geographical and cultural migration that would (without my full intention) be integral to my theological vocation of mapping a postmodern Quaker sensibility. At Union, my interest in biblical studies, which had been sparked by some elective courses at Indiana University (after my calling), continued to grow. I particularly gravitated toward the new scholarship regarding the apocalyptic literature of the Old and New Testaments. The growing scholarly consensus on apocalyptic eschatology as the organizing principle of both Jesus' and Paul's preaching was compelling to me. The work of J. Louis Martyn (1967), Ernst Käsemann (1971) and others showed Paul's proclamation of Christ to be apocalyptic in the root sense of the Greek *apokalypsis*: a 'revelation', a 'taking away of the veil' on present reality in a way that discovers the destiny of all things in Christ. The cross is the epistemological standpoint by which one sees that 'the form of this world is passing away' (1 Cor. 7:31). I had earlier gravitated toward the Hebrew prophets, but the development of apocalyptic out of the stream in Israel's life (see especially Hanson, 1975) particularly attracted me. It combined the prophetic concern for God's justice in society with a scope and grandeur that brought all the peoples of the earth – and creation itself – into the vision of God's redemptive work. Among other insights, I saw apocalyptic as the basis for a biblically grounded environmental concern. It is probably also true that the apocalyptic seer's panoramic distance and hallucinogenic intensity of insight matched my personality traits better than the confrontational, heroic style of the Hebrew prophet. (I spent my summers out of Manhattan, living and working in the woods as an Indiana State Park naturalist.)

I returned to Indiana to begin ministry as a Friends pastor in 1975. The Noblesville Friends Meeting was a warm and supportive place to begin pastoral ministry. Preaching and leading worship were my strengths, but I grew in all parts of the work and could fruitfully have stayed longer. But after a year, I began to experience a profound unease. I felt something stirring, both in me and in the world. It was nothing as overt as 1968. Yet at a time when I hoped to settle down, I was deeply unsettled. Some cultural indicators registered the tremors I was feeling. Figures like Patti Smith and the Sex Pistols loomed on the rock music scene, conveying soul-wrenching alienation, seething rage and visionary power. It was only later that I understood the vast, tectonic shifts underway in the world at that time. The Trilateral Commission, founded in 1973 to unite American, European and Japanese global interests, was setting in place the political and economic structures

that would dominate the last quarter of the century. It brought together figures from the highest echelons of corporate, financial, political and media institutions. One member was Jimmy Carter, elected President of the United States in 1976. The buyout of American politics, both liberal and conservative, by transnational corporate interests was underway.

George Fox, Drew University, AFSC, Berkeley

That year I also read for the first time George Fox's *Journal* (Nickalls, 1952). I was stunned by Fox's apocalyptic language and spirituality, expressed in experiential and sociopolitical terms. It was a remarkable, seventeenth-century parallel to Jesus' and Paul's preaching of the kingdom of heaven, divine judgment and new creation in present, unfolding terms. At the same time, however, I was also disturbed by Fox's critique of professional ministry. A local Friend introduced me to the writings of Lewis Benson, whose prophetic Christian interpretation of Fox (1968, 1974, 1976) spoke powerfully to me.

In one last development at that pivotal time, I began to write and sing songs. This new creative outlet emerged from the darkest eclipse of my last months in Noblesville. It was a response to the inspired psychodrama I saw emerging in the new punk music and to the biblical-liberationist reggae music of Bob Marley and others. But it came through me (and my limited musical abilities) as a primitive folk music laced with humour, skewed logic and irony. It was informed by my apocalyptic sensibility and a literary understanding of Jesus' parables of the kingdom. In the analysis of John Dominic Crossan (1973, p.76), 'paradox is to language as eschaton is to world'. That is, the parables of Jesus function as 'language-events' that unmask everyday reality and reveal God's way to those with the ears to hear. Irony and paradox can function to open the consciousness to a larger, transrational reality. Over the years to come, I wrote and sang songs as an obverse expression of my intellectual work in Quaker historical theology – and as a cathartic release from the superego-regulated sensibilities of the Religious Society of Friends. As the parables of Jesus were aimed to rock the respectable piety of Pharisaic Judaism, my songs attempted to disorient Friends from a middle-class Quaker version of the same captivity.

By early 1977, I felt clearly led to return to graduate studies and pursue a study of George Fox's life and message. That year was a time of deep disturbance and change for me. I grieved for the wholesome (though stultifying to me) goodness of the Midwestern Quaker home I was again leaving. I dreamed one night of seeing a church building on fire. I ran in and found the pews filled with sleeping people. But a voice said, 'Leave them; they're already dead.' That dream is still painful to me. There were – and still are – many vital Christians there, whose fellowship I cherished. But there was among them an otiose, slumbering collective spirit that was somehow not for me to disturb. Another disturbing revelation came that summer, as I attended a conference of Friends from all over the Americas. In the middle of one session, I suddenly heard a terrible roaring inside me, which I understood to be the Lion of Judah: 'The lion has roared; who will not fear? The Lord God has spoken; who can but prophesy?' (Amos 3:8). A deep sense of pain, anger and visionary

clarity was forming. Later the same summer, I returned to New York City. It was a memorable summer in New York: sultry heat, a city-wide blackout and the 'Son of Sam' serial murders.

In New York, I rejoined my close friend at Union, Richard Sturm, who was also in doctoral studies. We had a common understanding of apocalyptic. As he worked on Paul's apocalyptic gospel, I researched Fox's renewal of that liberating message. I started a PhD programme in biblical studies and homiletics at Drew University in New Jersey in September. Meanwhile I also began working part-time for the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) in New York on hunger and development issues to support myself.

During my years in New York, working for AFSC and studying at Drew, two lines of inquiry began slowly to converge. On one front, I sought to understand the larger historical and political context around Fox and the early Quaker movement. Here I was strongly influenced by Christopher Hill's Marxist analysis and revolutionary interpretation of seventeenth-century Puritans and more radical groups such as Levellers, Diggers, Seekers, Ranters and Quakers (Hill, 1961; 1972). I found his interpretation of early Friends lacking in theological discernment of their revised revolutionary vision. But this first exposure to Marxist analysis interacting with theological discourse was a powerful discovery for me, one that combined well with my background in modern, critical biblical studies.

On the other front, my research and development of educational materials for AFSC exposed me for the first time to systemic critiques of the global economic situation. Most pointedly, hearing Richard Barnet speak on the new, transnational phase of corporate capitalism opened my eyes to the larger economic issues around the problems of hunger and poverty (see Barnet and Cavanaugh, 1974). In my writing for AFSC, however, I was caught in the middle of an ideological struggle within the organization. Some pressed this more radical critique of corporate interests, US policy and international aid, while others continued to hope in a developmentalism predicated on First-World largesse. This ideological conflict revolved around questions such as, whether we should advocate more generous levels and enlightened use of aid for international development, or whether poorer nations are better off without the meddling of rich nations, with their strategic political designs and their introduction of inappropriate technologies. I wavered between these influences, often simply writing to order, I must confess. But the more integrative and radical critique was gaining ground in me. Moreover American politics in the late 1970s, with their growing reactionary undertow and renewed imperialistic ambitions, added more plausibility to the radical critique.

I was greatly aided in my studies of Fox's writings by two seasoned, non-academic Quaker scholars, Dean Freiday and Lewis Benson, who lived just down the New Jersey shore. My friendship with these two mentors grew over the course of many visits and conversations. It also fostered in me a scholarly sensibility that keeps some distance from the academic guild. My theological education at Union and Drew gave me some valuable tools of interpretation, but I began (with Benson's and Freiday's help) to see that early Quaker theology was fundamentally different from the Protestant theologies I had learned in those mainstream institutions. My task, as I began to understand it, was one of 'reconstructive theology' (a helpful term supplied some years later for my work by Quaker historian Jerry Frost). It involved

a close reading of early Quaker texts, to understand the spirituality of early Friends and the way they interpreted their experience scripturally. But it also inevitably drew upon present-day streams of biblical, theological, sociological and philosophical thought to complement early Quaker witness and help reveal its relevance to our own times.

This was also the time when the New Foundation Fellowship (NFF) was forming around Lewis' decades of research and writing on Fox. Though my primary alliance was with Benson as mentor and friend, I also took some hope in the possible effect of the NFF to renew the early Quaker vision among Friends. By the time I finished my work at Drew, however, I began to realize that NFF would not follow the more radical theological and political path of inquiry that beckoned me. Nevertheless I continued to participate in NFF events through the 1980s and still today share fellowship and concerns with Friends in that group.

In October 1982, I defended my dissertation at Drew on Fox's apocalyptic vision (another dear Friend and mentor, T. Canby Jones, was on the dissertation committee as an outside reader). Three days later, I was married to Dorian Petri at Brooklyn Friends Meeting, where we had attended. Three days after that, we left New York. Not seeing any suitable academic placement on the horizon (and feeling ambivalent in that direction anyway), I had accepted a pastoral position with the Berkeley Friends Church in California. Having learned something of the Quaker movement's emergence from a seeking subculture in England of the 1640s and 1650s, I was drawn to attempt a restatement of Fox's apocalyptic vision in Berkeley, a celebrated/notorious hotbed of American dissent and experimentation.

The meeting was small and struggling, but spiritually gifted and interested in deepening its Quaker identity and spirituality. Still, I faced a dilemma: Fox's compelling criticisms of paid, professional ministry still rang in my ears; could I find a way to develop my pastoral ministry that answered both Fox's concerns and the expectations of the meeting? That dilemma generated a number of lively experiments in preaching and worship. The highlights are related by my chapter (Gwyn, 2000b) in *Preaching in the Context of Worship*. The book is a *Festschrift* for my friend and homiletics mentor at Drew, Charles Rice. Meanwhile, through regular Bible-study leadership and biblical preaching, I sought to make a translation of Fox's apocalyptic spirituality for the average Friend today. That work produced the building blocks of my second book, *Unmasking the Idols: a journey among Friends* (1989).

Apocalypse of the Word

During my time in Berkeley, I revised and sought a publisher for my Drew University dissertation on Fox. That work finally appeared with Friends United Press, *Apocalypse of the Word: the life and message of George Fox* (1986). There had been opportunities to publish the work with two academic presses but, ultimately, I settled with a Quaker denominational press, feeling that my primary audience was my fellow Friends in both the liberal-unprogrammed and pastoral streams of Quakerism. Hopefully, the aura of a denominational press would not cause my work to be wholly ignored by academics. I made it no secret that I

undertook my research and writing as a Friend and as a Christian, under a deeply felt concern for Quaker renewal. It had long been clear to me that there is no 'value-neutral' or 'objective' scholarship. It is important to be both self-aware and honest with readers where one's interests in the subject matter lie. I valued the perspectives of scholars working on early Quakerism from other perspectives; but it was also clear to me that they would inevitably bring to the subject their own concerns – acknowledged or not.

With *Apocalypse of the Word* finally in print, and feeling that my ministry in Berkeley had achieved what it could, I left pastoral work in early 1987 and began to travel in ministry among Friends in North America, speaking about Fox's message and its meaning for our times. This was yet another step out into the wilderness, with no clear mode of proceeding or end in sight. It was a difficult time, particularly as it was very unsettling to my marriage. But I could not resist the call, despite the harrowing effects of exodus/exile. The drift continued.

Before moving on, more must be said about the theological synthesis reached in *Apocalypse of the Word*. My doctoral research on Fox did not aim to delineate changes in his witness over time, but to treat his work as a whole, mainly through the collected eight volumes of his works (1990). It was thus a synchronic study, seeking the coherence of his very unsystematic writings. My training in biblical studies, particularly in apocalyptic literature, helped me identify a unifying thread in Fox's thought. My approach built upon Lewis Benson's prophetic interpretation of Fox's Christology, while developing the eschatological dimensions that Benson had largely ignored. In particular, I focused on the apocalyptic quality of Fox's preaching and writing: that is, the radical manner in which he unmasked alienated human consciousness and false religious authority in the society around him. His preaching burst forth in 1652 as a galvanizing attack upon the new Puritan establishment and as a restatement of many of the radical ideas and hopes first articulated in England by the failed revolutionary groups of the Civil War decade, the 1640s. His apocalyptic message, stated in various wordings, was that 'Christ [is] come to teach his people himself by his power and spirit and to bring them off all the world's ways and teachers to his own free teaching' (Nickalls, 1952, pp.104, 107, 109, 143, 149–50). This Second Coming proclamation was accompanied by deep, discerning spiritual counsel to troubled Seekers, helping them locate Christ's revelatory presence, or light, in their own consciences. It also implied a radical critique of the state-sponsored Church, with its tithe-supported teachers.

Fox's message and the movement it quickly gathered in the north both accentuated and reinterpreted the sense of religious and political crisis that had pervaded England for a decade. In so doing, it turned men and women from false hopes in various human authorities to the true sovereign authority of Christ within them. *Apocalypse of the Word* takes Fox's theological programme step by step, from personal experience of the light's apocalyptic revelation within, to its engagement with the history recorded in Scripture, to its gathering power to form new grassroots Christian communities, to the unique, prophetic sense of worship and ministry appropriate to that revelation, to the revolutionary witness provoked by Fox's confrontation with state-enforced religion. Fox made contemporary, experiential application of the Book of Revelation, particularly in his ecclesiastical critique and social witness. But, more pervasively, he interpreted the entire Bible through a

powerful, typological hermeneutic that made a wide range of biblical symbols, motifs and history into living realities in the human conscience. Hence the early Quaker experience began as personal and inward, but moved outward into the wider dimensions of moral, social and political life. This revelation was *apocalyptic*, therefore, in the root sense: a taking away of the veil over present realities, showing their true meaning and destiny. Fox's preaching of Christ's return through the consciences of all men and women constituted an inwardly revealed 'apocalypse now' – a moment of crisis, judgment and decision throughout English society. The early Quaker 'Lamb's War', inspired by the visions of Revelation, was a grassroots spiritual renewal and a challenge to a new regime seeking to consolidate its victory over Charles I.

Owing to my personal concerns regarding an authentic Quaker understanding of worship and ministry, and my field of study (biblical studies and homiletics) at Drew, I focused my study in terms of biblical theological categories, with particular attention to Fox's understanding of Christ as the living Word. Although I recognized that there were larger political meanings to the witness of Fox and early Friends, I saw that it was necessary first to articulate the theological coherence (what Albert Schweitzer (1968) called 'consistent eschatology') of Fox's apocalyptic vision: that is, to show how this apocalyptic Christian spirituality, re-enacting the earliest phases of New Testament faith and practice, worked through all aspects of early Quakerism. The period of research, writing and further perfecting of this work had been one of the richest, most exciting and demanding times of my life. As I traveled among American Friends from coast to coast, and across the wide theological spectrum of present-day Quakerism, I struggled to make clear the present-day meaning and relevance of Quaker beginnings. Neither the travels nor the speaking were easy for me. The best I could do, I found, was simply to tell the story of the English Civil War and to suggest how Fox's message spoke to the condition of bewildered and disillusioned radicals of his time. It struck a chord for some, but only accentuated our shared sense that we were not at such a revelatory moment.

The Covenant Crucified

All through the early phases of my study of early Friends, I was aware that I was interpreting early Friends and the English Civil War partly in light of my own experience of American culture in the 1960s, especially the critical year of 1968, when I was called to ministry. It was important to be conscious of this life-site of interpretation. I knew this from my own Quaker spiritual tradition, as well as from reading Latin American and feminist liberation hermeneutics. I felt clear that, as long as I was careful and accurate in my reading of early Quaker writings, my personal experience was important to own consciously, to acknowledge to others — and to maintain in self-critical perspective.

During the years of pastoral ministry at Berkeley, I had also engaged with some of the radical, faith-based political witness there. I began practicing war-tax resistance in 1982 and was involved with wider work among Friends to advance that form of conscientious objection to war. Meanwhile I noticed how 'Reaganomics' were impoverishing many. I could see it in the exponential increase in people

coming to the community food pantry that our meeting housed and helped operate. I was also involved in witness against the US wars in Central America and spent twenty-four hours in the San Francisco jail for a group act of nonviolent civil disobedience. The pioneering work and writing of the Arizona Friend Jim Corbett on the sanctuary movement also came to my attention. In *The Sanctuary Church* (1987) and later in *Goatwalking* (1991), his covenantal framing for an international sanctuary network to aid Central American refugees was a brilliant combination of biblical study and political analysis – from an avowed nontheist. I continued to find many of my strongest allies among Friends and others who did not share my Christian conviction, but pursued the same concerns and similar structures of thought.

During the two years I spent traveling in ministry (1987–88), further readings in liberation theologies connected me again with Marxist analyses of current culture and politics. In particular, the writings of Fredric Jameson, the leading American Marxist literary and cultural critic, began to influence my thinking. Jameson's *The Political Unconscious* (1981) in particular suggested to me ways (not particularly in Jameson's intentions) to place Marxist and Christian frameworks in a useful interaction. His interpretation of texts within the horizon of the capitalist mode of production appeared to me a powerful correlate to the apocalyptic visionary's interpretation of larger socioeconomic forces around the people of God in history (as found pre-eminently in Revelation). Later Jameson's major work on postmodernism (1991) elucidated the connections between the cultural forms of postmodernity and the political economy of transnational corporate capitalism. This reading expanded on the work of Barret and others I had first encountered in the mid-1970s. Albums like REM's 'Life's Rich Pageant' and 'Document' supplied the sound-track to these times of integrative struggle.

I began at that time to conceive of a second major study of early Friends. It would aim to articulate the larger sociopolitical meaning of early Quaker apocalyptic in its day. The Quaker movement had arisen at the pivotal moment of transition from the last vestiges of feudalism into early capitalism, and from the last gasps of the English Reformation toward the early liberal Enlightenment. Early Friends were no longer Protestants but not early liberals either. Fox's paradoxical preaching of the light within each person was thoroughly Christian in its development, yet reached beyond Christendom toward an engagement with universal humanity. His strongly humanistic doctrines of Christ's teaching in each person and the human body as the temple of God gave rise to an anarchist sense of spiritual authority at large in society and an ecclesiology radically committed to corporate discernment of the felt leadings of Christ's light/Spirit. The egalitarian ethos and social witness of the Lamb's War augured for a society very different from what had come before – and from the social order that would be dictated by early capitalism.

I struggled to find the biblical–theological idiom that would fit the social vision of the Quaker apocalyptic struggle in England. What was the appropriate biblical concept of *coherence* to complement the apocalyptic understanding of acute *disjuncture*? The term that emerged was *covenant*, one of the central organizing motifs of the Bible and a centrepiece of Puritan theology and politics. As I immersed myself in early Quaker witness to the 'covenant of light', I found that it was grounded in a spirituality and vision profoundly different from the Puritan theology

of the covenant of grace. The light, being available in all people, was fundamentally at odds with the Puritan theology of grace, predicated upon predestination. The covenant of grace was available only to those whom God had elected before the beginning of time. To be sure, Puritan preaching of grace had inspired an energetic social ethos of Bible study, attendance at sermons, hard work and good citizenship – many positive energies for the reformation of both Church and society. But it was fundamentally a *spirituality of anxiety*, in which one spoke and acted like a Christian in order to feel assured of election for salvation. George Fox called this ‘profession without possession’. By contrast, Quaker spirituality was one of experience rather than inference. The individual’s surrender to the light’s revelation and leadings was the basis for participation in the covenant with God. But because the light deconstructed the false, constructed self and the world it construed, this apocalyptic revelation might best be described as a *spirituality of desolation*. Through deep surrender to the light’s power, and the raising of the seed within as a new will and life in God, early Friends experienced a harrowing participation in the cross of Christ and an equally profound sense of emergence into a new creation. As a gathered, covenantal community, rapidly proliferating as a network of what one today might call ‘base communities’ throughout England and beyond, the early movement understood itself to be initiating a new covenantal society in place of the fallen feudal order.

By claiming the human conscience as the place of Christ’s sovereignty on earth, early Friends preached the light as the basis not only for new religious ordering but for sociopolitical reconstruction as well. But, unlike some of the movements around them (particularly the Fifth Monarchists), they were not focused on controlling or overthrowing the political apparatus of the state. The nonviolent cultural revolution of the Lamb’s War was aimed at transforming the social infrastructure, in faith that the political superstructure must accommodate its shifts, or else topple through its own imbalance. This more cultural, infrastructural basis is key to understanding the revolutionary, anarchist and proto-feminist politics of early Friends. In this regard, Marxists such as Hill and his student, Barry Reay (1985), have not grasped the true political meaning of early Quaker witness. Confronted with conclusive evidence that Gerrard Winstanley, the proto-communist Digger, joined with Friends in the 1650s, Hill (1978) can only shrug and ask, ‘Where else could he have gone by that point?’ Certainly Winstanley’s communal experiment in Surrey and radical political platform went beyond the political consensus among early Friends. But the Quaker phenomenon as a mass movement with a well-organized network and a sweeping culture critique supplied *the key mediating term* between local praxis and state politics. The Quaker confrontation with the false authority of the clerical establishment and its magisterial enforcers made the Lamb’s War the most serious threat to the new capitalist class, as it sought to consolidate its gains from the Civil War.

This second study of early Friends required a diachronic treatment, following the development of the Quaker movement out of the religious and political conflicts that preceded it. It also required the review of a variety of early Quaker writers, though I often continued to find Fox the most integrative and deeply insightful of them. The resulting book was *The Covenant Crucified: Quakers and the rise of capitalism* (1995). Here I developed an interpretive framework involving the interplay between

the Marxist theory of mode of production and the biblical theology of covenant. To develop this model, I drew upon Jameson's literary theory, Norman Gottwald's peasant revolution theory of tribal Israel (1979) and Fernando Belo's materialist reading of the Gospel of Mark (1981). This approach constructed a theological/theoretical framework in which apocalypse/revolution interacted with covenant/mode of production. That framework made new, integrative sense of the covenantal conflict between Puritans and Quakers during the beginnings of capitalism in England. It also offered an Anglo-American response to the liberation theologies emerging from Latin American, Asia, Africa and elsewhere.

Of course, the story of the Lamb's War is the story of a failed revolution. The utopian, covenantal possibilities that early Friends envisioned and enacted in the new capitalist order were repressed with increasing savagery, first by Cromwell's Protectorate, then by the Restoration. The book charts the defeat, recontainment and repositioning of the Quaker movement, from populist apocalyptic movement, bent on world revolution in the 1650s, to a hedged sect practicing a countercultural, 'microcosmic eschatology' by the 1670s. As a result of that process of recontainment of the Lamb's War into a domesticated sect, even Friends themselves eventually could no longer hear the revolutionary meaning of their founding texts. So histories of Quaker beginnings to this day read as stories of sectarian or denominational founding.

In reviews and personal reactions to *The Covenant Crucified*, I found (at least) three difficulties in reception. Some simply could not accept a revolutionary reading of the history and texts and found the whole study off-putting. With the final defeat of the Soviet Union and the orgiastic triumphalism of capitalist ideology at that time, a Marxist reading of early Quakerism seemed eminently misguided, if not risible. But it seemed to me the perfect time. With the violent, repressive politics of Marxist-Leninism finally in shambles, it was time to reclaim the valid analyses and urgent concerns of a Marxist theoretical critique of capitalism, especially as this is integrated with the covenantal (also called federal) theology that has undergirded modern democratic politics.

The second misunderstanding I found was that the title of the book suggested to some readers bad faith among early Friends: they abandoned the Lamb's War for a withdrawn, sectarian revision of Quaker faith and practice. Further, seeing that early Friends were vibrant practitioners of mercantile capitalism from the start, and became notably successful in business, banking, science and technology in the eighteenth century, were they perhaps always part of the problem? The book does indeed highlight a number of ambiguities in the actions of Fox, Penn and Barclay as they enacted that shift in Quaker mode. And once the revolutionary agenda of the early movement collapsed, Friends generally made the most of their business prowess. But I tried to balance these ambiguities with an overarching sense that sectarian existence was *the only way forward* for early Friends. The covenant of light was rejected, repressed and defeated by the alienated ruling classes of the new capitalist order. Those forces crucified the covenant of light. Both biblical and Marxist readings of history are morally impassioned, to be sure. But both require that moral judgments be placed within a larger historical or providential vision always filled with painful, mixed feelings. In this regard, the book hints at a tragic reading of history that I would pursue further some years later.

The third problem, less overtly stated, that I detected among reader responses was that my reconstructive theologizing/theorizing had gone too far. Most were able to go along with the apocalyptic interpretation in my first study of George Fox. But the compounding of that with sociological and Marxist theories apparently went beyond the pale for many. Perhaps it was simply conceptual overload. Publishing the book with a Quaker press and attempting to advance such demanding interpretations among Friends outside the academy was risky from the start, but, often, the most small-minded responses came from academic historians. One reviewer simply bracketed all these larger theological and theoretical constructs as 'prophetic' and refused to engage with them. He then went on to supply a list of minor errors and quibbles. I admire and learn so much from the work of academic historians, but, generally, they continue to look with skepticism at theoretical and theological interpretations of 'their' subject area, and resist acknowledging their own religious, philosophical or political interests.

That being said, I must also admit that *The Covenant Crucified* could have been better realized. The style of writing and citation sometimes obscures the extent and quality of the research. Moreover, the developments of the Lamb's War should have been calibrated better with the political events of Cromwell's Protectorate and the last throes of the Commonwealth. But I continue to find compelling its overall interpretation of early Quaker politics and its larger sociohistorical and theological meanings. Although the book has gone out of print and I have so far been unsuccessful in persuading the publisher to reprint, *The Covenant Crucified* continues to connect with a few Friends and others asking the larger and more troubling questions that a middle-class, Anglo-American Quakerism would rather not face. Like *Apocalypse of the Word*, this book came out of a period of deep, *via negativa* personal eclipse (see below), which forced new understanding through suffering.

The Covenant Crucified concludes with a look at the covenantal possibilities in postmodern society. Here I was informed most by Jameson's work on postmodernism (1991), Corbett's covenantal interpretation of the sanctuary movement, and my own engagement with political witness in the 1980s. Though the current theme of 'globalization' had not yet attained wide coinage at the time of that writing, Jameson's analysis of postmodernity within the framework of transnational corporate capitalism was already mapping that territory. My formulation of 'X-Covenant' as the covenantal logic for the postmodern situation was admittedly groping at the furthest reaches of my own understanding. But it still makes sense to me.

Pendle Hill, Berkeley

More needs to be said about the personal circumstances surrounding the work on the book. Most of the research and writing of *The Covenant Crucified* took place from 1988 to 1991 at Pendle Hill, the Quaker study center near Philadelphia. During the first year there, I held a Quaker research fellowship at Haverford College. For the second and third years, I joined the teaching staff at Pendle Hill. The vibrant community there was tonic to me personally, deepening my spiritual life while I

furthered my study of early Friends. But that depth was also a dark-night experience, as I struggled not only with a more troubling reading of early Quaker history, but with a failing marriage as well – another kind of covenantal crisis.

Pendle Hill's strong internal community dynamics also tended to disengage it from a larger social service and witness. That, however, had not always been the case there, and was partly symptomatic of the exhaustion of the liberal-left after eight years of reacting to Ronald Reagan and another four years under George Bush the elder. The Gulf War at the beginning of 1991 and Bush's proclamation of a 'new world order' signaled the triumph of the new global corporate regime, enforced by American militarism. Resistance politics were in disarray, reflexively reactionary at best.

I left Pendle Hill in 1991, to return to Berkeley for a second pastoral engagement with the Berkeley Friends Church. I served there for another three years. This was a still darker time, as I struggled through separation from my wife and with a congregation starting to polarize with internal conflicts. The meeting was also painfully at odds with its yearly meeting (Southwest), as the latter continued to drift out of fellowship with Friends United Meeting and away from serious engagement with Quaker faith and practice. Still, it was also a fruitful time, as we continued to experiment with more participational forms of worship, ministry and pastoral care (again, see Gwyn, 2000b). I was meanwhile revising, editing and writing the conclusion to *The Covenant Crucified*.

I also began to speak and write more on the two major streams, pastoral–evangelical and liberal–unprogrammed, in American Quakerism. The two streams have long scandalized and anathematized one another. My growing experience in both, and my appreciation for each in its own renewal of early Quakerism, allowed me an unusual perspective. Both streams laid hold of the paradoxical Christian universalism of early Quaker preaching of the light of Christ within each person, but chose one side of the paradox to the near exclusion of the other. In *The Covenant Crucified*, I interpreted these choices as two forms of the present ideological captivity of Quakerism within the capitalist social order. Together, they constitute the Quaker form of the larger 'culture wars' that raged so strongly in the American culture of the 1980s and early 1990s. In various articles and addresses, I called upon Friends on both sides of this divide to approach and listen to one another – not in the hope of some reunification, but in the hope of returning to the paradoxical quality and liberating power of historic Quaker faith and practice. Most will choose to live on one side or the other of that divide. A few of us actually enjoy fellowship on both sides. At a Quaker conference in 1996, I described this as a Quaker 'bispirituality' (Gwyn, 1996). Later I collected some of these essays and addresses, together with some on the Quaker spirituality of the seed, in a small volume titled *Words in Time* (1997).

Things began to unravel at Berkeley Friends Church in 1993. Several factors converged in this débâcle. The liberal and evangelical contingents in the meeting were polarizing, partly over the experiments we had devised in worship and ministry. I was not fulfilling the traditional role of the pastor. I was deliberately and openly creating a free space of participational ministry and spiritual nurture in the meeting. It was within this post-pastoral ethos that I also openly entered into a relationship with one of the elders of the meeting, a woman approximately my own

age, who like me was going through divorce. While it lasted, the relationship was accepted by all parties. But when it failed, I was accused of sexual misconduct and the meeting was wracked with confusion. Evangelicals pulled back into traditional sexual mores and pastoral expectations. Liberals were caught up in political correctness. This was, after all, the time when the Anita Hill sensation erupted during Clarence Thomas' confirmation hearings for the Supreme Court, and many scandals of professional sexual abuse moved like storm fronts through the media. For my own part, I could see that I had moved ahead of the consensus of the meeting on both sexual mores and religious leadership, and had placed at grave risk the meeting, myself and a woman far more vulnerable than I had realized. A lawsuit was threatened, cash settlements were made, recriminations flew in various directions, and my last months in Berkeley were truly miserable. But most Friends remained loving and I could see only two or three acting in bad faith. What we bind or loose on earth is bound or loosed in heaven (Matthew 18:18); the Hebrew *berith*, 'covenant', suggests both binding and separating. I confessed what errors I could to the meeting and parted in peace and goodwill. It has taken years to heal from the experience, and I still find myself ambivalent in leadership roles. But God has been faithful.

It was a final irony in that tragic event that I could see that I had re-enacted in a small way some of the same conflicts and crossed wires that I had earlier identified in my chapter (in *The Covenant Crucified*) on the James Nayler débâcle of 1656. Nayler's entry into Bristol with the trappings of Christ's entry into Jerusalem was the most provocative act of the Lamb's War, signifying the coming of Christ in the bodies of common people like himself. It stated in shocking terms the revolutionary alternative for a nation that was trying to make Oliver Cromwell a quasi-monarch, and which would eventually crown the son of the king it had beheaded. By 1656, England was growing weary of radical religion and politics and desperate for some kind of moderate settlement. What Fox would later call a 'hardening' of the powers was setting in. Similarly, American political life was hardening in the 1990s. Bill Clinton had come out of nowhere on the national political scene in 1992, mysteriously backed by loads of money, and won the presidential election. The liberal-left breathed a sigh of relief, resistance politics slumped in exhaustion, and the transition from Bush to Clinton was remarkably minor. So minor, in fact, that the liberal-left implicitly realized that it had been sold out once again. That impotent frustration expressed itself (among other ways) in the pop-psychological rhetoric of 'low self-esteem' and politics of victimhood in the mid-1990s.

During this time, two sources helped me understand what was happening. Nietzsche's concept of *ressentiment*, developed in his *Genealogy of Morals* (1967), identifies the bad faith and reactionary moral formation of those who define themselves in negation of those they view as more powerful and/or threatening to their own position or world-view. Though Nietzsche attributed this to the 'slave mentality' of early Christians, his later interpreter, Max Scheler, diagnosed it as endemic to the *bourgeois* mindset (Nietzsche, 1967, p.8). This poisoned moralism had been a driving force within the 'culture wars' of the American middle classes and reached a fever pitch in the 1994 Congressional victories of right-wing Republicans and their 'Contract with America'. The American electorate had hardened into sullen, petulant reaction against government by either party,

reflexively ready to 'throw the rascals out'. Meanwhile, right-wing militia groups formed in the Midwestern and Western states. A rot was setting in.

The other source of new insight came from further readings in René Girard's 'scapegoat' theory of culture and conflict (1977, 1987; also see Williams, 1991). Girard had begun from an anthropological perspective, studying the ways in which 'primitive' cultures dealt with conflict and violence through the ritual sacrifice of scapegoat victims, whose death or banishment offered catharsis and forged new social solidarities. As his research and theorization continued, he developed a general scapegoat theory of *all* cultures. He interpreted the biblical saga as a progressive unmasking of the scapegoat mechanism, culminating in the preaching of Christ crucified as the final sacrifice that confronts sanctioned violence and delegitimizes the scapegoat tactics of all cultures. This even led him to convert to Christianity. Girard's theory, together with Nietzsche's insights, helped me understand some of the energies that had swirled around me during my last months in Berkeley. It also provided a cultural theory that complemented the atonement theology of the Hebrew prophets and New Testament. This would have a bearing on further writing.

Seekers Found

During my last months at Berkeley, in early 1994, I began to conceptualize one more major study of early Friends. I had read a major sociological study of the religious patterns of American 'baby-boomers', *A Generation of Seekers* (1993), by Wade Clark Roof. A wide-ranging study by Roof and his team of researchers sketched a map of seeking trajectories typical among those born between 1945 and 1964. One significant insight of the book was to identify as seekers both 'born-again' religious conservatives and 'new-age' eclectics who had left Judeo-Christian religion far behind. Both types (and others between these) repeatedly cited the 1960s and early 1970s as a time of crisis and break in American society. Conservatives viewed it as a *breakdown* in the religious consensus and moral wholesomeness of the 1950s, and sought a way back. Others viewed the same period as a *breakthrough* from the stifling conformity of the 1950s and the opening out into a larger spiritual reality, often informed by Eastern meditation, Native American spirituality or feminist and neo-pagan outlooks. Roof's use of Mannheim's theory of the generational cohort as a key sociological category was apt for studying a large social sector of American society that was just coming of age in the 1960s and early 1970s and was so strongly affected by the deep cultural conflicts and shifts of that period. Through sheer numbers and far-ranging experimentation, this generation has had great impact on American culture.

Roof's study not only spoke to my personal experience (I was born in 1948) and confirmed much of what I observed in my generation; it also stimulated my thinking about the Seekers and other radical groups of the 1640s and 1650s, a generation of young hyper-Puritans both deeply troubled and greatly inspired by the tumult of the English Civil War. My previous work with the apocalyptic theology and revolutionary politics of early Friends required one more approach, from a third angle. Who were the English Seekers? What did they seek? What did they find in

early Quaker preaching and spirituality that made so many of them believe they had found the truth – and the true Church – at last? What interaction of spirituality and politics catalyzed such powerful spiritual energies and prophetic witness among thousands who had counted themselves as bewildered and bereft during the previous decade? Answering these questions required a careful study of these young Seekers as they moved out of Puritanism, into radical free-church gatherings, and then out of all churches. Of course, Hill had done great work in *The World Turned Upside Down* (1972), describing the various flora and fauna of radical ideas in that period. My own approach could not add much informationally to what he and others, such as J.F. McGregor and Barry Reay (1984), had already given us. But, as the research progressed, I saw that these various radical groups of the period could be treated more developmentally, tracing their emergence in relation to the unfolding political events of the period. Just as politics and religion were a single equation in that day, so personal spirituality seemed to evolve rapidly in relation to the cultural shock waves that everyone felt at a deep level. The younger generation, just coming of age during these events, was particularly imprinted by those shocks.

So this next study would look at the *spiritual formation* of early Quakerism as it developed out of the radical scene of the 1640s. That approach would complete a trilogy, or a triptych of early Quakerism, featuring three complementary viewpoints. These all have a common concern to learn what we can from early Friends toward renewal of the Religious Society of Friends and/or some other form of radical Christian witness for today. I returned to Pendle Hill in September 1994 to begin intensive research for the book. I received financial aid over the course of 1994–96 that allowed me to live at Pendle Hill and devote most of my energies to research and writing. It was a time of personal healing and renewal as well, in part through the spiritual goodness of the Pendle Hill community, and in part through meeting a new life-partner, Caroline Jones, whom I would eventually marry.

I briefly include such personal details because they have significant bearing on the rest of the story I am telling. Personalism, the belief that personhood is the defining quality of divine–human relations and that ‘the personal is the political’, was a key feature of 1960s countercultural politics and spirituality. It energized the student free speech movement, anti-war protests, and the feminist and gay liberation movements of that period. It is also important to understanding the seeking culture in America since that time. In his book, *The Spirit of the Sixties* (1997), James J. Farrell traces the roots of 1960s Personalism to certain French influences upon the Catholic Worker movement, a stream of American religious philosophy and other sources. It came into mainstream American political discourse through figures such as Peter Maurin, Dorothy Day, A.J. Muste and Martin Luther King. Though Personalism is not treated in Roof’s sociological study of the baby-boom generation, it is a key to the formation of the seeking culture that has predominated in America (and many sectors elsewhere) since the 1960s. Farrell notes that as 1960s and 1970s Personalist radicals and environmentalists began to develop appropriate modes of political organizing and consensus decision making, they often found Quaker practices especially apt and adaptable.

I believe there are historical reasons for this resonance. Quakers are the main survivors of the small Spiritualist wing of the Protestant Reformation. The Spiritualist approach to regaining the purity and simplicity of the early Church

emerged in the first decades of the Reformation in the writings and activities of Hans Denck, Thomas Muntzer, Caspar Schwenckfeld, Sebastian Franck and others (see George Huntston Williams, 1958; 1992). Spiritualists insisted upon a more thorough-going reformation of the Church than the state-sponsored enterprises of Luther, Calvin, Zwingli and the Rhineland Reformers were producing. They emphasized the deeper spiritual transformation and moral regeneration of direct communion with Christ the Word within. This was the true communion of the soul, transported to the spiritual plane in Christ. Outward elements of bread and wine were secondary and not essential to the life of the Church. Men and women infused with this spiritual presence surrendered to the unmediated work of Christ within and among them. Some Spiritualists claimed the possibility of moral perfection through this Spirit-infused life. Schwenckfeld advocated a *Stillstand*, a Church-in-waiting, for a fuller revelation that would bring the splintering churches together.

Like the Anabaptists, with whom they had close relations, the Spiritualists were condemned and hunted down by the state-sponsored Reformers; they had only limited opportunities to spread their new faith. This stream seeped into England in various ways in the sixteenth century. Its most notable expression was in the Family of Love of Elizabethan times, but it was most fully manifested during the unsettled situation of the English Civil War, when thousands of eager young Puritans dropped out of all churches to wait for a fuller revelation, a new Pentecost that would reunite the English Church. Seekers and Waiters suspended sacraments, liturgy and regular clerical leadership in their informal worship groups. This was a holding pattern much like Schwenckfeld's experimental *Stillstand* congregations.

Seeker groups, along with the Anabaptist-influenced General Baptists in England, were the most important seedbeds for the Quaker movement in the 1650s. George Fox integrated the radical ideas and experiments of the 1640s and formulated them into a spiritual counsel that taught Seekers how to come more fully and consistently into the direct revelation of Christ's light, or Spirit. The full maturation of these personal and communal practices of spiritual discernment, worship, ministry and decision making made Friends the lasting vessel for a religious tradition with strong affinities to the experiential dynamics, anarchist organizational modes, communal discernment and egalitarian social activism of twentieth-century Personalism.

Moreover, the early Quaker movement was a mediation between two diverging forms of Seeker outlook and expectation in the 1640s. The first and classic Seeker type (Type A, I call it) was a fairly conservative Protestant impulse driven to radical conclusions. Young hyper-Puritans, driven to near-despair by their sinfulness and the absence of a 'true' Church, dropped out to wait for new apostles like those in the Book of Acts, with some new and convincing solution to the worship, sacraments and organization of the Church. Their preaching would probably be confirmed by signs and wonders like those of the first apostles. These Seekers wanted passionately to be part of an organized, visible Church, but were willing to wait in the wilderness for it, rather than participate in Church forms they no longer could believe in. In effect, these Type A Seekers were still engaged in the classic Protestant hope for 'primitive Christianity revived'.

However, other Seekers (also called Waiters), appear in the literature a little later

in the 1640s; these appear to have proliferated more in the southern urban centres of London and Bristol, as well as in the Parliamentary army. These (Type B, say) Seekers reasoned that God would not take them back to a Church that had become corrupted so soon after the apostles' age. God would instead take them forward into a new age or age of the Spirit. This new dispensation would be a clearer and more resilient revelation that would leave traditional Christendom behind. These Seekers were possessed of a belief in progressive revelation and a resulting progress in human history anticipating the liberal Enlightenment that would emerge later in the seventeenth century. They were also drawn to the Spiritualist theology of Christ's direct teaching by the Spirit, the inward, spiritual reality of the sacraments without outward elements, and a universal sense of God's Spirit in all people, beyond the bounds of Christian churches and beliefs. Hence they were less anxious to found a visible, gathered Church. These Type B Seekers were less mournful, more confident that they were the vanguard of a new age of the Spirit that would soon overwhelm the rest of England.

The pattern of these two forms of Seeker expectation is notably similar to the diverging types of baby-boom seekers that Roof finds: one looking wistfully back to a past age of wholeness to be regained, while the other eagerly looks forward to a future wholeness soon to be more fully revealed and triumphant. The two paradigmatic types of English Seekers did not diverge as far, or fall into the protracted cultural warfare we find today in American religion and politics. But they did chafe and conflict with one another as many were brought close together in the Quaker movement. The breakthrough revelation for both Seeker types was Fox's message that 'Christ is come to teach and lead his people himself'. Through this apocalyptic, Second Coming message and Fox's riveting spiritual counsel, these diverging Seekers were turned from their backward and forward orientations to 'stand still in the light', to become radically present *in* the present *to* the presence of Christ within them. The intense, pentecostal power of Quaker worship and charismatic leadership generated from this present-centered apocalypse from within. Fox's rhetoric mixed the apocalyptic message with egalitarian social agendas that renewed radical hopes for England's future. At the same time, he made strong claims that the Quaker movement was gathered into the same Spirit and power that the prophets and apostles had possessed. Both aspects of Fox's preaching were folded into a radical moment-by-moment attendance to the light's present leading and the seed's inward power.

Still, diverging Seeker expectations were not entirely left at the door to the Quaker movement, and they conflicted increasingly as the movement matured. The central leadership of the movement had been gathered from northern Seekers who seem to have been primarily of Type A outlook. Their rhetoric emphasized the primitive Christian qualities of the movement and clearly sought to establish the true Church in visible, gathered communities. On the other hand, the spirituality and worship patterns of the new movement (the inward sense of sacraments, for example) confirmed Type B Seeker agendas. Other significant leaders emerged later from the south, sometimes emphasizing Type B themes such as progressive dispensationalism and universalism. As the organization of the movement developed and became more standardized, many of these progressives felt stifled. At the same time, however, the development of a separate, independent sphere of

women's spiritual authority and leadership was an innovation of London Friends. Many northern Friends (most notably the Wilkinson–Story faction) were wary of women elders and the elaboration of a national system of women's meetings for business alongside the men's. It appears that a crucial aspect of Fox's leadership unfolds through his role as a Midlander mediating between northern and southern sensibilities; as a single man developing key partnerships with gifted women and facilitating the interaction of masculine and feminine spiritual formations; and as an apostolic figure melding Type A and Type B agendas in the development of Quaker faith and practice.

The book that resulted from these researches was *Seekers Found: atonement in early Quaker experience* (2000a). As earlier in the case of covenant, atonement emerged slowly as the key theological motif of this study. The spirituality of early Friends was a participation in the cross of Christ at several levels. The convincement narratives of Seekers becoming Quakers consistently describe an acute and painful death of self as the individual comes out of alienation from God, standing still in the light that reveals both particular sins and the condition of sin. Slowly, as the false self is deconstructed, the seed of God is freed to rise to new life with overcoming power. The bonding together of early Friends in this crucible experience constituted a second level of atonement, as their compassion for one another and networks of mutual assistance under persecution reconciled differences of class, gender and diverging understandings (A and B Seeker outlooks, for example). A third level of atonement played out in the universal, subversive social category of *friendship*, which defined the new, kingdom-coming order among them as they enacted shared countercultural social codes of equality and simplicity. But these behaviors were scandalously offensive to the mannered social codes of the surrounding culture; they created conflicts for early Friends at work, with family, in the streets and in marketplaces. The local Quaker often became the scapegoat for various tensions in the community, becoming the victim of mob violence or official repression. These 'Friends in the Truth', intimates of Jesus (John 15:15), extended that intimacy in all directions, addressing even Oliver Cromwell or Charles II as 'friend'. Such demeanor communicated grace to those with the eyes to see it, but was a stigmatizing disgrace to others.

This highly conflict-generating profile of the movement constituted a fourth level of atonement. The Lamb's War was their apocalyptic conflict with the world, aimed at calling people out of Babylon, out of various alienated forms of religious, social and economic relationship, into direct communion with God, one another and the creation. The provocative witness of early Friends was their part in following the Lamb into warfare against the forces of Antichrist; they understood clearly that they must be willing to suffer the same rejection and violence that Christ suffered, even to the point of death. Yet they did so in reconciling hope. The teenaged Quaker prophet James Parnel was surrounded by a hostile mob in the streets and struck down with a staff by a man who said, 'Take that, for Jesus Christ's sake!' Parnel responded, 'Friend, I accept it for Jesus Christ's sake' (Gwyn, 1995, p.118). The atoning suffering they endured was not for their own sins but for the sake of 'the Spirit in prison' among hostile neighbors. Thus, while apocalypse formed the *frame* of reference of early Quaker spirituality, its *point* of reference was a drama of atonement at every moment.

Seekers Found concludes with a meditation on how the Quaker movement was forged into a stable, continuing entity from a diverse and diverging gathering of Seekers. Early Friends used the word ‘truth’ audaciously for what they had found, or had found them: a living reality whom they served and sought to extend in English society. As a living reality and boundary concept they equated with God, ‘truth’ was a reality they never tried to define with any particular form of words. But a definite pattern of experience, belief, practices and development can be seen in the community’s formation around truth. I utilized four standard philosophical theories of truth (correspondence, coherence, operationalism and pragmatism) to devise a hermeneutical model describing four aspects or ‘moments’ of truth as it developed in early Quakerism. This is not a *definition* of truth, but a framework for understanding *faithfulness* to the truth as early Friends practiced it. The conclusion also examines how these four moments of truth seem to manifest themselves in the Gospel and Letters of John. There, in narrative and discursive forms, the mythic–historical drama of the Father/Creator, Son/Word, Spirit/Paraclete and community/Church of Jesus’ friends enacts the same hermeneutic of truth that coherence, operationalist, correspondence and pragmatic theories of truth, respectively, articulate.

Woodbrooke, *Heaven on Earth, Towards Tragedy*

As the work on *Seekers Found* progressed, new experiences and alliances were opening up. In 1996–97 I was invited to spend a year at Woodbrooke, the Quaker study center in Birmingham, England that had inspired Pendle Hill’s founding. This provided an opportunity to continue my research and writing, using sources that I could not find in the United States. It also provided an opportunity for a fuller experience of British Friends and to do a little teaching along the way. One of the most significant outcomes of that year was a three-week course I co-led with Timothy Peat and Ben Pink Dandelion on Quakers and the belief in the Second Coming of Christ. The course combined Tim’s interpretation of Paul’s eschatology, my own work with early Friends and Ben’s sociological research into present-day British Quakerism. The course was a dazzling non sequitur to the current outlook of Friends, but it was compelling enough to participants and to us that we felt led to produce a book out of the materials. The resulting volume, *Heaven on Earth: Quakers and the second coming* (Dandelion *et al.*, 1998) offered an opportunity to condense the work of my three large studies of early Friends into a brief statement in the book’s middle section. Connecting that with Tim’s and Ben’s scholarship offered a wider, integrative vision, combining our different strengths, disciplines and concerns into something original. The book also helped introduce my work more widely to a British Quaker readership.

I returned to Pendle Hill in the summer of 1997 and continued living and working there for room and board while I finished *Seekers Found*. Finally, I was married to Caroline Jones in December 1999. With the book being readied for publication, we were ready to move on from Pendle Hill and I felt more prepared to resume some form of active leadership among Friends. The opportunity arose early in 2000 to return to Woodbrooke as Quaker Studies Tutor. We accepted this invitation joyfully,

as it offered an opportunity for Caroline to return to England and an occasion for me to teach from the body of work I had developed over the years.

The significant development in my work with Quaker theory/theology since that move has been a new project with Ben Pink Dandelion, who had become an important ally and good friend. Shortly after my move to Woodbrooke, Ben and I engaged in a series of conversations regarding the tragic sense and its decline in modern, secular society. My long-time friend, Richard Sturm, with whom I had worked out my experiential understanding of apocalyptic, had done a PhD thesis in the late 1960s on the origins of tragedy in ancient Greece. Utilizing his later training in New Testament, Richard had also explored the tragic meaning of the gospel. Ben and I began to plan a course and book on tragedy that would combine Richard's classical and New Testament work with my early Quaker research and Ben's sociological interpretation of twentieth-century England and English Quakerism. We eventually brought in two other contributors: Brian Phillips, who had researched and written on Edwardian Quakerism, and Rachel Muers, a new PhD from Cambridge with some original insights into tragedy and postmodern society.

Writing my chapter of the book was an opportunity to reframe my previous work in terms of the classical understanding of tragedy. I had touched on the theme slightly in *The Covenant Crucified*, in treating the Nayler story and its larger historical significance in the transition toward capitalist social ordering. My reflections on suffering and atonement in *Seekers Found* also bordered upon a tragic thesis. I now pondered more directly early Quaker spirituality of desolation as a deep immersion in the tragedy of the gospel. Here intense personal *anomie* and suffering are transmuted into hope through a living sense of Christ's providential presence in the light and in the raising of the seed to new life within. The redemptive uplift of tragedy accrues to the surrendered soul through identification with the seed. Recognizing the life of the seed within is an *anagnorisis*, a discovery that develops through time, patience and continued surrender.

On a historical level, I interpreted the rise, struggle and defeat of the Lamb's War in relation to the *secularization* processes that began to accelerate in the second half of the seventeenth century in England. The Quaker movement was the last great *sacralization* project of the Reformation era, albeit on a covenantal basis different from that of the dominant Puritan programme. The intense, apocalyptic witness of early Friends to sound the day of the Lord, to 'stop the world' in people's consciousness, to delegitimize a state-enforced Church and establish an eternal Sabbath of divinely ordered social relations was a utopian sacralization movement unlike anything the Reformation produced. The rejection and defeat of that initiative and its vision of God's hand in human events by the new powers of early capitalism produced the decisive shift toward secularization. Divine providence would still be reckoned in personal lives and within sectarian polities; but it would fade from the larger vision of social history, displaced by England's glowing sense of national destiny on its own terms. The Quaker drama, arising at the crucial moment of transition into the early modern world, gives pointed theological confirmation to the literary theories of George Steiner (1961) and Timothy J. Reiss (1980) that the great European tragic tradition, which flowered in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, died – or at least ceased developing – in the latter seventeenth century. I also made use of some of Hegel's dialectical reflections upon *Antigone* as an ancient

Greek tragedy paradigmatic for modernity. That work is to be published in 2004 with Ashgate Publishing, under the title *Towards Tragedy/Reclaiming Hope* (Dandelion *et al.*, 2004).

Conclusion

Of course, all these historical labours are simply tracings upon the husk of the seed, mapping the extant records of the life that animated early Quaker witness. They are merely attempts to calibrate the biblical expressions of early Friends with some of the more compelling theological and theoretical insights of our own times. If Thomas Aquinas could look back on his great *Summa* and call it 'straw', how much more must I shrug at my best efforts of twenty-five years. But I can also say this: my mapping the surfaces of the seed's life in early Friends has at its deepest levels been guided by the inner workings of the seed's life in me. Theology and theory are not the life. At best, they are compost, the dead forms of the human mind that, properly understood and utilized, may enrich the seed's life in us.

Researching early Quakerism as a present-day Friend has certainly affected my findings. Not only have I brought to the historical material my own concerns for modern Quaker renewal and larger social regeneration; my personal spiritual practice as a Friend has no doubt also shaped my understanding of early Quaker witness. This orientation seems entirely appropriate, provided that it is acknowledged. Meanwhile I can also witness that reading early Quaker writings has opened up new depths of Christian spirituality in my life. Not much in modern Quaker literature has challenged or inspired me in a comparable way.

But while my inward, spiritual life has been enriched, my outward vocation of ministry among Friends has become more problematic. From the time I started reading Fox and early Friends, my life of nomadic sojourning, exodus/exile, has become a permanent condition. The astonishing integration of early Quaker witness, combining a deep Christian spirituality, a radically Spirit-led ecclesiology, a prophetic social witness and an apocalyptic sense of history does not offer ready-made formulas for renewal in any present-day stream of the Religious Society of Friends. Nor does it engage easily with the deepening malaise of social and political life we experience today. Over time, the figure of Abraham has become more luminous to me. His life was a series of sojourns lived with an eye toward a horizon of promise which would barely find any fulfillment in his own lifetime. The figure of his grandson, Jacob, has also been important to me (as he was to early Friends). His long years of questing and trickster ploys finally culminated in deep transformation. He ended his days in comfort – but in Egypt, a place he knew was not his home. Hence I have come to see the past quarter-century as a time of waiting and watching, a time of preparation. Hebrews 11:1–12:4 has become my great text.

My itineracy has been apocalyptic in a postmodern mode. Fredric Jameson (1991, pp.154–80) notes that, in the transition from modernity to postmodernity, the key reference has shifted from time to space. The modernist quest for the 'new' against the traditional is finally triumphant everywhere. Yet, paradoxically, the 'new' fades as focus shifts toward the interaction of different cultural modernities within the new global order. My apocalyptic spirituality has consisted in a

movement among different geographic, theological and cultural 'worlds' of the Religious Society of Friends. Each one conflicts with, eclipses and 'ends' the others. My vocation has been to witness them for myself, to learn from each of them, and to witness back to them from my own leadings, from my experience of the other Quaker worlds, and from my study of early Friends. That last reference brings time back into the elaborated space of postmodernity. The failed revolutionary vision of the Lamb's War stands as a witness against modernity, much as the failed countercultural politics of the 1960s witness against postmodernity – and as the crucified Jesus stood as a witness against the Jerusalem temple forty years after his death. The word of the slain and silenced prophets stands as societies march heedlessly toward destruction. The postmodern Babel, a true 'din of inequity', drowns out all its prophets. But our witness stands as its towers fall. The collapsing World Trade Center towers are a sign that the time of preparation is moving to a close. The larger forces of this present darkness are moving toward a decisive moment of contradiction. The Book of Revelation describes a political moment akin to our own. Its 'post-ancient' concatenation of multiple mythologies and symbols into a tableau of all-embracing cosmic conflict speaks with disturbing clarity to our postmodern, multicultural situation in an all-consuming global economy. This is a time to demystify the power relations of this age and to preach again the everlasting gospel.

Holiness: the Quaker Way of Perfection

Carole D. Spencer

In 1870, Hannah Whitall Smith, a Philadelphia Quaker, published *Christian's Secret of a Happy Life*, the most popular devotional book to emerge from the nineteenth-century Holiness Movement. Her book, which is still in print, became an instant best seller, going through numerous editions, and continues to be read by religious seekers over one hundred years later. *Christian's Secret* is a popular expression of holiness theology and spirituality. It might seem surprising that a Quaker would write the greatest classic from the literature of the Holiness Movement. But even more surprising is that Quaker historians have hardly taken notice of her, despite her prominence in the religious world of the Victorian era.¹ Smith wrote several other books in addition to *Christian's Secret*, including her spiritual autobiography, *The Unselfishness of God*, which provides valuable and fascinating documentation of the history of the Holiness Movement and its relationship to the Orthodox Quietism in which she was raised.

Smith claims she had to be introduced to holiness by a Methodist millworker, because the experience was essentially hidden to her within Philadelphia Quaker Orthodoxy. Thus she admits she had to learn from outside the Society what were in fact the foundational principles of Quakerism. She writes of sharing with a Quaker friend her 'new discoveries' of holiness teachings:

[The Friend]...on hearing what I had to tell, had expressed surprise at its being new to me, as it was, she declared, what the Quakers had always taught. This seemed to throw light upon Quakerism that I had never dreamed of. My mother also said to me one day, but Hannah why does thee call this doctrine new? Thee is only preaching what all the old Friends have always preached. Yes, I answered, 'I begin to see that this is the case, but they have never preached it in a way that ordinary people could know what they were talking about. It seems to me that nobody, who did not know it already, could possibly get hold of it from their preaching.' Certainly I never did, although I have been listening to their preaching all my life. But I came to the conclusion that my mother and my friend were right. It *was* true Quaker doctrine that we had discovered. (Smith, 1903, pp.275–6)

She concludes that Quakers called holiness 'the life hid with Christ in God' (ibid., p.276).

Ever since I read Hannah Whitall Smith's autobiography, a number of years ago, I have wondered if she was right about holiness being the foundation of Quakerism. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, the Holiness Revival had an impact upon a vast portion of American Quakers, transforming a quietist, contemplative sect into an enthusiastic, evangelistic one. The prevailing opinion among historians has been that this transformation, or near-revolution, as Thomas Hamm terms it, represents

an assimilation of Quakerism into the dominant evangelical culture (Hamm, 1988, p.xiv). Undoubtedly, as Hamm describes it, Quakerism, as all denominations of the time, were absorbed in varying degrees into the mainstream evangelical culture. Not only did Hannah Whitall Smith's life span this period of immense change, but she was also directly involved with many of the events and personalities of the period. Her writings attest to the fact that she was a woman of deep spiritual insight and a keen observer of people and culture. As she looks back over the course of her own spiritual journey, her remarks about the relationship between Quakerism and holiness seem to imply a different or at least more complex phenomenon than cultural adaptation. If her experience is at all typical or representative, then a strong case could be made that a new generation was rediscovering Quaker holiness and expressing it in new ways.

My work identifies early Quakerism as essentially holiness and argues that different interpretations of holiness characterize subsequent traditions of Quakerism. Holiness as the defining aspect of Quakerism provides a structure, arising out of the material itself, for interpreting changes in Quaker theology. I argue that Quakers were a radical holiness movement in its beginnings and recovered for Reformation Protestantism the experiential and transformational aspects of the Christian mystical tradition. Quaker holiness, though radical for its time and thus in conflict with the institutional and dogmatic forms of Christianity in the seventeenth century, nevertheless remained firmly grounded in the historical, theological and biblical framework of Orthodox Christianity.

A spirituality of holiness, though shared with many other groups, is completed in Quakerism by a doctrine of perfection, both mystical and ethical. Early Quakerism combined elements of many earlier holiness traditions, but reinterpreted them in a radical new type of Holiness movement in a post-reformation puritan context. This radical holiness became a distinguishing characteristic that set Quakers apart from other puritans and sectarians of the time.

In examining the religious experiences of selected figures from Quaker history, who played important roles in the development of Quaker life and thought across the centuries, we find that holiness remains a central, dominating theme. My work concludes that Quietism of the eighteenth century and Holiness revivalism of the nineteenth century, though in outward forms looking very different from the early period, maintained a strong core of holiness with perfection as the center of their spirituality, and thus continue the mainstream of Quaker belief and faith. Other branching movements, Hicksism, Gurneyism and modernism, all diverge in different ways from a Quaker theology of holiness, though each contains traces of the holiness heritage in their social-cultural adaptations. Gurneyism, in its return to biblical faith and Orthodox Christian doctrines, prepares the way for a revival of holiness within late nineteenth-century Friends.

The use of holiness as the paradigmatic theme connecting the evolution of Quakerism alters the standard diagram of its growth and development and offers a fresh interpretation of the standard mapping of Quaker history.

What is Holiness? Defining the Ineffable

The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought, in attempting to define holiness, suggests that it ‘embraces a range of concepts to do with the otherness of God and the character of a human life which is ordered so as to be consciously centred on [God] and [God’s] service’ (Davies, 2000, pp.302–3). *The Encyclopedia of Catholicism* defines holiness as ‘a spiritual quality derived from participation in the life of God who is the source of all holiness’ (McBrien, 1995, p.617). In the New Testament, *hagios* is the Greek word used to translate holiness. Holiness is characteristic of the saints, *hagioi*. Christians, as saints, are to ‘present their bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God’ (Rom. 12:1). Holiness is associated with the notion of suffering, death of self (Heb. 9) and rebirth through the Spirit, into purity (freedom from ‘body of sin’, meaning ‘original sin’), and wisdom (true *gnosis*, divine not human). In the early church holiness became connected to ascetical ideals, such as virginity, poverty, solitude (especially monasticism) and the liturgical life of the church. Holiness became divided into a category of being and of acting, with the distinction between the active and contemplative life.

I define holiness as a spiritual quality in which human life is ordered and lived out as to be consciously centered *in* God. For early Quakers holiness was centered *in* God and *with* Christ as participation and union. Thus, as Hannah Whitall Smith concluded, holiness is ‘the life hid *with* Christ *in* God’.² Union with God, or union with Christ, or ‘Christ in me’, for the majority of puritans in the seventeenth century was metaphorical and analogical – God and human could not really touch – but for the Quaker those phrases were not metaphor but reality, ultimate union, *unus spiritus*.

Quaker holiness is closer to the Roman Catholic understanding, but with a rigorous puritan ethic of obedience. In Catholicism, holiness is synonymous with perfection, and early Quakers often used the terms interchangeably. Perfection was the natural vocation of the sanctified Christian, growth in grace and love. Holiness therefore is inseparably linked with a doctrine of perfection. Perfection is the *telios* of *hagios*. New birth is the beginning of *hagios*, *telios* is the end (but paradoxically an end that never ends) to which it points and proceeds. To be reborn means to begin the process of perfection in love. Quaker holiness necessitates a concept of perfection. Holiness is paradoxically unending beginnings, dynamically spiraling, thus eternal, the infinite Light, ‘God as all in all’. In this chapter holiness is the overarching term which describes the essential quality of Quaker spirituality. Perfection refers to *telios*, the culmination or fullness of an ever-deepening relationship with Christ in God.

Holiness in Christian History

Quaker holiness cannot be understood without some knowledge of its roots in earlier Christian traditions. Although Quakers claimed to be recovering the primitive church of the Apostolic age, and declared the Church from the end of that age to the seventeenth century to be in a state of apostasy, their dependence on a continuous tradition of interpretations of holiness is an important shaping influence. Quaker

holiness did not simply appear *sui generis*. The Bible was the primary text for their idea of holiness, but how the holiness texts of scripture were interpreted through history influenced their own reinterpretations of holiness.

Holiness and perfection are prominent themes in the New Testament, and tend to be equated in the Gospel accounts. Jesus challenged his disciples with the vision: 'Be perfect therefore as your heavenly Father is perfect' (Mat. 5:48). This same injunction is often translated as 'Be holy as your heavenly Father is holy.' Just what this mandate of perfection entailed became interpreted in later periods in many different ways, some mystical and some ethical.

Holiness as a state of being 'in Christ' is prominent in the Pauline letters. The phrase occurs 164 times in Pauline (and pseudo-Pauline) writings: for example, Gal. 3:27, as well as the phrase, 'Christ in me' (for example, Gal 2:19–20, Phil. 1:21). The implication of being 'in Christ' is freedom from sin. Holiness as perfection is also a common exhortation in the Johannine writings, where the intimacy is extended to one of mutual indwelling: 'You in me, and I in you' (John 14:20; 17:21) and metaphorically expressed as 'the vine and the branches' (John 15:4–5).³ All of these Johannine texts, with the concept of mutual indwelling, are common in early Quaker writings.

Perfection as a doctrine of deification can be traced back to the Apostolic and patristic period. The Greek Fathers such as Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Gregory of Nyssa and Athanasius, and others down to the end of the fifth century developed the concept of perfection into a full-fledged doctrinal formulation, called *theosis*.⁴ In Eastern Orthodoxy, therefore, the equivalent doctrinal term for perfection is *theosis*, the notion of the birth of the Word in the soul of the believer. All Christians can enter the mystical life and potentially be deified (McGinn, 1991, p.268). Deification plays a central role in Eastern Orthodox theology and is inseparable from the doctrine of the incarnation, commonly stated in the expression 'God became man so that man can become God.'⁵ The doctrine of deification, though elaborated with much greater sophistication and nuance in the Eastern Christian tradition, is conceptually similar to the early Quaker way of perfection, and describes essentially the same process.⁶

The Western Christian tradition is less comfortable with the term 'deification', though it is employed, primarily in the medieval mystical tradition. The Roman Catholic Church prefers instead the classic term 'perfection' as the goal of holiness. In its definition of perfection, *The Encyclopedia of Catholicism* explains that 'the goal of Christian life is union with God in love, and it recognizes love, expressed as virtuous life, as the means to this goal' (McBrien, 1995, p.985). Perfection is the *sine qua non* of the Christian mystical tradition, the goal of the spiritual quest, the fruit of longing for God, the gift of the vision of God (*visio Dei*) or Divine union (*unio mystica*). In the mystical tradition, perfection is equated with the highest state of contemplative prayer. A variety of expressions are used to describe this experience: pure love, the prayer of the heart, baptism of the Holy Spirit, spiritual marriage. Early Quaker writings allude to many of these mystical expressions for union with God. Most often union is described as an inflowing of the love of God. The descriptions are generally affective, personal and often rapturous and sensual.

Volumes of reflections and formulations on the nature of perfection as love are found in the treatises of Christian dogma, but in the popular mind perfection simply was, and is, equated with sinlessness. Numerous historical investigations have been

written speculating on the sources of this doctrine: is it biblical, Gnostic, pagan or Eastern? The Pauline epistles in particular easily support a doctrine of sinlessness here and now, thus it is no surprise that early Quakers with their immersion in the Pauline epistles would be drawn to a doctrine of perfection with claims of overcoming sin. But the ultimate source of the belief may not be in biblical texts or esoteric traditions, but in experience. As one historian has observed of this phenomena in early Christianity,

there was sufficient empirical ground for the doctrine that some Christians at least, under the influence of the Holy Spirit and the enthusiasm of conversion, passed through a change so sudden and so far-reaching as to make them in effect, if perhaps only for a moment, new and sinless men. (Kirk, 1931, p.233)

Kirk's awareness of perfection emerging from the powerful dynamic of conversion is helpful in grasping the source of this emphasis on holiness in early Friends.

The Essential Elements of Holiness Quakerism

Trust in the revelatory nature of biblical texts and the experience of conversion are two essential elements of holiness common to early Quakerism. This holiness theory identifies eight essential elements of Quakerism, all of which represent core values of early Christian faith and experience. These eight elements characterize historical Quakerism in its first generation and can be found with differing emphases in the writings of all early Friends:

- 1) Scripture – Quakers had a thoroughly biblical vision and the Bible was authoritative, although the way they understood the Bible was closer to that of the early church than to Reformation biblicism.
- 2) Eschatology – Quakers, along with most sectarians of the time, initially anticipated the imminent Second Coming of Christ. When it did not happen literally they recognized that Christ had come again spiritually, within each person.
- 3) Conversion – Quakers were born again, the old self died and a new self was born; they shared the same soteriology as other Puritans, but extended sanctification into perfection.
- 4) Charisma – Quakers were enthusiasts, they were spirit-filled and spirit-led. Although they did not formulate an explicit pneumatology, the role and work of the Holy Spirit was a prominent feature in the early movement.
- 5) Evangelism – Quakers were strongly evangelistic and prophetic, preaching good news to the poor, denouncing oppression, both spiritual and social; they felt compelled to spread their spiritual discoveries around the world.
- 6) Suffering – Quakers were persecuted and martyred, imitating Christ by joyfully bearing the cross.
- 7) Mysticism – Quakers were mystical. Knowledge of God came through direct experience, and they incorporated the apophatic, an approach to God beyond images and words, in their spirituality.

- 8) Perfection – Quakers experienced divine indwelling, the *telios* of holiness, the fully restored image of God and victory over sin.

All of these elements, combined, define the nature of Quaker holiness. Because Quakers blended elements from many prior traditions, none of these components was unique; all can be found in earlier forms of spiritual life, and in many other radical groups of the time. But the constellation of all eight elements, combined, forms the uniqueness of Quaker holiness and differentiates Quakerism from other movements and subsequent holiness traditions.

Element One, Scripture: 'The Words of God'

Quakers had an intense and thoroughly biblical vision. Their sacred text was the Bible and their language and modes of expression were almost entirely biblical. They were especially dependent on the New Testament texts of the Pauline letters, the Gospel of John, Hebrews and Revelation. References to the synoptics were infrequent (Barbour, 1964, p.157). In the Old Testament the Prophets were primary texts for early Friends. Quakers believed in continuing inspiration through the Holy Spirit as an additional source of authority (belief which closely links this element to the element of charisma). For early Quakers revelation is not closed. The Bible is God's inspired revelation, but inspiration is not limited to the Bible, nor is the Holy Spirit confined to the reading of the Bible.⁷ But the Bible was the touchstone of truth and confirmed all direct, continuing inspiration. Any inspiration or revelation contradictory to Scripture was false mysticism or ranterism. Thus the Bible was the safeguard for self-deception. While the Bible was never regarded as the Word of God (Christ was the Word) it was nevertheless the *words* of God and, therefore, authoritative.⁸

The Bible was not an external authority ('a paper Pope') but an internalized authority. Quakers lived, breathed and were infused by the words of Scripture. It was foundational to all their theology and spirituality. Hugh Barbour claims that 70 per cent of their writings were quotations, paraphrases or allusions to Scripture (ibid.). Quakers were always suspect for devaluing Scripture, by those who considered themselves the keepers of true orthodoxy, though in practice Scripture informed every aspect of their lives, and undergirded all of their theology and doctrines.

Element Two, Eschatology: 'The Kingdom is come'

Quakers believed that the millennial Kingdom of Christ (though not technically a thousand-year reign) had come, and they were called to proclaim it, a belief referred to by later historians as a 'realized eschatology' (Damiano, 1988). This view predominated in the early enthusiastic period, but was modified after the Restoration with the creation of a theology for 'The Interim' when outward events did not seem so hopeful (Dandelion *et al.*, 1998). A radical apocalyptic millennialism prevailed in the beginnings of Quakerism, similar to that of many Puritan radicals at the time and was modified to a realized eschatology, 'Christ has come and is coming' and continued as a mystical eschatology, or 'realizing

eschatology', through the Quietist period (Damiano, 1988). The *parousia*, another term understood by their contemporary religionists as referring to the Second Coming of Christ, became for early Quakers the real *presence* of Christ in the *present*, the experience of the immediate presence of Christ in them and through them. By means of conversion the reborn (spiritual person) could live continually in the intimate, continuing presence of God.

Unlike many sectarian millennial groups, Quakers did not develop any detailed doctrine of eschatology or endtime events, or emphasize eternal rewards in heaven. (Barclay formulated no proposition related to eschatology.) Quakers lived with a heightened sense of the eternal present. Commentators on Fox's *Journal* have noted the mystical pattern of 'transcendent moments, each complete in itself but otherwise unrelated to what goes before and after' and the sense that 'life was itself a spiritual moment' (Olney, 1972, p.177). George Fox is purported to have said, on his deathbed, 'All is well. The Seed of God reigns over all, and over death itself' (Nickalls, 1952, p.760). The Kingdom of God *is* come.⁹

Element Three, Conversion: 'Born again'

Quaker conversion was a dramatic, intense and life-changing experience. 'Born again', 'new man' or 'new creation' were the terms most often employed: 'I witness I am regenerate and born again of the immortal seed' (Dewsbury, 1655, pp.12–14). Francis Howgill, writing in 1656, graphically describes this process of personal transformation:

I became a perfect fool, and knew nothing, as a man distracted; all was overturned, and I suffered loss of all. In all I ever did, I saw it was in the accursed nature. And something in me cried, 'Just and true is his judgment!' My mouth was stopped, I dared not make mention of his name, I knew not God. And as I bore the indignation of the Lord, something rejoiced, the serpent's head began to be bruised ... and as I did give up all to the judgment, the captive came forth out of the prison and rejoiced, and my heart was filled with joy ... Then I saw the cross of Christ and stood in it ... And the new man was made captive came forth out of the prison and rejoiced, and my heart was filled with joy. (Quoted in Barbour and Roberts, 1973, pp.173–4)

Fox summed up his dramatic encounter with Christ with the phrase, common among Quakers, 'this I knew experimentally' (Nickalls, 1952, p.11). The seventeenth-century word 'experimental' is often equated with 'experiential', but the modern terms 'existential' or 'transformative' may be closer equivalents. When Quakers spoke of being 'experienced' people they meant radically transformed people. The later Quaker term for conversion, 'convincement', is rather misleading because convincement was not so much a changing of the mind, but a dramatic heart-change, more affective than cognitive.

For the Quakers, as distinct from other Puritans, conversion was a continuous process of deeper and deeper intimacy with God. Quaker historian Richard Vann writes that most Quakers had already had a conversion experience (perhaps several) before joining the Quakers. They sought a communion with God that would continue, 'so deep that it might be called "continuous conversion"' (Vann, 1969, p.32).

Element Four, Charisma: 'in the Power'

Early Quakers could arguably be called a grass-roots Pentecostal movement.¹⁰ They saw their experience reflecting the pattern of the growth of the primitive church in the book of Acts (Knott, 1993, pp.234–5). The experience of being 'in the power' is one of the most frequently recurring phrases in Fox's *Journal*.¹¹ It referred to being 'Spirit-filled' and 'Spirit-led' and included physical manifestations such as trembling, quaking, trances, fainting and other ecstatic phenomena of that type, as well as 'signs and wonders', prophecy and miracles such as healings and exorcisms, similar to those found in the book of Acts.¹² All of these charismatic manifestations were common in the early period, including 'singing in the spirit'¹³ and possibly even speaking in tongues (there are some references to 'incoherent' praying in the Spirit).¹⁴ The more dramatic of these declined after the 1660s, or at least they were not so triumphantly proclaimed in the slightly less enthusiastic post-restoration period. But charismatic phenomena of a less ecstatic type were not uncommon throughout the Quietist period. Direct guidance of the spirit manifested by speaking spontaneously out of the silence when 'in the power' in worship became the most evident charismatic phenomenon of later periods.¹⁵

The Holy Spirit was internal (the Light of Christ within) but could also come in an extra measure from without, as in the descent of the spirit at Pentecost. Early Friends often used the term 'poured down' to refer to whole meetings that were influenced by the 'pouring down' of the spirit and thus communally 'in the power' (Fox, 1990, vol.3, p.13).

In the Quietist period the mystical-sounding phrase 'celestial showers' became the familiar term for the pouring down of the Spirit (Wilbur, 1859, p.127). The effects were described as 'broken meetings', or 'tender', meaning hearts were open, touched and moved by the presence and power of the Spirit of Christ.

Several recent studies of Fox portray him as a healer (see Bailey, 1992;¹⁶ Ingle, 1994). Healing ministry is a major dimension of the Christian mystical tradition, just as divine healing, 'the faith cure', was a major component of Holiness belief (Spencer, 1991). The historical recovery of the importance of healing and miracles in the early Quaker movement is a significant contribution. Bailey concludes, unequivocally, 'early Quakerism was a fully Spirit-led, charismatic movement' (Bailey, 1992, p.53).

Element Five, Evangelism: 'The Lamb's War'

Quakers were a missionary-oriented movement, adopting an itinerant, apostolic and even militant style of preaching (called 'the Lamb's War'). Fox's life was modeled on the Apostle Paul in the book of Acts. Their desire to spread the Quaker Gospel and witness to all of England, as well as Ireland, Scotland, the continent, Turkey, the Middle East, the American colonies and the Caribbean made the Quakers a missionary movement on a grand scale. Quaker evangelism united the political and the spiritual, in the same manner as the Old Testament prophets denounced their kings for 'grinding the faces of the poor'. Quakerism arose as a response to religious oppression, both spiritual and social. A concern for equality of all persons and social justice was a corollary of their evangelism in so far as it emerged from their

religious beliefs. Evangelism and social witness were one and the same, not two separate entities. Their protest against tithing was both a religious and a political protest. Religion *was* politics in the seventeenth century.

Evangelism is the obvious manifestation of the fact that powerful experiences of conversion cannot be private affairs. The effect of the inward revolution is to be thrust out into the world to spread the message of liberation that has been personally experienced. Fox declared he was 'to bring people off from all their own ways, to Christ the new and living way' (Nickalls, 1952, p.35).

Beyond the necessity of individual rebirth, Quakers also placed the 'rebirth of the true church at the center of their lives, and from the beginning they displayed an extraordinary missionary fervor and the organizational genius to make the fervor effective' (Endy, 1973, p.68). Fox is concerned not simply with individual salvation but also 'to bring people ... off from their churches ... to the Church in God' (Nickalls, 1952, p.35). Using a definition of evangelicalism as a 'religion of the heart based on an inward experience of conversion, through faith in Christ, and spread by the Gospel message', early Quakers were 'evangelicals' of their time (Campbell, 1991).

The Quaker concept of holiness, to the modern mind, appears to be puritanical, moralistic rigorism of the highest kind. But to the early Quakers holiness was a manifesto of freedom. It allowed the Quaker movement to release its followers from the darkness of religious, spiritual and social oppression.

Quakerism was the first great mission movement to come out of English Protestantism. Calvinism was not evangelistic, and most puritans, with a belief in election, did not evangelize. The Quaker belief in the universality of the Light of Christ (grace available to all, not just the elect) became the impetus and motivation for evangelism (Nuttall 1946, p.160).

Element Six, Suffering: 'Bearing the Cross'

Quakers identified themselves as belonging to the long line of martyrs for God's Truth and developed a literature of sufferings as a distinct form of writing (Knott, 1993; Barbour and Roberts, 1973, pp.116–17; Wright, 1932). In 1753, Joseph Besse published *A Collection of the Sufferings of the People Called Quakers*. He patterned his book after Foxes' *Acts and Monuments*, commonly known as *Foxes Book of Martyrs*, thus becoming a Quaker version of Foxe (Knott, 1993, p.218). Like the martyrs before them, Quakers could assert joy in suffering, and even ask forgiveness of their persecutors (ibid., pp.220, 222). Suffering becomes redemptive because it is given meaning and purpose as identification with Christ, and viewed positively for the sake of Christ. When Christ is truly incarnated in the individual, that individual bears the cross of Christ. Participation in God means participation in the Cross, and in the passion of Christ.¹⁷ The Cross thus becomes a central symbol in Quaker theology, not only as the symbol of an historic event, or a doctrine of atonement (ironically, they were accused of denying both), but as a daily enacting of the suffering of Christ, a cross mysticism. William Penn writes, 'the bearing of thy daily Cross is the only true testimony' (Penn, 1682, p.25).

After persecution ceased, self-denial and renunciation became evidence of holiness similar to the way 'blood martyrdom' became the 'white martyrdom' of

monasticism in Constantinian Christianity. Testimonies against unfair laws, and social customs of domination, were ways of continually testifying to one's faith, and evidence of submission to God's will, 'a continually enacted crucifixion to the world' (Knott, 1993, p.224).¹⁸ The belief that holiness involves suffering, even requires it, is much stronger in Quakers than in other Puritan non-conformists. Even the Baptist separatist John Bunyan is willing to concede, 'I am not for running myself into sufferings.'¹⁹ Penn and early Quakers seem to embrace suffering more deliberately, and even to invite it.²⁰ Such identification with suffering is also a characteristic trait of Christocentric mystics, who experience union with Christ (St Francis of Assisi and John of the Cross are among the most notable).

Element Seven, Mysticism: 'Experimental Knowledge'

When Andrew Louth defines mysticism as 'a search for and experience of immediacy with God' (1981, p.xv) he is following the classic scholastic definition, *cognitio Dei experimentalis*, knowledge of God through direct experience. When Quakers spoke of having 'experimental knowledge of God', or claimed to be 'experienced' people, they were speaking of knowing God via the mystical way, through direct encounter.

Mysticism takes two paradoxical paths in classical terminology, the *via negativa*, the language of negation (beyond words, sensations and images) and the *via positiva* the positive language of presence (the use of words, senses and images). Early Quakerism manifested both apophatic negation and cataphatic affirmation. Apophatism, the *via negativa* in the seventeenth century, was the 'interior way' termed 'Quietism', an element in the Quaker movement from its earliest beginnings.

Early Quakers, it could be argued, had profound insight into the limits of language in expressing Reality (which they called Truth) and also insisted that a Reality existed which was *not* relative to language, and which transcended it. All Christian mysticism values the element of silence, the end of speech, but no Christian tradition, outside of monasticism, had elevated the use of silence on a regular, communal basis to the extent of the early Quakers. Silence became an alternative symbol for their spiritual world, as opposed to the words and symbols of institutional religion. Liturgy, prayer books, scholarly preaching, rituals and sacraments came to be seen as cultish idols preventing rather than mediating God's presence.

At the same time that language cannot convey union with God, those who experience divine union often feel compelled to speak, preach and write with an overwhelming profusion of words, hoping to bring others into that union which they have experienced as Reality. The vast body of literature Quakers left, and the care they took to record and preserve it, shows how highly they valued language as the means of conveying their experience of spiritual Reality. They used language to convince and persuade, and developed a distinct biblical-mystical-symbolical language to spread their message of Truth.

Both the cataphatic and the apophatic characterize worship. Worship would begin in the negation of deep silence, beyond words and thoughts, and often ended in a luxuriant cascading of religious images in an attempt to witness to the experience. Edward Burrough provides one of the many descriptions of this consciousness of

God, which begins in silence and negation: ‘waiting upon the Lord in silence, as often we did for many hours together, with our minds and hearts towards him, being stayed in the light of Christ within us, from all thoughts, fleshly motions, and desires’ (Fox, 1990, vol.3. p.13). The hours of apophatic emptying eventually bring

the pouring down of the Spirit upon us, and the gift of God’s holy eternal spirit, as in the days of old, and our hearts were made glad, and our tongues loosed, and our mouths opened, and we spake with new tongues, as the Lord gave us utterance, and as his Spirit led us, which was poured down upon us. (ibid.)

When early Quakers gathered in silent worship they were expressing an elevated and intense mystical consciousness and were all witnessing to essentially the same ‘direct knowledge of God’, which they called ‘union with God’ mediated through Christ, a Christ mysticism experienced as the consummation of love. They considered themselves part of a single tradition, witnessing to the same experience as that of the original disciples, apostles and evangelists of the earliest Christian church.

Apophatism is also embodied in a process of detachment from the world, and a strict asceticism. In the words of Fox, ‘the Spirit draws off and weans you from all things that are created and external, (which fade and pass away) up to God, the fountain of life, and head of all things’ (ibid., vol.7, p.26).²¹ Apophatism is also embodied in the annihilation of the self, the letting go of the ego, and is thus related to conversion and suffering.

Element Eight, Perfection: ‘The Holy Birth in all its Fullness’

Perfection was a key component of early Quaker soteriology. Perfection was the culmination, the *telos* of the process of salvation, which begins with justification. The seventeenth-century Quaker theologian Robert Barclay defined justification as ‘a holy, pure, and spiritual birth, bringing forth holiness, righteousness, purity, and all these other blessed fruits’ (1886, p.5). The ‘holy birth’ he defined as ‘Jesus Christ formed within us, and working his works in us’ (ibid.). Perfection he defined as ‘the pure birth ... fully brought forth’ (ibid.). Perfection is thus the goal of spiritual formation (‘Christ formed within us’) and through this process of formation ‘also comes that communication of the goods of Christ unto us, “by which we come to be made partakers of the divine nature” as saith Peter, 2 Pet. 1:4, and are made one with him, as the branches with the vine’ (ibid., p.145).

Perfection is thus participation in God through Christ or, in classical mysticism, union with God. In those who experience divine union, ‘the body of death and sin comes to be crucified and removed, and their hearts united and subjected to the truth; so as not to obey any suggestions or temptations of the evil one, but to be free from actual sinning and transgressing of the law of God, and in that respect perfect’ (ibid., p.171).

And yet, Barclay adds, in order to make clear he is not speaking of sinless perfection, or the perfection of God, ‘doth this perfection still admit of a growth; and there remaineth always in some part a possibility of sinning, where the mind doth not most diligently and watchfully attend unto the Lord’ (ibid.).

Because of the mysterious, transcendent and mystical dimension of perfection, that cannot easily be explained but only experienced, the conceptualization of holiness as a theological formulation about it has tended to focus on the more pragmatic 'eradication of sin' and perfect obedience, rather than the mystery of union with God.

Although the conversion experience generally happened individually and privately for each person, perfection, the process of ever-deepening intimacy with God, took place within the church, the community of the convinced. As in the Greek concept of *theosis*, perfection has a parallel and essential communal aspect. (In Quakerism, salvation might be found outside the church, but the measure of perfection could only be realized within the purified church.) Unlike other individualistic radical groups, who taught perfectionist doctrines, Quakers were concerned about both individual rebirth and the rebirth of the true church (Endy, 1973, p.68). Thus seeking for perfection as both a mystical process and an ordered way of life within the spiritual community became a distinguishing characteristic which set Quakers apart from Puritans and other radical religious movements of their day. The distinctive emphasis on perfection reappeared with renewed vigor in a slightly different form in the nineteenth-century Holiness Movement (Barbour, 1964, p.149).

I argue that these eight elements, Scripture, eschatology, conversion, charisma, evangelism, mysticism, suffering and perfection, as a constellation, form the continuity of experience which characterizes Quaker holiness. These key elements have been changed, reduced, conflated or heightened at different periods within different branches over time; nevertheless, holiness is the *sine qua non* of what it meant to be a Quaker.

The Essentially Orthodox Nature of Quaker Holiness

The concept of deification, *unio mystica*, a participation in God through Christ, is the foundational experience of all Christian mystics and has always existed within, and alongside, the dogmatic, liturgical and institutional faith. This mystical aspect of faith, as divine union, biblically expressed as 'partakers of the divine nature' (KJV, 2 Peter 1:4) was so central to the beginnings of Quakerism that one early leader, Richard Farnworth, actually made it into a ditty, 'Written by one whom the world called a Quaker, but is of the divine nature a partaker' (1653a, p.2).²²

This experience-based faith was anchored to (and indeed could not be understood apart from) the mystery of the Trinity. Fox cared nothing for the dogmatic formulations, but the experience of the three persons, God, Christ and Spirit, and the ultimate unity in the diversity of persons was paramount.²³ This experience-based faith was also anchored in the doctrine of the incarnation, the Word becoming flesh, and the atonement, Christ's offering on the cross. The key biblical text for Quakers, John 1:9, 'the true Light that enlightens everyone' could not be understood apart from the incarnation, because the true Light was the Word become flesh. And Fox, like the Greek Fathers, did not stop there but recognized the inverse as well, that transfiguration was a two-way process. Since Word (God) became flesh, flesh could also become God-like (deified, perfect).

George Fox explains in his *Journal* what Christ meant when he said: 'Be ye perfect even as my heavenly father is perfect':

he who was perfect comes to make man and woman perfect again and bring them again to the state God made them in; so he is the maker up of the breach and the peace betwixt God and man.... But I told them Christ was come freely, who hath perfected for ever by one offering all them that are sanctified, and renews them up in the image of God, as man and woman were in before they fell; and makes man and woman's house as perfect again as God had made them at first. (Nickalls, 1952, pp.367–8)

Fox understood perfection as the return to the original God-likeness in which humanity was created, which Christ had restored through his incarnation and atonement. This concept of perfection as restoration and earthly glorification, rather than a glorification only to be experienced in eternity, is common to Christian antiquity and continues to be the traditional understanding of holiness in the Eastern Orthodox Church.

Holiness in George Fox: Ecstatic Rapture

George Fox's most dramatic expression of perfection is described in his *Journal* as an ecstatic rapture. Some time around 1648 he experiences a vision which is metaphorically expressed as being in the 'Paradise of God'. The experience is so overwhelming that Fox finds words inadequate, yet he, like all mystics, is nevertheless compelled to try and express the inexpressible:

Now was I come up in the spirit through the Flaming Sword, into the Paradise of God. All things were new, and all the creation gave another smell unto me than before, beyond what words can utter. I knew nothing but pureness, and innocency, and righteousness, being renewed up into the image of God by Christ Jesus, so that I say I was come up to the state of Adam which he was in before he fell ... But I was immediately taken up in spirit to see into another or more steadfast state than Adam's in innocency, even into a state in Christ Jesus that should never fall. And the Lord showed me that such as were faithful to Him, in the power and light of Christ, should come up into that state in which Adam was before he fell, in which the admirable works of creation and the virtues thereof may be known, through the openings of that Divine Word of wisdom and power by which they were made. (Nickalls, 1952, p.27)

Later George Fox, in his testimony at trial for blasphemy in Derby, refers to this state of being 'in the Paradise of God' as sanctification. Here Fox is giving witness to Christ abiding in him in a state of continual presence through the Holy Spirit:

Question: Are you 'sanctified'?

Answer: 'Sanctified? Yes, for I was in the Paradise of God.'

They said, had I no sin? 'Sin?' Said I, 'Christ my saviour hath taken away my sin, and in him there is no sin.' They asked me how we knew that Christ did abide in us. I said 'By his Spirit that he has given us.' (Nickalls, 1952, p.51)

George Fox never developed a consistent theology of holiness, or a clear doctrine on perfection. He never claimed to be a theologian. He had dramatic, rhapsodic experiences, which he expressed metaphorically and existentially: 'I knew nothing but pureness, and innocency, and righteousness, being renewed up into the image of God by Christ Jesus.' Fox had a subjective experience of being transported into union with God through Christ, convincing him that he had freedom from and power over sin, 'a state in Christ Jesus that should never fall'. What might appear to be arrogance or audacity is related to the ecstatic state, which gives him an unshakable certainty of the *unio mystica*, as well as profound insights, and assurance of the verity of his call. He also never exalted his mystical raptures, or made them paradigmatic for his disciples, or encouraged them to seek mystical states of sinless perfection.

Holiness in Robert Barclay: Doctrinal Proposition

The task of formulating a theological description of perfection was accomplished by a young Scotsman, Robert Barclay (1648–1690), one of a small number of scholarly, theologically trained leaders to join Quakers. Barclay was educated in both Protestant Calvinist and Roman Catholic traditions (Scots College in Paris), which provided him with a broader cultural and religious perspective than most others of his time.

Barclay includes a comprehensive, scholastic argument for the doctrine of perfection in his *Apology for the True Christian Divinity*, first written in Latin in 1676. Barclay's concept of perfection can be summed up as never-ending growth in grace, in proportion to one's measure (in relation to the potential of each individual). Barclay defined perfection as the 'holy birth fully brought forth'. But even that fullness 'still admits of growth' and is a 'perfection proportionable to a man's measure' (1886, p.172). It is a reaching for something that is always beyond. But its fruit is manifest in this life in the growth of pure love. Barclay concludes in one of his later works, *Universal Love*, that 'perfection consists in loving God above all' (1692, vol.3, p.190).

Barclay's theological formulation of perfection became the basis for John Wesley's eighteenth-century development of the stages in sanctification which culminated in Christian perfection, or 'perfect love'. For Wesley as with Barclay, perfection was a goal that is continually and dynamically before us, yet never a static state of perfect sinlessness; 'this perfection still admits of a growth; and there remaineth always in some part a possibility of sinning, where the mind doth not most diligently and watchfully attend unto the Lord' (Barclay, 1886, p.171). He further refutes sinless perfection by employing the term 'measure', thus always a relative perfection. He illustrates his point with two analogies: 'even as a little gold is perfect gold in its kind, as well as a great mass' and as 'a child hath a perfect body as well as a man, though it daily grow more and more' (ibid., p.172).

Barclay also uses the Pauline expression 'pressing after' (Phil. 3:14) in relation to perfection, in the sense that one is always reaching forward to something that is beyond (ibid., p.186). He is careful to note that even when one has attained a 'measure' it is possible to fall back, and that many holy persons who 'have arrived

to everlasting life, have had divers ebbings and flowings of this kind' (ibid., p.172). Sin may temporally weaken a person but through the Spirit within they can rise again.

There is a dynamic, existential quality to the writings of Barclay, which has often been missed because of his scholastic, systematic style. (Even John Wesley, a century later, though borrowing heavily from Barclay, patronizingly called the *Apology* that 'solemn trifle'.) Using the rational, formulistic style of his day to defend Quaker beliefs to the academicians, Barclay attempted to demonstrate a dialectical process as a kind of spiraling ascent, in which the goal is, and can be reached potentially, but never statically (even 'after a man has arrived to such a condition, in which a man may not sin, he yet may sin') (ibid.). Barclay (like John Wesley after him) never taught or claimed a permanent state of sinlessness (ibid., p.173).

From George Fox to Thomas Kelly: Quaker Holiness, a New Lens

It is impossible in the space of one short chapter to begin to encapsulate the embodiment of holiness in the key figures representing in microcosm the evolving holiness Quaker tradition. My work argues that Fox and Barclay, with slight variations, present a homogeneous understanding of holiness as a process of deepening union with God according to the 'measure' or capacity of each individual. Further, my work argues that holiness continued to be central to Quakerism through the eighteenth century. Although expressed with some variation in different types of Quietism in a different cultural setting and ethos, holiness as the message of direct experience culminating in union with God did not change. Perfection remained connected to both mystical experience and core Christian doctrines in the Quietist period. Holiness played a major role in spiritual renewal and reform impulses in Anthony Benezet's (1713–1784) leadership in early Quietism and Stephen Grellet's (1773–1855) evangelical impulses in later Quietism. Both leaders combined an unusual dialectic of both inwardly mystical and radical ethical holiness.

In the breakdown, fragmentation, reinterpretation and cultural adaptation (or non-adaptation) of American Quakerism in the nineteenth century, Elias Hicks (1748–1830), John Joseph Gurney (1788–1847) and John Wilbur (1774–1856) represent the widening, evolving and reactionary streams of holiness which create divergent and antagonistic branches, severing the unified vision of Quaker mystical and ethical holiness held in a balanced tension within the Society of Friends for almost two hundred years. These three leaders, and their separate legacies, change the shape of Quaker holiness. Hicks and Hicksism moves away from Quaker holiness and Christian Orthodoxy towards a more rationalist and Unitarian trajectory. Gurney moves away from Quaker holiness to a Wesleyan /Anglican non-mystical type, but nevertheless helps prepare Quakerism for a renewal of holiness through revivalism. And Wilbur maintains a tradition of Quaker holiness, but in an isolationist, sectarian form.

Quaker holiness at the turn of the twentieth century was poised to separate into modern evangelicalism and modern liberalism. Two key American figures of this

period whose ideas and visions for a new Quakerism are radically different are Rufus Jones (1863–1948), with his theological and historical project of a reinterpretation of Quakerism as a modern mystical, but essentially liberal, movement, and J. Walter Malone (1857–1935), with his entrepreneurial spirit in creation of a modern evangelical Quaker holiness movement. In modern British Quakerism, a complex, paradoxical figure, J. Rendel Harris (1852–1941), whose fervent holiness has been overlooked by historians, establishes the capacity of a Quaker modernist to fully embrace Quaker holiness without retreating from the challenges of liberal scholarship. But most modernists such as Harris' adversary, William Littleboy, represent the more dominant trend in British liberalism toward a non-mystical and non-holiness rational Quakerism (Kennedy, 2001, p.187).²⁴ My work argues that Harris represents core Quaker holiness within modernism.

Two ecumenical contemporary approaches that also maintain core Quaker holiness are represented by Thomas Kelly (1893–1941) via liberalism, and Richard Foster via evangelicalism.

A picture of the changing nature of holiness in Quakerism can best be described in the limited space of this chapter by a representation of the evolution, elimination and recovery of the eight key characteristics through different time periods and movements (Figure 3).²⁵ The nine columns represent different periods and a selection of movements of Quakerism over the centuries. The eight rows represent the key elements found in the early movement and the dynamics of change over time. The bold type indicates a basic continuation of that same element, roman type an adaptation. For example, the first change is from a literal Second Coming of Christ to an internalized Second Coming as 'realized' eschatology. Emphasis on eschatology gradually wanes but reappears in the Holiness Revival in a new form that is predominantly premillennialism.

Conversion, in the Quietist period, becomes primarily sanctification, or growth in grace. By the Orthodox period, conversion is wholly gradual growth in grace through membership in the community (birthright Friends). Hicksism differs from Orthodoxy in only one key element, the role of Scripture, which is gradually replaced by experience alone as a source of revelation, as in Modernism. Gurneyism, Revival Holiness and Evangelicalism all reappropriate Scripture as divine revelation and the interpreter of experience.

In the Quietist period Charisma becomes internalized with less manifestation of the range of charismatic phenomena, and intense focus on the singularity of being 'spirit-led', a charism which becomes the primary characteristic of Quaker spirituality. Broader charismatic phenomena reappear in Revival Holiness. Evangelism in the Quietist period evolves into primarily community ministry with an emphasis on formation of the individual to the values of the community (with some exceptions). The strong community ethos continues until a concern for evangelism reappears in Gurneyism, and is especially emphasized in Revival and Evangelical Holiness.

By the Quietist period, and the end of political persecution, Suffering is replaced by the strict adherence to the testimonies and disciplines. The willingness to be identified as a 'peculiar people' and to accept the marginalization of such a countercultural distinction becomes the 'cross' of suffering. Testimonies as 'Quaker distinctives' assume less importance in Revival and Evangelical Holiness, and

Figure 3 The eight key characteristics of Quaker holiness across time

Radical Holiness 1646–66	Formative Period 1667–89	Quietism 1690–1820	Orthodoxy 1827–58	Hicksism 1827–1900	Gurneyism 1858–1920	Revival Holiness 1870–1940	Evangelical Holiness 1940–	Modernism 1900–
Scripture	Scripture	Scripture	Scripture	Scripture	Scripture	Scripture	Scripture	Scripture
Eschatology	Realized eschatology	Realized eschatology		Experience		Premillennial eschatology		Experience
Conversion	Conversion	Sanctification	Community	Community	Conversion	Conversion	Conversion	Community
Charisma	Charisma	Leading of Spirit	Leading of Spirit	Leading of Spirit	Leading of Spirit	Charisma	Leading of Spirit	
Evangelism	Evangelism	Ministry	Ministry	Ministry	Evangelism	Evangelism	Evangelism	
Suffering	Suffering	Quaker testimonies	Quaker testimonies	Quaker testimonies	Quaker testimonies	Christian testimonies	Christian testimonies	Universal testimonies
Mysticism	Mysticism	Silent worship	Silent worship	Silent worship	Silent worship	Mysticism		Silent worship
Perfection	Perfection	Perfection	Obedience	Obedience	Obedience	Perfection		

become more broadly Christian. In Modernism they are more broadly universal: 'integrity, equality, simplicity, honesty'.

Mysticism by the Quietist period finds its expression primarily communally in silent (contemplative or apophatic) worship. Mysticism is reflected more widely in the spiritual experiences of Revival Holiness (worship becomes more kataphatically expressive). Mysticism is less predominant in Evangelical Holiness, though not totally absent. Evangelical worship becomes more rational and teaching-oriented, with slight space allotted for contemplative silence.

Perfection as mystical experience and ethical manifestation, the natural outcome of divine indwelling, or union with God, continued to be an expectation (though not often realized) through the Quietist period. In Orthodoxy the main focus of perfection became obedience. The mystical aspect of perfection finds expression again in Revival Holiness and is generally lost thereafter.

Under the influence of the Holiness Movement entire communities of Quakers, particularly in the American mid-west and far-west, adopted new forms of worship and ecclesiology, and reinterpreted their theology in light of the changing times and new spiritual currents. The Holiness Movement transformed many traditional quietist (Gurneyite) Quaker meetings into Evangelical churches (Hamm, 1988, p.88; Jones, 1974, pp.60–61). The Holiness revival with its vision and ethic of perfection tapped into the mystical roots of early Quakerism. Unlike earlier American revivalism (which had minimal impact on Quakers) personal salvation/conversion was not the primary concern of the Holiness Movement. The primary concern was sanctification, the fruits of conversion, lived out in a holy life of devotion to God and neighbor. The Holiness Revival was clearly evangelistic in its outlook and deeply concerned with saving the sinner and redeeming the backslider. Nevertheless it focused primarily and uniquely on persuading people to seek and experience the mystical moment of sanctification, a sense of freedom from sin, that occurred subsequent to conversion. Holiness advocates saw sanctification as a union with Christ that empowered the individual to live a righteous and obedient life. This experience was often referred to as the 'Baptism of the Spirit', a phrase and concept familiar to traditional Quakers.

Revivalists came to believe that traditional Quaker forms such as the ritual of silent waiting had become an obstacle to true holiness and was not nourishing the spirituality of a new generation. Thus, for Revivalists, the altar call became the paradigmatic experience to replace silent communion. Revivalists insisted Christ could be experienced more powerfully at the altar than by simply sitting in silence, waiting. Altar rails took on new significance. They became a symbol of the sacred place where 'baptism of the Spirit' occurred. For nineteenth-century Quaker revivalists a trip to the altar for prayer became a symbol for the real spiritual presence, a sacrament of penance, and public testimony to a deeper experience of grace that could overcome sin and self. For Revivalist Friends, perfection, the great distinguishing doctrine of Quakerism, could be both elevated and enhanced, by equating it with the Wesleyan doctrine of entire sanctification.

For Holiness Friends, revivals with dramatic preaching culminating in altar calls provided the kind of spiritual ecstasy that used to be found in silence. And music, they discovered, could prepare a worshiper to enter into that sacred space of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The longing for holiness and the felt presence of God

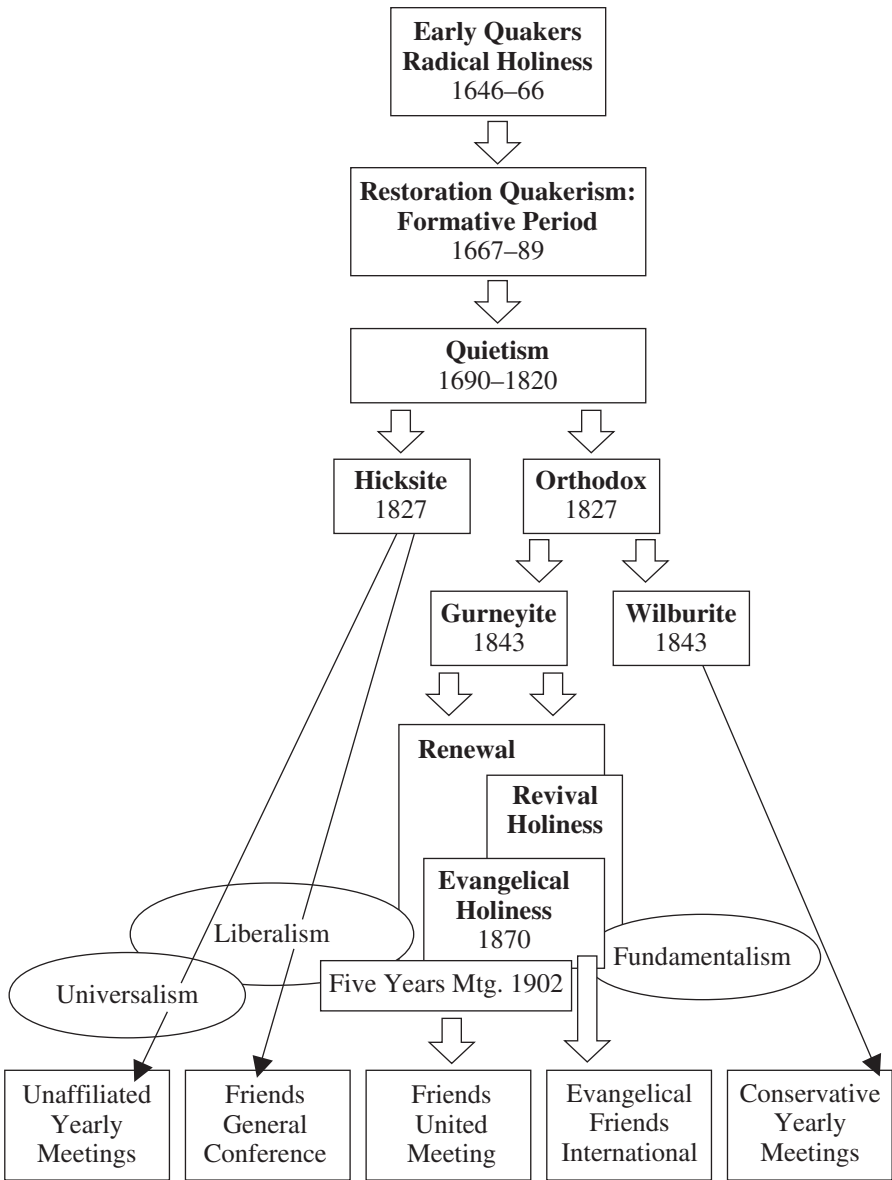
was the goal for both revivalist and traditionalist, but the way to reach that goal took very divergent paths.

This charting of 350 years of Quaker spirituality (though drastically simplifying a complex phenomenon) reveals that holiness functions as a primary theme and variation in the history of the Quaker movement. Based on the criteria of the eight essentials of Quaker Holiness, Revival Holiness follows most closely the original pattern of the early movement. However, this observation is not meant to imply that Revival Holiness as it became manifested in the nineteenth century was a truer or purer form of Quakerism. Many of its spiritual practices and expressions were quite different and shaped by changing cultural and social forces. But rather than viewing revivalism as an alien takeover, holiness theory contends that a new generation was rediscovering essential aspects of Quakerism buried within its own tradition. It also explains why a Quaker such as Hannah Whitall Smith found Holiness teachings to be ‘true Quaker doctrine’.

Holiness theory does not contradict or devalue other important theories, based on different logic or divergent criteria, but provides a new lens to explore significant data that has been overlooked or minimized, and thus brings a more complete understanding of the past. Holiness theory circumvents many of the standard theological and doctrinal issues, as well as the unique divisions such as programmed/unprogrammed, pastoral/non-pastoral, and use or disuse of spiritual practices that divide modern Quakers. The recognition of holiness as a paradigmatic theme connecting movements and branches in the evolution of Quakerism alters the standard diagrams of its growth and development and offers a fresh interpretation of the mapping of the history of the Quaker tradition (Figure 4).

In the Spirit of Holiness, a Personal Testimony

I discovered the Quaker ‘Way’, as many contemporary religious seekers do, as an adult disaffected by the institutional forms of evangelical Christianity that had shaped my early religious life. As with early Quaker seekers, assent to faith by belief in doctrines, and conformity to religious practices required by an institutional church had no authenticity or power for me. What took hold of me and would not let me go, even as a rational, skeptical and myth-denying adult, was the mystical dimension that lurked beneath the conventional, domesticated, evangelical exterior of the Christianity I had known. After moving to Oregon in 1980, and making the acquaintance of a ‘Friend’ who told me she attended a ‘Friends Church’, I became immediately curious. I had grown up in Philadelphia, the icon of American Quaker history, but knew little about Friends as a religious group and I had never heard of a Friends Church. When I asked her if she had any books about Quakers she handed me a slim volume by Thomas Kelly called *A Testament of Devotion*, written by a Philadelphia Quaker in the 1940s. When I turned to the first page and read ‘Meister Eckhart wrote, “As thou art in church or cell, that same frame of mind carry out into the world, into its turmoil and its fitfulness.” Deep within us all there is an amazing inner sanctuary of the soul, a holy place, a Divine Center, a speaking Voice, to which we may continually return. Eternity is at our hearts’, I was spellbound. Thus began my journey with God on the mystic road into the inner sanctuary of the soul.



Boldtype = movements where Holiness is central or maintained as a distinctive identifier.

Figure 4 The evolution of American Quakerism, 1646-2000

The cognitive, rational, rule-bound approach to religion had been a dead end, and a closed door. Quakerism provided a door for me to enter into the mystical dimension of the Christian faith I had long been searching for. I began attending a Friends Church, which quickly offered a community and an identity for me, although it was not the theology, doctrines, structures or forms of worship that initially attracted me, but something much deeper that I could not name.

When at mid-life I felt called to study theology to prepare for some type of ministry, I enrolled at a local seminary, which had been founded by denominations of the Wesleyan–Holiness tradition. There I was introduced to John Wesley, the Methodists and Holiness spirituality, a Christian tradition mostly unknown to me. I began to explore more deeply the history of Quakerism and discovered many connections and striking similarities between the two spiritual traditions. I learned that the two traditions interpenetrated in nineteenth-century American revivalism. I discovered that John Wesley, a great theological synthesizer, borrowed and adapted many elements from the Quakers. I further discovered that both traditions had great appreciation for many of the same Catholic mystics. When I turned my attention to exploring the vast mystical tradition of Christian spirituality I felt certain I had found the key to understanding Quaker history. I quickly learned I was not the first to uncover this path. Rufus Jones, one of the great Quaker thinkers in the early twentieth century, had already written volumes on Quakers and mysticism, but I soon discovered that his theories about Quaker mysticism were considered passé and had been dismissed by many later Quaker historians. And much to my amazement I read scholarly studies which denied that Quakers were mystical and, even more astounding, claimed that George Fox was not a mystic. I concluded that Jones, indeed, had been on the right trail, and his research had uncovered much valuable material for further studies, but his theory was flawed, for several reasons. First, he tried to disengage early Quakers from aspects of Orthodox Christianity which did not appeal to his own personal movement toward Modern Liberalism. Second, he completely dismissed the apophatic, *via negativa* type of mysticism so central to Quaker spirituality. And thirdly, he minimized the role of Christian perfection, and the spirit of holiness, which I identified as the central, defining element of Quaker spirituality.

When I read early Quaker literature I found that, historically, Friends stood squarely within an ancient Orthodox Christian stream and, in fact, were radically Orthodox in that they sought to recover a biblical mysticism of direct encounter with God which resulted in a life lived in the Spirit, or holiness exemplified. Early Quakers were denounced as heretics by many of their contemporaries, not because they actually departed from ancient Christian tradition, but rather because, like many earlier mystics, they challenged and protested against the abuses of the established institutional church and they were radically countercultural. The theology challenged by early Quakers was Protestant scholasticism, not biblical Christian faith. The seventeenth century was not a period in European history that appreciated and honored its mystics. Protestantism had little use for mystical Christianity. Even Catholicism, which in previous centuries had canonized its great mystics, in the seventeenth century persecuted many of them.

My exploration of Quaker history paralleled my own spiritual journey. As my research deepened, my faith deepened and my heart opened to the loving presence

of God that surrounded me in both dead and living Quaker saints. God became present to me through the lives and writings of spirit-led men and women largely unknown and mostly forgotten. I discovered in the Quaker tradition a long, rich history of mystics – mystics who were contemplatives in action, had personally encountered God, lived in the love of God and who inspired and sometimes moved me to tears with their compassion and Christ-likeness, despite their less-than-perfect holiness.

Notes

¹ The best academic study of Smith is found in Dieter (1996, pp.130–57). In 1875, Smith and her husband, Robert Pearsall, held meetings for Holiness in Brighton, England, which 8000 people attended. One observer noted that the more than 6000 people gathered at her meetings gave here a ‘congregation ... larger than Mr. Spurgeon’s’ (Dieter, 1966, p.148).

² The phrase appears in early Quaker writings. See, for example, William Dewsbury’s sermon, *On Regeneration*: ‘there is a Life hid with Christ in God for me’ (1688, pp.7–8).

³ Richard Farnworth (d. 1666), one of the more poetic of the early preachers, published 49 tracts; in *A Bunch of Grapes and An Iron Rod*, he used the closing ‘Thine in the Vine, R.F.’ (1654a, p.12).

⁴ This is not the same thing as self-deification, which comes from hubris, or ego, nor does it mean absorption into God and the loss of distinction between the essence of God and the self. See Lossky (1998, esp. pp.9–10, 135–6, 154–5) for a detailed theological discussion of this Orthodox doctrine.

⁵ See, for example, Irenaeus of Lyons (c.130–200): ‘The Son of God became man that man might become son of God’ (*Against Heresies*, III, 10, 2; III, 19, I); Athanasius of Alexandria (c.296–373): ‘The Word made himself “bearer of the flesh” in order that human beings might become “bearers of the Spirit”’ (*On the Incarnation and Against the Arians*, 8); Gregory of Nyssa (c.335–394): ‘The Word, in taking flesh, was mingled with humanity, and took our nature within himself, so that the human should be deified by this mingling with God: the stuff of our nature was entirely sanctified by Christ, the first fruits of creation’ (*Against Apollinarius*, 2).

⁶ Snelling, in a recent study comparing the concept of perfection in the Eastern Church and the Western Church, using Wesley’s doctrine of Christian perfection, reaches the conclusion that, in theory at least, they are similar, if not always expressed in the same doctrinal ‘language’ (Snelling, 1997, p.130).

⁷ Tertullian said in the late second century, when he joined the Montanists (an early perfectionist movement much like Quakers) that the church ‘had chased the Holy Spirit into a book’.

⁸ George Whitehead’s declaration on Scripture summarizes the centrality of Scripture and its authority for early Friends: ‘The Scriptures ... were given forth by the Spirit of God, and no whit altered by translations, they are a perfect Testimony of God ... whatsoever is written ought to be believed and received for Truth’ (Moore, 2000a, p.58).

⁹ This sense of triumph and paradoxical optimism that transcends the harsh realities of life is common to the mystical sensibility: for example, Julian of Norwich’s well-known phrase, ‘All will be well, all is well, and all shall be well.’

¹⁰ The term ‘Pentecostal’ is here used to refer to a primitivist movement that claims the experience of the first Christians at Pentecost as the norm for all true Christians rather than an extraordinary period not to be repeated (see Nuttall, 1946, p.156). Braithwaite (1912) describes a number of ‘strange excitements’ in which individuals came under the influence of ‘the power’ which, he acknowledges, ‘justifies the nickname Quaker’ (p.73) See, for example, his description of the Pentecostal meetings at Malton (pp.xi, 73–7) where some phenomena occurred which he determines were ‘not altogether healthy’ (p.77).

¹¹ In a literary study of Fox’s *Journal*, John R. Knott finds the same sense of charismatic power that historians and theological interpreters observe. He notes, ‘The expression, “so the Lord’s power came

over all", appears so frequently in the *Journal* as to make this power appear a vital force with a life of its own' (1993, p.245).

¹² See (Nuttall, 1948) for a comprehensive analysis of the charismatic dimension of this period.

¹³ Singing in early Quaker gatherings appears to have been a common occurrence. For example, Richard Farnworth, in *Truth Cleared of Scandals*, writes, 'We own ... singing in the spirit ... Hymnes and spirituall songs with grace in the heart (Col. 3:15,16) ... to sing with the spirit and the understanding, new Songs, which none can learn but those that are redeemed from the earth' (1654b, p.3).

¹⁴ See (Cadbury, 1948b) for a fascinating picture of the reality of the charismatic phenomena of this period with his careful reconstruction of the miraculous material omitted from later printed documents but still available in the original manuscripts. On speaking in tongues, the evidence is inconclusive, and the physical phenomena which occurred among early Quakers were never considered exceptional or given special importance. Thus early Quakers were not Pentecostal in the sense of the modern movement traced to Azusa Street where tongues speaking was claimed as evidence of the Baptism of the Spirit. Thus Quakers are to be identified as Holiness, but not Pentecostal in the modern, denominational sense. However, glossolalia, referred to as 'prayer language', is practiced by some Evangelical Quakers, but is considered a devotional practice, not a part of corporate worship.

¹⁵ According to Elizabeth Isichei's study of Victorian Quakers, Quietist ministers often claimed telepathic gifts, intuitive powers and psychical experiences. They lived in a heightened spiritual atmosphere in which even the daily details of life were inspired (not unlike some modern Pentecostals and charismatics). See Isichei (1970, p.24).

¹⁶ Richard Bailey argues that Fox's healing powers prove that Fox held a doctrine of 'celestial inhabitation' (1992, p.110), though I would challenge that conclusion.

¹⁷ James Nayler's entry into Bristol is an example of one way this theology became expressed literally.

¹⁸ Penn's *Primitive Christianity Revived* (1686) also promotes the ideal of plainness with suffering. Penn idealizes the early church and later persecuted movements such as the Waldensians as 'poor suffering Christians' in *No Cross, No Crown* (1682, p.292).

¹⁹ *Works*, 1859, vol.1, 226, quoted in Knott (1993, p.224).

²⁰ In comparing Quakers to other nonconformists and radicals of the time, Moore asserts that 'none showed the Quaker resistance to official persecution' (1993, p.259) and observes that 'Ranters and Diggers were not martyrs' and 'Baptists were full of self-doubt' (note, p.259).

²¹ This understanding of union with God as a rising above all created things, and annihilation of the self, is common to the writings of the Spanish and French Quietists. See W.O. Chadwick, 'Indifference and Morality' (1975, p.212).

²² Barclay uses 2 Peter 1:4 twice in his *Apology*, once in explaining justification: 'By this also comes that communication of the good of Christ unto us, by which we come to be made partakers of the divine nature, as saith Peter, 2 Pet. 1:4, and are made one with him, as the branches with the vine' (1886, p.145, original emphasis). He uses it again in his explanation of perfection: 'Wherefore if man must be always joined to sin, then God would always be at a distance from him ... whereas on the contrary, the saints are said to partake, even while here, of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4), and to be one spirit with the Lord, I Cor. vi. 17' (ibid., p.173, original emphasis). This text is the key scripture used in the Eastern Orthodox Church to support biblically the doctrine of deification.

²³ Debate regarding the Trinity abounds in modern Quaker literature, but reading the original sources has convinced me that Quakers were in practice Trinitarian.

²⁴ Littleboy's (1917) *The Appeal of Quakerism to the Non-Mystic*, his most well-known work, documents this perspective.

²⁵ This table is not meant to be comprehensive. For the sake of simplicity a number of movements such as Wilburism and Conservatism are not charted here. Both of these movements follow the basic pattern of Quietism.

Theoretical Reflections of a Skeptic about Theory

Thomas D. Hamm

In her wonderful collection of Quaker short stories, *Except for Me and Thee*, Jessamyn West wrote that there are stories that we tell ourselves over and over again, but never tell anyone else (West, 1970, p.4). The story of how I came to be an historian of Quakerism is one that I have often reflected on myself, but until now the occasion has never arisen for me to share it.

Some Fruits of Boredom

William Penn spent some of his retirement in composing a devotional and hortatory work, *Some Fruits of Solitude* (Bronner and Fraser, 1986, pp.401–2). The work that established my reputation as an historian of Quakerism was my dissertation at Indiana University, ‘The Transformation of American Quakerism, 1800–1910’, which was published in 1988 as *The Transformation of American Quakerism: Orthodox Friends, 1800–1907* (Hamm, 1988). It was the fruit of solitude of a different kind – boredom, combined with an interest in family history. Even as a teenager I was interested in genealogy and, since many, although not all, of my ancestors were Quakers they were relatively easy to trace. In particular, I became interested in tracing any descendant I could identify from a few Quaker immigrants to the Delaware Valley from the British Isles in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

In my first semester of graduate school, the bane of my life was a colloquium, or reading course, on the United States from the Civil War to World War I. The professor, while very capable, considered it his duty to make us aware of virtually every significant work on any aspect of US history in that time period. That meant that he considered half a dozen books and a dozen articles a week fair game. And I, in my mixture of naïveté, eagerness to please and obligation from being on a fellowship, considered it my duty to read every one.

Thus one Saturday evening in October 1979 I was on the sixth floor of the main library, making my way through an important but to my mind very dull work on the economic impact of railroad regulation in the 1870s. I decided that I was entitled to some sort of break, at least a diversion from work. For me, that meant going two floors down and pulling out a volume of the library’s almost complete holdings of the *American Friend*, the Quaker journal published first in Philadelphia and then in Richmond, Indiana, between 1894 and 1960. My interest was in the obituaries, from which I was making careful notes for my genealogical work. That evening, by

chance, I was looking at the volume for 1907. Early that year, I found something extremely curious, an editorial by Rufus Jones about the outbreak of Pentecostalism, or speaking in unknown tongues, in the Cleveland, Ohio, Friends Church (Jones, 1907, p.31). Although I had grown up among pastoral Friends, that struck me as very strange, and I made a mental note about it before going back to railroad regulation.

Two years later, I was able to put my discovery to good use. I was enrolled in a course on American sectarian religion, its focus Pentecostals, Christian Scientists, Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses. In need of a paper topic, and not enthusiastic about wrestling with the complete works of Joseph Smith or Mary Baker G. Eddy, I remembered the story in the *American Friend*. My professor, Stephen Stein, was enthusiastic, and encouraged me to explore it. And so I tried to explain how Quakers in 1907 could become Pentecostals.

When I read that paper now (it fortunately never made its way into print), I find it embarrassing how much I got wrong. I was limited mainly to accounts in the *American Friend*, and I missed much, such as the central role of Levi R. Lupton, the driven Quaker evangelist who would become a founder of the Assemblies of God, in the events at Cleveland (See Hamm, 1988, pp.169–71). But I did get one important thing right. Pentecostalism was possible among Cleveland Friends because of the transforming impact of the second-experience holiness movement on Orthodox Friends between 1870 and 1900. I became aware of the importance of Friends like David B. Updegraff, Dougan Clark, Jr, Luke Woodard, Seth C. Rees and Esther Frame.

That discovery was fortuitous, since it came at a time when I needed to begin to think about a dissertation topic, being in my last year of class work before my comprehensive written and oral examinations. I had come to graduate school with the idea of doing research on some aspect of the anti-slavery movement. As my interests moved increasingly in the direction of religious history, I pondered for a time the possibility of a study of Protestant clergy in the late nineteenth century, focusing on local church life. Steve Stein, however, while seeing the limits of my paper, was enthusiastic about my further exploring the issues that it raised about change among American Quakers in the nineteenth century. Over lunch in the spring of 1982, I discussed it with my advisor in the History Department, Lewis Perry. He was also enthusiastic, but found it so interesting that it was hard for him to believe that a good study had not already been done. By the fall of 1982, as I passed my comprehensive examinations and became a candidate for the PhD, I knew what I would do. I would study how American Quakers moved from sect to denomination, how they lost most of their peculiarities in the nineteenth century. Indeed, my first task was to narrow the study. Originally I wanted to study both Orthodox and Hicksite Friends into the 1920s. Hicksite Friends were the first to go, as I quickly realized that their story was so different that it required a different work. Then I decided that it would be necessary to introduce modernist Friends like Rufus Jones at the end of the story, but sufficient to end with introducing them.

I was fortunate along the way to find a variety of patrons. One of my first actions was to write to Hugh Barbour at Earlham College, which was only about 35 miles from my hometown of New Castle, Indiana. (How an Indiana Quaker boy did not go to Earlham for his undergraduate work is another story.) Hugh not only

confirmed that the topic was open, but introduced me to Earlham's Friends Collection, whose holdings were far richer than I had imagined. Another friend and Friend, Willard Heiss of Indianapolis, who had in his possession probably the best collection of Quaker books and pamphlets in private hands in the western hemisphere, gave me free run of it – anything there was fair game to borrow, and any duplicate was a gift to me. The Indiana Historical Society made me one of its Dissertation Fellows, perhaps stretching a guideline to consider my work a contribution to the history of the American Middle West. That made possible two trips to Philadelphia to explore the rich manuscript holdings at Haverford and Swarthmore and begin my relationship with the staffs of the Quaker Collection and the Friends Historical Library. I still remember vividly my first conversation with Jerry Frost at Swarthmore and his delight at discovering that we had the same hometown. I made a happy marriage in the spring of 1984, and Mary Louise was willing to support both of us so that I could spend the next year finishing the dissertation. Finally, I had the good fortune of Indiana University Press's decision to begin a series, 'Religion in North America', in 1985, with Stephen Stein as one of its editors. The finished dissertation went directly to his coeditor, and four months after my defense I had a contract for its publication.

The book, in turn, and its reputation among those who saw it in manuscript, helped me join the Earlham faculty in 1987. It is conceivable that, if the vagaries of the job market had taken me to another part of the country, my scholarship might have taken a different direction. I retain strong interests in the history of reform, the American South and the American Civil War, and I might have decided to explore them instead. But with Earlham's marvelous resources at my disposal, not to mention the intellectual stimulation of other Quaker colleagues in the college and the school of religion, my identity as an historian of Quakerism was sealed.

Becoming an Historian

In many ways, the above account starts the story in the middle. Before I knew that I would be an historian of Quakerism, I knew that I wanted to be an historian. My experiences before graduate school, especially the influence of mentors in my teenage and college years, were critical.

As far back as I can remember, history has fascinated me. Once I learned to read, histories absorbed most of my waking hours. By the time that I was in the fourth grade (age ten in the United States), I was already loading down my mother with books from the adult section of the public library in my hometown of New Castle, Indiana, that I could not check out myself.

The first important influence in my development as an historian was a teacher in whose class I never sat but who had a profound impact on me, a Quaker named Richard Ratcliff. He sponsored a History Club for eighth and ninth graders that involved gathering information on local history and publishing it in some form. He introduced me to research in primary sources: newspapers, the records in the county courthouse, reminiscences and autobiographies left by local residents, and local church records. I see the impact of that early work in the centrality of such records to much of my writing even today. It also led to my first publication, sponsored by

the local historical society, a pamphlet on the anti-slavery movement in my county that appeared in my senior year of high school (Hamm, 1975).

High school brought me into another kind of research when I joined the debate team. That meant doing intensive research on a subject such as educational finance or welfare reform, since one was judged not only on how well one argued, but on how well one could support one's position through citations and quotations from appropriate authorities. Such research took debaters far beyond the resources of local high school or public libraries into academic libraries and sources that ranged from congressional hearings to specialized journals. Debate also meant an emphasis on organization, on being able to construct an argument and support it with appropriate evidence. I do not remember much of the factual material from any of my high school classes, but I find myself using the skills I honed as a debater every time that I enter a classroom or write for publication or deliver a lecture.

When I entered college, however, I had only the foggiest idea of history as interpretation; historiography was a foreign concept. I knew that some historians were different from others. Growing up in Henry County, Indiana, the birthplace of Charles A. Beard, arguably the most influential American historian of the twentieth century (and himself someone reared among Quaker influences), I knew that historians disagreed with each other, but explained that as simply a difference between truth and bias. By the time that I had finished college, at Butler University, a small school in Indianapolis, I had a sense of what it meant to be an historian.

That was due largely to the influence of one remarkable woman, Emma Lou Thornbrough, who taught history at Butler from 1946 to 1982. She had done her graduate work at the University of Michigan under Dwight L. Dumond, who from the 1930s to 1950s produced a generation of students who dominated the study of anti-slavery and reform in antebellum America. Professor Thornbrough had a formidable list of publications in women's and African-American history, particularly the history of black people in Indiana. She encouraged my interest in research on Quakers and on Indiana history, but also pushed me to be able to place it in context. That meant reading historians whom she regarded as the best of the field. Two of them would have a profound influence on my future work.

The first of these is a seemingly unlikely choice for an historian of Quakerism, C. Vann Woodward, who was arguably the twentieth century's most influential historian of the American South. I began with Woodward's first book, his 1938 *Tom Watson: Agrarian Rebel* (Woodward, 1938). Woodward impressed me deeply with his ability to deal both fairly and morally with a profoundly flawed human being. Watson, who began his career in Georgia politics in the 1890s as a Populist who tried to form a coalition of poor white and black farmers, ended it (and flourished) as one of the most notorious racists in the United States in the World War I era, along with a digression into anti-Semitism. Woodward explained it as both a reaction to the political and economic realities of the time and as the fruit of Watson's own inner demons and personal faults. Woodward's biography struck me as a model of how historians should deal with those with whom we disagree: not excusing moral failure, but sensitive to ambiguity and complexity. While no group of Quakers about whom I have written has been the moral equivalent of Tom Watson, I often thought back to Woodward's model as I dealt with Friends who had, in my view, made profoundly bad choices.

The other historian, a colleague of Woodward at Yale, who deeply impressed me was David Brion Davis, especially his two magisterial works, *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* and *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution* (Davis, 1966; 1975). He shared with Woodward an ability to deal with deeply moral issues in a moral way – one never senses that scholarly objectivity leads Davis to any kind of moral neutrality on the evil of human slavery. At the same time, Davis is careful to explore fully all of the nuances and complexities of the thought and situation of his subjects, whether opponents or defenders of slavery. Davis also inspired me with the scope of his research: its breath-taking range, its synthesis of political, economic, religious and intellectual factors and forces. Yale was my first choice for graduate school and, when I was not admitted there, my second choice was to work with Lewis Perry, a student of Davis, at Indiana University, where I did earn my doctorate.

Conversely, Professor Thornbrough also encouraged my interest in work with local and regional history. This was natural, since most of her research had focused on Indiana. Thus my senior thesis was a biography of Daniel Worth (1795–1861), a Quaker turned Wesleyan minister who was a central figure in the anti-slavery movement in Indiana before the Civil War (Hamm, 1979). My paper in her senior seminar was a reworking of the high school paper I had done on the anti-slavery movement in my home area of Henry County, Indiana.

As I noted above, my intention when I began my graduate work was to study some aspect of the American anti-slavery movement, preferably an aspect in which Quakers were central. Lewis Perry, who, as a scholar of anti-slavery himself, was delighted to find such an eager student, was also insistent that I not define myself too narrowly, and that I especially avoid anything that hinted at sectarianism. This was partly a principled argument for intellectual breadth, partly a realistic concern that I make myself as marketable as possible in an extraordinarily bad job market for academic historians. It proved to be good advice for both reasons. As he defined himself as an intellectual historian, so did I.

Four schools of historians stand out as opening new intellectual worlds for me as a graduate student, modeling the kind of history that I wanted to do. Lewis Perry's influence was most evident in my reading of the work of Perry Miller (1905–1963), the Harvard historian of Puritanism. Miller's reputation was at its lowest point in the late 1970s and early 1980s. A new generation of social historians of the colonial United States had dismissed his reconstruction of 'The New England Mind' as elitist and lacking awareness of the necessary social and political contexts (see Hoopes, 1982, pp.3–24). Under Perry's guidance, however, I read virtually all of Miller's work, along with one of the most controversial works of one his protégés, Alan Heimert's *Religion and the American Mind* (Heimert, 1966). While I accepted the argument of social historians that intellectual history by itself was insufficient to explain historical events, Miller and Heimert convinced me that ideas do matter, that often they are in themselves sources of action. Miller's intellectual biography of Jonathan Edwards was especially powerful in this respect (Miller, 1949). While persuaded that Miller had misunderstood Edwards in crucial ways, I was still impressed with the way Miller used history to comment on timeless questions of good and evil in ways that were significant to contemporary readers.

The second school that left a deep impression on me were British Marxist historians of the generation of Christopher Hill and E.P. Thompson. I still remember my first reading of *The Making of the English Working Class* as a turning point in my intellectual life. The passion about the subject matter gripped me, as did Thompson's sympathy for his subjects. His treatment of religion was especially compelling, convincing me that religion, while it could be used as an instrument of social control, could also be used as an instrument of liberation and rebellion. Re-reading his chapter, 'The Transforming Power of the Cross', is an annual event for me (Thompson, 1963). I found the work of Christopher Hill equally attractive, particularly his *The World Turned Upside Down* (Hill, 1972). Naturally, his generally sympathetic depiction of Quakers attracted me, but I was also drawn to his methods of research and writing. The professor under whom I read Hill, Leo Solt, himself a specialist on seventeenth-century England, described Hill as a 'lumper', one who made his case by assembling vast amounts of disparate incidents, lumping them together, and drawing general conclusions from them. My own approach to writing tends to follow his example.

The third school whose work attracted me were the new social historians, especially those working in religion. My favorite in this genre was Paul E. Johnson's *A Shopkeeper's Millennium*, a study of the impact of revivalism in the 1820s and 1830s on Rochester, New York (Johnson, 1978). Johnson took the ideas of the evangelical revivalists led by Charles G. Finney seriously, but he was also sensitive to exploring the context in which they were received or rejected, through intensive study of local records, such as those of churches, courts and benevolent societies. Johnson sought to explain why a community responded favorably to revivalism, and that entailed understanding the contexts in which thousands of individuals made religious decisions. It embodied the 'new social history' in that it focused on non-elite groups and used quantitative methods, but appealed to me because it also took individual religious agency and choice seriously, rather than interpreting religious identity simply as a function of class or economic status.

The final history that I found appealing was the work of historians of American religion like George M. Marsden, Nathan O. Hatch, Mark Noll and Jon Butler. Marsden, Noll and Hatch are self-identified evangelicals who have focused largely on the history of evangelicalism and fundamentalism. Marsden's *Fundamentalism and American Culture* made a particular impression on me by explicating the highly articulate thought behind the fundamentalist movement of the early twentieth century (Marsden, 1980). Like most historians, I had tended to see fundamentalist and evangelical movements after 1900 as profoundly anti-intellectual. Some were, but just as often they reflected complex theoretical and theological systems. Butler's work is different in attempting to shift the focus of religious study from elites to the lives of congregations and groups of believers, especially attempting to recapture systems of beliefs that seldom found expression in written or published forms. His 1979 article in the *American Historical Review* was an inspiration to me, to try, as much as possible, to recapture the experiences of individual Friends who were not always as articulate as their leaders (Butler, 1979).

One may notice that I have not included any Quaker historians in this listing. I had read some of the classic Quaker historians, such as Rufus Jones, William C. Braithwaite and Elbert Russell, before I entered graduate school (Jones, 1921;

Braithwaite, 1912; Russell, 1942). But Quaker history seldom made it onto the reading lists of my instructors. When I included Frederick Tolles' *Meeting House and Counting House* (1948) on the list for an independent summer reading course on colonial American history, my supervisor thought it unnecessary – Quakers were not the subject of much scholarly attention at the time, and were certainly unlikely to turn up on a comprehensive examination – but he humored me. Thus it was not until I actually began my dissertation work that I read Hugh Barbour, J. William Frost, Edwin Bronner and Margaret Hope Bacon, among others (Barbour, 1964; Frost, 1973; Bronner, 1975; Bacon, 1980). But while all modeled the kind of scholarship that I wanted to do, the connections were indirect. Bacon's and Bronner's nineteenth-century work dealt with Hicksite Friends, who were outside the scope of my study, and Barbour and Frost focused on earlier periods. Rufus Jones and Elbert Russell did deal with the changes among Orthodox Friends in the nineteenth century, but as part of general surveys of Quaker history, which necessarily meant limited attention to the events that interested me. In my first work, I would be in what was largely virgin historical territory.

Writing Quaker History

As an historian of Quakerism, I have had three goals in my writing. The first is to explore areas of Quaker history that had previously been of little interest to historians. This, in my case, has entailed a focus on the period after 1800. My second goal has been to shift the geographic focus of Quaker historical writing. Like many unprogrammed Friends, previous American Quaker history has tended to center on the Fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man and the neighborhood of Philadelphia. My work has been to remind historians, and Friends, that after 1850 most American Quakers lived west of the Appalachian mountains. My final goal has been to put Quakerism (largely American, but with some forays into other areas) into its larger context, connecting it with forces and currents in the larger societies of which Friends were a part.

Historians usually fall into two categories. Some offer revisions, reinterpreting events that other historians have already studied, although often on the basis of the use of materials that were unavailable to or unexplored by previous generations. Some of the best work of the past generation falls into that category, such as Larry Ingle's reinterpretation of the Hicksite Separation or his biography of George Fox, or Rosemary Moore's recent book on the first years of Quakerism, or Leo Damrosch's revisionist biography of James Nayler (Ingle, 1986, 1994; Moore, 2000a; Damrosch, 1996). My own work, however, has tended to fall into a second category, exploring aspects of Quaker history to which previous historians had given little attention.

I began this with my first book, *The Transformation of American Quakerism*. General treatments of Quaker history had necessarily dealt with certain aspects of the way most American Friends in the nineteenth century had moved closer to the larger society, discarding the plain life and accepting the pastoral system. But such treatments by historians like Rufus Jones, Elbert Russell and Walter R. Williams had tended to see the dramatic change among Gurneyite Friends after 1860 as either a

kind of natural outgrowth of Gurney's evangelicalism or an exotic import from Methodism that somehow found root in some Quaker circles. It also tended to dismiss the Wilburite dissent from Gurneyism as a simple conflict of personalities or a battle over abstruse and utterly insignificant doctrinal points (Jones, 1921, pp.488–540, 868–908; Russell, 1942, pp.421–34; Williams, 1962, pp.192–201). My own work confirmed this portrait, to some degree. But it also illuminated aspects that had previously been little understood, and offered a revision of the points at issue among Orthodox Friends before 1860.

I opened my account with a depiction of the world of quietist Friends before 1850, based in large part on the journals and diaries of Friends who had not been the focus of previous scholarly work, such as Nathan Hunt, Henry Hull, Hannah Gibbons, Margaret Jones and Charles Osborn. Central to this world, I found, was the achievement of salvation through growth into holiness. This took place through obedience to the Inward Light, its nurture as a seed of holiness. Salvation was not to be claimed instantaneously through a conversion experience, as Protestant evangelicals taught. Instead, it was the fruit of the long, tried pursuit of holiness (Hamm, 1988, [ch.1](#)). This vision was not immediately at issue in the Hicksite Separation; in fact my subsequent research has shown that Hicksites were as committed to such a vision as were Orthodox Friends. But Joseph John Gurney's writings and ministries challenged it directly.

Gurney, through his writings and ministry, directly challenged the older vision. He argued that Scripture showed that salvation came through faith in the efficacy of the Atoning Blood of Jesus Christ, and might be claimed through a single act of faith. Holiness, or sanctification, was a second, separate experience, to be achieved gradually through obedience, subsequent conversion, or being born again. John Wilbur and Gurney's other opponents grasped the significance of this point. If salvation could be achieved this simply, and relatively effortlessly, then there was no point to many of the peculiarities of Quakerism. Friends justified many aspects of peculiarity and separateness with the argument that they were necessary to the nurture of the growth of the Seed, the Inward Light, away from the corruptions of the world. Now Gurney was not only denying that teaching, but actively encouraging Friends to form ties with non-Quaker evangelicals (Hamm, 1988, pp.20–28).

Even if Gurney had never lived, however, I concluded that Orthodox Friends would probably have moved in such a direction because most were becoming increasingly acculturated, increasingly tied to the larger world. I did this largely on the basis of the correspondence and manuscript diaries of Friends all over the United States, which showed them becoming engulfed in the larger American society. One sees it in the interest that they took in politics. One sees it in their embrace of evangelical reform movements, such as Bible, temperance, anti-slavery, tract, education and sabbatarian societies. One sees it in the books and magazines that they were reading, in the selections from standard evangelical authors that they included in the textbooks that they published for use in Quaker schools, even in the books that they placed in meeting house libraries. The aftermath of the Hicksite Separation left most Orthodox Friends with a feeling of common cause with non-Quaker evangelicals. The impact of the printing press and the transportation and communication revolutions cemented that embrace (*ibid.*).

The road from this acculturation to the outbreak of revivalism was not direct, however. I concluded that, in the 1850s and 1860s, a renewal movement had appeared among Gurneyite Friends all over the United States. It argued that Friends could modernize without compromising any of their basic testimonies. Thus they should end disownment for marrying out of meeting, cease to be concerned about the details of the plain life, and move toward more effective preaching while still retaining unprogrammed worship, the ministry of women and pacifism. But this reform movement never reached fruition. Instead, in the 1870s, a rival movement, which brought to Quakerism the techniques of holiness revivalism, swept it aside (*ibid.*, [ch. 3](#)).

The Quaker revivalists were all committed to the second-experience holiness movement that had a profound impact on American Protestantism generally after 1850. That movement argued that all Christians should undergo two experiences, first conversion, then sanctification, both instantaneous, achieved through simple faith in Christ. This ideology was embraced by a group of charismatic young Quaker ministers, most notably David B. Updegraff, John Henry Douglas, Luke Woodard and Esther Frame, who brought it to Friends and introduced all of the techniques of evangelical revivalism along with it. They succeeded because they brilliantly used traditional Quaker concepts, such as the possibility of sanctification and worship under the influence of the Holy Spirit. The result was a revolution in most of the Gurneyite yearly meetings, from New England to the Pacific Coast. By 1900, most Gurneyite Friends, who were the overwhelming majority of American Quakers, were in meetings with pastors and that had lost most of the traditional features of Quaker worship (*ibid.*, [chs.4–6](#)).

Such dramatic change necessarily created dislocation. One of the contributions of my work was to identify an influential group of Friends who refused to separate but who quietly worked to blunt some of the radical features of the revival. Ultimately, they would nurture the first generation of Quaker modernists, mostly notably Rufus M. Jones, whose early career was in large part an attempt to return pastoral Friends to a sense of their Quaker heritage. The surviving revivalists, and younger sympathizers, stridently resisted Jones and other modernists, but by 1907 the modernists had established a place for themselves among Friends. Their survival was due in part, I concluded, to the coincidental appearance of Pentecostalism in some holiness Quaker quarters, which distracted holiness leaders and led other Friends to doubt their tactics (*ibid.*, [ch.7](#)).

One of my favorite essays drew on work that I encountered while doing my dissertation research, but which proved tangential to that work. After 1876, I encountered frequent references to a ponderous tome published that year, Robert Barclay's *The Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth* (Barclay, 1876). The revivalists frequently cited it to show that their seeming departures from the practices of the previous generation of Friends, such as the use of hymns or the introduction of pastors, were in fact consistent with the practices of Fox and the first generation of Friends. So I investigated the work and found that it was a landmark in two respects. First, Barclay, an English Friend who was a descendant of 'the Apologist', in many ways created the paradigm for most Quaker historians who followed afterwards. His investigation of the origins of Quakerism placed Friends firmly within the context of the radicalism of the religious sects of the

Commonwealth period, drawing on many sources that Friends writing about the origins had never explored, such the Thomason Tracts and the Swarthmoor Manuscripts. Barclay also explored possibly links to Continental mystics. His work had a clear agenda, however; he was convinced that returning to first (and in his case strongly evangelical) principles would give Friends new life. London Yearly Meeting did not embrace his vision, but many American Friends did (Hamm, 1994a, and opening chapter of this volume).

One of the most pleasant aspects of teaching at Earlham has been the opportunity to engage in collaborative research with students. My first such project was also my first incursion into social history. It was published in 1991 as 'Moral Choices: Two Indiana Quaker Communities and the Abolitionist Movement'. It was an attempt to explain a split that took place among Indiana Orthodox Friends in 1842–43, when perhaps a tenth withdrew, convinced that the yearly meeting had become lukewarm or even openly hostile to the anti-slavery cause. Historians of Quakerism had long been aware of the separation, but usually limited their treatment of it to quoting from the collection of documents, *A History of the Separation in Indiana Yearly Meeting*, that the abolitionist separatists published in 1856 (Edgerton, 1856). This study tested whether the methods of social science could explain the split. Our work focused on two monthly meetings in Henry County, Indiana, Duck Creek and Spiceland, both divided by the separation. Much of the work was quantitative, comparing age, wealth and property holding, number of appointments and offices held in the meeting, family ties and places of origin in the east. We concluded, however, that such quantifiable characteristics were not determinative. Commitment to active abolitionism was a moral choice, much as were decisions that Friends made later in the century when they confronted the revivals (Hamm *et al.*, 1991, pp.117–54).

My work with Earlham students has also taken me into the twentieth century, the era of Quaker history that has been largely unexplored. J. William Frost has argued that peace activism has been the greatest contribution of Friends to the century, yet Friends are agreed that, among the pastoral majority, attitudes toward pacifism are ambivalent. An article published in 2000, 'The Decline of Quaker Pacifism in the Twentieth Century: Indiana Yearly Meeting of Friends as a Case Study', explored how this came to be. It concluded that, while the yearly meeting remained officially committed to pacifism, and an articulate minority still advocated it, the Peace Testimony was a dead letter in the lives of most members. This developed gradually over the course of the twentieth century, as Indiana Friends lost most of their distinctiveness. It was seen most clearly during the Vietnam War. While some Friends actively opposed American involvement, just as many were outspokenly critical of any anti-war activity, which they interpreted as pro-communist (Hamm *et al.*, 2000, pp.45–71).

After the publication of *Transformation*, my interest shifted from Orthodox Friends to the Hicksites, specifically to radical separatist Hicksites in Indiana, Ohio, and New York, who in the 1840s became involved in the creation of a series of utopian communities, founded on the abolition of all private property and coercive government, subject only to the Government of God. Their organization, the Society for Universal Inquiry and Reform, was the subject of my second book, *God's Government Begun* (1995). Historians had previously given the organization little

attention and, while aware of some of the communities it created, especially that at Skaneateles, New York, had not known of the connections among them or the coherent communitarian vision behind them. In this case, I was able to shed new light on the movement largely because I had access to two collections of manuscripts then in private hands, the papers of Valentine Nicholson and John O. Wattles.¹ Nicholson was a Hicksite Friend from Ohio; Wattles, a Connecticut Congregationalist, married a Hicksite Friend and embraced a version of Quakerism.

The Society for Universal Inquiry and Reform would have little direct impact on the larger American society; its longest-lived community lasted only three years. Yet it touched some of the leading radical reformers in the United States in its day, ranging from William Lloyd Garrison to Lucretia Mott to Frederick Douglass. Its participants were at the heart of the early women's rights movement in the Ohio Valley. They were also central to the series of separations that splintered Hicksite Friends in the 1840s, as the radical reformers left to form what they called yearly meetings of Congregational Friends. Little of this story had been known before I explored it.

The Universal Reformers led me into a larger study of Hicksite Friends after the Separation of 1827–28. My first attempt, the article 'Hicksite Quakers and the Antebellum Nonresistance Movement', expanded certain themes in *God's Government Begun*. Non-resistance was a variation of pacifism that first found expression among American abolitionists in the 1830s. It argued that no Christian could ever employ coercive force under any circumstances. Thus all governments were illegitimate and contrary to the will of God. Christians must work instead to usher in the Government of God. One would think that this pacifist vision would appeal to Friends, but my exploration of the reaction of Hicksite Friends showed that most opposed it. For some radicals, such as Lucretia Mott, it was a logical outgrowth of the Peace Testimony, but for a majority of Hicksites, it was simply anarchy, too closely tied to infidelity for consistent Friends to embrace (Hamm, 1994b, pp.557–69). Today I am at work on a general study of Hicksite Friends between 1827 and 1900, which has to date yielded two articles (Hamm, 2000, pp.17–41; 2001, pp.49–68).

Of a different piece, but reflecting my interests in intellectual history, was my history of Earlham College, published to mark its sesquicentennial in 1997. My central theme was the evolution of Earlham's understanding of itself as a Quaker institution. This answered, to my mind, two interesting questions. The first spoke to a subject of growing interest among historians of higher education, what George M. Marsden has called 'the secularization of the academy' (Marsden and Longfield, 1992). Numerous American colleges and universities, founded by religious denominations, have over time lost virtually all religious identity, equating that distancing with professionalism and academic excellence. Earlham, however, has not only won standing as a first-rate liberal arts college, but has retained a strong Quaker identity. That was my second focus, to look at the way Earlham's understanding of that identity reflected the changes among Friends since the school opened in 1847. The work was mainly one of intellectual and institutional history. Religious controversy was central, especially the attempts by fundamentalist-leaning Friends to purge critical study of the Bible and the teaching of the theory of evolution from campus before 1925. Campus controversies also showed the reaction

of Friends to issues as diverse as the peace movement of the 1930s to draft resistance during the Cold War to the emergence of the Gay Rights movement. I also found quantitative work useful. Exploring the careers of alumni before 1860, for example, showed that they were more likely to marry in meeting and retain their membership than their Quaker peers who did not attend Earlham. I also found that the presence of a Quaker academy made it more likely that residents of a given Quaker community would attend the college (Hamm, 1997).

In short, much of my work has simply tried to illuminate areas of Quaker history that previous historians had not studied. They were defined by subjects, such as pastoral Friends; by geographic area (I have given most of my attention to Friends west of the Appalachian Mountains, a majority for almost two centuries now); and by time period: there is Quaker history after the colonial period.

I opened this essay by saying that I am a skeptic about theory. What I see my work doing is putting Quakerism into the larger context of American society and broader, international intellectual and social movements. Sometimes that has meant showing how Friends affected larger movements and the larger society. More often, it meant illuminating the impact of the larger society on Friends.

Adjustment to a dominant culture is a central theme in my *Transformation of American Quakerism*. The Gurneyite majority of the Orthodox were those who became increasingly comfortable with the literature, the newspapers, the periodicals, the politics and the religious leaders of the larger American society. The Wilburite minority were those who saw the integrity of Quakerism as dependent on resisting 'the world'. Understanding what happened to Friends in this period means understanding the course of the larger American society. In turn, the modernist critics of revivalism after 1895 were inspired in large part by the rise of the Social Gospel movement in American Protestantism (Hamm, 1988, pp.20–33, 156–9). Thus amidst the citations of Quaker works one finds references also to books such as Ronald P. Formisano's *The Birth of Mass Political Parties*, Robert Wiebe's *The Search for Order* or Gabriel Kolko's *The Triumph of Conservatism* (Formisano, 1971; Wiebe, 1967; Kolko, 1963). This was also a critical point of my analysis of the anti-slavery separation in Indiana Yearly Meeting in the 1840s. One of the factors we measured was observance of the discipline, identifying Friends who had violated it through offenses such as marrying out of meeting. Our findings were somewhat surprising: the abolitionist Friends, those who defied the admonitions of the leaders of Indiana Yearly Meeting by joining anti-slavery societies, were generally 'weighty' Friends, less likely to have violated the rules and more active in their meetings than those who heeded the strictures of the yearly meeting to avoid contact with 'the world' (Hamm *et al.*, 1991). Similarly, my history of Earlham is informed by the growing scholarship on the history of higher education in the United States. Earlham's path toward a professionalized faculty, accreditation, Darwin and critical study of the Bible is one that characterized American higher education generally. Yet its retention of a sectarian identity makes it almost unique (Hamm, 1997, [ch.3](#)).

Like most historians of Quakerism, I do not see myself as belonging to any historical school. Some would argue that to have no theory is to have one, but I like to think that I am open to the insights that numerous schools of historical thought have to offer. Traditional church history is one of these. Much of my work has been

traditional in the sense that it has focused on institutions. Among Friends, institutions, particularly yearly meetings and schools, have been central. Thus I read their minutes and official records, and regard the debates and battles over their control and direction as being of significance.

At the same time, however, I also take seriously the work of historians who argue that it is important to try to recapture the experiences of those at a lower level, those who were not always articulate, who did not produce tomes of theology or articles in denominational journals (see, for example, Cashdollar, 2000; Hall, 1989; Brooke, 1994; Johnson, 1978). That has meant, for me, a liberal sampling of records at lower levels. Thus my first two books involved considerable work in the records of monthly meetings, as will the future book that I plan on Hicksite Friends. It has also meant delving into the surviving correspondence and diaries of Friends who were not always leaders to try to gain a sense of their Quaker worlds.

Many social historians have argued that the best way to do this is through quantification. As I noted above, I have found this useful in several ways. In *The Transformation of American Quakerism*, for example, I looked at patterns of disownment and discipline in four monthly meetings to determine whether perceptions of a massive loss of members due to the exactions of the Discipline were well-founded. I determined that they were (Hamm, 1988, pp.52–7). My work on abolitionist Friends drew on a variety of quantifiable characteristics, as did some aspects of my study of Earlham (Hamm *et al.*, 1991, pp.133–41; Hamm, 1997, pp.26–7, 52).

The eminent US historian Charles A. Beard once said that his vision of the influence of economics on politics, the centrality of class and financial consideration, was not the fruit of reading Marx. Instead it came from listening to political arguments in rural Indiana in the 1880s and 1890s (McDonald, 1969, p.111). Growing up a century later in the same place, I am also convinced that sometimes socioeconomic differences and motivations do determine individual actions. But I am not convinced that they are at the root of all, or even most, human behaviors, and I have not found them especially powerful in understanding and explaining the last two centuries of American Quaker history.

Ultimately, I continue to believe in the centrality of individual human choices. Those are conditioned by environment, but humans do make choices for spiritual and intellectual reasons that are not explicable by economic factors. Those choices, I am convinced, are at the heart of understanding Quaker history.

On Being a Quaker Teacher and Scholar

All conscientious Friends, I think, wrestle with the question of how our faith shapes our lives, whether we are living up to the standards that we profess by identifying ourselves as Quakers. Certainly, my work as an historian of Quakerism has had a profound impact on my spiritual life. I am not as certain about its role in my teaching.

I grew up a pastoral Friend, but in a pastoral meeting that was somewhat atypical – it was not until I began to study how the pastoral system developed that I realized just how unusual it was. First Friends Meeting in New Castle, Indiana, is part of

Indiana Yearly Meeting. It has the reputation of being relatively liberal within the yearly meeting. Labels like 'liberal' are relative, of course; by the standards of Friends General Conference it would look rather moderate. In the context of pastoral Quakerism, 'liberal' means several things.

It means, first of all, a strong sense of Quaker tradition. There is a period of open or silent worship, and for nearly thirty years the programmed 'service' has been preceded by an unprogrammed meeting. Discourse among us includes the Inner Light and 'That of God in Everyone'. The current pastor is a graduate of Westtown school, a liberal Quaker bastion, who spent years teaching in Quaker schools before embarking on a second career in the Quaker pastorate. The monthly meeting's gift to young people moving from junior to full membership was a year's subscription to the Pendle Hill pamphlets, which often embrace writings that many evangelical Friends find deeply troubling.

It also means a commitment to Quaker humanitarianism. New Castle Friends would probably be a little unsettled to hear themselves described as activists. But in contrast to most pastoral Friends meetings or churches today, the American Friends Service Committee is still part of the meeting's budget. One of our members is the current presiding clerk of the Friends Committee on National Legislation. There is no good work in the community in which New Castle Friends are not involved.

Finally, that 'liberal' identity means a tolerance of theological diversity. Some members describe themselves as evangelicals, but just as many would not. One of the unspoken understandings of the meeting with its pastors is that an altar call would be intolerable. No sermon in living memory has included references to hell. Calls by more fundamentalist elements in the yearly meeting to issue strident statements on abortion or homosexuality, or to align the yearly meeting more closely with Christian right organizations, have brought protests from us.

That liberalism has its limits, however, in that it is emphatically Christian. The suggestion that Quakerism is not definitely Christian would find little acceptance among New Castle Friends. The idea of an atheist Quaker would seem an oxymoron. But the difference between my meeting and many other pastoral meetings is that most of us would be willing to discuss the possibility, even if in the end we were certain to reject it.

This meeting meets my spiritual needs. My membership has been there all of my life, and unexpectedly I again find myself living close enough to attend regularly. I have served it in a variety of posts. Currently I am in my second term as clerk of the monthly meeting. My journey to the point where I appreciate it, however, has had some twists and turns. My work as an historian has played a role in that.

My first experience of an unprogrammed Friends meeting was in Bloomington, Indiana, when I began graduate school in 1979. Unlike many pastoral Friends, I found adjustment to the silence easy. I did not transfer my membership there, since I was often away on weekends and knew that I would not remain in Bloomington permanently. But Bloomington Friends gave me a taste for unprogrammed worship, a feeling that it brought me closer to God, than any other experience of worship I have known. After I married and moved to Morgantown, West Virginia, my wife and I began attending the small unprogrammed meeting there. When my first teaching post took me back to Indianapolis, we became part first of North Meadow and then of Lanthorne Meeting, an unprogrammed worship group that met in a private home.

We remained in it until we moved closer to Earlham, and so were in a position to return to New Castle Friends.

My participation in these meetings acquainted me with some remarkable Friends, all of whom shared an antipathy to pastoral Quakerism. They saw it as largely subsumed in fundamentalism and far-right politics, devoid of any truly Quaker identity. That fitted neatly with what I was finding as I pursued my dissertation research. Two things struck me about the revivalists. One was their intolerance and taste for heresy hunting. The other was the extent to which they took their major ideas from outside Quakerism (Hamm, 1988, pp.77–95, 107–10, 139–42, 160–72).

Thus in my dissertation I saw myself as producing a work that would undermine, if not utterly destroy, the intellectual foundations of pastoral Quakerism. Some readers have told me that they clearly saw that message in the work, but I have also had numerous pastoral Friends praise me for what they see as my even-handedness and fairness to all sides. Much of the responsibility for that must go to my dissertation committee. They were firmly wedded to the ideal of scholarly objectivity, and ruthlessly pruned anything from the manuscript that they saw as editorializing or a tendency to use my subject to fight contemporary theological battles.

As I matured (or like to think that I did), I became more tolerant of theological diversity. The pastoral system clearly met a need in the lives of most Americans who call themselves Friends, and there seemed little to be gained from its destruction. I also, as I broadened my study of the nineteenth century, became increasingly aware of the costs of the various separations. Creating a Religious Society of Friends that was ‘purified’ according to the vision I once had would have left relatively few Quakers who would meet my specifications. I also realized, as I studied the Hicksite separations in the 1820s and the Wilburite–Gurneyite splits of the 1840s and 1850s, that they often involved issues that, even if they seemed fundamental then, softened with the passage of time. My study of Earlham’s history reinforced that wisdom. ‘Among Friends, there is no new script, only new actors,’ I have said on many occasions, as new controversies appear to repeat, in their broad outlines, older ones. Thus I was firmly opposed to the Realignment proposal of 1991, which would have dissolved Friends United Meeting and forced all of its constituent bodies into either Evangelical Friends International or Friends General Conference. I knew that such attempts to purify organizations in the past had usually fallen apart within a few years because new issues arose that necessarily produced different alignments.

The impact I have described has had largely to do with polity and the nature of Quaker organizations, but I like to think that two decades of reading what was originally intended to be spiritual literature has also affected me. I first read Rufus Jones and Joseph John Gurney and John Wilbur and Lucretia Mott as a duty, but I have found many Friends of the past, many of them often forgotten, who have, in the best Quaker way, spoken to my condition. John Woolman is probably the foremost among these, but Friends more obscure have also inspired me. Perhaps foremost among these has been Samuel M. Janney, the Virginia Hicksite minister who was not only a gifted traveling minister but also an excellent historian of Friends (Janney, 1867). And I find in his autobiographical writings a spirituality that appeals to me, a quietism that is open to the life of the mind (Janney, 1881).

It is less clear to me how this intellectual journey has shaped my teaching. My

main appointment at Earlham is in the library, as archivist and curator of the Friends Collection. I do not teach courses on Quakerism, save as an occasional research seminar. The one exception was a short course for the Earlham School of Religion.

Many of my colleagues are convinced that there is a distinctive Quaker pedagogy. If there is, I have not encountered it, or, if I have, I did not recognize it. Teaching courses in US history, I have not felt led to try to create a Quaker vision of American history. I am not sure that such a thing exists (Hamm, 1995b, pp.317–18). And I am sure that there is not a distinctively Quaker American historiography. Like any Earlham faculty member, I am committed to a set of community principles and practices that emphasize integrity, honesty and respect for others. These are values that should characterize the lives of all Friends, but they are not unique to Friends.

Finis

If my career as an historian of Quakerism has done anything, it has given me a distaste for extremes. By geography, battling extremism has usually meant for me contending with a kind of pastoral Quakerism that is far too often little different from evangelical denominations like the Wesleyans or Nazarenes. My years at Earlham have brought me a growing number of encounters with liberal Quaker fundamentalism as well, and even an occasional one with a neo-Wilburite mindset that is just as rigid. Perhaps it is inevitable that youthful idealism fades with age. I like to think, however, that I have matured, with a growing sense of what all persuasions of Friends have to offer. While considering the idea of reunion of all of the branches of Quakerism unlikely in my lifetime, I like to think that my work shows the contributions that all have made.

Americans have a weakness for thinking that truth is usually found somewhere in the middle. By its very nature, Quakerism challenges that outlook. All Friends, even Conservative Friends, have changed dramatically over the course of the past 350 years; as many of my colleagues have shown, Friends in the 1670s and 1680s were very different from those of the first generation. In all honesty, I am not sure just what a purified and prosperous Quakerism would look like. But I think that it would have elements that I see in the competing Quaker groups today: the zeal of Evangelical Friends; the inclusiveness, concern for social change and thirst for learning of liberal Friends; the steadiness and solidity of moderate pastoral Quakerism; the ‘groundedness’ of Conservatives.

Note

¹ The Valentine Nicholson Papers are now at the Indiana Historical Society in Indianapolis, Indiana. The John O. Wattles Papers are now at the Western Reserve Historical Society in Cleveland, Ohio.

Some Reflections on an Ecumenical Pilgrimage

Martin Davie

Introduction

In this chapter I shall be reflecting on the path which my Christian discipleship has followed and the way that this path has shaped the questions which I have asked and continue to ask about the nature and development of Quaker theology and the place of Quakerism within the wider Christian Church. The limits of my knowledge and experience mean that the chapter will be focused on British Quakerism, although I hope that parts of what I say will also be relevant to Friends elsewhere.

My Introduction to Quakerism

My thinking about the nature of Quakerism began back in the late 1970s when I was a schoolboy and began to attend the Friends Meeting at Sevenoaks in Kent. As someone who had recently become a Christian I was looking for a Church to attend and as at that stage I was wary of the Church of England I gravitated to the Quakers because I knew about them through my mother who had been on the secretarial staff at the Yorkshire Quaker School at Ackworth and subsequently attended Leicester Preparative Meeting for a time.

At this stage in my spiritual pilgrimage I was strongly attracted by the vision of Quakerism set out in George Gorman's book *Introducing Quakers* (Gorman, 1974) which I had been sent by what was then the Friends Home Service Committee when I first began to make enquiries about Quakerism. What attracted me about Gorman's work was the way in which he based his approach to religion on experience. In [Chapter 1](#), 'Approach to Faith', Gorman contends that, for the Quaker, 'the point of departure for his religious quest is, in the first place, his own real, deep, human experience' (ibid., p.13). He then goes on to describe the kind of experience which he has in mind:

Most of the time we go about the business of living without thinking consciously about it. From time to time, however, something happens for good or ill, which causes us to think and to meditate profoundly about our very existence. Then we are driven into the depths of our being, where we are vividly aware of ourselves as unique and individual persons.

We struggle to find words to describe that of which we are aware, and they evade us, because no words are fully adequate to express a state that defies definition. Perhaps the words 'life', 'spirit' and 'consciousness' are among those that come most readily to

our aid, but even they fail to disclose the full sense of our identity as living beings. Our first reaction to our interior journey may well be one of anxiety, or even of terror, as we sense our insignificance, finitude and loneliness. But as we allow ourselves to be calmed by the stillness at the centre of our being, we can find a deeper awareness of our rootedness in life itself, and of our relatedness to other people. We know that it is from this deep place that our insights into the real meaning of life arise, and that the power to live it is found. In this kind of dynamic, vital experience we realise that we have discovered a new level of existence, in which our spirit is fused with spirit itself in a creative encounter. Religious men of all ages have spoken of this experience as an encounter with God. (Gorman, 1973, pp.13–14)

Looking back at these quotations after a quarter of a century in the light of the subsequent development of my theological thinking I can see enormous problems with what Gorman is saying. In particular I think that his attempt to develop a path to God that is rooted simply in contemporary human experience fails to do justice to the key point that was made by the Barmen declaration of the German Confessing Church in 1934, namely that ‘Jesus Christ, as he is testified to us in the Holy Scripture, is the one Word of God, whom we are to hear, whom we are to trust and obey in life and in death’ (Leith, 1973, p.520).

However, back in the 1970s such problems had not occurred to me and Gorman’s insistence on the experiential basis of religion, like the similar emphasis in J.A.T. Robinson’s *Honest to God* (Robinson, 1963) which I read at much the same time, appealed enormously because it seemed to me to provide an irrefutable basis for saying that the claims of religion were true. If you could directly experience God in the silence of a Quaker meeting then the question of whether God existed or not was solved at a stroke.

While thus being quite happy to buy into Gorman’s experiential account of Quakerism, I still wanted to see an acknowledgment of the importance of Jesus within Quakerism and Gorman duly provided me with one. In [Chapter 2](#) of his book, Gorman talked about the way in which there was among Friends:

wide acceptance of Jesus as a profound religious teacher and giant among the prophets. For them Jesus penetrated deeply into the meaning of life, and saw love at its centre. To this love he responded in personal trust as the ultimate source and sustenance of life itself. For Jesus, God must at least be like this. By this absolute trust in this love, and by the way it influenced his life and enabled him to accept his death, Jesus made it actual in his personality – he lived it into being. So in him we have a window into God, for in his life the love of God is most clearly seen. Thus Jesus discloses God to men. (Gorman, 1973, p.19)

As in the case of Gorman’s account of how we know God I now have grave reservations about the adequacy of this account of Jesus. By describing God by the single abstract term ‘love’ it flattens out the richness and complexity of the way in which God is actually described in the Gospels. Furthermore, it does not do justice to the personal identity between Jesus and God that we find outlined in the New Testament and summarized by the Catholic creeds.

In the New Testament¹ and the creeds,² God makes Himself known by taking human nature upon Himself at the incarnation. In Gorman’s account, by contrast, Jesus is simply a man who revealed the love of God by living an exceptionally holy

life. At the time when I first read Gorman, however, his account of why Jesus was important seemed to make sense. I could see how, if God was simply love and someone lived a loving life, then that life would indeed provide a window through which we could see God. What was more, if that was indeed how Friends viewed Jesus, then Jesus was clearly of central importance to Quakerism.

My Encounter with the Early Friends

Because I was satisfied by the theological approach expounded by Gorman, and because I found the experience of Meeting for Worship spiritually beneficial and the people there extremely kind and friendly I began to attend Meeting regularly and eventually became a member of the Society of Friends.

At the same time, I was also regularly attending my school's Christian Union and, being a bookish individual, I started reading all the theology books I could lay my hands on. They were a very eclectic mix, consisting of the books I could borrow from the Meeting House and school libraries, and books which I purchased from my local Christian bookshop and from charity shops, but two things became clear as I read them and thought about what I read. The first thing was that traditional, orthodox, evangelical Christianity made intellectual sense. The more I studied it, the more sense it made. The second thing was that there was a great gulf between the kind of evangelical theology that I was finding increasingly persuasive and the kind of Quaker theology to be found in Gorman and in the pages of *Quaker Monthly*, to which I had by then subscribed.

The dilemma I was faced with was how to hold together my commitment to Quakerism and the way in which my theological thinking was developing. I found an initial solution to this dilemma in the study of two key texts from the early days of Quakerism, George Fox's *Journal* (Nickalls, 1952) and Robert Barclay's *Apology* (Barclay, 1678). As I read Fox's *Journal* it soon became apparent that the kind of theology espoused by Fox was far closer to the Bible and the orthodox Christian tradition than anything to be found in modern Quaker writing. Whereas modern Quaker writing saw the 'inner light' as an innate human faculty and saw Jesus as an historical figure whose importance lay in his moral example, for Fox Jesus was a divine saviour with the power to deliver from sin and death, and language about the 'inward light' was language about the way in which his power was known and experienced in the human soul.

In the account of Fox's 'conversion' experience in 1647 I read:

as I had forsaken all the priests, so I left the separate preachers also, and those called the most experienced people; for I saw there was none among them all that could speak to my condition. And when all my hopes in them and in all men were gone, so that I had nothing outwardly to help me, nor could tell what to do, then, Oh then, I heard a voice which said, 'There is one even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition', and when I heard it my heart did leap for joy. Then the Lord did let me see why there was none upon the earth that could speak to my condition, namely, that I might give him all the glory; for all are concluded under sin, and shut up in unbelief as I had been, that Jesus Christ might have the pre-eminence, who enlightens, and gives, grace and faith, and power. Thus when God doth work who shall let it? And this I knew experimentally. (Nickalls, 1952, p.11)

From this and other passages in Fox it seemed that the original Quaker vision was fundamentally ‘evangelical’ in nature. That is to say, early Quakerism was concerned with bearing witness to the good news of Jesus’ power to save – exactly the same good news that I was seeking to comprehend and to share as a young evangelical in the late 1970s.

Looking back, it is clear that I did not properly appreciate the theological differences between the understanding of the Christian gospel put forward by Fox and the other pioneers of Quakerism and more mainstream versions of the Protestant evangelical tradition.³ However, my subsequent study of both Quakerism and Christian theology in general has only served to confirm my teenage insight that there was a connection between early Quakerism and evangelical Christianity. The cause of this connection is that, like Evangelicalism, early Quakerism was a development of the Protestant Reformation via the radical Puritans of late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries and its underlying theological framework reflected that fact.

Most fundamentally this meant that, whereas modern liberal Quakerism has only accepted those parts of the biblical material which are seen to be compatible with ‘modern thought’, the early Quakers took the biblical material at face value and, like other Christian renewal movements before and since, sought a first-hand experience of the supernatural reality which the Bible described. That is to say, where Fox and the other early Quakers felt that the Christianity of their contemporaries fell short was that it was based on a purely intellectual or ‘notional’ knowledge of the Scriptures rather than on the kind of life-changing experience of God to which the Scriptures testified.

As the early Quaker writer Isaac Pennington put it in his *A brief account concerning the people called Quakers*:

We wanted the presence and power of his (God’s) Spirit to be inwardly manifested in our spirits. We had (as I may say) what we could gather from the letter, and endeavoured to practise what we could read in the letter, but we wanted the power from on high, we wanted life, we wanted the presence and fellowship of our beloved; we wanted the knowledge of the heavenly feast and kingdom, and entrance into it, and the holy dominion and reign of the lord of life over the flesh, over sin, and over death in us. (Pennington, 1784, p.419)

Whereas my reading of Fox’s *Journal* pushed me to think about the overall orientation of early Quakerism, my reading of Robert Barclay’s *Apology for the True Christian Divinity* led me to realize the importance of thinking seriously about the distinctive features of Quakerism, such as its form of worship and its disuse of the sacraments.

Robert Barclay was a Scottish aristocrat who was educated in both the Roman Catholic and the Reformed theological traditions, and his *Apology* reflects the kind of detailed scholastic theology that was typical of both traditions in his day. That is to say, it was an attempt to prove the truth of Quakerism on the basis of a strict logical examination of the teaching of the Bible and the mainstream Christian tradition. As an evangelical I warmed to Barclay’s robust account of the importance of the Scriptures:

Whatever doctrine is contrary to their testimony may properly be rejected as false. We are very willing for all of our doctrines and practices to be tried by them. We have never refused to honour them as the judge and test for any disputes we have had on matters of doctrine. We are even willing to allow this to be stated as a positive maxim. Anything which anyone may do while claiming to be led by the Spirit, which is contrary to the Scriptures, may be considered as a delusion of the Devil. (Barclay, 1678, Proposition 3 Section VI)

I was also impressed by the intellectually rigorous fashion in which Barclay went about the task of proving that Quakerism was the 'true Christian Divinity'. This, I felt, was the path down which one had to go if Quakerism was to be defended theologically.

Looking back almost a quarter of a century later I still find myself impressed with Barclay's intellectual rigour. He is without doubt the one truly great systematic theologian that the Society of Friends has ever produced. Furthermore, I would still want to say 'Amen' to his account of the importance of the Scriptures and deplore the way that it is ignored not only by many Quakers but by many other Christians as well. This having been said, I would also want to argue that we cannot simply take Barclay down from the shelves, dust him off, and re-use him as the basis for a successful modern approach to Quakerism. This is for two reasons.

First, the theological debate has moved on since his time, and any successful modern approach will have to engage with the issues that have emerged since his apology was written. For example, any responsible systematic theology written today would need to engage with the 'postmodern' question of whether there is any such thing as universal theological truth, rather than simply truths that have validity for particular times and cultures.

Secondly, further reflection has led me to believe that many of Barclay's arguments are quite simply wrong. For example, in his twelfth proposition 'Concerning Baptism' Barclay declares:

As there is one Lord and one faith, so there is 'one baptism; which is not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience before God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ'. And this baptism is a pure and spiritual thing, to wit, the baptism of the spirit and fire, by which we are buried with him, that, being washed and purged from our sins, we may 'walk in newness of life'; of which the baptism of John was a figure, which was commanded for a time, and not to continue forever. As to the baptism of infants, it is a mere human tradition, for which neither precept nor practice is to be found in all the Scripture. (ibid., Proposition 12)

There are several problems with Barclay's argument in this proposition.

- He takes what the New Testament says about the results of baptism, and then departs from the New Testament by using this as the basis for the rejection of an outward sacramental sign in baptism in a way that the New Testament itself never does.
- He also mistakenly views Christian baptism as simply a continuation of the baptism practised by John the Baptist, rather than as the reality which John's baptism only foreshadowed.

- Finally he wrongly describes infant baptism as having no roots in Scripture, whereas it can in fact be seen as a practice which is rooted in what the Old and New Testaments have to say about God's prevenient grace and the covenant relationship between God and the families of believers.⁴

The sort of problems that can be found in Barclay's handling of baptism can also be found in his handling of many of the other theological issues he tackles, and therefore I would want to argue that doing justice to Barclay's legacy today means engaging with the Bible and the Christian tradition with the same degree of intellectual rigour that he displays, while being sensitive to a changed theological context, and also being willing to challenge his own arguments when they lack cogency.

Lewis Benson and Catholic Quakerism

A year or so after my first encounter with Fox and Barclay I came across the volume *Catholic Quakerism* (1968) by the American Quaker scholar Lewis Benson. As I read through Benson's work, which was originally given as a series of five lectures at Woodbrooke in 1964, two things stood out. The first was that here was a modern Quaker scholar who explained to me for the first time why modern Quakers saw the inward light as an innate human faculty. According to Benson, the reason for their seeing things in this light was that the original Quaker vision had become obscured by an understanding of Quakerism shaped by a form of Christian Platonism in which the inward light was understood

as signifying the spiritual potentiality in human life, and ... refers to that part of man's nature which has kinship with the divine. As this premise became widely accepted the term *inner light* became the most commonly used expression for the central principle of the Quakers, and this *inner light* came to be associated more and more with man's highest spiritual potential and less and less with the unique savior Jesus Christ. (ibid., p.2)

The second thing was that here was a present-day Quaker scholar who was prepared to affirm the importance for today of that Christ-centred Quakerism which I had discovered in the writings of Fox and the other early Friends. Thus I read, in Benson's account of the Quaker understanding of the Church, that the Church was the community of those obedient to the authority of the risen Christ:

The risen Christ is the prophet, priest, and king of the new covenant community. This community should not be understood as a cult centred on the belief in a beloved spiritual leader who rose from the dead.

The resurrection of Jesus is the resurrection of one who was the incarnation of the word that God speaks to man. He is the eternal prophet who speaks from heaven, and he speaks with the voice of authority because his voice is the voice of the creator. He is therefore 'the light of men', and the new covenant established by his death and resurrection is the 'covenant of light'. God who is light and whose law is light has given men a covenant of light. In this new covenant the word and power of God are

mediated to God's people through the risen Christ who is present in their midst. The new covenant is therefore not a legal code, cultus or idea, but a person. The expected new covenant was to be a person: '*He* will be to you a covenant' was the prophetic word that came to Isaiah.

This is the key to the new covenant community – it comes into existence when men hear and obey the voice of the living Christ, and it has no existence apart from this hearing and obeying. Faith is the ground of this community when faith is understood to mean putting one's whole existence under the authority of Christ. Fox said, 'We are not our own, and we are not to live to ourselves, nor to order ourselves, but to live unto him, and be ordered, ruled and governed by him. (ibid., p.46)

I still remember the excitement I felt reading Benson's work for the first time. Here at last was a modern Quaker scholar confirming my understanding of what the early Quakers were saying and, what is more, also affirming that the Christ-centred vision of the early Quakers was not just a historical curiosity but the basis for a renewal of the Society of Friends today.

I still find Benson's work exciting and I see it as a cause of great regret that his work seems to have been largely ignored by British Quakers with the exception of the small group of Friends associated with the New Foundation Fellowship.

My own subsequent research has confirmed Benson's contention that the way in which most British Quakers think about the 'inner light' has in fact been shaped by a neo-Platonic understanding of the relationship between God and humanity that was developed by the influential American Quaker Rufus Jones at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. That is not because most British Quakers are neo-Platonists but because Jones' neo-Platonic view that the inner light is a part of human nature has simply become axiomatic among British Friends regardless of whether they know anything about its philosophical roots.

My own subsequent theological journey has also reinforced my belief that Benson was right to insist that the only path for a renewal of Quakerism lies in a return to an emphasis on the covenant relationship between Christ and His people. This is because my study of theology in general has led me to see that Fox and the other early Friends cited by Benson were correct in their contention that God has established a new covenant with humanity through the risen Christ,⁵ and that the Church is called to be a people who submit to the rule of Jesus Christ in corporate obedience.⁶ To deny this is to deny the reality of what God has done and to misrepresent a fundamental part of what it means to be the Church.

However, in spite of these positive features of Benson's work, I now think that it also has four features which are problematic. The first of these is the limited scope of Benson's theological agenda. As I have noted elsewhere:

Benson and the New Foundation Fellowship which he inspired are concerned to expound the distinctive message of George Fox and to show its relevance for today. This is a perfectly legitimate task, but it is one that is limited in scope. It is limited because it excludes discussion of those areas of Fox's thought which were not distinctive, such as his views of the Tri-unity of God, or the inspiration of the Bible, or the fallenness of Man. It also excludes discussion of those issues which are of concern today but which were of no concern to Fox, such as how to speak of God in a secular age, how psychology has altered our view of Man, or how historical criticism has altered our view of the Bible. (Davie, 1997, pp.189–90)

Because Benson's work is limited in this way it does not provide a sufficiently comprehensive basis for the renewal of Quaker theology.

The second feature which is problematic is the fact that Benson does not address the epistemological question of how we hear the voice of Christ speaking to us. As we have seen, his theology is based on the conviction that Christ speaks to his people today, but he never addresses the question of how Christ's voice is heard. In mainstream Christian theology the answer that is given to this question is that Christ speaks to His people through the words of Scripture and/or the traditions of the Church (which are themselves rooted in the biblical witness). Benson does not follow this approach but instead reasserts Fox's teaching that 'Christ has come to teach his people himself' (Benson, 1968, p.27). What he does not explain, however, is what this actually means. In what way does Christ teach His people, and how can His voice be distinguished from the voice of the human imagination?

The third feature which is problematic is the fact that Benson sees the basic theological question as being the question of how we can live a 'righteous' life, by which he means a life lived in obedience to God. No one who takes the Bible seriously could fail to agree that this is a fundamentally important question. However, there are two equally important questions which he does not address. How can I be forgiven by God for my failure to obey Him in the past and how can I be in a right relationship with God even when I fail to obey Him in the present?

Benson totally ignores the first of these questions and avoids the second one by an unrealistic refusal to accept that there can be a disjunction between our knowledge of God's will and our performance of it. More mainstream Christian theology, particularly in its Protestant variety, has provided an answer to these questions based on the fundamental insight of the Apostle Paul:

since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as an expiation by his blood, to be received by faith. (RSV, Rom. 3:23-5)

What these words tell us is that neither our past nor our present failures need cut us off from God because through the death and resurrection of Christ we have been given the gift of a new relationship with God, a relationship which is not based upon our moral performance but simply upon God's free grace.⁷ Benson's refusal to accept, or even engage with, this Pauline teaching is a major hole in his theology.

The fourth feature which is problematic is Benson's attitude to ecumenism. He comprehensively dismisses all the mainstream churches as being examples of what he calls 'institutional' or 'man-made' Christianity and he argues that the early Friends were right to say that there can be no compromise between the Quaker vision and the existence of these kinds of churches:

the call of early Friends is not to accept a catalogue of particular reforms, but to begin again from another ground and root and to rebuild from the foundation. Penington says, 'To come out of one part of Babylonish worship, that is not enough; or to come out of some piece of Babylonish knowledge and wisdom, will not answer the call; but ye must come out of it all.'

The Lamb's war, as the Quakers saw it, was not a contest between two types of institutional Christianity, but a fight to the finish between institutional Christianity and

non-institutional Christianity. For George Fox, the Quaker movement was a genuine breakthrough for the cause of non-institutional Christianity. He says that when a man 'hath seen all the religions of man's making and is come out of them ... what a noise then do the religion makers make ... when they have broken through the wall of their city and religion'. Are there not signs that the time is again ripe for a movement that will break through the walled city of man-made religion? (Benson, 1968, p.59)

The problem with Benson's approach is that, in the first place, it does not do justice to the churches he criticizes. It is not sufficient to simply label them as examples of 'man-made' religion since upon examination it turns out that, in spite of all their faults, they all represent attempts to give expression to the Christian Gospel. The growing recognition of this fact has been one of the great achievements of the ecumenical movement and it is tragic that Benson cannot concede this point.

In the second place, it is impossible to make a meaningful distinction between 'institutional' and 'non-institutional' churches. Sociologically speaking, all churches, the Society of Friends included, are human institutions. What matters is not whether they are institutions but what kind of institutions they are. Are they institutions that serve the cause of the Christian Gospel by enabling people to come to know and love God? That is the question that Benson ought to have been asking.

The four problems which I have identified in Benson's work are problems which do not only apply to what he has to say. Because his work is based on the teaching of Fox and other early Quakers, these problems apply to their teaching as well. This fact raises the issue of whether Friends are really prepared to think critically about the work of their first founders, an issue to which we shall return later in this chapter.

Janet Scott's 1980 Swarthmore Lecture

By 1980, my general theological reading, and my study of Fox, Barclay and Benson in particular, had led me to believe that there was a need for someone to address the issue of how there could be an integration between the issues raised by the modern theological context, the Bible and the mainstream Christian tradition, and the distinctive beliefs and practices of the Society of Friends. I was therefore very encouraged to learn that the 1980 Swarthmore Lecture was to be given by Janet Scott on the subject *What Canst Thou Say? Towards a Quaker Theology* (Scott, 1980). Scott was a fellow member of Sevenoaks Preparatory Meeting and at that time she was a lecturer in Religious Education at Avery Hill College. I knew that she intended to tackle the question of what Quaker theology should look like at the end of the twentieth century and I hoped that she would provide the kind of integration to which I have just referred.

However, this hope was to be disappointed. As I sat in Friends House in London listening to the lecture it became clear to me that what Scott thought a modern Quaker theology ought to look like and what I thought it should look like were poles apart. As I have indicated above, I had become increasingly convinced of the intellectual validity of the mainstream Christian theological tradition in its evangelical form. Owing to the influence of inter-faith and feminist concerns,

Scott's lecture rejects this tradition almost completely. This can be seen in what she says about the topics of revelation, the person of Christ, salvation, and whether Quakerism is a Christian form of religion.

On the subject of *revelation*, she denies that there is anything normative about either Christ or the Bible as the sources of the knowledge of God, arguing that they are only two among a multitude of means by which God is made known to us, and stressing that we must not set any limits on how God is revealed. As she sees it: 'God is revealed not only in well known ways, the Exodus, the Exile, through Muhammed, Buddha, Gandhi, Guru Nanak, George Fox, but in countless millions of happenings and people wherever we have eyes to see' (Scott, 1980, p.61).

Furthermore, we cannot say any of these are more significant than any other because 'We cannot judge God's interactions with others – only marvel at the infinite variety and creativity of the divine spirit' (ibid.).

On the subject of the *person of Christ*, she rejects the idea that Jesus was divine, arguing:

Such evidence as we have tells us that Jesus was a man of his time, limited by the knowledge and culture available to him. He was not perfect in knowledge or in his interpretation of religion – there were times when he said things we regard as mistaken. (ibid., p.55)

In addition, she also rejects the notion that Jesus can be seen as defining what it means to be truly human. This is because of a feminist concern that

the use of Jesus as definitive for the nature of man means that a whole half of humanity is left out. Not only are women robbed of the authenticity of their deepest experiences, in particular the experience of childbirth, but the model of humanity and of God is robbed of the qualities which women have to offer. (ibid., p.57)

Finally, she denies that there was anything unique about Jesus' life and teaching:

he was not unique in the sense that there is nothing in his teachings and actions that has not been seen in some other life. There have been other martyrs, other teachers, others who have forgiven those who harmed them, other workers of miracles, others reported as raised from the dead. (ibid., pp.57–8)

On the subject of *salvation*, she accepts that it is permissible to say that 'Jesus was saviour because he demonstrated the love of God and in so doing caused people to turn to God and seek reconciliation' (ibid., p.41). What is unacceptable is the traditional Christian claim that the death of Christ on the cross brought about salvation: 'the death of Jesus brought about no fundamental change in God's saving will; that is, it was always God's intention to save, so that the death of Jesus was not necessary for salvation' (ibid.).

Lastly, on the issue of *whether or not Quakerism is a Christian form of religion*, Scott declares:

we may answer the question 'Are Quakers Christian?' by saying that it does not matter. What matters to Quakers is not the label by which we are called or call ourselves, but

the life. The abandonment of self to God means the abandonment of labels, of doctrines, of cherished ways of expressing the truth. It means the willingness to follow the Spirit wherever it leads and there is no guarantee that this is to Christianity or to any 'happy ending' except the love, peace and unity of God. (*ibid.*, p.70)

In the twenty-two years since I first heard her give it I have reread Janet Scott's lecture numerous times, and my reaction to it is still the same. Her understanding of Quakerism and mine are still poles apart.

As I see it, Scott's lecture raises legitimate questions about the credibility of traditional Christian orthodoxy in a world in which inter-faith and feminist concerns are increasingly important. However, I find the answers which she gives to be fundamentally flawed from both a Christian and a specifically Quaker perspective.

From a Christian perspective, what Scott has to say is fundamentally flawed because it makes Jesus Christ superfluous. As we noted above, according to the witness of Holy Scripture and the Catholic creeds there is a personal identity between Jesus Christ and God. Jesus Christ is not only a human being but also the eternal Son of God, the second person of the Trinity. It is for this reason that He is the one who makes God finally and definitively known, and therefore the one whom we are to hear and to whom we are to be obedient in life and in death. It is also for this reason that He is able to save, since as the eternal Son of God He is able to overcome the power of sin and death through His cross and the resurrection and thereby open for us the way to eternal life.

For Scott, by contrast, Jesus Christ is in the last resort simply a fallible human being and even if He had never lived we could still have had a perfectly adequate knowledge of God and salvation would still have been possible. There can be no compromise between these two positions. Either one or the other must be true. Both cannot be.

From a specifically Quaker perspective, what Scott has to say is fundamentally flawed because it has no real connection with the theological concerns of the first founders of Quakerism back in the seventeenth century. The connection between her version of Quakerism and theirs seems to be limited to the use of the term 'inner light', the conviction that a knowledge of God is open to all people, and the practice of silent worship. Even on these points the connection is superficial because for the early Friends the 'inward light' was the light of Christ, it was the risen Christ who made the knowledge of God available to all, and the purpose of silent worship was to allow the voice of Christ to be heard addressing His people through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. All these convictions would, of course, be denied by Scott because there is no place for them in her theology.

It seems that what we have in the case of Scott is a mirror image of the problem which we identified in the work of Benson. He is impeccably loyal to the theological vision of Fox and the other early Friends, but seems unable to go beyond what they said then in order to rethink what Quakerism might mean for today. She is rightly concerned to ask what Quakerism might mean for today, but seems to have lost touch with her Quaker theological roots in so doing.

My Research into the Development of British Quaker Theology

The experience of listening to Scott's lecture was the immediate catalyst for my research into the development of British Quaker theology. I knew what the early Friends said and I knew what Scott had to say, but what I did not know was the connection between the two. How and why had British Quakerism moved from one to the other? What had gone so tragically wrong as to produce a situation in which a British Friend could be officially invited to deliver a lecture which denied the most basic tenets of the Christian faith?

After taking a degree in theology at Oxford University, I had the opportunity to undertake postgraduate research at Oxford on this topic and the result was my 1993 doctoral thesis, 'A study in the development of British Quaker Theology since 1895 with special reference to Janet Scott's 1980 Swarthmore Lecture', which was published by Edwin Mellen in 1997. My research was pointed in the right direction by John Punshon, who was then tutor in Quaker studies at Woodbrooke and what I came to realize was that *the* key change in British Quaker theology took place in the aftermath of the Manchester Conference of 1895.

Up to that point British Quakerism had been an unequivocally Christian form of religion and its fundamental tenets on the key topics of revelation, God, Christ, theological anthropology and salvation lay within what I labelled the 'core of conviction' – that core of common beliefs which have been shared by all mainstream orthodox Christians whatever their differences on other matters. At the Manchester Conference those Friends such as John Wilhelm Rowntree, John W. Graham and Rendel Harris who felt unable to accept the evangelical interpretation of Quakerism that then prevailed within British Quakerism were provided with a platform to make their views known. The fact that they were not censured for so doing gave them the confidence they needed to mount a concerted campaign to convert British Quakerism as a whole to their more Liberal outlook.

This campaign took a number of forms, such as the foundation of Woodbrooke College in 1903, the establishment of the Swarthmore Lectures in 1908, and the production of the seven-volume 'Rowntree' history of Quakerism between 1909 and 1921. What all these enterprises had in common was that they were vehicles for the new Liberal outlook. By the 1920s, Liberalism had become the new orthodoxy within British Quakerism, its triumph being symbolized by the replacement of the section on 'Christian Doctrine' in the 1883 *Book of Christian Discipline* by the 1921 volume *Christian Life Faith and Thought* which reflected the Liberal emphasis on personal experience and gave prominence to Liberal theological ideas.

The Liberal approach to Quakerism was fairly diverse theologically but within this diversity there were four key features. The first was a reinterpretation of the early Quaker belief in the inward light as a belief that all human beings are capable of having direct experience of God and that this experience is the proper starting point for theological reflection. As I have indicated above, this approach was heavily influenced by the neo-Platonic interpretation of Quakerism advocated by Rufus Jones.

The second key feature was an emphasis on the need to reinterpret Quaker theology in the light of 'modern thought'. The constant factor in theology, so it was argued, was human experience of God, but the way this experience was formulated

in terms of theology could and should change to reflect the ever-growing knowledge possessed by the human race.

The third was an emphasis on intellectual tolerance. For Liberal Quakers, what really mattered was experience of God and ethically appropriate behaviour and, provided that someone showed evidence of these, they should be given liberty to engage in wide-ranging theological exploration.

The fourth key feature was that, although Liberal Quakerism rejected many of the key elements of the core of conviction, it was still an explicitly Christian form of religion at whose heart lay an acceptance of the biblical witness to Jesus Christ as the key to a proper understanding of God. A classic example of this approach is the following extract from Rowntree's *Essays and Addresses*:

In Jesus, in His life and His death upon the Cross, we are shown the nature of God and the possibilities which are within our reach. We are shown the world as the Father sees it, are called to live in harmony with His will and purpose, to hate the sins which made Him mourn, to scale the barrier of sin and discover that the way of penitence lies open and direct to the Fatherly heart. No legal bargain, but a spiritual conflict, and inward change, the rejection of the living death of sin, the choice of the new birth, of the purified self, the conversion from a low and earthly life to a high and spiritual standard of life and conduct – here you have the practical conditions of salvation, and in the active, free and holy love of God, ever seeking entrance, ever powerful if we but yield the gateway of our heart is the substance of the Gospel. The revelation of God's Fatherhood and the possibility of unity with Him through Christ, meet the deep need of the soul for a centre of repose apart from the transitory interests and things of time. Hear then the gentle appeal 'Come unto me and rest.' (Rowntree, 1905)

This extract demonstrates clear Liberal characteristics, most notably the rejection of a 'legal' view of the cross in favour of the 'exemplarist' view that the cross is a demonstration of the hatefulness of sin and our need for moral transformation, but it is also clear and unambiguous in its commitment to the centrality of Jesus Christ.

As I traced the further development of British Quaker theology, what became obvious was that the four features of Liberal Quakerism formed an unstable mixture because there was always the possibility that the first three would be appealed to against the fourth. This is what in fact happened increasingly from the 1960s onwards as Quakers influenced by the increasingly post-Christian and pluralist culture have questioned whether Christ should have a central role in theology and whether Quakerism should still be viewed as an essentially Christian form of religion. Janet Scott's 1980 Swarthmore Lecture is simply the logical outworking of this trend.

What also became apparent to me as I read more widely in the field of modern theology was that there was an alternative path that British Quakerism could have followed. The intellectual questions about the credibility of many features of evangelical Christianity that were raised by Liberal Quakers at the end of the nineteenth century were undoubtedly questions that needed to be faced. However, the answers they gave were not the only answers that could be given.

During the twentieth century, major theologians such as Karl Barth and Wolfhart Pannenberg on the Protestant side and Karl Rahner and Hans Urs Von Balthasar on the Roman Catholic side produced restatements of Christian orthodoxy that both

remained true to the core of conviction and rethought and re-expressed it in the light of contemporary issues and movements of thought. The same was true of theologians such as P.T. Forsyth, T.F. Torrance and E.L. Mascall within the British context.⁸

What these theologians show is that it is still perfectly possible to produce a restatement of traditional Christian theological convictions in a way that carries both intellectual integrity and enormous spiritual power. The great tragedy of British Quaker theology has been its failure to enter into conversation with the theologians I have mentioned or others like them, and/or to produce equivalent theology of its own. The great question facing British Quaker theology is whether, even at this late stage, it is willing to learn and change and to recover its lost Christian theological heritage.

Quakers and the Ecumenical Movement

The final stage in my personal theological pilgrimage has been my engagement with the ecumenical movement.

At Oxford I studied at a United Reformed Church college, and I was involved with the Methodist and Anglican traditions as well. I eventually married an Anglican Priest and was confirmed in the Church of England while also remaining a Quaker. After leaving Oxford I taught theology to Christians from many different traditions at a number of institutions, including two Church of England theological colleges. Since 2000 I have worked as a theological adviser for the Church of England centrally, and part of my responsibilities is to help the Church of England to develop its ecumenical policy.

All this ecumenical experience has led me to reflect on the place of Quakerism in the overall ecumenical picture, and it now seems to me that, although Quakers are involved in the ecumenical movement, they have not really faced up to the challenge that it poses. Ecumenical dialogue has now led to the situation where there is increasing convergence between the main Christian traditions on the basic elements of the Christian faith and the main features of any future reunited Church. It would be foolish to deny that major issues still need to be resolved but at least convergence is happening and the great ecumenical vision of the oneness of all Christian people in Christ being expressed in the oneness of a reunited Church seems closer to fulfilment. As I see it, that ecumenical vision is the proper response to Christ's prayer in John 17:20–23 and I wish that Quakers could subscribe to it more wholeheartedly. There are three great obstacles to this happening which are, for instance, reflected in the British Quaker response to the Churches Together in England 'Called to be One' process and the World Council of Churches 'Lima' document, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*.⁹

The first obstacle is the Quaker unwillingness to subscribe to any form of credal orthodoxy. This obstacle has three roots. The early Quakers objected to the Catholic creeds because they believed they were the product of an apostate Church, and that any statement of belief should stick to the words of Scripture itself. More recently, Quakers have objected to them either because they hold them to be incompatible with modern thought or because they hold that their specifically

Christian content is out of step with the more universalist approach of present-day Quakerism.

I do not find any of these arguments persuasive. The belief that the early Church became apostate after the apostolic age does not fit the known historical facts and there is no reason why non-biblical words should not be used to defend biblical truth. The belief that the creeds are outdated is called into question by the work of the great modern theologians I have previously mentioned, and the objection that the creeds are too Christian is based on the belief that Quakerism should be a universalist rather than specifically Christian form of religion – a belief which I would want to strongly challenge.

The second obstacle is the Quaker unwillingness to accept the need for the celebration of the sacraments or for a distinctive threefold order of ministry within the Church. The early Quakers justified their disuse of the sacraments on the grounds that Christianity was intended to be a purely inward and spiritual form of religion and that the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper were Jewish ritual practices which God tolerated in the early Church but which were never intended to endure for ever. More recently, Quakers have tended to argue that the sacraments are simply unnecessary because the grace of God can be experienced perfectly well without them, and that concentrating our attention on them can lead us to forget the potential of the whole of our experience to be revelatory of God.

Once again, I think there are problems with these arguments. As I have already indicated in my comments on Robert Barclay's treatment of Baptism in his *Apology*, the early Quaker arguments are difficult to justify from the New Testament in which there appears to be no suggestion that the sacraments are temporary Jewish ordinances or that Christianity was intended to be a purely 'spiritual' religion in which there were no symbolic rites at all.

It is indeed somewhat ironic that the early Quakers were so strongly anti-sacramental given that the early Quaker 'testimonies' such as the adoption of plain dress and a refusal to take oaths or give 'hat honour' to their social superiors¹⁰ had a strongly 'sacramental' function in that they were symbolic actions which bore effective outward testimony to the grace of God at work in the Quaker community and were intended to be means by which those outside the community could be led to experience that grace for themselves.

The more recent Quaker view of the sacraments is also difficult to sustain. It would be generally accepted by most Christian theologians that in his sovereign mercy God can and does give grace even when the sacraments are never used. However, this does not mean that it is therefore right to presume upon God's grace by neglecting the use of those normal channels of grace which God has provided for us. If, as the New Testament suggests, God has instituted Baptism and the Eucharist as means by which we may meet Him and through which our lives may be recreated by Him, who are we to refuse to receive what He has offered to us?

Furthermore, if we are to rightly perceive God at work in the whole of our lives, then we need to understand our lives within the framework of the biblical story of how God has recreated us in Christ, and here the sacraments can in fact help us because of the way in which they bear clear witness to this story. In fact I would want to argue that one of the reasons for British Quakerism having slid so far

towards universalism is its lack of a repeated sacramental witness to the truth of what Christ has done for us.

The Quaker rejection of the historic threefold ministry is also problematic because both in early Quakerism and today the basis for this rejection has been the idea that having fixed orders of ministry undercuts the importance of the stress on the universal vocation of the whole people of God and denies the possibility that God may call anyone to be His mouthpiece providing they are open to serve Him in this way. In fact it need do no such thing. The idea of the distinctive ministerial vocation of those who are ordained is merely a specific form of the biblical idea that within the one body of Christ different people are called to exercise different functions and that some are called to exercise a ministry of oversight and pastoral care.¹¹ Moreover, the fact that God may call some people to a lifelong ministerial vocation does not preclude the possibility that God may speak, and may be recognized to speak, through others on particular occasions, a point which the charismatic movement has rightly re-emphasized.

In fact the Quakers themselves have always recognized that people may have distinctive ministerial vocations. Until 1924, British Quakers had for centuries recognized the vocations of those who were called to regular vocal ministry in Meeting for Worship and to this day they have retained the offices of Elder and Overseer, offices which provide for the spiritual oversight and pastoral care of the Quaker community.

What the Quakers need to try to understand is how the needs which led to the establishment of these forms of ministry within their own tradition are precisely the same needs that have been provided for by the historic threefold ministry in other Christian traditions, and so the existence of these offices need not be seen as alien to Quaker concerns.

The third obstacle to greater ecumenical convergence by the Quakers is a widespread rejection of the belief that there needs to be greater uniformity of Christian faith and practice between the various Christian churches. Thus the British Quaker Committee for Christian Relationships declared in 1979:

It is only natural that within the great household of God there should be different families doing things differently, developing different family traditions, each perhaps enriching the life of the whole by their particular insights and emphases. There is neither scandal nor sin in this. (*Unity in the Spirit*, 1979, p.6)

This statement is fine as far as it goes. It takes seriously the place of diversity within the Divine economy. What it does not do, however, is face up to the fact that not all diversity is necessarily benign, and that it becomes scandalous and sinful when it prevents Christians confessing the same faith, sharing the same sacraments, possessing an interchangeable ministry and worshipping together. That is the situation in which we now exist, and that is the situation which we all need to work together to overcome.

To do this means working through what my Church of England Colleague Flora Winfield has called 'the ecumenical pain barrier', those situations where the actions and beliefs of other churches can cause us to turn away from the challenge of ecumenism and retreat into a more comfortable isolation. As she puts it:

unless the whole ecumenical movement (and not only those for whom there is an obvious personal impact) manages to stay with these difficult issues, which mark our division, then we will not discover together the means of our reconciliation. The structures for our working together are there to keep us talking to one another, to stay together and to work together at these difficult issues; they are also there to enable the churches to grow together in a truthful and honest relationship, and not to paint the fences which divide them rather than dismantle them step by step. (Winfield, 2002, p.28)

For Friends I think this means grappling seriously with those issues that separate them from the Christian mainstream, being willing to learn from others rather than simply assert their right to do things differently, and being willing to change where necessary, even if this means abandoning long-cherished Quaker traditions along the way.

Conclusion

Although I am now an Anglican as well as a Quaker, and although my job means that most of my time is taken up with Anglican concerns, I have not abandoned my Quaker roots. I am still passionately concerned about the future of British Quakerism, and I would argue that the challenge which it faces as it enters the twenty-first century is a challenge to change: a challenge to take a different theological path from the one which it has followed since the Manchester Conference and to recover its lost Christian heritage, and a challenge to take a full part in the ecumenical movement and not simply stay on the ecumenical sidelines.

My view of the challenge facing British Quakerism has undoubtedly been shaped by the ecumenical pilgrimage which I have described in this chapter. However, I would not want to say that only a person who has undertaken the same journey could reach the same conclusions. In the face of the relativism which is so prevalent in our 'postmodern' culture, I still want to defend the idea that there is such a thing as public theological truth. What I mean by this is that there is such a thing as the truth about who God is and how God relates to humanity and the rest of the created order, and this is accessible to anyone who is willing to submit their thinking to God's self-revelation.

What is important about my journey is not the details of my itinerary, but the intellectual destination I have reached, and I want to argue that this destination is one that can be reached by anyone who is prepared to look objectively at the kind of theological material to which this chapter has referred.

Notes

¹ See passages such as Mat. 11:25–27, John 1:1–18, Col. 1:15–19, Heb. 1:1–4.

² See, for example, the classic statement in the *Nicene Creed* which declares that Christians believe

in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, Begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of very God, Begotten, not made, Being of

one substance with the Father, By whom all things were made: Who for us men, and for our salvation came down from heaven, And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, And was made man.

³ For a brief survey of these differences, see Davie (1997, pp.19–30).

⁴ For a substantiation of these points, see Richardson (1958, ch.15).

⁵ Lk 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25; 2 Cor. 3:6; Heb. 8:8, 13, 9:15, 12:24. For a classic exposition of this strand of the biblical material, see Barth (1956, IV, I, pp.3–79).

⁶ Mat. 28:18–20; Acts 2: 41–7; Rom 1:5–6.

⁷ For a more detailed exploration of the issues touched on here, see Davie (2001, pp.158–94).

⁸ For a helpful introduction to the development of twentieth-century theology and the place of such theologians within it, see Ford (1997).

⁹ See the Quaker responses cited in *Called to be One* (1996) and *To Lima with Love* (1987) which was the British Quaker response to BEM.

¹⁰ Or indeed the occasional practice of holy nudity on the basis of Isa. 20!

¹¹ See 1 Cor. 12:1–31.

Taming Anarchy: Quaker Alternate Ordering and ‘Otherness’

Gay Pilgrim

One’s faith is given by God, one’s beliefs by one’s history. (W.C. Smith, 1977)

Prologue

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) claim that every individual can have a personal unmediated experience of God. It is this experience that guides, informs and motivates them and on which they base their actions, both individually and corporately. Or at least this was what I understood Friends to be about from my reading and attendance at Quaker courses and conferences of various kinds. I knew that there were some Friends who were not strictly Christian and were uncomfortable with talk of Jesus or Christ; that there were some Friends who were avowedly non-Christian, and a few who claimed to be atheists. Over time, it was borne in upon me that, in Britain, belief in the reality of an unmediated experience of God could no longer be assumed, and indeed that those who spoke of it as real were likely to be misheard and misunderstood, if not (politely) ignored.

In 1995, I had what might be termed a ‘spiritual emergency’ of the kind well documented by past Quakers (Brinton, 1972; Cronk, 1991; Nickalls, 1952; *Quaker Faith and Practice*, 1995¹) and indeed by many other religious groups (Furlong, 1996; Flinders, 1993; Grof and Grof, 1990). It changed my life. It also raised a serious question for me about the Religious Society of Friends. I knew from sharing my own experience that there *were* Friends who gave credence to the reality of an unmediated encounter with the Divine, but also that others clearly did not. This sharpened my observation of the way Friends ‘managed’ the worship space and the expression of spirituality. It seemed to me that the belief in an unmediated encounter with God had metamorphosed into a belief that there ‘was that of God in everyone’ (*QF&P*, 1995, 1.02.17), a much more comfortable theology in a postmodern, post-Christian age. Expressions of overtly Christian or vivid experiences of being caught up by God seemed to be unacceptable, and were either directly countered or gently derided. It was at this point that I began to seriously question what kind of religious group the Religious Society of Friends in Britain had become.

I was also concerned about those Quakers who had experienced the reality of God in their lives, and who were becoming increasingly unable to ‘own’ this, even privately. How could these Friends nourish and succour one another if they felt unable to speak their truth? How were they to come to know one another when largely silenced? What happened to those Friends who felt they were in need of

spiritual direction? In most faith traditions spiritual direction is recognized as desirable and valuable, but to whom could Quakers turn within their own group for such direction, if the whole concept of the reality of God was no longer credited?

It seemed to me that one of the ways to address this concern was to offer a series of workshops exploring mysticism² in general to the Yearly Meeting.³ As an experienced trainer I knew how to run courses and how to construct a day or a weekend which could lead from the general, to the Quaker, to the particular. It would be quite possible to offer an event which would be of interest to everyone, running the gamut from those who felt mysticism was a superstitious hangover to those who believed in the personal unmediated encounter with God. The idea was to enable Friends to talk with one another freely, but in such a way that the discussion could remain relatively abstract if it felt unsafe to be self-disclosing. My purpose was twofold: firstly to discover just how widespread the falling away from the original Quaker concept of humanity's relationship with God was; and secondly to make it possible for those Friends who did still adhere to it to recognize and come to know one another safely.

There is a long tradition amongst Quakers of 'testing' ideas which individual Friends feel drawn to act on (*QF&P*, 1995, 13.08). It is a process which involves bringing together a number of 'seasoned' Friends,⁴ together with the individual, to help him or her consider whether or not their idea has real substance, and whether indeed, it is for that individual to carry it out. It was in the course of this process that it was suggested to me that my questions about present-day Quakerism would make for a very interesting academic research project. Had I thought about this? Well, no. I had not. It had never even remotely crossed my mind. But I was interested and, after further discussion with others, I approached Birmingham University's Theology Department and in due course was accepted as a postgraduate student in their PhD programme. This was a considerable move away from what I had originally envisaged undertaking, but I naïvely thought that the one would inform the other. I failed to appreciate that the two projects required very different 'mindsets', and at that point I was unaware of the discomfort and difficulties that may be experienced by insider researchers (researchers studying their own groups). But as I found the PhD research leading to increasingly uncomfortable questions for me *personally* regarding Quakerism and Quakers, it became clear that it would be quite inappropriate for me to undertake the workshops, so I let them go.

Inevitably, as I engaged in the fieldwork and began to hear what Friends were telling me, the focus of my research shifted. The question about whether Quakers today still believe in the possibility of an unmediated encounter with God remains pertinent for me, as does the corollary question, 'What kind of a religious group are the Religious Society of Friends today?' But the major question that has arisen for me over the last three years is, 'What provides present-day Quakers with unity, given that there is such a diversity amongst them?' In America, Quakers split and formed new Yearly Meetings as the differences between them in theology and understanding of God became painfully obvious (Hamm, 1988; Barbour and Frost, 1988). Over the 350 years of Quakerism in Britain, there have certainly been separations (Isichei, 1970), but, although these may have shaken the main body of Friends, they were insufficiently significant numerically to make any long-term impact. As I explored various theorists and theories, I came across a concept that

seemed to me to offer an explanation as to why British Friends remain united. It pleased me particularly because it is a concept that can be applied to Friends longitudinally. It not only offers an explanation about modern Quakerism, it provides a connecting and continuing thread with those who initiated the Religious Society of Friends. This concept is termed 'heterotopia'.

Heterotopia

Heterotopia was originally a word used by anatomists to refer to those parts of the body which were out of place, missing altogether, extra or alien; features which were unexpected, incongruous and unsettling. Michel Foucault appropriated this word, using it to describe spaces that disturb, shock or unsettle. In 'Of Other Spaces' (1986) and *The Order of Things* (1977), he wrote most fully about his concept of heterotopia. In the latter he used the example of Borges' quotation from a Chinese encyclopaedia to illustrate how incongruous juxtapositions challenge preconceived assumptions. The ordering of the text in the encyclopaedia is at odds with a western understanding of logical sequencing and relationship (Foucault, 1977, p.xv) and its different ordering is confusing and unsettling. In 'Of Other Spaces', he discussed spaces, physical and mythical, and the way in which spaces (or sites) can be used to subvert or invert normal relationships. He argued that spaces or sites which contradict or invert relationships are of two main types: utopias and heterotopias. According to Foucault, utopias are 'fundamentally unreal spaces', whereas a heterotopia is a countersite (1986, p.24), a real space which highlights issues of order and power through the confusion it creates by its unexpected and incongruous use: for example, the holding of a fun fair in a prison.

Alternate Ordering

Kevin Hetherington is interested in Foucault's suggestion that the concept of heterotopia might illuminate the 'spatiality of the social ordering of modernity' (1996, p.40).⁵ He uses the term 'heterotopia' to denote 'sites of alternate order [which are] constituted through their incongruous character and (their) relationship to other less incongruous sites' (Hetherington, 1998, p.131). He defines heterotopia as follows:

Spaces of alternate ordering [which] organise a bit of the social world in a way different to that which surrounds them. That alternate ordering marks them out as Other and allows them to be seen as an example of an alternative way of doing things. (Hetherington, 1996, p.2).

This is the definition which provides a link in my work between mid-seventeenth-century Friends and modern Quakers, and is the definition I am working from when I use the term 'heterotopia'. My understanding of this concept has been furthered and broadened by its use in other disciplines, in particular cultural studies and geography (see Shields, 1991; Rose, 1993; Keith and Pile, 1993; Cresswell, 1996),

where the discourse about space, conceptual or actual, marginal or central, illustrates power relations and therefore social ordering. The discourse on marginality and on the opportunities that being marginal provides to rehearse an alternative social ordering is relevant to Friends, in both the past and the present.

The margins, whether geographical or social, offer opportunities for empowerment through practices of resistance, protest and transgression (Shields, 1991; Rose, 1993). They are spaces where alternate ways of living and ordering can be played with and practised, demonstrated and witnessed to. Louis Marin (1984, 1992) in particular explores the concept of spaces which can be experimented in and where ideas can be played with. He points out that Thomas More's word *utopia* was coined by bringing two Greek words together, namely *eu-topia* and *ou-topia*, one meaning a 'good place', the other 'no place or nowhere'. In other words, Utopia is defined as an ideal world which does not, and cannot, exist. Marin is interested in what happens in the gap that exists between the 'nowhere place' (the ideal that cannot be achieved): and the 'good place' (the good that can be achieved): what he terms the 'neutral' (1984). He posits that in this gap it is possible to imagine and attempt to create utopias within the confines of the modern world. He created the word 'utopias' to describe what occurs in this gap. What Marin calls the neutral is where Hetherington believes heterotopias exist. Hetherington states, 'Heterotopia are not quite spaces of transition ... but they are spaces of deferral, spaces where ideas and practices that represent the good life can come into being' (1996, p.3).

Hetherington also points out, however,

Difference, while being different to the accepted norm within a culture, while it is indeed a source of marginality and resistance to marginalization, is always also implicated in social ordering, even if at the most fundamental level, it is opposed to everything that society, seen as a social order, stands for. (Ibid., p.7)

Providing a significant alternate ordering necessitates being *simultaneously* marginal and embedded in the prevailing social order, since heterotopia, or sites of Otherness, express their alternate ordering directly through the society whom they seek to be different from. They must be juxtaposed to something to be heterotopic.

The Emergence of Quakers

George Fox⁶ is widely regarded as the initiator of Quakerism and its major leader. He was greatly unsettled as a young man by the contending religious ideas of his time and was immersed in his search for answers to his religious confusion during the English Civil War. His failure to find any priest or learned person from mainstream puritanism or protestantism who could help him led to a profound emotional crisis, during which he had a 'visionary' experience.

And when all my hopes in them and in all men were gone, so that I had nothing outwardly to help me, nor could tell what to do, then, Oh then, I heard a voice which said, 'There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition', and when I heard it my heart did leap for joy. Then the Lord did let me see why there was none upon the earth that could speak to my condition, namely that I might give him all the

glory; ... that Jesus Christ might have the pre-eminence, who enlightens, and gives grace, and faith, and power. Thus, when God doth work who shall let it? This I knew experimentally. (Nickalls, 1952, p.11)

This vivid personal encounter with God inspired him to begin preaching, but few heeded him. He had some success in the Midlands amongst a group calling themselves the 'Children of Light', but it was in the north of England, in particular Westmorland, Lancashire and Cumberland, that he found large numbers of followers. These were people who, realizing that the Civil War was not ushering in God's Kingdom as they believed it would, had retreated to the margins of society. Here they waited for God to show them how to live out an alternate ordering until Fox's arrival and message galvanized them (Nickalls, 1952; Dandelion *et al.*, 1998; Gwyn, 2000a).

Early Friends, although by no means the only group who sought to bring about a radical change in society based on religious precepts, were steadfast in maintaining their uncompromising approach. They lived their lives in a way that forced the authorities to take action against them, providing many opportunities for Friends to demonstrate their Otherness and alternate social ordering (Nickalls, 1952; Gwyn, 1995, 2000a; Bauman, 1983; Reay, 1985; Hill, 1972, 1998).

The alienation which Fox felt about the society and culture in which he found himself was not singular. Few, if any, of the beliefs which became central to Friends were unique, but what Fox and the early Quakers did was to bring them together in a cohesive way. The driving force of early Friends' actions was religious and they sincerely believed that they were 'called' to recreate society as God intended. But the commonality of their ideas with those extant at the time about what constitutes a 'good society' indicates that they were aware of the prevailing cultural influences (Barbour, 1964; Bauman, 1983; Baines, 1998; Carter, 1999; Moore, 2000a) and illustrates that sites of Otherness do not emerge out of a vacuum, but are stimulated by the very society against which they are reacting.

It was in the gap created by the collapse of traditional society, and the failure of the Commonwealth to implement the envisioned new society, that Quakerism came into being. During the chaos and mayhem of the Civil War itself, there was no control over what people could say and publish and a plethora of ideas spoken and written was transmitted throughout the country. With the establishment of the Commonwealth government, control and censorship was once more instituted (Bauman, 1983; Hill, 1961, 1998; Lamont, 1969; Acheson, 1993) and those who continued to write and speak of an alternative way of ordering society were apprehended and dealt with severely by the authorities. But the strongest groups continued to promulgate and disseminate their views, in particular the belief that an alternative was possible and necessary. For them the 'nowhere' was England, and the 'good place' was now.

Sites of Otherness

Without the confusion and breakdown of civil and religious authority which occurred during the Civil War, George Fox's opportunity to preach and challenge the mainstream understanding of the Scriptures and God's will would have been

greatly reduced, if not impossible. It allowed him to enter into debates and arguments that would ordinarily have been regarded as seditious or heretical, and *were* regarded as such immediately civil authority began to be re-established. Then Fox, along with others, quickly found himself imprisoned. Imprisonment did not dampen his convictions but rather provided him with a further platform for his preaching and dissemination of the Truth (Nickalls, 1952; Bauman, 1983). He turned the site of his imprisonment into a site of Otherness; a space which he used to evangelize and inspire, contrary to the intention that it should humiliate and defeat him. In this way he could be said to have created a heterotopic space; a space which was intended to marginalize those within it was used instead to encourage resistance to the prevailing culture and to inspire an alternative way of understanding and being in the world – a different ordering.

Prisons not only aim to marginalize those incarcerated within them, but are themselves on the margins of society. In this sense they reflected the position of early Friends who were on the margins of society geographically as well as religiously, being drawn primarily from those who had chosen to retreat beyond the reach of civil jurisdiction once they understood that true righteousness and justice were not going to be established by the Commonwealth government. This northerly part of England was largely ungoverned by religious or civil authorities and its marginality permitted the exploration and creation of an alternate ordering: a ‘nowhere’ place which provided the space to consolidate an alternate ordering; a space where the ‘good place’ could be discovered and lived with confidence. Such a space was a site of resistance to the prevailing social order, a space which enabled people to ‘raise their voices to be heard’, and led them to move out from the margins into more central sites where they could not only be heard but be ‘seen to live different, alternative lives, openly hoping that others will share their vision’ (Hetherington, 1996, p.7). Fox and other gifted Seeker leaders began to travel around the countryside spreading the message of their utopian vision and modelling, through their behaviour and actions, an alternate social ordering.

Within and Without

Heterotopias, or sites of Otherness, express their alternate ordering of society directly through the society from whom they seek to be different. To do this effectively, they need to inhabit spaces which are sufficiently central to render their alternate ordering visible.

One long-term, stable space for the creation of a heterotopic site was provided for Quakers by Margaret Fell, the wife of a judge who had considerable social and material standing in Lancashire. She heard George Fox preach and was so struck that she immediately invited him to stay, and ultimately Swarthmoor Hall, the home of the Fells, became the unofficial headquarters of the Quakers. As such it was a space consisting of real civil authority, being the home of an active, government-appointed circuitry judge, and determined protest and resistance to that same authority by Friends. It was a space which encompassed both the socially central and the socially marginal. It was both a site where law, order and the establishment were upheld and reinforced and a site from which resistance, challenge and protest were formulated and enacted.

Hetherington (1996, pp.6–7) points out:

Heterotopia exist when the relationship between sites is described by a difference of representation defined by their modes of social ordering. For example, holding a festival next to a prison would constitute a heterotopic relationship, each space being used to order the social in very different ways. Either site could be taken as heterotopic in relation to the other, but the likelihood, given that prisons are sanctioned within society whereas festivals are not, is that the festival will be seen as the heterotopia.

In just the same way, Swarthmoor Hall was used to order the social in very different ways, the one being sanctioned by society, the other definitely not.

Another example of a heterotopic site created by Quakers was churches. These were orderly places where the service followed a familiar pattern. They were controlled and organized by religious authorities, backed up by the civil government. They were central to the upholding and maintenance of social order and normativeness: a place where nothing unexpected happened, where people understood what was required of them, how to behave, what to wear, what to say and when to say it. Into this space came Quakers, interrupting the sermon, jumping onto the furniture, denouncing the priest and the established church, challenging people to a debate, sometimes wearing clothes torn and rended, with ashes smeared over them (Nickalls, 1952; Bauman, 1983). The familiar church was transformed into a place of Otherness, a place where something excessive and incongruous occurs.⁷ The Quakers' treatment of this space was in direct contrast to its normal usage, setting up disturbing and unsettling juxtapositions to normal social relations carried on within it.

Quakers also set up their own places of Otherness through their worshipping methods. They would meet in ordinary houses, barns or outside, gathering together in silence, waiting for the spirit of Christ to move them to 'minister' (speak). In this waiting it was not unusual for people to shake, murmur, moan or otherwise display peculiar behaviour (Higginson, 1653, p.15). There was no organized sermon, no singing, no order of service, no gender differentiation, no apparent hierarchy or leader. This was a site of Otherness established through its relationship of difference from other worshipping groups, from other church spaces, though related to them by the concept of worshipping God. Quaker Meetings unsettled social and spatial relations, while simultaneously providing an alternative representation of the same. That they were regarded with great suspicion and seen as transgressive is borne out by the extreme measures taken to break them up and outlaw them (*QF&P*, 1995, 19.35).

Otherness, Freedom and Power

As has been said, sites of Otherness and alternate ordering do not occur in a vacuum. Otherness and alternate ordering can only exist because they are in a vis-à-vis position with the rest of society. It is their difference *in relation to* other sites and orderings that makes them heterotopic, and such difference is not separate from the society in which it exists, but is construed by and participates in the construction of

that society. The existence of sites of Otherness as visible alternatives in social ordering has an impact on the prevailing norms and they, in their turn, are influenced by the reaction of society towards them. Social relations are not isolated constructs, but are constantly shifting in subtle response to the society which produces them. That some groups within society have more power than others and determine the predominant social relations has implications for what is defined as a site of Otherness, and what represents an alternate ordering. Even within the group who constitute the site of Otherness, power relations are central to their understanding of what it is they are claiming as Other, and the freedom with which adherents to the group can express and practice their 'otherness'.

For early Friends, their understanding that each and everyone could be 'convicted' directly by the Light of Christ, and that it was this experience, not the Scriptures, to which they should be obedient, potentially leant itself to anarchy. Who was to say whether one person's 'sense' of God's will was less 'truthful' than another's? This inevitably gave rise to conflict, resulting in the setting up of a system of organization and control which cleverly managed to sustain the centrality of the belief that every individual could be directly guided by God, while putting alongside it a process of testing discernment which squarely placed the responsibility for action on the group as a whole. Thus no one person could be seen to claim more power or knowledge than another. But, as Hetherington points out, alternative modes of ordering 'have their own codes, rules and ... generate their own relations of power' (1996, p. 24), and the outcome of this system of organization was that Quaker 'Otherness' became institutionalized.

The Influence of 'the World'

By the time of George Fox's death in 1691, the eschatological hopes and expectations which had inspired the first Friends had had to be reassessed. With the re-establishment of civil and political authority bringing order and stability to the country, the radical and challenging message of the Quakers became increasingly redundant to the population generally. This, together with the persecution and oppression Quakers were subject to, gradually reduced their numbers, and the advent of the eighteenth century finds Friends referring to themselves as 'the scattered remnant, preserved from destruction by the special grace of God' (Punshon, 1984, p.101).

During the eighteenth century, 'Quietist' Quaker traditionalists became increasingly concerned that the singularity and alternate ordering of Friends was being dissipated. Disbarred from the professions, state service or politics, they had turned to business and trade, where their reputation for honesty served them well and they flourished. The frugal Quaker way of life ensured an accumulation of capital which they invested in innovative projects, becoming successful entrepreneurs. And, despite the paucity of their numbers, Friends had not given up on their utopian vision, their wealth enabling them to become notable philanthropists. The incongruity of a group of people who were leaders in their field, yet who took no part in the arts, sport or the kind of leisure pursuits common to those of a similar class, served to further emphasize their Otherness and alternate ordering.

Their business and philanthropical activities inevitably brought them into close contact with 'the world', and anxiety about its corruption led to the creation of the concept of 'the hedge' between Quakers and 'the world' (Isichei, 1970, pp.143–7). The rules of the 'hedge' practices very intentionally and self-consciously maintained their visible difference in dress, speech, lifestyle and worship practices, which became increasingly strictly enforced as the century progressed. John Punshon remarks that 'it is ironic that in the second half of the 18th century an increasing internal rigidity in the Society of Friends should coincide with a much more relaxed social atmosphere outside it' (1984, p.147). But if Otherness is to be maintained, if an alternate ordering is to be sustained, there is no irony in this, but an entirely consistent logic. It is no coincidence to find an 'increasing internal rigidity' where external values and ideals are felt to be dangerously influential and potentially destructive of the identity of the group: in this case, Friends' sense of being Other to the society in which they dwelt.

But it is in the nineteenth century that the impact of a much greater degree of contact with 'the world' begins to be felt amongst Friends. As a consequence of their successful business ventures and philanthropical activity, many were exposed very directly to the new ideas and discoveries which were taking place in almost every field of endeavour. Nevertheless, even as they participated in and were influenced by society and the changes taking place in that society, Friends continued to model an alternate ordering and Otherness by their responses to, and solutions proposed for, the ills they sought to address. Their engagement with issues such as the treatment of criminals, capital punishment, the mentally ill and the abolition of slavery (Punshon, 1984; Isichei, 1970) continued to challenge and highlight power relations and social ordering, and Friends' position and power in society were now such that, although as a group they were marginal, their concerns and interests could not easily be marginalized. Where 'weighty'⁸ Friends were known to support a cause, non-Quakers would follow, and Isichei points out that 'the importance of the Quakers in Victorian England and the impact they made on contemporaries was quite disproportionate to their numbers' (1970, p.xix).

It was not only in the areas of work and philanthropy that Quaker Otherness and alternate ordering was challenged. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, the evangelical movement and Methodism swept across the country, and Quakers were not immune. From about 1830 to 1885, the influence of evangelical Quakers, with their insistence on the centrality of the Bible, made inroads into the theological distinctiveness of Friends (Isichei, 1970). Some commentators (Punshon, 1984; Isichei, 1970) argue that the rise of Liberal Quakerism in the 1890s was the result of a reaction to the extreme rigidity and strictly applied rules and regulations of Quakerism at that time. I suggest that it may also have been a reaction to a diminution in their distinctiveness and alternate ordering which was in danger of being lost under the domination of evangelical Friends (Kennedy, 2001).

The anti-evangelical reaction was broadly twofold. Firstly, the traditional, so-called 'Quietist' Friends, who revered the early Friends' writings and theology and were cautious about how they involved themselves with 'the world', were dismayed not only by the evangelicals' theology, but by their vigorous proselytizing. Secondly, the radical, liberal, outward-looking Friends, while seeking to engage with the wider world and society around them, also held to 'traditional' teachings of

Quakerism, such as the universality of the Inward Light, the universal offer of salvation and a refutation of the centrality of the Bible. They opposed the Evangelicals' rejection of the Inward Light and insistence on biblical authority. The differences between the Quietists and the Liberals, although less differentiated than those between themselves and the Evangelicals, were nevertheless considerable, and the conflict generated by these three opposing views reverberated throughout the Society.

In 1895, a conference was held in Manchester to consider and discuss late-nineteenth-century Quakerism. This conference was significant in its 'call for Quakerism to return to some of the teachings of early Friends and the abandonment of the Bible as a source of religious authority' (Dandelion, 1996, p.xix). Liberal Friends sought to recover the distinctive Quaker theology of the centrality of the Inward Light, although this was now reinterpreted to mean individual personal experience (Isichei, 1970, p.5), a reinterpretation that paved the way for the increased diversity of belief which has become the hallmark of present-day Quakerism (Dandelion, 1996).

By the end of the nineteenth century Quakers had, by and large, become 'respectable'. Their clear outward identifiers of speech and dress had fallen away and there was little overtly visible to signify their alternate ordering. Yet, even as they sought acceptance by the Establishment, they also sought to be recognizably distinctive (Phillips, 1989). If this was no longer possible for individual Friends, a corporate identity must be established, and Friends entering public life took with them a 'body of shared convictions and aspirations for municipal and national government' (ibid., p.19) becoming self-proclaimed 'representatives of Quaker thought and practice' (ibid., p.21), creating what Phillips terms a Quaker public culture.

Phillips illustrates how, around the 1890s, Friends perceived themselves as a 'moral elect' and the Religious Society of Friends as an example and teacher to the world. An editorial in *The Friend* (20 January 1899, p.34) states:

We believe there is in the English democracy a deeply rooted collective moral conscience, which is ... seeking to assert itself ... Its language is inadequate to its aspirations ... But it will arrive. *It is our work to help it, and teach it.* (Emphasis added)

And, in the *Friends Quarterly Examiner* in July 1902, Thomas Hodgkin writes:

there is still much that is worth striving to maintain in the moral condition of England. But for this we need, I think, an infusion of the old Puritan spirit in the chalice of English life, and none can represent that spirit more worthily than the Society of Friends. (Hodgkin, 1902, p.319)

The success of Friends in establishing a distinctive Quaker public culture is attested to in an article in *The Spectator* in 1901, entitled 'The Power and Function of Quakerism' which, according to *The Friend* (5 April 1901, p.216) 'judges the Society of Friends as indispensable to national life'. It would appear that turn-of-the-century Friends managed the difficult task of being simultaneously embedded in society, yet distinctive from it.

The arrival of World War I in 1914 punctured the halcyon Edwardian era, and Quaker hubris with it. But it also vividly demonstrated Friends' alternate ordering and the strength of their utopian vision through their conscientious objection to participating in the war. Once again Friends used the courts to witness to their peace testimony, enduring imprisonment and public vilification for their transgressive behaviour, which was viewed as shocking, excessive and incongruous. It would be a mistake to suppose that all Quakers were conscientious objectors, but the steadfastness and courage of those who were made a significant impact, not only in the public arena, but within the Religious Society of Friends itself. Indeed Kennedy claims that, without the advent of World War I, and the consequent elevation of the peace testimony to a central organizing motif, the Religious Society of Friends would have ceased to exist as a distinctive religious group (Kennedy, 2001, p.414).

The Death of Conviction

Friends' conscientious objection restored Quakers' heterotopic space, a space that offers opportunities for practices of resistance, protest and transgression; a space where alternate ways of living and ordering can be demonstrated and witnessed to; a space where it is possible to imagine and attempt to create a utopia. It also reconnected them with early Friends in their conviction that they were living out God's vision for the world.

The first Quakers saw themselves as a prophetic people, and their alternative ordering and Otherness arose out of this conviction. They did not have a vision of the world as it *ought* to be because of an ideology about social justice, peace and equality. It was *God's* vision for the world and humanity's place and purpose within it that was the inspiration and foundation for their Otherness and alternate ordering (Gwyn, 1995). Their experience of being convicted by Christ was utterly transforming, taking them 'out of the world' and returning them to a new place where their lives were visibly altered. It was an obligatory point of passage, without which a person would not be admitted to full participation in the life of the Religious Society of Friends. Victor Turner (1969) terms such experiences of transition as liminal, observing that they promote strong bonds and strengthen relationships and obligations within the group. There is little doubt that the inward spiritual experience, combined as it was with outward persecution, was an effective liminal rite of passage for seventeenth-century Quakers, and conscientious objection to World War I can be seen as such a rite of passage for early twentieth-century Friends.

By the mid-twentieth century, Quaker certainty about Christianity as the only true and proper faith was collapsing (Isichei, 1970) and the experience of being convicted by the Light had diminished in power, if not disappeared altogether. It was certainly no longer regarded as an obligatory rite of passage, the liminal being replaced by the liminoid (Turner, 1982) whereby the rite of passage (in this case the experience of being convicted by Christ and visibly transformed) becomes optional. It was no longer seen as essential, and a person could decide whether or not they wished to participate in the Meeting for Worship this week, this month or this year.⁹ Liminoid rites of passage are much weaker as they do not carry the same weight of

obligation and consequently do not strengthen the integration of the group as effectively as the liminal.¹⁰ Nor do they produce such a strong sense of identity. I would argue that they also allow a much greater degree of diversity, since it is no longer necessary for everyone to have participated in a similar experience to be part of the group.

At the end of the twentieth century the Quaker culture of openness makes taboo any certainty about Christ, God, divine will or the sacred (Dandelion, 1996; Heron, 1992; 1999). This 'death of conviction' (Lynch, 2002) also leads to an openness to a range of beliefs which become evaluated, not so much on the truth claims involved in them, as on the kind of life they make possible (*ibid.*) and throughout their history Quakers have maintained that it is possible to live an alternate ordering, to witness and be an example to something 'Other'. For early Friends this heterotopic stance was a consequence of their belief that they were called by God to live in a particular way in order to create the conditions for the coming of God's Kingdom on earth, their utopian vision quest being rooted in a common religious experience. Today, whilst many Friends remain committed to working towards peace and social justice (*QF&P*, 1995), it cannot be claimed that this is a consequence of a commonly shared religious experience. It owes more to the concept of an elect moral status (Hetherington, 1998), a concept describing those who believe they have access to a heightened sense of experience, resulting in the expression of moral values to do with better ways of living and interacting with one another.

Current British Quakerism

As Friends enter the twenty-first century their determination to be open to everyone and anything,¹¹ while certainly marking them out as Other to most religions (and possibly even secular groups), also creates uncertainty about what they are about and who they are. This was expressed in the autumn of 1999 in the national Quaker publication *Quaker News* (no.33): 'We live in a time which could be described as Quaker uncertainty or confusion; in a Yearly Meeting of many differences, particularly differently expressed beliefs, but also varied perceptions of what we should be about as Friends.'

It can no longer be assumed that those attending Meeting for Worship or applying for membership of the Religious Society of Friends are Christian, even in the very loose Quaker interpretation of that label. There is no longer a commonly shared religious belief, and this breakdown of an overarching religious paradigm has led to Friends' sense of identity and unity resting on their heterotopic stance itself: their sense of themselves as being Other and offering an alternate ordering to the rest of society (Dale, 1996; Wildwood, 1999).

But today Friends' concerns are no longer exclusively, or even mainly, Quaker issues. 'The world' has caught up with them, or they have been caught up with 'the world', and as the distinctiveness of their Otherness and alternate ordering comes under threat, so does Friends' sense of identity and unity. The wide differences between them with regard to what, in the words of *Quaker News*, 'Friends should be about' is resulting in conflict, and challenges to the mainstream of Quakerism; and, with the loss of a religiously based utopian vision, the loss of a corporate

discipline and authority, the loss of a visible distinctiveness as they become assimilated into the world, their heterotopic stance is becoming increasingly internally contested.

As it enters a new millennium the Religious Society of Friends reflects the pluralism, individualism and crisis of meaning common in the West (Flanagan and Jupp, 2001). The increasing individualism of the latter half of the twentieth century sat comfortably with the anarchic nature of Friends' understanding of God, as does the absence of a creed or statement of belief, and the flexible, apparently non-hierarchical, organizational structure of the Religious Society of Friends. Likewise, the pluralism of this era fitted in with Friends' belief in the need to be 'open to new Light from whatever source it may come' (*QF&P*, 1995, 1.02.7). The seeming impossibility of unravelling, from the plethora of faith paths and 'spiritualities' available, which one is revealing God's will, meant that all must be regarded as potentially having some light to offer (Dandelion, 1999), which served to encourage the idea that any and all beliefs are equally valid and acceptable. The weight that Quakers give to experience, rather than belief, has led to the essentializing of experience and consequently to the development of a 'behavioural creed' (Dandelion, 1996) in order to protect the form in which such an experience can take place. Liberal Quakerism has set its boundaries through the correct observance of the ways in which the group 'does' its religion, rather than by a shared liminal rite of passage. The behavioural creed has allowed Friends to be very permissive about belief, but, as diversity of belief proliferates, acceptance of the behavioural creed with its distinctive Quaker forms is being eroded, both in the regular Sunday Meetings for Worship and in the Meetings for Worship for Church Affairs (Field Notes). The increasing 'sogginess' of this boundary is a source of conflict and the most outward visible sign of competing heterotopic paradigms emerging within modern Quakerism.

Transition and Identity

Present-day Friends speak of being 'seekers' and see themselves on a pilgrimage towards a more spiritual, meaningful, integrated and life-revivifying existence where they can freely express all that they are. They could also be described as attempting to escape the routines of everyday life which they find oppressive, soulless and ethically and morally unsatisfying (Cohen *et al.*, 1987; Cohen and Taylor, 1992). Both pilgrimage and escape attempts are transitional processes, occurring in a space in which a new identity can be constructed. The spaces best suited to this transitional process are marginal, although they will always have a social centrality for those inhabiting them. They are likely also to be spaces of occasion where the re-forming identity can be rehearsed (Shields, 1991; 1992; Hetherington, 1998).

The Quaker meeting for worship has become such a space, an occasion which allows identity performance through the expression of the values and principles of the group: what Friends term 'ministry'. The meeting for worship is the primary space where Friends come to recognize and know one another, where they develop a sense of belonging and community (Turner, 1969). The acceptance into membership of Friends who bring with them the mores and ethos of a culture

committed to the personal, rather than a corporately shared spiritual path (Heelas, 1996), is having a profound effect, not only on the understanding of what it is to be a Quaker, but on the way in which identity and belonging are experienced and learned. The diminution of corporate authority has meant that identity performance no longer has to be expressed in terms of Quaker theology, and this, combined with uncertainty about what Quakerism is or should be, has created an unbounded space which may be colonized by anyone espousing an alternate ordering. As a consequence this is an ideal utopic site, enabling the development of an expressive identity while simultaneously developing ideas about how to create a better world, the practical progressing of which 'fits' with Quaker ideology and the modern Quaker vision quest. Nevertheless, as the Religious Society of Friends is steadily penetrated by those seeking a place to express their personal spirituality rather than follow a religion, sustaining unity and a shared identity is becoming increasingly problematic.

The Twenty-first Century

Present-day Friends in Britain fall, broadly speaking, into three groups: the Exclusivists, the Inclusivists and the Syncretists (Figure 5). All consider themselves 'true' Quakers, though not necessarily each other as such.

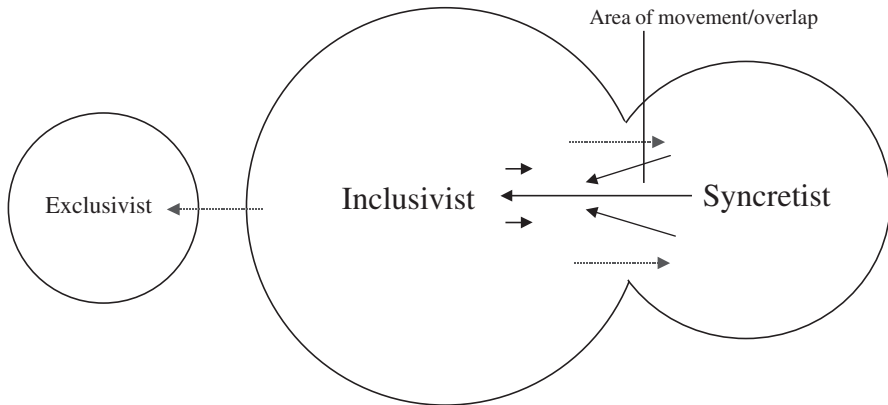


Figure 5 The heterotopic impulse within present-day liberal Quakerism

The Exclusivists are a discrete, but extremely small, group, who can no longer tolerate the lack of an explicit Christian religious enterprise in the mainstream of Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM). The most observable example of this group is Friends in Christ (FiC). They are a separate Yearly Meeting from BYM, having seceded in 1993 because they consider BYM irremediably 'out of the Light' (*The*

Call, 1996, no.1). They are deeply disturbed by what they perceive as the apostasy of many and the disappearance of an explicitly Christian 'ministry' in the meeting for worship, rooted in an understanding that God's call and guidance can be given to all through any one of those present. They are emphatically Christocentric, seeking a return to 'primitive Christianity' and a Quaker theology emphasizing the Christ within, 'gospel order' and meetings for worship which are not timed or constrained to one hour. Their utopian vision quest is religiously inspired and they seek to make visible their heterotopic stance by the use of 'plain' speech (the use of 'thee' and 'thou') and 'plain' dress (*The Call*, 2000, no.1). FiC have no doubts that there is 'one true church'. The continual questioning of the concept of the 'one true church' by those within BYM, and their conviction that the only certainty is being absolutely *uncertain* (what Dandelion, 1999, has termed the 'absolute perhaps') have no warrant within FiC. They have reconstituted clear boundaries and offer a very specific identity. There is some 'crossover' with members of the larger mainstream Yearly Meeting who are concerned about the loss of explicit Christianity within BYM, but FiC are too certain and their clearly defined faith position is too 'exclusive' to attract a widespread following amongst most present-day Quakers.

The Inclusivists, the bulk of Britain Yearly Meeting, consist of those who hold to the mainstream traditions and adhere to the behavioural creed which permits enormous flexibility of belief, but constrains the performance of Quaker identity. They are still corporatist in their outlook and very often their 'quakerism' is a given, a way of life which they take for granted and cannot imagine being without. They are loosely Christian, though Jesus may not be considered divine, his value lying more in his teachings and example than in his divinity. The concept of his atoning sacrifice is unlikely to be accepted or acceptable (Field Notes). They believe in God and the possibility of discernment, and over the last five years or so there has been an upsurge of interest in learning about practices of discernment, both for individuals and for Meetings as a whole.¹² Members of this group may express understanding of and sympathy with the Syncretists' pluralism, but continue to value the discipline and authority of the corporate body over and above the individualized privatized spirituality of the Syncretists.

Inclusivists place great value on the behavioural creed's ability to provide structure and order to their meetings for worship without unduly constraining the individual's 'ministry'. However, with increasing numbers of people coming to Quakerism because of its perceived lack of boundaries ('You don't have to believe anything' – Field Notes) and its provision of a space in which to rehearse their personal spirituality, the behavioural creed is coming under considerable pressure. To date the Inclusivists have been willing to tolerate with goodwill those who are seeking to discover their own spirituality. But this goodwill is seeping away as the voices of those more recent members who wish to incorporate other traditions into Friends' practice gain in volume and influence, and there is some evidence that Inclusivists are concerned that a willingness to be 'open to new Light from whatever source it may come' (*QF&P*, 1995, 1.02.7) is being misconstrued to mean 'anything goes' (Field Notes).

Inclusivists tend to regard themselves (albeit unconsciously) as a 'moral elect' and do not view the adoption of Quaker values by society at large with

disapprobation, since they see themselves as leading the way. Their heterotopic stance rests on continuing to live at the radical edge, but not so far out of mainstream society that they lose their influence and voice.

The Syncretists are much more amorphous, and appear to be concerned about their personal spiritual quest, rather than corporate theological certainties. Many of them have a sense of disconnection from traditional sources of meaning and are sceptical about fixed systems of belief which obscure more than they reveal. They seek and value comfort, healing and hope, wherever it might be found and often pursue non-Quaker religious and quasi-religious activities, as well as attending the Quaker meeting for worship (Field Notes). There is some overlap between Inclusivists and Syncretists, but whilst Inclusivists may have a syncretic approach to belief, they are not *essentially* syncretist because of their adherence to the behavioural creed which acts as a fixed boundary. Syncretists view boundaries as at best an obstruction, at worst a barrier. They place great emphasis on freedom, authenticity, the recovery of rejected knowledge and a synthesis of spiritualities. One such Friend describes herself as a Taoist Quaker with Pagan leanings (Field Notes). They include those who are drawn by a lifestyle but not a religion – who will, in fact, often explicitly reject religion; those who are interested in *religion* but *not* in a belief system; and those who have a religion of some kind, but who seem to need to appropriate a belief system with which they have some familiarity.¹³ They wish to locate themselves in a group providing a powerful sense of social solidarity, within which it is acceptable to construct a highly personalized spiritual belief system.

They are attracted by Friends' heterotopic stance and the utopic space it offers, rather than an explicit religious enterprise. It provides a space in which differing ideas, alternative forms of expression, alternate ordering and emerging theological concepts can be expressed without hindrance. It allows transgressive voices a considerable audience, and it is this, together with a recognition of one another's spiritual explorations, that provides unity amongst Syncretists. Their identity as a Quaker is but one among many, and signifies an alternate ordering rather than a particular religious belief. They push at the limits of what is acceptable within the mainstream, seeing traditional Quakerism as anachronistic and acting as a brake on developing a newly distinctive alternate ordering and otherness. The heterotopic stance sought by this group is not so much to do with an alternate ordering as with alternate *orderings*, and it reflects the spiritual marketplace attitude of the wider society.

Conclusion

The organizational structure of the Religious Society of Friends arose out of a need to contain the anarchic, individualized expression of God's call to action. It also addressed the issue of social and power relations within the group, as major disputes between various segments of the Quaker movement brought it perilously close to disintegration (Gwyn, 1995). The regularizing of what constituted Quaker 'otherness' and alternate ordering served to consolidate the movement and ensured its survival. But on exploring the historical sweep of Quakerism, it is apparent that

the alternate ordering highlighting the 'otherness' of Friends has constantly shifted, depending on which group dominated social and power relations. The periods of greatest contention have arisen when their visible alternate ordering is becoming submerged, and their sense of being 'other' increasingly hard to maintain, a state of affairs which prevails as the Religious Society of Friends enters the twenty-first century.

The materialism and pluralism of the late twentieth century has resulted in a religious 'supermarket society' and in the West it is acceptable to 'pick and choose', to have multiple identities, lifestyles and beliefs, even when these are logically opposed to one another (Punshon, 1990, p.23; Ritzer, 1983). Present-day Quakerism appears to encourage this attitude amongst its adherents, as evidenced by a public Meeting House notice:

Quakers are people of differing beliefs, lifestyles and social backgrounds. What we have in common is an acceptance that all people are on a spiritual journey. We hope we are indeed a real society of Friends, open to the world and welcoming everyone. (Field Notes)

Such a statement encourages those who are in the process of exploring or developing a personal spirituality to join Friends. The absence of a creed or dogma implies that you can believe anything, or nothing, and a lack of clear authority or control organizationally, appeals to those I have termed Syncretists. Present-day Quakerism appears to offer an ideal utopic space where inchoate ideas can be played with and practised, and where the re-formation of identity can be undertaken. In many respects it does afford more space, but only within certain parameters, those parameters being set by the behavioural creed. The challenges to the behavioural creed are as much to do with the nature of the heterotopic space constituted within Quakerism as with a challenge to an unformalized authority. Syncretists can feel frustrated and thwarted by this invisible code and seek to challenge it since it represents a block to their individually developing spirituality and identity.

At the same time that Friends' alternate ordering is being internally challenged, their external Otherness is also being lost. The utopian vision quest of Quakerism with regard to peace, justice and social equality has become mainstream within the wider society.¹⁴ Likewise the testimony to simple living has become conflated with environmental issues. The success of organic farming and produce and the government and local authority provisions for recycling are indicative of its acceptance in the wider society. Friends' 'otherness' and alternate ordering are no longer singular or even particularly obvious, their reputation in this respect resting largely on the past. Their sense of having a distinctive and unique role to play in 'the world' is, once again, more to do with feeling morally elect, than with a heterotopic stance. Given the plurality of the present culture, it is unlikely that Quakers will ever again be significantly externally distinctive. How, then, will they sustain their sense of identity?

If a heterotopia is about offering a utopic space, a place where alternatives can be played with and practised, then Quakers still have one. But what of their overarching sense of being Other, and offering an alternate ordering to 'the world'? I would argue that, over the twentieth century, Quaker Otherness has become internalized

and individualized, and British Friends' energies are now directed towards negotiating the playing out of their heterotopic stance within their own organization, rather than in the world at large. The shifting power relations open up the possibility of serious splits and indeed one small fragment has already ricocheted off. But if the dominant locus of identity for Quakers is their heterotopic stance, they may well prefer to maintain their present meta-heteratopia, whereby they present a unified appearance over and against 'the world', even as they continue to seek their own unique individual spiritualities and identities.¹⁵

Epilogue

The undertaking of any research is bound to have an affect on the researcher, and Hammersley and Atkinson point out that researchers 'rarely leave [the field] unaffected by the experience of research' (1993, p.120). For an ethnographic researcher, whose work consists of interacting with, listening to, observing and attempting to understand other human beings as they go about their lives, the impact is considerable. Engaging with any enquiry for a substantial length of time will open up areas of knowledge previously hidden or unavailable, and this in itself brings about a reconsideration of perspective and understanding. Amanda Coffey (1999, pp.7–8) states that 'The ethnographic research process ... helps to shape, challenge, reproduce, maintain, reconstruct and represent our selves and the selves of others.' As an insider researcher (that is, as a researcher studying her own group) I have certainly found this to be true.

Being an insider eliminates difficulties around access and acceptability, and makes for a smoother path in embarking on the research (Dandelion, 1996; McCutcheon, 1999). It does not, however, obviate the ethical questions concerning covert or overt investigation.¹⁶ It was my intention, and my desire, to be overt about my research, and indeed where individual respondents were concerned this was the case. But I had not taken account of the fact that being an insider gave me access to far more data than an outsider¹⁷ (even one who has been 'allowed in') as a consequence of holding various roles within the Religious Society of Friends. I found myself inadvertently collecting data covertly, and having to make decisions about what could acceptably be used as data and what could not. I occupied a kind of no-woman's-land between overt and covert data collection, the consequences of which will no doubt become apparent once my study is deposited in the public arena. The experiences of previous Quaker insider researchers (Nesbitt, 1999) does not lead me to be sanguine.

As an insider, both to the context and to the group,¹⁸ it was easy for me to conduct my interviews in a relaxed, unstructured, open-ended style. They were not recognizably 'interviews', but more in the nature of conversations, which allowed my respondents to range widely in their thinking. It was as a result of this that I found the focus of my research shifting, and my own sense of identity as a Quaker being challenged. I was frequently startled, not only by what I was hearing, but by who was saying it. I ran head-on into my unconscious expectations and assumptions, which was personally, as well as academically, painful. I was of course aware of the diversity among Friends, but had not realized the complexities of that,

or the extent to which various theologies had been mixed, resulting in what I personally thought of as 'muddled' theology.

It was academically painful because I believed I had taken full cognizance of the need to maintain a proper distance from the research, and fully prepared myself for the 'outsider' role. I had not expected to find it so difficult. It was personally painful because I was forced to reflect on whether I wished to be part of a religious group that had so slight an acquaintance with its own distinctive theology, or indeed *any* coherent theology. Could I even continue to see the group as religious in any way that had meaning for me at all? As I struggled to achieve the necessary distance from my identity as a Quaker so as to undertake a good academic sociological study, I was simultaneously struggling with what that Quaker identity meant to me, and what my life would feel like, be like, without it.

The experience also raised questions as to how I should present myself to respondents as yet unmet. Would my confusion and distress be apparent despite my best efforts? To what extent would my disenchantment colour my interaction with them? It would be naïve of me to believe that all the above did not, however slightly, affect my interviews, and listening to the tapes as I transcribed them I could detect subtle differences, but not, I think, significantly so. I should like to say that, despite the upheaval my own Quaker identity was subject to as a result of my research, each and every one of the meetings with my respondents was a wonderful experience. I felt honoured and humbled by their willingness to share their life stories, their deepest thoughts and feelings with me, so openly.

My ambivalence about Quakerism also led me to feel uncomfortable about the roles I inhabited in my Quaker life. Some of these were central to the organization: an organization I was not sure I felt I belonged to, or even wanted to belong to. Furthermore, Quaker business is conducted as a worship event, yet I was now questioning what that 'worship' really represented. In fact, I found myself in a curiously paradoxical situation. My head observed with some wryness my participation, but my heart entered fully into the event with all its erstwhile passion and conviction. This was a context in which it was not necessary for me to keep my state of mind hidden, and I had some useful discussions which decided me to continue in the roles I had been appointed to, at least until I could come to some firmer conclusions.

Which brings me to where I am now. I still find a lack at the heart of present-day Quakerism in terms of a spiritual rigour and discipline. My research has brought me to recognize my personal requirement in this respect. My difficulty lies in the fact that, like most Quakers, I find the notion of an external human authority unacceptable, which leaves me with very few, if any, alternatives. So, despite the lack of a shared religious enterprise and the nebulousness of present-day Quakerism which I find profoundly unsatisfactory, I continue to identify myself as a Friend.

However, there is no doubt that the challenges the research process has made to the construction and reproduction of my Quaker identity and its ability to give meaning and shape to my life, to my sense of self and to my relationship with others are still being played out. As Amanda Coffey warns, 'Ethnographers should be aware of how fieldwork research and textual practice construct, reproduce and implicate selves, relationships and personal identities' and points out that this 'construction and production of self and identity occurs both during *and after*

fieldwork' (Coffey 1999, p.1, emphasis added). This is a warning that 'insider' researchers, in particular, would do well to take due note of.

Notes

¹ *Quaker Faith and Practice* is a book published by Britain Yearly Meeting to guide Friends in procedural matters and to reflect the spiritual experience of Friends through the generations. It is more generally referred to as *QF&P*, as hereafter.

² I am using the term 'mysticism' in this context, to refer to those experiences which individuals interpret as being 'from God' in some way.

³ Britain Yearly Meeting is the shorthand name given to the organization of Quakers in Britain and to the annual meeting of Friends within that constituency (hereafter BYM).

⁴ Quakers who have considerable experience, knowledge and understanding of Quakerism may be regarded as 'seasoned'.

⁵ Although Hetherington points out that it has largely been applied to ideas about *postmodernity* and been used in a variety of ways (Connor, 1989; Soja, 1990, 1996; Delaney, 1992; Bennet, 1995; Gennocchio, 1995).

⁶ George Fox was one of several leaders of the emerging Quaker movement, but he is the best known today, and as such is representative of all Quakers of that time for the purposes of this chapter.

⁷ Foucault refers to two principal modes of ordering: resemblance and similitude. Similitude is an ordering that takes place through a juxtaposition of signs that culturally are seen as not going together, either because their relationship is new, or because it is unexpected (as in Borges' use of a Chinese encyclopaedia); what is being signified cannot easily be attached to a referent. In contrast, ordering represented by what is being signified refers to a known referent.

⁸ A term used to indicate recognized leaders among Friends.

⁹ In my fieldwork I have come across people who regard themselves as Quakers, even though they have not attended a Meeting for Worship for 15–20 years. Data presented here drawn from my fieldwork is labelled as 'Field Notes'.

¹⁰ Heron (1997) points out that Attenders (those who come regularly to Meeting for Worship but who are not in membership of the Religious Society of Friends), once they are accepted into membership, often attend less frequently.

¹¹ Examples abound in the letters pages of *The Friend*. See, for example, 26 May, 2000, p.16, 'All Inclusive'.

¹² Note the frequent requests and the long waiting lists for courses on discernment run by Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre (although these are attended by only 5 per cent of the Yearly Meeting).

¹³ Current fieldwork currently substantiates this.

¹⁴ Thus Nato troops are now referred to as 'peace keepers', though this may be in the process of changing owing to the actions being taken post 11 September 2001. The anti-capitalist movement and Jubilee 2000 are other examples.

¹⁵ For a more detailed exposition, see Pilgrim (2003).

¹⁶ Overt, meaning that the research is known about and sanctioned by the group; covert, meaning that it is not.

¹⁷ A useful discussion on the issues of insider research for Quakers can be found in Dandelion (1996, pp.36–44).

¹⁸ See Dandelion (1996, p.38) for a typology of insider research.

Conclusion:

the Nature of Quaker Studies

This conclusion reflects on the material above and considers the personal motivations and approaches of the authors towards their topics and their findings. It goes on to look at the nature of the Quaker study of Quakerism and how insider research affects the researchers and the relationship between the findings and the Quaker group itself. Finally, it looks again at the idea of 'truth' within this academic field.

Research: Subject and Self

This book offers readers for the first time an opportunity to compare theories of Quakerism one with another within the same volume. It also offers insights into the personal motivations of the researchers for the topics they picked, and the personal predisposition they had to what they found. Authors were also asked to reflect on the nature of insider research within their discipline, which they have done to varying degrees.

On the face of it, it looks as if each of the researchers has come up with findings which match her or his own theological preference. The explicitly ecumenical predisposition of Hugh Barbour, John Punshon, Thomas Hamm and Martin Davie locates Quakerism within forms of protestant orthodoxy. This allows Hugh Barbour to draw attention to the Puritan heritage of Quakerism, John Punshon (elsewhere, Punshon, 2001) to affirm the pastoral tradition of Quakerism, Thomas Hamm to critique Holiness Friends or other 'extremes' of Quakerism, and Martin Davie to critique Liberal Friends who have strayed too far from Christian orthodoxy. Their starting points and theological preferences are different but I want to suggest that they all move within an orbit of an ecumenical sensibility.

Only Glen Reynolds claims to dislike what he finds out about Fox. Michele Tarter's academic work makes personal connections for her, whilst Carole Spencer's work affirms the holiness aspect which originally attracted her to Quakerism. It is as if the research findings of these Quakers (or some-time attender, in Richard Bailey's case) become a pivot point or a series of points along their spiritual journeys. Only two of the scholars in this book were brought up as Friends (Hamm and Gwyn) and even these Friends have moved in some part away from the tradition of their upbringing. Rosemary Moore ends her history with the end of the specifically eschatological period of Quaker history, and Doug Gwyn's sense of the apocalyptic in the 1960s and in the decades since underpins his call to ministry and then to research, his findings and the message coming out of his work. Gay Pilgrim's work is motivated by a dis-ease with her present-day Quaker context, a situation she then analyses and models.

I know personally that my research findings have affected my sense of future for British Quakerism and, with it, my own sense of place within that movement. At the end of my doctorate, it looked to me as if British Quakerism did not have long to live. Later I discovered an implicit boundary which I had been unaware of before in the way in which Quakers believed (see below) and I could be more optimistic. Recently, I have forecast that, whereas British Methodism may be dead by 2030 (Bruce, 2000), British Quakerism is set to survive until 2108 (Dandelion, 2002, p.226). The move away from a personal God, and a God with a will to be obedient to, has provided me with data that I find personally unsettling. In my case, as in Glen Reynolds', I have not found what I wanted (although academically it continues to be fascinating).

This is not to criticize those whose readings of Quakerism match their theological preference. Rather, I believe it reflects the direction of passion for these scholars: they have investigated what attracts them, rather than having found what affirms them. Doug Gwyn researched the apocalyptic in Quakerism because of the times he found himself in, not because he wished to prove early Friends were living a realizing eschatology. In this way, these scholars have merely played to their strengths in their choice of topics and framing of findings.

In the same way that Quaker scholars of Quakerism may have difficulty in distancing themselves adequately from the material or seeing beyond its Quaker content (see below), Rosemary Moore, Richard Bailey and Michele Tarter question how far the profane historian can have an adequate empathy and understanding of material framed within extrarational motivations. Bailey raises the additional point about the way kinds of knowledge differ too, between the charismatic and historical, although he concedes that, when the charismatic attempts to voice their knowledge, historical meaning can be attributed to it. This applies to insiders and strangers, as does the effect of the relationship between researcher and subject. As Bailey points out, the very attempt to theorize places the theory between researcher and data. There is also the dimension of academic writing as a creative process: especially as theorists, researchers craft a story, a model, a reflection of reality, or even a means of conveying reality in symbolic or metaphorical form. The invention of new terms, of the adaptation of words from other arenas, highlights this process of the researcher's attempt to maximize understanding – all, as Bailey points out, within a frame of objectivity.

McCutcheon (1999) suggests a fourfold division of research approaches: the 'empathic', the 'explanatory', the 'agnostic' and the 'reflexive'. The 'empathic' is concerned with understanding actors' meanings, their 'experiences, behaviors, and claims' (1999, p.3). This is a stance easily adopted by insiders working with their peers, even while they will need to construct their own accounts of what they have observed. It is the basis of the phenomenological approach but is not represented here even by the sociologist Gay Pilgrim, as her kind of theoretical analysis extends beyond the limits of the empathic approach.

The 'explanatory' is concerned with explanation rather than deep understanding and looks for causes and regularities. It is the stance often taken by outsiders who believe there are limits to the understanding of another's experience, but it can be a stance consciously adopted by insiders too. Using my own differentiation between 'insider to the group' and 'insider to the context' (Dandelion, 1996, p.37), I would

argue that historians can only ever be 'insiders to the context' and that, in this sense, even these insiders are partial outsiders. Regardless of this distinction, however, with their focus on the explanation of meaning rather than an empathic understanding of it, the researchers represented here most easily fit this stance.

The 'agnostic', a term taken from the Victorian biologist Thomas H. Huxley, is a stance which in arenas devoid of empirical evidence (such as whether 'God' exists) seeks simply to describe and catalogue (McCutcheon, 1999, p.7).

The 'reflexive' removes the dichotomy between insiders and outsiders by arguing that all scholarship has an autobiographical element, that research findings say as much about their authors as their subjects. Everything is within the field or text. In a weak form, this way of thinking about the research process was assumed within the proposal for this present volume, but the reflexive approach would critique the kind of discussion here where old dualisms (outsider/insider, faith/research) still frame the discussion.

As already stated, the chapters in this volume fall within the explanatory school (although Rosemary Moore's exhaustive and seemingly non-partisan research of Quaker publications in the 1650s, and Gay Pilgrim's sociological disinterest in theology, have shades of the agnostic about them). Gwyn and Tarter in this volume are perhaps the most reflexive in that they locate their own personal odysseys alongside their research narratives (and note how Michele Tarter included autobiography in her doctoral thesis), although their published academic work is written from an explanatory position. In contrast, Peter Collins' interpretation of Quaker Meeting as a constant sharing of auto/biographical narratives of self and other melded his own reflexive approach as both an insider and an anthropologist with those of his subjects (Collins, 1996b).

Indeed all the authors operate from an 'etic' viewpoint rather than an 'emic' (Pike, 1967); that is, they study the subject as if from outside, almost as outsiders in spite of themselves. All but Tarter, Gwyn, Hamm and Davie (but this may lie with the editor's original invitation) have separated within their chapters their own motivations and lives from the findings of their research work, although all admit an interaction. None of the research here is democratic either, in the sense that its subjects can veto the findings. Partly this is an innate feature of doing history of centuries past, but it also represents a particular stance, a privileging of the attempt to be outside the data. Implicit in this stance is the belief that any outsider could carry out a similar study, that analytical categories external to the subjects' own perception of their situation are valid, and also that the explanation of religion can be communicated to those outside that context. In this sense, it is not that materialist historians such as Hill or Reay can never get close to truly understanding Quakerism, just that they sometimes miss some of the nuancing. Indeed, in spite of the hesitations voiced above, the appreciation for the work of outsiders, including materialist ones, is widespread within this volume. The debate rehearsed by this assembly of Quaker Studies scholars is over the choice of categories and the analysis of data, not over the attitude of different researchers towards the identification and treatment of data. This transparent inhabitation of now old-fashioned (modernist) dualism is, I suggest, a sign of these researchers' ability to reflect honestly on the ways in which they construct the boundaries and thus sites of interaction between the two. The style of their theorizing, the explanatory, as with

their choice of topics, plays to these researchers' own temperamental and academic preferences.

It could be argued of course that, if we give up the idea of a single truth about Quaker history, a proximity of sensibility and theory does not matter. The reader can take their pick and even mix and match theories, and future researchers can deconstruct the provisional canon further. The question of how separate and discrete these theories are is the topic I turn to next.

The Four Sides of Quaker Studies

Early in this book, John Punshon and Rosemary Moore both cast doubt on any attempt to try and pin early Quaker history down in any one way or to characterize one version of it as more truthful than another. Disciplinary differences, different starting points and a wide range of motivations lead the chapter authors to end up in very different places.

Is the academic truth of these theories akin to the liberal–Liberal model of theology as ‘story’? Liberal theology, as Martin Davie has so well charted, set its foundation on four main expressions: that experience is primary, that the faith should be relevant to the age, that Friends needed to be open to ‘new Light’ and that revelation was progressive; that is, that new revelation superseded old. While all those early Liberal Friends were clearly Christian, this set of characteristics leads to a situation where the newly invented tradition has no place it needs to be held to. There is no text, no tradition to act as an anchor and, whilst Liberal Quakerism could remain fairly static theologically, it is not surprising that it has been transformed, particularly since 1950, into a pluralistic liberal–Liberal tradition where there are many non-Christians, non-theists and Quakers of other faiths (Dandelion, 1996). Does the academic tradition represented here behave in a similar way?

In liberal–Liberal theology, silent worship is the medium of the search for experience. The experience, if obtained, validates the method, offers authority for belief in the reality of such experience, may lead to a call for action, a testing of that action and the suggestion (through Nominations Committees) and approval of names to carry out that action. However, silence also masks the theological interpretation of that experience. Ministry may or may not be theologically explicit and most experience is reflected on in the silence, in silence. I have called the shift from liberal theology to liberal–Liberal theology, or permissive or post-Christian Liberal theology, a silent revolution (*ibid.*), as it has been a shift to diversity masked by the emphasis placed on silent and thus invisible processes (see [Figure 6](#)). If ministry is not given, there is no reaction to what may include a fresh theological interpretation.

Thus silence is not only the beginning of the search for experience, it is also often the medium for its (non-)expression. Theological interpretation, theologizing, happens individually and inwardly as a universal and reasonable way of making sense of experience. This frees the individual from the fear of ostracism or the hurting of others but also places the believing individual in tension with a group which corporately wishes to say very little at all theologically. Further theological change or reflection is equally invisible. Today in liberal–Liberal yearly meetings,

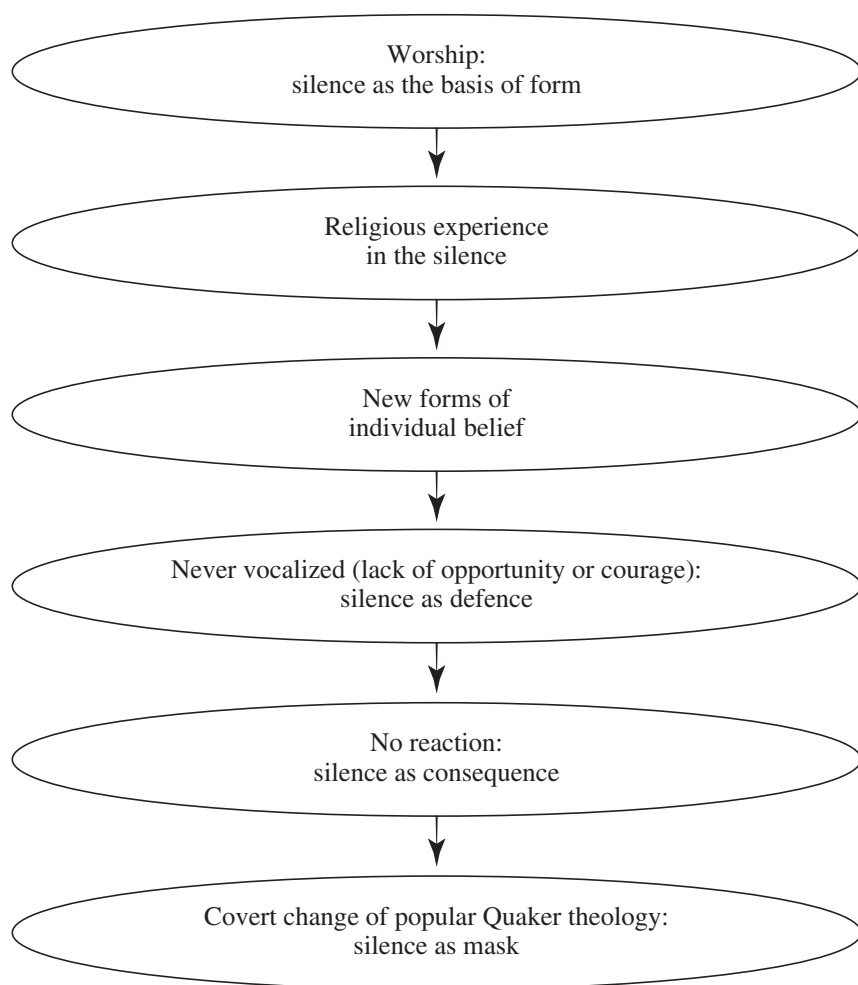


Figure 6 The culture of silence

the ‘middle ground’ can be unknown to many of the participants. In the interviews I conducted as part of my doctoral research, respondents would comment on beliefs which they felt unable to share more publicly for fear of not knowing whether they would be acceptable.

The content of belief claims is thus individualized and this fits well with this brand of Quakers’ attitude to truth. Truth, for liberal–Liberal Friends, can only be partial, provisional or personal. No body or group can lay claim to having the whole truth for all people for all time. This is a certainty about the nature of theological

believing which comes out of the rational philosophy which Liberal theology drew inspiration from, reacting to the Enlightenment project in an opposite way from Evangelical Quakerism (which claimed such rationality had no place in the discussion of faith). What is interesting about this liberal–Liberal model of ‘towards-truth’ or ‘perhapsness’ is the degree of zeal and certainty with which it is held. In a group, held together by praxis rather than belief (in a ‘double culture’ of liberal believing and conservative and conformist behaving (ibid.)), it would be obvious to forecast that praxis would only remain a secure organizational fixative as long as the theological permissiveness did not undermine the beliefs upon which the praxis is founded.

For example, when a majority of Quakers no longer believe in a God with a will, or a God at all, the traditional view that meetings for worship or church affairs sought to seek ‘the will of God’ would be wholly anachronistic. The erstwhile heretical question, ‘Why not vote?’ would then be a legitimate query. However, liberal–Liberal Quakerism is also bound together by this shared attitude to the way in which beliefs are held, the way in which truth claims can only be partial, provisional or personal. Part of the corporate culture which binds is an attitude towards theological thinking best described as one of ‘absolute perhaps’. These Quakers are absolute about their certainty that they can never be finally certain about theology which is, rather, a ‘perhaps’ kind of activity (Dandelion, 1999, 2002). Are the theorists described in this book operating a doctrine of ‘absolute perhaps’ in which their own theories sit as temporary and non-competing individual reflections?

In other words, does the insider academic enterprise of Quaker Studies mirror the diverse theological processes and outcomes of that branch of Quakerism in which most of the authors have spent time? Does each academic start from a different place, engage in her or his own personal encounter with the sources, and emerge with a different scholarly ‘ministry’? There are some direct contradictions, for example over the reading of early Friends as a Second Coming church, or the nature of deification, but, in general, it is as if different authors emphasize different aspects. Does the lack of direct engagement between these authors reflect an individualized Quaker Studies academy?

I think, having given such a long introduction to this, that the answer is actually ‘No.’ Firstly, the authors are clear that they are operating from a single shared set of data. This is not in dispute. It is not as if Gwyn or Tarter has found a particular epistle in the cellar of Swarthmoor Hall which informs their reading of the times but which others believe is a fake. In contrast to liberal–Liberal Friends, it is clear that the engagement is with the same sources. Second, all these authors are in print. Their own academic journeys are not as personal or private as the spiritual ones of liberal–Liberal Friends can be. Third, whilst there are differences and even at times contradictions between the theories, the reliance on a common set of data precludes a total denial of the whole of somebody else’s interpretation. In this sense, the theorists do not operate the internal heterotopic impulse described by Gay Pilgrim in her analysis of what is happening in British Liberal Quakerism. The bispiritality (Gwyn, 1996) of many of the authors here may be what prevents the kind of internal fragmentation she describes, given that the heterotopic is not a trajectory followed by more world-affirming branches of Quakerism. Equally important is the shared

research stance of this group. These scholars are not involved in debates about the degree to which, for example, they can apply external categories to the faith of their subjects or the degree to which they need to interweave their own personal autobiographical narratives with those of the Quakers they are studying. The shared ‘explanatory’ model, while inherited from the academy, also minimizes the possible comparison between Quaker Studies scholarship and total individualism. Indeed the ‘perhaps-absolute’ of this academic modernism acts as a similar kind of boundary as the ‘absolute perhaps’ does to the liberal–Liberal Quaker modernism. Rather, in my view, the theories sit alongside each other in definable schools, each school of theories at least touching another.

When I tried to symbolize the nature of Quaker Studies graphically, it came out as a three-sided pyramid with a floor as a fourth side (an isosceles or regular tetrahedron). Each of the four sides represents a school of theorizing. The first is what I have called the ‘mainline’ (Figure 7). This consists of the ecumenical presentations of Quakerism as one Christian group amongst many who draw their heritage from earlier spiritual insights and who happen to appear at the time of the English Civil War. I place Hugh Barbour, John Punshon, Thomas Hamm and Martin Davie in this school. These people are not sectarians or extremists. Their chapters are explicit about Quakerism’s puritan or orthodox Christian heritage. These authors are also explicit about their own present-day preference for an ecumenical Quakerism. This is an ecumenism which begins within the movement. Note Barbour’s hope that his

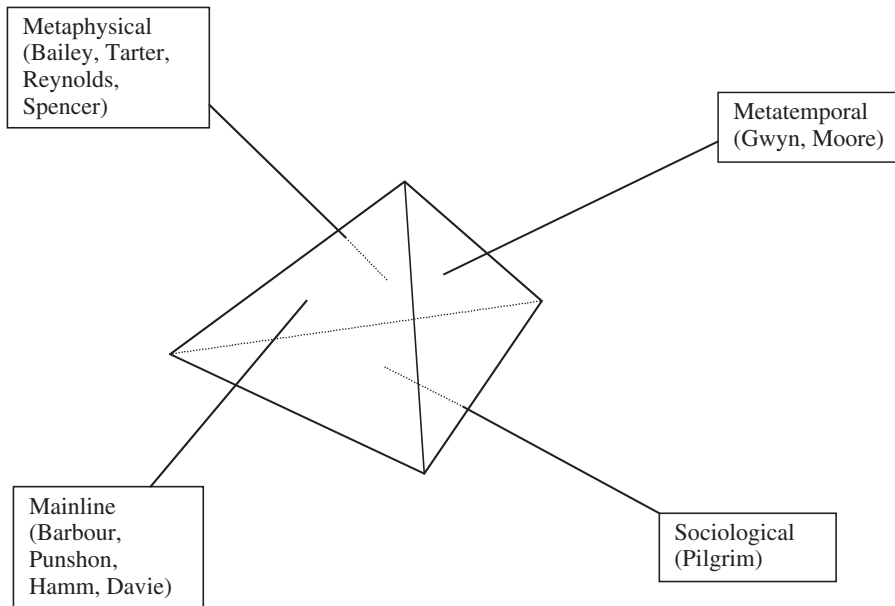


Figure 7 The tetrahedron of Quaker studies

book would open the way for discussion between Liberal and Conservative Friends (1964, p.xi) and that both Barbour and Hamm state their opposition to the Realignment proposal of 1991. It is also a Christian ecumenism and both Punshon and Davie are explicit about their belief in this. Similarly, Barbour wrote earlier of his sadness that Friends were not more involved in the World Council of Churches (1945). Whilst Hamm does not comment on the earliest days of Quakerism, his sympathies are clearly with the more worldly modernist centrist Friends (what Barbour calls the 'common core') rather than the sectarian Holiness ones (Hamm, 1988). As he says, he has a 'distaste for extremes'. Rufus Jones is in this school in temperament, given that part of his agenda, later successfully realized, was to heal some of the breaches between different Quaker traditions.

The second school is what I call the 'metaphysical'. Pioneered by the work of Richard Bailey and then Michele Tarter, it also includes Glen Reynolds and Carole Spencer. Bailey, Tarter and Reynolds all emphasize the aspect of union, either physically or metaphysically, between God and humanity. This is central to each of their pieces. Carole Spencer, a church historian, has a contrasting emphasis on the holiness or life of perfection subsequent to the mystical experience, but it is still about deification. Whereas Bailey states in his chapter here that 'it is not possible to situate Fox within the pale of seventeenth-century orthodoxy', Spencer claims that Quaker Holiness was clearly within the orbit of classical mysticism and reformation orthodoxy. Spencer also emphasizes eschatology, as does Reynolds, more than Bailey or Tarter. However, unlike Gwyn, Spencer does not place that at the heart of her thesis. Indeed, she sees a variety of eschatological models coming out of the writings of early Friends whom she understands as essentially orthodox protestants even suggesting the first Friends expected an outward Second Coming. Additionally, she takes the writings of Fox and Barclay to be similar and plays down the 'beyond falling' (Nickalls, 1952, p.27) claim of Fox. For her, perfection is Barclayan, never fully realized. In this she is close to Reynolds, whose gnostic emphasis places full eschatological completion after death or at least beyond the material plane. For all the authors, the mysticism of Jones' interpretation is only a taken-for-granted starting point (though Spencer, after Endy, 1981, disagrees with Jones' analysis of mysticism). (See the commentary to [Part III](#), above.)

Doug Gwyn does not say very much at all about the doctrine of perfection. As he describes in his chapter, his concern has been with the Second Coming nature of the first Friends, different lenses with which to understand that experience and expression, and further theories to explain how subsequent generations of Friends have reacted to that founding charism. His work is embedded within a faith perspective, unlike more materialist historians of the early period, and his reflections on the seventeenth century mirror his sense of the present times. Gwyn and Moore are alone in this book in emphasizing unfolding eschatological realization, or 'realizing eschatology', as central to a reading of Quaker history across time. Their 'metatemporal' interpretation forms its own third side of the pyramid shape I have in mind. Only in his emphasis on the phrase 'Christ is come to teach his people himself' does Lewis Benson possibly enter onto this face of the tetrahedron.

The floor of the pyramid is Gay Pilgrim's sociological perspective. As a sociologist, she observes the theological divergences of the other kinds of theory in

this book at a distance. Her theory of heterotopia does not rely on any one of the other scholars being correct. Rather, Pilgrim is interested in the sociological impulses of the group, regardless of their theology. All distinct social groups operate some form or other of herotopic impulse. What she adds is an analysis of what happens when that becomes the prime instinct of a group, regardless of its theology. Using as an example liberal–Liberal Friends, whose patterns of belief are very diverse, brings home that very point. In her analysis, the impulse to be different has taken over from the impulse towards a particular theological stance. In this sense, her theory sits beyond (or underneath looking up at, in the pyramid analogy) the theological divergence, giving an account of what is going on, theology aside.

In this way, the four schools sit alongside each other. They share the same data, the same research stance, and they also share the same concerns, (a) to be as academically rigorous as possible, (b) to feed their insights into the life of the various yearly meetings they are drawn from. Each of these scholars cares about the Quakerism they are studying. Finally, these scholars care about each other. Most of them know each other, hardly surprising in the small world of Quaker Studies, across their yearly meeting boundaries and across academic disciplines. And the shared concerns are explicitly recognized by those within this group. They are not operating a liberal–Liberal model of postmodern academe, but they are all, I suggest, somewhere on the pyramid of Quaker Studies.

Quaker Studies and Quaker Scholars

I have noted elsewhere (Dandelion, 1996, [ch.2](#)) that most Quaker Studies are carried out by insiders. I speculated that twentieth-century Quakerism is not sensational enough to attract the attentions of sociologists who have in recent years been able to focus their attention on the likes of Scientologists (Wallis, 1976) or Moonies (Barker, 1984). Equally, many may believe that Quakerism has died out. Thirdly, the limited access afforded the pure researcher may hinder their efforts. Caroline Plüss only gained access to London Yearly Meeting in session when she began to feel an affinity with the group of Friends she lived near to, and could secure a letter of support from a local Elder to participate in Yearly Meeting as an ‘attender’. To gain full access, a researcher may need to be an insider, or to lie.

The preponderance of Quaker Studies scholars who are Quakers has advantages and disadvantages. Access aside, the insider starts from a privileged position of understanding the language and culture of the group she or he is researching. They may be trusted more by their respondents because of this or because of the ability to assimilate into new Quaker settings more easily. Private collections of historical papers may be handed over more readily to an obvious insider. Interviewees may be more willing to talk freely, confident that they will not be misunderstood so much. The research agenda of the insider scholar may more closely match the personal interests of the Quaker subjects. Conversely, as Nesbitt suggests (1999, pp.90–95), Quaker sensibilities may match the needs of reflexive and critical research quite closely. Collins also makes the point that the insider/outsider dichotomy is an unhelpful one and that both ethnography and Quakerism have to negotiate blurred edges in their construction of distinct arenas and modes (2002, p.92). Practically,

one problem of insiderness in sociological studies is that of participants seeing the Quaker researcher only as a Quaker and thus, by default, turning the research process into a covert one. Pilgrim mentions this.

The disadvantages are of premature saturation and of over-familiarity, leading to oversight (Dandelion, 1996, p.43). A Quaker agenda is not a researcher's agenda, particularly in sociology, and I remember very clearly being told over and over again by my supervisors that I sounded 'too much like a Quaker'. There is also the problem of feeling too passionately about the outcomes of the research. Bailey quotes Goertz's caution about the danger of theologizing or abstracting history so that it fits the researcher's conception of religious history (Goertz, 1979, p.189), a point argued forcefully by Larry Ingle (1991). Bailey quotes Haskell in suggesting that objectivity involves preparing to 'assimilate bad news' (Haskell, 1998, p.301) and Gay Pilgrim's account includes her struggle with her personal judgment of some of the data respondents offered her. However, most conclude that the insider role is valid and/or find it compelling, and only Glen Reynolds suggests that an outsider might have emerged with a different reading of the data.

Nesbitt concludes from her study of Quaker ethnographers (1999) that their faith was affected by their research, as well as the other way round. This may be a positive engagement or it may not. One risk for the Quaker scholar of Quakerism is the degree to which they so deconstruct their religious group that it becomes too transparent for taste. I remember being asked at my PhD viva whether I could ever be a Quaker again, and Pilgrim asks the same question of herself. This deconstruction process also leads to dual activity as participant observer. Gay Pilgrim and Rosemary Moore both talk of being both within the group activity and on the outside of it observing the group. Teaching new researchers who are also Quakers can easily bring on an outbreak of double-identity. One way through is Michele Tarter's avowal not to quench the 'I' and to try and synthesize academic work and relevant personal narrative. For her, the downside of discovering such widespread censorship in the 1670s was offset by the discovery of the excluded material. Doug Gwyn's chapter also conveys a clear and positive sense of integrating faith and research.

The non-Quaker Quaker Studies scholar, especially the theorist, may find it easier to sustain credibility in an academic world still wary of explicit insider status. She or he can claim to have a greater critical distance in the attempt to explain and predict the group under study. However, Quaker writers here claim work by outsiders can lack insider perspective (or does it just not fit an insider agenda? See Arweck and Stringer, 2002, pp.1–17). It is not easy for outsiders to enter a sectarian religious and academic world filled with insiders who already know each other from both Quaker and academic contacts.

At the same time, within the majority of Quaker Studies scholars who are Quakers, the study of the present day is a minority activity. If Reynolds' conclusions about Fox were unsettling, at least his present-day Quaker life need not be overly affected. Those Friends who study the current situation face the problem of discovering something highly disruptive to their regular Quaker lives. My sense is that the historical is as disproportionately popular as it is because it offers an emotionally safer pursuit, where findings can be displaced by time. The censorship that Michele Tarter uncovered can be contextualized rather than taken as innately

Quaker, whilst her discovery of an embodied Quakerism can also affirm her present-day religious experience. In this way the seventeenth century is also popular because of the desire to find an essentialist view of Quakerism which can be used to judge and correct or affirm later reinventions. Each branch of Quakerism, for whom the label 'Quaker' or 'Friend' is still important, actively finds its beliefs and practices affirmed by part of the early Quaker tradition.

Quaker Scholars and Quakerism

In this way, scholars are useful to believers. Robert Barclay of Reigate's work affirmed the choices evangelical Friends were making in the late nineteenth century. Similarly, Elwood Siler, writing in 1887, would use a view of early Friends to argue that Quaker pastors were merely a continuation of the tradition started by the 'Valiant Sixty' (1887).

What is interesting is that Quakerism feeds off the work of these scholars to varying degrees. The 'mainline' historical school with its less theologically challenging approach (Martin Davie in the Liberal context aside) is the most well known and the most popular. It is the most accessible and is also the most affirming of the broad centre of worldwide Quakerism. The theories espoused by Hugh Barbour, John Punshon, Thomas Hamm and Martin Davie place Quakerism in a wider context, in the world, where the diversity of individual Quakers' religious past is also validated as part of an ecumenical journey. It requires and calls for denominational stability and theological common ground.

The metaphysical school of Richard Bailey, Michele Tarter, Glen Reynolds and Carole Spencer is the least known amongst the Quaker constituency. This body of work is the most recent and the least published. The findings of these scholars call for a revision of the view of the heart of early Quakerism and of the view of Fox and other early Quaker leaders. Tarter's work challenges the patriarchy of Quakerism and Quaker historiography, and calls for an uncovering of the lost tradition of an embodied spirituality. Carole Spencer's work calls for a redrawing of the tree of Quakerism, a fresh understanding of what Quakerism is traditionally about, a re-reading of Hamm's account of the Holiness revival, and a new perspective from the unprogrammed tradition towards outward forms and Holiness. These are challenging theories. However, each of these authors will find allies on the Quaker benches of the present day. Holiness Friends will enjoy Carole's rewriting of Quaker history and, within the Liberal tradition, there will be other Friends eager to hear the work of Tarter, Bailey and Reynolds, people for whom connections will be made, as happened for Michele Tarter.

Doug Gwyn's work is the only theory which no group of Friends currently needs in order to validate its practice or theology. In spite of the popular expression of Gwyn's views in *Heaven on Earth: Quakers and the second coming* (Dandelion *et al.*, 1998), most Liberal Friends no longer talk of eschatology or the Second Coming. Those evangelical Friends for whom the Second Coming is a significant aspect of their theology may have adopted pre- or post-millennialism from mainstream protestantism (Punshon, 2001) or be looking for an outward Second Coming rather than the inward one Gwyn claims Fox found to be fulfilling the book of Jeremiah

(31:31–4). Gwyn's own story of permanent itinerance is a story of a vocation of living in the margins, or on the borders. This fits well with his retelling of the apocalyptic prophecy of a minority calling out to the confused times of the 1650s. Gwyn draws a picture of similar times in the 1960s, when he receives his call, and of the present day as he in turn preaches his scholarship to a conflicted Quakerism involved in its own internal culture wars. Again, his work is challenging for Friends.

Rosemary Moore, while agreeing with Gwyn on his interpretation of the framework of early Quaker history, emphasizes a detailed history of Friends more than Gwyn does. In this, her work is read more widely, regardless of the theological persuasion of her readers.

Gay Pilgrim's work is of interest to all those concerned about the future of Liberal Quakerism. It appears, as sociology often does, as common sense. Like my own description of the Quaker 'double-culture' or 'the silent revolution' (Dandelion, 1996) or the 'absolute perhaps' (Dandelion, 1999), the concepts are taken up by Friends seeking to understand the metatheological processes which the group undergoes in the spaces where spirituality is not dominant. It is as if, if you take the theology away, you are left with sociological explanations. Without worship, meetings for worship for church affairs do indeed become, in the words of one of my PhD supervisors, 'vote-less decision-making bodies with a minority veto'. I expect 'heterotopic impulse' to become a common concept amongst the concerned of at least Britain Yearly Meeting.

At least it will do so temporarily. Echoing Kuhn's theory of scientific revolutions (1970), Bailey points out that all our theorizing will be subject to paradigmatic shifts of understanding. Indeed, we can see this in the move from the Jones interpretation to that of the 'Puritan School' and between that paradigm of the 1950s and 1960s and the more complex pattern of schools of belief presented in this volume. As Moore says at the end of her chapter, 'And in the next generation, starting from a different outlook, the work will doubtless have to be done all over again from the beginning.'

Truth

So what of Truth? Larry Ingle has described some aspects of the quest I originally had in mind as the folly of the search for the Quaker Holy Grail (1991). Perhaps it is, except that, given my sectarian and modernist temperament, I am still confident that progress has been and can be made in the direction of greater certainty and accuracy. McCutcheon states that theory has an *a priori* possibility of being disproved as it chooses to try to understand, not just the meanings of actions/beliefs, but the reasons for such actions. Consequently, its inductive logic can never reach unquestioned status (1999, p.6). With Karl Popper's theory of falsifiability in mind, it reminds me of the time I announced to a group of Liberal Quakers that the one belief I had found to be universal amongst British Friends was the idea of 'that of God in everyone'. Immediately, my statement being equivalent to 'all swans are white', Popper's black swan stood up at the back and said, 'I don't believe in that.'

However, each paradigm shift is positive in my view. In the meantime, I believe that, by putting these theories side by side, we can learn two things. First, we can

see exactly where they differ and thus note the location of distinction between readings of Quakerism (and where future work might usefully be focused). We can then understand the location of similarity between theories. Second, we can see, as I hope I have shown above, the way in which these theories are not all facing in separate or mutually exclusive directions. Rather, they are part of a single and united project to discover earnestly, sincerely and passionately, more about the Quaker past so that it can feed into the Quaker present as well as the academy. There are no total cynics here and no one for whom the work of any other is wholly wrong. Rather, we have the luxury of a variety of approaches and viewpoints from which to try to construct the most accurate description(s) of Quaker history, motivation and understanding. For those who teach Quaker history, this is a task they are continually involved in. As Quakers feed off the insights of scholars to understand better the root of their spirituality, so the teachers of Quaker history are continually grateful for the fresh research findings of a new generation of postgraduates and researchers. It is thus a time rich in possibility, as the discussion within this book reflects, and as the very healthy state of postgraduate Quaker Studies promises to sustain. As John Punshon concluded, 'We have by no means reached the end of Quaker history.'

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