

Compelling Reading:
The Circulation of Quaker Texts, 1650-1700

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I, Brooke Sylvia Palmieri, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Abstract

This is a work about the publications and archival habits of a radical minority. The Quakers organised themselves around reading, writing, archiving, and publication— activities in which every member was expected to participate. The paradox of these activities is that while they focused upon individual spiritual development, they were dependent upon and tested by intensely collaborative authorship and communal reading. Reading amongst Friends was an element of their spiritual identity, and also a direct inheritance of changes in information production and circulation triggered during the Civil Wars of the 1640s. Over time, Quaker reading practices changed along with the publications they produced and circulated, especially at the onset of state-sanctioned persecution during the Restoration. Publications, which initially featured Quaker leaders as authors, extended to include the testimonies of the broader membership experiencing persecution. Alternate readings of Quaker texts fuelled the doctrinal disputes between members. So too did the makeup of membership change, widening audiences, attracting scholars on the one hand, and non-English speakers on the other. Within current scholarship on the history of reading, Quakers show how individual readings developed in a communal environment. Within the study of book history, Quakers show how the uses of print were integrated with the uses of manuscript, and they offer insight into the role oral discussion plays in “reading,” which in turn, has shaped the outcome of what has survived. Finally, within religious history, the purpose of this thesis is to detail what it meant for men and women at the end of the 17th century to document their experience of revolutionary religious fervour of the Civil War period in its aftermath — and how that fervour structured the production and circulation of texts for centuries to come.

Impact Statement

For over three centuries, the Quakers have maintained a model of consensus-driven spirituality that has informed the way they have archived the experiences of their members, and the circulation of publications describing those experiences. Within academia, “Compelling Reading” documents the history of the earliest formation of these habits over the course of five decades during which Quakers experienced incredible persecution as a religious and political minority. Outside of academia, “Compelling Reading” offers a long history of—and a blueprint for—community-based heritage activity, publication, and archive-keeping for minority groups. As Quakers have historically been anti-violent and anti-racist, and have been involved with abolition, suffrage, and more recently environmental and LGBTQ rights advocacy, this thesis charts a social history that might be interpreted and reapplied to contemporary activist groups addressing those issues.

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Introduction

“Compelling Reading” begins with the act of reading as the source of a different, but recognisable, concept of textual culture. In this project I am dedicated to describing the spiritual, communal basis of reading, writing, editing, and publishing habits, and from them, an alternative view of the book in the world at the close of the 17th century. The small religious sect that sustains my inquiry is the Religious Society of Friends, known from their origins in 1650s as Quakers, or Friends, and I offer here the first sustained study of Quakers as readers working against the grain of a wider Protestant culture. As diligent readers of the bible, the Quakers saw themselves and their pamphlets, books, and manuscripts in keeping with the example set forth by the apostles, and the earliest “primitive” Christians. As readers of John Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs*, they saw themselves as continuing the work of the religious reformers of the 16th century. As a group of radicals founded in the chaotic aftermath of England’s bloodiest conflict to date, the Civil Wars of the 1640s, Quakers adapted the beliefs, imitated the printing habits, and welcomed into their membership radicals from among the Levellers, Diggers, Ranters, and Seekers. As readers of the texts composed by one another, their community was defined by the relationships and debates fostered in print and manuscript between individuals from a broad cross-section of society, both in England and abroad. In tracing the adaptation of Quaker reading habits from a small community of itinerant preachers to a wider membership, the story told here is ultimately one about the transformative and expansive possibilities of reading.

Each of these areas of reading informed a departure within Quakerism from conventional views of “the book” within Christianity. Taken title by title or pamphlet by pamphlet, texts written by Quakers look and feel in keeping with the textual culture of their time, but surveyed as a whole as I do here, the interrelated mass of books, pamphlets, broadsides, correspondence, and manuscripts are justified in their creation by an alternative theology. Protestant, but also Catholic, understandings of textuality were dominated

by the sanctity of the bible, whether in the form of an illuminated manuscript chained upon a lectern, or as the printed, vernacular works upon which Luther's concept of *sola scriptura* relied. This troubling materiality of the Word of God—sacred yet made manifest by the work of human hands in a fallen world—reached a point of crisis across Europe after 1517. The crisis persisted into, and beyond, the 1650s, but the Quaker viewpoint of the bible, and by extension the world of print itself, dismissed the problem. "Spirit," rather than "letter," was always of primary importance, and always to be found through, but outside of the text. For Quakers, it was blasphemy to conflate spirit with the text itself. In Quaker belief, divinity was to be accessed instead through the individual's "inner light," relegating books, pamphlets, manuscripts, and the other texts they produced and consumed to a position of secondary importance, secondary only to action, both spiritually and socially, a "dead letter." While texts were from the beginning crucial to exchanging news, maintaining communities spread over great distances, and describing experiences of conversion and persecution that would otherwise be lost, they were never imbued with the divine spark that troubled conventional Protestant (and even Catholic) understandings of scripture. By focusing in detail on the textual culture of the Friends, "Compelling Reading" seeks to describe a small but complicated world of interlocking habits in order to disrupt a larger assumption we have made about print and its place in the world.

Instead of a tension between letter and spirit, the chief Quaker concern when it came to how texts were created and circulated, was the extent to which those texts nourished a sense of community. The problem was both external, because the Quakers were harshly persecuted after the Restoration, and internal, because the religion was defined by its adherence to a concept of individual spirit. The Quakers organised themselves around reading, writing, archiving, and publication—activities in which every member was expected to participate. But the paradox of these activities is that while they focused upon individual spiritual development, they were dependent upon and tested by intensely collaborative authorship and communal reading. Schism was a constant threat. Nevertheless, agree-

ment and argument alike resulted in a profusion of textual materials, and controversy itself was a regular element of Quaker experience. Quakers kept excellent records documenting their process of establishing consensus both in the works they published, and the vast collection of meeting minutes and correspondences detailing their writing habits, collective editing habits, all of which documented—and appealed for—the survival of the sect despite harsh persecution. For in addition to the Quaker belief that—internally—the spirit must always come before the letter, was externally the immediate threat of violence. The majority of Quaker documents and printed works in the period I deal with were made and circulated under duress, pairing a minority view of the book in the world with the experience of the oppression of a minority.

By focusing on the spirited, spiritually driven Quaker textual tradition, “Compelling Reading” intervenes in five main fields of research: Quaker Studies, the wider study of religion in the Early Modern Period, and studies within the field broadly construed as History of the Book, and Archive Studies. Finally, the underlying principle that links each of these scholarly interventions is the History of Reading—reading as a spiritual and social practice that Quakers returned to again and again from their origins in the Commonwealth period, throughout their harsh persecution during the Restoration, and throughout their period of “quietism” facilitated by the passage of the Act of Toleration in 1689. Within Quaker Studies, historians of the confession have described the development and spread of spiritual beliefs of the Friends on the one hand, and historians of the book have written about *how* Quakers published, but there has been no study describing *why* they published, and linking their spiritual worldview to its expression in a vibrant textual culture, especially after the Commonwealth period. In a 2012 article, eminent Quaker historian Rosemary Moore called for a replacement for W. C. Braithwaite’s *Second Period of Quakerism* (1919), a working spanning the development of the sect from 1660 until the beginning of the 18th century. While the origins of the movement are well attested within scholarship—both by Quakers and others—Braithwaite’s work has remained a standard for nearly a century to a time period that merits renewed

attention.¹ While I do not claim to have written precisely the history Moore envisions, although she might agree with me that such a book should not be written by a single author, “Compelling Reading” addresses several gaps she has identified. I begin with outlining Quaker belief as it intersects—and in some places works against—the religious climate of Britain after 1660, paying particular attention to Quaker belief surrounding scriptural authority as it was tempered by their arguments in print and manuscript with other religious groups. I cover the impact of persecution upon membership and the structure of meetings, and provide what she calls “a more accurate assessment of ‘sufferings’” or Quaker persecution. In keeping with the growth in collective records I pay particular attention to those kept by the Second Day’s Morning Meeting as they took control of overseeing publications in the 1660s. I focus on a much overlooked episode from the Story-Wilkinson schism, the “major antagonism” of William Rogers in print and in manuscript. And I conclude with a detailed analysis of Robert Barclay and William Penn’s emergence as leading Quakers.² By detailing the collaborative ways in which works came to be written and circulated among Quaker “Meetings” for worship, modern day Quakers will find for the first time a history of how the record-keeping habits of “Ancient Friends” have come to structure their present-day publications and activism—a topic I conclude with in my Coda on a series of late 20th- and early 21st-century pamphlets published by LGBTQ Quaker activists.

Within the history of late-17th religious studies, I offer a way of contextualising Quakers outside of their confessional boundaries by showing the inherent instability of Quaker identity. This instability was rooted particularly in Quaker textual culture, a culture that produced disagreement and schism within local meetings that spread at times among the larger transatlantic community. In other words, while considering Quakers alongside other non-conformist groups whose library and archival collections are often physical-

¹ Rosemary Moore, “Towards a Revision of *The Second Period of Quakerism*,” *Quaker Studies* 17.1 (2012) 7-26.

² Moore, “Towards a Revision of *The Second Period of Quakerism*,” 9, 11, 12-13, 17-18.

ly separate from the Friends, I show a much blurrier view of religious identity as it related to social and political circumstance in the unstable climate of the late 17th century. Within the library Quakers created to preserve their books, they also took pains to preserve as many anti-Quaker works as they could, in effect uniting a stranger, more diffuse textual community of their critics, sometimes those who could barely agree on little else—men like William Prynne and John Goodwin—and sometimes those who had been faithful members of the sect for decades, like William Rogers, Francis Bugg, and George Keith. Toward the close of the 17th century, the blurriness of Quaker identity even came to appeal to those trained within a humanist tradition—a tradition once scorned by the first generation of Friends. However, in a religious culture that emphasised reading as a central practice, rather than a central text to be read, Quaker reader could and did expand to include religious works written outside of the confession, and even classical works typically found within humanist libraries. This attracted new members, like Francis Daniel Pastorius, from new backgrounds, like Germany and the Netherlands.

Within studies in the History of the Book, the spiritual basis of Quaker publication habits work against the dominant attitudes behind textual production within both Protestant and Catholic traditions, and therefore lay bare many of the assumptions that have characterised a field of research largely drawn from texts within those traditions. The breadth of surviving Quaker-made books and records also embellishes our understanding of how texts are made and circulated, and contextualises “the book” within the broader spectrum of textual materials that shape its creation and survival in both print and manuscript: pamphlets, broadsides, petitions, letters, meeting minute books, and ledgers. In this sense, the Quakers provide enough evidence to describe a “textual culture,” rather than distinct “print” or “scribal” cultures as they have often been distinguished. In my attempt to relate the mass of Quaker texts to one another and to the readers among whom they circulated, I also touch on several fields related to the history of the book: oral culture, authorship studies, censorship studies, and the recent surge in archive or record-keeping studies. Finally, drawing inspiration from the

scholarship with the field of “radical” Archive Studies has made it clear to me that the story I tell here of the birth of the Quaker archive under a period of extreme persecution amounts to the origin story of the oldest continuously running radical archive in the English-speaking world.

Trembling at the Word of God

The violent, involuntary origins of the word “quake,” could equally describe the relationship between the Friends and their reading in the earliest years of the movement’s development. To quake, in its medieval and early modern uses, was to be made to tremble “as a result of an external or internal impulse,” as in the event of catastrophe like an earthquake, or as a result of illness, fear, or anger.³ In nature as in the body, it was experienced without volition, for example in reaction to an angry Old Testament God: Mount Sinai quaked upon the Lord’s descent in the form of fire; in the New Testament, Moses is remembered as quaking in fear at the power of the Lord.⁴ This is the sense in which the Friends used the term, which in turn led them to be called “Quakers” by their persecutors. As George Fox related in his *Journal*: “Justice Bennet of Derby...[was the] first that called us Quakers because we bid them tremble at the word of God, and this was in the year 1650.”⁵ In early printed pamphlets, Friends referred to themselves as “the people in scorn call’d Quakers,” reclaiming the epithet.⁶ Embedded in the Quaker name and in its history was an ideal response to hearing the “Word of God”—trembling involuntarily—and a starting point for what I mean by

³ “quake, v.1.” OED Online. February 2018. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/155845> (accessed February 12, 2018).

⁴ Exodus 19:18; Hebrews 12: 20-21.

⁵ “Quaker, n.3b.” OED Online. February 2018. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/155847> (accessed February 12, 2018).

⁶ One, slightly earlier use of the term to describe “A person who trembles or quakes with religious fervour” which probably does not refer to the Society of Friends but gives evidence to the similarity between their spirituality and other post-Civil War groups is cited in the OED from 1647 to describe “a Sect of woemen (they are at Southworke) come from beyond Sea, called Quakers, and these swell, shiver, and shake, and when they come to themselves...preache what hath bin deliverd to them by the Spiritt,” see “Quaker, n.3a”. OED Online. February 2018. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/155847> (accessed February 12, 2018).

“compelling” reading, reading that forced its readers to pay attention to their experiences outside of the text. Sometimes, according to Fox, it even meant a kind of reading that forced readers to *stay* outside the text awhile before daring to return. In his *Journal*, for example, Fox recollected the early stages of his ministry in 1648:

Now the Lord God opened to me by His invisible power that every man was enlightened by the divine Light of Christ, and I saw it shine through all [...] This I saw in the pure openings of the Light without the help of any man; neither did I then know where to find it in the Scriptures; though afterwards, searching the Scriptures, I found it. For I saw, in that Light and Spirit which was before the Scriptures were given forth, and which led the holy men of God to give them forth, that all, if they would know God or Christ, or the Scriptures aright, must come to that Spirit by which they that gave them forth were led and taught.⁷

The insight to be gained from reading the scriptures followed only from the “divine Light of Christ,” which was also the way in which they had come to be written. A “Light and Spirit” inspired and “led the holy men of God” to write the books of the bible. But Fox stressed the secondary nature of this way of reading the bible—secondary only to experiences found beyond text, beyond self, and beyond humanity. Margaret Fell Fox, reflecting back upon her conversion by George Fox in 1652, wrote that 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.”⁸ For both Foxes, spiritual awakening was linked with an awakening about the means of production behind the bible.

The invisible world beyond the text, a world of light and spirit, was in keeping with a world that is lost to us now. Radical religious groups were all named for forms of spiritual engagement similarly lost, but which compelled them to walk and talk differently: to rant, to dig, to level, to seek. As Thomas

⁷ George Fox, *The Journal of George Fox*, Rufus Jones, ed. (Richmond, Indiana: Friends United Press, 1976) 46-7.

⁸ Spence Manuscript, chap. III, p. 135, quoted in Isabel Ross, *Margaret Fell: Mother of Quakerism* (London: Longmans, 1949), 11.

Hall listed them in his 1651 pamphlet “against unlicensed preachers,” *The Pulpit Guarded*, “We have many Sects now abroad; Ranters, Seekers, Shakers, Quakers, and now Creepers.”⁹ Quakers upset churches, marketplaces, taverns, courts with prophetic cries, arguments, and highly dramatic appearances to persuade converts.¹⁰ The remains of that world are overwhelmingly textual—an explosion of pamphlets and broadsides—and the Quakers were no different in the profusion of texts they used to facilitate the spread of their religion. Theirs was a coordinated campaign of interrupting Anglican services, preaching in marketplaces, and combining voice with a scattering of pamphlets: “Truth sprang up first in Leicester in 1644, in Warwickshire in 1645, in Nottinghamshire in 1646,” Fox described in the *Journal*. Quakers reached London and southern England by 1654. The first printed works only survive beginning in 1653. By 1656, Quakers had visited Barbados, Jamaica, Antigua, and New England, their travelling cloaks lined with pamphlets—many were burned when they reached Boston. By 1657 a party of preachers, men and women, had gotten as far east as Constantinople.¹¹ By the mid-1650s there were between thirty and sixty thousand Quakers in England, or 6-12% of a population of five million, and smaller communities on the peripheries of the English Colonies, as well as on the continent, in Germany, the Netherlands and Poland.¹²

The basic unit of belief among early leading Friends was also the motivating force behind their habits as readers, and their will to publish. Belief in the “inner light,” “was understood quiet literally as the animating force of the

⁹ “Quaker, n.3b.” OED Online.

¹⁰ Examples of this behaviour are described, for instance, in Stevie Davies, *Unbridled Spirits: Women of the English Revolution: 1640-1660* (London: The Women’s Press Ltd, 1998) ch. 4; and Barry Reay, *The Quakers and the English Revolution* (Southampton: The Camelot Press, 1985).

¹¹ Rosemary Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences: Early Quakers in Britain 1646-1666* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State U P, 2000), 125. Other key sources dealing with the birth of Quakerism are William C. Braithwaite, *The Beginnings of Quakerism* (London: Macmillan and Co, 1923); Hugh Barbour and Arthur O. Roberts, eds. *Early Quaker Writings 1650-1700* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B Eerdmans, 1973); Larry H. Ingle, *First Among Friends: George Fox and the Creation of Quakerism* (New York and Oxford: OUP, 1994).

¹² Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences*, 34.

human subject.”¹³ It connected Quakers to an older tradition of religious radicals, dating back to the Arminians and Anabaptists of the 16th century.¹⁴ For Quakers the inner light dissolved the distinction between human and divine. The inner light was not a metaphor: it was an actual presence within every man and woman that gave him or her direct connection to God.¹⁵ The inner light gave rise to a few peculiar habits amongst Quakers: Friends refused to take oaths, rejected Church clergy and Church hierarchy, allowed female preachers, used the informal “thee” and “thou” when addressing superiors, and would not take off their hats before the same, in court, or in churches. Worship could happen anywhere, and anyone could preside as minister, although Quaker preachers tended to be chosen by Fox and supported through the consensus of the leadership as well as the financial support of a “common fund.” There were no sacraments nor adornments, and no standard liturgy.¹⁶

Quakers were provocative and argumentative outside of their books: Matthew Caffyn complained of them “as Raging waves of the Sea, foming out of their own shame,” begging readers to “judge yee by this following description, of their behaviour towards me.” “[A]t several times thus [they] have said to me in great rage and fury of spirit; *Thou beast, bruit beast, thou Witch, thou Devil, thou Reprobate, thou Enemy of God....thou Drunkard, thou Thief, thou Murtherer, thou Serpent.*” This furious behaviour was continued in their publications, aimed at Caffyn and others: “saith Lawson in his Book against me,” Caffyn complained, and started a fresh list of in-

¹³ Hilary Hinds, *George Fox and Early Quaker Culture* (Manchester and New York: Manchester U P, 2011) 4.

¹⁴ Hinds, *George Fox and Early Quaker Culture*, 18.

¹⁵ Hinds, *George Fox and Early Quaker Culture*, 5.

¹⁶ Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* (Cambridge: CUP, 2007) 21, 34-35; for an overview of the importance of Quakerism to the development of female ministry see Keith Thomas, “Women and the Civil War Sects,” *Past and Present* 13 (1958) 42-62.

sults “*Thou Image-maker, thou Cockatrice hatching Eggs.*”¹⁷ Drawn as they were from examples read about in the bible, the inner light provoked this final Quaker habit: writing and publication in an argumentative and apocalyptic style. Just as Fox wrote in his *Journal* about imitating the “holy men” who had written the scriptures, the Quakers followed suit—every text was an similar outpouring of spirit, and very often a record of words spoken in anger or prophecy.

The Textual Turn in Quaker Studies

In terms of the breakdown of leadership, George Fox was most prominently cast as the “Founding Father” of Quakerism.¹⁸ But his role in establishing the religion was only made possible by a larger network of travelling Friends known as the “Valiant Sixty.” In the early days, James Nayler was the most avid publishing author, and Margaret Fell (later Fell Fox), maintained correspondence and the sect’s finances from her home at Swarthmoor Hall. Other travelling preacher-authors such as Richard Farnworth, Thomas Aldham, Francis Howgill, Samuel Fisher, and Edward Burrough produced significant works of Quaker theology.¹⁹ Fox grew to prominence as he outlived the first generation of Quaker leaders. In this work I move between the writings of Fox and other Quakers whose ideas influenced the shape of the movement, and preserved his place as its leader, including Margaret Fell Fox, Richard Hubberthorne, Ellis Hookes, Mary Fisher, George Bishop, William Rogers, William Penn, and Robert Barclay. The sammelbands that preserve pamphlets dating back to these founding decades organised roughly by year, are a material reminder that even Fox’s leadership was the work of a communal effort from the 1650s to the 1690s. The *Journal* is a case in point: published posthumously in 1694, the text was the result of decades of collaboration. Fox dictated a shorter form of

¹⁷ Matthew Caffyn, *The deceived and deceiving Quakers Discovered* (London: R.I. for Francis Smith, 1656) 54. By “Lawson” he refers to the botanist Quaker Thomas Lawson (1630-1691) who had co-authored a pamphlet against Caffyn’s preaching with John Slee in 1655, *An untaught Teacher Witnessed against.*”

¹⁸ Richard Bailey’s *New Light on George Fox and Early Quakerism: The Making and Unmaking of a God* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1992) makes a convincing case for Fox’s trajectory as the “Founding Father” of Quakerism.

¹⁹ Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences*, 23-25.

the work in 1664, describing his birth and the first years of his ministry beginning in 1648. He added to the manuscript again sometime between 1675 and 1677 when he was imprisoned in Worcester jail with Thomas Lower, his son-in-law and amanuensis.²⁰ After his death in 1691, his papers were consulted by Thomas Ellwood and combined with letters, as well as an introduction written by William Penn, to give context to his style of writing.²¹

In the past few decades a rich field of scholarship among scholars trained in the history of the book has emerged to account for the history of publications like Fox's *Journal*, and the complex networks of textual exchange that allowed upstart, itinerant Quaker preachers to maintain communities spread far and wide while they travelled or spent time in prison. "Compelling Reading" builds upon this "textual turn" in Quaker Studies in a few ways: by not sacrificing the spiritual for the sake of the material; by taking care to map printed Quaker works as they relate to records and fair copies of manuscripts; by going beyond the Commonwealth period and looking at how practices changed as patterns of persecution changed; and by questioning the boundaries of "Quaker" identity and, therefore, Quaker texts.

Beginning in the 1990s but culminating in *Print Culture and the Early Quakers* (2009), Kate Peters has fully established the "textual turn" in Quaker studies and remains a foundational scholar within the field.²² In her work, Peters shows Quaker printing as integral to the movement by tracing how the writings of Quaker preachers were carefully organised, published, and spread amongst relevant communities across the north of England in 1652-

²⁰ Thomas N. Corns, "'No Man's Copy': The Critical Problem of Fox's *Journal*," *The Emergence of Quaker Writing*, 103.

²¹ Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism*, 14.

²² Kate Peters, *Print Culture and the Early Quakers* (Cambridge: CUP, 2009), and see also her earlier articles; "Patterns of Quaker authorship, 1652-1656," Thomas N. Corns and David Loewenstein eds. *The emergence of Quaker writing: dissenting literature in seventeenth-century England* (London: Frank Cass, 1994) 6-24; and "Quaker pamphleteering and the growth of the Quaker movement in East Anglia, 1652-1656," David Chadd ed. *Proceedings of the Third Symposium on the History of Religious Dissent in East Anglia*. (Norwich: U of East Anglia P, 1996) 141-165.

3, south to London by 1654, to the Continent and overseas as far as the West Indies and the Caribbean by 1656. Between 1652-1656, Quaker leaders published a pamphlet per week, paid for through their “Kendal Fund” or “Common Fund” maintained by Margaret Fell Fox at Swathmoor House.²³ Peters’ work has contributed significantly to the understanding of historians of the sect who are Quakers themselves, and the story of their reliance on print can be found in the Quaker activist Pink Dandelion and Quaker historian Stephen D. Angell’s *Early Quakers and their Theological Thought 1647-1723*. In the volume, Betty Haglund in particular draws upon Peters’ work by charting the change in publisher, from Giles Calvert, one of the most prominent all-around radical publishers from the Civil War period. Giles Calvert and his wife Elizabeth also published the works of Richard Overton, Gerard Winstanley, and the regicides Hugh Peter and John Cook, works early Quaker pamphlets would have been sold alongside. After 1656, however, Quakers began to seek publication by printers within the confession.²⁴ In my first chapter, I focus on the time covered by Peters and Haglund, but rather than looking at *how* pamphlets were printed and circulated by the “Valiant Sixty” to their converts, I look at *why*. I do this first by contextualising Quaker publications within the larger print culture of the time—one which responded to Friends’ writings with great hostility and accusations of heresy, and second, by looking into Quaker views on scriptural authority as they developed in response to their critics. While there is a rich

²³ Peters, *Print Culture and the Early Quakers*, 1, 11; Kate Peters, “The Dissemination of Quaker Pamphlets in the 1650s,” *Not Dead Things: The Dissemination of Popular Print in England and Wales, Italy and the Low Countries, 1500-1820*. Roeland Harms, Joad Raymond, and Jeroen Salman eds. (Leiden: Brill, 2013) 213-228.

²⁴ Betty Haglund, “Quakers and the Printing Press,” Stephen D. Angell and Pink Dandelion, eds. *Early Quakers and their Theological Thought 1647-1723* (Cambridge: CUP, 2015) 32-47. Thomas Simmons became the chief Quaker publisher after Calvert (he was married to Calvert’s sister Martha) and both husband and wife converted to Quakerism and ran a bookshop at the Bull and Mouth in Aldersgate, where Quakers also met for worship, from 1655 to around 1663. Haglund, “Quakers and the Printing Press, 39.

discussion of the issue of scriptural authority within Quaker scholarship,²⁵ “Compelling Reading,” offers a theory of textual production drawn from both Quaker concepts of scriptural authority that privileged the “spirit” over the “letter,” and discussions of their own reasons for publishing their works found within paratextual printed material and written records. Moving beyond the period covered by Haglund and Peters, these Quaker theories of text were given prominence once the labour of archiving, publishing, and circulation had been brought fully within the confession. By the end of the century, keeping such work within the confession streamlined the process by which texts were communally written, edited, and occasionally, suppressed.

I prefer the term “text,” although Peters’ work has tended to foreground Quaker print culture in particular. After Peters, Jordan Landes and Louisiane Ferlier have produced excellent studies on circulation of Quaker printed books across the Atlantic, their preservation in Friends’ libraries, and their relationship to the commercialisation of printing in the 18th century.²⁶ But I temper their emphasis on a Quaker print culture first by looking into how the archival materials they have used in their research were created and maintained, and secondly, by emphasising the significance of how a community of readers was trained to consume so many texts in the first place, both through texts read aloud in public and at meetings, and in manuscript correspondence. There is no use publishing without an audience, and in the case of the Quakers, I show how that audience was taught to participate in the textual culture pioneered by early Quaker leaders. The

²⁵ See for instance Stephen W. Angell, “Richard Farnworth, Samuel Fisher, and the Authority of Scripture Among Early Quakers,” *Quaker Studies* 19. 2 (2015) 207-228; Moore, *The Light in their Consciences*; and Douglas Gwyn, *Apocalypse of the Word: The Life and Message of George Fox (1624-1691)* (Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1986).

²⁶ Jordan Landes, *London Quakers in the Trans-Atlantic World: The Creation of an Early Modern Community* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Louisiane Ferlier, “Building Religious Communities with Books: The Quaker and Anglican Transatlantic Libraries, 1650-1710,” *Before the Public Library: Reading, Community, and Identity in the Atlantic World, 1650-1850* Mark Towsey and Kyle B. Roberts, eds. (Leiden: Brill, 2017) 31-51; Louisiane Ferlier, “Tace Sowle-Raylton (1666–1749) and the Circulation of Books in the London Quaker Community,” *Library and Information History* 31 (2015) 157-170.

increase in Quaker publications, I argue, was made possible only when Quaker readers were forced to become writers, and the motivation for that correlated to the rise of state-sanctioned persecution after 1660. After Charles II's restoration, imprisonment shifted from an experience limited to Quaker leaders to a common experience among the wider community, and in turn, documenting experiences of persecution became a condition of membership itself.

This expansion required infrastructure. I begin to describe the origins of a Quaker community of readers-turned-writers in my second chapter, where I show how Quaker reading and imitation of John Foxe's *Actes and Monuments*, or *Book of Martyrs*, was integral the structure of Quaker record-keeping habits, which they called their "Sufferings." I do not overlook or take for granted *why* these texts have been published, in favour of describing how they were published and collected. Instead, I am interested in understanding the immense effort within Quaker meetings and among leaders trained communities to rely upon the texts they produced to petition the government and to publicise their advocacy for liberty of conscience. In addition, I provide greater depth to the "textual turn" in Quaker studies along with Marjon Ames, who has recently shown how print was supported through a scribal culture of correspondence, facilitated and preserved by Margaret Fell Fox. Ames has shown how Fell Fox was the first to organise a central "communicative structure that enabled [Quaker] ministers to evangelize" through "receiving, copying, and sending off letters to members of the emergent faith, thus allowing the process of sharing experiences."²⁷ Where Ames' study is limited to the work of Fell Fox, I show how the system she created grew into a full-time job taken on by generations of Friends beginning with her secretary William Caton, most prominently Ellis Hookes, and eventually became so unwieldy as to lead to the creation of two committees, the Meeting for Sufferings to deal with record-keeping, and the Second Day's Morning Meeting to oversee publication.

²⁷ Marjon Ames, *Margaret Fell, Letters, and the Making of Quakerism* (New York: Routledge, 2016) 1.

In my second, third, and fourth chapters, I trace the establishment of record-keeping habits amidst the letters and meeting minute-books that Friends kept in order to maintain communication and convert written information quickly into print—what I call the archive behind every book. “Publication” was a broad category: it could mean printing, but also spreading ideas by manuscript and word of mouth. As George Fox and Richard Hubberthorne wrote in a pamphlet: “[T]he Prophets of the Lord who spake his Word, somtimes spoke, and when they were moved to write they writ and published it abroad, so do we the same, being absent in Body, sending forth writings or Printed Books.”²⁸ This mix of media only increased as new authors recorded their experiences for publication. In addition, as I show in my third chapter in the case of Mary Fisher, records were written, re-written, and deployed to different ends in print and manuscript over the course of the rest of the century to suit the changing needs of the Friends.

In my fourth chapter, I show the obstacles encountered within this system of communal publication by focusing on a moment of clash within Quakerism. In his book *The Christian Quaker* (1680), William Rogers of Bristol attacked leading London Quakers who were members of Second Day’s Morning Meeting for failing to publish manuscript works he had compiled over the course of the 1670s. In this bitter debate, the Meeting’s failed attempts to censor Rogers’ writing show how well-trained Quakers were when it came to publishing their ideas, and how the collective system of writing, editing, and publishing was a hotbed for Quaker controversy and division. In other words, the “liberty of conscience” which was called for in so many Friends’ pamphlets over the years did not mean the sect did not attempt to censor its own members. But by looking closely at the practice of censorship, a much richer picture emerges of the work behind building consensus in order to publish communally-funded texts, as well as a much wider and more dynamic sense of community. Friends broke with friends, left and rejoined the sect, or identified as Quakers even when reprimanded, blurring the boundaries between Quaker textual culture and the wider cul-

²⁸ George Fox and Richard Hubberthorne, *Truth’s defence against the refined subtilty of the serpent held forth in divers answers to severall queries made by men (called ministers) in the North* (York: Printed for Thomas Wayt, 1653) 74.

ture of nonconformity in late 17th century England. This was achieved by a diffuse but engaged and well-connected community. My fifth and final chapter considers only a few of the consequences of such a community as it survived beyond persecution and into the 18th century, namely, the emergence of a relationship between Quaker and continental thinkers concerning the status of the bible, the expansion of Quaker membership to include humanistically trained converts, and finally, the expansion of Quaker reading—both in spiritually and scholarly modes—to incorporate texts by non-Quakers and classical authors. What began in my first chapter with the argument that the scripture was a “dead letter,” culminates in an almost limitless approach toward reading material among spirited readers like William Penn and Francis Daniel Pastorius. Their work as readers, collectors, and publishers repackaged ideas from the earliest days of the movement for a new generation of Quakers.

Friends, Allies, and Enemies of the Book

The sheer bulk of evidence Quakers have preserved make them an excellent case study in late 17th century religious worship and administration, especially as it has structured early modern approaches to the history of the book. Echoing Robert Darnton’s 1982 essay “What is the History of Books?,” James Raven’s *What is the History of the Book?* (2018) charts a sprawling field of inquiry into the “consequences of the production, dissemination, and reception of texts, in their material forms, across all societies and in all ages,” that has structured my approach throughout “Compelling Reading.”²⁹ While Quakers do not feature in Raven’s otherwise comprehensive study, as a case study in the history of the book they provide insight into four major concerns of the field as he describes them: offering a new angle to understand the influence of religion in shaping textual production; a view of censorship within smaller communities rather than administered by the state; an understanding of the influence of readers, who Raven considers “the most significant and challenging dimension of the history of

²⁹ James Raven, *What is the History of the Book?* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2018) 1.

books,” and the interrelated work of readers and authors in collaborating to produce texts.³⁰

Between 1650 and 1700, it has been estimated that Quaker authors published 3,100 new titles, in addition to 650 reprints of popular works, which Louisiane Ferlier points out would amount to around 3.5% of all printed books.³¹ The library containing these titles was officially founded, according to Anne Littleboy, with the creation of the Second Day’s Morning Meeting in 1673.³² By 1708, John Whiting had published a *Catalogue of Friends Books*, the first Quaker bibliography drawn from the library kept by the Second Day’s Morning Meeting. Whiting even included works which were relevant to Quaker doctrine by authors who had since broken with the group, such as George Keith, whose bibliography contained asides by Whiting concerning the schism Keith had caused among Quakers in Philadelphia. For instance, after Keith’s *Plain Short Catechism for children and Youth...who need to be Instructed in the first Principles and Grounds of the Christian Religion*, Whiting quipped in a printed aside: “as he need now to be.”³³

Despite this richness of material, and its accessibility through cataloguing, the Quaker library has been maintained separate from other collections since the 17th century, and Quaker publications are not well-represented elsewhere. The Bodleian did not acquire Quaker pamphlets—Oxford was a

³⁰ Raven, *What is the History of the Book?*, 84, 101, 103, 115.

³¹ Hugh Barbour and Arthur O. Roberts, *Early Quaker Writings, 1650-1700* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1973) 14; Louisiane Ferlier, “Building Religious Communities with Books,” 1.

³² Anne Littleboy, *A History of the Friends’ Reference Library, with notes on Early Printers and Printing in the Society of Friends* (London: Offices of the Society of Friends, 1921) 1.

³³ John Whiting, *A Catalogue of Friends Books Written by many of the People, called Quakers, From the Beginning or First Appearance of the said People* (London: Tace Sowle, 1708) 86.

place where Quakers were brutally persecuted, even during the Commonwealth period.³⁴

Nor was Bodley's librarian seemingly interested in receiving copies of worked issued by printers within a confession whose ministers had criticised the institution over the years, even though the University Library had been a legal despot library by an agreement brokered by its first librarian Thomas James in 1612, and by law since 1662. In London, Quaker printing was overlooked by George Thomason, whose collection of around 22,000 pamphlets printed between 1640 and 1661 remains a cornerstone of studies of cheap print and the "pamphlet explosion."³⁵

Within Quakerism, the period after the Act of Toleration of 1689, a little over a century between 1692 and 1805, has been known within Quakerism as "The Quietist Period," characterised by an end to Quaker evangelisation and a withdrawal from society.³⁶ A vibrant textual culture persisted within the sect, although pamphleteering gave way over the course of the 18th

³⁴ For example, a pamphlet signed by eight Quakers described the use of water torture against two female Quakers who preached in Oxford, Elizabeth Fletcher and Elizabeth Homes "driven by the Schollars into Johns Colledge, and there haled by them to the pump...into their mouths so long a time, that they were almost stifled to death, and drowned." Jeremiah Haward et. al., *Here followeth a true Relation of Some of the Sufferings inflicted upon...Quakers...by the fruits of the Schollars and Proctors of the University of Oxford* (London: n. pb. 1654) 1-2. They are memorialised in the Quaker Tapestry, comprised of 77 embroidered panels made between 1981 and 1996 depicting key moments in Quaker history. See "Persecution In Oxford - Quaker Tapestry." 2018. *Quaker Tapestry*. <https://www.quaker-tapestry.co.uk/panel/persecution-in-oxford/>.

³⁵ McKenzie, "The London Book Trade in 1644," Peter McDonald and Michael Suarez, eds. *Making Meaning: "Printers of the Mind" and Other Essays* (Amherst, Boston, MA: U of Massachusetts P, 2002) 129. See also David Cressy, *England on the Edge: Crisis and Revolution, 1640-1642* (Oxford: OUP, 2006) 293; Joad Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge, CUP, 2003), 6; James Holston ed. *Pamphlet Wars: Prose in the English Revolution* (London and Portland, OR: Frank Cass & Co, 1993) 2. Louisiane Ferlier has noted that John Wallis, a mathematician, cryptographer, and archivist in the Bodleian, bound together one volumes of *Anti-Quaker* pamphlets "that they be not lost," including those by George Keith, unpublished but cited in "Centre For The Study Of The Book | 2011-13 Visiting Fellows" *Bodleian.Ox.Ac.Uk*. <https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/csb/fellowships/current-and-past-fellows/past-fellows/2011-13>.

³⁶ Robynne Rogers Healey, "Quietist Quakerism, 1692-c.1805," Stephen W. Angell and Pink Dandelion, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Quaker Studies* (Oxford: OUP, 2013) 47-66.

century to monumental works of Quaker history, funded and published by the Second Day's Morning Meeting and the predominant Quaker printer, Tace Sowle. Printing within a confession that no longer sought converts limited circulation. Within other nonconformist collections, for example, Dr. William's Library has very few Quaker pamphlets, the majority of them dating to the late 18th century. These collecting habits—more than the books, pamphlets, and manuscript materials they contain that almost constantly cross-reference one another—constrained by location, prejudice, or simply by interest, have limited Quaker scholarship largely to Quaker scholars.

Beginning in the second half of the 20th century, scholars such as Hugh Barbour and Arthur Roberts, Christopher Hill, Barry Reay, Thomas Corns, David Loewenstein, and Kate Peters, have made more visible the connection between Quakers and the contemporaries.³⁷ So too have scholars within gender studies, as according to Keith Thomas, it was “among the Quakers that the spiritual rights of women attained their apogee” in worship, preaching, and prophesy. Stevie Davies, Phyllis Mack, Maureen Bell, and more recently Catie Gill and Naomi Pullin have shown in their work that Quaker women comprised the radical fringe of Quaker belief, using the support of the sect to intervene in and disrupt day to day life within England

³⁷ Barbour and Roberts provided commentary and collected key texts written by Friends in *Early Quaker Writings 1650-1700* (1973), building off of Barbour's earlier *The Quakers in Puritan England* (1964) which fully contextualised Quakers within a Protestant tradition, Barry Reay in *The Quakers and the English Revolution* (1985) continued the work of his advisor Christopher Hill in *The World Turned Upside Down* to discuss how Quakers—who featured infrequently in Hill's work—carried forward ideas from the revolutionary period; and Corns and Loewenstein's collection of essays, *The emergence of Quaker writing: dissenting literature in seventeenth-century England* (1994) featured works highlighting the role of print within the sect, including Kate Peters' first article on the subject, embedding them within a broader dissenting tradition.

and even among its nascent colonies overseas.³⁸ Although Christine Trevett has shown how women's roles within Quaker communities were underplayed in print—especially by the time the Second Day's Morning Meeting was formed—documents by and about female Friends survive in greater numbers than any other group at the time, so although they are a minority within a minority, Quaker women have become an important focal point for recovering women's lives at the close of the 17th century.³⁹

While Quaker women feature in “Compelling Reading,” my emphasis is upon applying a particular queer and feminist approach to the history of Quaker texts, rather than isolating texts strictly authored by females. Queer historian Jeffrey Masten has emphasised “collaborative textuality” in his groundbreaking work, *Textual Intercourse*: arguing that “collaboration was a prevalent mode of textual production in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, only eventually displaced by the mode of singular authorship with which we are more familiar.”⁴⁰ Danielle Clarke has described it in terms of a “textual manifestation of gender at all stages of literary production.”⁴¹ As Helen Smith brilliantly summarises in *Grossly Material Things*: “the early modern book and its texts can be reconceptualized not as male- or female-authored but as the interface at which numerous agents coincide, in com-

³⁸ Keith Thomas, “Women and the Civil War Sects” *Past and Present* 13 (1958) 47; other classic studies featuring Quaker women include Stevie Davies, *Unbridled Spirits: Women of the English Revolution: 1640-1660* (London: The Women's Press, 1998); Phyllis Mack, *Visionary Women: Ecstatic Prophecy in Seventeenth Century England* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and Oxford: U of California P, 1992); Christine Trevett, *Women and Quakerism in the Seventeenth Century* (York, UK: Sessions, 1991) and *Quaker Women Prophets in England and Wales 1650-1700* (New York: Mellen, 2000), Kate Peters, *Print Culture and the Early Quakers*, chapter 5. The most recent studies include Catie Gill, *Women in the Seventeenth-Century Quaker community: A Literary Study of Political Identities, 1650-1700* (New York: Routledge, 2017), and Naomi Pullin, *Female Friends and the Making of Transatlantic Quakerism, 1650-1750* (Cambridge: CUP, 2018).

³⁹ Christine Trevett, “‘Not fit to be printed’: The Welsh, the Women and the Second Day's Morning Meeting,” *Journal of the Friends Historical Society* 59.2 (2001) 115-144; Catie Gill and Michele Lise Tarter, eds. *New Critical Studies on Early Quaker Women, 1650-1800* (Oxford: OUP, 2018), 2.

⁴⁰ Jeffrey Masten, *Textual Intercourse: Collaboration, Authorship, and Sexualities in Renaissance Drama* (Cambridge: CUP, 1997) 4.

⁴¹ Danielle Clarke, “Nostalgia, Anachronism, and the Editing of Early Modern Women's Texts” *TEXT* 15 (2003) 190.

plex and varied ways.”⁴² Yet these innovations within the history of authorship and textual production have taken their cue from close readings within the study of “literary” texts that are often books. Throughout “Compelling Reading” I am interested in repurposing their approaches to texts that are neither literary nor necessarily even books, applying a similar understanding of literature as a sophisticated interplay between gendered labour within the wider market of cheap print. By working outside of canonical writers, patrons, and playhouses, “Compelling Reading” imagines a wider culture of collaboration on the margins of both English society and the scholarship that has focused upon it.⁴³ Quaker meeting minute-books and the experiences and agonies of persecution that they describe are a new corpus to consider alongside the literary texts we have typically analysed to understand collaborative textual production, showing that not only have the great works of literature enjoyed the benefit of multiple authorial and editorial perspectives by those who identified professionally as writers, but rather, such multiple authorship was part of a much wider social and textual practice.

One crucial intervention into the field of textual collaboration is to combine an understanding of multiple authorship with what Brian Stock has called a “textual community.” The bible defined a theoretical community of readers (or listeners), generating what Stock has described in his work on 11th- and 12th-century heretics in these terms:

What was essential to a textual community was not a written version of a text, although that was sometimes present, but an individual, who, having mastered it, then utilized it for reforming a group’s thought and

⁴² Helen Smith, *Grossly Material Things: Women and Book Production in Early Modern England* (Oxford, OUP, 2012) 4.

⁴³ Other leading scholarship in the field of multiple authorship tends to concern itself with literature, either of the Renaissance or the Romantic period: Grace Ioppolo, *Dramatists and their Manuscripts in the Age of Shakespeare, Jonson, Middleton and Heywood: Authorship, authority and the playhouse* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006); Arthur Marotti, *Manuscript, Print and the English Renaissance Lyric* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995); Jack Stillinger, *Multiple Authorship and the Myth of the Solitary Genius* (New York, Oxford: OUP, 1991); Michelle Levy, *Family Authorship and Romantic Print Culture* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008);

action. The text's interpreter might, like St. Bernard, remain a charismatic figure...yet the organizational principles of movements...were clearly based on texts...Finally, the textual community was not only textual; it also involved new uses for orality. The text itself...was often re-performed orally...one of the clearest signs that a group had passed the threshold of literacy was the lack of necessity for the organizing text to be spelt out, interpreted, or reiterated. The members all knew what it was...word of mouth could take place as a superstructure of an agreed meaning, the textual foundation of behaviour having been entirely internalized. With shared assumptions, the members were free to discuss, to debate, or to disagree...to engage in personal interpretations of the Bible or to some degree in individualized meditation and worship.⁴⁴

Stock's study depends upon heretics, who "provided a cutting edge for literacy" and for whom traces tend to remain to establish basic requirements for a textual community. They include: a set of texts with similar features, a group of readers who know one another, and evidence of that group's distinctive way of interpreting those texts.⁴⁵ One of the most significant units of meaning in this dissertation is that of the textual community, not only in Stock's sense, but as understood Quakers themselves when they encountered the beliefs of the Lollards through John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, and used his account as a model for the collection and publication of their own "sufferings."

Elizabeth Sauer has used Stock's work on the literacy of heretics to find affinities in his concept textual communities with the explosion of dissent between 1640 and 1675, and the Levellers, Diggers, Ranters, Baptists, and Quakers among them, whose identifying characteristics were incredibly blurry, yet had in common a few key goals in their published works: "tolerance for diversity and...propensity for dramatic performance" of their beliefs

⁴⁴ Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the 11th and 12th Centuries* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton U P, 1983) 90-91.

⁴⁵ Stock, *The Implications of Literacy*, 90; Richard Firth Green, "Textual production and textual communities," Larry Scanlon, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature 1100-1500* (Cambridge: CUP, 2009) 26-29.

as “a function of their resistance to established social structures.”⁴⁶ Sauer focuses on the role played by popular drama, however, earlier in the 17th century in informing the political actings-out of dissenters after 1640, drawing lines of continuity between Stock’s work in the 12th century, literary critics of the 16th century, and playwrights of the 17th century, to arrive at a theory of drama with implications that extend far beyond the playhouses of the late 17th century. While the Quakers were certainly dramatic in the churches, marketplaces, and courthouses where they preached, they did not consider their actions as theatre but as prophetic, similar to their textual output. Once again, the emphasis upon literary output becomes in my view an over-emphasis when considered amidst other works of scholarship in the period which also take drama as a source of textual analysis. Instead, I show how Quakers provide new lines of continuity with Stock’s concept of textual communities—one working on a much larger scale, transposed to a world where the availability of cheap print allowed for unprecedented textual output and thus the possibility of attracting converts. And complementary to Sauer’s approach, Quaker theatrics in person and in writing appealed to audiences not confined to the theatre but found in the streets—a different legacy of post-Civil War ideas. Perhaps most significantly is the constant work and administration Quakers invest in creating texts. Rather than the time constraints imposed by theatrical performances, or even in single, celebrated literary titles, Quakers consistently communicated and published new writing. As Sharon Achinstein summarises: “The English Revolution was a Revolution in reading. Over twenty-two thousand pamphlets were published between 1640 and 1661, surpassing the output of the French Revolutionary press one hundred years later.”⁴⁷ The surge of pamphlets did not require much more paper than before, the so called “pamphlet explosion” was simply a replacement of longer books with shorter, topical works;

⁴⁶ Elizabeth Sauer, *Paper Contestations’ and Textual Communities in England, 1640-1675* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: U of Toronto P, 2005) 100.

⁴⁷ Sharon Achinstein, *Milton and the Revolutionary Reader* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Legacy Library, 1994) 3.

sermons, news-books, ‘found’ letters, petitions.⁴⁸ Not only did short- replace long-form, but publishers and authors multiplied. An expansion in who could print was made possible by the collapse of the Stationer’s Company in the early 1640s, in other words, the collapse of the licensing establishment that restricted the number of presses in London and their clients.⁴⁹ One cultural consequence was that readers’ attention was re-routed away from longer works and works of a “literary” nature—and so in documenting the aftermath of the Civil War period, Quakers offer an important, sustained study that moves away from literature without dismissing some of the insights provided that literature about how people perceived the significance of reading and of texts.

Attention to the increased production of printed titles has produced excellent scholarship covering the revolutionary years of the Civil War, on the intermingling and spread of radical ideas, the rise of a demand for news in the form of broadsheets and pamphlets amongst an engaged public, and the use of print by that engaged public to pamphleteer and petition in its own right. Scholars like Jason Peacey have noted the rise of government accountability on the basis of increased print and manuscript exchange. Others have pointed out the reliance of radicals upon publication and petitioning as a way of communication and organisation that helped to carve

⁴⁸ D.F. McKenzie, “The London Book Trade in 1644,” Peter McDonald and Michael Suarez, eds. *Making Meaning: “Printers of the Mind” and Other Essays* (Amherst, Boston, MA: U of Massachusetts P, 2002) 130.

⁴⁹ Before the outbreak of war, in 1637, Archbishop Laud had imposed a Star Chamber Decree restricting the number of printers between London, Oxford, and Cambridge to 20. In reality, there were at least 135 unlicensed printers during this time, and in 1640 at the outbreak of war that jumped to at least 745, and their output overwhelmingly these works took the form of pamphlets. Geoffrey Parker, *Global Crisis: War, Climate Change, and Catastrophe in the Seventeenth Century* (New Haven: Yale U P, 2013) 368; David Cressy, *England on the Edge: Crisis and Revolution, 1640-1642* (Oxford: OUP, 2006) 293; Joad Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge, CUP, 2003), 6; James Holston ed. *Pamphlet Wars: Prose in the English Revolution* (London and Portland, OR: Frank Cass & Co, 1993) 2.

out a “public sphere” in England that is familiar to us today.⁵⁰ “The rise of the pamphlets reflected a transformation in the circumstances of politics and of reading and writing,” Joad Raymond summarises. Pamphlets created new readers for books later on. That transformative potential had roots in late 16th century English politics, but was truly unleashed in the 1640s. By 1688, “it was self-evident that any attempt to generate public support for a political initiative...would have to exploit the persuasive powers of the press.”⁵¹ “Compelling Reading” offers one version of events that makes sense of the reading public that survived the crisis of the 1640s, and made pamphlets seem “self-evidently” important by 1688, and provides a spiritual explanation for that process.

Endurance Studies

The practices I describe survived and provided a template for Quakers—and their allies—to return to again and again for centuries, and into the present. Consequently, the Quakers remain a religious community at the forefront of pacifist, environmentalist, and anti-discriminatory activism, ideas originating in this early period of their oppression during the Restoration. For this reason they provide a unique model for studying, for the first time, a long history of the radical archive. A 2015 Special Issue of *Archives Journal* edited by Lisa Darms and Kate Eichhorn represent well the problem of defining what exactly is “radical” about “radical archives,” but agree upon a few key features. “As co-editors,” Darms writes, “a radical approach to discussing radical archives might begin with attending to what creators, practitioners, and users...think archives are,” with a “focus on how radical or minority communities—whose archives have, historically, not been collected by institutions—could actively preserve their histories,” and concluding that “These communities have been self-documenting for decades.”⁵² While

⁵⁰ James Rees, *The Leveller Revolution: Radical Political Organisation in England, 1640-1650* (London: Verso, 2016), 71-72; see also David Zaret, *The Origins of Democratic Culture: Printing, Petitions, and the Public Sphere in Early-Modern England* (Princeton: Princeton U P, 2000).

⁵¹ Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering*, 10, 25.

⁵² Lisa Darms, “Introduction” - Radical Archives - *Archive Journal*, *Archivejournal.Net*. <http://www.archivejournal.net/essays/radical-archives/>.

the scope of the *Archives Journal* issue is limited to the 20th and 21st century, with articles on archiving Lesbian Comics, LGBTQ activism in the Rustbelt of the USA, and the problems of archiving performance art, each case study as it depends upon self-awareness of the need to document, and documentation outside of an institutional context, is provided with at least one set of ancestors in the Quaker archives, which I show in the following chapters developed from similar characteristics.

I use the term “radical” here in a contemporary sense to describe both the range of Quaker writings, as well as the reaction of their contemporaries to their beliefs. These writings addressed issues that we have come to identify with social justice movements, issues that have come to be associated with the use of the word “radical” in the sense of political or social change taken to extremes. The Quakers whose writings I focus on in each chapter created controversy in their presence and by their writings—their “zeal” and “enthusiasm” was perceived as a threat to social, religious, and political order. In addition to pacifism and religious tolerance, Quakers later published on issues ranging from gender and racial equality, to mental health, to prison reform, to free public schooling.⁵³ The abolition movement was grounded in Quaker activities in the 18th century, and the first suffragette meeting in the 19th century was held in a Quaker meeting house.⁵⁴ In that way, “Compelling Reading” stands as a case study not only of a communal culture within which individual readers developed and sometimes debated their reading habits, but also of a model of active reading that resulted in consequences outside the text—especially in terms of creating new authors who

⁵³ Just a few examples, Fox, George. “Epistle 291 [On Women]” *A Collection of Many Select Epistles to Friends...* (London, T. Sowle, 1698); Bathurst, Elizabeth, *The Sayings of Women...* (London, printed and sold by Andrew Sowle...1683); Bryn Mawr College’s online exhibition of [Quakers and Slavery](#); John Beller’s writings on prisons and mental health and R.A. Cooper, “The English Quakers and Prison Reform, 1809-23,” *Quaker History* 65.1 (Spring 1979) 3-19, and also *An Epistle to Friends of the Yearly, Quaterly, and Monthly Meeetings; concerning the Prisoners, and Sick, in the Prisons and Hospitals of Great Britain* [No Printer, place, or date, c. 1724].

⁵⁴ Brycchan Carey and Geoffrey Plank, eds. *Quakers and Abolition* (Chicago: U of Illinois Press, 2014); Pam Lunn, “You Have Lost Your Opportunity’ British Quakers and the Militant Phase of the Women’s Suffrage Campaign: 1906-1914,” *Quaker Studies* 2 (1997) 30-56.

applied their reading to publish tracts arguing on behalf of social reform. Overall, I believe that the interest and urgency around capturing contemporary activism as Darms and Eichhorn have also requires that we reflect further back upon a long history of record-keeping under duress. In this way, “Compelling Reading” bridges between contemporary history and the implications of the scholarship Alexandra Walsham, Kate Peters, and Liesbeth Corens have undertaken towards building “The Social History of the Archive”—adding a crucial element of “social reform” to the use of “social”—in the early modern period. Each chapter of “Compelling Reading” documents to some extent what Walsham calls “the spread of archival consciousness in other institutional settings, including commercial, diplomatic, and religious ones.”⁵⁵

While “liberty of conscience” and the social reform required to achieve it were frequently and heatedly debated topics that emerged from the Civil War period, the ways in which Quakers worked to record, edit, debate, suppress, and fail to suppress the different experiences of their membership is a record of the intense labour involved in realising the dream of such liberties. It was a dream spread through reading, and one achieved at least in part, I argue, as it was practiced among Quaker communities as part of the process of textual creation and circulation. As is even the case with social movements of the 20th and 21st century, the grassroots collaboration necessary to affect change in areas of environmental, immigration, and civil rights, requires tireless skills- and information-sharing.⁵⁶ This reality lends one final meaning to the word “radical” as I apply it to Quaker readers, a meaning dating back to the 14th century that would have been understood in the early modern period: radical as in root. In the example set by the col-

⁵⁵ Alexandra Walsham, “The Social History of the Archive: Record-Keeping in Early Modern Europe,” *Past and Present* Supplement 11(2016) 22; see also Liesbeth Corens, Kate Peters, and Alexandra Walsham, eds. *Archives & Information in the Early Modern World* (Oxford: The British Academy, 2018).

⁵⁶ Howard Zinn, *A People’s History of the United States, 1492-Present* (1980) remains a classic work showing the collective action required for social movements to lobby effectively; Greg Jobin-Leeds and AgitArte’s *When We Fight We Win! Twenty-First-Century Social Movements and the Activists That Are Transforming Our World* updates that history, describing the collective action currently happening on issues from immigration to LGBTQ rights.

lectively funded, collectively written Quaker texts of the early modern period, I see roots that have given rise to family trees of radical readers, radical activists, radical struggles, and compels the creation of future action, future archives, and future publications.

I

Absolutely Dead Things: Quaker Reading and Spirituality

“The Letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.”

— 2 Corinthians 3:6

God of Books

Little attention has been paid to the most horrifying aspect of John Milton’s description of books as “not absolutely dead things” in his famous pamphlet *Areopagitica*. It was a description that relied upon comparison with human life, and ultimately, Milton valued books over people. “[W]ho kills a Man kills a reasonable creature, Gods Image,” Milton wrote,

...but he who destroys a good Book, kills reason it self, kills the Image of God, as it were in the eye. Many a man lives a burden to the Earth; but a good Book is the precious life-blood of a master spirit, imbalm’d and treasur’d up on purpose to a life beyond life.⁵⁷

Contrasted to “reason it self” embodied by books, “many a man” was a “burden to the Earth.” And Milton went further: the destruction of a “whole impression” or edition of a book was a “massacre” worse than those of humans since book massacres destroyed “immortality rather than a life.”

A massacre was not an abstract concept in November 1644, when the pamphlet was published. Six months earlier, Prince Rupert’s forces had wiped out Parliamentarian soldiers and civilians in the Bolton Massacre. The event was widely publicised within Milton’s radical milieu, and it sparked further clashes, including Rupert’s de-

⁵⁷ John Milton, “Areopagitica” *John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose*, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York: Macmillan, 1957) 720.

feat for the first time by Parliamentarians at Marston Moor later that summer.⁵⁸ Nor was violence remote to Milton personally: on 29 August 1644 the Stationer's Company in London had petitioned the House of Commons and demanded punishment for Milton, along with the publisher of his unlicensed *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*.⁵⁹

Milton's response four months later with *Areopagitica* was a bold move. It attacked the Stationer's Company head-on with its description of the suppression of texts in terms of murder. Milton's name alone was attached to the work, and without an identified publisher, he accepted all responsibility for its contents. Against the revolutionary backdrop in which it was published, Milton's sense of the immortality of reason argued for in *Areopagitica* drew from a much longer religious tradition that prioritised books as sacred objects whose written, and later printed, contents brokered transcendent experiences for their readers. In *Areopagitica*, this heritage was redistributed from its religious origins to authorship in general. Censorship, Milton wrote, was a "dishonor and derogation to the author, to the book, to the privilege and dignity of learning."⁶⁰ To write with the censor's hand in mind stifled the flow of "genius." That argument struck a lasting chord: it was picked up and republished by Charles Blount under several titles during licensing controversies of the late 1670s and the

⁵⁸ John Tincey, *Marston Moor 1644: The Beginning of the End* (Oxford: Osprey, 2003) 33.

⁵⁹ Marshall Grossman, "Textual Ethics in *Samson Agonistes*," *Reading Renaissance Ethics*, ed. Marshall Grossman, (New York and London: Routledge, 2007) 87.

⁶⁰ Milton, "Areopagitica," 735.

1690s.⁶¹ Since then, it has formed a cornerstone in histories of free speech and freedom of the press. The boldness with which he subscribed his name alone to the text has given *Areopagitica* a place in the history of authorial copyright, although at no point in the work did Milton argue explicitly for an author's right to own his or her text.⁶²

My point in beginning with Milton's elevation of books as having a "life beyond life" in *Areopagitica* is to emphasise that both sides of the argument for and against licensing relied upon nearly the same idea. The information contained within books was understood to be transcendent of their physical form — hence Milton's language of books as containing a "life-blood," a "master spirit," reflecting the "Image of God," and having "immortality." Such language constructed a spiritual basis of "Reason itself." This mirrored the relationship between Christians and the bible. The notion of books as vessels for timeless ideas corresponded with conceptions of the "Word of God" as transmitted through the bible at the very origins of Christianity itself in its fourth-century transition to the codex.

⁶¹ Charles Blount, *A Just Vindication of Learning: Or, An Humble Adress to the High Court of Parliament In behalf of the Liberty of the Press, By Philopatris* (London: [n. pb.], 1679), 3; Charles Blount, *Reasons Humbly Offer'd for the Liberty of Unlicens'd Printing. To which is subjoin'd The Just and True Character of Edmund Bohun, The Licensor of the Press. In a Letter from a Gentleman in the Country, to a Member of Parliament* (London: [n. pb.], 1693); A2.

⁶² See for instance Stephen B. Dobranski, *Milton, Authorship, and the Book Trade* (Cambridge, CUP: 1999); Kevin Dunn, "Milton Among the Monopolists: Areopagitica, Intellectual Property, and the Hartlib Circle", *Samuel Hartlib and Universal Reformation: Studies in Intellectual Communication*, Greengrass, Mark, Michael Leslie, and Timothy Raylor, eds. (Cambridge: CUP, 1994), 190.; Joseph Loewenstein, *The Author's Due: Printing and the Prehistory of Copyright* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2002) 192-245; David Norbrook, "Areopagitica, Censorship, and the Early Modern Public Sphere," Richard Burt, ed. *The Administration of Aesthetics: Censorship, Political Criticism and the Public Sphere* (Minneapolis: University of Minn. P, 1994) 24; Sandra Sherman, "Printing the Mind: The Economics of Authorship in Areopagitica," *ELH* 60 (1993) 323-347; Ernest Sirluck, "Areopagitica and the Forgotten Licensing Controversy", *RES* 43 (1960) 260-274.

The censor was influenced by the same idea: the relationship between the “Word of God” and its incarnation in scripture had to be carefully policed to avoid error and the spread of heresy. The view that books contained a power to transform their readers also supported the argument for attempts to control what could be published. Their potential to corrupt as much as instruct had worried church authorities, and was exacerbated with the invention of the printing press. As the Spanish Inquisitor Francesco Peña complained a century earlier of printed books: “books, rather than people, could be widely dispersed and therefore read by more people...not only a city but kingdoms and provinces are infected.”⁶³ Whether words were able to improve or infect, the approach was deeply rooted in Christian spirituality, especially after the Reformation. This is the spiritual landscape in which I will consider the Quaker impulse to publish, and the function of Quaker texts within their belief system.

Milton and the Stationer’s Company that sought to silence him both relied upon an understanding of books as sacred objects with an agency or a life of their own. This was not the case for the Quakers. Instead, books were of secondary importance within Quaker spirituality from its foundation. George Fox was a leading figure in making the distinction between spiritual experience — “Immediate Revelation” — as a way of encountering the inner light, and reading the bible was a means of prompting that experience. Quakers defined “Immediate Revelation” as direct communication with God, as the Apostles had received in the form of tongues at Pentecost, and they believed it could take the form of “outward voices and appearances,” “dreams or inward objective manifestations, in the heart,” and finally,

⁶³ Quoted in Martin Austin Nesvig, “‘Heretical Plagues’ and Censorship Cordons: Colonial Mexico and the Transatlantic Book Trade,” *Church History* 75 (March 2006) 7-9.

in the books which they wrote and published.⁶⁴ Writing and printing, in turn, was a record or remnant of those manifestations, and it was often described as a “Duty of Conscience” to commit to writing one’s revelations. Publishing was, as a result, a means by which Quakers sought to embody the experience of those whose stories they had read about in the bible. Just as much as their public performances of arguing with clergy, or going naked in the marketplace, their books were means to an end, only as successful as the actions they provoked, be they to draw together the community more closely, or provoke authorities to cry blasphemy.

As William Sherman has summarised, to read in the early modern period meant first and foremost to read the bible.⁶⁵ The vernacular bible, in particular, was a tool with which the corrupted Catholic Church could be restored by the reformers of the sixteenth century.⁶⁶ The invention of printing was a story popularly told in terms of its role in the spread of Protestantism through editions of vernacular bibles. The narrative was bloody but ultimately triumphal in tone. As John Foxe noted of censorship in a section that praised printing in his bestselling *Actes and Monuments* of 1563: “Either the pope must abolish knowledge and printing, or printing must at length root him out.”⁶⁷ The vernacular bible, they argued, ushered a return to Christianity in its earliest, “primitive” form, returning it to a set of instructions legible to just about anyone and stripped of the lavish distract-

⁶⁴ Robert Barclay, *An Apology for the true Christian divinity...* (Aberdeen: [n. pb.], 1678) 3.

⁶⁵ William H. Sherman, *Used Books: Marking Readers in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia, PA: Upenn Press, 2008) 72; Hill, *The English Bible*, 1.

⁶⁶ Sheehan, *The Enlightenment Bible*, ch. 1; and for more, see James Simpson, *Burning to Read: English Fundamentalism and Its Reformation Opponents* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2010).

⁶⁷ Quoted in Alexandra Walsham, “Domme Preachers’? Reformation English Catholicism and the Culture of Print,” *Past and Present* 169 (August 2000) 72-123.

tions of Catholic liturgy.⁶⁸ The vernacular bible, in Christopher Hill's estimation, educated and galvanised a generation of revolutionaries in Milton's time. It dominated English textual culture for both printers, who sought monopolies over its publication, and readers, whose religious and political beliefs were shaped by its contents. As Christopher Harvey wrote in 1640: "It is the Book of God. What if I should/Say, god of books?"⁶⁹

On the one hand, Peter Lake has called the period in which Milton wrote, and Quakerism first took shape, a "historiographical ghetto." Between 1640 and 1660 the relationship between cheap print and religion changed dramatically, yet the period has been left to "languish," "elided by the continuing propensity of some...to break off in 1640 and of others to pick up again in 1660."⁷⁰ On the other hand, the two decades have been difficult to move beyond. Even the gradual build up to collapse in 1640 has not fully accounted for the force and extent of its consequences, and while Restoration legislation attempted to reverse much of what had occurred during the Civil War and Commonwealth years, its political characteristics stood in stark contrast to what came before. Yet the claims made for the period have far-reaching consequences: it initiated the rise of Parliamentary democracy and marked the emergence of a public sphere informed about, and demanding information from, its politicians in terms not unfamiliar to us today.⁷¹ Such arguments have been rooted in understandings of the circulation of print and manuscript material as a form of information and exchange available to widening audiences. If

⁶⁸ Christopher Hill, *The English Bible and the Seventeenth Century Revolution* (London: Penguin Books, 1994) 4-5.

⁶⁹ quoted in Hill, *The English Bible*, 3.

⁷⁰ Peter Lake, "Religion and Cheap Print," Joad Raymond, ed. *The Oxford History of Popular Print Culture, Volume 1: Cheap Print in Britain and Ireland to 1660*, (Oxford: OUP, 2011) 235.

⁷¹ Rees, *The Leveller Revolution*, ch. 1.

there is one thing scholars have agreed upon about the Civil War and Commonwealth periods, it is the “participatory tactics” popularised in the textual culture of the time.

Quakerism inherited this tradition. The relationship between Quakers and printed works from the origins of the movement in the late 1640s and early 1650s was not incidental—it was a feature of the revolutionary period that was impossible to ignore. Engagement with Quaker printing, in addition, was required of members, and has provided a way to understand the significance of the supposed “explosion” of print beginning in 1640. That explosion both informed Quaker publication habits, and was perpetuated by Quakers far beyond the Commonwealth period. The bible’s place in justifying Quaker writings was scandalous to Christians who held both Royalist and Parliamentary sympathies, that is, Protestants at both ends of the English political spectrum. Quakers called the scripture the “dead letter” and saw only active reading as a way to reinvest in the “dead letter” a sense of the “spirit” which had “given it forth.” The distinction between “letter” and “spirit,” and the authority of the “spirit” over the “letter” was a belief that numbered Quakers amongst the most radical religious groups of their day after the example of certain Civil War sects, especially the Seekers from whom they drew much of their early membership. The inner light remained at the heart of their spiritual practice, and structured their hierarchy of spirit over letter. The emphasis placed upon this distinction, furthermore, linked Quakers with a continental religious tradition including the Anabaptists a century earlier which had been perceived dangerous by both Protestants and Catholics.

In this chapter I will detail the Quaker belief in the inner light from their earliest writings to discuss its role in their interpretation of the bible, and in their publication of books. While excellent scholarship

has detailed the networks Quakers established to circulate their publications, and the importance of those publications to maintaining membership, my priority is to restore the spiritual imperative that powered those networks. More than their use as tools for communication and maintaining communities across England, Quaker pamphlets were the remnants of spiritual experience, and the raw materials for future readers to incorporate into their own practice.

Early Quaker writings concerning the inner light took a devotionally apocalyptic tone that sought to draw new members to the sect before it was too late, and they did successfully prompt conversion.⁷² Tracts were addressed, for example, “To the Light in all your Consciences... that to it ye may turn, to see what ye know of the living God,” as Margaret Fell wrote.⁷³ The “light” was an essential element of reading amongst Quakers. But it was also used in writing apologetic works. Edward Burrough described writing in the light as writing “in the same Spirit” as and achieving “true Union and Communion” with the Saints and the Apostles.⁷⁴ Both of these contexts, apocalyptic and apologetic, guided the inner light to its expression in pamphlets written by early leaders meant for early members to read.

To begin, I will look into “Reading in the Light” as it was defined in early Quaker pamphlets. Next, I will look further in depth at concepts of the inner light that were developed collectively in Quaker Meetings. A key text that described this development was William Britten’s *Silent Meeting*, which outlined the ideal format for collective Quaker

⁷² Adrian Davies, *The Quakers in English Society, 1655-1725* (Oxford: OUP, 2000) 109-10.

⁷³ Margaret Fell, *To All Professors of the World* (London: Giles Calvert, 1655), quoted in Giuseppina Iacono Lobo, “Early Quaker Writing, Oliver Cromwell, and the Nationalization of Conscience,” *Exemplaria* 24 (2012) 113.

⁷⁴ Quoted in Lobo, “Early Quaker Writing, Oliver Cromwell, and the Nationalization of Conscience,” 114.

worship, as well as the three stages by which Quakers might determine whether they were indeed “moved by the Lord” to speak. The language Britten uses to describe speaking in Quaker meetings was in turn, the language used to describe Quakers moved to write and publish. Next, I will return to the broader landscape of publications as foreshadowed by Milton. In this case I will focus on one debate in particular between the Quakers and the clergyman Richard Sherlock, as a way of considering how Quaker spirituality and reading practices clashed with conventional Protestant textual culture. Whereas Quakers called for an outpouring of spirit in the form of texts, mainly pamphlets, the way in which their prolific publications were viewed by critics like Sherlock was as a plague or pestilence — linking those critics with theories of heresy and information dating back to the Catholic Inquisition.

By detailing Quaker belief in terms of this debate I aim to set the foundation for everything that follows in this thesis: the continued investment in print, the emergence of a tradition of record-keeping, and in both of those areas, the extension of the practices of Quaker leaders to those expected of Quaker members. My focus upon the “plague” of Quaker writings shows, just as my reading of Milton’s *Areopagitica*, the Quakers maintained a truly radical heritage that linked them to religious movements both within and outside of England. Above all, the Quaker spirituality of texts ensured the survival and diffusion of certain Civil War-era practices and concepts beyond the Commonwealth period, and in particular, they ensured this through the consistent production of written and printed materials. In focussing on early Quaker publications, this chapter is limited to the perspective of Quaker leaders and their imagined audiences. And yet there was something to the inner light: it provided a basis for spiritual equality, and while that basis remained largely theoretical, in the realm of authorship and publication it did not. Friends were com-

pelled by their reading to add to the plurality of voices recorded and published, and systems emerged to document and attempt to control the collective force of such compulsion.

Reading in the Light

A 1655 pamphlet included a dialogue between Humphrey Smith (c. 1624 - 1663), an early Quaker preacher who had been arrested, and the justice Robert Atkins, who presided over his trial:

Rob Atkins said Smith, You are the Ring-Leader of this Sect, and of this people; I know you have Scripture enough, and you can tell of Pauls Condition, and many such things, but you lead people contrary to the ways of God.

Humph: Smith. Paul was accounted as a Sectarian and a Mover of Sedition, and a Pestilent Fellow.

Rob. Atkins. Paul was called so, but was not so; but you are called so, and are so.

Ans[wer]. That is not yet proved.⁷⁵

This exchange, couched in terms of Scripture, was first and foremost a debate over interpretation. The Quaker Smith's understanding of Paul's treatment by his contemporaries — namely his persecution as seditious and pestilential — was used to articulate his relationship to the court. The justice, in turn, accused him of a dangerous misreading: he had knowingly misinterpreted the scripture and had used that misinterpretation to lead others "contrary to the ways of God." The brief exchange is densely packed with information about the state of the Friends in 1655.

Paul was central to the Quaker understanding of their place in the world as persecuted yet righteous. The collapse of Paul's experience with Smith's was a common Quaker argument — they saw them-

⁷⁵ Humphrey Smith, *The Cruelty of the Magistrates of Evesham, in Worcester-Shire...*(London: Printed for Giles Calvert, 1655) 4.

selves as embodiments of the ancient historical examples described in the bible.⁷⁶ Moreover, in Paul's letter to the Corinthians, the notion that "The Letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life," was crucial, and often repeated, in defence of their approach to reading scripture. Smith and his fellow Friends performed a different kind of "active reading" than Lisa Jardine and Anthony Grafton have identified of scholars such as Gabriel Harvey a century earlier — but active reading is the only way to describe it. Quakers were infamous in their performance of the "spirit" drawn from their readings of the "letter" — appearing in public naked, smeared with ashes, with blood, scattering pamphlets in marketplace and churchyard, interrupting the sermons of ministers. Their experience of reading about, and imitating in public, examples from the bible were controversial. The element of active scriptural interpretation that led to such displays was what Atkins had identified as "contrary to the ways of God."

The Quakers copied the dialogue, and circulated it in a pamphlet printed by the radical publisher Giles Calvert as *The Cruelty of the Magistrates of Evesham*. Calvert was a printer of prophets and rebels. The point of Quaker pamphlets like Humphrey Smith's was to add to a body of "proof" that Quakers were correct in their embodiment of biblical history, as much as it was to encourage the conversion to Quakerism amongst readers. *The Cruelty of the Magistrates* would have sold along with dozens of other Quaker titles at his shop in London under the "Sign of the Black Spread-Eagle," published that year: *A Declaration from the Children of Light, Davids enemies discovered, and False prophets, antichrists, deceivers which are in the world* among others. They also would have sold side-by-side with Samuel Hartlib's *Reformed Common-wealth of bees*, the pres-

⁷⁶ Geoffrey Dipple writes a history of how the vernacular scripture promoted a sense of historical consciousness in the 16th century Reformation in *"Just as In the Time of the Apostles": Uses of History in the Radical Reformation* (Ontario: Pandora Press, 2005).

byterian Christopher Fowler's *Satan at Noon*, and the prophecies of Thomas Totney, who renamed himself TheaurauJohn Tany and preached in the streets of London with a large chain locked to his leg as a symbol of "the people of England's Captivity." "Know that I am a mad man," Tany had written in his 1650 tract *The Nation's Right in the Magna Charta*. In 1655 he prophesied that "light is come forth from the God," and that "the Jew and the Gentile" would be reconciled "both into one."⁷⁷ Tany and the Quakers drew the boldness of their descriptions of light from, among others, Jakob Böhme, the German mystic whose writings Calvert had begun to have translated and published as early as 1649.⁷⁸ Taken as a whole, the publications found at Calvert's shop placed Quakers within a broader tradition of dissent inspired by radical readings of the bible.

Historically, the practice of reading the bible at home and interpreting it without the mediation of university-trained ministers had been controversial in England. As Christopher Hill has detailed in *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution*:

The Anglican hierarchy wished to ensure that there was an educated clergyman in every parish, who would interpret the Scriptures for his flock, solve their problems and check their heretical thoughts....Once the Scriptures had been translated into the vernacular and printed, Pandora's box was opened.⁷⁹

Just as the exchange showed both Atkins and Smith as having "Scripture enough" to understand one another, the vernacular English Bible was the common ancestor of Anglican and Quaker spiritual-

⁷⁷ Ariel Hessayon, *Gold Tried in the Fire: The Prophet TheaurauJohn Tany and the English Revolution* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2007) 1, 5.

⁷⁸ B. J. Gibbons, *Gender in Mystical and Occult Thought: Behmenism and its development in England* (Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 1996) 4; *The epistles of Jacob Behmen, aliter, Teutonicus philosophus very usefull and necessary for those that read his writings, and are very full of excellent and plaine instructions how to attaine to the life of Christ* (London: Matthew Simmons for Giles Calvert, 1649).

⁷⁹ Hill, *The English Bible*, 17.

ities alike. Unlike debates over access to scripture that had taken place in the wake of the sixteenth-century Reformation, the Civil War years were a time for unprecedented affordability of the scripture. Before 1640, the Stationer's monopoly on bible patents kept prices relatively high, but after the collapse of the company octavo bibles sold at 2s. 8d, and even less in duodecimo. By 1650 the Army in Scotland could purchase bibles at 1s 8. each, although the average price remained around 2s.⁸⁰

Consequently, the Quakers who took to print had easy access to scripture, and their pamphlets were packed with scriptural interpretation, much to the annoyance of men like Bishop Samuel Parker, who complained that "unqualified people should [not] have promiscuous license to read the Scriptures" in the first place.⁸¹ For Humphrey Smith, George Fox, and other early Quaker leaders, that "promiscuous license" was always in the service of the inner light. Reading with attention paid to the inner light was the motivating force behind the Quakers' earliest pamphleteering efforts. Fox and early Quaker leaders sought to add to the body of writing that might inspire others to experience immediate revelation from their own light.

The approach made possible a multiplication of individual perspectives of scripture. Reading Quaker publications based on articulating their spiritual experiences filled a "glaring gap in the existing range of Protestant literature" that Alexandra Walsham has noted: "Spiritual and devotional writing was a genre which the reformed ministry was slow to develop." Bestselling Catholic works like the *Spiritual Exercises*, Robert Persons' *First Book of the Christian Exercise*, or Gaspar Loarte's *Exercise of a Christian Life* had no Protestant equiva-

⁸⁰ Hill, *The English Bible*, 18.

⁸¹ quoted in Hill, *The English Bible*, 16.

lent. As the vicar of Faversham complained in 1629: “Let it be observed what advantage the common Adversarie hath gotten by their pettie Pamphlets in this kinde.”⁸² To add to the trouble, Quaker pamphlets often instructed readers of their author’s methods of using letter to exercise spirit, and encouraged imitation.

The earliest Quakers referred to themselves as “Children of the Light” and “Publishers of Truth,” and took both literally. In a text published in 1653, George Fox and Richard Hubberthorne laid out the beliefs of the growing sect of Quakers in a question and answer format. Among other topics, they explained exactly why they were driven to publish pamphlets as a matter of spiritual duty, at the bidding of the light. They were moved by the Holy Spirit to publish, to inform and to clarify for people the difference between God’s truth and the devil’s falsehood: the book was called *Truth’s defence against the refined subtilty of the serpent*. Fox and Hubberthorne, like Humphrey Smith, imagined themselves to be carrying on the example set by the bible, and they imagined printed books as a logical extension of the epistles circulated between the communities of biblical antiquity:

[A]s the Prophets of the Lord who spake his Word, somtimes spoke, and when they were moved to write they writ and published it abroad, so do we the same, being absent in body, sending forth writings or Printed Books to declare to the simple mindes the deceits that ye who are blinde Guides have led them in...⁸³

This is different, but related, to the network of Quaker publications Kate Peters has described in *Print Culture and the Early Quakers*. Peters has shown Quaker publications to serve the function of binding together groups of people spread over great distances, and of keeping members unified regarding the information they had access

⁸² Walsham, “Domme Preachers?” 104.

⁸³ Fox and Hubberthorne, *Truth’s defence*, 74.

to. But in *Truth's defence*, Fox and Hubberthorne described further uses of Quaker publications — first as a tool for argument against “deceit” by non-Quakers, and second, as a physical sign of the spiritual and temporal collapse between biblical example with lived experience, just “as the Prophets.”

Quakers saw clergymen as their enemy — both because they controlled and authorised interpretation of the bible, yet also because the education and hierarchy by which they did so strayed from the habits of the Apostles described in the bible. Fox and Hubberthorne wrote:

[O]ur giving forth Papers or Printed Books, it is from the immediate eternal Spirit of God, to the shewing forth the filthy practises of the Worlds Teachers...who with a pretence and fair colours and glosses, and with a seeming Religion deceives the simple, and thy own soul too; we have bin long under captivity by you, and such as you, following your imaginacions, but God hath raised up a Light within us, by which we see you Deceivers without us...⁸⁴

The inner light made ministers redundant. Quakers, like many sectarians of their generation, wanted to do away with ecclesiastical hierarchy, the “Worlds Teachers” whom they saw as a force that held them in “captivity.”

Clergymen were a barrier rather than a conduit to God. Quakers criticised their “monopoly” on knowledge; Latin, Greek, and dexterity among “fair colours and glosses” of biblical commentaries was to them a distraction and a deception. Fox and his followers promised to undertake to publish indefinitely into the future to replace the availability of learned works with their own type of writings and testimonies, with the “Truth:”

⁸⁴ Fox and Hubberthorne, *Truth's defence*, 104.

[W]e are moved by the immediat Spirit of Christ, to write, to teach, or to exhort, or to put in Print,...thou shalt see more Papers and more Printings, and as the immediat Spirit grows, there will be more abominacions, and filthiness layd open, and all Deceit will be discovered, and the Truth spread abroad and cherished...⁸⁵

Crucial to this project was a certain fearlessness toward getting their hands dirty, toward the risk of reproducing “abominacions, and filthiness,” when identifying corrupt practices amongst priests.

True to their promise in *Truth's defence*, between 1652 and 1656 Quakers published a new pamphlet each week.⁸⁶ More than one hundred Quaker writers authored over 300 tracts between 1652 and 1656 alone. Reading in the light made Quakers incredibly adversarial. Active reading, reading for immediate revelation, resulted in direct engagement with others through letters and pamphlets. They modelled their confrontational behaviour on the prophets of the Old Testament. Early Quaker leaders took Fox and Hubberthorne's promises to print in 1653 seriously, and were often on the attack before pushed to defend their beliefs. As Richard Sherlock wrote in *The Quakers Wilde Questions Objected Against*, his patron Thomas Bindlosse had received “a letter of strange, scrupulous, and unheard Questions” drawn from scripture, and addressed to Bindlosse with a challenge to defend his beliefs. This form of provocation was common: Quakers challenged divines on their scriptural knowledge and threatened to print their challenges if they were ignored. It was in this context that they articulated some of their beliefs about the “spirit” and the “letter” most clearly. Their challenges, when published, read like blackmail. For instance George Fox wrote:

⁸⁵ Fox and Hubberthorne, *Truth's defence*, 105.

⁸⁶ Peters, *Print Culture and the Early Quakers*, 1,11.

John James, I hearing that thou doest make a noise up and down in the Countrey amongst the Ignorant, and hath spoken Re-proachfully, and backbited the people of God, that by such as thee are in scorn called Quakers, here is a few Queries for thee to Answer in writing, and plainness of words, which if thou dost not, we shall spread them abroad and set them in places where thou **comes**....

The queries concerned “the spirit and power” of the prophets and the Apostles, “whether or no doest thou own Trembling and Quaking at the word of God” and Fox closed the work with another threat. “Answer these Queries to the same thing queried, in writing, if thou be a Minister of Christ, as thou hast so published thy self...If thou do not give us thy Answer within two weeks, we may cause this to be Printed, because thou has slanderously reported of us.”

Many works by Quakers appeared in this format, and some bundled together multiple challenges, for instance *A Deceit and Enmity of the Priests, Manifested...Likewise XX Queries Propounded to George Long, High Priest of Bathe, and Priests Sanges of London, by them to be answerd in Print, or Writing*. “This Book should have been Printed long ago,” a postscript read, “but through neglect of some, and mistake of others, it hath been prevented, yet now it comes not out of good season, but may do its service, to awake the Witness of God.” Richard Waller and his wife wrote letters to the family where they had once been servants, and argued in their letters both against paying tythes and to justify their conversion to Quakerism. In Barbados, Thomas Clark described delivering letters to his critics in that colony in *The Voice of Truth uttered forth against the Unreasonableness...of the Rulers, Teachers and People of the Island Barbados*:

[A]fterwards I carryed a Letter to his house, which was written to him by two Friends, but when I came there, he refused to speak with me, and also to receive the Letter, which I sent in

to him; but he returned it again by his Clerk, who gave it me, and told me that his Master would have nothing to do with me, nor yet with my Papers: and soon after the said Manwaring writ me a Letter, in which was these words, (viz.) Thomas, I am sorry if the Zeal of thy Spirit be to quick for thy Discretion, and that a Cudgel must beat that out of thee, which the Devil hath blown in. And subscribed his name, Thomas Manwaring...

Epistolary challenges were a common means of debating scripture and circulating Quaker beliefs among local parishes. "Epistolarity," as in Altmans' sense of "the use of the letter's formal properties to create meaning," was used by Quakers to emphasise the immediacy of their beliefs, to establish an intimacy between author and reader similar to the Pauline epistles, as well as to pin down the local character of debate and discussion and even harassment in which they participated. The formal qualities of the epistles also linked Quakers to the textual communities of the bible, especially the letters of Paul, and in the textual culture of the Civil War period. Letters appeared in an easy, accessible format that also lent itself particularly well to profusion when printed as short pamphlets.

William Thomas, Bishop of Worcester, complained that Quaker pamphlets were "corrupt and corrupting," and he especially criticised that they had been "purposely made little, that they may be nimble, and passe with more speed, and at an easy rate, to infect the Nation."⁸⁷ The anti-Quaker writer, Francis Higginson, did not limit his disgust to printed matter when he complained about Quakers' "printed Libels, and...Manuscripts that flye as thick as Moths up and down the Coun-

⁸⁷ quoted in Lobo, "Early Quaker Writing, Oliver Cromwell, and the Nationalization of Conscience," 115.

try.”⁸⁸ These pamphlets owed their “little,” “nimble” appearance to the immediacy of their message: reading in the light inspired short bursts of prophetic revelation that adapted biblical examples to present experiences. They were by spiritual necessity brief: physical manifestations of immediate revelation that took the form of spontaneous utterances at Quaker meetings for worship, such as those, for example, described in William Britten’s *Silent Meeting a Wonder to the World*. And if these pamphlets captured the revelations and outpourings of individual Quaker leaders, reading them in the light was administered in the communal environment of the Quaker “Meeting.”

Silent Meetings

The triumph of the spirit over the letter is at constant odds with the durability of the letter over the spirit—materiality is history’s ultimate victor by sheer persistence. In this sense, a look into the spiritual prompt behind Quaker publications, as well as the intended result from reading the publications themselves, veers into intangible territory. Primarily, Quaker identity was tested and shaped in collective settings during worship, what the Friends called “Meetings.” Meetings occurred locally and weekly, although they were not site-specific and were held in houses and in fields and streets. As a form of worship, Meetings were held in silence, until members were moved to speak. Afterward, they also served as administrative hubs to record membership and exchange news.

William Britten’s (d. 1669) *Silent Meeting A Wonder to the World* (1660) described the ideal Quaker meeting and provided guidelines for experiencing the “immediate revelation” that meetings were supposed to provoke amidst the silence. It served as something like a Quaker equivalent to the *Spiritual Exercises*, except it was meant to

⁸⁸ Francis Higginson, *A brief relation of the irreligion of the northern Quakers*, (London: Printed by T.R. for H.R., 1653) sig. a2.

instruct the behaviour Friends exhibited in a communal setting. While most Friends' pamphlets contained references to the intangible inspirations and revelations that "moved" them to writing, Britten, a former Anglican and former Baptist minister, attempted to formalise the stages by which Quakers might evaluate their thoughts.

The purpose of the book was as an aid in determining whether each thought or "speech" was a product of the "Light of Christ within," or a false truth, since even the learned were capable of making mistakes. Reading the bible alone was not sufficient:

[T]he seeing, hearing, or reading the Letter vails little without us; for the Letter, of former Scriptures, the Scribes, Pharisees, and persecuting Priest had, who crucified Christ, as many now have the Letter also, yet to little purpose, whilst they seek to destroy the Works of the Spirit...Look therefore, by the *Light of christ within you...*"⁸⁹

Britten described the mixed metaphor of "hearing" with the heart: through meeting silently, communally, and undergoing intense silent contemplation before being moved to speak. "I have found and felt more of the Lords Presence in one Silent Meeting," he wrote, citing both his Anglican and Baptist history, "then I have done in a hundred Sermons preached by me in times past."⁹⁰ He described the steps by which Friends might aim for a sustained meditative state in their meetings, clearing their minds from any human concerns in order to "rest from sinful Imaginations...entering upon a true Rest in God."⁹¹

⁸⁹ Britten, William. *Silent meeting, a wonder to the world*, (London: Printed for Robert Wilson 1660) 5.

⁹⁰ Britten, *Silent meeting*, 5.

⁹¹ Britten, *Silent Meeting*, 8.

This “rest” wasn’t easily achieved: for instance George Fox also issued epistles warning Friends against falling asleep in meetings.⁹² Nevertheless, *Silent Meeting* described a mixed reading experience, involving a range of silent contemplation, private reading, and hearing works read aloud. The idea for the silent meeting was based upon the Friends’ interpretation of the Acts of the Apostles, and bolstered through a patchwork of biblical references:

[W]hereas his Kingdom is not of this World...neither are his Ministers of the Letter, but of the Spirit,...called New Testament (or new Covenant) Ministers, having that written in their Hearts, before promised...who should not search Authors, Commentaries, Manuscripts, as a Shop-Book, for a Sermon; but speak from the Power of Christ within, as Paul did...and the Apostles Act.2. did, having the Word in the Mouth, and in the Heart...Therefore we must pray God to send us such; for men cannot do it by calling one another *Bachelors*, and *Masters*, and *Doctors* upon human Arts and Acts [...] Now as the Apostles *Silent Meeting* was in Expectation of the Spirit before promised, so God (in Scriptures) having engaged himself, that in these latter Dayes there should be Flowings forth thereof, we silently wait for it...⁹³

This form of worship created a clear divide between the book and the spirit, and did not require an education. Quakers contrasted their approach to Catholic and Protestant services, which were administered through a whole host of liturgies, hymns, and prayer books, and private devotion was guided by personal bibles and books of hours. It also placed communal worship at the heart of the experience. Although the inner light revealed itself in the form of personal revelation, *Silent Meeting* emphasised the story of the Holy Spirit’s collec-

⁹² “And Friends, all take heed of Sleeping in Meetings, and Sottishness, and Dulness; for it is an unsavoury thing to see one sit Nodding in a Meeting, and so to lose the Sense of the Lord.” George Fox, “Epistle 257 (1668),” *Epistles* (London: T. Sowle, 1698) 257

⁹³ Britten, *Silent Meeting*, 9-10.

tive visit to the Apostles with the gift of tongues of fire as a way of establishing a setting in which individual testimonies were first spoken, tested, and developed.

Britten encouraged a three-stage process he called the “Spiritual Watch”, “Spiritual Touchstone” and “Spiritual Scales.” Each stage was geared toward refining one’s speech before speaking. Britten used the three-part process to triple-check any ideas that arose in the minds of Quakers during worship. He first asked readers to imagine themselves remaining silent, keeping “watch” in the manner of the apostles while Christ was in the Garden of Gethsemane. Next he encouraged a test of the phrasing of intended speech by “Melting, Trying, and Refining within...in Words themselves, how sometimes they are too many, sometimes unsound and untrue, sometimes too short...let them be tried by the *Spiritual Touchstone* before they proceed out of thy Mouth.” Finally readers were meant to check the content of their message, to test that content on the “Scales to weigh, ponder or consider all things to be spoken or done, before they pass from thee.”⁹⁴

These internal devotional acts, combined with a rejection of the need for fixed devotional texts, silently filled the gap between Quaker reading on the one hand, and the production of further texts and pamphlets describing their “immediate revelations” on the other. Any Friend who published their ideas had, ideally, subjected them to this test, to their own satisfaction, and to the satisfaction and approval of their local Meeting in most cases.

Consequently Quaker pamphlets often included introductory comments like Frances Taylor’s: “This gretly exercised me this Morning,

⁹⁴ Britten, *Silent Meeting*, 10.

and I could have no Rest until I had it writ down, and then God's Peace confirmed me, that I had done his Will."⁹⁵ Taylor used the typical Quaker language of devotional reading: "Oh! dear children, into whose hands this Book may be recommended, whether in the Truth or out of the Truth...when this comes to your hands, take this holy Exhortation, and enter into your Closets, and with Seriousness and Godly Fear read this Book." Sometimes Quakers were moved to print and to present their printed works in highly provocative ways. Andrew Jaffray wrote that "I was moved...(being a publick Market-day) to go through the Streets of the city [of Aberdeen] Naked, with Man's Dung in my Hands, and afterwards to scatter some of the above-written Papers at the Market-Cross," for which he was carried to prison, and from whence he authored and published a second edition of the pamphlet he described scattering.⁹⁶ Occasionally, epistles were printed and subscribed by the meeting members who had decided collectively on their contents. For example, the York Women's Meeting printed a brief letter composed from the "mind of the meeting," which offered warm greetings to meetings in other parts of England, and encouraged that the message be "gathred up...and kept in some particular hand, if happily there may be service for them in future time."⁹⁷ The immediacy of the need to print after a period of meditation, and mediation with the meeting, meant that while there are very few Quaker notebooks and commonplace books, and even less marginalia, Quaker pamphlets such as these have to be seen as evidence of reading practices.

⁹⁵ Frances Taylor, *A testimony to the Lord's power and blessed appearance in and amongst children...Published for the use of Friends...*(London: Printed in the Year, 1679) 4, 6.

⁹⁶ Andrew Jaffray, *A serious and earnest Exhibration and seasonable Warning given forth in two Epistles to the People and Inhabitants of Aberdeen* ([N.p.]: [n.pb.], 1677) 4.

⁹⁷ Elizabeth Taylor, et. al. *From our womens yearly meeting held at York the 19th and 20th dayes of the fourth mounth 1700* (London: n. pb., 1700).

Revisiting the Pamphlet Explosion

Taking to print as a readerly response was a possibility peculiar to the Commonwealth period. So too was incorporating self-evaluation as a kind of internal censorship an element of an environment where licensing had lapsed. The profusion of Quaker pamphlets, and pamphlets in general during the Civil War period, had been preceded by decades of tight control over the press. In *Truth's defence*, Fox and Hubberthorne wrote after the very recent collapse of a strict licensing regime that began in England even before the invention of the printing press. The Stationer's Company had been incorporated in 1402 to record and control patents to print texts, but censorship was a theological issue. After the invention and spread of printing, further legislation to control the circulation of information was passed, for instance restricting the types of bibles which might be published and read, or barring the writings of dangerous authors like Wycliffe, Tynedale, and Coverdale. Anglican Bishops reacted to "heretics" just as Continental Catholics had reacted to Martin Luther by increasing restrictions upon what could be published. They cooperated with the Stationers, and in theory no English books on religious subjects were printed or imported without license.⁹⁸

Under Archbishop Laud, publishing restrictions were tighter than ever. In 1624 and 1637 Laud appointed censors, including the bishop of London and the vice chancellors of Oxford and Cambridge, to restrict foreign imports, especially from the presses of English Puritans set up in Holland. Key figures in the revolutionary period such as William Prynne and John Lilburne suffered horrific persecution by the Stationer's Company for their publications. Prynne had his ears cropped and the letters "SL" branded on his face to indicate that he

⁹⁸ Cyprian Blagden, *The Stationer's company, A History, 1403-1959* (London: Ruskin House, 1960) 22, 28.

had published “Seditious Libel.”⁹⁹ But after the authority of Laud collapsed in 1640, the Stationers’ Company and Star Chamber were dissolved, and the presses operated unchecked. During the period of the first Civil War, there was more than a quadrupling of titles per year.¹⁰⁰ The burden of censorship by and large shifted to the realm of post-publication, and took the form of argument, causing an increase in pamphlets, engaged in “pamphlet wars,” many of which survive in George Thomason’s vast collection documenting the “pamphlet explosion.”¹⁰¹

Even Thomason’s collection — over 22,000 pamphlets — collected less than half of press output between 1640 and 1661, and his collection lacked Quaker publications in particular.¹⁰² This was more about form than anything. Robert Darnton and D.F. McKenzie have shown that there was not an increase in paper use in the London trade, so much as a reshuffling of the use of paper to print pamphlets rather than books. Moreover, that paper was distributed across a much larger number of presses.¹⁰³ This was partially a matter of clandestine presses printing in the open, and partially related to English Catholic publishing, which “moved back home” after 1640, and became the second largest type of religious publication after the Church of England itself.¹⁰⁴ As the publisher of John Milton’s 1645 poems complained: “the slightest pamphlet is now always more vendible than the works of learnedest men.”¹⁰⁵ Many of the pam-

⁹⁹ Rees, *The Leveller Revolution*, 28, 68.

¹⁰⁰ Hinds, *George Fox and Early Quaker Culture*, 9

¹⁰¹ McKenzie, D.F. “The London Book Trade in 1644,” 126.

¹⁰² McKenzie, D.F. “The London Book Trade in 1644,” 129.

¹⁰³ McKenzie, “The London Book Trade in 1644,” 130.

¹⁰⁴ Clancy, *English Catholic Books*, ix, xi.

¹⁰⁵ Achinstein, *Milton and the Revolutionary Reader*, 10.

phlets Thomason collected, printed after 1640, were shot through with anxiety over the surge of religious publications, and the return of a “Papist” market of books. Their authors took pains to justify their right to write in the prefatory material, chiefly by condemning the existence of other pamphlets. During the reign of Charles I, John Coke had written that the pamphlet wars engaged by the clergy were the frontline “defence of our church, and therein of our state.”¹⁰⁶ The change in the length of what was printed was also marked by a change in who wrote it.

As a 1647 broadside complained, many self-appointed preachers sought audiences without authorisation or training. “These Tradesmen are Preachers in and about the city of London,” showing images of twelve men: a confectioner, a smith, a shoemaker, a tailor, a sadler, a porter, a box-maker, a glover, a meal-man, a chicken-man, a button-maker,” each contributed to “many erroneous, Hereticall, and Mechannick spirits” which spread “the most dangerous an damnable tenets.”¹⁰⁷ Or as Ephraim Pagitt complained in his *Heresiography*: “Everyone that listeth turneth Preacher, as Shoo-makers, Coblers, Button-makers, Hostlers, take upon them to expound the holy Scriptures, intrude into our Pulputs, and vent strange doctrine, tending to faction, sedition, and blasphemy.”¹⁰⁸

The Quaker concept of immediate revelation offered one spiritual explanation for this emergent class of citizen-preachers. There was no knowing what a person might claim as divinely revealed, although Quakers argued that revelations could never “contradict the outward

¹⁰⁶ Quoted in Hill, *The English Bible*, 16.

¹⁰⁷ [Anonymous] “These Tradesmen are Preachers in and about the city of London,” British Library 669 f.11 (6).

¹⁰⁸ Cressy, *England on Edge*; Pagitt, *Heresiography*, sig. B1v.

testimony of the Scriptures.”¹⁰⁹ In a religious tradition where “the Word of God” was sufficient to attain salvation, any religious commentary or interpretation needed to be justified on spiritual grounds. Otherwise, religious publishing might be considered “superadditions.” In direct conflict with the Book of Revelation’s warning against the addition to the text of scripture. Quakers described themselves as heirs to Luther’s and Foxe’s efforts, and that they faced the same criticisms levied against both, was used as evidence to prove the point.

The Pamphlet as Plague

The debate over the ethics of religious publication in late seventeenth-century England used the same language Catholics had to describe heretics from the middle ages onward. Heresy and blasphemy were depicted as plagues of insects, plagues of disease, which could spread with dangerous speeds. As late as 1693, years after the Toleration Act had been passed, the accusation that Friends published too much persisted. The former Quaker Francis Bugg complained that “Nay, their very books...teach that the Scriptures are Death, Dust, Beastly Ware, Serpents Food,” so enduringly annoying was their mediate presence. “Who hath wrote more than the Quakers?” Bugg continued, “Have they not this forty years, and now, laid siege against the Christian reputation of both magistrates and ministers?...[enough] to infect a Nation.”¹¹⁰ To focus on this language of darkness, plague, and abomination yields an understanding about the relationship between spirituality, books, and information exchange in general within the Quaker tradition, and in opposition to their contemporaries.

¹⁰⁹ Barclay, *Apology*, 2.

¹¹⁰ Quoted in Luella Wright, *The Literary Lives of the Early Friends, 1650-1725* (New York: Columbia U P, 1932) 78-9.

As a concept, “plague” denoted a relationship with information circulation that was not bound merely by the invention of the printed book — it drew from a tradition much earlier, to biblical antiquity itself. When the discourse of plague was used to describe information, no form was exempt, and even if it began with pamphleteering, the implications for how printed and manuscript books were understood and used were altered. For those who employed the discourse of plague, it illuminated their own consciousness of a relationship with a Catholic as well as a Protestant history, and their familiarity with scriptures. Just as Ranters, Seekers, Levellers, Diggers, Baptists and others did a decade before the Quakers, publication involved an engagement with critics in terms of plague and pestilence, both real and imagined.

This tested, through debate, the place of books and reading within their own spiritual practice. Friends continued to rely upon an idea of writing and printing as secondary to “Immediate revelation” or experience they gained *from* reading, which in turn was the closest humans could get to God. Linked to this “blasphemy” was their idea that the scripture was a “dead letter”— not the word of God, but like their own writings, a remnant of each biblical author’s encounter with God. An early argument between Quakers and the Anglican priest Richard Sherlock provides a sense of the stakes of publication. Taking place over the course of the 1650s, the argument carried forward anxieties from the 1640s surrounding religious publications advocating “Liberty of Conscience,” that had flared up, including and most famously in Milton’s *Areopagitica*.¹¹¹

To take him at his word, Richard Sherlock (1612-1689) was reluctant to publish: “It is not any ambitious desire to appear in print,” he wrote

¹¹¹ Rees, *The Leveller Revolution*, 59, 65.

in a dedicatory epistle to Sir Robert Bindlosse in *The Quakers wilde questions objected against*. Despite “how unwillingly” he “appear[ed] in print,” the book was a product of a “challenge,” and “in conscience of [his] duty” as a clergyman he felt provoked to response. Several Quakers, he continued, had addressed “a letter of strange, scrupulous, and unheard Questions” to Bindlosse’s house. He had decided to take his response to the publisher to “assist against the infection of Errors in Religioun, the plague whereof is grown so Epidemical, that there was never more need of Antidotes.” The “unlearned, and unstable souls” of the Friends were “bewitched”. They were caught up in a revolutionary fervour: “this infection and plague of the holy, and true Religion, is crying Reformation, and Liberty of conscience (which are necessary, if rightly understood, and kept within their due limits).”

Sherlock wasn’t completely hostile to the rights demanded by those who had survived the years of civil war — he was simply sensitive to the excesses of the impulse to reform, the “Severe instrument of Reformation” which might be used “not only to pare the nails, but cut off the hands.” Revelation, Reformation, and Liberty of Conscience were important issues that required study and training if one were to earn the authority to claim them as personal rights. Instruction had to come from somewhere — if every person passed off their own desires as “immediate Revelation” or “The quickning Spirit”, the result would be total chaos.¹¹² As for Sherlock, he preferred “the ordinary way of study in the Schools of the Prophets, and of industrious search into the Books and writings of the learned.” In other words, he was invested in the traditional Protestant textual culture organised by a hierarchy of trained scholars—a humanistic project first elaborated upon by Erasmus, but emphasised by Luther and his milieu.

¹¹² Richard Sherlock, *The Quakers wilde questions objected against...* (London: Printed by E. Cotes for R. Royston at the Angel in Ivie-Lane, 1656) sig. A2, A2v, A4, 3, 213.

And understanding of Revelation, in short, was gained by years of intellectual labor, whereas claims to immediate revelation could not be trusted, “as if there were no more required to the acquiring of spiritual wisdom, then to sit still and wait for Divine Inspirations.”¹¹³ Without time, effort, and commitment, who is to say whether Quaker beliefs were the “true Religion” they claimed? Sherlock did not disagree entirely with the Quakers. He commended their *desire* to experience “immediate revelation,” to reform religion, and to achieve “liberty of conscience” for all. But he did worry that “the Devil doth gild, and paint, and cover their deformities...intermixt also with many wholesome and profitable truths: and thus doth this Prince of darkness transform himself into an Angel of light, that he may at once both amuse and betray the deceived souls of men.” And Sherlock feared that “the dangerous and destructive consequences of...depending upon immediate Revelation,” were themselves a kind of blasphemy out of the book of Revelation.¹¹⁴

The crux of Sherlock’s argument against immediate revelation was drawn from the last chapter of the Book of Revelation. “The canon of holy *Scripture*,” he wrote, had been “transgressed and dissolv’d...by the superaddition of *new Revelations*,” making “the authority of Gods Word...null, and void.”¹¹⁵ That notion of “superaddition of new Revelations” was a direct reference to Revelation 22:18-19

For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

¹¹³ Sherlock, *The Quakers wilde questions*, A4v.

¹¹⁴ Sherlock, *The Quakers wilde questions*, 213.

¹¹⁵ Sherlock, *The Quakers wilde questions*, 213.

And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

Earlier in the Book of Revelation, John had blessed those who preserved and remembered his vision of the apocalypse. But he concluded with a curse against those who might alter the text through addition or subtraction. There was plague on the one hand, and total excommunication on the other; excess bred monstrous excess, and reduction was met with spiritual bankruptcy. And it was the first verse which preoccupied Sherlock. Without many years of training, study, and meditation, Quakers “subvert the very foundation of the holy Christian Faith,” by attempting, in their zeal, to add to the scriptures. Their pamphlets imitated the language of Revelation, with apocalyptic titles like *The Vials of the Wrath of God Poured*, *The Whirl-wind of the Lord gone forth as a Fiery flying Roul*, *Babylon Cast Down*, added to John’s vision of the end of days, threatening to bring plague upon themselves and their countrymen.

On the bright side, the curse of John was among the few uncertainties of Revelation. The seven seals would break, the Anti-Christ would rise, the Whore of Babylon would appear drunkenly upon her dragon, but John’s final threats were conditional. With a little censorship, they could be avoided. Sherlock’s book was meant to convince the Quakers to scale back their fervour; to stifle the “Delusions of every idle enthusiastical brain” working “under the mask of Revelations.” Sherlock diagnosed the problem as specific to his own age, which had produced a profusion of superadditions to scripture. Whereas he viewed the past “1600 years together” as working with one unanimous, and common consent, [receiving] the holy Scriptures as the very canon of Faith, without addition or diminution, without ever hoping or waiting for any new Revelations to be

superadded thereunto: and very good reason sure, if that dismal curse wherewith the canon of holy Scripture is concluded, have any influence upon the mindes of men, Rev. 22.18.19. *If any man adde unto these things, God shall adde unto him, the plagues that are written in this book, &c.*¹¹⁶

The only way to ensure correct scriptural interpretation, for Sherlock, was through years of diligent study within respected institutions of learning. His concept of centuries of harmony, overlooking religious wars that had engulfed Europe, can only refer to a consensus amidst humanistically trained men on both sides of the religious divide, which prized education from the early Church Fathers to the architects of schism in 16th century Europe. He perceived in his own age the distinct difference that, like the broadside complaining of citizen-preachers, the explosion of scriptural interpretation was largely the work of unqualified, self-appointed ministers. John's words at their most basic were interpreted by Sherlock as a curse upon the careless and haughty reader, author, or publisher, but they could also be applied much more broadly—hence Sherlock's unwillingness to enter into print to begin with, as he described in the preface. In this sense too, Sherlock fits well within the textual tradition that emerged from emphasis upon *sola scriptura*: reluctance to write was an emotional feature of a religious life bound by the authority of a single, sacred text as much as anxiety over what had already been printed.

Sherlock's concerns were not unique. The plague was not a metaphor but a lived experience for many, a real public health disaster commonly interpreted as the effects of very specific causes. The "rhetorics of plague" were grounded in grisly experience: "the plague

¹¹⁶ Sherlock, *The Quakers wilde questions*, 214.

represents the other side of the miracle.”¹¹⁷ The metaphorical elements of the scriptural reference should not overshadow the lived experiences of actual suffering and plague, both physical and spiritual. Outbreaks of the disease in 1625, 1637, and 1645 were within living memory, and various books purporting to be from Queen Elizabeth’s and King James’s physicians with remedies for plague years were actively republished, and special liturgies were printed to be read “for the removing of the plague.”¹¹⁸ The threat of plague conjured past horrors, present and future threats; it was a sign from an angry God, it was an ugly medical mystery, it was an analogy, but never any of these in isolation. To think about plague, and the interpretation of printed information as a plague, requires empathy with a particular kind of fear and confusion in the seventeenth century.

“In this our Age everyone is prying into the secrets of the Revelation, (some of very ordinary Capacities),” wrote the sectarian Hezekiah Holland.¹¹⁹ He was right, and the consequences were dire for both sides of the religious spectrum. For the sectarians, plague was punishment for the royal abuse of power. For the Anglicans, it was punishment for rebellion against Charles I. Literal plague and the profusion of pamphlets that seemed like locusts were equally interpreted as signs that the world was ending. Anglicans felt the crisis in royal authority that began in the 1640s coincided with an outbreak of spiritual plague. Edmund Calamy gave a sermon before Parliament beg-

¹¹⁷ Graham Hammill, “Miracles and Plagues: Plague Discourse as Political Thought,” *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 10 No. 2 Rhetorics of Plague, Early and Late (Fall/Winter 2010) 86.

¹¹⁸ [Anonymous] *A forme of common prayer: to be used upon the 17th of November, and the 8th of December on which dayes a fast is appointed by his Mafesties proclamation, for the removing of the plague and other judgements of God, from this kingdom.* (London: Robert Barker, 1640).

¹¹⁹ Hezekiah Holland, *An exposition, or, A short, but fulll, plaine, and perfect epitome of the most choice commentaries upon the Revelation of Saint John* (London: Giles Calvert, 1650).

ging MPs to repent their anti-monarchical ideas in *Englands antidote against the plague of civil warre*.¹²⁰ An anonymous pamphlet identified “the Independent and Sectarian partie” of “fanatickes” who were in the New Model Army with the outbreak of plague in 1645.¹²¹ “The ghastly harbenger of Death the Pestilence appeares already with and without [London’s] Walls,” James Howell wrote in *England’s Teares*, published in 1644.¹²² “The plague of Heresie is among us, and we have no power to keep the sick from the whole,” preached Ephraim Pagitt in *The Mysticall Wolfe*, the same year as Howell.¹²³

Pagitt's sermon listed the heresies of the time until it grew out of its initial format into a catalogue of heresy, the *Heresiography*, which would be enlarged and developed over the course of six editions between 1645 and 1661 (Quakers were added to that edition). It was the most comprehensive description of the variety of beliefs to arise out of the Civil War and Commonwealth period.¹²⁴ The introduction read like something from the Book of Revelation: “Behold,” Pagitt bewailed, “suddenly a numerous company of other Hereticks stole in upon us as like the Locusts” of Revelation 9, who emerge in a cloud of smoke from a bottomless pit, led by the angel Abaddon, hideous to

¹²⁰ Edmund Calamy, *Englands antidote against the plague of civil warre* (London: Printed by I.L. for Christopher Meredith, 1645).

¹²¹ [Anonymous], *The tertian-ague growing into an Independent feaver* (London: [n.pb.], 1647).

¹²² James Howell, *Dodona’s Grove...[with] Englands Teares...*(London, Printed in the Yeare, 1644) 156.

¹²³ Ephraim Pagitt, *The Mysticall Wolfe* (London: Printed by Marie Okes and are to be sold by Robert Trot, 1645) 8.

¹²⁴ “Pagett , Ephraim (1574–1646),” S. C. Dyton in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eee ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, January 2008, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/21125> (accessed October 19, 2015).

behold.¹²⁵ Since he was a trained minister, Pagitt was qualified to interpret scripture in such a public, printed realm.

Pagitt is the only person to be listed in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* as a “heresiologist,” but he inspired a tradition of works on heresy. At the same time, his copious books in multiple printings, broadsides, and abridgements made heresy easily accessible while condemning it. The most famous example after Pagitt’s influence was Thomas Edwards’ *Gangraena*, “a work always in the making.” Infamous in its rancour and fraught with images of pestilence, it could not be republished fast enough to accommodate the growth and spread of ideas it sought to catalogue and dispute.¹²⁶ *Gangraena* outdid even the *Heresiography* in the onslaught of angry responses it provoked.¹²⁷ “Anti-sectarian literature is infested with figurative accounts of teeming bees, frogs, locusts, serpents, eels, and maggots,” Kristen Poole writes, in a chapter dedicated to the “images of swarming as a means” by which contemporaries “register[ed] the perceived chaos resulting from sectarian claims to liberty of conscience” in *Radical Religion from Shakespeare to Milton*.¹²⁸ She begins with Gilpin’s *Beehive of the Romishe Church* (1579) which depicted Catholics as drone bees swarming chaotically around a “particularly grim-looking bee-pope” and ends with *Gangraena*, which synthesised England’s swarms in order to “reverse the

¹²⁵ Ephraim Pagitt, *Heresiography* (London: Printed by M. Okes, and are to be sold by Robert Trot, 1645) sig. A3v; and reprinted in *Heresiography... The Fifth Edition* (London: Printed for William Lee, 1654) sig. A4v.

¹²⁶ Ann Hughes, *Gangraena and the Struggle for the English Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford U P, 2004) 224, 236.

¹²⁷ “Edwards, Thomas (c.1599–1648),” P. R. S. Baker in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, see online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, Oxford: OUP, 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8556> (accessed October 19, 2015).

¹²⁸ Kristen Poole, *Radical Religion from Shakespeare to Milton: Figures of Nonconformity in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: CUP, 2000) 15, 104.

turmoil” they had created.¹²⁹ “We have the plauge of *Egypt* upon us, frogs out of the bottomlesse pit covering our land, coming into our Houses, Bedchambers, Beds, Churches, a man can hardly come into any place, but some croaking frog or other will be coming up on him,” Edwards claimed, prefiguring writers like Richard Sherlock.¹³⁰

But in addition to the “bottomlesse pit” evoked by so many polemicists of the time, Edwards was also graphic in his acknowledgement of the plague as a bodily disease:

every ingenuous Reader may plainly behold the many Deformities and great Spots of the Sectaries of these times, Spots of all kinds, Plague spots, Feaver spots, Purpule spots, Leprosie spots, Scurvy spots, Spots upon them discovering much malignity, rage & frensie, great corruption and infection...¹³¹

As a descriptive term “plague” always invoked threats both from within, disease-based, and from without, hoards of insects, a confused blend that updates interpretations of the language of Revelation with the lived experience of bubonic plague over the centuries. The link between plague and the spread of language, of ideas, had its roots in the false but widely accepted etymology of the word “plague” in early modern writing. Early modern writers connected the Hebrew consonants of the word “plague”, the letters DBR (“Deber”), are the same for the word “speech.” This was a misreading, since the unwritten vowels for both words are different — but it was a persistent misreading. In the seventeenth century, English glosses of the false connection even expanded to include “speech” and “word”. Henoeh Clapham, for instance, elaborated that

¹²⁹ Poole, *Radical Religion*, 104, 123.

¹³⁰ Edwards, *Gangraena*, sig. R1r

¹³¹ Edwards, *The Third Part of Gangraena...*(London, 1646) sig.*.

The word DEBER in proper english The Pestilence, they turne by the Greeke word Logis in English The Word...the very terme, that Saint John in his first chapter doth giue unto the Son of God, by whom as by a Word, the Creature had his beginning and being. So that the 91. Psalm and thurd verse, they thus read, He shall deliuer thee from the Word, not the Pestilence. And why? Because that Pest....had the beginning and being solely by the word of God...¹³²

According to Clapham the pestilence and the word had the same origin because pestilence came at the word, or command, of God— it was an act of judgment from God upon those who had transgressed, and was likewise only removed at the word of God.

The persistent and obsessive connection between plague and language had long been part of conceptions of information and its spread, especially the spread of heresy. This epidemiology of plague as both linguistic and medical was rampant throughout medieval plague writing.¹³³ During the Reformation and Counter-Reformation this connection was made more emphatically, especially among Catholic censors; “In all realms, heresy was regarded as ‘disease’” according to Nancy Roelker.¹³⁴ Martin Nesvig has described in great detail the writings of Spanish censors whose efforts to control the book trade between Spain and Mexico in the 16th century were conceived in exactly these terms. Drawing on a connection between their experience “heretical plagues” during the reformation, and those described by Jerome, Tertullian, Augustine, and Thomas Aquinas, the

¹³² Henoah Clapham, *His Damaundes and Answers*, sig. B1r, quoted in Gilman, Ernest B. *Plague Writing in Early Modern England* (Chicago and London: The U of Chicago P, 2009) 73, 94.

¹³³ Bryon Lee Grigsby, *Pestilence in Medieval and Early Modern English Literature* (New York and London: Routledge Press, 2004) 3.

¹³⁴ Nancy L. Roelker, *One King One Faith: The Parlement of Paris and the Religious Reformations of the Sixteenth Century* (Berkeley and London: U of California P, 1996) 194.

Spanish inquisitors Luis de Paramo and Francesco Peña wrote at length of the infection of heresy. Specifically, Nesvig's work traces the worries around the spread of vernacular translations of the bible dating to the early 15th century onward as a plague of heresy.¹³⁵ So in addition to Milton's description of books as "not absolutely dead things" in *Areopagitica*, was the perception that books were deadly to humans. In keeping with the written and printed word as a secondary concern, Quakers disregarded such a perception, denying books the power to corrupt and placing responsibility with readers. The Friends' response to Sherlock elaborates one early view of why, but in each consequent chapter, it is always the reader and not the reading material who remains accountable for any misreadings.

The Quaker Response to Sherlock

Tracing the history of the way in which information was described in terms of plague gives a sense of the accusations of blasphemy that were levied against the Quakers for claiming their own cheaply printed pamphlets had been produced in the same spirit as the scripture. This was not the same argument between "high" and "low" culture, the traditional downgrading of pamphlets as inferior forms in comparison to large books, a commonplace that at least dates back to Thomas Bodley's remark that pamphlets were "not worth the custody" in libraries like the Bodleian.¹³⁶ It was a matter of salvation and damnation. As Sherlock wrote, the Quakers' prolific printing threatened no less than rendering the bible "null and void". And the kind of pamphleteering the Quakers practised, and promised more of, was a kind of "bottomlesse pit" — as it focused on publishing the spiritual experiences and prophecies of its members, it was a renewable resource. If the bible was a dead letter, and to consider it in any other

¹³⁵ Nesvig, "Heretical Plagues," 7-9.

¹³⁶ Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain*, 5.

way was idolatry, a profusion of texts worked to avoid over-reliance upon any single text, or the emergence of a canon. Nestled within this story of the rise of news and political engagement through print, *how* pamphlets fit into the hierarchy of knowledge must be understood as first and foremost a religious question.

And the kind of shift groups like Quakers would bring to that question had much broader application. Religious printing so dominated the market that a shift in cheaply printed religious works, especially beginning in the 1640s, was a shift for the entire publishing industry and all its readers.¹³⁷ The debate with Sherlock was not isolated, nor were its consequences short-lived. The first printed Quaker response to Sherlock, written by Richard Hubberthorne, completely recast this argument over the superaddition of scripture as a matter of religious practice.

Priests like Sherlock, Hubberthorne wrote, mistook an apocalyptic *style* of writing for addition to scripture. Rather, for Quakers, “super-addition” was defined to include elements of worship; the sacraments and the creation of an ecclesiastical hierarchy were not specified in scripture. What counted as superaddition, as courting plague, to the Quakers was the more elaborate growth of liturgical tradition and ornament. “Shew me by the scriptures, and what scripture have you,” he wrote “which speaks the word Sacrament...here thou which adds to it, has brought thy self under the plague and wo.” The elaborate education of priests and tithes to pay them likewise was interpreted a superaddition to scripture, missing the point of the immediate revelation made possible by simply reading. Emphasis upon the “spirit”

¹³⁷ Walsham, Alexandra, ‘Domme Preachers’ 79 lists the relevant statistics on the dominance of religious printing in the market, with reference to Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550-1640* (Cambridge: CUP, 1991) and Margaret Spufford, *Small Books and Pleasant Histories: Popular Fiction and its Readership in Seventeenth Century England* (Cambridge: CUP, 1981).

over the “letter” formed the basis for Quaker arguments against humane learning. In another book co-authored by Hubberthorne and James Nayler they cited Paul to the Corinthians, “The Letter killeth but the Spirit giveth life.” This key biblical passage was interpreted by the two men: “None can rightly understand the Scriptures, but they who read them with the same spirit that gave them forth...for they are spiritually discerned.”¹³⁸ This Quaker belief animated their religious practice and, by extension, their entire infrastructure of publications.

In his response to Sherlock, Hubberthorne likened him to the sorcerer Simon Magus, from the Book of Acts, “buying and selling the letter” and “worse than he, for he would have bought the spirit” but “thou art denied with the same spirit.” “Immediate revelation” could not be gained by education: “the scripture came not by will of man: therefore it is not the knowing of it by Hebrew and Greek, but by the spirit.” And in any case, education did not guarantee godliness: “Pilate had Hebrew and Greek, which crucified Christ.”¹³⁹

Margaret Fell, the “Mother of Quakerism,” wrote a year later *To All that would know the Way to the Kingdome*, that to conflate the printed letter of the bible with the Word of God was a gross mistake:

you who put the Letter for the Word, and have gotten it in your minds, and gather Assemblies by it;...it is blasphemy for you to say, the Letter is the Word, when the Letter Saith, God is the Word...the letter is the declaration of the word, the husk.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸ James Nayler, *Truth Cleared from Scandals* (London: Printed in the year, 1654) 2, 11.

¹³⁹ Richard Hubberthorne, *A Reply to the Book set forth by one of the blind guides of England who is a Priest at Barwick Hall in Lanchashire, who writes his name, R. Sherlock* (London, printed for Giles Calvert, 1654) 4, 13,17.

¹⁴⁰ Margaret Fell, *To all that would know the Way to the Kingdome...*(London, Giles Calvert, 1655) 4-8.

The result of such a mistake was idolatry, a false hierarchy, the elevation of books above spirit, and above the people who experienced spirit. That elevation resulted in the idolatry of the letter, a central concern within Protestantism. Such idolatry came to be expressed in all kinds of strange ways, some described by David Cressy in his article “Books as Totems”, which shows how the bible came to be used “as a magical talisman, as an aid to divination, as medicine, and as a device for social display,” in various instances. His story culminates in the description of a procession of Puritans in New England, lead with a bible atop a pole.¹⁴¹ Cressy’s examples are extreme incarnations of the type of conflation between the spiritual “Word” and the physical “Letter” that Quakers attempted to overturn — one of the “abominations” they were laying bare.

In 1659 George Fox wrote the first folio-sized work to be published by the Society of Friends, a collected, systematic refutation of just over one hundred books and pamphlets that had attacked Quakers over the past decade: *The Great Mystery of the Great Whore Unfolded and Antichrists Kingdom Revealed*. In its basic material format, *The Great Mystery* represented another way in which the pamphlet explosion influenced books — as time wore on, pamphlet-sized debates grew into book length-works, with the Quakers as with Thomas Edwards’ *Gangraena*. By the end of the 1650s, Quakers had started to produce book-length works, powered by the same sense of inner light that had justified their profusion of pamphlets.

According to Fox in *The Great Mystery*, working within the prophetic tradition, dreaming dreams and seeing visions, was part of reading scripture the way it was meant to be read. Just as God’s spirit delivered the text of books of the bible to their authors, visions were seen

¹⁴¹ David Cressy, “Books as Totems in Seventeenth Century England and New England” *The Journal of Library History* 21 (Winter 1986) 92-106.

to be delivered by God to the Quakers in an unbroken tradition. To use the scripture to attain immediate revelation was to return to the root of religion, what Quakers praised as “Primitive Christianity”. Fox described the scriptures as superior to Quaker writings only on their basis as historical texts. They fell closer historically to God’s covenant with humankind in the form of Jesus Christ, and documented the earliest encounters between man and spirit. “The Spirit was before the Letter was,” yet the bible was the earliest surviving record of that relationship. Fox addressed Sherlock in *The Great Mystery*: “That which the Apostles received, they received from God: so ye receiving it not by the same means, have receive it from men, and not from God.”¹⁴² In short, Sherlock’s education distanced him from God: “The Quakers deny your shops of tools that comes out of the humane learning, And the Scriptures give no such expressions as a shop of tooles that ever the Prophets; or Apostles had a shop of tools of humane learning...humane learning hath come up in the Apostacy.” Quaker practices and publications did not render the Scripture useless, instead Fox argued that they enabled readers to better “see the Scriptures in their place, and the fulfilling of them, which was given forth to be believed, practiced, read, and fulfilled, not for men to make a trade of them.”¹⁴³

The conclusion of *The Great Mystery* introduced a final argument against the fixity, and perfection, of the bible, a final reason for the triumph of “Spirit over Letter.” A section entitled “Several Scriptures Corrupted by the Translators”, with printing in both Hebrew and Greek, contained citations of scriptural mistranslations over the centuries that Fox argued prevented the possibility of reading the scrip-

¹⁴² George Fox, *The Great Mystery of the Great Whore Unfolded and Antichrists Kingdom Revealed unto Destruction* (London: for Thomas Simmons, 1659) 39, 242.

¹⁴³ Fox, *The Great Mystery*, 70, 74.

ture literally. The final page concluded with the last verse from the second letter of Paul to the Corinthians presented without comment or gloss: “We do not corrupt the word...we do not sell the word for money.”¹⁴⁴ This final argument against treating the scripture as anything other than “letter” was further developed in later Quaker writings, including the most famous compendium of Quaker beliefs, Robert Barclay’s *Apology for True Christian Divinity*, published two decades later and covered in chapter five in terms of its relationship to the emergence of biblical textual criticism.

It was an argument which ultimately lay bare the hierarchy of information Quakers sought to overturn. Instead of a spiritual landscape in which the divine word was pure and set apart, Quakers sought to create a profusion of spiritual works that taught individual readers to encounter their God on their own terms, in their own time, to be balanced against quiet contemplation communally. In place of plagues of pamphlets, there were, and would be, multitudes of personal experiences, visions and prophecies, letters and pamphlets, flashpoints of contact with the divine. To have read the scriptures without drawing from them inspiration to preach, to prophesy, to write, denied their power, their ability to provoke immediate revelation. “Thou has cleared thyself from the Spirit that gave forth the scriptures, who denies immediate revelation from heaven,” Hubberthorne had once accused Sherlock. According to Hubberthorne, as with Fox, to deny immediate revelation was to “Be a false prophet.”¹⁴⁵ Their publications, on the other hand, tested by the Spiritual Touchstone, within meetings, and in imitation of examples found within the bible, were forms of worship and spiritual outpouring in their own right.

¹⁴⁴ Fox, *The Great Mystery*, 373-375.

¹⁴⁵ Hubberthorne, Richard. *A Reply*, 1.

Conclusions

The spread of the plague in both word and illness had the same effect: social breakdown, which offers a way of rethinking Ann Blair's scholarship concerning "Information Overload" and the perception that too many books were in circulation. Conrad Gesner complained in 1544 of the "confusing and harmful abundance of books," but by the seventeenth century, this was perceived as a harmful abundance of pamphlets in England. By 1685, Adrien Baillet warned of the effect of their circulation and survival, "Unless we try to prevent this danger," he wrote, "by separating those books which we must throw out or leave in oblivion from those which one should save." Blair has shown how paradoxically the anxiety over too many books "fuelled the production of many more books, often especially large ones" — encyclopaedias and other short-cuts to learning.¹⁴⁶ Jacob Soll has argued, in response, that there could be no such thing as "Information Overload." Information was money, and power, and the more information that could be accrued, the greater the fortunes of the gatherer. This was especially true for those working in finance and government intelligence such as Soll's exemplar, Jean-Baptiste Colbert. Yet even for scholars, the more copious the information, the better the reputation — hence works glorifying their own abundance, like Erasmus's *De copia*.¹⁴⁷ I would argue in light of Quaker publications and the controversies with which they engaged that information overload was ultimately a religious judgement, whether Protestant or Catholic. Where the bible was sufficient, all else was superfluous, and the application of the language of plague and overload to other areas of writing, humanist or otherwise, carried with it an inherently

¹⁴⁶ Ann Blair, "Reading Strategies for Coping with Information Overload ca. 1550-1700," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 64 (January 2003) 11-28; Ann Blair, *Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information before the Modern Age* (New Haven, CT: Yale U P, 2010).

¹⁴⁷ Jacob Soll, *The Information Master: Jean-Baptiste Colbert's Secret State Intelligence System* (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 2009).

religious bias. This perceived imbalance of religious publications, their form, their content, their creators, upon the wider history of printing, must not be dropped from the secular and humanist accounts of the world of books that has dominated book history.

The worries of clerics and polemicists by 1640 in England were not out of place in Europe where religious wars had torn apart the continent for decades. So too in Europe, there were debates over whether or not the printing press was the work of God or the Devil described in the late Elizabeth Eisenstein's *Divine Art, Infernal Machine*. As Sir Roger L'Estrange wrote in 1660: "It has been made a Question long agoe, whether more mischieve than advantage were not occasion'd to the Christian world by the invention of typography."¹⁴⁸ The plague of pamphlets was part of the perception that there were too many printed works, which in turn reflected the anxiety that there were too many individual interpretations of the bible, too many authors. Quakers would continue to argue over "plague" in causes beyond the Commonwealth period, and the debates they staged were reaffirmed by their religious practice, and its elaboration, in print and in their meetings.

Tracing the development of these topics through the reading and publication habits of Quakers has here worked against the grain of the strict bracketing of the period between 1640 and 1660 noted by Peter Lake. The legacy of censorship and the language of plague informed perceptions of print technology long before 1640, and the debates prompted by the perception of a pamphlet revolution inspired the publication of books, at least within Quakerism, long after, into the Restoration and beyond. William Britten's *Silent Meeting*, an instructive work, was also a key work of transition, drawing from the

¹⁴⁸ Elizabeth Eisenstein, *Divine Art, Infernal Machine* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 2011), 34.

practices of Quaker leaders to inform the wider membership and enhance the communal experience at meetings. Fox's and Hubberthorne's promises in the 1653 pamphlet *Truth's defense* lay the spiritual framework for how a generation of Quakers afterwards learned writing and publication habits of their own as a result. Pamphleteering amongst Quaker leaders taught others to follow suit and express their spiritual experiences similarly— through manuscript and print circulation. This set the spiritual foundation for Quaker record-keeping habits and publication committees, which form the basis for the subsequent chapters, and which became increasingly formalised in the 1660s and 1670s. The motivations behind Quaker publications gave rise to an entire infrastructure of practices that would become significant to their identity as a sect: collecting records and archiving their experiences, reading widely and incorporating reading experiences beyond the bible into their spirituality, and communally composing and editing books about their experiences and activities. An engraving from an anti-Quaker pamphlet by the Baptist Benjamin Keach communicated the weight of their burden in overturning scriptural hierarchy they had initiated in their pamphlets from the early 1650s. In the centre of the engraving, a massive scale lies between Quakers and their critics. On one end a single book, "The Holy Bible" tips the scale away from the Friends, who have piled upon their end a large heap of "Quakers Bookes." Above the image was captioned from Daniel 5:27: "Thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting."¹⁴⁹

That may be true: the Quakers had only published their works for a little over two decades at that point. Moreover, their writing style did not produce works of "genius" like Milton's *Paradise Lost*. But in attempting to overturn a tradition that survived in monumental form in

¹⁴⁹ Benjamin Keach, *The Grand Imposter Discovered* (London: [n. pb.], 1675).

books like the Lindisfarne Gospels (c. 700), the Gutenberg bible (c. 1454), and the King James bible (1611), the Quakers were not interested in producing monumental works, nor literary texts for further idol-worship.¹⁵⁰ They did not want to replace the bible with another book of “precious life-blood”; they wanted to express ephemeral grappings with the light, however crudely. In 1675 George Fox wrote in an epistle, “To all that would Know the Way to the Kingdom,” that not to experience the light was to “lay waste to Scripture”:

[T]hou denyest Christ, who came to call Sinners to Repentance before Letter was, but it is he that calls to Repentance Sinners, and not the Letter; but the Letter is a Declaration of the Word, God is the Word; and it is a Declaration of the Light, Christ is the Light; and a Declaration of the Spirit, but the Spirit is not in it; a Declaration of Power, but the Power is not in it...¹⁵¹

So much of an individual’s experience could be elevated to revelatory status, and could result in the publication of a book or pamphlet that described one’s revelation, because Friends’ conception of books lacked Milton’s “precious life-blood,” even the scripture. As Robert Barclay wrote: “The letter of the Scriptur is outward, of it self a dead thing.”¹⁵² Because for Barclay, as for most Quaker authors, divinity was not Logo-centric or even libri-centric; books were “a meer declaration of good things, but not the things themselves.” Without people to read them, books *were* absolutely dead things, and would only

¹⁵⁰ N. H. Keeble’s *Literary Culture of Nonconformity* (Leicester: Leicester U P, 1987) beautifully reconsiders the English Revolution in terms of the great works of literature it inspired in the Restoration, from the works of Milton and Bunyan to the diaries of Samuel Pepys and John Evelyn.

¹⁵¹ George Fox, *To all that would Know the Way to the Kingdom, Whether they be in Forms, without Forms, or got above all Forms. A Direction to turn your Minds within, where the Voice of the True God is to be heard...*(London: [n.pb.], 1675) 9-10.

¹⁵² Barclay, *Apology*, 46; Edwin Wolf II, *The Book Culture of a Colonial American City: Philadelphia Books, Bookmen, and Booksellers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988) 27; Frederick Tolles, *Meeting House and Counting House: The Quaker Merchants of Colonial Philadelphia 1682-1763* (New York: WW Norton and Company Inc. 1948)154.

continue to be so. And it was this passionate belief in the dead letter that paradoxically sparked life in scores of other publications, that gave multitudes of new voices and perspectives, new spirits, an afterlife only hinted at by its durability on the page.

II

The Book as Archive, the Archives behind Books: Foxy's *Book of Martyrs* and Quaker Record- keeping Practices

“The Holy Ghost speaketh to the Adversaries in innumerable sorts of
Books.”

—John Foxy¹⁵³

Introduction

In 1661, Ellis Hookes (1635-1681) published a pamphlet on behalf of the Friends that contained, in spite of nearly a decade of prolific publishing by members of the group, nothing written by Quakers. Instead, *The Spirit of Christ, and the Spirit of the Apostles, and the Spirit of the Martyrs is Arisen* was drawn predominantly from John Foxy's *Actes and Monuments*, a work first published a century earlier and popularly known as *The Book of Martyrs*. Rather than descriptions of the travels of George Foxy, Richard Hubberthorne, James Nayler, and other early Quaker leaders, Hookes abridged stories of the burning of Polycarp (d. 156) at the stake, glossed Christian persecution under Nero, and jumping ahead to the martyrdoms of John Wycliffe (1320? - 1384), Jan Hus (1369 - 1415), the Marian martyr Richard Woodman (1524? -1557), all drawn from *The Book of Martyrs*.¹⁵⁴

Yet *The Spirit of Christ* was an unmistakably Quaker text, with excerpts from *The Book of Martyrs* abridged and re-arranged into chap-

¹⁵³ John Foxy, *The Benefit and Invention of Printing, by John Foxy, That Famous Martyrologist, Extracted out of his Acts and Monuments, Vol I. pag. 803,804, Edit. 9. Anno 1684.* (London: Printed and Sold by T. Sowle, 1704) 4.

¹⁵⁴ Ellis Hookes, *The Spirit of Christ, and the Spirit of the Apostles, and the Spirit of the Martyrs is Arisen...*(London: Printed for Giles Calvert, 1661) 7-9, 13.

ters supporting beliefs held by the Friends. The refusal to swear an oath occupied the majority of the work, but there were also sections on the refusal to remove hats before superiors, and the refusal to pay tithes. The work concluded with a justification for “speaking to a Priest in a Pulpit.” The interruption of priests had been made illegal by a statute enacted during Queen Mary’s reign in 1557, but such interruptions were a common feature of Quaker identity and a common reason for their imprisonment. Hookes made the connection between past and present in one of the few printed side notes that mentioned Quakers by name: “the People of God called Quakers, have suffered by the professors, who have made use from the same [law].”¹⁵⁵

While he kept references to the Quakers confined to the sub-title and pushed to the margins of the text, Hookes’ thirty-two-page pamphlet was symptomatic of major changes the Friends were undergoing at the time. These changes altered the use of the print networks Quakers had established over the course of the previous decade both regarding authorship and content. The format changed too: while the 1650s were characterised by short pamphlets, the Restoration marked the addition of book-length works to the growing list of Quaker publications.

These changes were adaptations to a dramatically altered political landscape. The Commonwealth had collapsed after the death of Oliver Cromwell. Richard Cromwell was unable to maintain the position of Lord Protector inherited from his father in 1658, and Parliament invited the return of monarchy under the rule of Charles II. My purpose in this chapter is to consider the influence of the regime change upon the Quaker experience, particularly as that change al-

¹⁵⁵ Ellis Hookes and Thomas Rudyard, *The Spirit of Christ, and the spirit of the Apostles, and the spirit of the martyrs is arisen...* (London: Giles Calvert, 1661) 32.

tered the textual tradition established by the Friends in the prior decade. Although the return of Charles II was marked by a strict censorship regime and even stricter laws aimed at curbing the activities of dissenting sects, publications remained an important part of Quaker spirituality. These publications combined Quaker beliefs with a petition-style approach. Like *The Spirit of Christ*, they gathered together multiple examples of experiences subscribed to by multiple Quakers to petition Charles for toleration. In order to facilitate the collection and publication of these experiences, my primary focus on this chapter will be upon the emergence of the record-keeping habits that streamlined the publication and circulation process of these works, called “Sufferings.”

In the 1650s, the publications Quaker leaders circulated were both elements of their inheritance from the petitioning and pamphleteering of the Civil War-era radicals that had preceded them, and an efficient way of building connections over distances and despite long absences. But, I have argued, mere adherence to a tradition of participation in print was not the only reason George Fox and other leaders made use of the press. The Quaker concept of the inner light, the real presence of the divine in every person, compelled Quaker leaders to print as both a “duty of conscience” and proof that they had read the bible in the same “spirit” in which it had first been written. Whereas in the 1650s the beliefs of Quaker leaders set the spiritual basis for an outpouring of publications by multiple authors, after the Restoration, a material infrastructure developed that made such an outpouring possible among the wider membership. And given the emergence of state-sanctioned persecution of the Quakers at this time, this outpouring was not only possible but necessary, as a way of recording experienced threatened by suppression. While the Quaker approach to reading the bible justified their profusion of printed pamphlets, in this chapter I will show how the extension of

Quaker reading practices from the bible to another key text, *The Book of Martyrs*, further structured how they printed and began to collect records to facilitate their printing. In both of those instances, the experience of collapsing past and present, Quaker persecutions with that of earlier martyrs, only intensified after 1660.

The circumstances leading to the birth of such an archive were brutal. Persecution spread from those few leaders who dared to interrupt priests in their pulpit in the 1650s, to the broader membership who dared meet to worship after the return of Charles II. And, just as earlier publications argued for a radical collapse of present and biblical antiquity, lived experience and scriptural examples, beginning in the 1660s Quakers used their publications to amplify their connection with earlier generations of English reformers. The shift in the direction of violence, from state to subject after the coronation of Charles II, was similar to those who had suffered and died during the reign of Mary (1542-1567), and resonated with the Friends. They drew heavily, as we shall see from the example of their first record-keeper Ellis Hookes, upon the rhetoric and structure of John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* in shaping the records they collected concerning persecution, as well as the publications that circulated those records. Since early Quaker identity had been largely maintained through printed sources, leaders such as George Fox and Margaret Fell Fox only extended those methods of approach to incorporate testimonies from among the wider membership.

I will begin with an overview of an important early example of how this system of record collection and publication was used, in the "Peace Testimony" of 1660, the declaration of pacifism coordinated by the Friends in response to the rise of state-sanctioned persecution. The "Peace Testimony" departed from earlier Quaker beliefs, yet repackaged Quaker experiences as a way of "proving" the reliability

of its contents. Such a strategic use orchestrated by George Fox and Margaret Fell set a pattern similar to, and reinforced by, that found in John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*. Hookes' *Spirit of the Martyrs* provided a conceptual backbone to the emergence of a Quaker archive, which Hookes himself was hired to maintain as the first officially appointed clerk to the Friends. A major influence in shaping this infrastructure, *The Book of Martyrs* provided a pattern for Quakers to follow when collecting and publishing their own stories. After looking to Hookes' publications, and collaborations, I will move to the archive itself as it grew over the course of the 1660s and was refined in memoranda circulated among Friends during that time and into the 1670s. The records collected in the archive ultimately facilitated a massive shift in the content of Quaker publications— from the apocalyptic outpourings of a few, to the experiences of persecution by many.¹⁵⁶

Coordinating such publications required two basic elements in place: strong local communities instructed in record-keeping, and strong ties between those meetings and central Quaker authorities in London. Quaker meetings for worship, which had served as hubs for reading aloud and distributing printed pamphlets in the 1650s, as well as testing the validity of immediate revelations in a communal environment, added record-keeping to their list of administrative duties.

Just as John Foxe in the sixteenth century drew from networks of English Protestants in exile to fill the pages of his book, so George Fox in the seventeenth century encouraged his converts to keep copies of relevant letters, court documents, and descriptions of their

¹⁵⁶ David Runyon's "Appendix: Types of Quaker Writings by Year - 1650-1699" provides an excellent visualisation of this, in Barbour and Roberts, *Early Quaker Writings 1650-1700*, 567-576; Richard Vann among others has written eloquently on sufferings from this period onward in "Friends Sufferings—Collected and Recollected" *Quaker History* 61 (Spring 1972) 24-35.

own experiences — the archive behind each book.¹⁵⁷ And just as John Foxe's, and John Bale's collected writings had a century earlier, Quaker writings combined their earlier apocalyptic exegesis with lived experience.¹⁵⁸

When *The Spirit of Christ* was published, Ellis Hooke had been recently employed by George Fox as the first clerk to the Society. He would act in that role for twenty-four years, collecting and maintaining records centrally in London, making him the Quakers' first historian and archivist.¹⁵⁹ He was also involved in overseeing the publication of Quaker books, and consequently, an authority in matters of doctrine and discipline amongst the wider membership. But *The Spirit of Christ* did more than show how one influential Quaker read a famous Protestant work, and used that reading to justify his own beliefs. When he invoked the influence of *The Book of Martyrs*, Hooke also deepened the roots of the nascent Quaker movement. His records and publications promoted an expansion of Quaker historical awareness beyond the memory of the Civil War and the sects of Ranters, Seekers, Levellers, and Diggers. He reinforced Quaker history with stories of the earliest Christians and biblical figures, as well as the great reformers in England and Europe of the sixteenth century.

As an anonymous Quaker wrote from Newgate Prison in 1662:
“Reader, Necessity requires the publishing of these things for the information and satisfaction of the world, and to prevent the many false

¹⁵⁷ John N. King, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and Early Modern Print Culture* (Cambridge: CUP, 2006) 26-29; Thomas Freeman, “Publish and Perish: The Scribal Culture of the Marian Martyrs,” Julia Crick, and Alexandra Walsham, eds. *The Uses of Script and Print, 1300-1700* (Cambridge: CUP, 2004) 235-254.

¹⁵⁸ Richard Buckham, *Tudor Apocalypse: Sixteenth Century Apocalypticism, Millenarianism, and the English Reformation: From John Bale to John Foxe and Thomas Brightman* (Oxford: The Sutton Courtenay Press, 1971) 29, 234.

¹⁵⁹ David J. Honneyman “Ellis Hooke (1635-1681) First Recording Clerk of the Society of Friends,” *Quaker History* 72.1 (Spring 1983) 43-54.

reports that otherwise may go abroad concerning these things...it is expedient that we publish.”¹⁶⁰ The critical mix of spirituality that emphasised individual reading and individual “Truth,” produced a generation of writers who recorded their experiences of suffering, and a recorder who shaped and maintained his generation’s testimonies. Moving between the growing Quaker archive and the publications it made possible, Quakers were educated through the act of recording in their own history. In addition, the Friends archive was collected against the grain of comparable records being kept at the time in the courts and local parishes. It was patched together from disparate methods of recording. It combined subscribed petitions with accounting ledgers, yet at all times repeated language drawn from *The Book of Martyrs*. And just like their readings of the bible, their imitation of *The Book of Martyrs* embedded the Friends thoroughly within the Protestant tradition at the same time as it provided a platform from which they coordinated radical departures from their contemporaries.

Hell Broke Loose

In 1660, Thomas Underhill described the Quakers’ impact upon society in three simple words: *Hell Broke Loose*, the title of his pamphlet critical of their beliefs. He recognised that part of his critique was outdated: “And though now adayes it’s rarely seen that they Quake; yet it’s well known to thousands.”

“[Quakers] are the most immodest, obscene, people in the world, next to the late Ranters. If all the Stories of their women stripping themselves to the very skin, in the presence of men, and of mens so doing in the presence of women of late years, should be here set

¹⁶⁰ [Anonymous], *The second part of The cry of the innocent for Justice...*(London: Printed for the author, 1662) 4.

down, they would be enough to make a large
Volume.”¹⁶¹

Underhill’s perception of Quakers as “poisonous Weeds...with which the Garden of the Church of *England* is overrun,” came largely from his perception of the “multitude of motions, in Counsels, Books, Papers, Letters, which they have sent or delivered unto every pretending Authority for these many years.” The majority of his book against Quakers came from quotes he had lifted verbatim from Quaker tracts, a point he emphasised, so widely available were they to Friends and their enemies alike.

Barry Reay has argued that this profusion of Quaker pamphlets contributed to the sense of fear and panic that led to Charles’s restoration in the first place. They overstated their importance and the size of their membership through brazen engagement with the clergy, and constant pamphleteering, which fuelled the conservative backlash.¹⁶² And once Charles returned to England, the Quakers were sent to prison. Quaker critics printed violent outpourings, among others Ralph Farmer’s *Sathan [sic] Inthroned in his Chair of Pestilence, or Quakerisim in its Exaltation* (1657), Thomas Smith’s *A Gagg for the Quakers* (1659), Lodowick Muggleton’s *The neck of the QUAKERS Broken* (1663). The titles were not just rhetorical. Quakers were gagged, beaten, and abused, increasingly so after 1660.

Upon the ascension of Charles II to the throne, the enthusiasm of the Commonwealth Period became dangerous fanaticism, feared and legislated against, initiating nearly three decades of state-sanctioned

¹⁶¹ Thomas Underhill, *Hell Broke Loose, or, An History of the Quakers both Old and New...* (London, Printed for T. V. and Simon Miller in St. Paul’s Churchyard, 1660) 1, 30.

¹⁶² Reay, *The Quakers and the English Revolution*, 4, 44, 95.

persecution of Quakers and other dissenting groups.¹⁶³ So the Friends may have equally described their situation in 1660 as *Hell Broke Loose*. If there was any test of the strength and resilience of early networks of Quaker publications, it was their horrific persecution beginning with Charles II in 1660 and until the Toleration Act was passed in 1689. Whereas Quaker “sufferings” before had described the experience of an itinerant Quaker leadership, the Clarendon Codes passed between 1661 and 1665 — especially the 1662 “Quaker Act” requiring an oath of allegiance — brought persecution upon the wider membership and other nonconformists who were perceived as threats to the restored monarchy.

Broadsheets published by the Quakers contrasted 3,179 imprisonments over a seven-year period “in the dayes of the common-wealth” against 5,000 incarcerations in the first year of Charles II’s reign alone.¹⁶⁴ Quakers were a minority among dissenting groups, yet disproportionately persecuted because they were very public in their worship. Unlike the Baptists and Presbyterians who met in secluded forests or private homes, Quakers met openly, even in the street. For instance, among more than twelve hundred dissenters imprisoned in London in 1664, 850 were Quakers, and in areas such as Middlesex which were largely home to Puritans, 859 out of 909 imprisoned that same year were Quakers.¹⁶⁵ In some communities, the children of imprisoned Quakers were left to continue holding meetings.¹⁶⁶ Between 1660 and 1689, over ten thousand Friends were imprisoned,

¹⁶³ William Braithwaite describes the origins and changes in the meanings of the words, focusing in particular on Monck’s speech to Parliament in 1660. *The Second Period of Quakerism*, 4-6.

¹⁶⁴ *For the King and both Houses of Parliament; The True State and condition of the People of God, called Quakers...* London, Printed in the Year 1661.

¹⁶⁵ Barbour, *The Quakers in Puritan England*, 225-226.

¹⁶⁶ Barbour, *The Quakers in Puritan England*, 226.

and from that total, three hundred and sixty-six died in jail, including several leaders.¹⁶⁷

Quakers fired up the presses in response, producing pamphlets and broadsheets that appealed for mercy:

This is to thee O KING and thy Council and to all the Officers and Magistrates that are under Thee. Never was the like Groans and Cryes of the Fatherles, of Widows and Families under the cruel Oppressions, Afflictions and Sufferings, as it as this day, and hath been since Thou was Proclaimed King of these Dominions, who by the Power of God was brought in, and set up here: Never was the like known, to have the Dungeons, Prisons, Sellars, Houses of Corrections, and nasty Vaults, so filled with the Righteous and Innocent People of the Earth (of such as are harmless, and have no envy to any man's person upon the earth) for the worshipping of God...¹⁶⁸

These printed petitions often were signed by as many Quakers as could be found outside of prison. George Fox, while imprisoned at Lancaster Castle, pleaded for himself and his fellow prisoners to “come speedily to tryal, for they learn badness from one another” in the overcrowded conditions.¹⁶⁹ The common term for these printed petitions and pamphlets amongst the Quakers was coined by Fox: “sufferings.” The genre was not a new creation of the 1660s, but it did overtake other types of writings produced by Quakers at the time, representing a common experience.

¹⁶⁷ Craig Horle, *The Quakers and the English Legal System* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1988), 46-55.

¹⁶⁸ Samuel Fisher, et al. *This is to thee O KING and thy Council...* (London: Printed for Robert Wilson) 1660.

¹⁶⁹ George Fox, *To Both Houses of Parliament* (London: Printed for Thomas Simons at the sign of the Bull and Mouth, 1660).

According to Joseph Smith's *Catalogue of Friends' Books*, recording sufferings was a practice as early as 1653, in George Fox and James Nayler's *Saul's Errand to Damascus* (London: Giles Calvert, 1653). In the year following, five other works specifically addressed the persecution of Friends. This type of writing became the dominant form of Quaker pamphlets, shifting from the apocalyptic visions of a few to the collected experiences of persecution and property destruction of many. For instance, *The Cry of the Innocent for Justice, Being a Brief Narrative of the Illegal Apprehending and Imprisoning of about seven score of the people called Quakers...*(1662), was printed in two parts and signed by seven different authors from around England who contributed information relating to the persecution as well as the persecution of others in their communities. Further relations were printed in response, from Colchester, London, Middlesex, Worcester, subscribed by incarcerated Friends, mapping their sweeping repression. Certain pamphlets covered specific court proceedings in great detail, including dialogue between the court and the accused, for example *A true Relation of the Unjust Proceedings, Verdict (so called) 7 Sentence of the Court of Sessions, at Margarets Hill in Southwark, Against diverse of the Lord's People called Quakers, On the 30th day of the 8th Month 1662*. Other pamphlets read like newspapers, and condensed longer-form stories of persecution into shorter lists with less detail, as in *A Brief Relation of the Persecutions and Cruelties That have been acted upon the People Called Quakers In and about the City of London since the beginning of the 7th Month last, til this present time*. These compiled sufferings were meant to establish the Quakers as a non-threatening group by their sheer numbers.

These publications reinforced the message that Quakers belonged to a dynasty of sufferers and martyrs.¹⁷⁰ This too was a mutation of the petitioning culture of the Civil War and Commonwealth period — instead of relying on subscribed names, often the undersigned added information about their experiences. In *Print and Public Politics in the English Revolution* Jason Peacey has shown how the explosion of cheap print helped to create a lasting cultural appetite for political news, particularly in the form of pamphlets and petitions.¹⁷¹ The war established print as a feature of everyday life, for everyday people, and fostered “new methods of participation and made traditional methods more widely available.”¹⁷² The format of Quaker publications from the 1660s tended to include signatories at the end in addition to the author, supporting Peacey’s argument about the expansion of “participatory tactics”.¹⁷³ Quakers applied “participatory tactics” learned from petitioning to their longer pamphlets, which contained more detail on the nature of their persecution.

Collected Quaker sufferings were meant to support the “truth” of an argument agreed upon by leaders, and at the same time, to re-write Quaker history much in the way Steven Shapin has described was collectively achieved by the community of gentlemen-scientists in *The Social History of Truth*.¹⁷⁴ George Fox and Margaret Fell Fox

¹⁷⁰ Knott, *Discourses of Martyrdom in English Literature 1563-1694* (Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 1992) 218; Barbor, *The Quakers in Puritan England*, 208-9.

¹⁷¹ Peacey, *Print and Public Politics in the English Revolution*, 14.

¹⁷² Peacey, *Print and Public Politics*, 18.

¹⁷³ Peacey, *Print and Public Politics*, 18.

¹⁷⁴ Steven Shapin, *A Social History of Truth: Civility and Science in Seventeenth Century England* (Chicago and London: U of Chicago P, 1994); more recently Richard Yeo and Elizabeth Yale, among others, have added to the pool of scholarship on reliability and record-keeping: Richard Yeo, *Notebooks, English Virtuosi, and Early Modern Science* (Chicago and London: U of Chicago P, 2014); Elizabeth Yale, *Sociable Knowledge: Natural History and the Nation in Early Modern Britain* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016).

had derived this strategy too from their experience of controversy in 1656. During that year, the first major point of controversy among Friends erupted when one of the most prominent leaders, James Nayler, was arrested and imprisoned for blasphemy. The cause of arrest was his entry into Bristol by donkey in imitation of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem.¹⁷⁵ Rosemary Moore has argued that the "Nayler Affair" in 1656 prompted Quakers to reconsider "their public image." After Nayler's arrest, Friends "were urgently in need of a 'good press'." They implemented this change themselves in the first large shift in their publication style: "from prophecy to apologetics," the same style of apologetics that would come to be known as "sufferings."¹⁷⁶ Quakers used their printers and their preachers to circulate testimonies condemning Nayler, distancing him from their group as a whole. His reputation was ruined as he served his prison sentence, and although he was forgiven by George Fox after his release in 1659, he died in relative obscurity in 1660.

The Nayler response was the first instance of using the Quaker system of publication to carry out a dramatic change in the type, and tone, of information it circulated. It formed the basis for Fox's subsequent administration of order, and aided in consolidating his ideas such as that of the "Peace Testimony." The "Peace Testimony" was politically advantageous, since by 1660 Quakers faced a dangerous problem: authorities had not distinguished Friends from other violent sects, such as the Fifth Monarchy Men, who had staged a failed uprising that same year. And some Quakers *were* sympathetic to, if not cooperative with, the Fifth Monarchists.¹⁷⁷ By adapting pacifism on

¹⁷⁵ Leo Damrosch, *The Sorrows of the Quaker Jesus: James Nayler and the Puritan Crackdown on the Free Spirit* (Harvard, Harvard U P, 1996).

¹⁷⁶ Moore, *The Light in their Consciences*, 47.

¹⁷⁷ Greaves, Richard L. *Deliver us from Evil: The Radical Underground in Britain, 1660-1663* (Oxford, OUP, 1986) 200-201.

behalf of all Quakers, Fox sought that “all Occasion of suspition may be taken away, and our Innocency cleared”¹⁷⁸.

There was a clear top-down structure in the early days. Quaker sufferings after 1660 were collected to support the declaration George Fox had published against war and violence in all its forms — the so-called “Peace Testimony.” Fox’s “Peace Testimony” was, intellectually, grounded in his encounters with Oliver Cromwell beginning in 1650, during which time he met with, and committed to writing, a promise that he and his followers would not take up arms against the government.¹⁷⁹ This further reinforced the similarities between Quaker spirituality and that of the Mennonites and Anabaptists found in Germany and the Netherlands, who made commitments to avoid “external weapons” in the late 16th century.¹⁸⁰

The more immediate printed predecessor was a petition written by Margaret Fell Fox (1614-1702), an important early Quaker leader, author, and administrator, “delivered into the King’s hand, the 22nd day of the Fourth Moneth [June] 1660.” Meredith Baldwin Weddle has argued that the *Declaration and Information From us the People of God called Quakers*, was the first collective declaration of Quaker pacifism, signed by 13 other leaders.¹⁸¹ The *Declaration and Information* outlined the basic ideas taken up by George Fox six months later in the *Declaration from the Harmless & Innocent People of God*

¹⁷⁸ Fox, *A Declaration*, 6.

¹⁷⁹ Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences*, 29; Peter Brock dates Fox’s pacifism to 1650, when he refused to accept Cromwell’s attempts to recruit him as captain of a militia in *Pacifism in Europe to 1914* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton U P, 1972) 259.

¹⁸⁰ Brock, *Pacifism in Europe*, 213.

¹⁸¹ Meredith Baldwin Weddle argues that one reason it has been overlooked is that it was written by a woman in *Walking in the Way of Peace: Quaker Pacifism in the Seventeenth Century*. (Oxford, OUP, 2001), 43.

called *Quakers Against all Plotters and Fighters in the World*, known as the “Peace Testimony:”

Our Principle is, and our Practices have always been, to seek peace, and ensue it, and to follow after righteousness, and the knowledge of God, seeking the Good and Well-fare, and doing that which tends to the peace of All.¹⁸²

Quakers had not in fact “always” tended “to the peace of All” that many early Quakers including Fox himself had used, and believed in, the violent terms of their “Lamb’s War,” and many more had served as soldiers in the New Model Army.¹⁸³ But this history was nowhere to be found in the collection of sufferings and other publications issued to support the *Declaration and Information from the Harmless*, such as Edward Burrough’s *Visitation and presentation of love unto the King* and Richard Hubberthorne’s *Account of severall things that passed between his Sacred Majesty*. These apologetics published by Quaker leaders would come to be supported by Ellis Hookes’ collections of sufferings.

Historical revision was a matter of life and death. The “Peace Testimony” was not made as an abstract statement of belief, or a devotional text, as earlier pamphlets on the inner light had been, nor was it aimed at gaining converts to the movement. A nonviolent position was the only way to create distance between the Friends and the fifty radicals charged with regicide during the restoration, and Friends and the ten Fifth Monarchists who had been hung, drawn and quartered for treason.¹⁸⁴ The elevation of pacifism in the “Peace Testimo-

¹⁸² George Fox, *A Declaration from the Harmless & Innocent People of God, called Quakers Against all Plotters and Fighters in the World. For the removing of the ground of Jealousie, and Suspition from both Magistrates and People in the Kingdoms, concerning Wars and Fightings...* (London, 1660) 1.

¹⁸³ Barbour, *The Quakers in Puritan England*, 234.

¹⁸⁴ Bernard Capp, “A Door of Hope Re-opened: The Fifth Monarchy, King Charles and King Jesus,” *Journal of Religious History* 32.1, (2008)16–30.

ny,” adapted from the beliefs of a few individual Quakers in the 1650s into a collective, official statement after 1660 had far-reaching implications for Quakers, especially those living in the wilderness of the colonies.¹⁸⁵ But more immediately, it was a change Quaker leaders relied upon record collection and publication to effect.

After it was published as a brief pamphlet, its ideas were further circulated as petitions and broadsheets, and by other Friends in their own writings. Individual accounts of suffering were another way of disseminating the Quaker “Peace Testimony” through the sheer contrast between peace and the violence they withstood in the name of their beliefs. The number of discrete authors testifying to their persecution further strengthened the call for mercy. For instance, Peter Hardcastle published *A Quaker’s Plea* in 1661, which contained testimonies by Hardcastle and other soldiers who had left the army and adopted pacifism with the belief that it was “not lawful (in the administration of the gospel) to fight...or go to war with carnal weapons.”¹⁸⁶

From the “Peace Testimony” onward, pacifism was linked by Quaker writers with another increasingly dominant belief: liberty of conscience. The emerging language of peace was reinforced by Quaker application of the “light” and the concept of freedom of “Conscience” argued for in earlier pamphlets and petitioned for in the time of Oliver Cromwell.¹⁸⁷ In 1660, the same years as the Peace Testimony, official Quaker statement linked the commitment to pacifism with the longer-held belief in freedom of conscience. *The Case of Free Liberty of Conscience* was sent to Charles II and both houses of Parliament.

¹⁸⁵ Larry Gragg, *The Quaker Community on Barbados: Challenging the Culture of the Planter Class* (Columbia, MI and London: U of Missouri P, 2009) 5.

¹⁸⁶ Quoted in Brock, *Pacifism in Europe*, 272.

¹⁸⁷ Lobo, “Early Quaker Writing, Oliver Cromwell, and the Nationalization of Conscience,” 114, 116.

To grant toleration for the freedom of “conscience” or religious worship, was, Quakers lobbied Charles II, the way to ensure a peaceful kingdom. In support, *Liberty of Conscience Asserted* was published, encouraging the government to adapt liberty of conscience as a peaceful policy after the example of the Quakers, since “obedience obtained by force would not last,” and was signed by four prominent Friends.¹⁸⁸ Tolerance itself was pushed further into the secular or state-determined realm: Quaker writers began to argue for tolerance more broadly, not just that of their own sect: “Our Cry hath always been, and is at this day, for LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE to Worship God.”¹⁸⁹ They used examples of their own experiences of persecution to argue for their beliefs, rather than the descriptions of dreams, prophecies, and warnings that populated Quaker pamphlets of the Commonwealth period.

When a government raid on a Quaker meeting resulted in the death of John Trowel from the “wounds and bruises received at the Meeting”, Quakers printed the story.¹⁹⁰ After his death, his body was displayed at the Quaker Meeting House in an attempt to publicise government responsibility, and the pamphlet was printed as witness to the brutality: “That the murder might be manifest, and not be hid in secret.” Pamphlets were paired with performance: in protest of Trowel’s death, Solomon Eccles walked naked through Bartholomew Fair with a “pan on his head full of fire” of warning — shouting at people to remember Sodom. Likewise, two female Quakers interrupted a

¹⁸⁸ Moore, *the Light in Their Consciences*, 219.

¹⁸⁹ *For the King and both Houses of Parliament: Being a further Relation (in brief) of the Cruel Havok and Soil...*

¹⁹⁰ [Anonymous], *A Brief Relation of the Persecutions and Cruelties That have been acted upon the People Called Quakers, In and about the City of London, since the beginning of the 7th Month last, til this present time, With a general Relation of Affairs, signifying the State of people through the Land.* (London: [n.p.] 1662) 1. From page 19 onward, are included lists of wounded and imprisoned Quakers by county.

service at St. Paul's with "hair down with blood poured in it, which run down upon her sackcloth". One "poured also some blood down upon the alter" and spoke a sermon of her own, about cruelty.¹⁹¹ A broadside described how "he lay sick ten dayes...and the Coroner and Jury viewed his dead body, and many others, who judged him to be murdered, his body being black with bruises, and even rotten." This story featured Trowell's death alongside information concerning the deaths of fifty-six others since Charles had come to power.¹⁹² Another pamphlet named him "that murdered martyred Saint, John Trowell, whose Blood the Earth hath drunk up."¹⁹³ "O! Consider, Consider," wrote the pamphleteer, "it is a small thing for Liberty of Conscience to be given in matters of Religion."¹⁹⁴ In these descriptions, the language of Fox's initial "Peace Testimony" was repeated again and again with bloody embellishments, the extremities of peacefulness and persecution set against one another. This strategy, in turn, was paired with historical examples drawn from *The Book of Martyrs* to add to the body of proofs of Quaker righteousness.

From the *Spirit of Christ* to the *Spirit of Martyrs*

To add to the bulk of their compiled experiences, material from *The Book of Martyrs* allowed Quakers to contextualise their sufferings historically, and moreover, to use that accumulated tradition to add to their collection of personal sufferings in order to give it more power. The *Cry of Newgate* thus contextualised John Trowell's death with connections to Queen Mary's reign: "we loath your *Club Law*, for in

¹⁹¹ Braithwaite, *Second Period of Quakerism*, 25.

¹⁹² [Anonymous], *For the King and both Houses of Parliament being a brief, plain, and true relation of some of the late sad sufferings of the people of God called Quakers for worshipping God and exercising a good conscience towards God and man* (London: 1663).

¹⁹³ [Anonymous], *The cry of Newgate with the other prisons in and about London* (London: [n. pb.] 1662) 7.

¹⁹⁴ [Anonymous], *The cry of Newgate*, 5.

Queen Maryes dayes, in that Persecution which was very bloody indeed...the loathsom pestiferous stench thereof is exceeding un-savoury in the minds of the good Protestant People of this Nation.” And later: “These *Tragedies* are not much unlike some of those Christian Hunters...as Nero, Domitian, Maximinus, and Diocletian.”¹⁹⁵ Both the stories of the earliest Christian martyrs and of the Marian persecutions used to describe the deaths of Trowell and other Quakers were drawn from John Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs*.

The Book of Martyrs had long been a bestselling work across the spectrum of Protestantism, chained in churches and published in many editions, formats, and abridgements.¹⁹⁶ Like the Bible it was a common source for Anglicans and Sectaries alike, from the lavish edition owned by Charles II and across the spectrum of sectaries from Prynne to Lilburne, providing a common historical source about the struggles and successes of Protestants in England.¹⁹⁷ Just like Prynne and Lilburne, John Foxe provided George Fox with a template for Christian life-writing and a justification for suffering. *The Book of Martyrs* gave Quakers historical counterparts to conflate with their own experiences of persecution.¹⁹⁸ As one tract put it:

[A]ll along, even to this day and age, the true witnesses of God have suffered persecution, yea and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution: for saith Christ, if ye were of the world, the world would love his own but because

¹⁹⁵ *The Cry of Newgate*, 4, 6.

¹⁹⁶ John King, *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs and Early Modern Print Culture* (Cambridge: CUP, 2006) 1-3, 150; Elizabeth Evenden and Thomas S. Freeman, *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England: The Making of Foxe’s ‘Book of Martyrs’* (Cambridge: CUP, 2011) 335.

¹⁹⁷ Knott, *Discourses of Martyrdom*, 4.

¹⁹⁸ Barbour, *The Quakers in Puritan England*, 208-209, Wright, *Literary Lives of the Quakers*, ch. 7.

ye are not of this world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you...¹⁹⁹

The Book of Martyrs provided a genealogy for Quakers, tracing their heritage beyond the immediate struggles of the Civil War and Commonwealth eras back to the earliest Christians, to the first English reformers. As a blueprint for recording experiences of persecution, *The Book of Martyrs* was not about accuracy of facts, but the thrust of propaganda of the story. Foxe encouraged his readers “Staying your iudgment till truth be tryed”, “wisely weying [its] purpose.”²⁰⁰ The language of “weighing” “truth” directly informed Quaker publication tactics.

Moreover, the 1632 edition highlighted the importance of suffering for those who had witnessed the Restoration according to Damian Nussbaum, who has shown the “an unequivocal call for martyrdom” added to the text. A new conclusion to that edition was entitled *A treatise of afflictions and persecutions of the faithfull, preparing them with patience to suffer martyrdom*. “It is impossible to live godly and not suffer persecution,” it argued.²⁰¹ The generation of Civil War radicals had absorbed this message: John Lilburne had seen first-hand the brutal treatment of Henry Burton, John Bastwick, and William Prynne under the Laudian regime, and had read about them in John

¹⁹⁹ Alexander Parker, *A Testimony...with some reasons why Margaret Hambleton doeth deny the Presbyterians...* ([London?: n.pb. 1658?]).

²⁰⁰ Susan Felch, “Shaping the Reading in the *Acts and Monuments*,” David Loades, ed. *John Foxe and the English Reformation* (Scolar Press: 1997) 61. See also Patrick Collinson, “Truth and Legend: John Foxe’s veracity” in *Clio’s Mirror: Historiography in Britain and the Netherlands* (1985); Theodore Bezman, *To Live Ancient Lives: The Primitivist Dimension in Puritanism* (1988).

²⁰¹ **Damian** Nussbaum, “Appropriating Martyrdom: Fears of Renewed Persecution and the 1632 Edition of *Acts and Monuments*” Loades, David, ed. *John Foxe and the English Reformation* (Scolar Press: 1997) 178.

Taylor's 1639 version of *The Book of Martyrs* that included their stories.²⁰²

Both editions emphasised martyrdom with renewed vigour and suffused the pamphlets and literature of Civil War period with their language, from the tracts of Lilburne and Winstanley, to the poetry of Milton and the *Pilgrims Progress*, although the call to endure suffering was part of *The Book of Martyrs* from the beginning.²⁰³

While abridgements and reprints of *The Book of Martyrs* were common, especially in the 1640s where three separate versions were published, no less than three abridgements in defence of Quakers were compiled by Ellis Hookes.²⁰⁴ In 1664 Hookes published a great expansion of his *Spirit of Christ*, similarly titled *The Spirit of the Martyrs Revive'd*. He prefaced the book with a little poem:

Go forth, O Book, and let the World review
The Blood-shed by a Persecuting Crew,
Let Popish Bishops and the Prelates see,
The dying Martyrs Words revived be,
Who though there Bodies for the Truth were slain
Their Living Testimonies still remain...²⁰⁵

The first parts of the book included an abridgement of the Old and New Testament, but the bulk of the work contained "A Brief View of the Great Sufferings and Living Testimonies of the True and Constant Martyrs, Contain'd in the *Acts & Monuments* of the *Church*, writ by the industrious [sic] Labours of *John Fox*, and now Epitomiz'd, and a further Account annexed of some that suffered DEATH for RELIGION since." Hookes imitated Foxe's habit of including copies of laws and

²⁰² Rees, *The Leveller Revolution*, 28.

²⁰³ Knott, *Discourses of Martyrdom*, 1-5.

²⁰⁴ King, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, 150.

²⁰⁵ Hookes, Ellis. *The spirit of the martyrs revived* (London: [n. pb.], 1664) sig. *v.

edicts that legalised religious persecution— a practice that would be carried over in Friends’ sufferings. He also relied upon dialogue Foxe had reproduced in *The Book of Martyrs*, another formal element Quakers imitated in print. Although no Quakers were mentioned in over two-hundred pages of the epitome of Foxe’s work with other ecclesiastical and martyrological histories, the argument was clear. Hookes complained that the origins of suffering came from people who once “were under Suffering and Oppression for their consciences”, but who had been “raised” by the Lord and eventually had “Power [put] into their hands,” which meant “They soon forgot [God’s] kind dealings with them.” He wrote that

the *Independents* and *Presbyterians*, some of whom I have seen, neer forty years since, dregged out of their Meetings in private Houses, and their Cloathes tore, and their Faces covered (as it were) with dirt, and their blood spilt; and in this suffering condition they made many Covenants and Vowes to the Lord; but this very People afterwards coming into Places of Authority, and killing, and taking Possession, got them selves into the High-Places of the Earth, and soon forgot their time of deep Sufferings; and being exalted into Government, they tread in the same steps those had trodden that were their great Persecutors, and then they turned at riggid Persecutors, if not worse, then those they had turned out...²⁰⁶

Those who suffered were righteous, and those in England who persecuted them yet identified as Protestant, had forgotten their own history.

In 1665 Hookes issued an additional, but much shorter pamphlet co-compiled with Thomas Rudyard, similarly titled *The Spirit of the Martyrs is Risen*. It once again drew from *The Book of Martyrs*, only this

²⁰⁶ Hookes, *The spirit of the martyrs revived*, 247.

time Hooke and Rudyard organised stories of those that had suffered persecution for a wider array of reasons, all of which the Quakers had faced imprisonment for:

- 1 For working on Holy days, and for not having bells rung when they preached.
- 2 For eating flesh in Lent, and on the dayes called *Frydayes*, and other dayes which are forbidden.
- 3 For speaking in the Steeple houses.
- 5 For meeting together in houses, woods, fields, and barns, and for not going processioning, and for denying Organs.
- 6 For not paying Tithes, and Churching women.
- 7 For saying any place was as holy ground to bury in as the Church-Yard. And
- 8 For saying that the gift of God could not be bought nor sold for money; for these things the Martyrs suffered, and for many others.²⁰⁷

Each of these issues had emerged as a dominant source for Quaker persecution over the past five years— the re-arrangement of *The Book of Martyrs* worked to give precedent to Quaker activities. It was also meant to prove that the oppressors of the Friends were in the wrong, through historical comparison. This shorter work closely resembled the arrangement of the manuscript books Ellis Hooke had begun to keep of Quaker sufferings. It took the form of a succinct list, where persecution or martyrdom is often implied rather than stated: “Robert Andrew for keeping disputations of heresie in his house... Robert Bartlet detected with a number more with him for reading and conferring among themselves... Thomas Threadway and others for reading the Commandments in his house... Roger Hearne and others sat up all the night in the house of Burant, reading all night a

²⁰⁷ Ellis Hooke and Thomas Rudyard, *The spirit of the martyrs is risen and the spirit of the old persecutor is risen and manifest...* (London: for Thomas Simmons, 1665).

Book of Scripture.” With occasional dialogue included, or brief introductions to the type of persecution: “Queen Maryes dayes, some without authority took upon them to interpret and Preach the Word of God in publique and private places and then in Churches.”²⁰⁸

While the majority of examples were from English history, Hookes and Rudyard also used Foxe to contextualise Quaker persecution in continental terms. For example: “In Spain and Italy an abundance of Martyrs suffered, and was burned, and their goods confiscated and seized upon, some for entertaining Assemblies in their houses, for the retaining the Word of God.”²⁰⁹ Likewise, the issue of tithes was contextualised repeatedly in terms of Papal law, reinforcing the sectarian point that the Church of England had no business carrying forward policies created by Pope Innocent III.²¹⁰ The re-arrangement of sufferers’ and martyrs’ stories according to the reason for their persecution was a shrewd attempt at advocating for Quakers without the typical Quaker language of “Woe!” and cries of “Blood!”, rather holding a mirror of history up to the Church of England. Yet the re-configured *Book of Martyrs* also structured the records Hookes himself had begun to collect, documenting the persecution of the Friends as it unfolded. While the first few years of Restoration relied upon collections compiled by Quaker leaders and including non-Quaker sources, by 1662 those works were overtaken by examples drawn from immediate experience.

The Origins and Growth of the Archive

For twenty-four years Hookes facilitated the growth, maintenance, and organisation of a central Quaker archive in his chambers in order

²⁰⁸ Hookes and Rudyard, *The spirit of the martyrs*, 12-13.

²⁰⁹ Hookes and Rudyard, *The spirit of the martyrs*, 15.

²¹⁰ Hookes and Rudyard, *The spirit of the martyrs*, 29.

to continue the work of martyrologists like John Foxe. Looking to the appropriately titled “Book of Sufferings,” Hooke’s hand dated entries beginning from 1655. While Anne Littleboy has dated the birth of the Quaker library to the foundation of the Second Day’s Morning Meeting on 15 July 1673, Quaker documents had been collected and centralised dating back to Margaret Fell Fox’s home at Swarthmoor Hall.²¹¹ Margaret Fell Fox, **Margon** Ames has recently argued, was the first to organise and maintain “a communicative structure that enabled [Quaker] ministers to evangelize” through “receiving, copying, and sending off letters to members of the emergent faith, thus allowing the process of sharing experiences.”²¹² Fell Fox’s creation of “The Quaker Letter Network” made possible the quick response to James Nayler, and it was her collection of letters, the majority of which were written by George Fox, which helped in the consolidation of his leadership role.²¹³

Margaret Fell Fox hired a secretary, William Caton (1636-1665), in 1653. He had already impressed her as a young man, and had been her son’s companion at grammar school.²¹⁴ Around this same time Fell established the “Kendal Fund,” also known as the “Common Fund,” to pay for the travels of Quaker missionaries, to help the families of those who had been imprisoned, and to cover the expense of printing and distributing pamphlets. Fell spent her own funds, and

²¹¹ Anne Littleboy, *A History of the Friends’ Reference Library, with notes on Early Printers and Printing in the Society of Friends* (London: Offices of the Society of Friends, 1921) 1.

²¹² Ames, **Marjon**. *Margaret Fell, Letters, and the Making of Quakerism* (New York: Routledge, 2016) 1.

²¹³ Ames, *Margaret Fell*, 42.

²¹⁴ “Caton, William (1636–1665),” Nicholas McDowell in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, October 2006, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4898> (accessed May 23, 2016). George Fox wrote in a journal entry for 1656, ““ye north att ye first boare ye charges of all ye printinge for severall yeares,” Wright, *The Literary Life of the Early Friends*, 75.

money was collected from local Friends' meetings.²¹⁵ Caton himself was not only something like the earliest unofficial clerk to the Society, but he was in his own right an author and a preacher who travelled and even set up lasting communities of Friends in the Netherlands.²¹⁶ He was interested in ecclesiastical history, publishing at his own expense an abridgement of Eusebius Pamphilius's "*Remarkablest Chronologies*" that also contained "a catalogue of the Synods, and Councils....together with a hint of what was Decreed in the same."²¹⁷

The combination of secretary, author, preacher, historians, and preserver of Quaker histories were all roles Ellis Hookes took upon himself. Whereas the bulk of Caton's energy was eventually channelled into his own evangelical mission, from his chamber in London, Hookes focused almost entirely on the growth and maintenance of Quaker records, and their publication. And while Caton's materials documented primarily the experience of Quaker leaders, the birth of the Quaker archive began with the official, paid appointment of Hookes as clerk to the Friends. And it was in his chambers that an archive grew which made possible the later Quaker library. Hookes appeared at nearly every aspect of the publication process or communication circuit in positions of authority. He read manuscripts, chased down missing records, got works published, composed and

²¹⁵ "Fell, Margaret (1614–1702)," Bonnelyn Young Kunze in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, January 2008, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/9260> (accessed May 26, 2016).

²¹⁶ See for instance William I. Hull's *The Rise of Quakerism in Amsterdam, 1655-1665* (Swarthmore, PA, Swarthmore College, 1932), one of five volumes Hull dedicated to the study of Quakers in the Low Countries.

²¹⁷ William Caton, *An abridgement of a compendius commemoration of the remarkablest chronologies which are contained in that famous Ecclesiastical history of Eusebius* (London: Thomas Simmons, 1661).

signed printed works on behalf of others, wrote and published works of his own, and co-authored treatises with George Fox.

Over the decades his duties were diverse: Friends were instructed to appeal to him for advice on legal matters, but he was also tasked with getting copies of letters patent from the Bermuda Company, and at times delivered petitions to members of Parliament, and found translators for Quaker works to be circulated in France.²¹⁸ Hookes acted as a publisher: “The following Epistle being committed to me, I have found it convenient to disperse it,” he wrote in the preface to the 1661 publication of Edward Burrough’s *Tender Salutation of Perfect Love*, and again in 1672; “The Publisher of this Volumn wisheth all Peace and Prosperity in the Lord...I having had much Exercise and care upon me in Collecting, and for the Publishing these Books in this Volumn; at length, after much Travel & Diligence.”²¹⁹ By 1679, he was officially in business with the Quaker printers Andrew Sowle and Benjamin Clark.²²⁰

Such a high level of individual activity makes Darnton’s expansive communications circuit contract; a single individual could exert much influence over the shape of the historical record. Hookes’ work, in turn, was managed carefully by Fox. It was Fox who, in addition to securing payment to hire Hookes, authored epistles designating the kinds of records Hookes was to maintain and from which he pub-

²¹⁸ Through his trade as a scrivener, Hookes would have been a “minor legal official” Honneyman, “Ellis Hookes”, 47; with Fox, George, *An epistle from the people in scorn called Quakers to all people upon the earth to read over that they may see what the people called Quakers hold concerning God, Christ, his death, his resurrection, his blood, concerning his offering, redemption, salvation, justification, faith, and hope* (London: Printed in the Year, 1668).

²¹⁹ Edward Burrough, *A tender salutation of perfect love unto the elect of God the royal seed...*(London, Printed for the Author, 1661). 2; Edward Burrough, *The memorable works of a son of thunder and consolation...*(London: Printed and Published for the good and benefit of Generations to come, in the Year, 1672) 2.

²²⁰ Honneyman, “Ellis Hookes” 52.

lished. Fox encouraged the broader membership to keep records of their experiences calling them by two names: “Testimonies,” which included conversion narratives, and “Sufferings”, or instances where Quakers were persecuted for their testimonies.

In a 1657 Epistle to “All Friends every where” he encouraged Quakers persecuted for refusing to pay tithes to record their “Sufferings”, laying the groundwork for the Friends’ archive that Hookes would maintain his entire life:

[T]ake Copies of your Suppoena’s [sic] and Writs, that ye may have them, when ye Appear, to shew them to the Court;... keep Copies of your Sufferings in every County...Let a true and a plain Copy of such Suffering be sent up to London....And if any be beaten or wounded in going to Meetings, or be struck or bruised in Meetings, or taken out of Meetings and Imprisoned; let Copies of such things be taken, and sent as abovesaid, under the hands of Two or Three Witnesses that the Truth may be exalted, and the Power and Life of God lived in. ²²¹

This emphasis on the repeated copying of court documents and personal testimonies combined with the power ascribed to multiple witnesses formed the basis of the Quaker archive that still exists at the Society of Friends Meeting House in London. Fox requested a “plain Copy” of relevant records, referring to the Quaker style of “Plainness of Speech,” which he had defined in an earlier 1656 epistle. “Use Plainness of Speech and plain Words, single Words in the single Life, pure Words from the pure Life, seasoned Words, seasoned with Grace, which teacheth to deny all Ungodliness and Worldly Lusts,” he wrote.²²² Ultimately “Plainness of Speech” lead to a certain

²²¹ George Fox, Epistle 140, *Epistles*, 109-110, and repeated in Epistle 141 (1657), “To Friends in Holland” in Epistle 253 (1667), to Friends “in all your Islands and Plantations” in Epistle 258 (1668).

²²² Fox, *Epistles*, 88-89.

amount of repetition of words and phrases within Quaker record-keeping — yet like William Britten’s “Spiritual Touchstones” elaborated upon in *Silent Meeting*, it helped to harmonise individual testimonies and sufferings into a communal account. “Be Diligent,” Fox advised, “And those that can write help them that cannot” when “moved to speak forth by the Power” against their persecutors.²²³

The experience of persecution, the hundreds of deaths in prison over the course of the first decade after the Restoration, also created an urgency for preserving the testimonies of those who had died. In 1669 Fox wrote calling for “such Testimonies of Friends as are deceased, let them be Recorded, that so the Testimony of the Lord through his Servants may not be lost....to future Generations.”²²⁴ The introduction of this mentality in the collection of records would increase over the decades, especially after the Act of Toleration, when Friends began to look back over their own history of persecution from a distance. But for both the living and the dead in the 1660s, Fox came to expand upon his strategy with the “Peace Testimony,” and defended the “Truth” of Quaker beliefs through the similar strategy of multiple testimonies derived by multiple records. In his 1668 “Exhortation to Keep to the Ancient Principles of Truth” (republished in 1698) he wrote to Friends to “keep your Testimony” organised by headings similar to Hookes’ abridgement of the *Book of Martyrs*: “against the World’s vain Fashions”, “against Hireling Priests, and their Tithes”, “against swearing”, “against all Loosness,” “against all the World’s evil Ways,” “against all the filthy Raggs of the old World”, and “for your Liberty in Jesus Christ.”²²⁵ These issues dictated the organising principles of printed pamphlets, and they were each sup-

²²³ Fox, Epistle 264, *Epistles*, 293.

²²⁴ Fox, Epistle 264, *Epistles*, 293.

²²⁵ Fox, Epistle 263, *Epistles*, 274.

ported from manuscript that Ellis Hookes kept, volumes which drew together records collected from Quaker communities across England and in the colonies.

Each volume was known as the “Book of Sufferings” and organised first by region. Each county or colonial community had its own section. Copies of relevant legal documents (Warrants for arrest, mittimuses, letters written by Quakers to the relevant authorities) were included chronologically. The earliest dated to 1655, with a spike in 1660, at least because that was when records were more diligently kept, alongside the Quaker argument that Charles II’s restoration increased systematic persecution. Each local section concluded with an index of Quakers listed alphabetically by surname. Hookes sent out memoranda and requests for information and correspondence from Quakers far and wide, which were then collected, copied, summarised, and prepared for potential publication.

Quaker archiving entailed exactly the kind of “waste” keeping and transfer methods used by merchants in medieval Italy.²²⁶ A few communities provided loose papers that still survive, containing hastily written accounts of sufferings that would have been known as “waste” in terms of mercantile record keeping, and which were crossed out to denote that they had been entered into the fair copy. That system was still employed by merchants in late 17th century England, evidenced in any common guide to book-keeping. Richard Dafforne’s 1660 text, *Merchants Mirror: Or, Directions for the perfect Ordering and Keeping of his Accounts. Framed by way of Debitor, after the (so termed) Italian MannerAs likewise a Waste-Book, with a complete Journal and Leager thereunto appertaining* suggests

²²⁶ Armando Petrucci, *Writers and Readers in Medieval Italy*; Miriam Hussey, “Business Manuscripts in the Library of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania,” *Bulletin of the Business Historical Society*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (Jun., 1936), pp. 48-51.

exactly the same system.²²⁷ Clerks like Hookes had been trained to simplify the collected “waste” documents into a ledger. The approach, grounded in financial record-keeping, has been shown by Ann Hughes to have been a common habit to local parish communities during the Civil War in connection with central authorities, resulting similarly in a “creation of archives from above and below.”²²⁸ In this case, the “Book of Sufferings” was a kind of ledger, and the process of simplifying the documents from local Quaker meetings included quantifying accounts of the loss of time, property, and occasionally, the loss of life in prison.

Refined Infrastructure

As the Quaker movement established itself in spite of persecution, the infrastructure to support the growing number of records kept by members became more refined. By 1673 the Second Day’s Morning Meeting was established, with Hookes as a leading member, to further refine the continuum between the collection of Quaker documents and their ready availability for publication.

The Second Day’s Morning Meeting oversaw (and controlled the content of) publications by Quakers, and was complimented by the Meeting for Sufferings, also facilitated by Hookes, which coordinated document collection.²²⁹ A memorandum circulated in 1675 from Hookes and the Meeting for Sufferings revived the call for diligent record-keeping, re-iterating Fox’s advice from years ago.

²²⁷ Richard Dafforne, *The Merchants Mirrour*... (London: Nicholas Bourn, 1660).

²²⁸ Ann Hughes, “‘The Accounts of the Kingdom:’ Memory, Community and the English Civil War,” *Past and Present Supplement* 11 (2016) 317.

²²⁹ See Chapter 4, and Thomas O’Malley, ‘The Press and Quakerism 1653-1659’ *Journal of the Friends’ Historical Society*, 54 (1979); Thomas O’Malley “Defying the Powers and Tempering the Spirit”: A Review of Quaker Control over their Publications 1672-1689, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 33 (1982).

The memorandum also contained a few practical items: Friends should not “Judge nor reflect upon one another” in the course of their persecution. The memorandum gave Quakers instructions in the event of arrest. First, Friends were told to alert their Quarterly or Monthly meeting. Second they were encouraged to know the laws by which they were detained, “especially to be capable of laying it on the heads of their Persecutors for exceeding their own Law in Severity.” “Friends who suffer,” the memorandum continued, “are advised not to let out their minds into too much expectation of outward relief.” Finally, Friends were told to “be careful of violent struggling” when they were arrested, and to direct any legal queries to the Meeting for Sufferings.

The second half of the memorandum repeated the basis of record-keeping:

...Persons [should be] nominated to draw up a short paper of some Instances of most gross Sufferings to be presented to the parliament: with convenient Speed, as also to draw up a Book of Sufferings at Large, as soon as may be, as well those upon the late act unprinted, as Tythes &c.

...That ye Booke of Sufferings before the King came in be Transcribed, and reviewed by the Severall Counties respectively, to Inspect and take care of the certainty of matters before it be printed, and when fitted, that ye printing of it goe on.

...That after they are received by the Counties, and returned to London friends of ye second dayes meeting, advise about ye reviewing them over againe for their better Methodizing, in order to a Brief history to be published.

...Friends of each County are willing to defray their proportion of charges for their transcription.²³⁰

Documents were to be made and transcribed by reliable friends, and passed between communities in a kind of peer review to ensure accuracy before publication. The memoranda concluded with a vengeful reminder that hearkened back to the earlier days of apocalyptic preaching. In order “That friends Sufferings be layd upon those in power,” records were to be published alongside “Judgements of God,” stories of the brutal demise of those who had persecuted Quakers.

The London Yearly Meeting’s first printed Epistle in 1675 elaborated upon what typical Quaker meetings were meant to submit in terms of paperwork just as the memorandum had, “not in loose Papers, but fairly entered into a Book under distinct heads and causes.” It also repeated the same vengeful element of record-keeping as the memorandum:

And it is further agreed and advised at this Meeting that all Judgments of God upon Persecutors, Informers, and others, not only what has of late years befallen them, but from the first breaking forth of truth, be drawn up in writing, and entered in every Monthly Meeting Book, where it came to pass exactly in all circumstances of time and place and attested under the hands of witness, that thence it be sent and entered into their Quarterly Meeting Books and thence transmitted to this General-Meeting, in order to be here recorded and Published in Print, or laid before Authority, as a Service may be seen to be therein.

Quakers did publish these “Judgments of God” against their enemies, and continued to publish them even after the Act of Toleration

²³⁰ Memorandum...18th [October] 1675. Meeting for Sufferings Vol I 1675-1680. Library of the Society of Friends, London.

had been passed and the need to publish sufferings to argue on behalf of liberty of conscience had all but disappeared. In 1696 for instance “A Short Account of the Manifest Hand of God That Hath Fallen upon Several Marshalls and their Deputies, Who have made Great Spoil and Havock of the Goods of the People of God called Quakers, in the Island of Barbados” was printed by Tace Sowle in London. It described the horrible death of 31 different men who dared imprison, fine, or steal from Quakers: Thomas Parry “was found dead, with a great quantity of Blood under him,” while Walcup Dargerfield was “found dead in his Cabbin, as supposed to be stifled in his own Vomit.” Charles Lucas was “Killed by a Fall into a Well”, and a number of men simply “died very poor,” leaving their families behind to struggle. Most infamous of all was the story of Thomas Cobham, who before dying was taken with such a fever that he cried out “Neither Heven nor Hell, but all Fire, Fire!” In 1753 Joseph Besse reprinted several pages of these stories from “A remarkable account of the Hand of God” in his account of Barbadian Quakers. Between righteousness and vengefulness, Fox’s instructions gave Ellis Hookes a full-time job in compiling a vast amount of information in his chamber over the course of his career.

After Hookes

An inventory made upon his death in 1681 outlined the expansion of the Friends’ archives beyond the volumes of Books of Sufferings surviving in Hookes’ hand, and chronicling the lives of thousands of Quakers, their struggles, their marriages, the births of their children, their deaths under natural circumstances and otherwise:

- Book of Births
- one book of Burialls
- one book of Marriages
- one of Poultons Statutes
- Londons Book of sufferings

one Abridgment of Speaches
 one Bible & 16 other books of fr[ien]ds
 one yearly meeting book
 2 Meeting for suffering books
 one 2d day meeting book
 one letter book
 2 books of marriages
 3 Quarterly meeting bookes
 one Cottons Concordance
 one 6 weekly meeting book
 Several bundles of papers of friends sufferings both in Eng-
 land & beyond ye seas
 The vintnors meeting book
 These Bookes were by Wm Ingram & Wm Chandler delivered
 to ye meeting at ye chamber that was Ellis Hookes...
 James Claypoole borrowed a receipt book in writing of Rebec-
 ca Smith's

Another list added to the above "15 bound Bookes" — comprised of pamphlets— "of Friends' writing of several years entitled by the said friends respectively, and 11 old Books of friendly persons." The equivalent documentation was otherwise to be found in local parishes, a process that had been initiated over a century earlier by Thomas Cromwell under Henry VIII.²³¹ For nonconformists such as the Quakers, living outside of the official religion, few documents would have attested to their lives and their struggles if not for the development of these record-keeping habits.

²³¹ Adam Smyth has written of parish records as early forms of life-writing in *Autobiography in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 2010), and Kristianna Polder has drawn from extensive marriage certificates Quakers kept to describe the ways in which Quakers created a matrimonial culture of "communal accountability towards holy behaviour," *Matrimony in the True Church: The Seventeenth-Century Quaker Marriage Approbation Discipline* (Farnham: Ashgate: 2015) 7, 31.

It took a year for Hookes' successor Richard Richardson (1622/3-1689) to sift through everything left behind by him after his death. At least two problems emerged, the back-up of material from meeting books and "meeting for sufferings" books that had not been incorporated into the fair copy "Books of Sufferings," and a lack of consistency across sufferings drawn from Friends' meetings in different locations:

ffriends finde here in ye Great Register, that there is a neglect of settling down the time how long friends have been prisoners, and therefore desire, that friends in each county when they bring up their sufferings, do bring ye day of ye month, ye yeare, for what &c.

And if any prisoners, how long they have been, and for what. And if cleared, when. Which being down in their month & quarterly meeting Book, they may have recourse to their Book, before they come up...

ffriends having taken great care from time to time to view the sufferings of friends finde they are increased in Bulk by letters from p[ar]ticular persons...And therefore desire they may be fairly drawing and ye names truly & plainly writte, with ye day months & year, for what &c. And duly sent up to every yearly meeting, in a Book."²³²

This continued emphasis on keeping records and improving the process of transcription only hinted at the hugely collaborative process behind the creation of the Quaker archive and the publications it made possible.

The records had "increased in Bulk" for Hookes at the end of his life, and for his successor Richardson, to such an extent that a central clerk was not enough. All meetings and their members had to be

²³² 6th of the 4th mo. 1682. Meeting for Sufferings Vol II 1680-1683. Library of the Society of Friends, London.

trained in a style of record-keeping that would make the job of the central London collection of documents possible. Without coordination between individuals in London and the groups meant to record local persecutions, imprisonment, marriages, births, deaths, the purpose of document collection in the first place could not be fulfilled. That is, largely, to be organised for printed circulation.

The unwieldiness, yet ultimate success, of the system regarding its survival, enhances the culture of “godly readers” Andrew Cambers has depicted among Protestants at the same times as the reliance upon manuscript and print was taken to new extremes.²³³ This was not the management of community through a fixed canon of religious reading so much as the management of community through the constant creation of new texts. The new extremes came from the tension between individual experience and communal coherence, and the huge labor involved creating a communal sense of history and of experience from thousands of individual experiences. This was a reversal of the early system of Quaker record-keeping maintained by Margaret Fell Fox, which sent more letters out than it received, saved, and recopied for publication. Instead, the flow of information collection was overwhelming in the direction of Hookes’ London office.

Even in 1683, Fox was still to be heard at a meeting proposing “ye printing of sufferings weekly; & that fr[ien]ds be exact in sending them up that are most grievous. That fr[ien]ds suffrings may be thrown into the high field, as suffer in ye high field.”²³⁴ Richardson continued the work of Hookes: indexing volumes of sufferings, furnishing information for the publication of new sufferings, continuing to

²³³ Andrew Cambers, *Godly Reading: Print, Manuscript, and Puritanism in England, 1580-1720* (Cambridge, CUP, 2011), 2-3.

²³⁴ “Meeting 7. 3m. 83.” Yearly Meeting 1668-1693 Vol. 1. Library of the Society of Friends, London.

maintain the Friends' reference library, publishing polemical tracts in his own right, in other words, maintaining the continuum between archive and print.²³⁵ The "15 bound Bookes" found in Hookes' chamber after his death testified to this, they were bound together the rapidly-published sufferings of Quakers from around England, under similar-sounding titles such as *Another cry of the innocent & oppressed for justice* (1664) describing persecutions in Middlesex, *A True and impartial narration* (1664) describing the imprisonment of Nicholas Lucas, Henry Marshall, Jeremiah Hearn, John Blendall, Francis Pryor, Samuel Trahearn and Henry Feast, who were sentenced to be forcibly transported to Jamaica, *Innocency and conscientiousness of the Quakers asserted* (1665), and *The Voice of the innocent uttered forth* (1665). Printed works were only one manifestation of a process powered by the circulation of handwritten documents and scribbled-over proofs, a slow process in building individual suffering into collective identity. Every book that was published bore witness to an archive that once existed, a multitude of experiences that had been gathered and made uniform by careful coordination, collection, and recopying, an archive that has yet to be discovered, if it has survived at all.

Seeing the stories they had read about *The Book of Martyrs* mirrored in their own treatment deepened the sense among Quakers that their sufferings "proved" their righteousness. The connection was made clearest in Thomas Wynne's *Antiquity of the Quakers Proved out of the Scriptures of Truth* (1677), a work which blended the Quaker zeal for publication outlined in my first chapter with a sense of living history gained through their experiences of suffering after 1660. The book contained a litany of scriptural and martyrological accounts, a few

²³⁵ Norman Penney, "Our recording clerks, ii: Richard Richardson," *Journal of the Friends' Historical Society* 1 (1903-4) 62-8.

drawn from *The Book of Martyrs*, yet all persons described as an “ancient Quaker.”

Come Papists, Protestants, Presbyterians, Independents, and Anabaptists, how comes it to pass that you make such a stir with the former ancient Quakers Writings, and carry them about with you, and keep them in your Houses, and call them the Bible, and the Word of God, and your Rule; but cannot about the present Quakers, and their Writings, but are afraid to read their Writings; although there be nothing in our Writings but what is largely testified of, and pointed unto, in the Writings of our traduced Brethren, the Quakers of old...²³⁶

When he identified these historical figures as Quakers, Wynne was attempting to argue against the hypocrisy inherent in contemporary Quakers’ persecution just as Ellis Hookes had in his abridgements of *The Book of Martyrs*. It was a wild work of anachronism — scoffed at by contemporaries — that could not possibly exist without a catalogue of examples meticulously compiled to link Wynne’s life experiences with those of the past with a degree of historical awareness.²³⁷

Yet none of the drama and detail of their experiences would have survived if not for their highly publicised and reinforced call for good record-keeping habits. The only other surviving documents attesting to their persecution otherwise would be transcripts from the court trials in which certain Quakers were condemned. As Arlette Farge writes in her beautiful meditation upon the judicial archives in which she has spent her career, the discord and confrontation lie at the heart of police records was “rarely motivated by respect for others...we can almost always glimpse one group’s desire for domi-

²³⁶ Thomas Wynne, *The Antiquity of the Quakers Proved...*(London: Printed in the Year, 1677) 11.

²³⁷ William Jones, *Work for a cooper being an answer to a libel, written by Thomas Wynne the cooper, the ale-man, the quack...*(London: Printed by J.C. for S.C., 1679).

nation over another.”²³⁸ “History is not a balanced narrative of the results of opposing moves,” Farge writes. “It is a way of taking in hand and grasping the true harshness of reality, which we can glimpse through the collision of conflicting logics.”²³⁹ By contemporary terms, this enshrines the efforts of Fox, Hookes, and later Richardson, as the architects of the longest continuously running radical archive in the English-speaking world.

I use the word “radical” to denote both the fringe status of their beliefs — for instance concerning the bible, the inner light, liberty of conscience, and the refusal to bear arms — but also to acknowledge the extreme persecution of those beliefs by law. The strategies pursued by Quakers in collecting, recopying, and then circulating information form the basis of what Liesbeth Corens has called in the case of recusant Catholics a “counter archive,” kept in response to the silence or perceived misrepresentation of state or court records.²⁴⁰ While there are similarities between Catholics and Quakers in keeping their own records in the 17th century, the crucial distinction is that Quakers mobilised their writings in printed works meant to circulate primarily outside of their confession, and extend their beliefs to civil life — bearing arms, taking oaths, paying taxes. In the face of erasure, control of information and its production was their strategy for holding oppressors accountable for their actions, and committing to writing the experiences of those who otherwise were not given the right to protest their treatment, or remember their struggles.

²³⁸ Arlette Farge, *The Allure of the Archives*, Thomas Scott-Railton, trans. (New Haven and London: Yale U P, 2013) 44.

²³⁹ Farge, *The Allure of the Archives*, 86.

²⁴⁰ Liesbeth Corens, “Dislocation and Record-Keeping: The Counter Archives of the Catholic Diaspora,” *Past and Present Supplement 11* (2016) 269-287.

III

Truth and Necessity: How Quakers used their Records in Print

“Behind the record is the need to record.”

Terry Cook²⁴¹

We will never know exactly what Mary Fisher (1623-1698), a traveling preacher from the Religious Society of Friends, said to the ruler of the Ottoman Empire, Mehmed IV (1642-1693), in 1657. In the only surviving letter on the subject, she wrote merely that she had “borne [her] testimony” to him.²⁴² *New England Judged* (1661), the first and lengthiest description of their encounter in print, included additional details of Fisher’s dialogue with the “Great Turk” but not the testimony itself:

Then [Mehmed] bad her speak the Word of the Lord to them, and not to fear, for they had good hearts and could hear it... Which she speaking what the Lord had put into her mouth to say, They all gave dilligent heed with much soberness and gravity till [Fisher] had done, and then [Mehmed] asking her, Whether she had any more to say? She asked of him, Whether he understood what she had said? He replied, Yes, Every word; and further said— That it was Truth...²⁴³

In spite of its persuasive power, the truth central to their encounter could not be transcribed, it was a truth that the reader could only imagine.

²⁴¹ Terry Cook, “Electronic Records, Paper Minds: The Revolution in Information Management and Archives in the Post-Custodial and Post-Modernist Era,” *Archives and Manuscripts* 22 (November 1994) 302.

²⁴² Sylvia Brown, “The Radical Travels of Mary Fisher: Walking and Writing in the Universal Light” Brown, Sylvia, ed. *Women, Gender and Radical Religion in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2007) 53.

²⁴³ George Bishop, *New England judged, not by man's, but the spirit of the Lord: and the summe sealed up of New-England's persecution* (London: Robert Wilson, 1661) 20.

In other words, the encounter presented readers with a distinction between “Truth” and narrative, spirituality and history, divine and human utterance. For the Quakers, the emphasis on personal testimony and its preservation demonstrated the complexity inherent in relationships between how information was recorded and how it was used, between truths that could not be written, and the necessities that required them to be recorded just the same. To add to the complexity of the split, in *New England Judged*, Fisher defined “Truth” as a matter of context at the close of her meeting with the Sultan:

They were also desirous of more words than she had freedom to speak, and asked her, What she thought of their Prophet Mehomet?...she said, That they might judge of him to be true or false, according as the Words and Prophecies he spake were either true or false, Saying, If the Word that the Prophet speaketh come to pass, then shall ye know that the Lord hath sent that Prophet, but if it come not to pass, then shall ye know that the Lord never sent him— To which they confessed and said, It was Truth.

The nature of truth agreed upon between the Christian Quaker and her Islamic audience was described as potentially a very long term project gained from hindsight. The truth of the “Word of the Prophet,” for example, as Quakers portrayed themselves and identified Mohammed as, was only verified once it had been interpreted to “come to pass.”

By the same logic, Fisher’s meeting with Mehmed didn’t require their meeting to have happened at all to be “Truth.” According to her letter, she felt her trip into the Ottoman Empire to be a success, whether or not it was the seventeen-year-old sultan she encountered. Its place within *New England Judged* emphasised that the Turks had treated the Quakers better than their fellow Christians to convince King

Charles II to order Puritans in New England to repeal laws authorising the murder of Quakers trespassing into their territory, and Charles did. And finally, perhaps as a result of the success of *New England Judged*, the story itself has been repeated in Quaker histories until the present. Although she did make it to Constantinople, filling the gaps in Fisher's story with an understanding of Ottoman politics at the time, the role of women in Ottoman society, and the intricacies of Ottoman-European diplomacy makes her encounter with Mehmed difficult to believe. At the same time, its impossibility makes it an ideal example to trace in manuscript and print, a test case to slow down the process of record keeping and its intended uses to viewing speeds.

As a test case, the purpose of this chapter is to complement the previous by focusing in detail on the material instantiations of a single testimony published in collections of Quaker sufferings. Tracing Fisher's story as a product of an archive, deployed in print with obvious intentions, creates a sense of a continuum between scribal and printed information Friends maintained, and an understanding of how religious and political intent shaped this continuum. The creation of the Friends' archive was an act of response to pain and persecution, as I described in the previous chapter, but it also contextualised persecution within a longer history. The manuscripts compiled were in imitation of print, inspired by readings of the martyrologist John Foxe's (1516-1587) *Actes and Monuments* (1563), called *The Book of Martyrs*. The totality of Friends' records, correspondences, and printed works was collected together to validate their struggles under Charles II in terms of Foxe's depictions of the Marian martyrs.

The emphasis Fisher's story placed upon Ottoman tolerance as a foil of Christian cruelty in *New England Judged* was the first extended use of a tactic pioneered by religious dissenters dating back to the

16th century, who had similarly found refuge in the Ottoman Empire. The Quaker incorporation of individual experience into a narrative that expanded arguments for tolerance to include the controversial “Turkish Question” adapted the convention to contemporary audiences and successfully achieved toleration in New England. Within Quaker belief, moreover, it expanded the scope of conceptions of “liberty of conscience” for the first time to include toleration for non-Christians.

Fisher’s story allows us to interrogate not only the mechanics of the Quaker archive, but also the competing assumptions made about its contents over the centuries, and its complicated relationship to printed material. In Fisher’s case, we can watch a letter written first in evangelical zeal, then copied into the earliest Quaker archive, a letter-book, and used thirdly for polemical writing and petitioning, and finally for biographical writing. As Natalie Zemon Davis has beautifully shown in *Fiction in the Archives*, by placing the fictive qualities of preserved documents at the “center of analysis” it is possible to get a sense of how a narrative is crafted, and why.²⁴⁴ Lisa Jardine’s experience of *Temptation in the Archives* focused on a nineteenth-century archivist’s treatment, and censorship, of a seventeenth-century letter. My contribution to Davis’s work in tracking the uses of Fisher’s letter in the Quaker archive shows that, beyond Fisher’s own narrative as crafted in her letter, the archive itself facilitates the creation of multiple narratives, multiple afterlives. And to Jardine’s, I would add that the temptation to interfere has always existed, prior even to the emergence of the archivist’s profession.²⁴⁵

²⁴⁴ Natalie Zemon Davis, *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and Their Tellers in Sixteenth Century France* (New York: Polity Press, 1987) 3.

²⁴⁵ Lisa Jardine, *Temptation in the Archives* (London: UCL Press, 2015) 15-17.

Like the distinction made in the printed story itself, Fisher's experience allows us to separate truth from narrative as a matter of necessity. To conflate the two oversimplifies the process by which the travels and travails of itinerant Quaker preachers like Fisher were collected, archived, and carried through to publication. However, in separating the truth from the narrative of Fisher's story, taking neither for granted, my purpose in this chapter to reassess what has been lost: the anger, the struggle, the suffering and the brutality that motivated the initial recording and circulation of Fisher's story that has been forgotten. As Edward Burroughs, a leader of the movement who died in prison wrote: "Truth is increased through all Trials." Friends' attitude toward the validity of suffering only succeeded if those "trials" were shaped into an intended truth, and communicated with sufficient force.²⁴⁶ In Fisher's case, her experience of hospitality in the Ottoman Empire was used to enhance the sense of brutality of other trials suffered both by her and her fellow preachers. Her letter was marshalled to the cause of the Quaker archive in general, which was organised in terms of the time, place, and magnitude of persecution among members.

Mary Fisher's story is significant because it allows us to understand something more basic than truth or falsehood, it allows us to look prior to the record, in Terry Cook's words, at the need to record. In both the 1657 and 1661 scribal and printed iterations, Mary Fisher's story speaks volumes about the Quakers at an early juncture in their development as a nonconformist religious group that relied upon record-keeping and publication both to preserve identity, and to hold their persecutors to accountability. I will connect Fisher's story to three increasingly broad contexts: first as a letter written to inform and comfort the early Quaker community; then as a document in a

²⁴⁶ Quoted in Knott, *Discourses of Martyrdom*, 221.

transitional period within a growing archive, inspired by Quaker readings of Foxe's *Actes and Monuments*; and consequently, as a story found within printed books beginning with *New England Judged*, arguing for religious toleration.

I have also chosen Fisher's story as it travelled along the spectrum of print and manuscript to shed light on the complicated interplay between the two media. Unlike archives kept in secret, such as those within accounting firms or state departments, the Quaker model fostered the collection of documents for publication. But they did not print everything they collected — including Fisher's initial letter. Her story was instead embellished in its printed versions by George Bishop and later authors, used to describe and relate to an expanding network of Quakers travelling overseas. *New England Judged* relied upon travel and expansion, as it gathered together disparate stories to strengthen the argument for toleration and to advocate against the persecution of Quakers in central seats of power. This was similar to how Ellis Hookes had re-organised and compiled the stories of Foxe's martyrs in his own writing to support Quaker beliefs, and how George Fox and Margaret Fell Fox had used collected sufferings to reinforce the "truth" of their "Peace Testimony" without addressing violent beliefs held by some of their members. The immediate uses of Quaker publications such as *New England Judged*, when compared with the afterlife of those publications as source material for other texts, show how archives adapted to respond to different needs over time, and how those changing needs could alter the meaning of truth itself.

The Letter

On 13 March 1658, Mary Fisher wrote a letter from London reflecting on her travels in the Ottoman Empire, addressed to Thomas Killam, John Killam, Thomas Aldam, and their "dear wives." The letter has

been transcribed by Sylvia Brown, and is worth reproducing in full here:

My dear Love salutes you all in one, you have been often in my remembrance since I departed from you, and being now returned into England and many tryalls such as I was never tryed with before, yet have I borne my testimony for the Lord before ye King unto whom I was sent, and he was very noble unto me, and so were all that were about him, he and all that were about him received the words of truth without contradiction...

This introduction is the only mention of the “King”, which has been interpreted to mean the Sultan, Mehmed IV. The letter continued with a more general assessment of Ottoman religiosity and hospitality based on Fisher’s experience. Her kind treatment after so “many tryalls” made Fisher “love them more then many others”, especially in comparison to the English:

...they do dread the name of God many of them and eyes his Messengers, there is a royall seed amongst them, which in time God will raise, they [are] more near truth then many Nations, there is a love begot in [me] towards them which is endlesse, but this is my hope concerning them that he who hath caused me to love them more then many others will also raise his seed in them unto which my love, Neverthelesse though they be called Turkes the seed in them is near unto God, and their kindnesse hath in some measure been shewne towards his servants after ye word of ye Lord was declared to them, they would willingly to have me to stay in the country, and when they could not prevaile with me they proffered me a man and a horse to go five dayes Journey, that was to Constaninople ~~where~~ but I refused and came safe from them the English are more bad most of them, yet there hath

a good word gone thorow them, & some have received it but they are few, so I rest with my dear love to you all.²⁴⁷

This letter is the only surviving archival source depicting Mary's famous encounter with the "King" of the Turks, later adapted into the story found in *New England Judged* in 1661. But for now, it's important to prioritise its initial context as a letter.

Epistolary communication was a cornerstone of the early Society of Friends, "establishing a sense of unity and cohesion within a rapidly expanding movement," and enshrining the basic elements of "Quaker" identity. As his collected volume of *Letters* attests, Fox spent the first decade gaining converts to his Religious Society of Friends, called Quakers by their critics, through impassioned speeches and letters. Margaret Fell Fox's house in Swarthmoor Hall served as headquarters for the scribal copying and dissemination of letters from 1652 onward when George Fox first visited and converted her.²⁴⁸ Early Quaker preachers followed suit, writing outward-looking letters on the road or in jail to maintain confidence and commitment amongst their readers. For example, another letter from April 1657 by Mary Fisher survives in a different hand, addressed to the converts she had made in Barbados during a visit in 1656, exhorting them to "love not your lives unto the death...give up freely, soul and body as a living sacrifice."²⁴⁹ Fisher's letters were typical of early Quaker style pioneered by Fox — fearless in their sense of sacrifice, fiery in their evangelism, fixated on the potential of the "seed" of God's presence in converts, optimistic about the future of dedicated Friends

²⁴⁷ Brown, "The Radical Travels of Mary Fisher," 53; Caton MSS, vol 320/1, f. 164, Library of the Society of Friends, London.

²⁴⁸ Corns and Loewenstein, *The Emergence of Quaker Writing*, 12.

²⁴⁹ Fisher, Mary "To Friends in Barbados, London April 9 1657," Portfolio Manuscripts 33/112, 113, Library of the Society of Friends, London, quoted in Mack, *Visionary Women*, 169.

who would be saved when the apocalypse came.²⁵⁰ That style of charismatic letter-writing was developed in print as well as manuscript, as Quakers published and disseminated pamphlets in a parallel process to their scribal circulation. The earliest pamphlets published by Friends included copies of letters: as in *A brief discovery of a three-fold estate of antichrist* (1652) and a collection of letters written by George Fox, William Dewsberry, James Nayler, and John Whitehead while they were traveling throughout Yorkshire in 1654, *Severall letters written to the saints most high*.²⁵¹ The writings of other Quaker preachers, authorised by Fox, were carefully organised, published, and dispatched to relevant communities across the north of England in 1652-3, south to London by 1654, to the Continent and overseas as far as the West Indies and the Caribbean by 1656.²⁵²

Fisher's trip to the Ottoman Empire was characteristic of the evangelical zeal of the first decade of the Quaker movement. In April 1657, after she had returned from travelling to Boston and Barbados, Fisher was in London planning a mission eastward with five other Quaker preachers: John Perrot, John Luffe, John Buckley, Mary Prince, and Beatrice Beckley. With George Fox's blessing, their combined religious zeal inspired a plan to convert the Turks and the Jews. They set sail in July, travelling to Leghorn (Livorno), and spent some time in Italy (to convert the Pope no less), then to Venice, then to the Island of Zante owned by Venice, then Smyrna.²⁵³

²⁵⁰ Brown, "The Radical Travels of Mary Fisher," 55.

²⁵¹ Corns and Loewenstein, *The Emergence of Quaker Writing*, 13.

²⁵² Peters, Kate, *Print Culture and the Early Quakers*, 1, 11; Peters, "The Dissemination of Quaker Pamphlets in the 1650s," 213-228.

²⁵³ Brown, "The Radical Travels of Mary Fisher," 45-46.

In a letter to George Fox, John Perrot wrote that the group had been forced to split up, failed to reach Jerusalem, and joined together again in Constantinople with the aim of converting the “Great Turk”. The connection in Constantinople was confirmed by Sir Thomas Bendyshe, the English Ambassador at the time, to John Thurloe, Richard Cromwell’s State Secretary. In a long letter that updated the Lord Protector on Ottoman political intrigues, the Quakers only added to his troubles:

Nor are all our troubles from without us; some are, as I may say, from amongst us, and from within us, occasioned by a generation of people crept in unawares, called Quakers,...whom I suffered with tendernes, so long as their comportment was offencelesse; but when, at length, becoming scandalous to our nation and religion, (which upon this occasion was censured and scoffed at, by Papists, Jews, and others of a strange faith) and insufferable also by reason of their disturbances at our divine exercises, and severall notorious contempts of mee and my authority, I friendly warned them to returne, which the two women did quietly; but John Buckly refuseing, I was constrained to shipe him hence upon the Lewis.²⁵⁴

It is unclear what kind of “disturbances” the Friends caused, but it may have related to their wild ways of crying and distributing pamphlets — they were bold, interrupting sermons and arguing with figures of authority.²⁵⁵

Fisher herself had first been imprisoned in York Castle when she converted in 1652 for shouting at a priest during his sermon “Come

²⁵⁴ 'State Papers, 1658: July (6 of 7),' in A Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe, Volume 7, March 1658 - May 1660, ed. Thomas Birch (London: Fletcher Gyles, 1742), 284-295, accessed March 25, 2015, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/thurloe-papers/vol7/pp284-295>

²⁵⁵ Keith Thomas gives a good overview of Quaker preaching habits in “Women and the Civil War Sects” *Past and Present* 13 (1958) 42-62.

down, come down, thou painted beast, come down. Thou art but an hireling, and deludest the people with the lies.”²⁵⁶ In 1653 she was publicly whipped in Cambridge with her fellow preacher Elizabeth Williams, and for the next three years, she spent three prison terms in Yorkshire and Buckinghamshire for similar disruptions. There was no reason to believe Quakers behaved differently in non-Christian countries. For instance, in 1661 Henry Fell and John Stus were arrested and deported from Cairo for similar behaviour. After their arrest they attempted to throw pamphlets into the streets “in Latine, Hebrew, and Arabique” — the consul Richard Bendish worried the scandal the Friends might cause the Muslim authorities, since printing in Arabic was strictly forbidden.²⁵⁷

Thomas Bendyshe’s letter and Mary Fisher’s letter were composed with vastly different intentions. Bendyshe’s letter must be read in the context of relating diplomatic news and foreign affairs to his superior, and hers must be read in the context of a movement which relied on letter-writing to stoke the fires of its members’ religious zeal. Fisher’s task in writing was abstract: how to commit to words the spiritual ecstasy of encountering God within her own person? No wonder she wrote of being moved to speak by the Lord but did not attempt to write what she said. Her truth claimed to be of a higher order: that it did not match up with the reality of the Ottoman Empire at the time does not make her a liar. While Fisher’s encounter with the great “King” of the Turks has become famous in the annals of Quaker his-

²⁵⁶ Brown, “The Radical Travels of Mary Fisher”, 41; Raine, James ed. *Depositions from the Castle of York Relating to Offences Committed in the Northern Counties in the 17th Century*, Surtees Society 40 (1861) 54; she also features in Stevie Davies’ *Unbridled Spirits: Women of the English Revolution 1640-1660* (London: Women’s Press, 1998), and while imprisoned in York Castle she subscribed to a printed work with her fellow prisoners Thomas Aldam, Elizabeth Hooten, William Pears, Benjamin Nicholson, and Jane Holmes: *False Prophets and false teachers described* (London: Printed in the year, 1652).

²⁵⁷ Matar Nabil, *Islam in Britain 1558-1685* (Cambridge: CUP, 1998) 135.

tory, contextualising her letter in terms of Ottoman politics at the time, the treatment of women, Christians, and the state of European diplomatic relations, makes her audience with the Sultan unlikely.

The city of Constantinople in 1657 had experienced a ten-year old state of bloody upheaval. Mehmed IV became Sultan of the Ottoman Empire in 1648, aged seven when rioting Janissaries deposed his father Ibrahim, and eventually his own officials strangled him to death. Marc David Baer has shown in detail how this set “an unfortunate tone for the first decade of [Mehmed’s] rule.” The 1650s were a time of tremendous instability for government and governed alike, and the blame was squarely upon the “frail” shoulders of the young Sultan himself “and the power of female royals” who were really in charge— like Mehmed’s mother, Turhan Hatice. Reactions to her regency were characterised by a renewal of misogyny against women in the court, and interpretations of Islamic law shifted into a phase in which the status of women was increasingly limited, their visibility diminished.²⁵⁸

Morale was low: the treasuries were depleted and the Ottomans had been defeated by the Venetians, with whom they were still at war. Twelve Grand Viziers had been appointed in quick succession and violently retired after failing to fix the situation. An Ottoman chronicler of the time, Karaçelebizade, lamented financial corruption, dynastic instability, the weakening of the borders, and the abuse of commoners he saw around him. In late 1656 however, a new Grand Vizier was appointed, the eighty-year-old Köprülü Mehmed Pasha, who ushered in a new era of forced stability through an even greater level of brutality. Köprülü Mehmed Pasha authorised mass executions of rebels, government officials both in Constantinople and around the

²⁵⁸ Marc David Baer, *Honored by the Glory of Islam: Conversion and Conquest in Ottoman Europe* (Oxford: OUP, 2008) 25-39

provinces, and the religious elite. In his first year in office, as many as ten thousand men were executed; chroniclers described the severed heads that decorated public spaces in the capital.

It was a bad time to be Ottoman, but likewise, it was a bad time to be Christian in Constantinople. In April 1657, the Orthodox Patriarch Parthenios III was executed by Köprülü for supposedly inciting Christians to rebel against the Sultan, and finally, in August the Ottoman navy defeated the Venetians and took back control of the islands of Bozca and Limni.²⁵⁹ In the same letter where ambassador Bendyshe described the “disturbances” of Mary Fisher and her fellow travellers, he described at length the mess of diplomatic relations at the time. Ottoman presence in Transylvania had caused friction between east and west, the Sultan and his advisors were displeased with French, Swedish, German, and Polish ambassadors for potentially aligning against him. Fear of “sodaine revolution” marked the withdrawal of the Sultan to Adrianople to “seeke his safety.” But what the future held was “not easie to conjecture.” The Sultan himself was described as reclusive, and paranoid, and Bendyshe recorded that it was “much fear’d [Mehmed] may be driven to the unnatural policy of this empire, and for his own security cutt off his brother Solyman” lest his own brother depose him, as their father had done to their uncle decades earlier.²⁶⁰ For his part Bendyshe worked hard to live through this period quietly, to separate himself and all English visitors remote from the diplomatic clashes of which he wrote.²⁶¹

²⁵⁹ Baer, *Honored by the Glory of Islam*, 50-77.

²⁶⁰ 'State Papers, 1658: July (6 of 7),' in A Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe, Volume 7, March 1658 - May 1660, ed. Thomas Birch (London: Fletcher Gyles, 1742), 284-295, accessed March 25, 2015, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/thurloe-papers/vol7/pp284-295>; The unnatural policy that Mehmed's own father Ibrahim had carried was not, in the end, followed— and it would come back to haunt him when Solyman deposed Mehmed and assumed power in 1687.

²⁶¹ Daniel Goffman, *Britons in the Ottoman Empire 1642-1660* (Seattle and London: U of Washington P: 1998) 200.

The life of a European Ambassador in Ottoman territory had always been complicated. In the late 15th and during the 16th century as trade opened up between East and West, it became something of a tradition for Ottomans to treat foreigners with what scholars have called “degrading hospitality.” Christian visitors were not only enemy infidels but also defined by Islamic law as *müste’min*; foreigners were allowed temporary right to reside within the Empire and to be treated hospitably, a practice very different from that in Europe at the time. Tolerance of religious difference was implied by these temporary rights on the one hand, but “exclusion and insult” were built into the ways in which hospitality was administered on the other, to remind the infidels of their status. The treatment of ambassadors was the primary staging ground for this complicated diplomacy; their experiences reflected the reality of Ottoman refusal “to treat with western powers on a basis of equality and reciprocity.” For example, part of the ceremony of admittance to the Sultan involved any foreign envoy being forced to the ground and dragged by his arms before the Sultan in prostration upon his knees.²⁶² This led to an incredibly varied experience for foreigners depending on the town, and the officials in charge at the time.²⁶³ It wasn’t until the Karlowitch treaty of 1699 that the Ottoman approach to Westerners began to change. By that time, they were at war with both Russia and European powers, and their resources had been stretched too thin to risk “degrading hospitality” further.²⁶⁴

²⁶² Ethem Eldem, “Foreigners at the Threshold of Felicity: the reception of foreigners in Ottoman Istanbul,” Donatella Calabi and Stephen Ruk Christensen, eds. *Cities and Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe 1400-1700* (Cambridge: CUP, 2007) 119-120.

²⁶³ Goffman, *Britons in the Ottoman Empire*, 21-2.

²⁶⁴ Matar, *Islam in Britain 1558-1685*, 185.

The only time Mary Fisher or any of her companions might have glimpsed the Sultan was at the outset of his ceremonial journey to Adrianople. On 24 September 1657, Mehmed IV began his journey from Constantinople to Adrianople because he was about to reach his seventeenth year and Islamic law require him to undertake an expedition there in isolation to mark his coming of age, and the lapse of his mother's supervision. The procession itself was a demonstration of power. According to the Ottoman historian Nurhan Atasoy: "It was only at such events that most [foreigners and diplomats] got the opportunity to see the sultan and his entire entourage at close quarters."²⁶⁵ The Swedish ambassador Claes Rålamb produced a series of paintings that capture the grandeur of the spectacle. Earlier that year, Rålamb had endured a "cat and mouse" game with the Grand Vizier Köprülü before securing audience with the Sultan — one of his problems in procuring access was a lack of gifts to present to Mehmed, as the typical protocol for a foreigner's audience with the Sultan was elaborate and expensive. Combined with his earlier, clipped meeting with what he described as the "rough and tyrannical" Köprülü, Rålamb recorded in his diary the atmosphere of wonder and fear among the Sultan's own subjects. Such processions offered commoners a rare glimpse of their ruler, whose power was established through absence.²⁶⁶

As a woman, as a Christian, as a commoner during a period marked at the worst of times by bloodshed and paranoia, and at the best of times by a treatment of foreigners that aimed towards displays of subjugation, Fisher's description of her audience with Mehmed IV

²⁶⁵ Nurhan Atasoy, "Processions and Protocol in Ottoman Istanbul," Ådahl, Karin, ed. *The Sultan's Procession: The Swedish Embassy to Sultan Mehmed IV in 1657-1658 and the Rålamb paintings* (Istanbul: Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, 2006) 171.

²⁶⁶ Cemal Kafander, "The City that Rålamb Visited: The Political and Cultural Climate of Istanbul in the 1650s" *The Sultan's Procession*, 64.

can only be a fiction. That did not alter the point of her letter. It was meant for circulation amongst Quakers and relayed information about her overall impression of the “Turks” as possible converts. In its style and ambitious invocation of the King of the Turks, it was typical of Quaker epistolary culture.

To some extent all epistles imagined their audiences, and the imaginative nature of the epistolary form was a commonplace in the early modern period, from Erasmus’ letter-writing manuals to the “discovered” collection of King Charles I’s letters published after the Battle of Naseby in 1645, *The Kings Cabinet Opened*.²⁶⁷ George Fox adapted that tradition to Quakerism, and Quaker preachers such as Mary Fisher followed suit, authoring letters that imagined particularly grand audiences.²⁶⁸ Most ambitious of all, in 1660 Fox published dual-language epistles in Latin and English to the Emperor of China, The King of Spain, the King of France, The Pope, the King of Muscovy, and the Princes of Germany.²⁶⁹ Quakers often took on this style of lofty address in their own publications. *New England Judged* was addressed as a letter to the leaders of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and earlier, its author George Bishop had included letters to the King and Parliament, the Nobility and Gentry, Bishops and Archbishops, down the class ladder to “The People of These Nations” in his *Book of Warnings*.²⁷⁰ John Perrot, a member of Mary Fisher’s travelling party, addressed Mehmed IV in printed epistles from a

²⁶⁷ Diana G. Barnes, *Epistolary Community in Print, 1580-1664* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013) 103.

²⁶⁸ Barnes, *Epistolary Community*, 5.

²⁶⁹ George Fox, *For the Emperour of China and his Subordinate Kings & Princes* (London: Robert Wilson, 1660); *Papers Given Forth in English & Latine to the Magistrates of the Isle of Milita, and to the Emperour of the House of Austria and to all the Princes under Him. To the King of France and to all Powers that be under him: To the King of Spain, and lastly to the Pope.* (London: Robert Wilson, 1660).

²⁷⁰ George Bishop, *A book of Warnings...*(London: Robert Wilson, 1661).

prison in Rome: *A Visitation of Love, and Gentle Greeting of the Turk*.²⁷¹ John Stubbs and Henry Fell printed a letter in Latin and English to Prester John, the “Christian King of Ethiopia” in advance of a failed attempt to visit him in 1660.²⁷² Imagining audiences could allow for productive thinking separate from the polemic pamphlets through which Quaker ideas were more frequently tried and tested.

Quakers thoroughly explained the reasoning behind their beliefs, while at the same time engaging with expansive notions of the wider world and imagining toleration rather than retaliating to experiences of persecution. Even later, in 1680, Fox wrote an epistle “To the Great Turk and his King at Algiers.” In 1683, “the Great Turks Declaration of War Against the Emperour of Germany,” was widely circulated in London, containing a supposed translation of Mehmed IV’s declaration of war. Fox responded to Mehmed with *An Answer to the Speech or Declaration of the Great Turk, Sulton Mahomet*. It wasn’t printed, however, until 1688, as a prophetic text that foretold the overthrow of Mehmed IV, which had occurred in 1687.²⁷³

Within the religion, the usefulness of epistolary culture in strengthening the bonds of Quakers near and far gained a new urgency in 1660, when violence and persecution of Quakers became a state-sanctioned activity after the restoration of Charles II. In addition to heartening converts and imagining a future, Quakers relied upon the networks established in manuscript and printed letters and pamphlets to begin to collect and chronicle their persecution across the wider membership. No longer limited to the stories of itinerant lead-

²⁷¹ John Perrot, *A Visitation of Love, Gentle Greeting of the Turk* (London: Thomas Simmons, 1660).

²⁷² Wrighter, Luella, *Literary Life of the Early Friends*, 76.

²⁷³ George Fox, *To the Great Turk and his King at Algiers...* (London: Benjamin Clark, 1680); Anon. *The Great Turks Declaration of War...* (London, 1683); Fox, George *An Answer...* (London: A. Sowle, 1687).

ership, local Quaker communities were taught and encouraged to collect records of their own experiences for publication in a hostile world. This dramatic change in affairs had consequences that extended to the papers already collected in the early days of the movement, including Fisher's letter. Fisher's safe journey to and from the Ottoman Empire became a source of leverage to argue for mercy. In the face of mass incarceration, the Quakers would draw from their steadily growing archive to print works appealing for religious toleration.

Outside of the experiences of degradation limited to diplomats, the Turks had played a significant role in religious debate, especially after the fall of Constantinople in 1453. Ottoman armies threatened the borders of the Christian world and were interpreted by theologians as a "scourge" to punish corrupted Christianity. By the Reformation, however, the "Turkish Problem" was also articulated as a question of co-existence, not only to facilitate trade between the two cultures but as a way of theorising the limits of toleration.²⁷⁴ The Ottomans were famous for their "millet" system, in which non-Muslim religious groups were protected if they paid a special tax. While individuals had no protections, membership within a community ensured recourse to law and freedom to worship in designated places.²⁷⁵ Persecuted religious groups in the sixteenth century sought and gained refuge in the Ottoman Empire, including Jews, Huguenots, Anglicans, and Anabaptists, and drew from their experiences to attack Christians for their

²⁷⁴ Robert White, "Castellio Against Calvin: The Turk in the Toleration Controversy of the Sixteenth Century," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 46 No. 3 (1984) 584; Robert H. Schwoebel, "Coexistence, Conversion, and the Crusade Against the Turks," *Studies in the Renaissance* 12 (1965) 166.

²⁷⁵ Benjamin J. Kaplan, *Divided by Faith: Religion, Conflict, and the Practice of Toleration in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, Mass, London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007) 240; Will Kymlicka, "Two Models of Pluralism and Toleration," in David Heyd, ed. *Toleration: An Elusive Virtue* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996) 81-105.

hypocrisy in printed works.²⁷⁶ Fisher's experience in the Ottoman Empire was one of the few among Quakers that supported a powerful argument made by dissenting religious groups for over a century concerning the question of non-Christian models of toleration. Whether or not she met the Sultan, the fact of her safe passage was a realistic, flesh-and-blood example in a longstanding rhetorical tradition formulated against death itself.

From Archive to Publication

Mary Fisher's letter did not survive in her own hand. It was preserved in the first of a three-volume manuscript collection of early Friends' letters copied by William Caton. The three volumes of correspondence that included Fisher's letter, number among the earliest surviving contents of the Quaker archive and helped establish a template for Friends' record-keeping habits to follow, especially as facilitated by Ellis Hooke's readings of *The Book of Martyrs*. Caton's volume was incorporated into the archive in Hooke's chambers, where it was collected among other stories and published for the first time in 1661.

However significant Fisher's story would become in *New England Judged*, there was no real record of its circulation or celebration before that time. In a published dialogue from 1660 between Richard Hubberthorne and Charles II there was a tantalising but wholly inconclusive exchange: "Have any of your Friends been with the great Turk?" Charles asked. "Some of our Friends have been in that Countrey," was Hubberthorne's vague response, although he was one of the more prominent leaders of the movement and Fisher had written

²⁷⁶ Daniel Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 2002) 109-111; Benjamin Schmidt, *Innocence Abroad: The Dutch Imagination and the New World, 1570-1670* (Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 2001) 103-104.

her letter several years before.²⁷⁷ The way in which Fisher's account was later used as an example to appeal for toleration is completely absent.

Yet Fisher's concept of the truth of Mohammed in her printed encounter with Mehmed IV found in *New England Judged* was complemented by this delay in its publication. The truth was a matter of a long-term weighing of contexts, the careful assembly of stories into plausible narrative. This first appearance of Fisher's story in publication fit exactly within the expanding genre of Quaker writing that George Fox had imitated from John Foxe and the Acts of the Apostles in the New Testament. But *New England Judged* had a slightly less conventional goal. It was not meant, like the bulk of sufferings, to petition Charles II for indulgence and toleration within England, but rather it condemned the Puritans that had settled in New England for their cruelty to Quakers and challenged Charles II to condemn that cruelty.

Although George Bishop, the author of *New England Judged*, never left England, he did have access to the wide-ranging records maintained by Ellis Hookes, as well as to Friends' printed books and pamphlets. He was a colourful character, a former soldier in the parliamentary army, and an advocate of regicide at the Putney Debates. He was dismissed as a spy during the first Anglo-Dutch War for "intermeddling in foreign affairs," and criticised among Friends after his conversion around 1654 for his outspoken ways. Bishop's public persona was more political than religious when the rest of the Quakers were often the reverse. He advocated for religious toleration, for which he lobbied in person and in print, and the forcefulness and

²⁷⁷ Richard Hubberthorne, *An account of severall things that passed between His Sacred Majesty and Richard Hubberthorne Quaker on the fourth of June 1660* (London: printed for M.S., 1660) 10.

popularity of his writings show the extent to which Quaker networks of communication could be used even by those who were outside London, and moreover, who occasionally fell afoul of authority.²⁷⁸

The system of publication pioneered by George Fox and documented by Ellis Hookes facilitated works even by controversial Quakers, and Bishop's writing became popular. *New England Judged* brought together the stories of Quakers all over the world and was the length of a book rather than a pamphlet. Bishop brought his readers along on the journeys of itinerant Quaker preachers "...Over the Globe, the Tropicks of Cancer, and Capricorn, the Line Equinoctial..." His narration moved east through Sweden, Denmark, Germany, and France, to Florence, Venice, Rome, Constantinople, Moscow, and Jerusalem, then turned back westward, "thorow the Straits from one end to the other" to Portugal. His destination was the Anglo-American colonies, the "five or six hundred Miles on foot from Virginia to New-England, through Uncouth Passages, Vast Wilderness, Uninhabited Countries for near Two hundred Miles together."

Bishop concluded this section in New England with the account of four Quakers who were executed in Boston for their beliefs. He addressed the leaders of the Massachusetts Bay Colony directly in the work, in outrage over the executions of Marmaduke Stephenson and William Robinson (1659), Mary Dyer (1660), and William Leddra (1661). His purpose in crossing the globe was to show by glut of example that the Puritans were unmatched in their cruelty:

O ye Rulers of Boston! Ye Inhabitants of the Massachusets!
What shall I say unto you? whereunto shall I liken ye? Indeed,
I am at a stand, I have no Nation with you to compare, I have

²⁷⁸ "Bishop, George (d. 1668)," Maryann S. Feola in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. David Cannadine, May 2015, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/37195> (accessed September 20, 2016).

no People with you to parallel, I am at a loss with you in this point...²⁷⁹

In the typical confrontational style of “plain speech,” Bishop kept it simple and boldly literal: because he wanted to accuse the Puritans of being uniquely brutal, he compared them to everyone the traveling Quakers had *ever* met.

New England Judged was part of a series of pamphlets protesting the treatment of Quakers in the Massachusetts Bay Colony beginning in the Commonwealth Period. These pamphlets chronicled the experience of itinerant Quaker leaders, and later provided the pattern by which persecution amongst the broader membership was described and published to petition local magistrates in England. In this way, Quaker petitioning strategies were largely tried and tested on the margins of the emerging English Empire before they were put to use after the Restoration. This movement from the margins to the centre of Empire was particularly marked in Bishop’s book. But the earliest pamphlet that addressed the subject was Francis Howgill’s *Popish Inquisition Newly Erected in New-England* (1659). In it, Howgill justified the Quaker persistence in the colony where they were persistently banned with a gloss from the Old Testament: “Amos must prophesie at Bethel, though he be forbidden.”²⁸⁰ Howgill also included, in typical Quaker fashion, the copy of the legislation he was petitioning to overturn. The *Act made at a General Court held at Boston, the 20th of October, 1658*, banished all Friends, on the basis that they bore “many dangerous and horred Tenents, and do take upon them to change and alter the received laudable customs of our Nation, in giving civil respect to equals, or reverance to superiors,

²⁷⁹ Bishop, *New England Judged*, 14, 15-19, 20-21, 24, 88.

²⁸⁰ Francis Howgill, *The popish inquisition newly erected in New England* (London: Thomas Simmons, 1659) 22.

whose actions tend to undermine the civil Government, and also to destroy the Order of the Churches.”²⁸¹

Later that year *New-England's Ensigne...being a Confirmation of so much as Francis Howgill truly published in his Book* was published in London, though “Written at Sea” by Humphrey Norton, a travelling Quaker preacher who himself had been persecuted in Boston. Norton repeated the names and experiences of those in Howgill’s account, adding a few new updates and copies of legislation newly passed against Quakers by the Boston Council.²⁸² Norton also contributed to another tract along with fellow travellers John Rous, John Copeland, and inhabitants of the colony, Samuel Shattock, Nicholas Phelps, and Josiah Southwick: *New-England a Degenerate Plant*. The pamphlet contained reproductions of the legislation passed on 14 October 1656, 14 October 1657, 20 May 1658, 20 October 1658 (the most famous, promising “Banishment upon pain of Death”), 13 May 1659, and 11 May 1659. These were interspersed with commentary by each of the men and concluded with a “true Copy of a Letter which was sent from one who was a Magistrate in New England to a friend of his in London,” published “not by the direction...of the Author” but rather, because it condemned Puritan treatment of Quakers by non-Quaker, it “was thought meet to be published to the view of all.”²⁸³

²⁸¹ Howgill, *Popish Inquisition*, 44.

²⁸² Humphrey Norton, *New England's Ensigne: It being The Account of Cruelty... Written at Sea, by us whom the Wicked in scorn calls Quakers...*(London, Printed by T.L. for G. Calvert, 1659).

²⁸³ John Rous, et. al. *New-England a Degenerate Plant...*(London, Printed in the year, 1659) 20.

Edward Burrough similarly condemned “that spirit of murder” in Boston — and would be proven right.²⁸⁴ George Fox summarised the state of affairs in a pamphlet petitioning the “Parliament of the Commonwealth of England”:

...Eleven strangers which are free-born English received 22 whippings, the stripes amounting to 350. Eleven inhabitants and free-born English received 16 whippings, the stripes amounting to 160. Fourty five imprisonments of strangers and inhabitants, amounting to 307 weeks; two beaten with pitch ropes, the blows amounting to 139 . by which one of them was brought near unto death; twenty five banishments upon penaltis if returning, fines laid upon the inhabitants amounting to 318 pound eleven shippings; five kept fifteen dayes in all without food; and fifty eight dayes shut up close by the Gaoler, and had none that he know of; and from some of them he stopt up the windows, hindering them from convenient air; one laid neck and heels for sixteen hours ; one very deeply burnt in the right hand with the letter H; one chaiend the most part of twenty days to a log in an open prison in the Winter; five appeals to England denied at Boston; three their right ears cut by the Hangman; one of the inhabitants of Salem, had one half of his house and Land seized on, while he was in prison a moneth before he know of it.²⁸⁵

After this summary, Fox recounted the same stories in the same order as those pamphlets which preceded him. He concluded by directing readers to Norton’s *New England’s Ensigne* and Howgill’s *Popish Inquisition Newly Erected*, sold by Giles Calvert and Thomas Sim-

²⁸⁴ Edward Burrough and Francis Howgill, *The Heart of New-England Hardned through Wickedness* (London: Printed for Thomas Simmons, 1659) 40.

²⁸⁵ George Fox, *The secret works of a cruel people made manifest* (London, Printed in the Year 1659) 1.

mons respectively, “the which books may be serviceable for any of you to read for your particular satisfaction.”²⁸⁶

Everything changed about the nature of these pamphlets depicting persecution once news arrived of the martyrdom of two Quakers in Boston in 1659. Francis Howgill was the first to publish once again. He wrote against a New England clergyman’s defence of the executions, and emphasised the “old and true saying; *’Tis not the punishment, but the cause makes a Martyr*” (his emphasis).²⁸⁷ The belief had been one repeated by Anabaptists in their published accounts of persecution beginning in the sixteenth century and popularised by 1660 in *The Bloody Theatre*, also known as *The Martyrs’ Mirror*.²⁸⁸ After the deaths of Marmaduke Stephenson and William Leddra, even more materials were printed in London addressed to Parliament. After 1660, the same pleased were enhanced by letters and sermons by the martyrs themselves and addressed to Charles II.²⁸⁹ If their deaths were considered in such terms, it was due to the relentless campaign of publications Quakers issued that highlighted their cause. It wasn’t the punishment but its treatment in publications that made martyrs.

²⁸⁶ Fox, *The Secret Works*, 15.

²⁸⁷ John Norton, *The heart of New-England rent at the blasphemies of the present generation*. (London: Printed by John Allen at the Rising-Sunne in St. Paul’s Church-yard, 1660) 81.

²⁸⁸ David L. Weaver-Zercher, *Martyrs Mirror: A Social History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins U P, 2016) 60.

²⁸⁹ Marmaduke Stephenson, *A call from death to life* (London, printed in the Year 1660); Joseph Nicholson, *The standard of the Lord lifted up in New-England* (London: 1660); Edward Burrough, *A declaration of the sad and great persecution and martyrdom of the people of God, called Quakers, in New England for the worshipping of God*. (London, 1661); Isaac Pennington, *An examinations of the grounds or causes, which are said to induce the court of Boston in New-England to make that order or law of banishment upon pain of death against the Quakers* (1660).

Carla Pestana's "Quaker Executions as Myth and History" has detailed in-depth the ways in which Quakers created, over the course of a century, a historiographical tradition from these martyrdoms, shaping an idea of Puritan intolerance that has persisted into popular conceptions of American history. Pestana has shown how "For Quakers, the executions emerged as a pivotal event in the mythology, and they revised the tale to meet the changing needs of the Society of Friends," and conversely, "Puritans experienced increasing difficulty incorporating the executions into accounts of their colony's history."²⁹⁰ George Bishop's *New England Judged* was one of the most important works for Pestana's argument because it was one of the most popularly circulated works. It gathered together the materials from the array of pamphlets that had circulated before it. But it also went beyond its predecessors in scope, since it drew together Quaker experiences from much further afield, above all Mary Fisher's story. Bishop began his text with Fisher because she provided a sense of extreme experiences within which to contextualise the martyrdoms, between her travels east and west. This too was a careful choice — Elizabeth Hooton had travelled to Boston before Fisher and Austin, and had equally experienced the brutality of intolerance by the Massachusetts Bay Colony.²⁹¹

It was expanded a few months after its initial publication in 1661 and again 1667, and it was republished in 1703, quoted in other volumes from the time, and circulated both in England in and the colonies.²⁹² Its popularity contributed to its status, as Pestana has shown, as a reliable source for Quaker historians for centuries to come. It one of

²⁹⁰ Pestana "Quaker Executions as Myth and History," 443-444.

²⁹¹ Weimer, Adrian Chastain, "Elizabeth Hooton and the Lived Politics of Toleration in Massachusetts," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 74 No. 1 (January 2017) 43-76.

²⁹² Carla Gardina Pestana, "'The Quaker Executions as Myth and History'" *The Journal of American History* 80.2 (Sept 1993) 448.

the earliest works that influenced the grand monument to Quaker sufferings in the 18th century, Joseph Besse's *Collection of the Sufferings of the People called Quakers*, known as the "Quaker version of [Foxe's] *Actes and Monuments*."²⁹³

Unlike its companion books, broadsides, and pamphlets, Bishop's style was distinct. Throughout the book he blended the typically scattered narrative of events and legal documents into one style that could easily be imagined as an address preached before the Massachusetts Bay Colony.²⁹⁴ "Yet I have not done with you," he repeated after each accusatory section, forcing his reader to remain focused on the specific cause of his rant.²⁹⁵ And unlike other books on the subject, Bishop not only offered a litany of the abuses Quakers suffered there, but contextualised them within the wider story of the travels and travails of Quaker preachers, listed chronologically. It was methodically global in the number of stories it brought together to serve the "Truth", in this case, to publicly shame the rulers of Massachusetts and warn them to change their ways in favour of tolerance. Just like the printed works that had come before it, Bishop's book began with roughly the same story, of the first Quaker visit to Boston in July 1656. This featured Mary Fisher yet again, this time with Anne Austin as her companion.

When the *Swallow* had arrived from Barbados that summer, officers immediately boarded and searched the ship because they had been given "Intelligence" of the arrival of two women, Anne Austin and Mary Fisher. This was not the first Quaker visit from across the At-

²⁹³ Knott, John R. *Discourses of Martyrdom*, 218.

²⁹⁴ This is consistent with his style in other pamphlets wrote and addressed to the King and Parliament at the time, for instance, *A book of Warnings* (London: Robert Wilson, 1661).

²⁹⁵ Bishop, George. *New England Judged*, 12.

lantic— Fisher and Austin had travelled around the West Indies the year prior to preaching and founding communities on Barbados and around the rest of the West Indies. But this arrival in Boston was where Quaker accounts of “Sufferings Overseas” began in the manuscript “Book of Sufferings” compiled by Ellis Hooke, and their printed counterparts followed suit.

Their timing was terrible: a month before their arrival Ann Hibbins had been executed for witchcraft— she would be immortalised in *The Scarlet Letter* as the old crone responsible for leading Hester astray.²⁹⁶ As threatening as any witch, Anne and Mary were Quakers, and they were immediately arrested, while “about an Hundred Books” they carried were confiscated from the ship’s steerage. A council was held on the 11th of July, where Anne and Mary admitted they had come to evangelise, and circulate what to the Council were “Corrupt books.” The Council made three demands. They ordered the common Executioner to burn the books Austin and Fisher had brought. They ordered the Jailer to imprison the women until they could “be transported out of the Country.” And they ordered Captain Simon Kempthorn of the *Swallow* to “speedily and directly” take Fisher and Austin back to Barbados at his own expense, and in the meantime to pay the £100 for their imprisonment, or “be committed to Prison till he do it.”

So the hangman burned the books to add to the sweltering heat of the month, while Fisher and Austin were thrown in prison: their “Pens, Ink, and Paper were taken away, and they suffered to have no Candle by Night.” Worse still, with the memory of Ann Hibbins trial for witchcraft fresh in the mind of Governor John Endicott, Fisher and

²⁹⁶ Alison Games, *Witchcraft in Early North America* (London: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2010), 40-41.

Austin were searched for witch marks.²⁹⁷ The description of their treatment in Ellis Hookes' handwriting in the manuscript "Book of Sufferings" is truly horrific:

They ordered certaine Overseers to search those Two Innocent Women for Witches, and had appointed certain Men in the Next roome to be ready to assist the Women, by binding those two Innocent Persons, if they refused to be searched, but they being cleer of all guilt in any such respect gave themselves upp freely to be searched...modesty will not permit, but so farr as may be was as followeth. They stripped them starke naked, & searched them from head to foot, searching every part even amongst their hair, and between their Toes, misusing and abusing their bodies, in a very gross manner, in so much as Anne Austin who was a marryed Wife, & had born five children said she had not suffered so much in the birth of them all as she had donne in this barbarously cruel searching, one of them before they had thus searched them was commonly reported to be a Man in Womans apparell, & though they had thus abused them, & were witnessse themselves, that what they had said was false, and the two women in nothing were found guilty.²⁹⁸

The passages depicting the brutality of Fisher and Austin's sexual assault were reproduced by Humphrey Norton, George Fox, and George Bishop in their writings— the legal documents committing the women to prison passed by the Boston Council on 11 July 1656 were also reproduced in each tract. This numbered among the most extreme forms of the "abominacions" Quakers had always vowed to

²⁹⁷ Joseph Besse, *A Collection of the Sufferings of the People called Quakers, for the Testimony of a Good Conscience... Taken from Original Records and other Authentick Accounts... Volume II*. (London: Luke Hinde, 1753) 177-178; Brown, "The Radical Travels of Mary Fisher," 44.

²⁹⁸ New England. 1656. Microfilm Meeting Minutes 1650-1680, Vol 2. Society of Friends Library, London.

publish, and which shocked their critics, since each author expressed anxiety over what “modesty” permitted.²⁹⁹ Bishop’s version presented the story in this way:

Did ye not shamelessly cause Two of the Women aforesaid, viz. Mary Fisher and Anne Austin, to be striped stark naked, and so to be search’d and mis-used as is a shame of Modesty to name? and with such Barbarousness, as One of them, a Married Woman and a Mother of Five children, suffered not the like in the bearing of any of them into the world?³⁰⁰

It is hard to tell whether Bishop’s information was taken first, second, or third hand— whether he spoke or corresponded with the women themselves, drew from manuscript minute books, or copied information from the pamphlets on the subject that had already mined the archives.

But for the first time in the cache of pamphlets that addressed the cruelty of the Massachusetts Bay colonists, Bishop contrasted Fisher and Austin’s treatment with the kindness of non-Christian cultures. In the same section that depicted the barbarity Fisher and Austin suffered, Bishop described the hospitality of indigenous people: “Shall I take a View of the Indians near you? Their Kindness to those People in Entertaining them [travelling Quakers] in their Wig-wams (or Tents)?” Other Quaker visitors had been taken in by Natives, had their wet clothes dried, been given them food and water, and offered guidance in navigating the woods when they “might have perish’d; for their Travellings were harder than their Sufferings.” Bishop’s strategy was the same as Humphrey Norton’s in *New-England’s Ensigne*, where the portrayal of Native American views was first used to enhance “The Account of Cruelty”:

²⁹⁹ Norton, *New England’s Ensigne*, 6; Fox, *The secret works*, 2.

³⁰⁰ Bishop, *New England Judged*, 17.

An Indian Prince, for so he appears by his speech, hearing of [Boston authorities] dealing with [Nicholas Upshall] this ancient, weak man, called them Wicked men, and said unto him *Ne. tup.* which is to say, Friends, if thou wilt live with me, I will make thee a good warm house; this he spake in his own language, preaching condemnation thereby to the English Christian, teaching them an example of compassion towards the persecuted, whom they of Boston had barbarously banished in the winter season, which are such in those parts, that several have perished in travelling betwixt town and town.³⁰¹

The “Prince”’s “*Ne. tup.*” is the Natick *netomp*, “my friend”, also related to *weetomp-sin*, “my kinsman.” According to Roger Williams, “What cheare Netop? was the generall salutation of all English toward them, Netop is friend.”³⁰² The connection Norton made between nobility and compassion, for a group of people the Puritans were constantly at war with, would have been shocking to inhabitants of Boston. It was one of the earliest descriptions of Quaker encounters with Native Americans, and prefigured the approach Quaker preachers took toward Native Americans during their travels, and eventually

³⁰¹ Norton, *New-England’s Ensigne*, 14.

³⁰² James Hammond Trumbull, *Natick dictionary* (Washington D.C.: Govt. Print. Off., 1903) 85, 187; drawing from Roger Williams, *A Key Into the Language of America* (London: Gregory Dexter, 1643) 2.

by peace treaty, in the foundation of their Pennsylvania colony in 1681.³⁰³

Bishop's interpretation of Fisher's letter concerning her visit to the Ottoman Empire enhanced the rhetoric of drawing from non-Christian sources to argue for toleration. Fisher's later travels to the Ottoman Empire occur only after the description of her brutal treatment in New England, a counter-example of kindness experienced by others. And the scene unfolded dramatically with detail completely lacking in Fisher's initial letter. Bishop described Fisher's journey of "five or six hundred miles" from Venice to Adrianople; the retinue of "great Men" surrounding Mehmed "as he uses to be when he receives Ambassadors;" the three translators present by which the two spoke; their discussion about the Prophet Mohammed; her journey back home. All that remains preserved between letter and printed source is the centre of the encounter, where a "Truth" was delivered but not described. According to Bishop, Fisher conveyed it to her satisfaction, and her speech compelled Mehmed first to ask her to stay "in that Countrey," and then to offer her "a Guard to bring her unto Constantinople" with horses.

³⁰³ William A. Pencak, and Daniel K. Richter, *Friends and Enemies in Penn's Woods: Indians, Colonists, and the Racial Construction of Pennsylvania* (Pennsylvania State U P, 2004); Patrick Erben, *A Harmony of Spirits: Translation and the Language of Community in Early Pennsylvania* (University of North Carolina Press, 2012). Bishop's continuation of the trend of using Native Americans as almost symbolic leverage against the colonies was taken to even further extremes by other Quaker writers: some extended the logic of 'Judgements of God' to argue that Native American warring against Puritan colonists was God's punishment for their general brutality, and specifically their persecution of Quakers. A 1675 book, *New-England's Present Sufferings Under Their Cruel Neighboring Indians*, argued as much. It reproduced "A Copy of Inscriptions" at the grave of "two friends that had died, which was later dismantled" but which "many hundreds of Town and Country, flock'd about it, Reading, taking and giving Copeys of the Inscription which were Engraven upon the Front end of the Work:....Though her our Innocent Bodies/in silent Earth do lie,/ Yet are our Righteous Souls at Rest,/our Blood for Vengance cry." So keen were Quakers to justify the righteousness of their own beliefs in persecution that they overlooked the horrific treatment Native Americans experienced at the hands of colonists.

From letter to publication, Fisher's concern over the potential for conversion to Quakerism amongst the Turks was replaced by a description of mutual, cross-cultural understanding. The Sultan "bad her speak the Word of the Lord to them, and not to fear, for they had good hearts and could hear it," Bishop wrote, and "They all gave diligent heed with much soberness and gravity till [Fisher] had done." The way Bishop drew from Fisher's story was a departure from her initial letter, containing none of its contents in favour of his own added dialogue and skew. In *New England Judged*, it was meant to show by extreme example the hypocrisy of Christians.

The strategy was successful, and even though Bishop entirely rewrote the story, his way of rewriting it adapted it to his contemporary needs and moreover sealed the future of the encounter's appearance in other books. At the moment of its publication, *New England Judged* and its companion pamphlets were a part of one of the few successful Quaker efforts of their time. Amidst a crisis of persecution in England, petitioning to Charles II on behalf of Quakers in the Massachusetts Bay Colony saw positive results. In 1661 the king wrote ordering them to suspend their harshest laws, and they did. George Fox's appeal on behalf of the Quakers as "free born English," combined with George Bishop's book, were recognised in a time where most pleas and publications of Quaker sufferings in English counties that used similar arguments were ignored.³⁰⁴

Afterlives

The blend of politics, suffering, pleas for mercy, and cries for vengeance that motivated the publication and circulation of stories found in *New England Judged* changed over time. In 1675, Edward

³⁰⁴ "Letter Sent from Charles the 2d King of England to New England, 9 Sept 1661" *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society* 39 (1871) 159-60. Pestana "The Quaker Executions as Myth and History" 442; Fox, George, *The secret works*, 1.

Wharton described a man who used *New England Judged* to remind Puritan leaders of their sins:

A Man, who had gotten one of George Bishop's books of Friends sufferings in New-England, and reading a saying there, wherein he testified the days should shortly come...then sitting, with George Bishop's Book in his hand, and came several Miles out of Country: he told them he could not have rest in his mind, until he came to shew them that Book; and he delivered it to them, bidding them read such a place, and consider if he was not a true Prophet from the Lord, in what he had foretold; and whether it was not now come to pass: But they frowned hard upon him... whereupon he demanded his Book gain, but went away without it."³⁰⁵

The book's haunting contents were used in Wharton's account to further criticise Puritan cruelty. He cited the harsh conditions of life in New England as judgements of God upon the Puritans for their earlier mistreatment of Quakers.

The book also was used to gain and inform new converts to communities of Quakers in America. A meeting minute in 1700 concerned "Friends books of service in America" and included yet another request for the book. Three Friends attending the meeting noted "the service of Friends Books being disperced among the New Convinced in America, and particularly Ancient Books of George Bishop and Relating to the Persecution of our Friends to Death and otherwise, in and about boston." Meeting attendees were "desired to look out some Books...and to send if can be gote some of the said ancient books of George Bishops."³⁰⁶

³⁰⁵ Edward Wharton, *New England's present sufferings under their cruel neighbouring Indians* (London: 1675) 7

³⁰⁶ 27th. 3mo. [May]. 1700. Second Day's Morning Meeting Minutes, Vol II 1692-1700. Society of Friends Library, London.

The next time Fisher's story appeared outside of Bishop's book, however, was in the 1696 publication of William Sewel's *History of the Rise, Increase, and Progress of the Christian People Called Quakers*. This was the first history of Quakers, and so much had changed between *New England Judged* and Sewel's publication. The colony of Pennsylvania had been founded in 1681, allowing Quakers their own place in the new world and initiating a new age of immigration. The Act of Toleration had been passed in 1689, changing and all but eliminating the threat of brutal persecution that had so influenced the fate of so many of the Friends.

Both of these had changed the nature, in turn, of conversion to the sect. In Pennsylvania as on the continent, German and Dutch immigrants converted; in London, Friends spent less time and resources seeking converts at all, although they continued to appeal to nobility and influential figures. The tone of Quaker writings by this time was a far cry from Bishop's righteous anger — following suit with the new intended converts, Friends' writings were influenced by the emergence of a world of polite letters, and *The History of the Rise, Increase, and Progress* reflected these changes. As Corns and Lowenstein have noted, "Sewel's work illustrates the growing tendency to omit the excesses of the early Quakers," but Fisher's story was preserved.³⁰⁷ Sewel copied almost verbatim from Bishop, with no mention of Fisher's letter. He added only the name of the Sultan, "Mahomet the fourth." But whereas in *New England Judged* the story was meant to achieve tolerance among Puritans through global examples, Sewel's history was meant to celebrate the spread and survival of Quakerism.

³⁰⁷ Corns and Loewenstein, *The Emergence of Quaker Writing*, 140 Footnote 11; see also Hull, William I. *William Sewel of Amsterdam, 1653-1720* (Philadelphia: Swarthmore College Monographs on Quaker History, 1933).

From this point on, the story became enshrined in Quaker histories, with occasional moments of incredible exuberance, such as in the epic poem “Mary Fisher: or the Quaker Maiden and the Grand Turk” published around 1845, and one of the “Lays of Quakerdom” published around 1855:”

Two hundred years! The Quaker sleeps
Within her nameless grave;
But a whole kindred people keeps
Her memory pure and brave.³⁰⁸

Sewel’s account informed these and was the direct link to modern usage.

In particular, he was cited in the first volume of the great Quaker historian William Braithwaite’s sweeping and definitive two part history. Braithwaite cited Sewel, and also uses Fisher’s letter and the diplomatic correspondence of Bendyshe to support Sewel. Concerning Bendyshe’s July 1658 letter, which ended with Fisher and Beatrice Beckley, her companion who was completely dropped from both Fisher’s letter and Bishop’s telling of the story, Braithwaite wrote: “I infer that the two women went home quietly because they had discharged their concern.”³⁰⁹ All scholarly revivals of Fisher’s story after this period draw from the same pool of materials, most often citing Braithwaite and Sewel. The Oxford Dictionary of Biography lifts the story from Bishop. Nevertheless, there is no reason to believe anyone purposefully lied when they retold Fisher’s story.

³⁰⁸ Ruth Plumley, “Visit or Mary Fisher to the Sultan Mohammed IV. At Adrianople, 1658.” *Lays of Quakerdom* (Philadelphia: Biddle Press, 1854?) 36. Ruth Plumley was a pseudonym of Benjamin Rush Plumley (1816-1887).

³⁰⁹ Braithwaite, *Beginnings of Quakerism*, 423.

Fisher led a fascinating life, and was truly a *Visionary Woman*.³¹⁰ And her story, insofar as she actually travelled far and wide, was emblematic of Frederick Tolles' bustling account of Transatlantic Quakers. Between 1655 and 1700 no less than 148 Quaker preachers travelled around the Atlantic, founding communities of their own in the colonies and spreading their books and papers to any who would accept them, and shouting down those who would not. Carla Pestana has shown how Bishop's popular book, and Mary's story, played a key role in a 17th century Quaker historiography that moved "away from the prophetic tradition, entering a new phase, that of the inoffensive martyr" while overturning an entire historiographical tradition of Puritan investment in their "Shining City upon a Hill." The use of Bishop's book in 1661 to gain relief from Charles II, as a work of prophecy in 1675, and to gain converts to Quakerism in 1700, all contribute to Pestana's argument. Sylvia Brown has pointed out Bishop's reliance upon distance, his depiction of a wider world beyond the Church of England and her dissenters was crucial to expanding Quaker notions of tolerance toward other belief systems.³¹¹ David Vlasblom has developed that argument, showing Fisher's experiences marked "an emergence among Quakers of a collective concept of Islam....that was fundamentally different from the predom-

³¹⁰ Villani, Stefano. "Fisher, Mary (c.1623–1698)." Stefano Villani In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., edited by Lawrence Goldman. Oxford: OUP, . <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/9505> (accessed April 24, 2015); Phyllis Mack rightly includes her in *Visionary Women: Ecstatic Prophecy in Seventeenth Century England* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1992).

³¹¹ Frederick B Tolles, "The Transatlantic Quaker community in the Seventeenth Century" *Huntingdon Library Quarterly* 14.3 (May 1951) 239-258; Pestana, "The Quaker Executions as Myth and History," 441-469; Carla Gardina Pestana, "The City Upon a Hill Under Siege: The Puritan Perception of the Quaker Threat to Massachusetts Bay, 1656-1661" *New England Quarterly* 56 (1983); Brown, Sylvia. "The Radical Travels of Mary Fisher," 39-63.

inating English and Western perceptions.”³¹² None of these interpretations lose their validity if in fact Fisher never met the Sultan.

Inaccuracies are part and parcel of documents written to grapple with persecution and record suffering otherwise suppressed. The Quaker archive was at first a desperate archive that struggled against an existence constantly threatened, chronicling bodies imprisoned and property confiscated. It was a way of recording against the threat of mortality. This was not the mortality of “Bills of Mortality” printed on a weekly basis for Londoners to encounter: they contained lists of those that had died from “griping in the guts” to “grief”, from “scurvy” to “spotted feaver.”³¹³ Typical Bills of Mortality were of no use to persecuted communities such as the Friends: they did not include categories marking deaths in prison. Writing against the threat of erasure was the reason George Fox desired “such Testimonies of Friends as are deceased, let them be Recorded, that so the Testimony of the Lord through his Servants may not be lost....to future Generations.”³¹⁴

The popularity and success of Bishop’s book were symptomatic of the expansion among Friends of who could write, and what they wrote, on the basis of materials preserved in the Quaker archives. George Bishop seemingly had no connection with Mary Fisher whose story he rewrote, he was not counted amongst Quaker leadership, and was even criticised at times by Quakers because they perceived

³¹² David Vlasblom, “Islam in Early Modern Quaker Experience and Writing,” 2; Brown, Sylvia, “The Radical Travels of Mary Fisher,” 40; Christopher Hill, *Antichrist in Seventeenth-Century England* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971) 181-182.

³¹³ *London's dreadful visitation: or, a collection of all the Bills of Mortality for this present year: beginning the 27th of December 1664 and ending the 19th of December following: as also the general or whole years bill. According to the report made to the King's most excellent Majesty.* (London : Printed and are to be sold by E. Cotes ..., 1665.)

³¹⁴ Fox, Epistle 264, *Epistles*, 293.

his public persona and political beliefs to overshadow his religious commitments.

Bishop authored a popular book that was still in demand by the turn of the century, and whose format provided a major source text for future Quaker historians and biographers over the century. In the face of examples like Bishop, the Quakers began to refine further the process by which books were authored, edited, and published from the archives to accommodate a growing, and sprawling, transatlantic membership. Nevertheless, the rhetoric used to frame debate, whether external or internal, introduced mistakes and oversimplifications as a kind of collateral damage done to documentary sources. Ultimately, Fisher's encounter with Mehmed IV balanced imagination in almost equal measure with direct experience as ways of expressing both religious fervour, and arguing for political ends. Yet the difficulties in compiling the religious archive that contained her story, facilitated by a group of heavily persecuted and unevenly educated people, provides a model to re-evaluate the contents of other types of archives, from scientific to judicial. As Arlette Farge argues,

These incomplete discourses, given under duress, are elements of society, and they help to characterize it...even if the discourse is muddled, mixing lies and truth, hatred and cunning, submission and defiance, it does not diminish the 'truth' that it carries. The archives do not necessarily tell the truth, but, as Michel Foucault would say, they tell *of* the truth.³¹⁵

The movement and recopying and correcting of documents, the reorganising and rebinding of old materials with new, the harmonising of language and the addition of details for later use, were not features limited to the Quaker archive alone. As Elizabeth Yale writes,

³¹⁵ Farge, *The Allure of the Archives*, 29.

“No archive is innocent.”³¹⁶ Writing is not a naturally occurring phenomenon — for anyone. As it is always contrived, so must it be questioned, whether written by hand or impressed by machine.

³¹⁶ Elizabeth Yale, “The History of Archives: The State of the Discipline,” *Book History* 18 (2015) 332, 335.

IV Communal Readings: The Fine Line Between Consensus and Censorship

“The Quakers...scarce agree in all things, doe yet generally throughout England keep themselves up in one entire Body, glewed together with a strict Unity.”

—Thomas Trotter³¹⁷

Introduction

Joseph Smith opened his grand *Descriptive catalogue of Friends' books* (1867) with a key of symbols that summarised the problem of identifying Quaker-authored texts, and more broadly, the problem with generalising about Quaker identity.

In his “Explanation of signs used in this Catalogue” Smith selected five symbols to denote the changing status of Quaker authors:

- * to indicate those individuals who at some time were disunited from the Society, and not known to have returned.
- † those who were reinstated into membership
- ‡ those who were disunited, and returned, but believed to have again left the Society.
- § those individuals about whom there is some uncertainty as to whether they left the Society or not.
- || those Authors about whom there is some doubt as to whether they ever belonged to the Society; and those *Anonymous Books* with the same mark must be considered doubtful, i.e. whether written by Members or not.³¹⁸

³¹⁷ Thomas Trotter, *The Character of a Quaker...*(London: printed and are to be sold by the Booksellers of London or elsewhere, 1672) 15.

³¹⁸ Joseph Smith, *A Descriptive catalogue of Friends' books...*(London: J. Smith, 1867).

Smith's use of these signs perfectly illustrated the tensions between individual reading and writing practices inspired by the inner light on the one hand, and on the other, the collective editing and publication habits that tempered individual spirit, described in this chapter.

For all of the reinforcement provided both by Friends, all of the careful attention paid to keeping records consistently and in "Gospel Order," even contemporary critics like Thomas Trotter were aware of how "Unity" was both an impossibility and a priority amongst the Quakers. As I will show, much labour went into building consensus and managing disputes, they for the most part, Quakers stuck together in spite of their differences, "glewed together with strict Unity." As Trotter continued, "the Papist acknowledgeth one Pope in the World, the Quaker sets up a Pope in every individual Breast."

From their earliest days Quakers had relied upon print and manuscript communication to maintain a uniform flow of information between meetings and members. The language of light, testimony, and truth, and the careful system of record-keeping established a common framework and language within which Friends recorded their experiences. Yet the consensus Friends sought to achieve in their meetings and through their collected publications was not achieved without struggle and internal division. While the printed sufferings of Friends portrayed a religious group unified through persecution, from the James Nayler affair onward, controversy was a common occurrence among Quakers. The mix of a spirituality that encouraged personal revelation and published testimony produced, at times, great infighting amongst the Friends. Quakers were argumentative: Trotter described them as "Hedge-hog[s] wrapt up in [their] own warm down, turn[ing] out Bristles to all the World besides." They were natural contrarians: "very curious to be in all things contrary to the common

Mode.”³¹⁹ The combative tone of their pamphlets and petitions was not limited to non-Quakers. The exhaustive system of signs found in Smith’s *Catalogue* makes it difficult to imagine anything like a fixed Quaker identity, and the publications themselves reinforce the point.

My focus for this chapter is the meeting minutes kept by the Second Day’s Morning Meeting, a committee created in the 1670s to approve, publish, and distribute Quaker publications. These meeting minutes illustrate the fine line between consensus and censorship. Or as Barry Reay has put it: “Quaker self-censorship did the State’s job for it in the 1670s and 1680s.”³²⁰ In particular I will focus on one controversy, beginning in the 1670s, but with aftershocks leading into the 1690s, that began amongst Friends in the Bristol Monthly Meeting. The debate resulted in the publication of anti-Quaker works by avowedly Quaker authors over the nature of membership itself. The Bristol Quaker, William Rogers, was so infuriated by Fox’s control over the printing of Quaker works that he took to the press to address the problem himself.

My point in focusing on Rogers’ book is to show how the record-keeping and publication habits developed in the earliest days of the movement spread so effectively that they also educated Quakers about taking their internal dissent to print. Although primarily a censoring body, the meeting minutes of the Second Day’s Morning Meeting showed that the elements of Quaker spirituality which relied upon publication were impossible to silence. Their failed attempts at silencing Rogers, and the controversy that followed, shed light on the complicated lives of books, manuscripts, and their circulation in late 17th century England. The publication history of William Rogers’s

³¹⁹ Trotter, *The Character of a Quaker*, 5, 6.

³²⁰ Reay, *The Quakers and the English Revolution*, 111.

book, *The Christian Quaker*, provides much evidence concerning how authority and censorship fit into the practice of a community long used to reinforcing its common bonds through print and manuscript publications. But the larger task of this chapter is to go before, beside, and beyond Rogers: although we meet him as a published author for the first time spreading schism, the wider world of reading he took pains to reconstruct in *The Christian Quaker* was as much about building consensus as it was about censorship. And as this chapter will show, the distance between the two was densely packed with variety. Above all, the Quakers offer a particularly well-documented case study in how communities made use of the written and printed word to shape their identity, and reciprocally how the act of writing and printing in its own right shaped the contours and tested the boundaries of communal life.

Adding More Glue

When George Fox was released from prison in 1666, he turned his attention to refining the way in which quarrelling Quakers maintained a sense of unity, or “glewed” themselves together. Constant persecution, and in London, the outbreak of plague and fire, had all contributed in Fox’s mind to the weakening of a coherent Quaker identity, what he called a “Gospel Order” — but dissent within the sect had also spread further afield. To begin with, a prominent itinerant Friend named John Perrot (c. 1620 -1665) had travelled earlier in the decade across England, as far as Constantinople, and in the other direction, as far as Barbados, and had questioned, in his preaching and publications, a few of Fox’s ideas. Chief among them was the usefulness of meeting at a fixed time. Perrot believed that as the inner light might speak to an individual at any time, the notion of a regular schedule of worship was useless. Perrot had also questioned whether or not Quakers should remove their hats during prayer. It was Quaker practice to refuse to don caps before superiors, and Per-

rot thought Quakers ought to refuse to remove them altogether.³²¹ Both of these beliefs breached extremes that George Fox did not approve of, and what's more, undermined Fox's own teachings.

Print was not enough to address the controversy — Fox wanted to address the problems caused by Perrot and others who had spoken out of turn in person, and so travelled to visit Friends to restore “Gospel Order.” Fox went to Ireland in 1669, and the Anglo-American colonies from 1671 to 1673. Other approved leaders, most prominently William Penn and Robert Barclay, joined Fox for his journey to the Netherlands and Germany.³²²

Back in England, meanwhile, Fox had refined the system of Meetings by which Quakers met and worshipped communally. He organised Friends into Meetings that convened monthly in each county, quarterly across larger areas, and finally answered to the highest authority, the Yearly Meeting in London, and he wrote epistles to each about the ways in which they might more carefully discipline wayward Friends. For example, surviving meeting minutes for Horsleydown noted a crackdown on a variety of behaviours; drunkenness, swearing oaths, playing ninepins, marriage by Anglican priests.³²³ Richard Cockbill and his wife Anne were reprimanded as they had “gone into Astrology &...run into Imaginations,” and gossiped of other members of the meeting.³²⁴

Part of Fox's campaign to reform the organisation of his followers also concerned the ways in which Quaker records were kept and

³²¹ Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism*, 45; Braithwaite, *The Second Period of Quakerism*, 228-230.

³²² Braithwaite, *The Second Period of Quakerism*, 263, 265.

³²³ Braithwaite, *The Second Period of Quakerism*, 251-253.

³²⁴ Horsleydown Meeting Minutes, MS11b3'1. Society of Friends Library, London.

publications circulated. Not only would this address any disunity, but by that time, the expansion of the archive and the pace of publication required more work than Ellis Hookes alone could manage. As early as 1666, Fox had written that books written by Quakers for publication should be considered only by “faithfull & sound” Friends. By 1672, Fox created and placed two new committees toward the top of the hierarchy of meetings: the Council of Ten and the Second Day’s Morning Meeting. It was the job of these to formally oversee the submission, emendation, and publication of Quaker writings.³²⁵ Since publication was both a spiritual and administrative necessity for Friends, and the 1660s had seen a sharp increase in the number of Quakers involved in writing for print, it made sense that the business of publication would be so extensive as to require its own meeting space. The Council of Ten and Second Day’s Morning Meeting worked together to make sure no Friends’ books were printed, or reprinted, without their approval. In addition, the Meeting For Sufferings was created to deal exclusively with the collection of sufferings, since they had amassed to such a bulk, and with providing resources for those suffering persecution or imprisoned. Ellis Hookes was a leading member of both committees.³²⁶ The Second Day’s Morning Meeting minutes in particular provide a vivid portrait of the formalisation of the Quaker publication habits that had contributed to their survival during persecution, and their expansion overseas. The minute books depict an incredibly rich forum of exchange which has much to tell about the history of ideas and their circulation outside of intellectual elites - a social history made possible by a mix of written and oral communication.

³²⁵ O’Malley, “Defying the Powers and Tempering the Spirit,” 76.

³²⁶ Braithwaite, *The Second Period of Quakerism*, 280-2.

The earliest minutes for the Second Day's Morning Meeting were dated 15 September 1673 and also marked the birth of the Quaker library.³²⁷ As a first step toward taking control of printing operations, it was set out that founding members would collect what was already in circulation. A team of Friends appointed to the Meeting set out to collect books and review manuscripts: George Roberts, William Welch, James Claypoole, George Whitehead, William Penn, and Ellis Hookes, who was also in charge of keeping the meeting minutes. Nicholas Jorden of Bristol, and Nicholas Cole of Plymouth, in addition, were also sent to find texts outside of London. They agreed that

2 of a sort of all bookes written by frends be procured & kept together & for the time to come that the bookseller bring in 2 of a sort likewise of all bookes that are printed, that if any book be perverted by our Adversaryes we may know where to find it. And that there be gotten one of a sort of every book that has been written against the Truth from the beginning.³²⁸

Just as the records kept by Ellis Hookes in fair hand streamlined the process for compiling manuscripts for print, the creation of the library also facilitated future publications. As was written: “[I]f any book be perverted by our Adversaryes we may know where to find it,” in order to speedily respond. This also was an acknowledgement, as was the case with George Bishop's *New England Judged*, that printed texts often relied upon one another to recycle certain arguments and stories when necessary.

³²⁷ Littleboy, Anne. *A History of the Friends' Reference Library* (London, Offices of the Society of Friends, Devonshire House, Bishopsgate, 1921).

³²⁸ Morning Meeting Minutes 1673-1692. Transcript. Friends' Library, London. 15th of the 7th Month [September] 1673.

By 1674, the Morning Meeting was the first port of call for all manuscript submissions among Friends.³²⁹ The shorthand description of the Second Day's Morning Meeting throughout Quaker (and subsequently non-Quaker) scholarship has been that it is a censoring body.³³⁰ On a basic level, that was true: works were rejected for publication by the Meeting, as invested in the power of print as Kate Peters has shown early Quaker leaders to be. In addition, Thomas O'Malley has provided the most in-depth description of the Morning Meeting in an article investigating criticisms levied against it by separatist Quakers, including William Rogers. Rogers' accusations in *The Christian Quaker*, O'Malley shows, were accurate: the Meeting really *was* an extension of George Fox's leadership, and it censored and edited texts to suit Fox's vision of what the Society of Friends ought to be. After decades as Quakers, both Bugg and Rogers fell afoul of that vision, and so would the prolific Quaker author and leader George Keith by the late 1690s.³³¹

The Christian Quaker

Collectively published Quaker pamphlets required "reading for action" not as a scholarly practice inherited from the great Humanists of the previous century, so much as a form of education for yeoman and their families, building relationships with other like-minded men and women, and as a register of their dissent. Just as in 1653 George Fox wrote that it was his purpose to "lay bare" the deceitfulness of Anglican ministers, that same criticism animated those Quakers like William Rogers who came to question Fox's authority. When empow-

³²⁹ O'Malley, "Defying the Powers and Tempering the Spirit", 78.

³³⁰ Thomas O'Malley, 'The Press and Quakerism 1653-1659' *Journal of the Friends' Historical Society*, 54 (1979), Thomas O'Malley "Defying the Powers and Tempering the Spirit," 78, Reay, *The Quakers and the English Revolution*, 111; as have Bailey, *New Light on George Fox*, and Corns in "No Man's Copy."

³³¹ O'Malley, 'Defying the Powers and Tempering the Spirit' 76, 85.

ered readers like Rogers questioned the very leaders who taught them to read in the first place, the cycle of dissent came full circle.

Steeped in a tradition of reading, producing, and responding to argumentative pamphlets and books, the extent to which all Quakers were comfortable with arguing occasionally backfired. This was the case with James Nayler's fall from prominence at the close of the 1650s, as it was the case for John Perrot by the middle of the 1660s. No matter the controversy, both sides always spoke from a righteous position, and William Rogers was no different when he justified his character assassination of leading Quakers in 1680. Over the course of the 1670s, Rogers had watched as Fox's epistles and visits to each meeting firmly established hierarchy of religious authority. Rogers gave two reasons for publishing his book: first, because he was desired to do so by sympathisers, and second because "at length it became my Concern of Conscience."³³²

Rogers' "conscience" had been tried over the course of years of debate between Quakers in Bristol, where he lived, and resented those in London whose authority outweighed his own. "The Meeting at Bristol hath become as an Anvil, whereon many Apostates or Innovators...[have] frequently beat," he wrote. He had lost his patience with London Quakers and the Yearly Meeting in London: "What Defence can there be against a Slandrous Tongue?"³³³ Rogers' 1680 publication answered its own question much in the style of Quaker pamphlets from the 1650s, in a long series of accusations and scriptural references. By 1684, his *Christian-Quaker distinguished from the apostate & innovator* had become a large book. The original five-part

³³² William Rogers, *The Christian-Quaker Distinguished from the Apostate & Innovator in Five Parts...* (London: John Brighthurst, 1680) sig. B4r.

³³³ Rogers, *The Christian-Quaker*, sig. B1v.

text had expanded to eight at its author's expense, growing apace and in response to criticisms published by his fellow Quakers.

A cursory search in the Library of the Society of Friends today gives a sense of the scandal his book caused: there are multiple volumes containing dozens of responses to Rogers, and within individual pamphlets there are angry polyphonies of testimonies co-authored against him. The debate remains an example of infighting at its worst. For instance, Thomas Ellwood attacked Rogers in rhyming couplets:

For all the filth that Thou, and Others Spaul,
On honourable Friends, in the course will fall
Upon your Selves; On them it ne'er can stick:
Yourselves your Vomit up against must lick.
William, Thy work is weigh'd, thy Spirit try'd;
and both thy Work and Spirit are deny'd.³³⁴

Gross words, from the same Ellwood who edited George Fox's *Journal* for publication in 1694, and removed much of its violent language. Yet the poem also made mention of the fact that Rogers' work had been "weigh'd," his "Spirit try'd." Ellwood used the language from William Britten's *Silent Meeting* on the evaluation of one's inner light, and instead applied it to describe the activities of the Second Day's Morning Meeting in evaluating and dismissing the text.

"Controversy is perhaps the least artistic of all forms of literature, since the combatants as a rule have lost their sense of proportion and of humour," the historian William Braithwaite wrote of William Rogers, and his conspirators John Wilkinson and John Story, in his definitive history of Quakers, *The Second Period of Quakerism*.

³³⁴ Braithwaite, *The Second Period of Quakerism*, 422; Thomas Ellwood, *Rogero-Mastix, A ROD for William Rogers, in Return for his Riming Scourge, &c.* London, Printed in the Year 1685, sig. D3r.

“Moreover,” Braithwaite continued, “its cloud of words often darkens knowledge.”³³⁵ According to Braithwaite's account of the Story-Wilkinson Schism, and Rogers's place within it, the controversy was just one of the growing pains within Quakerism, as it looked away from the fire-and-brimstone of its early days in the aftermath of the English Revolution, and sought stability for the future. It was at first a debate about leadership. Over the years the self-declared, yet widely recognised leader of Quakerism, George Fox, had begun to draw criticism through his attempts to organise Quaker Meetings more strictly.³³⁶ Rogers agreed with Wilkinson and Story that Fox's “Gospel Order” was as good as Anglican hierarchy, a truly revolting idea to Quakers, and moreover, they refused to implement the separate, Women-only meetings which Fox encouraged during his travels in the early 1670s.³³⁷ While Braithwaite is correct that the “cloud of words” surrounding the Story-Wilkinson Controversy makes it difficult to know just how the argument originated, a look into the debate nevertheless offers a rich cache of information for the historian of texts and their circulation. Rogers and his critics alike cited the constant flow of letters, minute-books, manuscripts, and printed pamphlets with a degree of precision that often disregarded the contents of the materials in question. So where there may be little art in the language of debate or the poetry of Ellwood, there was an intricate artistry to the web of relations seeing these works to print, and in the preface to *The Christian Quaker*, Rogers mapped the morass of manuscripts, correspondence, meetings, acts and hands that helped

³³⁵ Braithwaite, *The Second Period of Quakerism*, 320.

³³⁶ On Fox's consolidation of his leadership through a mixture of outliving other prominent Quakers and formalising his vision for how the religion should be organised, see Richard Bailey, *New Light on George Fox and Early Quakerism: The Making and Unmaking of a God* (San Francisco: Mellan Research University Press, 1992).

³³⁷ Braithwaite, *The Second Period of Quakerism*, 269-323; Clare J. L. Martin, “Tradition Versus Innovation: The Hat, Wilkinson-Story and Keithian Controversies.” *Quaker Studies* 8, no. 1 (2003): 5–22.

produce his own book. Just as in Chapter 2 I argued that there was an archive behind every work, this remains true for the controversy stirred by Rogers. Adding to that argument, my focus on the interplay between consensus and censorship emphasises the highly communal quality of the creation of the archive behind every book, and any single author.

William Rogers' attack on Fox's leadership and his criticism of the Morning Meeting in his work, amounts to something beyond an entry point to analyse the Morning Meeting's censorship practices.

Through Rogers it is possible to understand how the Quaker establishment prized the value of print, and the network of exchange it had created, and he also provides an example of the way in which Quakers were educated in the skill of turning print to their advantage.

Looking in-depth at Rogers' preface to the reader we see an angry and frustrated man on the one hand, but an exemplar of Quaker publishing culture on the other, detailing how he went about publishing the present text. In the book, Rogers' argument relied on the reproduction of many other works: "many Papers, Epistles, Testimonies, Proceedings and Practices, which were the Effects of Disunion, Separation and Division" in both print and manuscript. Rogers sought to preserve the context of his argument, the archive leading to the disunity, and laid out his attempts to work within the system at first, and only after, his recourse to print to take the debate "public."³³⁸

"The *True Christian-Quaker* hath been judged and censured," Rogers wrote in his preface. Here Rogers was not just imagining future readers: the book *had* already circulated before it was printed— just as Thomas Ellwood spoke of in his poem of attack, it had been "weigh'd."

³³⁸ Rogers, *The Christian-Quaker*, sig. A3r; sig. B4r.

Rogers had been moved by the “*Religious Differences*” (his emphasis) that had arisen amongst Bristol Quakers in 1678 to “put *Pen to Paper* on that Subject,” producing a manuscript in three parts.³³⁹ Rogers sent his manuscript to the Morning Meeting in order that it could be circulated more widely, but it was not. Such a refusal to circulate left Rogers feeling “deceived” by the very Quaker leaders whose responsibility it was to inform the membership.³⁴⁰ As a result, it became Rogers’ “Concern, to prepare another *Manuscript*”, this time attacking the “ONE PERSON” he felt was responsible: George Fox, but not before addressing seven letters, all carefully cited and signed by Rogers (and “three other” Bristol Quakers).³⁴¹ When Rogers received no satisfactory response, he “very publicly” circulated his manuscript with an ultimatum: either Friends prove him wrong in his assessment of Fox, or he would print the piece for wider circulation.³⁴² This too mimicked the earliest forms of Quaker debate — the provocative letters sent to ministers like John James or Richard Sherlock in the 1650s challenging them to public debate.

William Rogers acted in kind nearly three decades later. Receiving no answer to his challenge, once again, he edited and printed *The Christian-Quaker*, so that the dispute might “lye on Record, at least *Until an Union might again be witnessed.*” “’Tis the Duty of all *Christians*, to clear their Consciencs,” Rogers wrote, “which doubtless was the Real Ground, whereupon many Antient and Honourable Friends (already fallen asleep)...have given forth their Testimony... both by Word and Printing.” Not only was the imperative to publish

³³⁹ Rogers, *The Christian-Quaker*, sig. B4.

³⁴⁰ Rogers, *The Christian-Quaker*, sig. C3.

³⁴¹ Rogers, *The Christian-Quaker*, sig. C4.

³⁴² Rogers, *The Christian-Quaker*, sig. D2.

bound into his personal idea of conscience, but he saw himself in the company of Quaker tradition of publishing sufferings and testimonies, which had long relied on the same tactics as an essential component of spiritual activity. And since both Quaker and anti-Quaker books were incorporated into the Friends' library, he did make it onto the record.

Rogers was a successful merchant, not a member of the Morning Meeting, nor was he published in print before *The Christian-Quaker*. But in his preface to the work, he patterned the publication and circulation of his text upon the methods of the Morning Meeting: he began by circulating his ideas within his local community, he then facilitated the wider distribution of his manuscript, and finally, he resorted to the expense of print to address wider audiences. Looking to the editing, publication, and circulation of texts as described in the minutes of the Second Day's Morning Meeting, Rogers' approach was the standard Quaker practice. Ten years earlier, from its development in 1673, the Second Day's Morning Meeting had basically educated its members about how to agitate using print. In Rogers' case, it backfired. Whereas O'Malley focuses on censorship and the controversy Rogers caused, my interest in the means by which Rogers caused that controversy addresses two issues that have been overlooked. First, there is the bigger picture of publication activities that even Rogers mentioned. The majority of works submitted to the Meeting were accepted for publication. Second, the format of the Meeting itself was highly collaborative, adapting the tried and tested means of Quaker administration and record-keeping to reading, composing, and editing texts collectively for publication.

William Rogers was a product of this context, and when his conscience was moved he used it against the very group who had established it. Focus on censorship alone overlooks the complex range of

practices concerning the publication and distribution of texts, something else Rogers' rambling preface hints at. Building on O'Malley's scholarship, I hope to balance the realities of censorship against their implications for a wider world of productive tensions "between an individual author and a collaborative community," as Stephen Dobranski describes it in his work on authorship.³⁴³ A look into the gritty details of how Quakers sought to silence, or at least modify, the views of their own members, furthermore, shows how Quakers practically applied their beliefs on "liberty of conscience" advocated for so often in their published sufferings.

Is it possible to square the lofty ideals of William Penn's *Great Case for the Liberty of Conscience* (1670) with Penn's role in the Second Day's Morning Meeting refusing to publish Rogers' manuscripts? Yes — although doing so requires readers to separate rhetoric from reality. In the very least, even when they tried, Quakers didn't manage to successfully silence dissatisfied members. Liberty of conscience won out through a tradition of defiance rather than default. But in the context of *The Christian Quaker*, a debate over the "impartial reader" — a rhetorical construct — ultimately offers evidence of a Quaker textual culture that allowed its readers to own, read, and respond to even texts that had been suppressed.

Dreams of Impartiality

Just as heresy had a way of spreading even in books that spoke out against it — for instance Thomas Edward's *Gangraena* — the Second Day's Morning Meeting was faced with a problem of reprinting ideas that it had rejected when it printed responses to Rogers' work. In earlier publications, Quakers published the opinions of their critics to an almost excessive degree.

³⁴³ Stephen B. Donbranski, *Readers and Authorship in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 2005) 6.

A 1665 book co-authored by Thomas Curwen, William Houlden, Henry Wood, William Wilson, and Margaret Fell Fox against John Wiggan provides information about the Quaker attitude toward publishing their critics. First, they complained that Wiggan “hath taken some of our papers and private letters writ to him, but left out the occasion, wherefore they were written, and so in this he hath not done honestly.” Quakers often reproduced letters, laws, and any other contextual material in full to support their arguments— their counter-attack on his writing also sought to school him in the art of printed debate as they saw it. They noted of Wiggan’s writing, that “as for all his bad letters...we shall not set them down all, nor part, for some of them are out of the bound of Christianity.”³⁴⁴ But in this case, the modesty was a posture: the bulk of the text was occupied with reprinting Wiggan’s argument, (“as the Reader may read and see”), and at the very end of the text, they summarised a “list of Wiggan’s assertions.”³⁴⁵ One of the reasons they did so related to the difficulty the Quakers had in acquiring Wiggan’s attack on them. They complained throughout the book: “thou didst not so much as direct that a Copy of it should be given to us, and so thou renders thy self both obnoxious and odious in thy Book and practice.”³⁴⁶

Quaker authors had already imagined, appealed to, and encouraged fair representation, an “Impartial Reader,” a humanist rhetorical convention that would become characteristic of eighteenth-century publi-

³⁴⁴ Margaret Fell Fox, et. al. *This is an Answer to John Wiggan’s Book, Spread up and down in Lancashire, Cheshire, and Wales, who isa Baptist and a Monarchy-Man...*(London: Printed in the Year, 1665, sig. A2.

³⁴⁵ Fox et. al., *This is an Answer to John Wiggan’s Book*, 2.

³⁴⁶ Fox et. al., *This is an Answer to John Wiggan’s Book*, 83.

cations.³⁴⁷ They were not alone in using the convention: it was characteristic of pamphlet wars after 1640 to include the enemy's argument. The Bristol Baptist Robert Purnell addressed himself to "impartial," "unbayased" readers in his works, and it was likewise a habit of the bitter Quaker critic and overall controversialist Richard Baxter to "willingly leave the Reader to judge according to the evidence... desir[ing] no more of him, but Diligence, Impartiality, and Patience."³⁴⁸ Roger Crab, "The English Hermite" who was impartial himself, "neither for the Levelers, nor Quakers, nor Shakers, nor Ranters, but above Ordinances" in his work on vegetarianism addressed the "Impartial Reader," asking them to be open-minded about his idea that "innocent creatures for innocent food, and beastly creatures for beastly and fleshly food."³⁴⁹ The Anglican clergyman Henry Jeanes, among others, paired "impartial" with "learned."³⁵⁰

Even Sir Roger L'Estrange knew that a plea for an impartial reader was a rhetorical necessity: he addressed one in his writings at the same time as he passionately advocated for censorship and impris-

³⁴⁷ The paratextual materials of early English books and pamphlets are littered with appeals for "the impartial Reader to judge" (R.T. *The hyrelings reward*. [London: Printed by J.C. and T.W., 1652]). While not without its flaws, and only a sample of overall publications, if and EEBO-TCP (<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebogroup/>) search for "impartial reader" is any indication, it becomes habit to address the reader in such a way increasingly from the 1620s onward, with spikes of use beginning in the 1650s and later in the 1690s.

³⁴⁸ Among others: Robert Purnell, *The Way to Heaven Discovered...* (Bistol: William Ballard, 1653) 2, and in *A little cabinet richly stored...* (London: Printed by R.W. for Thomas Brewster, 1657); Richard Baxter, *Baxter's apology...* (London: Printed by A.M. for Thomas Underhill...and Francis Tyton, 1654) sig A3v; and *Confirmation and restauration the necessary means of reformation...* (London: by A.M. for Nevil Simmons...to be sold by Joseph Cranford, 1658), and *Of Justification...* (London: by R.W. for Nevil Simmons, 1658).

³⁴⁹ Robert Crab, *The English Hermite, or, Wonder of this Age...* (London: Printed, and are to be sold in Popes-head Alley, and at the Exchange, 1655) sig A2v, sig A4v.

³⁵⁰ Henry Jeanes, *Uniformity in Humane Doctrinall Ceremonies Ungrounded on 1 Cor. 14.40. Or, a Reply Unto Dr. Hammonds Vindication of his Grounds of Uniformity from the 1 Cor. 14.40* (Oxford: Printed by A.Lichfield...for Tho. Robinson, 1660) 87.

onment for printing seditious works, and would be in charge of censoring works in 1662.³⁵¹ Sometimes rather than “impartial” the author imagined a “sollid Christian Reader” and the judgment of “Sober men.”³⁵² Maybe Abraham Nelson was the most candid in his use of the word (in a book identifying Oliver Cromwell as the Antichrist) when he addressed a “Friendly and Impartiall Reader.”³⁵³ The ideal reader was not so much impartial as sympathetic, and however cloaked in the rhetoric of neutrality they may be, it was an act of self-flattery for an author to confuse friendliness with fairness. But amidst a sliding scale of rhetoric and reality, Quaker publications allowed pursuit of an “impartial reader” from a theoretical device to a practice, since they reproduced long excerpts from their critics.

In *The Christian Quaker*, Rogers relied on publication because he saw himself as a good Quaker, working, like “Antient” Friends, to publish truth far and wide. This led him to painstakingly reconstruct the origins of his grievance and both sides of the argument — similar to the textual details in the response to Thomas Wigan — through the publication of letters and excerpts from other Quaker pamphlets— and it was the reason why the *Christian Quaker* expanded into eight parts over a four year period. The unease between providing readers with both sides of an argument and divulging too much caused some initial unease for Quakers. While they had no problem reproducing the violent speech of outsiders, this argument had grown internally and published intimate knowledge of the workings of the Bristol meeting and the Second Day’s Morning Meeting. Christopher

³⁵¹ Roger L’Estrange, *[H]is apology...*(London: Printed for Henry Brome, 1660); *A Short view of some remarkable transactions...*(London: Printed for Henry Brome, 1660); *Treason arraigned* (London, printed in the year, 1660).

³⁵² James Parke, *False fictions and romances rebuked...*(London: printed in the year, 1684) sig. A2.

³⁵³ Abraham Nelson, *A perfect description of Antichrist, and his false prophet...* (London, Printed by T.F., 1660) sig A3v.

Taylor, the first author to respond to Roger's *Christian Quaker* in 1681 expressed discomfort. Taylor was particularly angered by Rogers' argument specifically as it was available in print. *The Christian Quaker* was "a manifest token of [Rogers'] Destruction as to Truth, and the ruin and undoing of his Soul forever, and the Souls of all, who in this spiritedness adhere to him."³⁵⁴ John Bringhurst, who had published both Rogers' initial work and Taylor's response condemned owning *The Christian Quaker* in his preface.³⁵⁵

A year later Taylor's tactics (also published by Bringhurst) had reversed, in his response to the sixth and eight parts of Roger's work:

And to thy wicked Book I refer the Reader, whether this be not the main Subject of it; and so is notorious false and blasphemous....And what if I have neither particularly quoted Part nor Page of thy Book: yet what I affirm is true: Unto which, for proof of what I say, I refer the Reader to thy Book, and justified my Charge against thee.³⁵⁶

John Pennington likewise pointed readers to the external source itself rather than reproducing the text at length:

[L]et not the Reader take upon my bare word only, (as I doubt, from his seeming fairness to many have his) but read his

³⁵⁴ Christopher Taylor, *An Epistle of Caution to Friends to take heed of that Treacherous Spirit that is entered into W[illiam] R[ogers] and his Abettors* (London: John Bringhurst, 1681) 11.

³⁵⁵ Taylor, *An Epistle of Caution to Friends*, sig. A2v. In the "Epistle to the Reader" found at the beginning of the text, Bringhurst wrote:

And to all such who have, or may have an itching Ear to read that Book, it rises in my Heart to caution you to forbear satisfying your minds therein, for the Enemy may take advantage upon you, thereby to draw out your minds to take everything for granted that is therein inserted...

However, Bringhurst in a sense needed to assume such a posture: he had been the printer of Rogers' book! In order not to seem to profit from printing both sides of an argument, he would have to "caution" his readers "to forbear."

³⁵⁶ Christopher Taylor, *Something in Answer to Two late Malitious Libels of William Rogers; Intituled The Sixth and Eight part of his (falsely so called) Christian Quaker...*(London: John Bringhurst, 1682) sig. A2v.

Book, and observe the drift thereof, then he will see whether I had not just cause thus to reflect on him.³⁵⁷

The most exhaustive, two-hundred thirty-four page line-by-line refutation of Rogers' book by Thomas Ellwood, *An Antidote Against the Infection of William Rogers's Book* was so long because it reproduced so much of Rogers' writing, but at the same time Ellwood discouraged the reader to "not publickly own that wicked Book...in which those Corrupt Fruits are brought forth." "[Y]ou cannot chuse but be polluted thereby, and entangled therewith," he added. Ellwood suggested he had done readers a service in reading the book on their behalf, that they had "escape[d] the snare" in not buying it.³⁵⁸ However at least one of the several surviving copies at the Society of Friends Library preserves a few rare marginal annotations that favour Rogers, agreeing "Twas too true" with him and "There was too much ground for itt," describing Rogers' break with Bristol Quakers. They were crossed out by a different pen.³⁵⁹

The problem was the same on the other side of argument— Rogers relied upon an impartial reader because he did not trust in the impartiality of the readers that comprised the Second Day's Morning Meeting. In a later addition of *The Christian Quaker* he criticised the Second Day's Morning Meeting:

If the Holy Ghost in the Apostles days, directed to chuse a certain, select, well qualified Number of men, for such a Service (as doubtless it did) its against right reason to suppose, that the Apostles would in their day, have left the consideration of such weighty matters, as Treatises of things relating to the Kingdom of

³⁵⁷ John Pennington, *Complaint Against William Rogers* (London: Printed for Benjamin Clark, 1681) sig. A2.

³⁵⁸ Thomas Ellwood, *An Antidote Against the Infection of William Rogers's Book* (London: Benjamin Clark, 1682) 233.

³⁵⁹ Ellwood, *An Antidote*, 107, 109.

God, and the salvation of mankind, to the Approbation of an uncertain, unselected Assembly; for such I call that Meeting wherein many of the Writings of the People of the Lord called Quakers (intended for publick View) are approved, or disapproved: for that no Certain, Select Number of Persons are chosen for that service; but any Persons who have Publick Testimonies for the Truth, though but by way of Exhortation, and are owned as Friends of Truth, and come where that Meeting is appointed, are the Persons by whom such Writings....as are for publick service, are approved, or disapproved.³⁶⁰

His criticism of the Second Day's Morning Meeting was that they were an "unselected Assembly" — unlike the Apostles, singled out by the Holy Spirit — and those had no authority over himself in approving or disproving his text. For Rogers, a model of authority is taken, in typical Quaker fashion, from Saint Paul, as a matter of age, yet he appeals to an "impartial reader" to approve of his logic over the logic of an "unselected Assembly" that had been given "consideration of such weighty matters:"

I now appeal to the impartial understanding Reader, whether according to this form of Government, one that is in the place of Paul a Father...may not have the testimony which he hath through the motion of Gods Spirit to publish unto the Word of God, be over-ruled by Timothy a Son...nay, perhaps by one that is of much lesser rank in the Body...yet I query, Whether it looks like a part of Christ's Government, for Timothy the Son, to be admitted as a Judge over the Writings of Paul, who as a Father begot him unto the Truth?³⁶¹

This passage has a difficult relationship with hierarchy and the impartial reader. Rogers disputed the authority of the Second Day's Morn-

³⁶⁰ Rogers, *The Christian-Quaker...Part 3*, 29-30.

³⁶¹ Rogers, *The Christian-Quaker...Part 3*, 29-30.

ing Meeting over his manuscript publication because they were not “well qualified.” He criticized their membership for elevating “one that is of much lesser rank in the Body” over older or more distinguished Quakers. He used the language of a key biblical text for the Quakers to strengthen his argument, Paul's second letter to Timothy on the establishment of a Church government, asking whether it would make sense for Timothy, the younger man, to advise Paul, the more experienced of the two, rather than vice-versa. Such a mistrust of the Morning Meeting recalled Milton's suspicions of the censor's influence upon authors in *Areopagitica* — censorship was best left up to the reader.

In spite of the different appeals and anxieties over representing both sides of a debate, the emphasis on impartial reading related Quakers to the humanist tradition they often criticised. Early modern learned culture valued reading habits that gathered information for later use when writing, or as Lisa Jardine and Anthony Grafton first put it, “reading for action.”³⁶² Quaker publication methods involved their own “reading for action,” preferring a reference library and reading aloud, and using reading to suit the immediate needs of the movement. Those needs included clarifying belief, petitioning, engaging with critics, but most of all keeping members informed, and using the momentum of their informed communities to produce more manuscripts, more printed works.

³⁶² Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine, “Studied for Action: How Gabriel Harvey Read his Livy,” *Past and Present* 129 (1990), 30-78, and among others Ann Blair, “Reading Strategies for Coping with Information Overload ca. 1550-1700,” 11-28; Ann Moss, *Printed Commonplace Books and the Structuring of Renaissance Thought*, (Oxford: 1996); William H. Sherman, *John Dee: The Politics of Reading and Writing in the English Renaissance* (Amherst, MA: 1995); Kevin Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions: The Politics of Reading in Early Modern England* (New Haven and London: Yale U P, 2000).

Quaker creaders had their own “worlds made by words” in the style of what Anthony Grafton has described of the early modern Republic of Letters, and case studies such as William Rogers’ shows exactly the ways in which “level networks coexisted and collided with hierarchies of individuals, or loyalties, and of position” as Quakerism occupied new middle ground, distinct from the early days of its extremities.³⁶³ The creation of an impartial reader armed with both sides of the story, while risky, is part of the textual noise necessary in ensuring liberty of conscience — there could be no liberty where there was no choice. And while much of the history of such liberties focuses on moments of physical clash and oppression — for instance William Penn’s *Great Case for Liberty of Conscience*, it is also in these petty squabbles on a day to day basis where the reality was borne out for the greater majority of people. But finally, this grappling with textual production was also operating outside of the controversy sparked by *The Christian Quaker*, in the wider world of Quaker publications facilitated by the Morning Meeting.

The Bigger Picture

To step back, the Meeting and the works they recorded receiving and reviewing in their minute books show that between 1673 and 1693, a majority of 64% were accepted for publication (2% of which were reprints). Secondly, 22% of works submitted were approved for manuscript circulation, being deemed valuable for a more limited, usually Quaker-only readership. That leaves 14% of the total rejected outright for publication, or 110 out of 783 titles recorded in the meeting minute-books. Yet even these numbers are not representative of the total output of Quaker publications. Thomas O’Malley’s comparisons between the minutes from 1674 to 1688 and recent Quaker bibliographical work, including Joseph Smith’s catalogue, show that only

³⁶³ Anthony Grafton, *Worlds Made by Words: Scholarship and Community in the Modern West* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard U P, 2009) 133.

about 36.1% of total Quaker publications were reviewed by the Morning Meeting at all.³⁶⁴ Some of these books would have been reviewed but unrecorded. For example, discrepancies between meetings mentioned in George Fox's *Short Journal* and the minute-books showing that not all books reviewed were recorded.³⁶⁵ But unrecorded books couldn't account for more than 60% of published books. Rather, the Morning Meeting had enough trust in the "Gospel Order" of the wider Quaker community to leave them to publishing their own works. Most works were printed without need of the Meeting's oversight at all.

Consequently it is possible to re-interpret O'Malley's scholarship in connection with the archive of meeting minutes to make a case for the permissiveness of the Quaker publishing establishment. O'Malley identifies both pre- and post-publication censorship: works were rejected in manuscript, and Friends were occasionally disciplined for publishing against the Second Day Morning Meeting's advice (as well as the printers who published them). It was well within the scope of the Morning Meeting to come down hard on as many Quaker authors as necessary for the "service of Truth," but that occurred in a limited number of cases. Friends who published without permission were chastised: Joseph Notts "Unwisely Meddle[d] with a Controversie... wherein he ought not to have been concerned." The Meeting, which read aloud his pamphlet and the response it provoked, found Notts in

³⁶⁴ O'Malley, 'Defying the Powers and Tempering the Spirit', 83; O'Malley draws his numbers from David Runyon's Appendix of Quaker Writings by Year, part of Barbour, Hugh and Roberts, Arthur O. *Early Quaker Writings 1650-1700*, 574. These are in turn taken from Joseph Smith's *Catalogue of Friends' Books* (1867) and its *Supplement* (1887). Quaker bibliography is older than that: Smith's monumental work is an updated version of John Whiting *Catalogue of Friends Books* (London: Tace Sowle, 1708).

³⁶⁵ O'Malley, "Defying the Powers and Tempering the Spirit," 83.

the wrong and “[could not] stand by him,” but drew up a response of their own to put an end to the dispute.³⁶⁶

The three major Quaker printers, Andrew Sowle, Benjamin Clark, and John Brinhurst, were all at times reprimanded at some point by the committee for ignoring their authority, yet each published texts on behalf of the Morning Meeting even after their infringements.³⁶⁷ John Brinhurst, who printed William Rogers’ *Christian Quaker*, was reprimanded and then contracted to print counter-responses to the work. In one instance, the Morning Meeting intercepted a work that had been printed without their approval that had been printed by Benjamin Clark, “A Relation of the Warr in New-England.” It was ordered not to be circulated “but brought to John Osgoods there to lye till freinds see meet to deliver them back for waste paper” and the printer was warned to “print no bookes for the future but what are first read & approved of by this Meeting.”³⁶⁸ Aside from a minority of examples like this, the majority sets a tone of openness — and looking to the remaining set of Second Morning Meeting minutes outlines the dynamics of publication that made permissiveness possible.

Collaboration

The numbers above do not depict just how varied the pathway toward publication could be, and the number of perspectives involved in the process. The fundamental reason for this was the collaborative nature of the meeting: each work for review was read aloud to those in attendance, which was usually between six and eight individuals.

³⁶⁶ 23.viii.1693; 23.viii.1693. Second Day’s Morning Meeting Vol II 1692-1700. Society of Friends Library, London.

³⁶⁷ Andrew Sowle, who printed more Quaker books than anyone, frequently used Quaker networks to circulate political works, including those not approved of by the Meeting. O’Malley, ‘Defying the Powers and Tempering the Spirit’, 82.

³⁶⁸ 20.x.1675. Second Day’s Morning Meeting Vol I 1673-1692. Society of Friends Library, London.

Breakaway editorial groups appointed to read longer works were never allowed less than three or four attendees. For instance, William Tomlinson's work on "The Principles of the Papists" was "read out and corrected by 4 of the friends to whom it was referred and left to be printed with as much Expedition as may be and William Tomlinson to have notice to view the Corrections first."³⁶⁹ At least one collection of quires dating to the 1690s and belonging to Benjamin Lindley provides an excellent example of the highly collaborative nature behind Quaker publications, and in this case, illustrates a process that was both friendly and efficient.³⁷⁰

The first quire comprised fifteen items Lindley had copied out from different print sources, letters from William Dewsbury, Francis Henshaw, Francis Howgill, William Penn, George Fox, Isaac Pennington, a letter from the Leveller hero John Lilburne, and excerpts from William Sewell's published history. In addition, there was included one printed work, to which Lindley composed his own "postscript," beginning on the title page and written upside down on the verso of every page of the pamphlet. The postscript would form the basis for Lindley's work, showing it to be a conversation with several texts from its earliest incarnation. In the next quire, a large folio, that writing has been written in a fair hand and contains a new draft of what would be published as, *A mite cast into Truth's publick Treasury Containing a Dissertation upon outward Baptism & ye Supper*, a polemic against the celebration of the sacraments. Working from his own reading of Quaker writing, Lindley compiled the work to submit to the Second Day's Morning Meeting, and the manuscript includes marks throughout the note Meeting's reading aloud of the text: "Read thus farr" written in the margin at each stopping point. Correspondence

³⁶⁹ 28.iii.1679. Second Day's Morning Meeting Vol I 1673-1692. Society of Friends Library, London.

³⁷⁰ Benjamin Lindley MS Box Y4/1-2. Society of Friends Library, London.

surviving in the folder between Lindley and Morning Meeting member John Artis referenced multiple drafts of the work, occasionally with entire paragraphs excised: “I hope my last is got to thy hand. I must rely on thee or A[ndrew] Cla[rke] to send me this again wch he has sent a fare copy out...It may all come into a large sheet of paper.” Another quire included “Some Observations of Notes by R.C. on BL’S Manuscript of ye Sacraments (so called)” to which there is also “BL’s Reply and Concession to R.C.’s Objections” consolidated the Morning Meeting’s opinions on necessary edits. “R.C.” was not a regular member of the Morning Meeting. The work was finally published in late 1695, although this process of exchange was not documented in the Meeting Minutes.

While in Lindley’s case even great attention was given to editing short pamphlets, over time, the number of Quaker pamphlets published lessened in favour of longer works, especially collected editions of the writings of deceased Friends. For book-length works, those editorial groups were much larger. When James Claypoole’s longer collection of biographies of deceased Friends was appointed to be read, but “not so many [could] meet as was appointed,” the “intent of the meeting was frustrated” and the reading was rescheduled to accommodate “the greater part” of fourteen appointed readers.³⁷¹ There were consistent members of the Meeting (O’Malley identifies 13 of them as Quaker leaders), and a wider cast of readers who frequently attended meetings.³⁷² A further group of outsiders attended, for examples, authors who read their own works in person, or their families. For instance Thomas Briggs read his ‘testimony...& a little

³⁷¹ 16th.iv.1679; 30.iv.1679. Second Day’s Morning Meeting Vol I 1673-1692. Society of Friends Library, London.

³⁷² O’Malley, ‘Defying the Powers and Tempering the Spirit’, 85.

note of his sufferings” with his daughters present when it was “agreed to be printed.”³⁷³

The Morning Meeting also coordinated the collection of the works of Friends who had died, just as George Fox has encouraged in his epistles, for example after the death of William Dewsbury (1621-1688), an important early itinerant preacher. The Morning Meeting sent enquiries to Warwick, York, and Bristol to collect his “books and epistles”, and during the autumn of 1688 they were reviewed by two teams of 3-5 readers. By January Andrew Sowle had agreed to print them.³⁷⁴ Collecting the complete works of deceased Friends created the opportunity for loaning those documents to new readers. The Second Morning Meeting’s trust was placed in distant Quaker communities to edit works for themselves, without oversight. For instance, in 1681

Thomas Salthouse representing to this Meeting the Mind of the Quarterly Meeting in Cornwall, as desiring the perusal of the Papers, Testimonies & Epistles of & Concerning Richard Samble his Convincement Lyfe & Death, It is therefore agreed by this Meeting that the said written Papers...bee sent back & Recommended to the said Quarterly Meeting of Cornwall and alsoe to the Quarterly Meeting of Devon, for thm to peruse, or Intrust some faithful Friends in their Meetings to peruse them. And to leave out and Correct, and Amend any parts or Papers thereof, as they shall see Cause which when they have so

³⁷³ 7.vii.1685. Second Day’s Morning Meeting Vol I 1673-1692. Society of Friends Library, London.

³⁷⁴ 2.v.1688; 3. vii.1688; 12.ix.1688;26.ix.1688; 3.x.1688; 17.x.1688; 14.xi.1688/9. Second Day’s Morning Meeting Vol I 1673-1692. Society of Friends Library, London.

done they may Reterne them to this Meeting & their sence
Thereupon by some safe Hand.³⁷⁵

Although no members of the Morning Meeting were from Cornwall or Devon, authority were entrusted to members of the meetings that would have known Richard Samble personally, to edit his papers where necessary. As John Burnyeat was well known to the Morning Meeting, after his death in 1690, the Meeting spent two months separating between works to be printed (his journal and epistles, an account of his sufferings, twenty-five testimonies of friends about him, and a further two reprints), and those left to remain in manuscript (his private letters, and printed books that might stir controversies long settled).³⁷⁶

Composition and editing required collaboration between Friends for different reasons. A work rejected by the Morning Meeting offers one example: a manuscript by Thomas Wynne — the author of *The Antiquity of the Quakers Proved* — was submitted but initially rejected:

[We] read onely to the 12th page [it] being very difficult to read and to distinguish the matter by reason that it is not right English and the opposers words and the reply are not distinctly sett downe with breaches between, it is the desire of this meeting that if Ellis Hookes and James Parkes cannot correct it that Thomas Wynee have notice thereof by Letter and his book returned him from Ellis Hookes, *and that with the assistance of some friends in Weles or that way they would see it amended and better composed* and made shorter that the opposers

³⁷⁵ 6.iv.1681. Second Day's Morning Meeting Vol I 1673-1692. Society of Friends Library, London.

³⁷⁶ 9.xii.1690/1; 23.i.1691. Second Day's Morning Meeting Vol I 1673-1692. Society of Friends Library, London.

words and his replies be sett down distinct with breaches between them &c” (my emphasis).³⁷⁷

Wynne, later to emigrate from Wales with William Penn on board the first ship bound for Philadelphia, was a physician by trade and once resettled in Philadelphia served as speaker in the first two Pennsylvania Assemblies as well as justice of the peace.³⁷⁸ Both roles would have required some skill in clarity and composition. Wynne’s case opens up yet another function the Morning Meeting made possible: skills-sharing. The centrality of reading and writing to publication fostered an increase in reading and writing amongst Quakers just as they had become accustomed to organising separate Meetings for skills sharing amongst midwives, teachers, and other professions.³⁷⁹

Looking at the distribution of other Friends’ books, it is possible to see how the networks of distribution created during the 1650s were used by the Morning Meeting. Friends from across the counties where entrusted with circulating texts just as travelling Quaker preachers of the 1650s had been. For instance, a short work “signed on behalf of Friends” by George Whitehead, Edward Bourne, Thomas Lower, John Bowater, Samuel Waldenfield, John Vaughton, Benjamin Antrobus, William Ingram, Theodor Ecclestone, and William Meade” was composed in response to a text by Benjamin

³⁷⁷ 24th.i.1678/9. Second Day’s Morning Meeting Vol I 1673-1692. Society of Friends Library, London.

³⁷⁸ Geraint H Jenkins,. “From Ysgeifiog to Pennsylvania: The rise of Thomas Wynne, Quaker Barber” *Flintshire Historical Society Journal* 28 (1977-78) 39-62.

³⁷⁹ Larry Gragg had described the emergence of skills-sharing meetings amongst Quakers in Barbados in *The Quaker Community on Barbados* (Columbia MI and London, U of Missouri P, 2009) 89; on skills-sharing amongst midwives in particular see Evenden, Dorren *The Midwives of 17th Century London* (Cambridge, CUP, 200) and Marland, H. (ed.) *The Art of Midwifery: Early Modern Midwives in Europe* (London: Routledge, 1993).

Coal, Charles Harris, “and others” calling for “True Reconciliation.”³⁸⁰

The work sought to find “unity” between feuding Quakers and was printed in an edition of 1500 and after “some of the Principal Parties having had of them,” the Morning Meeting dispersed copies with Friends to the counties:

To York by William Bingley	100
To Gloucestershire and Worcestershire by John Vaughton	100
To Berkshire by John Kent	100
To Bristol and Wilts by Charles Marshall	100
To Wickham and other parts in Buckinghamshire by John Vaughton	100
To Bedfordshire by John Vaughton	50
To Westmorland by Theodore Eccleston	50
To Warwickshire by Patrick Livingston	50
To Hartfordshire by Thomas Burr	100
To Devonshire and Cornwall by Thomas Lower	20
London and Hammersmith	500
For John Hadon	50
John Kent	50
William Bingley	30
Pat. Livingston	10 ³⁸¹

Richard Vann’s scholarship demonstrates that this distribution was easily facilitated due to the fact that many Friends were in professions that required business travel.³⁸² From writing and editing, to

³⁸⁰ Whitehead, G. et al. *The Late Expedients for a True Reconciliation Among the People of God Called Quakers Proposed by Benjamin Coal, Charles Harries, and Others, for a True Reconciliation, &c. Tenderly Considered* (London, n.p, 1693)

³⁸¹ 26.iv.1693. Second Day’s Morning Meeting Vol II 1692-1700. Society of Friends Library, London.

³⁸² O’Malley, “Defying the Powers and Tempering the Spirit,” 81; Vann, Richard, *The Social Development of English Quakerism 1655-1761* (Harvard UP, 1969).

printing and dispatching, and finally to writing again in response to printed works, Quaker publication practices relied on an active community of readers from beginning to end. Since so many could be involved in the process, the Morning Meeting remained a hive of activity, where submitted manuscripts were subject to a range of readings, re-readings, and forms of circulation in manuscript and print. From the collaborative composition of prison testimonies beginning in the 1660s, to this example, it is clear that the Morning Meeting could facilitate large-scale communications just the way William Rogers had expected of them in his *Christian-Quaker*. No wonder William Rogers was so enraged at the Meeting's refusal to do so with his own manuscripts.

Acceptance and Rejection

Works reviewed by the Morning Meeting were not often published without edits, as Benjamin Lindley's manuscripts attested to, and even George Fox's writing was not immune. A paper in June 1677 was "ordered to be laid by till G.F. be spoken with about it."³⁸³ The same was true for other leaders such as Isaac Pennington, whose book, *The Soul's Food*, included a chapter "concerning the souls food" that was "not Judged meet to be printed."³⁸⁴ John Dobb's "Friends Caution to the People of England" was "thought not fitt to be printed as it is in verse But if the matter continue with him to let it be done in prose."³⁸⁵

Edits required the approval of the author, evidenced by the multiple copies of drafts of Lindley's pamphlet, but also for example when

³⁸³ 9th.iv.1677. Second Day's Morning Meeting Vol I 1673-1692. Society of Friends Library, London.

³⁸⁴ 4th.viii.1680. Second Day's Morning Meeting Vol I 1673-1692. Society of Friends Library, London.

³⁸⁵ 19th.xi.1690/1. Second Day's Morning Meeting Vol I 1673-1692. Society of Friends Library, London.

Ambrose Rigg's book was read aloud to the meeting. "It is the advice of this Meeting that when he comes to the City it be read over again in his presence & the Citations which are most pertinent and proper to the title be printed & the rest left out." Two months later he was given clearance to "publish in print."³⁸⁶ Stop-press corrections were occasionally used to keep the flow of printing consistent but allow for authorial input across the editing process:

George Miers book read through, and to be printed by Andrew Sowle till paragraff 7th, page 16 & there to stop till Richard Richardson receive answer from the Author whether a paragraph there scored in the margent may with his consent be left out.³⁸⁷

Length was an important factor, although there was no average time it took to read and edit works. For instance, *The Exalted Diatrophe reprehended* took four meetings, and at the end of each the completed part was "delivered to John Bringhurst for the Presse," the same man who had been forgiven for printing William Rogers's *Christian-Quaker* only a few months earlier.³⁸⁸ The Meeting also reviewed works for reprinting: for instance a *Testimony of Friends Against Fighting* (1660) was reprinted in 1684, and Steven Crisp's *Epistle to Friends Concerning the Present & Succeeding Times* (1666), was reprinted in 1679, in 1683 with a postscript, and again in 1688.

Printing for circulation only among Friends was another important task, for instance the Morning Meeting paid Andrew Sowle "forty Shillings" to publish "Eleven Hundred Yearly Meeting Papers," that is,

³⁸⁶ 6th.xi.1677/8;12.i.1679. Second Day's Morning Meeting Vol I 1673-1692. Society of Friends Library, London.

³⁸⁷ 25.v.1686. Second Day's Morning Meeting Vol I 1673-1692. Society of Friends Library, London.

³⁸⁸ 26.vii.1681; 3.viii.1681; 17.viii.1681; 24.viii.1681. Second Day's Morning Meeting Vol I 1673-1692. Society of Friends Library, London.

an epistle written in advance of the London Yearly Meeting to be circulated afterward. The Morning Meeting added somewhat begrudgingly that

[I]t is the Sense of the Meeting that he prints no More Books or Papers that this Meeting is to pay for, without an Agreement with the Friend or Friends, That deliver the Coppie... Note that the Reason of this Minute is because that when Friends have come to pay him, for some things he printed, he hath demanded more than they could have it done for, And therefore do direct that Agreement be made with him first.³⁸⁹

It is difficult to establish exactly what was paid for each job, but as they are represented in the minute-books, Andrew and his daughter Tace Sowle were often in attendance to secure overdue payments.³⁹⁰ This practical element of the high cost of publication, some of which would have been freely distributed, was another important reason behind the Morning Meeting's rejection of manuscripts. They simply could not afford to print everything.

The Meeting, which drew from a "Common Fund" to pay for publications, did not take up the expense of printing where books already in circulation fit the purpose. For this reason they did not reprint George Keith's *Catechism*, which had been printed in Philadelphia. To clear controversy in Barbados, rather than spend time and money printing responses sent to them by Barbadian Quakers, the Meeting sent extant books "for the clearing of Truth".³⁹¹

³⁸⁹ 5.viii.1689. Second Day's Morning Meeting Vol I 1673-1692. Society of Friends Library, London.

³⁹⁰ 12.ii.1691; Second Day's Morning Meeting Vol I 1673-1692. Society of Friends Library, London.

³⁹¹ 28.vii.1691; 6.v.1691. Second Day's Morning Meeting Vol I 1673-1692. Society of Friends Library, London.

In addition, manuscripts submitted to the Morning Meeting were treated differently based on the results they were intended to achieve. Manuscript copies were circulated where the expense of printing was not judged necessary. Submissions to the Morning Meeting could be considered “serviceable” to be “spread & read amongst freinds in Manuscript,” such as Thomas Taylor’s epistle, *A Loveing Seasonable Advice to the Children of the Light*.³⁹² Copies of those manuscripts were typically held by Ellis Hookes for Friends to consult, and borrow, but sometimes authors were encouraged to copy and send their own manuscript copies “abroad...where he seeth Meet.”³⁹³ In other instances, authors were encouraged to circulate their writings only among their own local Meeting.³⁹⁴

There was a calculated lapse between publication and wider circulation of works addressed to the King or Parliament: “that none be published untill some daies after they are delivered to them they are directed to,” and “first delivered before cryed about the Citty”.³⁹⁵ This tactic was used elsewhere. Robert Ford’s address to magistrates at Exeter in 1684 was delivered in manuscript copies before being sent to press “it being the usual way of friends to avoid provocations.” Three months later, “the said friends, as ordered by the meeting [to] read Robert Ford’s paper...think the service of it may be done & so none in printing it.”³⁹⁶ When Quakers in Maryland proposed to print a

³⁹² 30th.ix.1674. Second Day’s Morning Meeting Vol I 1673-1692. Society of Friends Library, London.

³⁹³ As with John Wilsford, 16th.ii.1677. Second Day’s Morning Meeting Vol I 1673-1692. Society of Friends Library, London.

³⁹⁴ 28th.iv.1675. Second Day’s Morning Meeting Vol I 1673-1692. Society of Friends Library, London.

³⁹⁵ 26th.ii.1675. Second Day’s Morning Meeting Vol I 1673-1692. Society of Friends Library, London.

³⁹⁶ 29.vii.1684; 1.x.1684. Second Day’s Morning Meeting Vol I 1673-1692. Society of Friends Library, London.

book describing court proceedings against them for refusing to swear an oath, the Meeting wrote to them to ask if they had been fined or had suffered any persecution. Publication was contingent upon the response: if they had not, then the work should not be printed “because it may give occasion [sic] to the Rulers” of the colony to further pursue the matter. “However,” the minute continued, “the Testimony against swearing & the advice in it may be printed if friends desire,” since it addressed an important part of Quaker belief in general but did not incite individuals with the power to fine or imprison Quakers.³⁹⁷

Partial rejection of works was most often a resort of the Morning Meeting in order to keep Quakers out of prison, or free from controversy with other sects. But works were rejected carefully, read and re-read before Morning Meeting members arrived at such a result. George Whitehead, James Park, Thomas Robertson, and Benjamin Antrobus were appointed to re-read a rejected paper by Samuel Watson “& see if they can so amend it, as that it may be clear & safe to print it, & to give [Watson] an account thereof, For it being now read a 2d time in the meeting, The meeting is still dissatisfyed with it as before.” After two more meetings, the author agreed to the edits and the work was given to Andrew Sowle and Richard Richardson “to correct the copy” and print.³⁹⁸ Richard Vickris’s work was reviewed by three Meeting members who advised against its printing, since the author had just been arrested. They worried “the publication of this Booke would tend to frustrate & strengthen their bonds” early in his imprisonment. “But if they remaine prisoners then that it be left to

³⁹⁷ 15.xii.1674. Second Day’s Morning Meeting Vol I 1673-1692. Society of Friends Library, London.

³⁹⁸ 28.ix.1685; 30.ix.1685; 14.x.1685. Second Day’s Morning Meeting Vol I 1673-1692. Society of Friends Library, London.

them to consider whether it will lay upon them to publish this book or no.”³⁹⁹

Sometimes works were rejected because the controversies they engaged with had long past. Works that stirred controversy with other religious groups were rejected, or printing them was postponed in order to gather multiple perspectives:

Upon Reading John Grattons answer to John Cheney preist his pamphlet [*The Shibboleth of Quakerism*, 1676] against thee & thou, it was agreed that the said book be not published, because it's so long since the Preists sheet came forth, & that it was little regarded as also because its reported that the Preist intends to publish more pamphletts and then this about thee & thou amongst the rest may be answered in one book.⁴⁰⁰

Likewise a manuscript entitled “The Baptist Leaders threasht” was not found “convenient to print,” although the Meeting encouraged the author Steven Smith to “write an Epistle to those four Baptists mentioned, conteyning any of those threshing reproofs in the book, *without* such as discusses the doctrines.” Works engaging with Baptists were rejected to avoid “childish contentions” that would cause “troubles to friends, both those concerned in the disputes, & these old controversyes...[and] new disputes.”⁴⁰¹ Works that might provoke internal dispute between Friends were likewise passed over. For example, even two decades after the trial of James Nayler the Meeting would not print important titles among his printed works before he

³⁹⁹ 26.xi.1680/1. Second Day's Morning Meeting Vol I 1673-1692. Society of Friends Library, London.

⁴⁰⁰ 11th.x.1676. Second Day's Morning Meeting Vol I 1673-1692. Society of Friends Library, London.

⁴⁰¹ 8.xi.1682/3. Second Day's Morning Meeting Vol I 1673-1692. Society of Friends Library, London.

had fallen out with George Fox. Only in 1698 were they finally reissued at the request of the Yorkshire meeting.⁴⁰²

These instances bring up a contradiction in Quaker attitudes toward tolerance. On the one hand, they censured individual members' opinions, on the other, they did so to avoid dispute with others, in acknowledgement of their liberty to subscribe to different beliefs. But Friends did use the preserved anti-Quaker books in order to more easily coordinate defensive publishing. Printed responses were once again not always considered the best means of conflict resolution:

Upon the Consideration of the two late scandalous Pamphletts one entituled a Monstrous Eateing Quaker, & the other a Quaker turned Jew, It is desired that the Mens Meeting would appoint and nominate 2 or 3 of the men friends to assist Ellis Hookes to enquire out the Author and printer thereof & endeavour the most effectual way they shall Judge meet to putt a Stopp to such gross scandalous Pamphlets whereby friends & Truth are abused.⁴⁰³

In the end, Hookes himself authored a succinct broadside that answered these two pamphlets and one other at once: *The Quakers Acquitted from the Foul Aspersion of the Scandalous Libeller: Being a Detection of Three Most Abusive and Sordid Pamphlets, Entituled: I. The Monstrous Eating Quaker. II. The Quaker Turned Jew. III. The Quaker and His Maid. Which are Confuted by Plain Evidence to Undeceive the Ignorant, Clear the Truth and Stop Debauchery* (1675).

Disputes were managed as locally as possible. A short paper defending the Quakers by Alexander Lawrence was "read and agreed to be

⁴⁰² 25.iv.1677. Second Day's Morning Meeting Vol I 1673-1692. Society of Friends Library, London.; Braithwaite, *Second Period of Quakerism*, 419.

⁴⁰³ 10.iii.1675. Second Day's Morning Meeting Vol I 1673-1692. Society of Friends Library, London.

Printed 500 & no more and that 500 to be sent into Cheshier.”⁴⁰⁴ Shorter works that responded to a particular pamphlet could be bundled together, as with a collection of responses by Frances Eastlake and George Fox to Samson Bond.⁴⁰⁵ Only in extreme cases were disagreements taken to a larger scale — and the largest of them after the foundation of the Morning Meeting was not with outsiders so much as former Quakers. Humphrey Woolrich wrote “a paper against Several Friends of this meeting, and expos[ed] it up and down without speaking to them, according to Gospel order.” The Morning Meeting could not persuade Woolrich to meet in person, to “condemn” his “Irregular practice,” and eventually resorted to print to answer his criticisms, collectively composed by George Whitehead, John Vaughton, William Bingley, and John Field.⁴⁰⁶ This was also the case, for William Rogers, others involved in the Story-Wilkinson affair in Bristol, with Francis Bugg in London, and George Keith in Pennsylvania. Sometimes leaders disapproved of the uses other Quakers put to print, and sometimes Quakers used print to criticise their own as with Woolrich or Rogers, but the majority of the time the system worked to the advantage of the collective.

Quaker History and Quaker Readers

The Second Day’s Morning Meeting facilitated the use of Quaker records to begin to publish works reflecting upon Quaker history. These publications were not comparable to the urgency with which Quakers had once created records for print depicting their persecution in pamphlets and petitions, so much as a matter of compiling book-length monuments to their own history addressed to both

⁴⁰⁴ 11.ix.1678. Second Day’s Morning Meeting Vol I 1673-1692. Society of Friends Library, London.

⁴⁰⁵ 30.v.1683. Second Day’s Morning Meeting Vol I 1673-1692. Society of Friends Library, London.

⁴⁰⁶ 31.vi.1691; 7.vii.1691; 14.vii.1691; 9.ix.1691. Second Day’s Morning Meeting Vol I 1673-1692. Society of Friends Library, London.

Quaker and non-Quaker audiences. A crucial text, both in the example set through its compilation and publication, and in the example described in its content, was George Fox's *Journal*. Published posthumously in 1694, the *The Journal of George Fox* was the result of decades of collaboration: Fox dictated a shorter form of the work in 1664, describing his birth and the first years of his ministry beginning in 1648, and added to the manuscript again sometime in between 1675 and 1677 when he was imprisoned in Worcester jail with Thomas Lower, his son-in-law and amanuensis.⁴⁰⁷ After his death in 1691, his papers were consulted by Thomas Ellwood and combined with letters to round out his life story.⁴⁰⁸ In its content, the *Journal* offered a look back upon the growth of Quakerism, and established George Fox as its undisputed leader, and consequently, as the exemplary Quaker reader. In its publication history, the 1694 publication exemplified Quaker methods of collaborative writing, editing, and circulation that had been initiated in the 1650s and refined over the decades. Furthermore, its language removed Fox somewhat from the language and context of his early preaching in order to repackage his example for a new generation of Quakers explored in my next chapter.

Quaker reading began in the *Journal* with the example set by George Fox, his response to reading the bible, the place the bible held within Quaker spirituality, and finally, its shaping of the Quaker attitude to textual production as a devotional act more generally. Fox's emphasis upon the bible in his *Journal*, described reading scripture as secondary to spiritual experience at the early stages of his ministry in 1648 and provides in miniature a portrait of reading as it intermingled with Quaker spirituality:

⁴⁰⁷ Thomas N. Corns, "'No Man's Copy': The Critical Problem of Fox's *Journal*," *The Emergence of Quaker Writing*, 103.

⁴⁰⁸ Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism*, 14.

Now the Lord God opened to me by His invisible power that every man was enlightened by the divine Light of Christ, and I saw it shine through all [...] This I saw in the pure openings of the Light without the help of any man; neither did I then know where to find it in the Scriptures; though afterwards, searching the Scriptures, I found it. For I saw, in that Light and Spirit which was before the Scriptures were given forth, and which led the holy men of God to give them forth, that all, if they would know God or Christ, or the Scriptures aright, must come to that Spirit by which they that gave them forth were led and taught.⁴⁰⁹

Spiritual awakening here amounts to a kind of awakening about how texts are made. The insight to be gained from reading the scriptures followed from the “divine Light of Christ”, yet at the same time “searching the Scriptures” created and closed a feedback loop with which to validate the authenticity of spiritual experience. In *Prophecy and Reason*, Andrew Fix has shown how the metaphor of the light was central from Biblical times, throughout the Middle Ages, and even to the religious wars that erupted beginning in the Renaissance.⁴¹⁰ This emphasis within Fox’s *Journal* was used by Quakers in the coming decades to align their movement’s history with those of continental radicals.

Nevertheless, the *Journal* renewed its spiritual—as opposed to secular—commitments, describing Fox’s compulsion as a reader of the bible to take arms in the battle between light and darkness. Yet the bible was a means, a tool, rather than an end, a subject that had been redefined with greater rigour by Robert Barclay:

⁴⁰⁹ George Fox, *The Journal of George Fox*, Rufus Jones, ed. (Richmond, Indiana: Friends United Press, 1976) 46-7.

⁴¹⁰ Andrew Fix, *Prophecy and Reason: The Dutch Collegiants in the Early Enlightenment* (Princeton: Princeton U P, 1991) 184.

I was sent to turn people from darkness to the Light, that they might receive Christ Jesus; for to as many as should receive Him in His Light, I saw He would give power to become the sons of God; which power I had obtained by receiving Christ. I was to direct people to the Spirit that gave forth the Scriptures, by which they might be led into all truth, and up to Christ and God, as those had been who gave them forth.

Yet I had no slight esteem of the holy Scriptures. They were very precious to me; for I was in that Spirit by which they were given forth; and what the Lord opened in me I afterwards found was agreeable to them. I could speak much of these things, and many volumes might be written upon them; but all would prove too short to set forth the infinite love, wisdom, and power of God, in preparing, fitting, and furnishing me for the service to which He had appointed me; letting me see the depths of Satan on the one hand, and opening to me, on the other hand, the divine mysteries of His own everlasting kingdom.⁴¹¹

The tension between letter and spirit would remain fundamental to Quaker spirituality and to the intention behind Quaker reading practices. As Fox noted, “many volumes might be written” about the experience of living the text of the bible.

Yet in stark contrast to Fox’s early pamphlets, the *Journal* suppressed “violent millenarian language,” all instances in which Fox called himself the “Son of God,” and several descriptions of blasphemy trials.⁴¹² The work involved in reshaping Fox’s writing, and the prominence of his leadership when in fact the early years of Quakerism were marked by the influences of many others, which was highly collabo-

⁴¹¹ Fox, *The Journal*, 47.

⁴¹² Corns, “No Man’s Copy”, 105; Bailey, *New Light on George Fox*, 76.

native in the lead-up to publication.⁴¹³ William Penn, another member of the Morning Meeting and an influential Quaker leader discussed in my next chapter, wrote the introduction to the *Journal*, which repackaged Fox's style—"uncouth and unfashionable...nevertheless very profound" and imitated by countless other Quakers—for the growing fashion in polite letters.⁴¹⁴ Yet after publication, this monument to a Quaker leader and epitome of his spiritual belief required further emendation.

In the five years after the death of Fox in the beginning of 1691, Friends all over England had been allowed access to his letters, notebooks, and other manuscripts, brokered through Ellwood, Penn, and the rest of the Second Day's Morning Meeting. The meeting minutes during this time describe, week by week, a kind of pilgrimage to the archive from Quaker membership spread far and wide. After this mass re-visitation of Fox's books and manuscripts culminated in the publication *Journal* in 1694, post-publication revision was made possible through the highly engaged community of Quaker readers. In August 1694, a section from Fox's newly published *Journal* was identified as inaccurate by Quaker readers in Derbyshire:

A Letter dated the 18th 6 mo [August] 1694 from Severall Friends in Darbyshire Signifying they think the Relation in George Fox's Journal folio 309 should be left out, for they suspect the verity of part of the Relation, and Requests it may be left out.

This meeting desires that none of George Fox's Journalls be Exposed Untill farther Direction from them touching this matter - And that Thomas Lower Signifyes that to the sellers of them.

⁴¹³ Bailey, *New Light on George Fox*, 22.

⁴¹⁴ N. H. Keeble, "The Politic and the Polite in Quaker Prose: The Case of William Penn," *The Emergence of Quaker Writing*, 113.

And this Meeting Adjourns untill to Morrow at the 5th hour at this place to further consider what is necessary to be done in Relation to Corrections or leaving out the Passage, and to write into the Counties about it as they then shall Judge most meet.⁴¹⁵

The Meeting moved quickly on the letter from Derbyshire which pointed out that inaccuracy in the *Journal* concerning Fox and a woman he supposedly converted to Quakerism.

First, they appointed a group of 5 to re-read Fox's epistles, "both printed and written, and proceeded with the printed first" to fact-check the *Journal*. A week later the issue was referred to a larger group of eleven, nine of whom actually met, and agreed "that there is some doubt" whether or not the conversion story was "all true or in every part." On the basis of that doubt, they agreed:

1st That that sheet be Reprinted and that passage left out which is Questioned.

2dly That notice may be given thereof until the severall Countyes of England and Wales, and Advice that none of the books already printed be Exposed untill the said sheet of Correction be put in and the other taken out.

3 That the Printer or book seller be Advised to sell no more books till so Corrected.

4 That John Field prepare a letter to be forthwith sent to Advise the Countyes and Benjamin Bealing to send them with the Advice of the Printers to the places where the books are sent that they may not be Exposed till Corrected.

5 That a Coppy of this be sent to William Mead that he may know it's the Friends Request that he would be pleased to Write to the printer to have that sheet reprinted with that Pas-

⁴¹⁵ 27.vi.1694. Second Day's Morning Meeting Minutes, 1692-1700. Library of the Society of Friends, London.

sage left out and direct the printer to send to such that books have been sent unto to send up their books to be changed which will prevent their knowing what the Passage is or to send a sheet to those places or persons that Books have been given or sent to.

6 That Endeavours be Used that if the Journall is either in Oxford or Cambridge &c that they be changed by Thomas Northcott, and that Notice be given if any that have one already printed, it may be changed by Thomas Northcott.⁴¹⁶

William Meade, who had been responsible for providing the Meeting with a fair copy of the *Journal* manuscript, and who had also negotiated terms with the printer, reported back to the Meeting that they were nevertheless responsible for the error, as “he printd the Journal by [their] Direction, [and] he doth not look upon it his duty to doe anything more in it.” In light of Meade’s lack of cooperation, the Meeting decided that

Leaf 309;310 be reprinted, with those Lines and Words left out which are underscored, and then the said new printed leaves sent down to every Country to a Couple of discreet Faithfull Friends, to take out the old Leaves and put in the New as carefully and Neatly as they can...⁴¹⁷

The networks Quakers had built for their books were efficient enough to implement a country-wide expurgation, prompting by external readers but facilitated by the Morning Meeting. Such quick implementation of these edits in 1694 was the work of decades of development among Quaker readers, the kind of efforts only made possible through a well-practised culture of collaboration.

⁴¹⁶ 5.vii.1694. Second Day’s Morning Meeting Minutes, 1692-1700. Library of the Society of Friends, London.

⁴¹⁷ 24.vii.1694. Second Day’s Morning Meeting Minutes, 1692 - 1700. Library of the Society of Friends, London.

Dissenting Communities

The Second Day's Morning Meeting was unique in the details they preserved within their minute-books, but there was a wider culture of collaboration to be found in England in the second half of the 17th century. The collaboration within the Morning Meeting, and engendered by them in other parts of England, formalised a patchwork of petitioning methods, censorship methods, and religious devotional practices into a working circuit of pre-publication reading, writing, and editing. Even letters of rejection issued by the Meeting read like petitions to the author against publication, as all present at the reading of the rejected work typically signed their name.⁴¹⁸

At the same time that Quakers petitioned the King and Parliament in broadsides, pamphlets and book-length works, they taught their multiple signatories to become authors, they contributed to widening Jason Peacey's concept of "political history of the book".⁴¹⁹ The Levellers in particular relied upon "collective organisation, actions, and leadership" in John Rees' words to petition, print pamphlets, paste papers "upon severall Gates and Posts throughout [London], inciting the People to rise up as one Man."⁴²⁰ The early Quaker membership, drawn from a range of religious confessions, and the "multiple, if not shifting, affiliations" between Quakers, Baptists, and Independent congregations allowed for a cross-pollination of ideas as well as printing habits, what Elizabeth Sauer has described as a "protean

⁴¹⁸ "At a Meeting at Rebecca Travers the 2st 7 mo 1674 Upon reading of an Epistle of Ralph Fretwills it was agreed upon that a letter be writ to him and subscribed by Friends of this meeting giving their reasons why it will not be of service to the Truth to print it a Copy", signed by 8 Friends, and to Judith Boulby whose prophetic style of writing was "not fitt...in this time of peace and quietness" in 1690, also signed by 8 Friends. 18th.iv.1690. Second Day's Morning Meeting Vol I 1673-1692. Society of Friends Library, London.

⁴¹⁹ Peacey, *Print and Public Politics*, 403.

⁴²⁰ Rees, *The Leveller Revolution*, 59, 65.

nature of Puritanism” characterising the culture of print in late seventeenth-century England.⁴²¹

The collaborative efforts of the Morning Meeting resembled that of other religious nonconformists in a slightly later period. For example, Tessa Whitehouse has shown the emergence of a tradition of collaborative writing, editing, and publishing in print and manuscript among ministers of the dissenting academies of the eighteenth century. Her emphasis upon friendship, kinship, and student-teacher relationships, and polite epistolary exchange in the circles of the dissenting ministers Philip Doddridge and Isaac Watts, suggests a parallel world of textual production to the Quakers.⁴²² Similarly, Jordan Landes has shown how communication between Friends was centrally administered by Quaker leadership in London, who actively “maintain[ed] networks for the distribution of news, faith, and ideas,” based on kinships and friendships.⁴²³ Dissenting ministers relied upon epistolary culture and an “intensity of collaboration...reflective of...dissenters’ high regard for collective, cumulative intellectual endeavours.”⁴²⁴ Doddridge’s circulation of works in manuscript, edited and added to by friends, colleagues, and students, does resemble that of Benjamin Lindley’s as corrected and edited by members of the Morning Meeting.

At the same time, dissenting ministers had enjoyed a common experience not true for the members of the Morning Meeting and the pool of authors it saw to print. In 1662, when fellows of Oxford and Cam-

⁴²¹ Sauer, “*Paper Contestations*”, 100.

⁴²² Tessa Whitehouse, *The Textual Culture of English Protestant Dissent 1720-1800* (Oxford: OUP, 2015) 8, 54.

⁴²³ Jordan Landes, *London Quakers in the Trans-Atlantic World: The Creation of an Early Modern Community* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015) 8.

⁴²⁴ Whitehouse, *Textual Culture*, 26, 35.

bridge who refused to accept the terms of the Restoration religious settlement lost their fellowships, they began to establish their own institutions of education.⁴²⁵ Ministers at the academies applied the rigour of their training at the universities to the creation of a theological curriculum that was lacking at those former institutions.⁴²⁶ The Quaker system, on the other hand, had grown organically over the course of the movement's growth and survival, and while many of its aims to print and preserve history were the same as Doddridge's circle, there was not the educational infrastructure to ensure a common background for those involved. The same elements behind the publications of well-educated dissenting ministers, and more generally, among humanists, elements of collaboration and correction, were critical to the ways in which communities collaborated and exchanged ideas outside of institutions of humane learning, and Latinate culture.⁴²⁷

But above all, censorship and fiery controversy has become the calling card of the Morning Meeting because the system that Quaker habits most closely resembled was that of licensing. Based on their early experiences publishing, there is no doubt Quakers incorporated what they knew all too well about harsh censorship into their own printing practices as they refined them over the years. Licensing required cooperation in order to work, between authors, printers, publishers, and government-appointed licensers, be they the Archbishop of London or Sir Roger L'Estrange, and the line between censorship and consensus remained very finely drawn. An instance of discontent between the Meeting and their printers, and amongst the printers

⁴²⁵ Whitehouse, *Textual Culture*, 14.

⁴²⁶ Whitehouse, *Textual Culture*, 18.

⁴²⁷ Peter Burke, *Languages and Communities in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: C U P, 2004) 54; Anthony Grafton, *The Culture of Correction in Early Modern Europe* (London: The British Library, 2011) 2, 211.

(“by reason of one reprinting another’s copy”), led to a clarification of ownership and production in 1683 that paints a picture similar to that of licensing:

[F]or the future every Printer employed by friends, have the sole property & possession of his own Copy that’s delivered to him, by this meeting or the order thereof; or by the Author of the same copy. And that no other Printer or Bookseller employed by friends shall reprint the same; or dispose of it, without the consent & agreement of the Printer, to whom it is given or delivered, as aforesaid.

And this agreeable to the advice of the meeting for sufferings of 11 of 12 month 1680. For the Printers imparting their Books one to another, as they can agree. And also to an agreement of this meeting of 23 6 months 1680 For the Author’s having power to dispose of his copy to the printer. And for, no old Book to be, reprinted but by approbation of this meeting. And for this meeting’s disposing thereof to the Printer in case the Author is deceased, or give no order therein.[...]

And that all books that are reprinted, have the date of their first edition inserted. And that no book be reprinted, without the consent of the Author, if living; & approbation of this meeting.⁴²⁸

Here the Meeting combined the role of licenser, reading manuscripts to approve for publication, with that of the Stationer’s Company, keeping a copy and record of the authors and printers who own each printed work, and to that extent resembled a licensing body.

More fundamental to the collaboration inherent in licensing texts was the grounding of co-authorship in religious devotion. For this reason I would highlight the activities of the Morning Meeting and the commu-

⁴²⁸ 29.xi.1682/3. Second Day’s Morning Meeting Vol I 1673-1692. Society of Friends Library, London.

nity of readers and writers it facilitated as similar to the textual production exemplified by the Gospel Harmonies produced as Little Gidding in the 1630s and -40s. The Harmonies were produced by a community of Anglican lay women under the guidance of Nicholas Ferrar, literally through cutting up copies of the four Gospels into their basic words and phrases, and reassembling them into a single coherent narrative, with illustrations cut and pasted from various other texts.⁴²⁹

The Little Gidding Harmonies were vivid materialisations of a publication culture that always relied on hybrid materials, no matter how visible they were. And all textual production was a matter of communal cutting and pasting, acceptance and rejection, no matter the traces that remain.⁴³⁰ The Little Gidding Harmonies fall on one end of the same spectrum of practice as *sammelbands* of pamphlets containing both sides of Quaker controversies. Through an exercise of communal devotion, the women of Little Gidding multiplied and harmonised the personal tastes of several readers to one unique material expression.⁴³¹ They are as much evidence of the act of reading communally, and of censorship, as just about any Quaker pamphlet issued through the Morning Meeting. Quakers' devotional and social reliance upon print networks to preserve their identity eventually fostered a system wherein that identity could be contested by its own membership. Brian Stock's notion of "textual communities" of medieval heretics extends to the Quakers, who show by example that

⁴²⁹ Sherman, *Used Books*, 103-4.

⁴³⁰ Jeffrey Todd Knight, *Bound to Read: Compilations, Collections, and the Making of Renaissance Literature* (Philadelphia, UPenn Press, 2013).

⁴³¹ Whitney Trettien has recently digitised Harvard's copy of the Harmonies in tandem with her PhD dissertation on cut-and-paste methods as a form of female authorship. She has provided an excellent overview of their context and contents here: <http://blog.whitneyannetrettien.com/2013/03/faqs-on-little-gidding-harmonies.html>.

once an environment of dissent has been created, it almost inevitably turned to internal criticism.

A controversy on a scale that nearly split the sect down the middle arose when George Keith broke with the religion he had adhered to for nearly twenty years. The main argument of the Keithian controversy, stemming from an attempt to pin down Quakerism to an agreed upon doctrine, and questioning the way in which Quaker leaders set standards for membership, recurred throughout the 18th century, culminating in the 19th with the Hicksite schism. The regularity of debate amongst Quakers supports Jon Mee's description of "Conversable Worlds" of Enlightenment London — marked by "the emergence of [a] conversational paradigm" of public debate in print that was as much about "collision" as "communion."⁴³² Yet at the same time, the exuberance of their arguments, which was not always "polite" nor "conversational" so much as argument, maintained something of the vim and vigour of early Quaker pamphlets.

While moments of consensus, which were the majority, allow us to track the emergence of a period of "Quietism" within Quakerism, the terms in which debates and controversies were argued preserved much of the language of fire and brimstone, apocalypse and plague, characteristic of the Commonwealth period. Christopher Hill has noted the "natural tendency...to read backwards" when writing the history of Quakers, to take for granted the image of the "sober, grey-clad, moderate, industrious" Quakers that are familiar to us from the eighteenth century.⁴³³ Quakers themselves, particularly the Second Day's Morning Meeting, taught future readers to read backwards just as

⁴³² Mee, John, *Conversable Worlds: Literature, Contention and Community 1762-1830* (Oxford: OUP, 2011) 26, 32.

⁴³³ Hill, Christopher "Introduction" to Reay, *The Quakers and the English Revolution*, 1.

Christopher Hill has argued, through their control of press output. As Pink Dandelion writes, “Read Fox’s *Journal*” — published in 1694 from the collaborative efforts of Quakers across the country — “and you could be forgiven for thinking that there had been no Civil War.”⁴³⁴ On the other hand, read Caleb Pusey’s *Satan’s Harbinger Encountered* (1700) or *The Bomb Searched and found Stuff’d with false Ingredients* (1705) against George Keith and Daniel Leeds in Pennsylvania, and you could be forgiven for thinking the Civil War had never ended.

The rigorous editorial process formalised in the Morning Meeting shaped the Quaker image and the history that could be written of the movement. Early Quaker historiography was made possible by the Morning Meeting through its preservation of the archives and publications of early leaders, and its collection of anti-Quaker materials. Collection always coincided with acts of revision, just as in the case of the near-erasure of James Nayler from Quaker history, the collective affirmations of the “Peace Testimony,” the compilations of “Sufferings” used to lobby Parliament on behalf of Quakers in England and abroad. Toward the close of the century, the Morning Meeting turned its attention toward consolidating these materials in the first full-scale “History of the Quakers” in English, Latin and German, as well as a two part collection of “Dying Sayings of many of the People Called Quakers” that would expand to six parts and a Latin transla-

⁴³⁴ Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism*, 4-6.

tion by the 1730s.⁴³⁵ It is fortunate that, in keeping excellent records, and failing to silence the upstarts in the community, they preserved the raw materials to reconstruct a counter-history to every story.

⁴³⁵ Gerardus Croese, *The general history of the Quakers: containing the lives, tenents, sufferings, tryals, speeches, and letters of the most eminent Quakers, both men and women; from the first rise of that sect, down to this present time. Collected from manuscripts, &c. A work never attempted before in English.* (London: for John Dunton, 1696). John Tomkins, *Piety promoted, in a collection of the dying sayings of many of the people call'd Quakers. With a brief account of some of their labours in the gospel, and sufferings for the same.* (London: printed and sold by T. Sowle, 1701); John Tomkins, *Piety promoted, the second part.* (London: T. Sowle, 1702); John Field and John Tomkins, *Pietas promotata...* (London: assignatos J. Sowle [Tace Sowle], 1737).

Expanding Light: London, Amsterdam, Philadelphia

In the 1678 English translation of his *Apology for True Christian Divinity*, Robert Barclay outlined core Quaker beliefs in a series of propositions, and described the importance of the inner light for a new generation:

For as God gave two great Lights to rule the outward World, the Sun and Moon, the greater Light to rule the Day and the lesser Light to rule the Night; so hath He given man the Light of his Son a Spiritual Divine Light, to rule him in the things Spiritual; and the light of Reason, to rule him in things Natural. And even as the Moon borrows her Light from the Sun, so ought Men, if they would be rightly and comfortably ordered in natural things, to have their Reason enlightened by this Divine and pure Light.⁴³⁶

The assertion of sun over moon, divine over earthly, and spirit over reason, grounded in a natural understanding of light, sits uneasily beside dominant concepts of enlightenment and of reason that have been used to characterise the period. Barclay stressed the spiritual and universal nature of the “pure Light,” from the beginning of the text. His fifth and sixth propositions were drawn from the gospel of John in particular. Such language echoed Quakers from George Fox in the 1650s to William Shewen a few years prior, who wrote in a pamphlet to the Baptist minister Jeremiah Ives that “We do not over-strain the Words of John’s Testimony in the first Chapter and

⁴³⁶ Robert Barclay, *An Apology for the true Christian divinity...*(Aberdeen: [n. pb.], 1678), 93.

9th Verse, when we say, write, print, and preach, *Lighten, Enlighten, enlighteneth, or Giveth Light to every man coming into the World.*⁴³⁷

In my last chapter I established the basis by which Friends used publication practices as points of both convergence and divergence, community and disunity, but above all, I showed how the Second Day's Morning Meeting facilitated exchange between a central body of Quaker leaders, and Quaker meetings on the margins. The ability to communicate between such groups was built in to the record-keeping habits developed and described over my last three chapters, showing how London meetings acted as administrative hubs for Quaker affairs and debates, even to the extent of being challenged by Bristol-based Quakers. This chapter further explores points of interaction between margin and mainstream—the margin in this case being both moveable and incredibly permissible—between Quaker and non-Quaker readers. In it, I aim to show the importance of Quaker meetings and communication habits in facilitating exchange between Quakers living on the continent and in the North American colonies, and non-Quakers in those same environments.

Shewen's expansive if repetitive translation of the Vulgate "inluminat"—lighten, enlighten, enlighteneth, giveth light—and Barclay's extended discussion of its significance in the *Apology* structure my approach in this final chapter, tracking the expansiveness of the light, and of Quaker readers down only two of the many pathways they had embarked upon by the turn

⁴³⁷ William Shewen, *The Universality of the Light which shines in Darkness Asserted...*(London: Printed in the Year, 1674) 27-28.

of the century. The key figures in this chapter are all Quakers who individually embodied the movement between margin and centre in their own right. Robert Barclay's *Apology* was written and published outside of London and of the pattern set by the Second Day's Morning Meeting. I will consider Barclay's *Apology* in the immediate context of its publication in Amsterdam, not to mention his continued influence from his home in Aberdeen where the English translation was published at his own expense, and where he was taught by George Keith before Keith's migration to Philadelphia.

I will begin with the insight yielded by a book attacking Barclay's *Apology*, John Brown's *Quakerism the Path-way to Paganism*. The criticisms found in Brown—a fellow Scotsman, although one living in exile in the Netherlands—show a contemporary understanding of Quakerism within its continental context. Working backwards, this provides an opportunity for me to describe in brief the textual trail leading to the *Apology*, produced by earlier Quaker preachers who had built communities in the Netherlands, particularly William Ames. Ames knew and debated with the Collegiants, met Spinoza, and his writings were part of the intellectual milieu in which Spinoza lived, thought, and wrote. Barclay furthered these exchanges between Quakers and Collegiants in the Netherlands—I would argue that on some level the *Apology* is a response to, and appeal to, the Collegiants above all others—and dedicated his work to describing and contextualising Quakerism in terms of a continental intellectual landscape that was a departure from earlier Quaker opinions. My reason for beginning here is to set the intellectual foundation for Amsterdam as the setting for Barclay's masterpiece of Quaker doctrine, *An Apology for True Christian Divinity*. In the

Apology, Barclay restated, and refined, the Quaker relationship to scripture. It was the first systematic description of Quaker doctrine, and over the course of several decades it would become a staple of Quaker home libraries, or according to the J. William Frost, “a fundamental source which must be dealt with before one can comprehend Quakerism.”⁴³⁸

From Aberdeen and Amsterdam, I will depart down a second pathway into the wilds of colonial Pennsylvania, an experiment in governance according to Quaker principles established by William Penn, and settled by one particularly avid Quaker convert, reader, and statesman, Francis Daniel Pastorius. In Pennsylvania, Quaker ideas were applied for the first time to the creation of a colony, one in which principles of toleration drawn from Penn’s own experiences as a Quaker formed the basis of government. I will focus how both Penn’s and Pastorius’s readings were put to practice in the day to day administration of the so-called “Holy Experiment.” In each of these examples, the form of reading in the light that Quakers had developed from their theory of scripture was applied outside of “dead letter;” to writing by philosophers, classical authors, and other non-Quakers, and to the practical necessities of governance.

From among Penn’s prolific writing I will focus upon *No Cross No Crown*, a text largely drawn from pagan sources and in which we can see Barclay’s

⁴³⁸ J. William Frost, “The Dry Bones of Quaker Theology” *Church History* 39 (December 1970) 503-504; Landes, *London Quakers in the Trans-Atlantic World*, Appendix 1; “Barclay, Robert, of Ury (1648–1690);” Gordon DesBrisay in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, see online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, Oxford: OUP, 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1347> (accessed September 1, 2015).

influence and textual theory at work in a devotional context. Of chief importance was the possibilities created by considering scripture the “dead letter” only enlivened by reading within the “spirit” or the “light”—that such reading practices could be extended and applied to any texts. Penn’s treatment of all texts as possible sources for reading within the light found its extremity among the writings of Penn’s friend, Francis Daniel Pastorius. Pastorius was a German Pietist convert to Quakerism who also emigrated to Pennsylvania, and applied his humanist education—and commonplacing habits—to the books he found there, many of them Quaker authors. Pastorius’s massive commonplace book, *The Beehive*, is yet another meeting place of two traditions, and in his changing organisation methods Pastorius harmonised the “Quaker” and “Non-Quaker” division between sources. In the content, organisation, and guiding metaphor of the bee, Pastorius’s book brought together radical Pietist and Quaker traditions with classical humanist learning. And from his place in colonial Pennsylvania, Pastorius’s reading of these texts informed his roles as statesman, farmer, educator, and one of the first abolitionists. By the close of the century, Quakers had enshrined their beliefs in different types of texts such as the exemplars focused on here: works of immense erudition, each of which established their practice of reading widely and collaboratively as a pattern of behaviour for generations to come. I will conclude with tracing just one element of this collective behaviour as it relates to Quaker debates concerning the slave trade as initiated by Pastorius and picked up by later, more radical, yet always marginal, Quaker abolitionists, until eventually, the margin became a mainstream Quaker conviction.

Satan's Amanuenses

John Brown was onto something when he called his 1678 attack on the Friends *Quakerisme the Path-way to Paganisme*. What he meant by “paganisme,” was that the Quaker emphasis upon the inner light elevated individuals to deities (“They assert themselves to be equal with God”), resulting in a pantheism worse than that of antiquity. Belief in the inner light potentially dissolved religious difference. He wasn’t the first to make the argument. Protestant ministers had accused Quakers of “paganism” just as they had Levellers, Seekers, and Ranters. And a pamphlet by William Russel had been published a few years earlier in London, *Quakerism is Paganism*, citing “twelve pagan principles” including that “The Quakers do deny the Scriptures to be the Rule of Faith and Practice unto Christians.”⁴³⁹ Building upon the distinction Quakers made between the spirit and the letter of the bible, the Quaker argument that the the inner light was both divine and present in all people, even non-Christians, and took precedent over the authority of the bible, outraged Brown just as it had Russel. “To take away all outward and visible discriminating difference betwixt Christians and Turks or Pagans,” Brown wrote, made each “equally sharers of all external privileges of the Church, with Christians; that so Christ might have no distinct house, or Kingdom.”⁴⁴⁰ The terms for universal equality threatened the existence of Christianity itself.

⁴³⁹ William Russel, *Quakerism is paganism...*(London: Printed for Francis Smith at the Elephant and Castle, 1674) 8.

⁴⁴⁰ John Brown, *Quakerisme the path-way to paganisme* (Edinburgh: printed for John Cairns, 1678) 467.

This sense of “paganisme” is a central concern of my chapter insofar as it responded to a reality of how Quaker identity had changed over time, both in terms of an expansion in Quaker reading practices to include pagan or classical texts, and in terms of an expansion in *who* was attracted to the confession. The two were related: the pagan texts themselves were part of typically humanist libraries, and Quakerism had begun to attract members who were educated within and carried forward that tradition, in spite of earlier Quaker criticisms of “humane learning” in works like *The Great Mystery of the Great Whore Unfolded* (1659). My goal in focusing on these two issues is to chart a “path-way” of Quaker belief as it came to include texts outside of those self-published within the confession, and to apply the same devotional reading principles that powered Quaker readings of the bible, the *Book of Martyrs*, and their own pamphlets, to non-Quaker texts.

Although the Commonwealth period had long ended, the persecution of Quakers under Charles II had drastically altered the tone and content of Quaker printing for nearly two decades and a fairly constant stream of repressive legislation. Brown’s argument was the same in 1678 as Richard Sherlock’s in his 1656 book, *The Quakers wilde questions objected against*. “[T]heir books [contain] such positions,” Brown wrote, “as overturn and destroy the Gospel,” yet so did his own in terms of how faithfully it reproduced Quaker writing:⁴⁴¹

I have gathered together an heap of such [“blasphemous positions”], to the Number of Three Hundred and Fiftie, and moe (and the Reader may possibly find yet moe, that have escaped me....we might soon finde out

⁴⁴¹ Brown, *Quakerisme the path-way*, p. 11.

the number of the Name of the Beast, Six hundred Sixty and Six) to which may be added Sixty and Five, found in one book of G. Keiths, set down here at the end, after the Postscript; by which, thou mayest judge, what a Masse would be found, if all their books were searched.⁴⁴²

Brown's exhaustive strategy was the same as Ephraim Pagitt's *Heresiography* (1645) and Thomas Edwards' *Gangraena* (1646), which exhaustively catalogued the perceived blasphemies and enthusiasms of Civil War-era England, although rather than cover a range of religious groups, the volume focussed upon the Friends exclusively, and predominantly the first Latin edition of a work that would be published in English as *An Apology for True Christian Divinity*, by Robert Barclay. Even the language of plague was invoked by Brown to describe the Quakers from the very beginning of the text. "This Pestilentious Cloud of Heathenish and Hellish Darkness, which the Devil by the ministrie of these Locusts," Brown wrote, "hath now exhaled out of the bottomless Pit...darkening our Horizon, and infecting so many even of such, of whom sometimes better things were expected."⁴⁴³ Brown expressed grief that a "Just and Jealous God [would] suffer such Hellish Locusts to arise," who carry "the very Credentials of Hell, and the Devils Commission to go forth."

His perception of the multitudes of Quakers was grounded in textuality, as was the prompt for taking to print himself:

[T]here would not be much need of Arguments, disswading from a Perusal and Reading of their Scripts and Pamphlets: For this impression

⁴⁴² Brown, *Quakerisme the path-way*, sig. *4.

⁴⁴³ Brown, *Quakerisme the path-way*, sig. *2.

would prompt them to an abhorrence of such Libels against the God and Father of our Lord....Is it not obvious to all, that beside the advantage the Devil in our losse of so much precious time, spent in reading of their heretical and blasphemous writings, (which may be one end why the Devil prompteth them to be at so much paines and charges, to Write, and Printe, so many pernicious Scripts, and distribute them so freely) he hath this also, that the reading of their Impertinent Reavings, in and about the holy things of God....doth oft excite the Reader to laughter, who should rather be weeping over the manifest Effrontery done to the holy and precious Truths of God...⁴⁴⁴

Easy access to Quaker texts seemed to Brown the Devil's work, but he also railed against readers. If others had taken seriously the threat of Quakerism, he would not need to write. In addition to readers who laughed at the implications of Quaker ideas, there was another worry — that the accessibility of Quaker texts had the power for quick and easy conversion:

[P]ersons Illiterat, and of meane Understandings, when turning Quakers... learne in so short a time, in a few dayes, if not, in a few houres, all their Notions, Errours, Blasphemies, Prancks, and (verso) Practices, (all so contrary to the Way and Professions, wherein they have lived from their Infancy) that they can act their wayes, and utter their Abomination, in their very dialect and tone, so exactly, as if they had seen nothing else, all their dayes; to speak nothing of Persons civilly educated, who yet, turning Quakers, can so suddenly and so perfectly imitate

⁴⁴⁴ Brown, *Quakerism the path-way*, sig. *3.

and follow their rude and rustick carriage, as if they had never seen civility with their eyes...⁴⁴⁵

This too was plague-like in its quick, infectious spread: “Flee from them, most hastily, then from persons having the blak botch,” Brown warned, “that when these could endanger only the Body, those were actively seeking to destroy the precious Soul.”⁴⁴⁶

While Brown’s attack resembled that of earlier critics, *Quakerisme the path-way to paganisme* responded to two very specific developments amongst the Friends. First, a year earlier, Robert Barclay had published his *Apology* in Latin, in Amsterdam, which Brown directly addressed in his book. Second, there was the visit by prominent Quakers—William Penn, George Keith, George Fox, and Barclay himself—in a 1677 missionary tour to the Netherlands, including Rotterdam, where Brown lived in exile.⁴⁴⁷ Brown balked at the continental recognition which Quakerism had begun to enjoy through emergence of a wealthy, well-educated generation of leaders (namely Penn and Barclay) whom Fox had selected to carry forward his vision for the movement. Barclay’s book in particular, printed first in Latin, did not take the evangelising tone of earlier pamphlets, but sought to cast

⁴⁴⁵ Brown, *Quakerisme the path-way*, sig. *4.

⁴⁴⁶ Brown, *Quakerisme the path-way*, sig. *3-*3v.

⁴⁴⁷ Oswald Seidensticker, “William Penn’s Travels in Holland and Germany in 1677,” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* Vol. 2 No. 3 (1878) 237-282; “Brown, John (c.1610–1679),” Ginny Gardner in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eee online ed., ed. David Cannadine, Oxford: OUP, 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/3618> (accessed August 1, 2017).

Quakerism in a respectable light in order to gain sympathy to the cause of toleration.

Whereas English heresiologists saw Quakers within the tradition of Civil War-era radicals, Brown, a Scottish clergyman in exile, instead connected them with the “Enthusiasts” of Northern Europe. “It is no strange thing,” he wrote “for this sort of Fanaticks...to pretend to immediat missions.” He was familiar with the local religious groups who had maintained similar ideas of immediate revelation, particularly the Anabaptists:

[T]he history of the Anabaptists in Munster, & in other places of Germany & Helvetia will not suffer us to forget this: Thomas Muncer stiled himself so in his letters; Melchior Hoffman would needs be called & accounted an Apostle from heaven; and what blasphemous titles David Georg did assume to himself, is sufficiently known.⁴⁴⁸

Brown’s worries about the way in which people of “Illiterate” and “meane Understandings” might adapt Quaker beliefs had already, to some extent, come to fruition. The 1677 journey to the Netherlands and to Germany was not the first visit. Communities of Friends had been established in the Netherlands as early as early as 1657 (although the earliest visits dated from 1655), by the first “archivist” of the confession, William Caton and another important early preacher, William Ames.⁴⁴⁹ Friends had allied with other radicals, relationships also kindled by this missionary tour. Brown was

⁴⁴⁸ Brown, *Quakerisme the path-way*, 4.

⁴⁴⁹ Seidensticker, “William Penn’s Travels,” 239, 251; and for a comprehensive, five-volume study of Quakers in the Low Country, begin with William I. Hull’s *The Rise of Quakerism in Amsterdam, 1655-1665* (Swarthmore, PA, Swarthmore College, 1932).

also correct in his association of Quaker beliefs with the history of continental radicals such as Müntzer, Hoffman, and Georg, all 16th century reformers associated with Anabaptism in Germany, with an influence that spread to the Netherlands — the Quaker belief in inner light had affinities with the region's radical traditions, particular those of the Dutch Collegiants.⁴⁵⁰ And as I will discuss below, William Ames played an important role in the writings of Pieter Baling, author of *The Light Upon the Candlestick* (1662), a key text of Collegiant thought, which Friends themselves republished with endorsements that the text supported their own beliefs.⁴⁵¹

The 1677 visit was intended to consolidate and celebrate the Quaker presence throughout the country, and it was a visit aimed at converting a very eminent figure: the niece of Charles I who was living in Westphalia, Princess Elizabeth Stuart.⁴⁵² The appeal of Quakerism to radicals and elites alike had been carefully managed by the touring Friends. Earlier that year, Barclay had written from prison in Aberdeen to the princess, and Penn had gained her favour as early as 1671.⁴⁵³ They were accompanied by the successful merchant and Quaker Benjamin Furly, a figure whose famous library provided sanctuary to the likes of Algernon Sidney, John Locke, and

⁴⁵⁰ Sheehan, *The Enlightenment Bible*, 19; Hinds, *George Fox and Early Quaker Culture*, 18.

⁴⁵¹ Laura Rediehs, "Candlestick Mysteries," *Quaker Studies* 18.2 (2014) 151.

⁴⁵² Seidensticker, "William Penn's Travels," 254.

⁴⁵³ Seidensticker, "William Penn's Travels," 256. Braithwaite, *Second Period of Quakerism*, 350.

the Earl of Shaftesbury.⁴⁵⁴ These connections surely heightened the anxieties and the prose of John Brown even to the very end of his book, spanning five hundred pages:

If I could weep out this Postscript, or write it with teares of blood, I am convinced it would be short of that just signification of deep sorrow, which I judge dutie, and wherewith the souls of all the lovers of our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerities, should be swelled....while their ears are filled and made to tingle with the din of that doctrine of Devils dropping from their tongues, and falling from the pens of Satans Ministers and Amanuensis.⁴⁵⁵

Counterpoised to Brown's dramatic convictions, the tour was largely successful due to the genteel bearing of Penn and Barclay. In addition to the effective combination of presence and print, as ever the case with Quakers, Barclay's and Penn's prominence and writings as gentlemen-scholars portrayed Quakerism differently than had earlier itinerant preachers like John Perrot, Mary Fisher, and even George Fox himself. The likeminded thinkers they met on their trip would come to purchase land in Penn's colony beginning in the 1680s and facilitate the resettlement of religious radicals from Germany and the Low Countries. Barclay's *Apology* and Penn's *No Cross No Crown* became standard Quaker texts formulated as addresses to non-Quaker audiences, reinforcing the connections they had made in person and cultivating relationships with sympathetic readers. Yet they were so

⁴⁵⁴ Justin Champion, *Republican Learning: John Toland and the Crisis of Christian Culture, 11696-1722* (Manchester and New York: Manchester U P, 2003); Hutton, Sarah, ed. *Benjamin Furly 1646-1714: A Quaker Merchant and his Milieu* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 2007).

⁴⁵⁵ Brown, *Quakerisme the path-way*, 554.

comprehensive in their treatment of Quaker belief that they eventually became key texts within the confession as well. Combined with Quaker travels, these texts linked together networks of Quakers outside of London, with thinkers outside of the Quakers, and eventually culminated in the creation of a new colony for them to occupy together in Pennsylvania.

Barclay's Writings

This distinction between letter and spirit found its most in-depth intellectual grounding in the scholarly writings of Robert Barclay, beginning with its Latin edition published in Amsterdam in 1677. The publication of the book on the continent was atypical of Quaker writings, and Barclay was atypical among Quaker converts. He was Scottish, continentally educated, wrote fluently in Latin, and had formerly converted to and then denounced Roman Catholicism. Barclay's influence over the course of his life and writings from Aberdeen, and over the course of his travels, upon the Quakers is difficult to understate. Although it was written and published without the oversight of the Morning Meeting, his *Apology* would become the standard outline of Quaker doctrine after it was published in English at Barclay's own expense in Aberdeen in 1678.⁴⁵⁶ It was reprinted nine times in England, three in Ireland, and six in America: copies were included in every shipment of books to the colonies, and consequently found in most Quaker household invento-

⁴⁵⁶ Braithwaite, *The Second Period of Quakerism*, 386.

ries beside the bible on both sides of the Atlantic.⁴⁵⁷ It was a staple for “ancient” Friends and the first book encountered by potential converts, “arguably the most important and influential statement of Quaker faith ever published,” according to Rosemary Moore, providing the religion “the necessary intellectual framework,” although it would take several decades to be found in each meeting house library.⁴⁵⁸

While Barclay was part of the changing perceptions and realities of Quakers as the movement survived its early decades, nearly all of the elements of his *Apology* concerning scripture are consistent with the earliest days of the movement.⁴⁵⁹ However, his chief departure concerned—crucially—the Quaker definition of the light. While early Quakers had not distinguished between Christ himself and the light, causing much controversy, Barclay described the light specifically as coming *from* Christ. Moore describes Barclay’s clarification and distinction in this way in terms of its relationship to George Fox:

...Fox knew that some change was essential, for there are items in the collection of Quaker letters known as the Swarthmore manu-

⁴⁵⁷ For instance, in a meeting minute from 1693, the Second Day’s Morning Meeting ordered shipments of books to be sent, including 25 copies of the *Apology* to Barbados and the Leeward Islands, 6 to Jamaica, 12 to New England and Rhode Island, 6 to Virginia and Carolina, 10 to Pennsylvania and to East and West Jersey, and 10 to New York and Long Island., paid for by the Meeting for Sufferings. 17.ii.1693 Second Day’s Morning Meeting Vol II 1692-1700. Society of Friends Library, London.

⁴⁵⁸ Moore, “Towards a Revision of *The Second Period of Quakerism*,” 17.

⁴⁵⁹ Richard L. Greaves, “Seditious Sectaries or ‘Sober and Useful Inhabitants’? Changing Conceptions of Quakers in Early Modern Britain” *Albion* 33 (Spring 2001) 24-50; Barbour, Hugh “William Penn, Model of Protestant Liberalism” *Church History* 48 (June 1979) 156-173.

scripts that show signs of tampering by Fox himself, as he tried to removed evidence that he had been addressed by Quakers in near divine terms. As has been shown, the expression of the Quaker faith had already shifted a little during the 1650s in response to public pressure...Credal statements issued by Quakers were intended for the general public and for the government, not for themselves. So Penn and Barclay could be permitted to require the Quaker faith, and if Fox had doubts about the way his movement was going, he kept them to himself.⁴⁶⁰

However, concerning scriptural authority, Barclay's approach was not so much different in content than in tone from some of the earliest Quaker writings, including Fox, as well as in Richard Farnworth's *Truth clear of scandals*: "for the Letter is death, but the Spirit is life, and is out of the Letter."⁴⁶¹ Barclay described the reasoning behind the belief in very clear terms: scripture was "only a declaration of the Fountain, and not the Fountain itself." He argued that it was in fact blasphemous to treat the scriptures as anything more than "a faithful historical account [sic] of the actings of Gods people in diverse ages," "A Prophetical account" and "a full and ample account of all chief Principles of the Doctrine of Christ." The "Spirit" was the "primary Rule of Faith;" while the scriptures, with his emphasis "may be esteemed a *secondary Rule, subordinate to the Spirit from which they have all their excellency and certainty.*"⁴⁶² Barclay developed this early Quaker belief later on

⁴⁶⁰ Moore, "Towards a Revision of *The Second Period of Quakerism*," 18-19.

⁴⁶¹ Richard Farnworth, *Truth Clear of Scandals*...(London, Printed, Anno Dom. 1654) 9.

⁴⁶² Barclay, *Apology*, **3v.

in the book at great length and with great rigour on the issue, with a sensitivity toward textual instability, reception, and translation, elaborating in greater detail upon George Fox's argument at the close of *The Great Mystery of the Great Whore Unfolded*.

Barclay defined and elaborated upon four main sources of textual instability that he argued posed a problem for interpreting the scripture to be the literal word of God. There were books whose authenticity was not universally accepted, "[T]he Antients themselves, even of the first centurys, were not at one...while some of them rejected books, which we approve, and others of them approved those, which some of us reject," including the letters by Peter, James, and John, and the book of Revelation.⁴⁶³ There were books which "by the injury of time, are lost, which are mentioned in the scriptur" by Enoch, Nathan, a third epistle from Paul to the Corinthians, which "if it should please God to bring to us any of these books...we might...receive them, and place them with the rest."⁴⁶⁴ There was the "faithfullness of the Interpreters" or translators: "how uncertain is it for a man to build his faith upon, the many corrections, amendments, and various essays, which, even among Protestants have been used."⁴⁶⁵ Finally, transcription posed a problem: Barclay emphasised that no "original coppys are granted by all...to be now extant...of which transcribers *Jerom* in his time complained, saying,

⁴⁶³ Barclay, *Apology*, 43.

⁴⁶⁴ Barclay, *Apology*, 59.

⁴⁶⁵ Matthew Fellion and Katherine Inglis give an excellent overview of the history of English bibles banned on grounds of their translation or errors in *Censored: A Literary History of Subversion & Control* (London: The British Library, 2017) chapter 1.

that *they wrote not what they found, but what they understood*.⁴⁶⁶ Each of these elements substantiated Barclay's overall point that the scripture itself contained no canon, no list of its legitimate contents: "It saith not, *now the canon of the Scriptur is filled up*."⁴⁶⁷

Any scriptural reference that prohibited the "addition" of words, Barclay limited to the books in which they were found. For instance, Revelation 22:18, which stated that God shall bring plagues upon those that "add unto these things" referred to "that particular prophecy." Proverbs 30:6, bidding the reader "add thou not unto his words" referred only to Proverbs, since "many books of the Prophets were written after" that book of the bible. Finally, Barclay pointed out, Protestants had accepted instances where others *had* "added" to scripture. For example, John Hus had foretold the reformation in his writings and was revered in *The Book of Martyrs* as a prophet and reformer: "Was he therefore cursed? or did he therein evil?" Barclay asked.⁴⁶⁸

Barclay's initial Latin *Apology* was an expression of his reading of Quaker pamphlets in England as well as his engagement with the writings of Quakers in Amsterdam and, in turn, their relationships with the circle of thinkers known as Collegiants, with whom Spinoza was associated. His approach to scripture, and even the publication history of the Latin *Apology* in Amsterdam in the 1670s, connected the work to Spinoza's *Theological-political treatise*, which was published, banned, and confiscated from distribution in

⁴⁶⁶ Barclay, *Apology*, 50-51.

⁴⁶⁷ Barclay, *Apology*, 60.

⁴⁶⁸ Barclay, *Apology*, 60.

the Netherlands by May 1670.⁴⁶⁹ “Spinoza’s boldest, most influential, and (to his contemporaries) most shocking conclusion in the Treatise,” Steven Nadler writes, “is that Holy Scripture, is, in fact, a work of human literature.”⁴⁷⁰ Spinoza, it has been shown, echoed several of the arguments of the Quaker Samuel Fishers’ *Rusticos Ad Academicos* (1660) in his *Tra-catus*. He had likely translated two Quaker works by Margaret Fell into Hebrew in 1658, and later met William Ames.⁴⁷¹

The birth of textual criticism was almost entirely founded upon the study of biblical texts by humanists as well as theologians after the reformation, and neither Spinoza, nor the Quakers, were the first to have made such an argument.⁴⁷² Jonathan Sheehan has brilliantly described the creation of *The Enlightenment Bible* as a vernacular text “reconstituted” through scholarship “as a piece of the heritage of the West,” its authority recast in the process as cultural rather than divine “to survive in a post-theological age.”⁴⁷³ Sheehan’s work relies on a reciprocal relationship between scholarship and religious zeal. He shows how English reformers “gave the Germans the tools to build the Enlightenment Bible”—that is philological, histor-

⁴⁶⁹ Steven Nadler, *A Book Forged in Hell: Spinoza’s Scandalous Treatise and the Birth of the Secular Age* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton U P, 2011). 2.

⁴⁷⁰ Nadler, *Book Forged in Hell*, 32.

⁴⁷¹ Rediehs, “Candlestick Mysteries,” 154; Richard H. Popkin, “Spinoza and Samuel Fisher,” *Philosophia* 15 (1985) 219; Hull, *The Rise of Quakerism in Amsterdam 1655-1665*, 205.

⁴⁷² Nadler, *A Book Forged in Hell*, 106; Fix, *Prophecy and Reason*, 11; Richard Popkin, *The History of Scepticism from Savonarola to Bayle* (Oxford: OUP, 2003), 219.

⁴⁷³ Sheehan, *The Enlightenment Bible*, xi, 30.

ical, and educational practices—and how the radical Pietists created a template for new Biblical scholarship with their Berleburger Bible (1726-40).⁴⁷⁴ The Quakers, however, did not publish a bible.⁴⁷⁵ Consequently, what was similarly radical about both Spinoza’s and the Quakers’ textual criticisms of the bible was that they were not aimed toward producing new translations or commentaries of scripture. Instead, they argued against the efficacy of organised religions and the hierarchies of ecclesiastical and textual authority they had established.⁴⁷⁶ It is no wonder that in his satirical work attacking the uses of reason in religion, Frans Kuyper (1629-1692) lampooned two figures: the philosopher and the Quaker, one for his “philosophical rationalism” and the other for his “mystical irrationalism,” yet both, because they sought to strip the bible of its spiritual authority.⁴⁷⁷

On the ground, the approach of the philosophical Collegiants and the zealous Quakers seem to meet in the middle, fusing together elite intellectual tradition with every day provocations, discussions, short pamphlet debates, and preaching. For decades Quakers had alarmed and harangued parish priests and congregations on a local level, such as John Brown and

⁴⁷⁴ Sheehan, *The Enlightenment Bible*, xiv, 73.

⁴⁷⁵ Occasional plans to were formed and abandoned to print a bible among Quakers. Finally, in 1791, when the New Jersey printer Isaac Collins produced an edition of 5,000 copies, the majority of which were purchased by the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting and the project was considered a failure and a loss. Frost, J. William “Quaker Books in Colonial Pennsylvania,” *Quaker History* 80 No. 1 (Spring 1991) 1-23, 3; see also Richard Hixson, *Isaac Collins: A Quaker Printer in Eighteenth Century America* (1968).

⁴⁷⁶ Israel, *Radical Enlightenment*, 5.

⁴⁷⁷ Fix, *Prophecy and Reason*, 150.

Richard Sherlock, and spread their ideas of textual instability amongst the “[P]ersons Illiterat, and of meane Understandings” (as described by Brown). Spinoza shocked the learned elites that comprised the Republic of Letters. His friend, Henry Oldenberg wrote that he had been “deeply alarmed” by Spinoza’s work, as were others who aligned themselves with Cartesian thought.⁴⁷⁸ Yet for these big-picture similarities, the Collegiants, a group of continental Protestants whose millenarianism in the 1620s evolved to “secularized philosophical rationalism” in the 1690s and found their “ultimate expression” in Spinoza, disapproved of the Quakers.⁴⁷⁹ The first Quaker missionaries to the Netherlands, William Caton, John Stubbs, and William Ames, had provoked debate in public and by pamphlet. These men felt the Collegiants to be likely candidates for conversion to Quakerism on the basis of their similar emphasis on the inner light, spontaneous speech in meetings, and their criticisms of institutionalised religion.⁴⁸⁰ By 1657, while the two groups agreed upon the primacy of divine revelation over scriptural authority, the Collegiant Pieter Serrarius found the Quaker claim of the spirit over the bible too radical, and began to moderate his own concept of the inner light.⁴⁸¹

Amidst this world of textual instability, from supposed pamphlet wars to the authority of scripture itself, Andrew Fix has argued that these debates be-

⁴⁷⁸ Nadler, *A Book Forged in Hell*, 233, 235-6.

⁴⁷⁹ Fix, *Prophecy and Reason*, 3, 193-195.

⁴⁸⁰ Fix, *Prophecy and Reason*, 194; Hull, *The Rise of Quakerism in Amsterdam*, 145.

⁴⁸¹ Fix, *Prophecy and Reason*, 195.

tween Quakers and Collegiants amounted to among “the most important events for the secularization of Collegiant thought after 1660.” The intellectual community that would produce “one of the most important and influential books in the history of philosophy, in religious and political thought, and even in Bible studies,” as well as the cornerstone of the “Radical Enlightenment,” was itself a result of a moderate reaction to the Quakers.⁴⁸² More recently, however, Laura Rediehs has revisited the so-called “pamphlet wars” between Collegiants and Quakers to show the substantiveness of Quaker influence upon Collegiant thought. She has shown the exchange in ideas to be less a story of stark opposition and instead one of a convergence, and borrowing on both sides. Whereas Fix describes *The Light Upon a Candlestick* as denoting a shift in Collegiant thought away from Quakerism, culminating in a final break with the sect, and towards a “rationalistic direction” (in Barclay’s terms, from Sun to Moon), by re-contextualising the pamphlet within its wider publication history, Rediehs shows the extent to which both sides agreed with and excerpted one another’s texts, used similar language to describe their thought, and even kept in contact with after 1660 and during the 1677 missionary tour from London, rather than breaking definitively in 1660 as Fix describes.⁴⁸³

Two years after Balling’s *Candlestick* was published, Benjamin Furly translated it into English, allowing for easier circulation among Quakers. By 1722, in one of the earliest works of Quaker history, William Sewel pub-

⁴⁸² Nadler, *A Book Forged in Hell*, 240; Israel, *Radical Enlightenment*, 275, 343.

⁴⁸³ Rediehs, “Candlestick Mysteries,” 151, 160; Fix, *Prophecy and Reason*, 199.

lished the same pamphlet “in its entirety as an appendix” to the text, and it was listed over a century later in Joseph Smith’s *Descriptive Catalogue of Friends Books* as a work written by Ames.⁴⁸⁴ This was due not only to Sewel’s account of the relationship between Ames and Balling, but because, as Rediehs is the first to show, the borrowing in language and ideas between the writings of both men, first in William Ames’ *Mysteries of the Kingdom of God*, a pamphlet in response to the writings of the Collegiant Galenus Abrahamsz, and in Balling’s *Candlestick*, published in response.⁴⁸⁵ If my last chapter was about the community of Quaker readers whose readings, discussion, and debate shaped the creation of texts, Barclay’s *Apolo-gy* can be seen from a similar perspective as an expression of and re-sponse to a long series of readings, discussions, and debates between Quakers and the community of continental Collegiants.

The emphasis of Quaker and Collegiant exchange was—Fix and Rediehs agree—upon the nature of the light as it relates to the reading of scripture. In the *Mysteries of the Kingdom of God*, Ames interpreted Collegiant thought to imply two kinds of light, which Rediehs distinguishes as a “light of conscience by which people originally strive to be free from sin, and... follow Scripture” and from that, the “Light of Christ” which then might flourish after “these initial human efforts.”⁴⁸⁶ Ames attempted to point out the theological inconsistency of such an approach and described instead a light that combined these two features, arguing that if humans were made by

⁴⁸⁴ Rediehs, “Candlestick Mysteries,” 151.

⁴⁸⁵ Rediehs, “Candlestick Mysteries,” 157-8.

⁴⁸⁶ Rediehs, “Candlestick Mysteries,” 157.

God, then they could not be separated or lacking in the “Light of Christ.” And whereas the Collegiant view of light required a literal reading of scripture, Ames argued that without the Light of Christ, there could be no understanding of scripture in “the spirit it was given forth” by God to its authors. Ames’ argument about the secondary nature of scripture was consistent, for instance, with George Fox’s *Journal*: “I saw [the divine Light of Christ] shine through all. neither did I then know where to find it in the Scriptures; though afterwards, searching the Scriptures, I found it.”⁴⁸⁷

However Fix argues that ultimately Quaker belief was too extreme for the Collegiants. In response to Ames, Pieter Balling and Galenus Abrahamsz moderated their position on the power of the light, claiming in Fix’s words that “no one in the temporal world could claim such extraordinary divine inspiration or authority...[They] considered the Quakers’ great zeal and sense of election [instead] to be spiritual arrogance.” They also found the Quaker habit of interrupting sermons and their refusal to remove their hats “appalling.”⁴⁸⁸ Balling modified his language, changing the “inner” light to the “true” light to distinguish between beliefs.⁴⁸⁹ Nevertheless, within Balling’s writings are contained certain concepts that reinforce Quaker perspectives: “This Light, Christ, &c. is the truth & word of God...This hath the pre-eminence before any Writing, Scripture, Doctrine, or anything else that we meet from without.”⁴⁹⁰ And both Ames and Balling cited the Gospel of

⁴⁸⁷ Rediehs, “Candlestick Mysteries,” 158; Fox, *Journal*, 47.

⁴⁸⁸ Fix, *Prophecy and Reason*, 195-6.

⁴⁸⁹ Israel, *Radical Enlightenment*, 344.

⁴⁹⁰ Quoted in Rediehs, “Candlestick Mysteries,” 159.

John, just had Fox, and William Shewen, in justifying their approach.

Balling wrote: “have regard unto that which is within thee...the true Light which enlighten every man that cometh into the world.” As Rediehs stresses—and Fix admits—in Balling’s discussion of light, the word ‘reason’ did not appear.⁴⁹¹

Barclay’s *Apology* must be read in the shadow of this exchange, and I would join his introduction of a new concept of Quaker light—pointed out by Moore—as well as his metaphorical distinction between the light of a spiritual sun and a rational moon as an attempt to make sense of Collegiant unease with Quaker certainty concerning the influence of the light upon knowledge, while at the same time describing the Quaker position in a way that would be respectable to, among others, the Collegiant reader. The loss of scripture, its rediscovery, its faulty transcription, its manifold translation, the debate of its interpretation between and among generations, when described in detail, emphasised the agency of the reader in both Collegiant and Quaker texts. And the reader remained a point of emphasis and convergence in Barclay’s *Apology*. What could not be made perfect or restored by more translation or transcription, could rather be authenticated only by the “Spiritual senses.” Among Friends, Barclay argued, individual sense distinguished good from bad, and enough survived from the scriptures to provide a framework to test new revelations:

[W]e distinguish betwixt a revelation of a *new gospel* and *new doctrines* and a *new revelation* of the *good old Gospel* and doctrines; the last we plead for, but the first we utterly deny. For we firmly believe,

⁴⁹¹ Quoted in Rediehs, “Candlestick Mysteries,” 161.

that *no other foundation can any man lay, than that, which is laid al-
ready...*⁴⁹²

But the ability to do so required the ability to read carefully — to weigh and consider, and to heed immediate revelation. Barclay himself in his prefatory material claimed his own approach “comes more from my heart, than from my head, what I have heard with the ears of my Soul, and seen with my inward eyes.” This approach was opposed to clerical learning “which taketh up almost a mans whole life-time...[but] brings not a whit nearer to God.” After all: “God laid aside the wise and Learned...and hath chosen...Fisherman of old, to publish his pure and naked Truth.”⁴⁹³ On the one hand, this was not an abandonment of Civil War anti-clerics of the 1640s, and of George Fox, Richard Hubberthorne, of William Britten in *Silent Meeting* in the 1650s: “All their pretences can no more make [Churches] holy, than a Heap of stones, nor add any more vertue thereby into the Pulpit, then into a Tub,” Britten wrote.⁴⁹⁴ But on the other hand, Barclay’s language was non-adversarial and his propositions were couched in a language of “Enlightenment” in the sense lacking—but striven for—within Collegiant texts: he appealed to, and named, reason. There was no inherent sanctity to the printed bible, and by extension any book, everything depended upon the uses made of them by the individual, whether they read by the light of the sun or the moon.

No Cross No Crown

⁴⁹² Barclay, *Apology*, 59.

⁴⁹³ Barclay, *Apology*, sig. **v and six **2r.

⁴⁹⁴ Britten, *Silent Meeting*, 12.

One consequence of this approach to texts was that it justified readings of texts outside scripture, and even written by non-Quakers. There was something of this at work in William Caton's abridgement of Eusebius's chronologies, and Ellis Hookes' *Spirit of the Martyrs*, which used non-Quaker examples to defend Quaker beliefs. Equally, Thomas Wynne's *Antiquity of the Quakers Proved* went so far as to describe a range of martyrs, reformers, and figures from the bible anachronistically as "Quakers."

William Penn's *No Cross No Crown*, relates to this category of work, drawing from non-Quaker authors. But whereas Caton, Hookes, and Wynne used non-Quaker texts for the sake of historical argument—contextualising imprisoned Quakers within a longer history of persecution—Penn's work was meant as a devotional text, and the writers he used were meant to provoke the spirit, in the same way that Quaker pamphlets were, and in keeping with ecstatic readings of scripture "in the spirit in which it was given forth."

William Penn became an influential Quaker leader at a young age, but he was one of the first Quaker leaders to emerge who had been too young to have experienced the birth of the movement. Before his conversion he had been trained as a humanist and lawyer. Throughout his life he was a skilful politician in the courts of both James II and William and Mary, and a wealthy landowner in the wake of his father Admiral Sir William Penn's distinguished career.⁴⁹⁵ Penn was born in the liberty of the Tower of London the same year *Areopagitica* was published, and he converted to Quakerism in 1667 but quickly rose to prominence as a leader and champion of tolera-

⁴⁹⁵ Barbour, "William Penn, Model of Protestant Liberalism," 159.

tion after the Second Conventicle Act was passed and prompted a resurgence in Quaker persecution in 1670. While he was imprisoned under the Conventicle Act he responded from his cell in Newgate prison with *The Great Case of Liberty of Conscience*. This work, combined with his performance at his trial with William Meade, established Penn as a leading voice among Quakers, and dissenters more broadly. Penn and Meade couched their defence in terms of their rights as Englishmen, and were acquitted by the jury.⁴⁹⁶ In response to the ruling the unsympathetic Lord Mayor ordered the jury themselves to be imprisoned, but was overturned by the chief justice, establishing a new and significant precedent in English law: the “autonomy of juries.”⁴⁹⁷

No Cross No Crown, his most famous (and best-selling) work which drew from secular writing to discuss spiritual experience, showed Penn to be widely read. In total, his writings offered insight both into the development of an individual over the course of his life within Quakerism, and charted a course within the movement similar to Barclay’s, stretching into the first half of the 18th century, spanning both sides of the ocean, and appealing to genteel men of letters before the soldiers, artisans, and labourers that had comprised the first generation of Quakers. His writings about Quakerism showed “a pattern of oscillation between the poles of mysticism and action,

⁴⁹⁶ William Penn and William Mead, *The peoples antient and just liberties asserted, in the tryal of William Penn and William Mead, at the sessions held at the Old-Baily in London, the first, third, fourth and fifth of Sept. 70, against the most arbitrary procedure of that court.* (London : [n.pb.], 1670).

⁴⁹⁷ “Penn, William (1644–1718),” Mary K. Geiter in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, January 2007, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/21857> (accessed September 3, 2015).

prophecy and administration,” not just as he aged, but from the very first years of his conversion.⁴⁹⁸ He was wealthy and well-connected enough to cast his influence broadly, and facilitated the most extreme extension of Quakerism yet: the “Holy Experiment” of Pennsylvania, founded in 1681. The colony operated according to Quaker principles and Quaker politicians had majority control of it until the 1750s.⁴⁹⁹ His identity as a “Quaker” was as complicated as Barclay’s, blended with earlier religious experiences, conversions, and his uncharacteristically affluent upbringing. As James II himself quipped of Penn the courtier: “I suppose you take William Pen[n] for a Quaker, but I can assure you he is no more so than I am.”⁵⁰⁰

Nevertheless, Penn identified as Quaker over the course of his lifetime and explicitly in the forty works he published. As I argued in the last chapter, the “Quaker” identity was at times unstable, since controversy played a large role in how Quakers related to one another. Penn and Barclay further complicated any sense of a stable Quaker identity by their very demographic as wealthy landowners, increasing the breadth of social strata that the religion drew its membership from. Yet Penn consistently argued on behalf of the dissenting cause, and was a consistent advocate for religious toleration. His genteel education ensured he was a polite man of letter and a well-informed litigant in equal measure, which in turn widened the scope of influ-

⁴⁹⁸ Alderfer and Tolles, “Introduction,” x-xi.

⁴⁹⁹ For an account of this see Gary B. Nash *Quakers and Politics: Pennsylvania 1681-1726* (Boston: Northeastern U P, 1993), Hugh Barbour, ed., *William Penn on Religion and Ethics: The Emergence of Liberal Quakerism* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1991); Melvin Endy, *William Penn and Early Quakerism* (Princeton, Princeton U P, 1973).

⁵⁰⁰ Quoted in Geiter, *William Penn*, 13.

ence held by the Society of Friends. His influence would only increase: in 1681 Penn was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, although he wasn't an active member. His attention by that time was focused on Pennsylvania, a culmination of his efforts since 1673, but only granted in 1680 by Charles II to placate dissenters during the Exclusion crisis. He arrived in North America in 1682 and spent two years there establishing the government by which his "Holy Experiment," a colony founded on principles of pacifism and toleration, would be administered, the first and last time in history the Quakers would have nearly total in a governing body.⁵⁰¹ Penn's proprietorship over the Pennsylvania colony further altered Quaker membership, not only in terms of geographical sprawl but in terms of new converts amongst continental immigrants whom he allowed to settle the land.

By 1686 he transferred his Whig allegiance and became essentially a courtier to James II— what Hugh Barbour called his move to a "pragmatic" strategy to arguing toleration, sacrificing outward political belief for proximity to power. The language of his writing on toleration shifted over time from the earlier, Quaker-sounding argument for "liberty of conscience" owed to every person since they bore a "light within," to a language of "reason" and "enlightenment."⁵⁰² Despite the change in terms, the argument remained the same. Yet Penn's later years were spent in political and financial tur-

⁵⁰¹ Luella M. Wright, "William Penn and the Royal Society," *Bulletin of Friends Historical Association* 30 (Spring 1941) 8-10; "Penn, William (1644–1718)," Mary K. Geiter in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, January 2007, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/21857> (accessed September 3, 2015).

⁵⁰² Barbour, "William Penn," 166-167.

moil, both in England where he settled, and in the colonies where his popularity oscillated—after 1691 he temporarily lost proprietorship of the colony, and fell out of favour with Friends both in Pennsylvania and Britain. Even William Meade, with whom he had spent time in prison, opposed his membership within the religion from that point onward.⁵⁰³ At the same time, he cast himself as a historian of the Quaker movement in his writings, linking Friends with their predecessors both from the bible and the 16th century reformation in a series of publications including *The Rise and Progress of the People Called Friends* (1694), and *Primitive Christianity Revived* (1696). He also published works of ethical reflection on his own life, *Some Fruits of Solitude* (1693), and his last work, *More Fruits of Solitude* (1702), in which the aged Penn cast himself as a Stoic philosopher.⁵⁰⁴

In spite of a tumultuous life, from 1669 when it was first published, until well after his death, Penn's *No Cross No Crown* was in constant circulation, growing in content and size. The title was the 17th-century equivalent of “no pain, no gain.” Penn wrote it in 1669 while imprisoned in the Tower of London for blasphemy in a pamphlet he had written a year earlier, *The Sandy Foundation Shaken*.⁵⁰⁵ *No Cross, No Crown* was not the typical Quaker work of the 1660s, so much as the application of typical Quaker reading habits to the memory—and library—of a well-educated convert. It drew together “Sixty Eight Testimonies of the most famous Persons, of both former and later Ages for further confirmation.” None were Quakers—the testi-

⁵⁰³ Moore, “Towards a Revision of *The Second Period of Quakerism*,” 20.

⁵⁰⁴ Barbour, “William Penn,” 167.

⁵⁰⁵ Alderfer and Tolles, “Introduction,” 44.

monies range from “heathen” authors, to early church fathers, to Marian martyrs. Similar to works by Ellis Hookes, he derived his defence of Quaker beliefs from authors without any knowledge of Quakerism in an attempt to appeal to the readers’ impartiality and to draw larger connections between the Quaker struggle, the persecutions of early Christians, and the heroes of the Protestant Reformation.

The impartial reader was an important theme for Penn. He wrote in the preface desiring “of the *Reader* two things for his own sake,” to be serious and impartial:

...be very *Serious*, remembering, that he who despiseth what he does not know; bespeaks himself a fool...[and] that he would be *Impartial*; for he that reads, and makes his prejudic’d constructions mine: or seems to slight the Subject, Book, or Matter, because he disrespects the Author or his Opinions...may give sufficient evidence of his own weakness, but not discover mine, since there is not any thing less becomes an equal Christian temper, then to interpret ill, of that which means not so [...] such pre-opinion prevents all clear and certain examination of things.⁵⁰⁶

In the first part of the work Penn guided readers through the scripture in a kind of spiritual exercise, with sections at the end of each chapters incorporating heathen testimonies. This first edition was one hundred and eleven pages, while the second edition published thirteen years later in 1682 had expanded to over six hundred pages to accommodate the profusion of

⁵⁰⁶ William Penn, *No Cross, No Crown...With Sixty Eight Testimonies of the most famous Persons, of both former and later Ages for further confirmation...*(London: Printed in the Year, 1669) sig. A3-A3v.

learning Penn had access to outside of his prison cell.⁵⁰⁷ The 1669 edition was primarily a guidebook for Quaker behaviour from non-Quaker sources, describing their reasons for using “thou” instead of “you,” refusing other titles, hat removal, and tithes. But in the 1682 edition this was embedded in a much longer spiritual exercise dominated by non-Quaker and even non-Christian authors, with an appeal to non-Quaker readers, which would make sense given Penn's trajectory between 1669 and 1682 as a public figure of some political and intellectual prominence beyond the sect, including his journey with Fox, Keith, and Barclay to the continent. The “Catalogue” of testimonies was, once again, entirely non-Quaker, but had been updated to include more of the Greek kings he would have learned about as a schoolboy at Chigwell School, and the more recent past, including the deathbed testimony of his father the Admiral, and a tribute his friend Princess Elizabeth of the Palatinate, who had died in 1680—a cast of 90 ancient heathens and 50 Christians in total. Yet the point was devotional: as the title page promised: “Reprinted with great Enlargements of *Matter* and *Testimonies*; that thou, *Reader*, mayst be won to *Christ*, and if won already, brought nearer to *Him*,” and in the Preface: “Come, *Reader*, hearken to me a while; I seek thy Salvation, that's my *Plot*.”⁵⁰⁸ Reading *No Cross No Crown* cover to cover does have the feel of reading a work of scholarly, clerical learning: “Penn, one must admit, was a culture snob.”⁵⁰⁹ But his snobbery was channelled to the same end as even the least educated

⁵⁰⁷ William Penn, *No Cross, No Crown...* (London: printed and sold by Benjamin Clark, 1682) sig. A5v.

⁵⁰⁸ Penn, *No Cross, No Crown*, sig. A3r

⁵⁰⁹ Barbour, “William Penn,” 159-160.

among Quaker authors. He elaborated on the problems that came from the liturgy, sacraments, and ecclesiastical hierarchy. He sought to empower the “impartial” reader to be just that, to make decisions for from a broad selection of texts entirely consistent with the reader-centric, as opposed to scripture-centric, spirituality of the Friends.

Penn’s cultural snobbery only reared its head around two hundred pages into the 1682 edition of *No Cross No Crown*. The beginning of the book was entirely a meditation on the necessity of suffering to salvation (“The great Work and Business of the Cross in Man is SELF-DENIAL”), the nature of the Cross through biblical sources, Penn’s lengthy rejections of pride, avarice, and worldly luxuries.⁵¹⁰ Only after a hundred pages did he incorporate Quaker habits and beliefs into his meditation, and after another hundred pages that he draws from non-Quaker testimonies, and the work takes on more of the learned feel of Barclay’s *Apology*.⁵¹¹

No Cross No Crown was equally a project of history, situating Quaker beliefs within a vast lineage of other thinkers. Penn addressed the role of pain and suffering within Christian culture, and criticised “the little regard Christians have” for the Cross. He felt mortification and suffering had fallen out of favour among Christians, causing the “degeneracy of Christendom, from Purity to Lust, and Moderation to Excess,” making worship hollow and hypocritical. Belief without suffering was as good as non-belief: “though [Chris-

⁵¹⁰ Penn, *No Cross, No Crown*, 32.

⁵¹¹ Penn, *No Cross, No Crown*, 104 (Quaker beliefs are introduced); 258 (Heathen examples are used).

tians] worship not the same *Idols*, they worship Christ with the *same Heart*...the unmortified Christian and the *Heathen* are of the *same Religion*.⁵¹² Penn located the cause of “degeneracy” in misinterpretation of the bible, just as George Fox, or Richard Hubberthorne had.

It was ultimately a misreading of the scripture, Penn argued, that had produced “*Exterior Forms of Worship*” and hierarchy, and that misreading barred rather than facilitated direct access to the divine:

[A] worldly *Priesthood*, Temple, and *Altar* [...]..and though fruitful in the Invention of *Ceremonies*, *Ornaments*, yet barren in the blessed fruits of the spirit. And a thousand shells can't make up one kernel, nor many dead Corps one living man...Thus Religion fell from Experience to *Tradition*, and worship from power to *Form*, from Life to *Letter*; that instead of putting up lively and powerful Requests, animated by the deep sense of ...the Assistance of the holy Spirit, by which the Ancients prayed... dull and insipid *Formality*, made up of corporal *bowings* and *Cringsings*, *Garments*, and *Furnitures*, *Perfumes*, *Voices*, and *Musicks*...thy Condition is the worse by thy Religion, because thou art tempted to think thyself the better for it, and art not.⁵¹³

When “Life” became subservient to the “Letter,” “the deep sense” that the Holy Spirit was present disappeared. According to Penn, a religion of interpreting the letter gave rise to ceremony and ornamentation, which in turn produced a religion that was more harmful than beneficial, because it lured adherents into a false sense of superiority.

⁵¹² Penn, *No Cross, No Crown*, 1, 3.

⁵¹³ Penn, *No Cross, No Crown*, 24-25.

Yet Penn did not argue to dispense with books entirely, he simply reasserted their place in worship, as a conduit for spiritual experience. Penn's own book was a tool for correcting the "dull and insipid *Formality*" of religion, in favour of reading the book as a "lively and powerful Request." Penn's argument later in the book dissected books down to the words that comprised them, linking the Quaker use of "our simple and plain Speech, Thou for You" with their preference for "spirit" over scripture. "Words of themselves are but as so many marks, set and employed, for necessary and intelligible Mediums of Means." And later: "Words are nothing, but as men give them Value."⁵¹⁴ Once words were deprived of status, they could in fact lead their readers back to salvation—although this movement from the Word to the word is as technical and granular in its approach to language as Barclay's. With such a concept of the power of words to broker spiritual experience, the right kind of reading could reverse the "degeneracy" of language. And if "Words are nothing, but as men give them Value," then their author should not matter.

This theory of words, an extension of the Quaker theory of "letter," was not limited to the bible in *No Cross No Crown* but to many other texts, a final justification for Penn's choice of heathen authors. Page 258 is the first that featured such authors, but the way had been prepared through the spiritual, scripture-based meditations. So too was the reader prepared to approach new authors in the same spirit that they had the scripture. To the "considerate Reader" (who had stuck with the text this far), Penn wrote:

⁵¹⁴ Penn, *No Cross, No Crown*, 136, 140.

This Book should have ended here, but that the Power Examples and Authorities have upon the Minds of People, above the most sensible and pressing Arguments, inclin'd me to present my Readers with some of those many Instances that might be given in favour of the virtuous Life recommended in this Discourse...it will be easie for the considerate Reader to observe, how much the Pride, Avarice, and Luxury of the World stood reprehended in the judgments of Persons of great Credit amongst Men...⁵¹⁵

His earlier spiritual exercises informed these later texts, meant for moral instruction and use. This mirrored changes in how the bible had been interpreted more broadly, as an “enlightened” bible, meant for moral instruction in an increasingly secular world. Whereas the Berleberger Bible of the Pietists would eventually bring together many sources within the apparatus surrounding the scripture, combining pagan author and scripture visually on the page, Penn’s approach here required only that the reader be in the right frame of mind.⁵¹⁶ Penn’s world of books was one where usefulness remained in the agency of the reader, not the text, which made any book fair game, even one by a “pagan” author.

No Cross No Crown extended the earliest Quaker notions of the dead letter to all writing. *No Cross No Crown* also reimagined the plague or hoard of insects, once feared, as a benevolent multitude. If the responsibility was for the reader to make good sense of the testimonies, the more testimonies he compiled, the greater the chance Penn has of moving the reader. His re-

⁵¹⁵ Penn, *No Cross, No Crown*, 260.

⁵¹⁶ Sheehan, *The Enlightenment Bible*, 81.

liance upon a majority of ancient writers was used to caution modern authors against corruption: “How little the christians of the Times are true Philosophers, and how much more these Philosophers were Christians than then, let the Righteous Principle in every conscience judge.”⁵¹⁷ The only modern writers he trusted were those on their death bed, with whom he concluded the book, and claimed to know personally to have a “Just reckoning at their extream moments of their dying-beds, when Death, that hard passage into Eternity, look’d them in the face.”⁵¹⁸ When faced with death, there was no need for pride, there was nothing to lose. And the reader too, ideally had nothing to lose:

Expressions of that Weight and Moment to the Immortal Good of Men....abundantly prove to all sensible Readers, that the Author was a Man of an enligned [sic] Mind, and of a Soul mortified to the World, and quickned [sic] to some Tastes of a supernatural Life....let his Quality adorn’d with so much Zeal and Piety...become Exemplary to those of Worldly Quality, who may be the Readers of this Book: Some perhaps will hear that Truth from the several authors I have reportd.⁵¹⁹

Through scripture, biography, and wise sayings, readers were given a chance to incorporate virtue into their own lives that need not have any religious connection at all to be part of a religious belief system and practice. But as Penn stressed in his introduction: it was all down to the industry and impartiality of the reader to make the most of the reading.

⁵¹⁷ Penn, *No Cross, No Crown*, 320.

⁵¹⁸ Penn, *No Cross, No Crown*, 374.

⁵¹⁹ Penn, *No Cross, No Crown*, 404.

Holy Experiments

The affinities between continental religious radicals and the Quakers, highlighted both by Barclay's enlightened approach to the bible in the *Apology*, and Penn's wide-ranging reading habits in *No Cross No Crown*, did not culminate in a book so much as a place. This convergence did not occur in the Netherlands, where Quakers had intermingled with other radicals and famed at the time for its toleration of difference, nor in England, where the majority of Quakers were located, but across the Atlantic, in Pennsylvania. Quaker principles were codified in the constitutional documents of the colony drafted and redrafted by William Penn. "In theorizing from a dissenting position in England," Andrew Murphy has written,

William Penn had, by early 1681, assembled a coherent and powerful (if largely politically unsuccessful) theory involving liberty of conscience and the importance of powerfully representative institutions (e.g. juries, Parliament) in the preservation of civil and religious liberty.⁵²⁰

Penn guaranteed religious freedom and enacted a peace treaty with the local Lenape tribes in an attempt to ensure colonists would have no need to bear arms. Although he conducted his proprietorship primarily from England, Penn employed agents in the colony and on the continent to create and circulate the propaganda inviting settlement—it was up to those settling in Pennsylvania to uphold the ideas Penn had formed and articulated as a leading Quaker voice and Whig sympathiser over the course of the 1670s.

⁵²⁰ Andrew R Murphy, *Liberty, Conscience, and Toleration: The Political Thought of William Penn* (Oxford: O UP, 2016) 126.

As Frederick Tolles has shown, Penn relied primarily on an emerging class of wealthy Quaker merchants who were sympathetic to his own “Whig” philosophy, and intimately knowledgeable through their trade of “the geographical situation of Pennsylvania as a principal theatre of growing Anglo-French imperial rivalries.”⁵²¹ Between toleration and booming trade, the result was a colony distinct from the rest of those that had formed along the eastern seaboard: Penn’s “Holy Experiment” was the most pluralistic colony, with no dominant religious or cultural group, and the most rapidly growing.⁵²² Yet it was also distinct in its contradictions between theory and practice.⁵²³ Geoffrey Planck and others have noted the contradictions in Quaker behaviour brought to the fore in the colony in order to consolidate the power necessary to enforce their belief in the peace testimony, for example, Quakers sought support from royal commissioners, slaveholders and others involved in perpetuating the violence of an expanding British Empire—and in return tacitly supported their activities.⁵²⁴

Just as Mary Fisher’s travels, and the martyrdoms of travelling Quakers had once played a significant role in defining Quaker belief and activities from the margins, it was in the wilderness of Pennsylvania where letter and spirit charted a course forward for Quakers as a whole into the 18th centu-

⁵²¹ Tolles, *Meeting House and Counting House*, 11.

⁵²² Sally Schwartz, *A Mixed Multitude: The Struggle for Toleration in Colonial Pennsylvania* (New York and London: NYU P, 1987) 2-3, ch. 3.

⁵²³ Murphy, *Liberty, Conscience, and Toleration*, 127-129.

⁵²⁴ Geoffrey Planck, “Quakers as Political Players in Early America” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 74 No 1 (January 2017) pp. 35-42.

ry. In Pennsylvania the greatest controversy yet would emerge and nearly tear apart the Quaker community, with aftershocks in London and abroad, when the influential Friend George Keith caused a schism in belief. At the same time, in Pennsylvania, those age-old affinities between continental mystics that early Quakers had drawn from Civil-War-era publications would be renewed by the German Pietists who emigrated to the colony and brought with them esoteric texts and beliefs.

In both of these cases, books and their readers have much to tell us about the convergence, and divergence, of letter and spirit in the colony. And it was in the colony that a reader lived who could not have come closer to Penn's imagined audience in *No Cross No Crown*. Francis Daniel Pastorius was a friend of Penn, and a convert to Quakerism, who worked as agent of the Frankfurt Company and who established Germantown in Pennsylvania, ushering in the largest wave of immigration from Germany beginning in 1700.⁵²⁵ When Pastorius arrived in Philadelphia in August 1683, he brought with him what so many migrants had before and have since: a good education and nearly crushing disillusionment. He had studied at Altdorf, Strasborg, Jena, Nuremberg, but described his law practice as "making nothing but work for repentance."⁵²⁶

⁵²⁵ Margo M. Lambert, "Mediation, Assimilation, and German Foundations in North America: Francis Daniel Pastorius as Cultural Broker," *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 84 No. 2 (Spring 2017) pp. 141-170.

⁵²⁶ Alfred L. Brophy, "Bee-Hive: 1696, Francis Daniel Pastorius," *The Multilingual Anthology of American Literature*, Marc Shell and Werner Sollors, ed. (New York and London: New York U P, 2000), 12-43. For a longer account of Pastorius's life, see Marion Dexter Learned's *The Life of Francis Daniel Pastorius* (Philadelphia: Campbell, 1908).

Pennsylvania provided Pastorius with the opportunity to apply his legal expertise to new purposes. He had been sent there there as an agent of the Frankfurt Land Company, formed in 1682 by leading German Pietists to facilitate the immigration of their community to the 15,000 acres of land they had purchased from William Penn. A utopian experiment (“Germantown”) within a utopian experiment (“Philadelphia”), Pastorius played a key role in mediating multilingualism and cultural cross-pollination between new residents, as Patrick Erben has shown.⁵²⁷ He documented his experiences of the growing colony in a massive commonplace book he began in 1696, entitled “His Hive or Bee-Stock” and commonly known as *The Beehive*. The book itself was a work of translation and education, containing information he hoped his sons and his local community would consult, use, and add to. As he wrote on the very first page of the manuscript:

And seeing it is the largest of my Manuscripts, which I in my riper years did gather out of excellent English Authors...My desire, Last Will and Testament is that my Two Sons John Samuel and Henry Pastorius shall have...my Writings...to themselves & their heirs for ever, and not to part with them for any thing in this World; but rather to add thereunto some of their Own.⁵²⁸

The Beehive was in its time a manuscript at a crossroads: bringing together a lifetime of humanist learning, documenting nearly in real time Pastorius’s conversion from Pietism to Quakerism, and the shift of the primary lan-

⁵²⁷ Patrick Erben, *A Harmony of Spirits: Translation and the Language of Community in Early Pennsylvania* (University of North Carolina Press, 2012) 11-14.

⁵²⁸ Quoted in “Bee-Hive: 1696,” 17.

guage from Latin and German to English, the language he raised his sons to speak. Pastorius had named the book after a reading practice, dating back to classical antiquity but popular among humanists, that imagined readers as bees, moving from book to book as the insects moved from flower to flower, culling pollen to turn to honey.⁵²⁹ For Pastorius, like Penn, profitable reading was the responsibility of the reader. “It does not bother me or make me wonder that certain proverbs here displease you,” he addressed readers of the *Beehive*, “you want honey without gall. Honey is given to no one without gall.”⁵³⁰ Yet Pastorius was not sentimental about his book, or even his own reading tastes. He encouraged his readers to cut out or erase parts of the book that they did not like, imagining centuries upon centuries of collective edits and amendments:

Be my corrector. As you cut away the truths that are superfluous, reader, may you also deign to add the truths which are lacking. Much work remains, and will remain, nor will anyone born in 100,000 years lack the occasion to add something.⁵³¹

In poetry, prose, and excerpts from other books, Pastorius again and again applies the language of reading as bees as a language of reading books for both spiritual and moral ends.

To give a sense of the separation between honey and gall *The Beehive*'s keeper had already undertaken, in an opening section, “Authors out of

⁵²⁹ Ann Moss, *Printed Commonplace Books*, 105.

⁵³⁰ Quoted in Brophy, “Bee-Hive: 1696,” 39 n. 31; see also Patrick Erben, “Honey-Combs and Paper-Hives: Positioning Francis Daniel Pastorius’s Manuscript Writings in Early Pennsylvania,” *EAL* 37 (2002) 157-194.

⁵³¹ Quoted in Brophy, “Bee-Hive:1696,” 40 n. 32.

which [The Beehive] is Collected,” Pastorius listed upwards of 827 books, separated into two categories: Quaker and Non-Quaker authors. But the ten-page list of books did not represent everything Pastorius had incorporated into the manuscript. Only those works featuring an asterisk, he wrote, had made the cut. For instance, of the 387 titles written by Quaker authors listed, Pastorius has asterisked—and so extracted from— 110 titles, or roughly 28% of the available Quaker books.⁵³² And in the content of the book, William Penn, Robert Barclay, and George Fox topped the list of Quaker writers from whom Pastorius culled pollen for the pages he referred to as his “honey-combs.”

Of the 440 Non-Quaker books listed, Pastorius had chosen a little over 36%, with titles that ranged from religious writings to husbandry manuals to the collected works of John Milton, from locally produced almanacs to Sir Roger L’Estrange’s translation of Seneca’s *Morals* (1696), John Locke’s *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1710), writings by both William and Cotton Mather, and the popular novel, *Letters Writ by a Turkish Spy* (1687). Pastorius’ access to the writings of John Locke, would have been the result of a deal William Penn made with Locke’s publishers, Awnsham and Churchill, to send shipments of books on consignment to the colony. Consequently, there were copies of Locke’s works in Philadelphia, ranging from his *Common-place Book to the Holy Bible* (also referenced by Pastorius) to his more famous *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Some of the books listed above would have come from Pastorius’ own library,

⁵³² Alfred L. Brophy, “The Quaker Bibliographic World of Francis Daniel Pastorius’ Bee Hive,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Bibliography*, 122 (1998): 241-291.

which was, according to Edwin Wolf, “probably the largest in Pennsylvania.”⁵³³ Although Pastorius’s initial list of works cited included more Quaker than non-Quaker titles, the Quaker titles were much shorter, pamphlet-length works, and over time, their contents were overshadowed by non-Quaker, and even non-religious writing, just as in Penn’s *No Cross No Crown*. Pastorius’s poetic language of bee-like industry followed suit, increasingly emphasising the responsibility of the reader to make the most of their reading: “In this Volume as ye find Friends & No friend speak their Mind, But Reader of these Two, Care more for WHAT than WHO.”⁵³⁴ The Beehive brought together and reorganised thousands of excerpts from hundreds of Quaker and non-Quaker books alike under first topical headings (“reading” or “peace”), but in the majority of its pages, by numbered entries featuring topical headings that were then organised in an alphabetical index for easy use and consultation. In other words, over the course of the massive volume, the doctrine and belief of the Quakers were scattered amidst other writings published across the fifteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. Excerpts from William Penn and Robert Barclay were placed side by side with Seneca and Erasmus, and Anti-Quakers were placed beside Quakers, enemies with Friends—yet all of them were assembled in support of the basic tenants of Quaker belief, particularly

⁵³³ Edwin Wolf II, *The Book Culture of a Colonial American City: Philadelphia Books, Bookmen, and Booksellers* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1988). Although Wolf does not mention the extant inventory Pastorius kept of his library in a manuscript from the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, *Res Propriae*, which includes the 263 titles of his library, organised by size: 24 Folios, 49 Quartos, 91 Octavos, 75 Duodecimos, and 24 Twenty-Fourmos.

⁵³⁴ Brooke Palmieri, “‘What the Bees have Taken Pains for:’ Francis Daniel Pastorius, The Beehive, and Commonplacing in Colonial Pennsylvania,” 2008-2009 Penn Humanities Forum on Change, University of Pennsylvania, April 2009.

pacifism and religious toleration. More important than his humanist upbringing— his “work for repentance”—which nevertheless structured the look of *The Beehive* as a commonplace book, were the theories of Quaker texts and readers, in structuring the manuscript’s copious, tolerant outlook.

This radical integration of poetry, pithy statements, and decontextualised religious and political opinions, in turn, alternated with recorded descriptions of Pastorius’s activities as a teacher, statesman, and a Quaker. Pastorius served as a justice of the County Court in 1684 and 1693, and a member of the General Assembly in 1687, he was court clerk, bailiff, and treasurer at different times for the Pennsylvania Assembly. He taught in Philadelphia and Germantown from the 1690s until his death in 1719. His works of propaganda were sent to the continent to encourage migration, and the few local works he published, informed and were informed by the mentality that created *The Beehive*, as well as the honey stored there. He published a guide for government clerks to aid them in record keeping, he published an English primer for the school children he taught, he published a religious tract to promote reconciliation between George Keith and Quaker leaders in the colony, and established common beliefs in his Dutch and German pamphlets, between Dutch Anabaptists, German Pietists, and Quaker belief.⁵³⁵ He also sought to establish friendly relations between Continental and English immigrants and local Native Americans — the

⁵³⁵ Brophy, “Beehive: 1696,” 13-14; Jim Duffin’s Introduction to *Acta Germanopolis: Records of the Corporation of Germantown Pennsylvania 1691-1701* (Philadelphia: Colonial Society of PA), 2008, documents Pastorius’s many positions held throughout the years (sometimes for several terms) as Bailiff, Committeeman, Clerk, Recorder, and Treasurer; Erben, *Harmony of Spirits*, 111.

Beehive documents his meetings with the local Lenape tribes and his pamphlet *Sichere Nachricht* worked to overturn stereotypes about “erroneously-called savages.”⁵³⁶ Finally, Pastorius co-authored the “Germantown Protest,” the first anti-slavery petition written in America in 1688, which Katharine Gerbner has shown to have influenced George Keith’s *Exhortation and Caution to Friends* in 1692, which also argued against buying or keeping slaves.⁵³⁷ These works initiated debates among the Pennsylvania Quakers, who would take nearly a century to come to consensus concerning the abolition of slavery.⁵³⁸ Much more than a manuscript, the buzzing activity found in the pages of *The Beehive* helped power the civil life and publications of one of the most prolific thinkers and polymaths of the colonial period in Pennsylvania. Where I argued for conceptualising of an archive behind every book in earlier chapters, *The Beehive* equally served as such a resource to settlers in the early colony.

Conclusion

Both Barclay and Penn’s writings—philosophical and devotional—argued in such terms as to make spiritual enlightenment a reasonable choice and pursuit, rather than leading to an argument for a rational enlightenment. In other words, I do not mean to show so much the secularisation of Quaker thought in the expansion of their conversations about the nature of light

⁵³⁶ Erben, *Harmony of Spirits*, 109, 111.

⁵³⁷ Katharine Gerbner, “Antislavery in Print: The Germantown Protest, the “Exhortation,” and the Seventeenth-Century Quaker Debate on Slavery,” *Early American Studies* 9 No. 3 (Fall 2011) 552-575;

⁵³⁸ Jean R. Soderlund, *Quakers and Slavery: A divided Spirit* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton U P, 1985) 4, 10.

both with contemporaries and with classical authors, but the reverse—the deeply spiritual underpinnings of such a project. I have concluded with Pastorius as a way of showing one instance in which this manifested—yet again on a different kind of margin, that inhabited the non-native English speaker and Quaker convert—in the form of a copious and highly inclusive textual culture that brought together ideas across confessions and, in Pastorius’s case, synthesised them in the framework of colonial life and government. Text moved into the context of day to day activity, letter provoked spirit. Pastorius’s *Beehive*—similar if not modelled from Penn’s in its approach—is only one example in which the “dead letter” of Quaker thought showing how models of Quaker reading and collection might be applied, with wide ranging consequences. Robert Barclay’s “dead letter” elaborated upon study of the textual history of the bible, and given his education and connections, the form of his writing in turn repackaged Quaker beliefs for new audiences. These influential Quakers travelling and writing on the margins show not only the resilience of Quaker communication networks in their ability to coordinate exchange over great distances—which, as Jordan Landes, has noted the greatest threat to the definition of community itself⁵³⁹—but also shed light on Quaker involvement in the history of ideas outside of the confession. Just like William Rogers, and the printers John Bringhurst and Andrew Sowle, even Quaker leaders were not consistent in terms of keeping within or outside of Quaker administrative practice and “Gospel Order” when it came to their reading and publications.

⁵³⁹ Landes, *London Quakers in the Trans-Atlantic World*, 8.

I have also ended with Pastorius to show the synthesis of Barclay's and Penn's writing and influence in both a massive project of collection and recollection, but one which also—similar to Penn and Barclay—synthesised continental and Quaker thought in form and content for the highly practical purpose of use in an early colonial experiment. Arguments in Barclay's *Apology*, the text of Penn's writings including *No Cross, No Crown*, and the vast repository accessible to colonial readers in Pastorius's *Beehive*, set a standard of Quaker thought and enshrined the pattern of Quaker reading and writing habits that would inform the actions of future generations of Quakers in the colonies. In particular, Pastorius's attention in *The Beehive* to collecting arguments against slavery continued the work he had initiated with his co-authors in the 1688 "Germantown Protest against Slavery," and initiated nearly a century's worth of work building consensus among Friends concerning abolition.⁵⁴⁰

In 1683, Benjamin Furly had unsuccessfully warned William Penn against the use of slaves in his colony, and as a compromise, argued for their freedom at the end of an eight year period. In 1688, the Germantown petition was subscribed by Pastorius and a mix of German and Dutch converts to Quakerism he had helped settle in the colony, four of whom had also been Furly's clients.⁵⁴¹ Pastorius's hand is unmistakable in the language of the petition, but above all the authors sought to imitate the language of Quaker pamphlets, and as Katherine Gerbner argues, their application of Quaker thought marked a departure from earlier Quaker writings on slavery. "The

⁵⁴⁰ Gerbner, "We are Against the Traffik of Men-Body," 149.

⁵⁴¹ Gerbner, "We are Against the Traffik of Men-Body," 156-7.

Germantowners conceived of blacks as the social and spiritual equals of whites,” unlike even George Fox’s epistles criticising slavery in 1671. Drawing from the style more than the substance of earlier Quaker writings, the protest looked “more like a Quaker pamphlet” and relied on a structure of argument similar to Quakers of the Restoration, comparing “the oppression of blacks in Pennsylvania to the oppression of Quakers and Mennonites,” in order to argue that such oppression was of a social, and historic nature rather than of natural order, as many slaveholders argued.⁵⁴²

At the same time, the arguments they made were unlike anything that had come before within the Quaker community and marked a disjunct between non-English converts to the religion and those Friends like Pastorius who were born, raised, and educated on the continent, creating what Gerbner has called “cultural disconnect.”⁵⁴³ Moreover, the authors of the Germantown protest argued from a perspective of continental opinion, using one margin as a kind of leverage on the other: slavery threatened the “Holy Experiment” of the colony, and “This makes an ill report in all those countries of Europe, when they hear off, that ye Quakers doe here handel men as they handel there ye cattle.” It threatened their enterprise to find more who would pay for land to settle in the colony.⁵⁴⁴ While the petition was rejected by the Philadelphia Monthly Meeting, Pastorius and his cosigners continued the work of appealing to their neighbours and friends against ownership of

⁵⁴² Gerbner, “We are Against the Traffik of Men-Body,” 158, 160, 165.

⁵⁴³ Gerbner, “We are Against the Traffik of Men-Body,” 167.

⁵⁴⁴ Gerbner, “We are Against the Traffik of Men-Body,” 159.

slaves— *The Beehive* continued to accrue entries on the subject documenting Pastorius's interest in supporting his earlier arguments.

This pattern of collecting source material, co-authorship, petitioning, debate, and a return to collection and discussion in and around Pastorius's Germantown created a unique environment of learning around the subject of abolition in colonial Pennsylvania that was relied upon in to the 18th century. Pastorius's neighbours, William Southeby and Cadwalader Morgan, petitioned (unsuccessfully) against the importation of slaves in Pennsylvania in 1696, and in 1711 the Chester Monthly Meeting compiled a protest against buying slaves. A member of that meeting, the merchant Ralph Sandiford would continue to publish against slavery in the coming decade.

Such continuous activity and exchange has lead Jean Soderlund to characterise "Delaware Valley Quakerism" as "the primary wellspring of American social reform."⁵⁴⁵ Most recently, Marcus Rediker's compelling biography, *The Fearless Benjamin Lay*, documents Lay's (1682-1759) fierce opposition to the brutality of slave economies to the extent of practicing vegetarianism, making his own clothes, and living in a cave outside of Philadelphia to avoid contact with material produced by slave labour. Drawing from his readings of scripture, the Germantown Protest, the Chester Meeting, Sandiford, and George Fox, among others, in 1737 Benjamin Franklin published his friend Lay's pamphlet *All Slave-Keepers that keep the innocent in*

⁵⁴⁵ Jean R. Soderlund, *Quakers & Slavery: A Divided Spirit* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton U P, 1985) 4, 19-20, 23.

*Bondage, Apostates.*⁵⁴⁶ Lay combined his lifestyle and his writings with a style of debate that truly hearkened back to the early days of radical, uncompromising Quakerism. For example, at the 1738 Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Lay appeared (although he had been disowned as a Quaker at that point both in England and Pennsylvania) before the meeting and stabbed a hollowed-out bible that contained a bladder of red juice with a sword, allegedly shouting that those who held humans in bondage were “as justifiable in the sight of the Almighty” as if they “should thrust a sword through their [slaves’] hearts as I do through this book!” Another source reported that, covered in fake blood, he said: “Thus shall God shed the blood of those persons who enslave their fellow creatures.”⁵⁴⁷

These glimpses into one particularly well-documented and well-studied area of inter-generational discussion and action can only happen within a highly collaborative culture of textual engagement. As Rediker concludes of Benjamin Lay: his “philosophy combined Quakerism, ancient philosophy, seafaring culture, abolitionism, and commonism,” he “steeped himself and the books and culture of the original ‘primitive Friends’” and was “part Leveller...part Seeker...part Digger...[and] all Quaker,” much like those early Friends.⁵⁴⁸ Such access to such a radical tradition half a century after it had survived brutal persecution, I would argue, was not possible without a

⁵⁴⁶ Marcus Rediker, *The Fearless Benjamin Lay: The Quaker Dwarf Who Became the First Revolutionary Abolitionist* (London, New York: Verso, 2017) 56, 72.

⁵⁴⁷ Soderlund, *Quakers & Slavery*, 15; Rediker, *The Fearless Benjamin Lay*, 1-2.

⁵⁴⁸ Rediker, *The Fearless Benjamin Lay*, 142-143.

strong Quaker commitment to the circulation of texts. The second generation of Quakers, which Penn, Barclay, and Pastorius each represent in their own ways, both preserved access to a Quaker past and mobilised the systems of belief, painstaking documentation, and exchange that I have described in the past five chapters, a history and a tradition that would make possible the generation of new ideas and unforeseen consequences. The century-long Quaker debate over slavery, and the eventual Quaker involvement as a whole rather than as an array of Quaker-identified individuals in the cause of abolition, is just one pathway down which to track the results of a religious culture that relied upon constant meetings—in writing, in print, and in person—to build consensus.⁵⁴⁹ And in the case of Barclay, Penn, and Pastorius, what began as an exploration of the deeply personal nature of the inner light, developed into collections of sources testifying to its outward expression, in order to make the theoretically equalising effect of the light more accessible to all in practice.

⁵⁴⁹ Soderlund, *Quakers & Slavery*, 26; see also Brycchan Carey, *From Peace to Freedom: Quaker Rhetoric and the Birth of American Antislavery, 1657-1761* (New Haven: Yale U P, 2012), Geoffrey Plank, *John Woolman's Path to the Peaceable Kingdom: A Quaker in the British Empire* (Philadelphia: U Penn P, 2012) and Brycchan Carey and Geoffrey Plank eds., *Quakers & Abolition* (Chicago: U of Illinois Press, 2014).

Conclusion

In a pamphlet published by Tace Sowle in 1704, the most prominent Quaker printer renewed an historic commitment to textual production for a new age. Written by no Friend, it was a reprint of two pages from the 1684 edition of Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* Sowle had entitled *The Benefit and Invention of Printing*.⁵⁵⁰ This little pamphlet carried forward a model for textual engagement that Quakers would return to again and again, and one which could not have persisted had it not been such a consistent practice in the first fifty years of the movement's survival. Much is expressed in only a few pages: without need of explanation Sowle reproduced a description of the origins of printing that had been written by Foxe over a hundred and fifty years earlier. Foxe described in brief the history of the invention of printing, but emphasised the "end and purpose the Lord hath given this Gift of Printing to the Earth:" "to subdue his exalted Adversary," the Devil, in the form of the Pope.⁵⁵¹ Printed Books, Foxe argued, were the catalysts in a chain reaction which ultimately relied upon readers:

Printing of Books ministred matter[s] of Reading, so Reading brought Learning, Learning shewed Light; by the brightness wherof blind Ignorance was Suppress'd, Error Detected, and finally, God's Glory with Truth of his Word Advanced. And thus much for the worthy Commendation of Printing.⁵⁵²

Printed books facilitated wider audiences for reading, reading brought instruction in the "Light," and once illuminated, spiritual truth was advanced when each individual could separate that truth from error for themselves. This description of the printing press committed its output to deeply personal and completely transformative experiences on a global scale, a vision which Quakerism had emphasised from the very earliest days of the movement. Foxe's succinct history downplayed the vast effort of exchange

⁵⁵⁰ John Foxe, *The Benefit and Invention of Printing, by John Fox, That Famous Martyrologist, Extracted out of his Acts and Monuments, Vol I. pag. 803,804, Edit. 9. Anno 1684* (London: Printed and Sold by T. Sowle, 1704).

⁵⁵¹ Foxe, *The Benefit and Invention of Printing*, 4-5.

⁵⁵² Foxe, *The Benefit and Invention of Printing*, 8.

and skills-sharing required for such advancement—not to mention the suffering and sacrifice—an effort not limited to his own time, but carried forward by the Quakers, and an advancement still in progress.

In the past five chapters, I hope to have paid tribute to those involved in making *The Benefit and Invention of Printing* possible by describing in great detail how matters of reading were ministered, how Quakers developed theories of reading from their understanding of scripture, and how ministering to a community of readers scattered far and wide meant that Friends “Suppress’d”—both “blind Ignorance” and occasionally one another—and how they handled the errors they perceived both as individuals and within a communal setting. Rather than taking for granted Foxe’s words about the benefit of the printing press, in each chapter I have addressed key elements in the work of making truth of such claims. In my first chapter this required a core group of Quaker leaders to theorise—and circulate—ideas about the nature of reading scripture and justifying their textual output in terms of those scriptural readings. In my second chapter I traced how such theories were made into a community-wide practice through the emergence of a system of record keeping habits structured by reading the bible and Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs*. In the third chapter I examined how Friends went about using their records to lobby in print for the cause of toleration—although to cause complication, in my fourth chapter I showed just the opposite, examining a case of internal censorship within that wider culture of collaborative publication. Finally, I concluded with the writings of a new generation of Quaker leaders who repackaged these ideas for future generations in their own texts.

Over the decades I have covered, the Quaker basis for turning Foxe’s description of the *Benefit and Invention of Printing* into a plan for spiritual development and social action drew from a few particularities within the sect: an adversarial style of speaking and writing inspired by Civil War radicals, a theory of text that prioritised the authority of readers, the experience of state-sanctioned persecution as a minority group, and finally, travel in different parts of the world and a membership that was scattered across so-

cial strata. Each of these elements, covered over the course of each chapter, were highlighted yet made to cohere through a constant dialogue resulting in a profusion of manuscript and print materials. They remain in a library and and archive still maintained as an important element of Quaker identity to the present, and each of these elements of Quaker belief and practice, are remnants of a system that has endured. The same ideas about truth and its expression that developed in the early decades of Quakerism to allow for communication between members have only increased to accommodate an increase in membership, and an increase in the scope of member's influence. Even in times of schism, the Quakers have used the same means to express their disagreement with one another as they have their unity. In showing instances of both, I hope to have provided more than a history, but a model for collective organisation that has survived over the past three hundred and fifty years, and is still in place.

Postscript: A Continuous Search

The community-wide involvement in discussion, debate, and publication as a means of sharing information, building consensus, and adapting Quaker beliefs described in “Compelling Reading” has continued to inform Quaker spirituality—and activism—into the twenty-first century. As one example, the Valiant Sixty’s networks of communication, and the work of Ellis Hookes, the Meeting for Sufferings, and the Second Day’s Morning Meeting, endures in the ways Quakers have facilitated discussion about homosexuality and the LGBTQ rights movement over the past sixty years. The reading, writing, and discussion facilitated between a smaller groups who published *Towards a Quaker View of Sex* (1963), *Homosexuality from the Inside* (1973), and *This we can say* (1994), and the wider sprawl of Quaker communities equally provides a model for writing a history of the social production of knowledge and testifies to the work still needed to create social change more broadly.

1957-1963

In 1957 Anna M. Bidder (1903-2001), a zoologist teaching at the University of Cambridge, began to host monthly meetings for herself and ten other Quakers, both men and women, each from disparate professions including education, psychiatry, and prison administration. As accomplished professionals and elders within the Society of Friends, the stated purpose of the meeting was to discuss “problems brought by young Quaker students, faced with homosexual difficulties, who came to older Friends for help and guidance.”⁵⁵³ Over the course of five years, the monthly meetings culminated in a seventy-five page co-authored pamphlet, *Towards a Quaker View of Sex* (1963) that promoted healthy, safe sex within both heterosexual and homosexual relationships. It was the first published work within Christianity

⁵⁵³ Alastair Heron, ed. *Towards a Quaker View of Sex: An essay by a group of Friends* (London: Friends Home Service Committee, 1963) 5.

to take a positive view toward homosexuality.⁵⁵⁴ Even within the history of LGBTQ activism, it was a dramatic intervention, proceeding the Stonewall riots and consequently the gay liberation movement they sparked in both the USA and the UK. While the pamphlet would spark decades of publication, discussion, and development, parts of it read as urgently today as in 1963: “One should no more deplore ‘homosexuality’ than left-handedness,” they wrote.⁵⁵⁵

Alastair Heron, the editor of the text and a fellow of the British Psychological Society, acknowledged the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust and the Friends Temperance and Moral Welfare Union for funding the publication, and included a note for “non-Quaker readers” about “the use of the word *concern*,” as it had inspired the authors, and which they defined in terms of twentieth-century Quaker doctrine as “a gift from God, a leading of his Spirit which may not be denied.”⁵⁵⁶ While much writing on the use of the word “concern” flourished in the twentieth century, this is the same sense of “concern” as “an obligatory call to action,” which William Rogers described as his “Concern of Conscience” when publishing *The Christian Quaker* in 1680, and the same “concern” Mary Fisher described as prompting her ministry to the Ottoman Empire.⁵⁵⁷ The eleven Friends who wrote *Towards a Quaker View of Sex* introduced the publication with similar language of “concern” and “continuous search,” as well as in terms of their understanding of this early Quaker history:

[T]here are certain historical characteristics of the Society of Friends that ought specially to lead to a clear and wholesome understanding

⁵⁵⁴ An online exhibition celebrating the groundbreaking work, and including digital versions of the first and second edition, can be found here: "Towards A Quaker View Of Sex · LGBT Religious Archives Network" 2018. *Exhibits.Lgbtran.Org*. <http://exhibits.lgbtran.org/exhibits/show/towards-a-quaker-view-of-sex>.

⁵⁵⁵ Heron, *Towards a Quaker View of Sex*, 21.

⁵⁵⁶ Heron, *Towards a Quaker View of Sex*, 2.

⁵⁵⁷ "Thought For The Week: What Is A Quaker Concern?" 2018. *The-friend.Org*. <https://thefriend.org/article/thought-for-the-week-what-is-a-quaker-concern>.

of the significance of the sex relationship. The Society has maintained throughout the three hundred years of its history the complete personal and material equality of the sexes. It has an attitude to authority that enables it always to say in the words of John Robinson's farewell to pilgrims setting off for the New World: "The Lord has yet more light and truth to show forth"—and on every conceivable question. For Friends, God's will for man can never be circumscribed by any statement, however inspired; the last word has never yet been spoken...Quakerism involves a continuous search.⁵⁵⁸

At least in keeping with William Penn's *No Cross No Crown*, they quoted a non-Quaker reformer to describe their beliefs, the Puritan exile John Robinson (1576-1625) speaking to members of his Leiden parish before they embarked on the Mayflower in 1620, although they reversed Robinson's original ordering—"truth and light"—into a more Quakerly "light and truth."⁵⁵⁹

David Blamires has shown how *Towards a Quaker View of Sex* had a huge impact both within and outside of the Society of Friends. The publication "contributed massively to keeping the Friends Bookshop financially afloat," and even before it was released news of its compilation stirred debate in *The Friend*, a weekly publication for Quakers, on the BBC TV programme *Meeting Point*, where Anna Bidder and another co-author Kenneth Barnes were interviewed, and in both the popular and religious press.⁵⁶⁰ In a long and careful review of the pamphlet in *The Friend*, John Ounsted encouraged readers not to judge homosexuality "by its outward appearance but by its inner worth," applying a centuries-old Quaker argument anew:

Neither are we happy with the thought that all homosexual behaviour is sinful: motive and circumstances degrade or ennoble any

⁵⁵⁸ Heron, *Towards a Quaker View of Sex*, 8.

⁵⁵⁹ William Wallace Fenn, "John Robinson's Farewell Address," *The Harvard Theological Review* 13 (July 1920) 236-251.

⁵⁶⁰ David Blamires, *Pushing at the frontiers of change: A memoir of Quaker involvement with homosexuality* (London: Quaker Books, 2012) 6-7, 10-11.

act, and we feel that to list sexual acts as sins is to follow the letter rather than the spirit, to kill rather than to give life.⁵⁶¹

Nevertheless, in the weeks, months, and years following, the reaction was polarised. A Catholic publication, *The Tablet*, concluded in its review similarly that *Towards a Quaker View of Sex*, “whatever its deficiencies of judgment” reminds its readers “of the dangers of a legalistic approach and of the letter that killeth rather than the spirit that quickeneth.” The *Times Literary Supplement* was less forgiving, described the booklet as “often muddle-headed” especially in “the disproportionate space given to one problem, homosexuality.”⁵⁶²

The Meeting for Sufferings that year “noted the distress of many Friends” and called into question the Friends Home Service Committees’ (FHSC)—a modern incarnation of the Second Day’s Morning Meeting—publication policy. While the authors of *Towards a Quaker View of Sex* had tried and failed to publish the work elsewhere, they were rejected by publishers independent from the Society of Friends and hence had relied on the FHSC.⁵⁶³ In the pamphlet itself, the FHSC had noted briefly on the inside of the title page that they were “glad to publish *Towards a Quaker View of Sex* for the group of Friends which prepared it, as a contribution to thought on an important subject,” although cautioned that the “views expressed are those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the attitude of the Friends Home Service Committee, or of the Religious Society of Friends.” The FHSC, moreover, continued to support their decision to publish as recorded in a meeting minute in response to the Meeting for Sufferings:

It has long been our policy to publish over the imprint of the FHSC books and pamphlets written by individuals or groups. The publication of this essay...is therefore no new departure in policy. Such publication is arranged by our Literature Committee, having obtained the judgment of at least two, and in this case three, responsi-

⁵⁶¹ Quoted in Blamires, *Pushing at the frontiers of change*, 8.

⁵⁶² Quoted in Blamires, *Pushing at the frontiers of change*, 12.

⁵⁶³ Blamires, *Pushing at the frontiers of change*, 6, 9.

ble Friend readers. This judgment is upon the suitability of the document as well-written literature deserving publication. It has never been a censorship, which is what would result from any attempt to limit publication to statements with which all Friends would agree.⁵⁶⁴

Such a policy was indeed “no new departure:” the practice of appointing two or three readers dated back to the Second Day’s Morning Meeting’s first meeting minute in 1673. Over the course of Quakerism’s “continuous search,” and throughout the harshly repressive climate regarding same-sex desire at the time, the legacy of the Second Day’s Morning Meeting carried forward by the FHSC developed their role as publishers, not censors. By publishing *Towards a Quaker View of Sex*, the concerns of a small, peripheral group of Friends meeting in and around the University of Cambridge were brought to the centre of discussion by both the Yearly Meeting and the Meeting for Sufferings.

1973-1982

In his memoir on Quaker activism around the issue of same-sex marriage, David Blamires cites *Towards a Quaker View of Sex* alongside the 1957 Wolfenden report as influences behind his decision to publish *Homosexuality from the Inside* (1973). More immediately, a 1971 book review in *The Friend* of Charlotte Wolff’s collection of interviews with lesbian women, *Love Between Women*, had elicited correspondence from readers that Blamires had seen as so “wrong-headed,” that he wrote a short article for the magazine to address the problem. “That article in *The Friend* was a beginning,” Blamires wrote, but after speaking with Quakers in both the USA and the UK, he realised that to dispel “the widespread ignorance...among Friends, [there] was a need for a more extensive publication.”⁵⁶⁵ After several meetings with Friends, including the recording clerk to the Yearly Meeting, the general secretary of the FHSC, and the head of the Friends House Library, publication of Blamires’ pamphlet was undertaken by another committee working in the wake of the early Quaker administrative meetings—the Social Responsibility Council (SRC). After further travel and a

⁵⁶⁴ Quoted in Blamires, *Pushing at the frontiers of change*, 9.

⁵⁶⁵ Blamires, *Pushing at the frontiers of change*, 22-3.

stay in Minneapolis to write a first draft, Blamires described his writing process in these terms:

Anybody who has ever been a clerk or national committee member in Britain knows that Friends love to get their teeth into drafts, whether minutes, Yearly Meeting epistles, or other Quaker documents. *Homosexuality from the inside (HFTI)* went through five drafts before actually being published.

I am not sure just who participated in the meetings that we had through 1972 to consider the drafts and make improvements. We were not an appointed committee, but rather a group of Friends who were deeply concerned to provide Quakers (in the first instance) with a picture of what it felt like to be homosexual in the social circumstances of the time. It was a task that we felt was laid on us, a concern in the full Quaker sense of the term. The core group met at the Friends International Centre. Each draft in turn was shared with an increasing number of Friends, and we gained enormously from their suggestions and careful reading. Towards the end of our work we consulted with members of the group that had produced [*Towards a Quaker View of Sex*] in 1963.⁵⁶⁶

After additional meetings with the Social Responsibility Council, and the Meeting for Sufferings, where Friends spoke both for and against the draft, it was approved for publication. In turn, the fifty-page result, *Homosexuality from the Inside* elicited many responses—“almost all...positive”—to Blamires in its edition of 10,000, and was reviewed in *The Friend*, and *The Guardian*, among other publications. Its publication prompted the creation of support groups for gay and lesbian individuals run by Quakers, a telephone counselling service, and the Friends Homosexual Fellowship, for homosexual Friends, their partners, and allies.⁵⁶⁷

Blamires travelled the world lecturing Quaker meetings, including the Australian mainland and Tasmania, Canada and the USA, as well as outside Quaker circles, within academia, and wrote for non-Quaker religious publi-

⁵⁶⁶ Blamires, *Pushing at the frontiers of change*, 24.

⁵⁶⁷ Blamires, *Pushing at the frontiers of change*, 29-30, 33.

cations.⁵⁶⁸ In 1979, a sympathetic Walter Barnett published a pamphlet in response to Blamires, *Homosexuality and the Bible*, arguing that parts of scripture that had been used within Christendom to condemn homosexuality had been misinterpreted.⁵⁶⁹ Between travel abroad and the responses it elicited to his work, and activities at home with the Friends Homosexual Fellowship, Blamires realised there was much more work to be done to record and publish the experiences of gay and lesbian Friends. Consequently, his next move was to help organise the publication of *Meeting Gay Friends* (1982), a collection of 22 autobiographical essays from gay, lesbian, and bisexual contributors ranging from those in their early twenties to old age pensioners. Publication of the pamphlet also prompted the need for a conference to widen the conversation, particularly surrounding underrepresented perspectives such as those of bisexual and transgender Friends.⁵⁷⁰

1987-2009

Work continued both to widen awareness of the gay experience and to provide pastoral care for LGBT people especially amidst the AIDs crisis in the 1980s.⁵⁷¹ In 1987 the Meeting for Sufferings began to facilitate discussion about the recognition of same-sex relationships within Quaker communities, and to debate whether in cases of long-term relationships these unions should be recognised and celebrated as marriages. In 1988 documents produced as a result of these meetings, and also from a few other Christian organisations, were published in a “study pack” distributed by the Quaker Home Service called *The recognition of same-sex relationships in the Religious Society of Friends*.⁵⁷² The same year, the Swathmore lecture at the Yearly Meeting was given by Harvey Gillman reflecting upon his experience

⁵⁶⁸ Blamires, *Pushing at the frontiers of change*, 36-40.

⁵⁶⁹ Stephen W. Angell, Pink Dandelion, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Quaker Studies* (Oxford: OUP, 2013) 450.

⁵⁷⁰ Blamires, *Pushing at the frontiers of change*, 46-48.

⁵⁷¹ Blamires, *Pushing at the frontiers of change*, chapter 5.

⁵⁷² Blamires, *Pushing at the frontiers of change*, 57.

as a gay, Jewish convert to Quakerism. By that year, it was clear to David Blamires and both the Quaker Home Service and the Friends Homosexual Fellowship that revisiting, revising, or perhaps even replacing *Towards a Quaker View of Sex*, at that point nearly thirty years old, was necessary. The result was an unofficially appointed committee who began meeting on 3 July 1988 until 11 December 1994 to discuss, author, and communally edit the papers that would become *This we can say: Talking honestly about sex*, another collection of Quaker perspectives on sexuality, similar to *Meeting Gay Friends* (1982). Around the same time, a separate group of Quakers published *Speaking our Truth* (1993) another collection of writing by gay, lesbian, and bisexual Quakers that would be expanded and republished in 2004 as *Part of the Rainbow*.⁵⁷³ Once the material had been arranged and circulated among four other Quaker readers for feedback, however, the work was not recommended to the Quaker Home Service for publication, and so the eight authors (one had died from AIDS by that point) set up Nine Friends Press to publish the work themselves.⁵⁷⁴

While only a minority within Quakerism, the single title issued by Nine Friends Press nevertheless accomplished at least two significant results: it coincided with the work of the Revision Committee, a group of twenty-five officially appointed Friends charged with updating the Book of Discipline, and it added momentum to discussions surrounding Quaker approval of same sex marriage that would culminate in an official statement in 2009. The Quaker Book of Discipline was drawn from a few of George Fox's earliest epistles, but in its recent incarnation was organised to include Quaker beliefs based on manuscripts compiled by the London Yearly Meeting in the 1730s. The last time it had been updated, agreed upon, and circulated in the 20th century was 1959. Beginning in 1986, the Revision Committee sought suggestions from individuals—and in total received no less than

⁵⁷³ Blamires, *Pushing at the frontiers of change*, 36; *Part of the Rainbow: A plain Quaker look at Lesbian Gay and Bisexual lives* (Harrogate, Yorks: Quaker Lesbian and Gay Fellowship 2004) 1. The Quaker Lesbian and Gay Fellowship was a new name adopted by the Friends Homosexual Fellowship.

⁵⁷⁴ Blamires, *Pushing at the frontiers of change*, 73-75.

3,200 from the wider membership—and in 1994 incorporated perspectives from *This we can say* into its sections on “Close Relationships.” Crucially, they did not include a separate heading for “homosexuality,” but rather in the index entry for “homosexuality” directed readers to discussions on “sexuality,” making the point that it was not to be seen as separate or “inherently a problem,” but instead as equal with heterosexuality.⁵⁷⁵ After three decades of publishing and conversation on the fringe being funded and brought into the centre of attention by the Yearly Meeting, this was the first officially published position to accord equal rights regardless of sexual orientation, if only by implication. Shortly after, in 1995, the first gay British Quaker relationship was celebrated in a ceremony of commitment in Oxford.⁵⁷⁶

While Quakers began to approve of same sex marriage ceremonies, dependant upon the location, the European Union’s passage of the Civil Partnership Act in 2003 prompted Friends to consider same sex marriage as an official matter of policy. Quaker committees were set up and conferences were held to address the absence of a spiritual component to the legalisation of civil ceremonies, and in 2009 the Yearly Meeting officially began to advocate in favour of same-sex marriage, and for a change in the language of EU law to call same-sex ceremonies “marriages” as a matter of equality. In a paper entitled “We Are But Witnesses,” The Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations circulated information about the Yearly Meeting’s decision and its theological underpinnings for use by other churches and faiths.⁵⁷⁷ While the focus, in this case, was on the topic of marriage equality, the wider argument was about equal rights under the law —what activist Peter Tatchell has called a “lightning rod” tactic of focussing

⁵⁷⁵ Blamires, *Pushing at the frontiers of change*, 77.

⁵⁷⁶ Blamires, *Pushing at the frontiers of change*, 85.

⁵⁷⁷ Blamires, *Pushing at the frontiers of change*, 91-92.

on one issue in order to combat wider discrimination.⁵⁷⁸ Much work still remains, and Quakers have a place in a story and a struggle that continues. But as David Blamires concludes in his memoir:

Social changes do not happen overnight; they are the result of numberless small actions coming together in moving forward...The story of Quaker involvement is still worth telling, though, because it shows how small groups, working together under concern and prepared to devote the necessary time, made a difference to the resolution of an important area of social injustice.⁵⁷⁹

Within the context of LGBTQ history such a unified, wide-reaching approach taken by Quaker leaders in 2009 was an event over fifty years in the making, relying on a do-it-yourself approach to forming meetings, facilitating discussion, consciousness raising, and circulating writing, similar to other LGBTQ organisations, including the Campaign for Homosexual Equality, the Gay Liberation Front, and later ACT UP, Outrage!, and Stonewall.⁵⁸⁰ But within the context of Quaker history and in keeping with Quaker tradition and concerns of conscience, such efforts were over three centuries in the making, and relied on almost constant dialogue between individuals, smaller collectives, and larger communities. In the absence of a centuries-old archive for one struggle—that of LGBTQ people—the Quaker archive and library bears witness to the kind of action and exchange necessary to compel the majority to first acknowledge the oppression of minority groups, and more importantly, endeavour to end such sufferings.

⁵⁷⁸ Shackle, Samira, "Peter Tatchell: "Same-Sex Marriage Is A Great Victory. But It Isn't Quite Equality"," *The New Humanist*. <https://newhumanist.org.uk/articles/4660/peter-tatchell-same-sex-marriage-is-a-great-victory-but-it-isnt-quite-equality>.

⁵⁷⁹ Blamires, *Pushing at the frontiers of change*, 94.

⁵⁸⁰ See for instance Vern L. Bullough, *Before Stonewall: Activists for Gay and Lesbian Rights in Historical Context* (New York: Harrington Park Press, 2002), Sarah Schulman, *The Gentrification of the Mind: Witness to a Lost Imagination* (Oakland, CA: U of California P, 2012), David Wojnarowicz, *Close to the Knives: A Memoir of Disintegration* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991).

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