

CHAPTER 27

Quakers

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The middle decades of the seventeenth century witnessed the birth of the Quaker movement and, simultaneously, a relaxing of censorship that led to an increase in published material. As a result of this concurrence, ‘Friends’ (as they were known) quickly recognised that they could disseminate their message through print. A branch of radical Protestantism that practised impromptu preaching, Quakerism inspired its adherents to declare that ‘the truth of the Lord’ must be ‘spread’, and to demonstrate the leading of an inward light: ‘the Lord God hath lighted my Candle, and it must not be hid’ (Graves 2009; White 1660: 6). Sharing moments of religious insight and religio-political commentary with others was soon widely practised, and Quaker utilization of print for these purposes can be seen in the remaining decades of the century. Friends published nearly 1,000 texts during their first decade (the 1650s) alone, even as the ‘valiant sixty’, who were the stalwarts of the new movement during the early years, grew to 60,000 converts by the end of the Commonwealth period (Runyan 1973; Vipont 1975; Reay 1985: 9). Inevitably, their published works were influenced by the social and historical conditions that obtained during these years. After the return of the Stuart monarchy in 1660, output continued to be high; yet this declined to an estimated fifty to seventy-five texts per year in the latter decades of the century (Runyan 1973; Green 2002: 70–71).² Connecting to the readers of published works was always part of the plan, as Quakers sought to carve their presence in print culture from their movement’s inception. Indeed, mapping the changes in emphasis during the first fifty years of Quakerism is one of

the themes of this chapter, as the movement went through many radical changes between 1650 and 1700.

It may be thought strange that a general claim can be made for so broad a spectrum of literature, but it is the case that the Quakers' central religious *tenets* are pervasive and relatively consistent. As noted in the only survey, to date, of Quaker writing's first seventy-five years, 'practically every [autobiographical] narrative contains a detailed account of the surrender of individual will to the leadings of the inner light' (Wright 1932: 156). Moreover, as William Frost argues, 'the key to Quakerism was the inward light of Christ. Both opponents and Friends recognised this theme' (Frost 1970: 508). In perceiving spiritual insight as personal, as when Sarah Blackborrow declares that 'a resolution [was] begotten in me, to find Christ in me' (Blackborrow 1660: 8), Quakers echo the earlier Protestant reformers who urged believers to look within for signs of God's grace. The Quakers from the first decade established the practices that later writers would either emulate themselves, or drawn back from, even when writing from altered social contexts about the light spoken of in the gospels (John 1:9; 12:46). Since it was so often returned to, no account of Quaker writing can afford to ignore their repeated theological insistence on the divinising light, or illuminated conscience, that was an extension of Protestant theology.

Nevertheless, literary criticism has in recent years brought a new emphasis on the *modes* of writing adopted by Quakers, as well as attention to matters such as authorial *voice*, since the manipulation of print was the 'means by which Quakers argued for their ideas in a hostile world' (Hughes 1994: 144). The special issue of *Prose Studies*, from which this observation has been taken, provided the first edited collection of essays to explore the 'development of Quaker writing' as its sole focus (Corns 1994: 2). Now, it is generally conceded that the Quakers' deployment of print made them amongst the most effective religio-political pamphleteers of the century (Peters 2005).

In the discussion which follows, I will segment Quaker writing according to the standard temporal division that the historian William Braithwaite introduced. Namely, I will work chronologically from the first phase (1650–1660) to the second period of Quakerism (1661–1700) (Braithwaite 1981, 1979), with the second phase itself divided into two politically defined sections, 1660–1689 and 1690–1700. Quaker writing resonates with readers today because of the immediacy and urgency of its prose, which often has a reformist, socially egalitarian message (Hobby 1991). Nevertheless, it has often been asserted that the second phase of Quakerism lost its vigour as it moved, in Maurice A. Creasy’s memorable phrase, ‘from the meeting to the study’ (1962: 11). The emphasis in the course of this chapter will be on the importance of collective experiences to religious writers, since ‘individual expression was not a paramount aesthetic concern’ of the early Quakers (McDowell 1998: 103).³ I assume, in other words, that that pamphleteers wrote *as Quakers*, conveying not only their individual connection to the living God working within the believer but, also, an equally developed understanding of their place within the Quaker corpus when trying to shape the movement’s public image.

In the seventeenth century, sympathetic readers pointed out the ‘Service to the Truth’, while hostile reading communities drew attention to the perceived errors of a Quaker text (Burrough 1672: A3^f). As I will show through discussion of representative texts from across the range of the corpus, Quakers exploited print culture to inform, reprehend and offer inspiration to their readers through highly persuasive writing. Characteristic in their discussion of socio-political themes was the admonition of those persons viewed as impervious to Quaker imperatives for reform of the individual and the state in matters of conscience. Quakers did not only communicate disparagingly, however, as though outsiders were to be repelled. By inflecting the personal and autobiographical into the written accounts of their spiritual leadings, Friends showed others how they, too, could be saved by the light

within. The key genres analysed here are not static or fixed in nature; I shall refer to the most significant modes, as well as contending that there is significant generic overlap among them.⁴

THE WORD OF THE LORD: QUAKER WRITING, 1650–1659

Quaker writers during the first decade of the movement's inception developed their eschatology to engage in highly-charged modes of address. Writers frequently envisaged that the language of the text would stir readers by working on them to examine the grounds of their faith, and so learn of God's work from the text. They are reader-centred in their approach to reformist work, as can be seen even from their titles. Market-conscious printers may have been more active than the writers of tracts in setting out the title-pages, but these are no less useful for what they show about Quaker methods of appealing to readers. For example, William Dewsbury's *The Mighty Day of the Lord, is Coming* uses the main title to declare the eschatological belief in Christ's immanency, while the extended sub-title addresses two camps: those with 'desires to know the onely true God', and those who 'reject his counsel' (1656b). Striking title pages in Dewsbury's other works show the same originating force, just as *The Mighty Day* was said to be 'the word of the Lord' (title page; Wing 1945: 444–45). His *The Discovery of Mans Return to his First Estate* instances that it is 'from the Spirit of the Lord' (1654b), as does his *A True Prophecy of the Mighty Day of the Lord* (1654a). It is small wonder that Quaker writing is perceived critically to be 'often using ecstatic language' (Garman 1996: 31).

According to a contemporary witness, Dewsbury was both a prolific writer and a compelling orator: ‘his testimony [...] was piercing and very powerful, so as the earth shook before him’ (Braithwaite 1981 [1912], 74). The fortitude of people that shaped the movement in the early years, and wrote extensively, like Dewsbury, was recognised when their works were ‘[re]printed for future service’ (Dewsbury [1689], title page). In particular, prefatory material in the form of testimonies and addresses ‘to the Reader’ establish the framework through which to interpret the perceived value of Quaker writing to others; hence, utilization of later editions of a writer’s works can be key to assessing their reception. In fact, some of the most interesting observations on pamphleteering belong not to the 1650s, but to periods considerably later, including the beginning of the eighteenth century. John Whiting, for instance, remarked on the context behind the production of Dewsbury’s ‘several books’ about persecution (Whiting 1715: 181). In the late-seventeenth century, however, those commending Dewsbury’s complete works, *The Faithful Testimony*, praised him for the combined ‘boldness’, ‘plainness’ and ‘simplicity’ of his pamphleteering, which brought many to see ‘the benefit of his Labours’ (Dewsbury 1689: A2^v-A3^f). The same inspired language used on the title-pages of his individual pamphlets from the 1650s was repeated in the preface which describes how Dewsbury was ‘made an eminent Instrument in his [God’s] hand’ (Dewsbury 1689: A2^v). As Hilary Hinds has observed, persons willing to be guided by the Holy Spirit were often defined as ‘instruments’ (1996: 96–100). Hence, the term denotes that through this unity with the godhead the individual is both passive and empowered.

Titles that use the word ‘admonition’ or ‘warning’ are just as likely to exhibit that the central message being imparted is ‘from the Lord,’ resulting in a difficulty with establishing with any degree of rigour the generic breakdown of Quaker texts. Although David Runyan’s tabular analysis (1973) does at least provide a long view of the century, it lacks precision. Smaller, more qualitative, cross-sections of Quaker literature best confirm what can be seen

already in Dewsbury's writing: a preponderance of inspired works. Taking the texts published during the five-year period by Quaker printer Mary Westwood as her sample, Maureen Bell found that prophecies are 'well represented' in her corpus (1988: 39). Bonnylyn Young Kunze categorised Quaker women's writing, and found thirty-one calls to repentance, fifty-four statements of religious doctrine and eighteen polemical tracts (1994: 132). Any of these varieties of writing might also have a prophetic tenor. For instance, the 'inspiration of the Spirit of Jesus Christ [...] who is found worthy to open the Seals of the Book, and is *the way, the truth, and the life,*' is invoked in a polemical text, here the work of Dewsbury in response to an Anti-Quaker writer (Dewsbury 1656 a: 25, citing Revelation 5 and John 14:6). The admonitory stance adopted with regard to non-Quakers could be bombastic, such as when Dewsbury spoke in the voice of God: 'I will overturn, overturn, overturn' (Dewsbury 1654a: 6). Polemic, doctrine, admonition, warning and prophecy—these may all be combined in Quaker works.

Dorothy White's short Quaker tracts from 1659–1662 (seventeen in total) are all prophetic in nature, even though some are defined as '*Epistles*' and others directly address '*England's Rulers*' or '*The Parliament*' (Foxton 1994: 72–4; White 1661; White 1662b; White [1662c]). The designation of the term 'prophet' during the seventeenth century was 'frighteningly open-ended' (Gilman Richey 1998: 1), but it usually involved union and, more rapturously, 'an exclusive transcendent intuition of the Godhead' (Hessayon 2007: 91). Maintaining that 'in the Name of the Lord God, and in his Authority I do proclaim', White establishes that she is an emissary since her 'language,' as Hilary Hinds contends, shows its 'divine origin' (White 1662a: 5; Hinds 1996: 138). The key feature in her writing is that she adopts a three-stage process. Firstly, God prepares the ground by bringing out the prophetic spirit in his people. Thereafter, during the second stage, it is characteristic that the relationship with the godhead is shown to be beyond full expression (though represented

textually, to the best of the writer's ability). This sort of experience benefits from an associative, allegorical style, such as when White refers to how '[her] soul doth swim within the Sea of love, as fishes in the water move' (1661: 8–9). Once it has been acknowledged that God has a purpose, and that the individual Quaker is attuned to this through a vision, a calling, or else being moved by the inward light, the prophecy can begin.

In *An Epistle of Love and Consolation*, White moves smoothly into the third stage, which is speaking and writing. She declares, 'The Kingdom of Glory is revealed, the Son of Righteousness is risen in his Beauty, in his transparent Brightness, the Glory of all Nations is come; and this is the Day, wherein the Lord God is binding up his Jewels, in the bond of Life, in the tye [sic] of his own Spirit; and the Lamb is come to Reign in his Temple' (1661: 1). Phyllis Mack's term for such an occurrence is 'self-transcendence' (1992: 127–64), though where there are direct comments on the authorial role, as in this instance of White's *Epistle*, 'merging' would better describes the process, since the woman inscribes her own physical presence into the account: 'And the Lord God hath spoken, and therefore I will speak, for God hath unloosed my tongue, to speak to the praise of his name' (1661: 2). White concludes: 'the ravishing Glory of God did overshadow me, and the word of Eternal Life run through me, often saying, Publish the day of the Lord God, lift up thy voice like a Trumpet, as a mighty shout; and this is to go through the Nation' (1661: 6). Such works reach out to the reader by asking that the light and word working through the prophet be recognised.

It is more difficult to gauge the responses of readers to Quaker women's writing than it is to the equivalent works of the men, especially those who, like Dewsbury, were honoured with collected editions of their writings. With the exception of Margaret Fell, the eminent Quaker leader (Fell 1710), there are no published collected works for Quaker women. Dorothy White was the second most prolific female writer after Fell, but the neglect of her in a commemorative edition is unsurprising for two reasons (Foxton 1994: 72–74). The first is

that her works tended to be short and in total they add up to only 180 printed pages (with an additional three broadsides). The second reason is that a woman with this name was a follower of the disowned Quaker, John Perrot, a situation which may go some way to explaining the apologetic tenor of the works she published in the 1680s, after twenty years of silence (Farnworth 1665: 15).⁵ James Nayler, the Quaker who brought shame on the movement when convicted for blasphemy, was able to be re-habilitated and republished (1716); but White was not afforded equal stature or deemed as important as this early Friend.

This absence of collected works is not the only reason why the impact of Quaker women's work on readers cannot easily be measured. Another is the general paucity of prefaces or comments 'To The Reader' in 1650s Quaker writing. This is significant because prefaces are important for framing the writer, and comparison might therefore be made with a Fifth Monarchist / Baptist writer like Anna Trapnel, for instance, who benefited from positive commentary about the efficacy of her prophecies (Holstun 2000: 257–303; Adcock 2011: 207–251). Republication is another way of measuring the perceived significance of a work. However, women's pamphlets rarely run to second editions, though Fell and Anne Audland are an exception (Foxton 1994: 47–48). Some works by Margaret Fell were also translated into other languages, indicating her value as a spokesperson for the movement (Foxton 1994: 53–56). Although excellent scholarly work offers insights into the relationship between writers of pamphlets and their readership, much remains to be done with regards to the very specific case of Quaker women (Peacey 2013; Raymond 1996).

Though this might seem to suggest that women's contribution to the literary profile of the movement was slight, female Quakers in fact produced a corpus of work that was far larger than contemporary Baptists, Anglicans and Independents (Bell 1990: 250). Moreover, if the presentation of women's writing tends to be materially different from that of some esteemed male writers' works—for example, lacking prefaces—it nevertheless holds true to

some of the key tropes, specifically the idea of writing ‘for the Lord’, practised in a movement that perceived spiritual equality. Indeed, another way in which Quaker women’s writing can be considered significant is that it was used at the time to shape the public image of Quakerism. Evidence of the women’s connection to and integration into the wider Quaker movement is one of the vital aspects of their writing (Gill 2005).

The dubious honour of having one’s work responded to by a virulently anti-Quaker writer is an important way of judging the impact of Friends’ publications. William Dewsbury, for instance, was reviled by John Timson in 1656 for his tract entitled *A True Prophecy* ((Timson 1656; Dewsbury 1654a), resulting in an answer from Dewsbury the same year (Dewsbury 1656a). Similarly negative impacts on readers can contextualise the writing of other Quaker leaders of the 1650s, such as the response to George Fox’s *Saul’s Errand to Damascus* and Edward Burrough’s political writings (Weld and others 1654: 5; Leslie 1696: XCVIII, C, CCXCVI-CCXCVIII, CCCIV, 166). James Nayler is the subject of the most concerted anti-Quaker riposte, and many contemporary pamphlets commented on his ‘fall’ after the ill-fated Christ-like entry into Bristol and his severe public punishment for blasphemy (Damrosch 1996; Moore 2000: 43). It is usual for anti-sectarian writers to draw particular attention to women whom they perceived to be especially transgressive, and the heresiographer Thomas Edwards, writing of 1640s sectarianism, took this approach (Hughes 2006: 113–15). Friends such as ‘Williamson’s Wife’, who was said to have asserted that she was the son of God, also feature in anti-Quaker literature, for the similar reason that they exaggerated the threat of Quakerism to contemporary society (Higginson 1653: 3–4). The women involved in the Nayler affair also drew comment, particularly Martha Simmonds. Being well-connected to the London print-market (she was married to a Quaker printer), she wrote and published some short texts (Foxton 1994: 66). In one of the anti-Nayler works, it is Simmonds’s publications that are censured, rather than, as was more usual, her actions and

character. Christopher Wade sneers that her ‘gross ignorance’ was ‘published in print’ (1657: 35). The reactions of anti-Quaker writers offer only a jaded view of the impact of Quaker writing on their readership, and in Wade we see how a woman’s work could be pored over in order to show ‘the Devil speaking in thee’ (Wade 1657: 36).

Although writers who were critical of Quaker writings shared a general impulse to question the legitimacy of their messages, even these clerics reveal the movement’s bibliophilic focus. Metaphors of disease are widely in evidence in the description of the Quaker menace, since the idea that their writing was attacking the body politic was common scare-mongering. However, it does seem from these antagonistic writings that the textual profligacy of the Quaker movement was apparent to all. Its members are depicted as excessively print-centred: ‘[Quakers] would trouble me with divers of their Books ... twelve of their Books were brought to me’ (Firmin 1656: 1). The movement was said to publish works of excessive virulence, taking ‘sinful liberty to themselves in their printed books’ (Higginson 1653: a1^v). Quaker words were quoted back to ‘let all Christian Readers consider their ‘railing’, and admonish them for not knowing when to ‘bridle their tongues’ (Weld et al 1654: 17; Collier 1657: 1; Miller 1655: 6). Anti-Quaker books, then, claimed to protect their readers against vulnerability to Quakerism: ‘I hope where ever this Book shall arrive before them, the people will so well know them, as to abhor any further acquaintance with them’ (Underhill 1660: 35). Quakers continued to embrace the public forum of print, even so, and Edward Burrough, one of the Quakers’ chief political writers, stipulates that his text should be circulated by readers, ‘sent from one to another as they are moved’ (1657: [14]). Moreover, he suggested a remedy in cases where the book itself was not sufficient to answer all queries: ‘[if] any be unsatisfied still in the matter, And if any, especially of the Heads and Rulers have Jealousies raised in them, concerning us [...] [we] make freely and cheerfully, four, ten, twenty, thirty, or more or fewer of us, [to] give as many of the wisest and ablest Priests and

Professors a meeting for dispute' (1672: C4^v). The saturation of the print market with popular print may well have had the effect of gradually educating the readership to sort the truth from the lies, but Burrough, for one, was still willing to enter into further conversation (Peacey 2013: 93–114).

In addition to prophecy, a second major feature of the Quaker output during the 1650s was, as Runyan points out, 'an appeal to the political leaders or parliament' (Runyan 1973: 567). Since the genre of the 'appeal' is also typically written as though it is from God, it further exemplifies this recurrent feature of Friends' works. Named a 'Son of Thunder', Edward Burrough was particularly valued by Quakers who gave him this nomenclature to show his energetic and inspired character (Burrough 1672, title page). As is typical of auto/biographical sketches from the period,⁶ *The Memorable Works* show the integration of a believer into the religious community in addition to their personal qualities, and Burrough is praised for his service to the Quaker movement (Gill 2005). Richard Bauman, in *Let your Words be Few*, suggests that Burrough was 'one of the most effective of the early Quaker tract writers at systematizing Quaker doctrine for public presentation' (1998: 24). Burrough's orientation in his political pamphlets emerges clearly: a parliament man with love for the good old cause, and hopeful that the Army could be its agents, he nevertheless instructed the rulers on how they could better serve the people and God. In the 1660s, even such a committed commonwealth man could speak reasonably accommodatingly to the restored monarch (Moore 2000: 177). He wrote texts of the kind John Whiting described as 'Reproof and Warning as a Prophet to the Rulers and People of divers sorts' (1715: 131). Quakers also published their petitions to parliament, but in this discussion I will not examine them as a distinct genre.

Interestingly, Burrough's addresses to rulers do not draw much on the ecstasy of merging with the godhead, nor does he use the word prophecy in the titles of his political

tracts, thus distinguishing his mode of writing from that of Dewsbury and White. Yet the absence of these features allows Burrough to develop another mode when speaking ‘the word of the Lord.’ In *A Message* (November, 1659) he notes: ‘this is the very substance of my message to you, that my master hath given me to say unto you’ (1659b: 10). He continues: ‘I have told you the Lords present message unto you, which I received from him,’ and ‘I must tell you, as he said unto me so to do’ (1659b: 16, 2). He looks for the providential message, with an apocalyptic fervour confirming what Bernard Capp has claimed to be the period’s ‘widespread apocalyptic and millenarian beliefs’ (1972: 35). Burrough, in sadness, comments on the state of the nation: ‘there is no establishment in the Earth, but strife and contention, and heart-burnings in the bowels of the Nation, and great want of true love, true unity, and true peace, and all the contrary doth abound among the people, because of which the Nation is subject to present misery [...] we have seen the cause of thy distractions to be the sins of thy Rulers and People’ (1659a: 2). What to Burrough, and indeed to many Quakers, was so obvious that it hardly needed expressing, was that God was angry at the mistreatment of the people of God. Enthymeme—‘a syllogism in which one premiss is suppressed’ (*OED* 3)—is a common feature in religious works because this rhetorical mechanism combines two ideas without fully articulating the relationship between proposition ‘a’ and proposition ‘b’ (Stark 2008). This gave the reader scope to construct for him/herself the providential message hinted at in the text, recognising that the people of God are the Quakers.

When exercising choice in his rhetorical tactics, Burrough is like the Quaker women petitioning parliament in that, as Kirilka Stavreva has observed of them, they ‘heeded closely the divergent responses of the assembled audience’ (2007: 35). Burrough’s tone can be more measured, though, unlike some religio-political writers of the period, never neutral or dispassionate (Caldwell 2007). On the issue of toleration, for example, he proposed solutions that could reduce persecution, while on matters of religious conscience he speaks

thoughtfully. He expounds that '[God] alone will settle and establish Religion by his own power and by his own Law, and through his own Ministry, as people comes to that of God in them, to feel the Spirit and power of the Lord God to change them; hereby will every one particularly be settled in Religion, and by no other way nor means; and this I know from the Lord' (Burrough 1659e: 5–6). He is, however, more acerbic when defining the church's role in persecution, since he notes the irony that only when groups are pressing to establish themselves do they preach liberty of conscience. Conveniently ignoring their initial idealism once they have to extend liberty of conscience to others, such groups follow 'the great Whore [...] the beast [...] false worships and Churches,' as Burrough notes only a few sentences after his calming tone has assured the readership of God's plan (Burrough 1659e: 6). In many of his political tracts, he employs a rhetorical signature that serves to show he is a sincere defender of the people's rights, representing himself as inconsolably honest, virtuously so: 'I do answer on my Lords behalf: and I must tell you plainly ...' (Burrough 1659b: 15). He is like the Digger Gerrard Winstanley in knowing that a pamphlet intended for rulers will contain 'some things inserted which you may not like' (Burrough 1652: 11; Winstanley 2009: 288). Burrough also shows God's will is greater, so 'read and consider', and that he is 'a friend to righteous men,' a 'lover of Justice,' a 'Friend to this Nation' (1659c; 1659 e, 12; 1659 f; 1659 d).

Quakers quoted the Bible often in their speech and writing, but they nevertheless maintained that the basis of their own faith was spiritual, not scriptural (Fox 1656; Graves 2009: 69–76). The practice of reading was therefore afforded the same status as other sorts of religious activity, as can be seen from the comments of Rebecca Travers. Wholly typical of the Quaker attitude, Travers explains, 'the Scripture [...] were written by holy men as they were moved by the holy Ghost, and are revealed and interpreted by the same spirit' (Travers 1659: 4–5). Quaker prophets affirm that they write in the spirit, and read the Bible in the

same inspired state. Moreover, given the heart-changes that could be affected by connecting to the godhead, it could be argued that they also endeavoured to work on the consciences of the political elite, making them both better readers, and men (Lobo 2012). Across the period, the prophetic impulse in Quaker writing led them to use print knowingly, and, indeed, inspiringly.

Quakers did not write for writing's sake, but for a purpose: to convey the inner workings of the light as it led them to admonish, guide, or engage the reader. 1650s prophets such as Dewsbury, White and Burrough sought thorough societal and spiritual reformation, so used their pamphlets to argue for radical change across the nation. In the Restoration, Quakers continued to write 'For the Lord', but also recorded their sufferings under an increasingly partisan legal code that criminalised religious dissenters, in a period when persecution was 'carried on with very great severity and rigour' (Ellwood 1885: 249).

1660–1689: 'DIVINE PROVIDENCE [...] SOMETIMES VOUCHSAFEST

TO BRING GOOD OUT OF EVIL'

Hester Biddle, a vocal Quaker prophet with six publications to her name, observed in the early 1660s: 'I had rather die the cruellest Death that ever was, or can be delivered by man, than to neglect or abstain from meeting together in his Name' (1662: 21). The tenor of most Quaker anti-persecution pamphlets of the Restoration period was as defiant as Biddle's. Margaret Fell wrote retrospectively in a similar vein, of her experiences in 1664: 'I rather choose a prison for obeying of God, than my liberty for obeying of men contrary to my conscience' (Fell 1992: 109). 'Men' stood for persons who were 'unedified' by religion,

referring in this context to the adherents of the legal system who upheld the stingy legislation of the 1660s, such as the Quaker Act of February, 1662 (Braithwaite 1979: 23, 21–115). Quakers quite often termed such people ‘the generation of Cain’, and blemished the reputations of persons who acted as judges against them with charges of corruption (Cotton 1655: 2). In effect, they made liberty to worship as much a moral matter as it was a legal or religio-political one. In contrast to the unregenerate, Quakers insisted that persons that held to their beliefs, though the cost to them was great, were ‘of another spirit, of another image, or another make, of another heart’ (Barbour 1973: 374; Penington 1661: 8). As Richard C. Allen has explored in the Restoration context, Quakers used forthright language to condemn the wider society for compelling people to worship in the state church (Allen 2013).

The penal system that prosecuted religious dissenters during the reign of Charles II led not only to the imprisonment of Quakers but also, after repeat offences, to the sentence of transportation and *praemunire*.⁷ Though the focus of this chapter is, in the main, English Quakerism, very notable instances of persecution took place in other countries, and it is reductive to limit an account of their ‘suffering’ (as Quakers called it) merely to the Carolean context (Lise Tarter 1993; Herbert 2011). Indeed, some of the news of Quaker persecution abroad is to be found in texts printed with especial care—either receiving editorial attention from several authors, or being devotedly republished—which signifies that these works were thought to be of quite widespread interest to British readers. Quakers in Boston, New England, for example, were served with the death penalty for failing to recant their faith or adhere by the court’s sentence of banishment. As a consequence, several pamphlets from the early 1660s told of the persecution of three Quakers in the colonies: George Bishop’s *New England Judged* (1661); [Anon.], *A Call from Death to Life* (1660); and Edward Burrough’s *A Declaration of the Sad and Great Persecution and Martyrdom* [1661] (Barbour 1973: 116–40). The last of these is given prestige treatment as the printer used black-letter typeface to

add textual enhancement to the account, making it atypical of Quaker texts. The printer's (or Burrough's) use of the word '*martyrdom*' in the title was typical of work that was informed by John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*. Some Quakers are known to have owned this book, and others make reference to it in their work on persecution (Kunze 1994: 210; *A Narrative of the Cruelties and Abuses*, 1683: 28; Fell 1664: 15). However, these confirming details only add to the picture that, through print, '[Quakers] reinforced their sense of themselves as belonging to the line of martyrs [from the Bible and from Foxe] for God's truth' (Knott 1993: 218). Mary Dyer was one of the Quakers sent to the scaffold in Boston, where she used her protest to affirm: 'I came in Obedience to the Will of God' in order to reverse the '*unrighteous Lawes*' (Burrough and Dyer 1661: 28).

As John Knott has persuasively observed, 'no religious community of the late seventeenth century suffered more than the Quakers, or did more to record and publicise their sufferings' (1993: 216). Each different stage of the judicial process received detailed comment, from being taken to a J. P., to the trial, to imprisonment. Moreover, differing depictions of selfhood emerge in Quaker publications from this period, depending on the aspect of persecution being described. It is noteworthy that there is as much to contrast as to compare in the two main accounts of George Fox's imprisonment at Lancaster prison. The contemporaneous text of 1664 by Margaret Fell focused on the crucial moment when Fox protested his innocence at trial. Fox's subsequent account of his experience in Lancaster (published in 1694, though probably written before 1679), reaches a climax when describing the privation resulting from his sentence (Fell 1664; Keeble 1987: 50; Fox 1998: 346).

In addition to the different points of emphasis to be found in Quaker narratives, Friends also used varied modes when writing of suffering. In part because the Psalms inspired them, and in part because the early-modern prison was a 'muses habitation', Friends also wrote significant amounts of poetry (Murray 2009: 149; Moore 2004). Poetry engenders

a different voice as its modes of diction often move from admonition to a feature we have not yet observed in Friend's writing: complaint. Towards the end of the 1650s, two Quaker women, Katharine Evans and Sarah Cheevers, were imprisoned by the Italian inquisition in Malta. As in the case of the sufferings of the New England Quakers, the publication history seems to show that Friends anticipated a general readership for the women's account of their suffering. *A Short Relation* had a preface, was published twice, and was later updated to take account of Evans and Cheevers' release from prison (Foxton 1994: 52; Fabrizio 2013). Katherine Evans was responsible for much of the verse, and her work expresses the ardent resolve of many Friends when faced with incarceration:

My Love to *Truth* doth me constrain

In Prison ever to remain;

If it in truth be so that even I

Cannot in truth be set at Liberty. (Evans and Cheevers 1662: 48)

In like manner, Thomas Ellwood's *Journal* (1714) contains both verse and prose accounts of 1660s suffering. His poetry, on occasion, is a cautionary warning to Friends: 'Oh that no unbelieving heart / Among us may be found' (1885: 256–7). Such comments add a different register to the literature of persecution. Rather than a confident or unrepentant strain, Ellwood's verse shows, perhaps, some anxiety that he will not be found worthy:

'To the Holy One'

Surround me, Father, with thy mighty Power

Support me daily by thine holy arm [...]

Preserve me faithful in evil hour,

Stretch forth thine hand to save me from all harm. (Ellwood 1885: 227)

Quaker writings from the period of the Stuart monarchy, infused as they are with accounts of that ‘evil hour’ for the Friends, suggest that it was hard for them to discern God’s plan for his people (Rose 2011). The Quakers had started to compile records of their sufferings in the late 1650s (Braithwaite 1981: 314). These sources would later provide the material for Joseph Besse’s *A Collection of the Sufferings* (1753), a text which situates such hardships providentially. Observing that ‘it pleased Almighty God, to whom only the Intentions and Designs of Princes are foreseen and foreknown [...] to place upon the Throne King William [...] [for] the Glory of establishing to Protestant Dissenters a general Liberty of Conscience in religious Worship, ‘ Besse traced the path to toleration (1753: xlv).

Seventeenth-century narratives of Quaker sufferings, lacking the teleological understanding of Besse, nevertheless also tried to reveal God’s purpose. A series of pamphlets concerning the persecution of the 1660s declare their perspective in the vocabulary of sorrow and innocence shared by their titles: *The Third Part of the Cry of the Innocent* (1662), *The Cry of the Innocent and Oppressed* (1664) and *Another Out-Cry* (1665). In yet another similarly entitled pamphlet, *Another Cry*, the writers promise their persecutors that ‘the hand of the Lord will over take them’ (1664: 11). In ‘R.C.’s’ *God’s Holy Name*, suffering was twinned with a Revelation-style prophecy in order to show the disastrous consequences of intolerance (1661). The plague and fire of the mid-1660s gave further cause for reflection (*Another Out-Cry* 1665). Quaker writers could also see God’s hand when a judge, jury-member, or prison warder suffered either an unexpected or painful death; details such as these register that Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments* was still the literary model to be invoked.⁸ As Thomas Ellwood observed, ‘Divine Providence [...] sometimes vouchsafeth to bring Good out of Evil’ (Ellwood 1885: 249).

William Penn sought to influence the toleration debate by his insistence that the Quakers be reprieved in the name of liberty of conscience. The ‘bulk’ of Penn’s writing on religious liberty was produced by the mid-1670s (Morris 2012: 203). Penn saw that the mass imprisonment of worshippers on matters of conscience was a blot on the nation’s character. When he wrote a series of pamphlets at the end of the 1680s, he formulated his argument, in part, in language that had been used in earlier works. For instance, he commented on the Foxeian idea that ‘the Martyrs Blood won the day’ (1687: 11). However, Penn’s aim was clearly to look beyond the Foxeian framework that had been so useful to Quakers in the early days, and that remained in evidence in the accounts of the sufferings of Friends in distant locations, such as America. Although Penn left ‘no direct testimony to the sources of his intellectual and theological development’, it seems that he ‘may have made searching use of humanist and philosophical resources’ (Morris 2012: 208; Angell 2012: 166). Quakers had not always been so willing to use or embrace non-Quaker writers, though on legal matters an exception was often made in the case of John Selden, who had been so useful to Quakers appealing against having to pay tithes (Nevitt 2006: 145–178). Indeed, John Crook had apologised early in the Restoration for ‘using the Laws of men’ in his argument (Crook 1662: 47). However, Penn had no such compunction and could, indeed, be employing the humanist belief that rhetoric, well-argued and logically set out, could win the day (Remer 1996). He writes with the authority of one that knows the wider discourse: ‘Why then may not that be done here that has been so happily acted elsewhere?’ (Penn 1688: 9).

Penn wrote of the parlous situation of Quakers: ‘If ever it were time to speak, or write, it is now’ (1993, 135). Quakers indeed took this literally across the near thirty years between the Restoration and toleration, writing at least 167 sufferings narratives from 1660–1688, the most standard being those already discussed in this chapter (Runyan 1973: 569–72). However, Quaker suffering was even more ubiquitous than has been shown; indeed, it is a feature of

much more than the collected trials and imprisonments that established the community-wide persecution. The Quaker sense of the importance of print emerges in a narrative that focuses in its early sections on the trial of Edward Burrough, who speaks first:

Let all take notice, I am *denyed Law and Custome at the bar*, if ye deny me this motion of Arrest of Judgement. Then Alderman *Brown* spoke to him in these words, *This is all ye shall have, and print it (said he) if ye will through the Land*; To which E.B. again replied, that he was no very great Printer, yet he thought it his duty to publish these things as many as he could, that all the World may know the Proceedings. (*The Third Part of the Cry* 1662: 26)

The trope, here, is one that recurs in much Restoration Quaker suffering writing: that the reading public must be educated as to the proper way to interpret the sufferings of Quakers (as injustice), to see the hardships they bore, and to recognise that liberty of conscience was the only solution. In a similar manner, bold statements were also made at other trials, such as when William Penn and William Mead reminded their reader (in gendered language), ‘you are Englishmen, mind your privilege’ (1993, 148). But these sufferings narratives could also have power when simply recording, for posterity, the names of those who suffered:

Here followeth the Names of 32. more Sentenced the 16th of the 11th Moneth (called *January*) 1664. at the *Sessions* held in the *Old Baily*, and also of four Sentenced as a *Sessions* held at Hicks-Hall on the 12th. of the aforesaid Moneth.

Robert Hayes, Robert Pute, John Fox, John Tilby, Edward Walker, John Tisdell, William Garrald, John Grane, Mathias Gardener, George Tayler, Richard Lambert, Evan Jones, William Tilleby, William Tillet, Isaac Mason, Josiah Clare, Christopher Disckinson, Isaac Warner, Edward Brush, Richard Smith, Mary Powell, Ann Dance, Elizabeth Dixson, Katherin Charles, Susanna Horn, Dorothy Hall, Allice Richardson,

Margaret Ushor, Thomas Stokes, Thomas Clarke, Thomas Burbuke, Bartholomew Harne. (*The Cry of the Innocent* 1664: 17)

Such lists were common to a movement that valued the collective protest of all Friends. Moreover, prison writing has an even wider scope, and includes works written from prison, though not necessarily wholly concerned with the theme of persecution. Dorcas Dole, a woman whose life is discussed in John Whiting's *Persecution Expos'd*, wrote three works of admonition and warning while in prison (Whiting 1715: 71, 75, 92; Foxton 1994: 51).

Suffering is also the theme in a number of other texts, and many reach out primarily or solely to Quaker readers. The Quakers in Bristol during the early 1680s suffered intense persecution, since meeting houses were nailed up, there were mass arrests, and law enforcers even incarcerated children. Though a string of texts for public consumption show the Bristol experience,⁹ more inward-facing responses survive too. In his 'To Suffering Friends in Prison at Bristol' (1683), for instance, George Fox reminds these Friends that through being stalwart in their sufferings they will be rewarded by God, the true judge. 'He that endures faithful to the End shall be saved', Fox affirms, before concluding 'And so with my *Love* in the *Seed*, in which you and all nations are blest. G. F.' (Fox 1698: 490). Autobiographies and memorials also took up the theme of persecution. Barbara Blaugdone, at end of her autobiography, explains why she puts her life on record: 'I have written these Things that Friends may be encouraged, and go on in the Faith, in the Work of the Lord: For many have been the Tryals, Tribulations and Afflictions that I have passed through, but the Lord hath delivered me out of them all' (Blaugdone 1691: 38). Likewise, accounts of recently-deceased Quakers also contain addresses to Friends on the subject of persecution. One writer interjects in John Story's biography that 'we believe those who stand not to their Testimony, but flies therefrom in the Day of Persecution, may truly be counted, either weak in Faith, or departed from the Faith' (Story 1683: 39). These many and varied textual accounts show that there is

leakage of the generic concerns of ‘sufferings’ writings into other kinds of texts. The mixing of genres means that there is probably even more writing on suffering than statistics (previously referred to) show, the subject being of such import to the Quakers.

1690–1700: ‘WHY SHOULD I WRITE OF THESE THINGS TO THEE?’

The central literary event of the 1690s was the publication of the *Journal* of George Fox. He had dictated the main events of his life up to 1675 to Friends, and Thomas Ellwood sketched in the remaining details for the later period, before the posthumous publication in 1694. The *Journal* is a classic spiritual autobiography, moving from accounts of Fox’s early religious experiences to his becoming the leader of the new movement, and later showing the endurance that was required in order to maintain his beliefs despite widespread opposition. Fox’s *Journal* stands alongside other Quaker autobiographies, some preceding him, such as William Caton’s (1689) and Margaret Fell’s (published in 1690), and some post-dating him, such as John Banks’s (1712), and Thomas Ellwood’s (1714). Indeed, the confessional autobiography is another major genre of Quaker print culture (Runyan 1973). Many of these journals focus considerable attention on the early years of Quakerism, particularly the person’s conversion to the faith (which Friends called ‘convincement’) and the times when Quakerism was gaining a foothold (Wright 1932: 110–21; Wright 1937). Fox’s most recent editor, Nigel Smith, has argued that the *Journal* ‘captures the features of the prophetic Quaker tracts’ and hence, the movement’s early days (Fox 1998: xviii–xix), though the radicalism of the text has, in fact, been much debated (Hinds 2011: 9–11). This ambivalence is caused by how one judges the turning of the Quaker movement into ‘a structured

institution', as Matthew Horn terms it, such as through the committees that ruled on the value of published works from the mid-1670s onwards (Horn 2013: 297; O'Malley 1982). In the year prior to the publication of the *Journal*, for instance, the annual meeting had called for writers to exercise 'care' in their printed works (Renewed Advice 1693: 1). When John Banks posed the question in relation to his own life narrative, 'Why should I write of these things to thee?', his answer was that giving an account of a life could 'edify' the other members of the spiritual community (Banks 1712: 142). This was certainly the ideal underlying the autobiographical imperative.

This ideal did not always work in practice. Woven into Fox's *Journal* as part of its *modus operandi* was the assumption that he understood the light to be working within or through him, guiding his every action. The prophetic elements of Fox's *Journal* were features with which a writer hostile both to Fox and to the Quaker movement could take issue, and this is what Charles Leslie's *The Snake in the Grass* did. Leslie was Anglican, and prior to this attack on Friends he had penned an earlier polemic against his other main target, Socinians (Kolbrener 2003).¹⁰ Writers in the genre of 'controversy' frequently drew on earlier works of denunciation, and, as Braithwaite demonstrated, *The Snake in the Grass* borrowed freely from an ex-Quaker turned controversialist, Francis Bugg (Braithwaite 1979: 489). Quakers who left the movement were particularly useful for antagonists, even though such attacks were answered by Friends as a matter of principle. Leslie insisted that the Quaker movement needed to break its ties with the early days, the 'original Rabbis' and, in particular, Fox (Leslie 1696: 8). The *Journal* was one of his targets; *The Great Mistery [sic] of the Great Whore* (1659) was another. He characterises Fox's immanentist beliefs as delusion, and mocks 'his foolish legend of a Journal' (Leslie 1696: lxix). One of the *Journal's* key accounts of a formative religious experience looked, to Leslie, like the 'mad

joy' of a 'despairing soul' (Leslie 1696: lxxxx). He was referring to a moment when Fox described the Flaming Sword leading him 'into the paradise of God' (Fox 1998: 27).

The final text for consideration in this chapter could not be more different from Fox's *Journal*, though it exemplifies another, related aspect of Quaker writing. A more domestic side to Quakerism, as a religion uniting families, emerged in the death-bed testimonies that were published as part of the tradition of *ars moriendi* (Gill 2005: 147–182).¹¹ These gave particular prominence to women, since they were often collaborative ventures between family members remembering the deceased. Elizabeth Moss's testimony to her mother, Mary Moss, is one such text:

And for my own part, I have been, as it were raised from the very brink of the Grave, and I am as one of the Monuments of the Lords Mercy, desiring that the Day may never be forgot by me. And when I was in my greatest Calamity, the Thoughts of her from whence I came, was as Marrow to my Bones, blessing the Lord on her behalf, That he was pleas'd to suffer me to spring from such a Root [...] O the remembrance of this my dear and tender Mother bows my Heart in Humility, and tenders my Soul causing me to say *O! thou God of the Righteous* [...] Oh! the loss of so dear and tender a Mother, (which I have with my dear Sisters who beheld her upon her dying Bed) is more than I can sufficiently express; and though we Mourn yet not as without hope.(Watson 1695, 12, 14)

Neither Mary Moss, nor her daughter, Elizabeth, figure in standard histories of the Quakers. The compiler of the volume, Samuel Watson (Mary's step-father), joined the movement early,

and became a writer, a minister and a sufferer, making it likely that his influence led to this work being published (Watson 1712; Feild [sic] 1711: 165). Women like Mary Moss and Elizabeth Bols capture a different spirit of Quakerism from that of the visionaries like Fox, certainly, but in this testimony we are reminded that a movement needs mothers and daughters as much as it needs leaders.

As the century drew to a close, the Quaker movement remained true to its roots in that its literature still had the power to generate controversy. In contrast to the hostile reception to Quaker work by writers like Leslie, there is evidence of the perceived benefit to the reader of a Quaker text in John Whiting's comments that he often derived comfort from this work (Whiting 1714: 27, 228, 236). Many other uses for print can be discerned, since Quakers employed print as effectively as (if not more so than) any other religious pressure group of the seventeenth century. In the process, Quakerism gave a voice to hundreds of men and women who made the incidents of their life—prophecy, imprisonment, religio-political protest, the domestic ties that bound them, their links to co-religionists—count to the full. It is little wonder that Quakerism continues to generate notable historical interest and, even, fresh critical controversy.¹²

¹ My thanks to Claire Bowditch, David Campling and Helen Wilcox for commenting on the first draft of this essay.

² See also Rosemary Moore's online checklists of Quaker publications.

<http://www.qhpress.org/rmoore/>

³ The extent to which Quakerism's supposed decline was in fact co-determinate with the development of organisational structures that helped the movement to survive, is beyond the scope of this article; see Braithwaite 1979: 215–350).

⁴ I refer only in passing to a key feature of the Quaker corpus: doctrinal writing and animadversion. However, T. L. Underwood's study of the Baptist / Quaker controversy fills this gap (Underwood 1997). Where I have omitted detailed comment on any other key variety of Quaker writing, I note this in the main text.

⁵ When I wrote the *ODNB* article on White I could find no information about her absence from Quaker records, but this possibility opens new avenues for research.

⁶ For fuller discussion of early modern religious autobiographical writings, see chapter 13.

⁷ The term refers to the loss of goods and property, inflicted as punishment for a breach of the statute of *praemunire* – that is, for disobedience in ecclesiastical matters (*OED* 2b)

⁸ See, for example, the anonymous pamphlet *A Narrative of the Cruelties and Abuses Acted by Isaac Dennis* (1683).

⁹ See, for example, the following anonymous pamphlets, all of which were published in 1682: *More Sad and Lamentable News from Bristol*, *The New and Strange Imprisonment of the People Called Quakers* and *The Sad and Lamentable Cry of Oppression*.

¹⁰ Socinians were a Protestant sect subscribing to a radical anti-trinitarian creed.

¹¹ For further discussion of death-bed testimonies and the early modern art of dying, see chapter 38.

¹² I have tried as far as possible to include new scholarship in this essay. See also Richard Allen and Rosemary Moore's 'Restoration Quakerism 1660-1691' (*Oxford Handbook of Quaker Studies*, due 2015), and Kristiana Polder's *Courtship and Marriage Approbation in the Seventeenth-Century Quaker Community: George Fox Margaret Fell and Matrimony in the True Church* (Ashgate, 2013).