

**A STUDY OF PERCEPTIONS OF GOD AND OF RELATIONSHIP TO GOD AMONG
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY AND MODERN BRITISH QUAKERS**

by

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Abstract

This thesis argues that current debates about belief within present-day British Quakerism misrepresent the nature of Quaker faith and practice by over-emphasising particular aspects of the way in which Quakers have traditionally talked about God, namely, seeking to understand the mystery of divinity and the role of the divine will in relation to human intuition and reason in guiding behaviour. By comparing texts from the seventeenth and twenty-first century, using a quantitative method, it is demonstrated that there is a consistency across time in the way in which Quakers have perceived God and their relationship to God. By treating 'performance' (how adherents follow the will of God) and 'transformation' (how adherents experience their relationship with God) as dualistic and by using different strategies to avoid the challenge of empiricism, present-day Quakers appear dis-united in their internal theological disagreements. This thesis argues that Quaker faith and practice is more accurately understood, in both periods, as a single axis, running between performance and transformation and that this pattern of believing and belonging avoids internal disputes, which are misplaced. The method of analysis itself also provides a contribution to academic understanding of how patterns of belief and behaviour can be analysed.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION.

1.1 Introduction to the study.

The genesis of this thesis lies in family tragedy, causing my need, as a Quaker, to re-examine how I might perceive God, and what this might mean for my life. I chose to do so by analysis of how Liberal Quakers in Britain approach such matters today, and of the origins of such approaches in the birth of Quakerism. In the course of that analysis I found considerable differences in approach, both between Quakers, generally, in the seventeenth and twenty first centuries and within both groups. The major common feature is emphasis upon divinity within. Whether perceived as commanding, judging, leading, upholding or empowering, it is portrayed as intimately linked with the believer. The mysterious, inexplicable nature of divinity was recognised by early, just as it now is by Liberal Quakers. I found cause for concern, however, that, whilst early Friends seemed inspired by the mystery¹ many Liberal Quakers, at a popular level, seek to explore it empirically, resulting in disagreements on both the nature of divinity and of the 'divine will' within Liberal Quakerism.

This thesis argues that current debates about belief within present-day Liberal Quakerism misrepresent the nature of Quaker faith and practice by over-emphasising particular aspects of the way in which Quakers have traditionally talked about God, seeking to understand the mystery of divinity and the role of the divine will in relation to human intuition and reason in guiding behaviour. By comparing texts from the seventeenth and twenty/twenty-first centuries, using a quantitative method, it is demonstrated that there is a consistency across time in the way in which Quakers have perceived God and their relationship to God. By treating 'performance' (how adherents follow the will of God) and 'transformation' (how adherents experience their relationship with God) as dualistic and by using different strategies to avoid the challenge of empiricism, present-day Quakers, individually, appear dis-united in their internal theological disagreements. The thesis argues that Quaker faith and practice is more accurately understood, in both periods, as a single axis, running between performance and transformation and that this pattern of believing and belonging avoids internal disputes, which are misplaced.

What many Liberal Quakers seek are understandings of the divine² explicable in terms comprehensible to the modern mind. There is widespread suspicion³ of invoking the supernatural in explanations as superstitious. What individual Friends often fail to consider is the implications of 'mystery'. The dominant popular perception is that, through the sciences and philosophy, all aspects of universe, world and life, including human life, are

¹ George Fox wrote of Quaker faith as 'a mystery held in a pure conscience' (from *1 Tim.3:9*) See John. L. Nickalls, *The Journal of George Fox* (Philadelphia PA and London: Philadelphia Yearly meeting and Quaker Home Service, 1997) [1952] 28

² God or Spirit

³ See, for example, Jan Arriens, 'Faith, Belief and Non-belief' in *The Friends Quarterly* Issue 2 2008 3 – 13

explicable, leaving no room for a 'God of the gaps'.¹ There is less scope to invoke supernatural causes of phenomena, as science progressively provides natural explanations for them. This ignores, principally, the question 'why?'. Science frequently clarifies how phenomena are brought about, but not their purposes; why 'natural laws' make material existence possible and why they enable organic life. Much of the understanding of matter is thrown into confusion by the discovery of quantum mechanics. Its behaviour, at the most fundamental level,² seems bizarre, lacking in logic, as presently understood, influenced by observation³ and profoundly mysterious. The sense of the numinous, long associated with that of the supernatural and rejected as superstition by many⁴, can be a sense of the mystery which underlies existence. Such mystery may or may not involve an 'ultimate reality', 'God', but such possibilities are beyond empirical investigation, so become matters of faith.

Fundamental to institutional Quaker thought about divinity is the widespread experience of the presence of God within 'the heart'. This⁵ is the basis of the experiential, mystical, approach to Quaker faith. For many Quakers today the acute sense of an inner, personal, divinity remains the basis of their faith and practice⁶. Others sense the numinous in the wonders of human relationships, of nature or of great art, feeling that there must be some underlying reality, but one always beyond reach.

As will be illustrated⁷, a common perception of God within Liberal Quakers is as 'Ground of Being', the ultimate cause of existence. Perceived as literal truth, this makes divinity ultimately responsible for the violence of exploding stars, just as for the existence of human compassion. The Quaker view is of a benign God, willing the best for all life. 'The best' is, however, different for many life forms. Where reproduction is prodigious, individual life is inconsequential. Humankind, investing so much more in each new individual, acts to nurture and preserve individual life. Given a unique capacity for self-reflection, individuals also seek a sense of meaning which transcends mere survival and reproduction. Out of this search emerges ethics, which also serves to preserve individual life. Quaker faith is that such a search, such an ethic, is divine. Some Liberal Quakers reject 'God', often rejecting, not the divine mystery, but a God who tells them what to do. How humankind views the sources of virtuous behaviour is a difficult question. A 'God' seen to condemn individual wrongdoing,

¹ See, for example, Charles Alfred Coulson, *Science and Christian Belief* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) 20 'There is no 'God of the gaps' to take over at those strategic places where science fails; and the reason is that gaps of this sort have the unpreventable habit of shrinking'.

² Or, at least at the most fundamental level understood to exist to date.

³ A possible parallel with the divine – human relationship as widely understood by Quakers and others.

⁴ See, for example, A.C. Grayling, in, Mick Gordon and Chris Wilkinson (eds.) *Conversations on Religion* (London and New York, Continuum, 2008) 1 – 6

⁵ As is discussed in: Chapter 2 section 2.1 Chapter 4 sections 4.1, 4.2 Chapter 5 section 5.3, 5.4

⁶ See, for example, Curt Gardner, *God Just Is: Approaches to silent worship* (London: Quaker Books, 2012) esp. 125 – 130

⁷ See Chapter 4 section 4.3 and Chapter 5, sections 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6

then to claim responsibility for human virtue, is unacceptable to many. As I show below¹, Quakers have always struggled to understand the roles of divine guidance and empowerment in relation to human discernment and willpower. Claiming direct, unambiguous, guidance from a transcendent source is difficult for some Quakers today, and essential for others. Many still feel the need to 'perform', be obedient to the divine will, felt within, but all seek and value transformation, seeing life in a new, virtuous, way. Quaker community discernment of right action, in the stillness of a meeting for worship, or in the vigorous sharing of a Quaker business meeting, is evidence of a broader conception of divine guidance at work, through relationship with God and with 'that of God' in others. Some, in, arguably, a more self-indulgent age, 'choose' which aspects of relationship to Divinity to affirm, feeling upheld, but neglecting calls to selflessness.

How Liberal Quakers see testimony, exhibiting divine virtue in their own lives, raises theological questions. Seeking to make life a testimony to a benign God informs action, inspiring compassion and empathy for others, 'answering that of God in every one.'² If, however, testimony is codified, into individual 'testimonies', this risks making them into ideals, visions of perfection, to which all should aspire. As counsels of perfection these are unattainable, evoking feelings of guilt and inadequacy. They can also lead to self-righteous attitudes in more self-satisfied individuals.

Below I set out recent contributions to *The Friend*³ relevant to these reflections. The purpose of their inclusion is to clarify the nature of the problems I address.

1.1.1 Examples of 'popular' Liberal Quaker disagreements.

Central to many current problems is the theism - non-theism⁴ debate.⁵ The central Quaker proponent of non-theism is Boulton⁶. He states⁷ that faith concerns love, loyalty and trust between humans. God is the imagined embodiment of the values and virtues understood to be the foundation of 'the Good Life'. God is love in action. 'God' language he sees as poetic and metaphorical, not indicative, elusive not literal. Gross⁸ describes 'God' as vital in expressing deepest experiences, allowing exploration of understandings of the meaning of

¹ See Chapter 2 section 2.1

² George Fox, in *Quaker Faith and Practice*: the book of Christian discipline in the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of friends in Britain. 4th Edition (London: The Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends(Quakers) in Britain, 2009) [1995] 19.32

³ *The Friend*, a weekly magazine widely read by Liberal Quakers. I suggest it comes as close as one can come to being an expression of the views of 'ordinary Quakers'. Views, that is, which have been considered sufficiently to be expressed in written form for general scrutiny. As ever, there is always the risk that such expressions become dominated by those who enjoy seeing themselves in print.

⁴ Or, realism/non-realism.

⁵ See Chapter 4 section 4.3

⁶ He is author or editor of several books on the subject, two of which I analyse as supplementary to my main analysis of texts.

⁷ David Boulton, 'Faith: What's God got to do with it? A report of a day conference of the Quaker Council for Christian and Interfaith Relations (QCCIR) in, *The Friend* Vol. 172 No. 7 (Feb 14 2014)

⁸ Phillip Gross, Quaker poet, speaking at the same conference and reported in the same article.

life and existence. Ambler¹, sceptically, warns of the need, if ultimate reality is denied, to create meaning for oneself and resist the view that the universe is indifferent and purposeless.

Non-theist ideas attract Quaker criticism. Iredale² calls non-theists atheists, rejecting the concept of a Quaker atheist, for whom worship would be impossible and belief in that of God in everyone would become meaningless, 'merely' a metaphor for respect for all. Denying God as 'Spirit'; uniting and guiding all who accept the Spirit, is, for him, unacceptable in a Quaker. For Petter³ Quakers, if they deny their leadings are 'of God', become a humanistic society. He claims that 'the problem'⁴ arises from a decline in understanding and use of religious language, neglected through fears of deterring enquirers⁵ many of whom are fleeing more belief centred religious groups. Poole⁶ describes 'non-theist' as negative, dividing Quakers, by denying their central tenet of feeling led by an inward, unseen, power. Jeorett⁷ welcoming healthy debate on spiritual matters, regrets the widespread factionalism and loss of a sense of direction within Liberal Quakers who 'may be on an unstoppable trajectory to obscurity and division.'

Such statements indicate stark divisions based upon rigid meanings attached to the terms 'God' and 'Spirit'. Drewett⁸ examines the meaning of 'theism'. Whilst a modern definition involves a transcendent being, creator and ruler of the universe, other understandings are possible. A creator, providing for all human needs, is benign. It is readily described in terms of our highest human virtue, self-giving love, which has no physical existence, it is 'spiritual'. God, thus, becomes Spirit,⁹ immanent in all feelings and relationships, but also, as creator, beyond, transcendent, encompassing all of space and time. Such a God evinces mystery and purpose. Seen in these terms, the distinctions God-human, Spirit-heart become obscure and the positions adopted above less starkly opposed. Nonetheless perceptions of difference persist. QCCIR¹⁰ reports concerns expressed by other churches as to whether Quakers do share their confidence that God is the essence of what is important. They respond, recognising the lack of a shared language; Quakers emphasise their shared experiences in the stillness, so rarely need to express their perceptions in words. Searle¹¹ adds that everyone expresses their faith in the words most meaningful to them, but not necessarily to everyone else. She urges all to seek the meaning expressed behind the words.

¹ Rex Ambler, Quaker academic, also at the same conference.

² Roger Iredale, 'Belief and membership' in, *The Friend* Vol.172 No. 7 (Feb. 14 2014)

³ Stephen Petter, 'Faith and Clarity' in, *The Friend* Vol. 170 No. 20 (May 18 2012)

⁴ Of non-theism.

⁵ These are terms used to denote those who first approach Quakers (enquirers) or come more or less regularly to meeting for Worship but are not in membership.(attenders)

⁶ Jacqui Poole, letter in *The Friend* Vol. 170 No. 45 (Nov. 11 2012)

⁷ Paul Jeorett, letter in *The Friend* Vol. 170 No. 45 (Nov. 11 2012)

⁸ Gerald Drewett, 'The nature of God' in, *The Friend* Vol.172 No. 14 (April 4 2014)

⁹ *John* 4: 24

¹⁰ Quaker Council for Christian and Interfaith Relations; report in *The Friend* Vol. 172 No. 15 (April 11 2014)

¹¹ Dorothy Searle, letter to *The Friend* Vol. 172 No. 15 (April 11 2014)

Quakers have traditionally used terms like 'God' '(Holy) Spirit' and 'Christ' confident that they are free of doctrinal meanings¹. Perhaps some Quakers forget that.

Humankind, a social species, craves relationship, with one another but also with a divinity which provides meaning and faith, trust. For early Friends this relationship was with Christ. Today, seeing Jesus as uniquely divine is problematical for many Liberal Quakers. Lampen² regrets that Jesus is so rarely mentioned, suggesting that this is due to rejection of doctrinal beliefs, turning the religion of Jesus into one *about* Jesus.³ He lists the many ways in which Jesus' life and teachings model the life Quakers seek today⁴ urging acceptance of early Quakers' view of the Light of Christ within, but seeing it, not as supernatural but in the sense of evoking, say, the 'spirit of Ghandi'. It is a search for deepest truths, not about beliefs but discernment and action.

The second aspect of the potential crisis for Liberal Quakers concerns 'testimony', applying Quaker faith to words and actions. Fox urged⁵ 'be patterns, be examples ...that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them...' Quakers today sometimes appear, in defending cherished beliefs, to ignore the compassion that such beliefs demand. Others attend worship, but appear to pay no heed to testimony. Myhill⁶ asks if 'anything goes' in Quakerism today, with meeting for worship too often seen as a time for 'finding oneself', 'following one's own path', 'developing one's own spirituality'. This, for him, is due to emphasis upon 'political correctness, tolerance, listening skills, alternative therapies and resistance to authority in all forms'. Such an approach encourages uncertain, needy, people, resistant to any form of commitment. His own words certainly lack compassion. Davison⁷, more positively, points out that many newcomers to Quakers seek a less materialist life but have little history of religious or spiritual engagement. They are hungry for clear guidance to help them understand Quaker worship and Life. Both Davison and Swaine⁸ emphasise the role of Elders, supporting Friends' spiritual life and explaining that Quakerism is a spiritual journey, not a religious tradition dictating 'Laws'.

Often, the numbers active within a Quaker meeting today are much augmented by 'attenders'⁹, many fully committed to the meeting, but not currently seeking membership.

¹ Peter Leeming, letter to *The Friend* Vol. 171 No. 27 (July 15 2013)

² John Lampen, 'Inspired by Jesus' in, *The Friend* Vol. 172 No. 13 (March 28 2014)

³ Such doctrines Lampen sees as grounded in the Pauline Epistles and the John Gospel. These are the very parts of the New Testament emphasised most by early Quakers.

⁴ Jesus loved but challenged his Jewish religion and its traditions. He treated women as equals and valued children highly. He reached out to all; strangers, the disabled, even enemies. He attacked tyranny, whether due to wealth, religious or state power. He spoke his truth fearlessly to authority and never backed down, even when afraid. He encouraged faith, trust; 'follow me.'

⁵ *Quaker Faith and Practice* 19.32 George Fox (1656)

⁶ John Myhill, 'Quaker contradictions' in, *The Friend* Vol. 167 No. 26 (June 26 2009)

⁷ Alec Davison, 'Laboratory of the Spirit' in, *The Friend* Vol. 171 No. 11 (March 15 2013)

⁸ Thomas Swaine, 'Elders' gifts and authority' in *The Friend* Vol. 171 No. 30 (July 26 2013)

⁹ These are individuals regularly coming to meetings but not in formal membership.

Most Quakers today have been ‘convinced’¹, often in adult life. They are frequently the only Quaker in their family. This, along with constraints over work and family responsibilities, has resulted in wide variations in the degree of commitment to Quaker activities and concerns. Lonely and ‘damaged’ individuals frequently turn to Quaker meetings for companionship and support. Some fail to grasp the nature of Quaker worship and cause disruption. Fisher² reminds of the need to be tolerant and understanding of mental health issues. She rejects the stereotype that Quakers are rich, benevolent, saintly, individuals, assisting others³; many are equally disadvantaged themselves. Johnson⁴, however, regrets the lack of social, cultural, ethnic or economic diversity among Friends, who are frequently dominated by white, older, financially secure, intelligent, individuals and Parkin⁵ expresses discomfort with Friends’ tendency to equate ‘Quakerly’ with perceptions of moral, ethical or spiritual superiority. The testimony to equality is not an invitation to others to aspire to high Quaker ideals but recognition that ‘we are no better than anyone else’. Quakers are human and show human frailties and intolerances. Many emerge in letters to *The Friend* and are often disappointingly lacking in grace, compassion or understanding of the complexity of many issues, suggesting simplistic, moralistic solutions to problems. One recent example relates to the role of Friends House⁶ and its salaried staff. Lewis⁷ defends these, from Quaker criticisms of the costs of the building and of central work and the perceived ‘centralisation’ of decision taking. That she needed to indicate the value of Quakers speaking and acting as a united body and the dangers of each meeting ignoring work done elsewhere, dissipating the energies of the Society indicates the common lack of any wider sense of Quaker community. Many Friends seem disengaged from all but Sunday worship, critical of the costs and direction of the work done in their name, but disinclined to become involved, either actively in the work or in the decision making processes required to influence it. Wagstaff⁸ describes her experience that many, self-labelling as non-theist exhibited a broad spectrum of views, many compatible with her own, broadly mystical, theist, perceptions. Many were working hard to support local Quaker meetings but finding no spiritual stimulation or encouragement there. She concluded that a significant element in the drive to join the non-theist Friends Network⁹ was to escape the ‘squashing’ of passion and energy felt in some areas of the Society. If this is the case there really is a problem.

¹ Have converted to Quakerism over the course of their life

² Jean Fisher, letter to *The Friend* Vol. 171 No. 4 (Jan 25 2013)

³ The very existence of such a stereotype suggests that problems of self-perception are not new to Friends.

⁴ Marisa Johnson, letter to *The Friend* Vol. 167 No. 37 (Sept. 19 2009)

⁵ John Parkin, letter to *The Friend* Vol. 171 No. 5 ((Feb. 1 2013) a response to proposals for establishment of a Quaker bank

⁶ The London Home of Quakers and the location of all the salaried executive

⁷ Ann Lewis, letter to *The Friend* Vol. 170 No. 40 (October 5 2012)

⁸ Kersti Wagstaff, ‘More engagement’ in *The Friend* Vol.172 No. 21 (May 23 2014) She feels no urge to non-theism, but reports on her attendance at one of the Non-theist Friends’ Network

⁹ An informal grouping of non-theist Friends.

Leeming¹ emphasises that Quaker testimonies² are individual and collective behaviours, evidence of the spiritual processes going on in each individual and in the group. They are the proof and the fruits of spiritual transformation, not principles or rules to observe or creedal statements of belief or intent. He opposes attempts to describe and codify supposed ideals, in the areas of peace, simplicity, integrity, equality and sustainability, without reference to the reality of the needs and problems of individuals directly involved in each particular situation. Such idealism lacks the empathy and compassion which should result from the Spirit acting in the heart.

Much that is set out above is best described as a ‘popular Quaker’ discourse. It is within this, as opposed to the more ‘institutional (Liberal) Quaker’³ discourse which I examine in Chapters 4 and 5, that the most passionate expressions of concern at the present state of Quakerism in Britain emerge. In the thesis I show that, largely, these are concerns of the ‘head’ not of the ‘heart’. They concern beliefs and performance and not experience and the resultant sense of transformation and relationship, which I show to be central to Quaker faith. As such they represent a move along the single axis, towards belief/performance, running counter to that found in the texts analysed, which was further towards the transformation/ relationship pole.

The areas of greatest concern, which will be addressed at appropriate points throughout the thesis, are:

1. Concerns as to the meaning of attempts to discern the will of God, as a basis for individual and corporate Quaker action in the world.
2. Disagreements as to beliefs concerning the unique divinity of Jesus and their resultant effect upon attitudes to the Christian basis of Quaker tradition and upon faith in understandings of Jesus’ life and teaching as a basis for living a good life.
3. Perceptions of testimony, Quaker witness in the world, and how this is discerned. Concerns are expressed, on the one hand, over perceived tendencies of Friends to be selective over which aspects of testimony to uphold and, on the other, over testimonies becoming broad principles, rules or creeds, ignoring their basis in spiritual experience.
4. All the above arise from intellectual speculations as to the reality and nature of God and Spirit and the resulting questioning and loss of faith in religious experience.

1.1.2 Development of the thesis.

Having identified and exemplified the types of problem among current Liberal Friends, the thesis clarifies their bases. To do this it examines the descriptions given both by seventeenth

¹ Peter D. Leeming ‘The Quaker Testimonies’ in, *The Friend* Vol.170 No. 30 (July 27 2012)

² See Chapter 5 section 5.6

³ Pink Dandelion makes a similar distinction in, *A Sociological Analysis of the Theology of Quakers; The silent revolution* (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 1996)

century and by, mainly post-1980, Liberal Quakers¹ of their beliefs, both about divinity itself and their relationship to divinity. It then addresses how such beliefs affect behaviours, both within the Quaker community and in the wider world.

To achieve this I developed a method of analysis of Quaker texts, combining qualitative with quantitative analysis. I described and quantified understandings of God and of relationship with divinity. I argue that early Friends, in the seventeenth century, established and broadcast belief in a divinity within the individual, who was in consequence empowered to live a virtuous life. They substituted a call for obedience to divine promptings for the dominant one for belief in doctrine as the key to salvation, but did so largely by internalising and making existential doctrinal beliefs about God and God's requirements. Liberal Friends have developed this existential approach, sometimes with difficulty in a different social and cultural climate.

These findings come from having examined ways in which God and relationship with God can be modelled. I conclude that a model which emphasises 'belief' and 'performance', contrasting these with 'transformation' and 'relationship' is inappropriately dualistic in the Quaker context. My findings indicate a more nuanced approach to such models, seeing belief/performance and transformation/relationship as poles along a single axis. This indication emerged through use of the quantitative technique, identifying the features of God and relationship most frequently referred to and basing discussions heavily upon those features. This eliminated undue selectivity in the nature of the beliefs emphasised. It revealed two distinct strands of Quaker thought, one emphasising inwardness, transformation and relationship, the other focussing upon belief and performance.

The specific focus of the thesis upon God or divinity and relationship to divinity is unlike any study undertaken before, yet it is an issue central to any consideration of Friends. A re-evaluation of thoughts about God, against such a contextual background, forms, potentially, a valuable aid as academics seek to better understand modern forms of religiosity.

The method of analysis itself also provides a contribution to academic understanding of how patterns of belief and behaviour can be analysed.

1.1.3. Outline of the rest of this chapter.

The chapter examines previous scholarship relevant to the study, indicating the scope for this thesis as a useful addition to that scholarship.

It then examines the role of models of God in such a study, then develops and justifies a model as suitable for use.

The methods used in the study are then explained and evaluated.

¹ Also, hereafter, referred to as 'Friends'

Finally, the development and main characteristics of both early and Liberal Quakerism are described to provide background to the study.

1.2 Relevant Scholarship.

James¹ criticised 'ordinary' religious believers, their behaviour bound by convention and tradition. He contrasted such behaviour with that of George Fox and 'the Quaker religion which he founded', praising it as having 'veracity', 'rooted in spiritual inwardness' and close to the original gospel truth.

The first investigation of earlier Quakerism was by Robert Barclay of Reigate in 1876². There then followed the 'Rowntree Histories', attempting a systematic history of Quakerism³. These works are broad in focus, but include the development of Quaker beliefs. Much scholarly attention, following these major studies, was concerned with biographies of influential Quakers, or with consideration of what broader religious movements influenced the development of Quakerism. Such studies⁴ include much on Quaker faith and practice relevant to the thesis. Broader studies of the religious and social history of relevant periods, such as those by Horton Davies,⁵ W. Arnold Lloyd,⁶ Franklin H. Littell⁷ and Elbert Russell⁸ also cast light on aspects of Quaker faith and practice at the time.

More recently there have been histories of the lives and beliefs of early Quakers as a community, particularly by Moore⁹. She examines their theology, describing their central focus upon the demands of an inward divinity, not on doctrinal beliefs. Belief was in God as Spirit. Coming to God required being 'reborn', transformed, to accept the guidance of an inward Spirit.¹⁰ Moore pioneered a quantitative approach to Friends' beliefs, devising ten questions¹¹ to interrogate each text examined. All were relevant to the present study and

¹ William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A study in human nature* (London: Folio Society, 2008) [1902] 6 – 7

² Robert Barclay, *The Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth* (London: Hodder, 1876); A period when the Society was dominated by evangelicalism.

³ See John Punshon, *Portrait in Grey: A short history of the Quakers* (London: Quaker Books, 2006) [1984] 252 – 3 The Histories were: W. C. Braithwaite, *The Beginnings of Quakerism* (London: Macmillan, 1912) 2nd Edition prep. By Henry J Cadbury, (York: Sessions 1970)[1955] W.C. Braithwaite, *The Second Period of Quakerism* (London: Macmillan, 1919) 2nd Edition prep. By Henry J. Cadbury (York: Sessions 1979)[1961] Rufus, M. Jones, *The Later Periods of Quakerism* (London: Macmillan, 1921) (2 Vols.)

⁴ Some of which are listed below.

⁵ Horton Davies, *The English Free Churches* (London: Oxford University Press, 1952)

⁶ W. Arnold Lloyd, *Quaker Social History, 1669 – 1738* (London: Longmans, 1950)

⁷ Franklin H. Littell, *The Origins of Sectarian Protestantism* (New York: Macmillan, 1964)

⁸ Elbert Russell, *History of Quakerism* (New York: Macmillan, 1942) (reprinted Richmond IN: Friends United Press, 1979)

⁹ Rosemary Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences: The Early Quakers in Britain 1646 – 1666* (University Park PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000)

¹⁰ Rosemary Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences* 105 – 6

¹¹ The ten questions were: 1. How is salvation effected for the individual? 2. What is the eschatological standpoint? 3. How is the church, the saved community, regarded? 4. What is said about worship? 5. What is the use made of, and view taken towards the Bible? 6. What does it say about the way of life of believers? 7.

helped in devising my approach. I developed the numerical approach, from a focus on key words to one on relevant concepts.

Biographies of prominent early Friends, particularly George Fox¹, James Nayler,² Isaac Pennington,³ Margaret Fell,⁴ and William Penn⁵ all include examination of their beliefs and actions. Gwyn,⁶ studying Fox, described Friends' 'apocalyptic spirituality', seeing inward guidance as the key to salvation on the 'day of the Lord', widely felt to await everyone in the turbulence of the times. Fox denied that Scripture was written using extra-ordinary access to the Spirit; such access was available to all.⁷ Seeing God as Spirit, mystically present within, meant revelation became individual, direct, immediate, possessing unique authority.⁸ Keiser and Moore⁹ argue that Pennington described a mysterious, Spirit led, Life, requiring that he avoid deceit and oppression. This resulted from 'spiritual poverty'; failure to recognise the value of others. Jantzen¹⁰ suggested that early Quaker women particularly, by concerning themselves with a God immanent, within the heart, not transcendent, shifted the focus of faith from death and afterlife to living a virtuous life on earth, emphasising justice and showing concern for all in their everyday world.

Biographies of early Friends give valuable insights into how they were inspired to live often extraordinary lives of courage and commitment. They illustrate the Quaker view that God was both powerful and judgemental and, simultaneously, an intimate presence, supportive and compassionate. They do not reconcile these different perceptions, evaluate their

Is anything said concerning civil law? 8. What was the purpose of the text? 9. What emphasis was placed upon key words, Light, conscience, covenant, truth? 10. Were there any other special features of the text?

¹ For example, Douglas Gwyn, *Apocalypse of the Word: The Life and Message of George Fox* (Richmond IN: Friends United Press, 1984), Cecil W. Sharman, *George Fox and the Quakers* (London and Richmond IN: Quaker Home Service and Friends United Press, 1991), Richard Bailey, *New Light on George Fox and Early Quakerism: making and unmaking of a God* (San Francisco CA: Edwin Mellen, 1992), H. Larry Ingle, *First Among Friends: George Fox and the creation of Quakerism* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), Rex Ambler, *Truth of the Heart: An anthology of George Fox* (London: Quaker Books 2007) [2001], this includes considerable discussion of Fox's theology by the author., Hilary Hinds, *George Fox and Early Quaker Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011)

² William G. Bittle, *James Nayler, 1618 – 1660: The Quaker indicted by Parliament* (Richmond IN: Friends United Press, 1986), Leo Damrosch, *The Sorrows of the Quaker Jesus: James Nayler and the Puritan crackdown on the free spirit* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1996)

³ R.M. Keiser, and Rosemary Moore, *Knowing the Mystery of Life Within: Selected Writings of Isaac Pennington in their Historical and Theological Context*. (London: Quaker Books, 2005)

⁴ Bonnelyn Young Kunze, *Margaret Fell and the Rise of Quakerism* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1994), Sally Bruyneel, *Margaret Fell and the End of Time: The Theology of the Mother of Quakerism* (Waco TX: Baylor University Press, 2010)

⁵ Melvin B. Endy, *William Penn and Early Quakerism* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1973)

⁶ Douglas Gwyn, *Apocalypse of the Word*

⁷ Douglas Gwyn, *Apocalypse of the Word* 87 – 8

⁸ Wilmer Cooper, *A Living Faith: An historical and comparative study of Quaker beliefs* (Richmond IN: Friends United Press, 1990) 25 – 6

⁹ R.M. Keiser, and Rosemary Moore, *Knowing the Mystery of Life Within*

¹⁰ Grace Jantzen, *A Place of Springs: Death and the displacement of beauty* Vol. 3 ed. Jeremy Carrette and Morny Joy (London and New York: Routledge, 2010)

relative significance or address their effects upon how early Friends formed a unified view, either of God or of their relationship with God.

A number of studies investigate specifically the origins of Friends' faith, whether in mysticism¹, in early forms of a Holiness tradition² or from Puritanism³. Brinton associated early Quaker ideas with those of the early Christian church, adopting a spiritual vision of Christ as inner guide and mentor, building this around their understandings of Jesus' life and teachings. Williams⁴ claims that early Friends conflated scriptural accounts of Jesus, the theology of virgin birth, miracles, resurrection and ascension with their own spiritual experiences of divinity. Jesus' message was valorised and spiritualised through beliefs concerning his powers, especially his resurrection, symbolising spiritual rebirth. Spencer⁵ describes 'holiness', mystical union with God, as a paradigmatic theme of Quaker theology. Deriving such beliefs from medieval mysticism, Friends developed a new form of ethical and mystical perfection. Human life should be centred upon God and service to the divine will, requiring 'death of the self' and rebirth through the Spirit, giving purity and wisdom.

Cole,⁶ Hill⁷ and Reay⁸ all placed special emphasis upon the social and political focus of early Friends, whilst Gwyn⁹ sought to reconcile their political with their, initially apocalyptic, spirituality. Friends' emphasis on Spirit or Light was derived from Scripture, especially Paul and John¹⁰. Timeless and universal, it shattered individual self-absorption; all were 'in God'. This produced a non-violent cultural revolution, seeing political change as coming from individual spiritual transformation. Guiton¹¹ emphasised the importance of 'Kingdom' for early Friends. Kingdom was heavenly, but crucially, also embraced the earth and justice for all. Quakers sought to help create the kingdom on earth.

¹ For example, Rufus M. Jones, *Spiritual Reformers of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Kessinger Publishing, 1998)[1942] and *Studies in Mystical Religion* (London: Macmillan, 1909) both of which examined suggested bases for Jones' Liberal ideas Howard Brinton, *The Religious Philosophy of Quakerism: The Beliefs of Fox, Barclay and Penn As Based on the Gospel of John* (Wallingford PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 1973)

² Carole Dale Spencer, *Holiness: The Soul of Quakerism: An Historical Analysis of the Theology of Holiness in the Quaker Tradition* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007) The 'Holiness' movement is widely regarded as originating in the nineteenth century, particularly around Methodism, but ideas of being 'holy' 'in the image of God' were a foil to Calvinist claims of human degeneracy and evoke ideas of mystery, of union of divinity and humanity.

³ Hugh Barbour, *The Quakers in Puritan England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1964) (reprinted with a new preface by the author Richmond IN: Friends United Press 1985)

⁴ Patricia A. Williams, *Quakerism: A theology for our time* (West Conshohocken PA: Infinity Publishing, 2008)

⁵ Carole Dale Spencer, *Holiness: The Soul of Quakerism:*

⁶ Alan Cole, *The Quakers and Politics, 1652 – 1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955)

⁷ Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical ideas During the English Revolution* (London: Penguin, 1991) [1972]

⁸ Barry Reay, *The Quakers and the English Revolution* (New York NY: St. Martin's Press, 1985)

⁹ Douglas Gwyn, in B. P. Dandelion, D. Gwyn and T. Peat, *Heaven on Earth: Quakers and the second coming* (Birmingham and Kelso: Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre and Curlew, 1998) 103

¹⁰ 2 Cor.4: 6 John 1: 19

¹¹ Gerald Guiton, *The Early Quakers and the Kingdom of God: Peace, testimony and revolution* (San Francisco CA: Inner Light Books, 2012)

This thesis, placing 'God', 'relationship' and 'behaviour' centrally, cuts across discussions on previous influences, showing that the impetus for early Quaker thought and action was their perception of intimate relationship with God. This was new to their times but was a return to 'authenticity', the relationship modelled by Jesus and the apostles. This perception emboldened and sustained them. It was experiential, mystical, but also intensely practical and prophetic, addressing both leaders of Church and State and the common people.

Studies of Liberal Friends are few in number. Davie¹ undertook a history of their theology², concluding that it departed considerably from the basic Christian, belief-centred, 'core of conviction'. He described that, more recently, Liberal Quakerism had divided sharply, into a more conservative, Christocentric, and a more radical, Universalist, group³. The latter denied that beliefs about Jesus Christ constituted a unique revelation of divinity. Davie's work was hypothecated upon the view that Quakerism required a strong basis in doctrinal belief, a view which the present study challenges. Benson⁴ challenged Davie, claiming a continuing attachment of Liberal Friends to their Christian origins, particularly the importance of Christ's message of obedience to inward leadings. Such obedience was empowering and contrasted with idealistic views of divinity, setting standards of ethics and religious behaviour beyond individual abilities. Benson emphasised the Christocentric over the Universalist beliefs of Liberal Quakers. Benson's contrast of idealism and obedience I also found and develop, along with comparison of Christocentric and universalist priorities..

Ambler⁵ examined broad issues in Liberal Quaker theology, as does Dandelion⁶, who adopts a sociological approach. Dandelion also examines Quaker liturgy and emphasises Liberal Quakers' placing of authority only in direct, inward 'experience', with no requirement to authenticate experience by reference to Scripture, the 'traditional' source of divine revelation. Insisting that how they perceive what is truly 'of God' is crucial to understanding any faith group he emphasises that Liberal Quakers discern this inwardly, aided by joint discernment in communal worship, but, ultimately, individually⁷. Cooper⁸ and Stevenson⁹ both examine the philosophical underpinnings of Quaker theology. All such studies have proved useful, but, in none of them is the focus clearly upon how perceptions of divinity directly affect self-perception and behaviour.

¹ Martin Davie, *British Quaker Theology Since 1895*

² From 1895 to the 1990s

³ This was, he claimed, particularly obvious in the 1980 Janet Scott Swarthmore Lecture. Janet Scott, *What can't thou say? Towards a Quaker theology* (London: Quaker Books, 2007) [1980]

⁴ Lewis Benson, *A Universal Christian Faith* (Fritchley: The New Foundation Fellowship, 2007) [1966]

⁵ Rex Ambler, *The End of Words: Issues in contemporary Quaker theology* (London: Quaker Home Service, 1994)

⁶ Pink Dandelion, *A Sociological Analysis of the Theology of Quakers: The silent revolution* (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 1996), *The Liturgies of Quakerism* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), *An Introduction to Quakerism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007)

⁷ Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 130

⁸ Wilmer Cooper, *A Living Faith:*

⁹ Leslie Stevenson, *Open to New Light: Quaker spirituality in historical and philosophical context* (Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2012)

Whilst there is a wide spectrum of scholarly work devoted to Quakerism, the focus of my study makes an original contribution to the discipline. The quantitative, analytical approach adopted uniquely allows weighting of Friends' priorities. It highlights the single axis hypothesis, showing how joint emphases upon 'performance' and 'transformation' illustrate how the former becomes subsumed into the latter. By comparing Liberal and early Friends, I illustrate how ever increasing permissiveness in belief has, whilst having a liberating effect, introduced real difficulties in holding both faith and discipline.

1.3 Development of an analytic model.

1.3.1 The Borg Models.

As an aid to analysis in this thesis I use a dualistic pair of models of God and relationship to divinity presented by Borg¹.

He first distinguishes two types of 'world view'²: religious and non-religious. The religious view perceives, additional to the material level of reality a non-material³, extra, spiritual, dimension. Conviction of the existence of this dimension is a 'human unanimity', variously named 'God', 'Spirit', 'the sacred', the 'Tao', 'YHWH', 'Allah', 'Brahman', or 'Atman'⁴. The non-religious⁵ view, originating in the western Enlightenment period⁶, sees everything as within the familiar space-time, material, level. It is continually elucidated by science, using empirical methods, providing evidence accessible to human senses.

Borg describes many wishing for a religious view, but unable to believe in forces or influences beyond the scope of empiricism. Others, seeking to retain a conventional religious world view⁷ reject the findings of science, sticking to scriptural, theistic⁸, accounts of Creation. Yet another group accepts scientific explanations of the universe, grafting on a

¹ Marcus J Borg, *The Heart of Christianity: Rediscovering a Life of Faith* (New York NY: HarperOne, 2004)

² Marcus J Borg *The Heart of Christianity* 63- 5

³ See William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* Lecture 2

⁴ Huston Smith, *Forgotten Truth* (San Francisco: Harper, 1992)[1976] x, 5, 18

⁵ Secular, naturalist, material.

⁶ See, for example, Karen Armstrong, *A History of God* (London: William Heinemann Ltd. 1993; London: Vintage, 1999) 337 - 341

⁷ Often called 'fundamentalists'; Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction* 4th Edition (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007) 490 describes Fundamentalism as a Protestant theology, originating in the USA, which places especial emphasis upon the Bible, which it sees as totally inerrant. 83 he extends this definition, adding that, to liberal Protestant critics, a firm restatement of traditional Christian faith is seen as 'fundamentalism'. Don Cupitt, in Mick Gordon and Chris. Wilkinson, *Conversations in Religion* (London: Continuum, 2008) 51 – 4 sees fundamentalism as arising from 'foundationalism', the desire to overcome scepticism and nihilism by positing a sure foundation for beliefs

⁸ The meaning of this term is significant to this study. E. A. Livingstone, *Oxford Concise Dictionary of the Christian Church* 2nd Edition (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006) [1977] 581 maintains that, in its current usage it refers to a philosophical system that accepts a transcendent and personal God, who created and preserves and governs the world, 'the contingency of which does not exclude miracles and the exercise of human freedom'

form of God, absent from that universe, either totally disengaged from it¹ or intervening in it in an unpredictable, often unethical, manner.

Within a religious world view, Borg suggests there are three possible approaches to the nature of divinity:

1. 'Out there,' transcending the universe; supernatural.
2. Present, immanent. Often labelled pantheism,² this regards nature as divine, monistic, eliminating the dualism, material-spiritual. Many regard it as a form of atheism; divinity must transcend ordinary, sensible, reality. Spinoza³ disagreed, affirming a single 'substance', 'God or nature'⁴. God's infinity included the whole finite world. The created world was not inferior to the divine Creator. Mind and matter were two of the infinite attributes of the one primal Substance, God, not confined to nature⁵. It is not obvious that theism requires either a transcendent or a personal perception of God. The latter represents an anthropomorphic view of divinity.⁶
3. Panentheist⁷. All of nature is in God, the 'Ground of all Being'⁸. God is the Ultimate Reality from which all else is derived. This monistic view embraces a conception of divinity which is broader than the conventional, western, theistic one.

Borg⁹ next described two 'root concepts' for thinking about God: 'Supernatural theism', as a being outside the universe, or, 'Panentheist', as an encompassing Spirit, making reality equally material and spiritual.

He defined two religious paradigms:¹

¹ The 'Deist' view; See Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction* 142 – 3

² See Ward, Keith, *God: A Guide for the Perplexed* (Oxford: One World) 159 - 162

³ Baruch Spinoza (1632 – 77) – a Jewish Philosopher. See O.L. Reiser, *Nature, Man and God: A synthesis of pantheism and scientific humanism* (Pittsburgh, 1951)

⁴ *Deus sive natura*

⁵ This, last, affirmation is highly significant. It meant that Spinoza was not strictly pantheist and it opens the possibility of panentheist ideas of all of nature 'in God'.

⁶ For example, in Vedic, an Indian form of philosophy pantheism is part of a rejection of polytheism. The apparent multiplicity of reality is an illusion. What is ultimately real, divine is Brahman. A. P. Martinich, in, Robert Audi, Ed. *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* 2nd Edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 640 – 1

⁷ A term first coined by Karl Christian Friedrich Krause in the early nineteenth century. Although nature and human consciousness were part of 'God' / Absolute Being, the Absolute is neither completely contained in nor identical with them. He appeared to anticipate Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's view of an 'end of history' in which human affairs, finite, would reunite with the infinite essence in a universal moral and spiritual order. Jere Paul Surber, in, Robert Audi, Ed. *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* 2nd Edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 476

⁸ Paul Tillich (1886 – 1965), in, *The Courage to Be* (London: Collins 1962)[1952] saw God as such and insisted that the love of God should be our 'ultimate concern', giving us the 'courage to be'.

⁹ Marcus J. Borg, *The God We Never Knew: Beyond dogmatic religion to a more authentic contemporary faith* (San Francisco: Harper 1998) 12

1. 'Earlier', 'belief based', embracing supernatural theism. Belief in the Bible as literal-factual truth, a divine product with divine authority, revealing doctrine and morals to humankind. It seeks 'salvation', principally, as reaching a heavenly afterlife, largely by holding appropriate beliefs.
2. 'Emerging', 'transformation'², embracing panentheism and a sense of intimacy between humanity and divinity. Whilst retaining belief in a transcendent deity, humankind and all life was united and upheld 'in God', through a universal Spirit. The Bible³ was understood as a human response to God, teaching ethics through metaphor, and as sacramental, aiding focus upon God. Transformation was from a self-centred to a self-transcendent view of life, becoming loving and compassionate, inspired by relationship with a loving, compassionate, God.

Borg⁴ utilised James' ideas⁵ of a God who does 'wholesale' or 'retail' 'business'. The 'wholesale' God was 'ultimate reality', 'being itself'. The 'retail' was the God humankind related to, in the personalised language of prayer and worship. Much disagreement concerns the extent to which humans literalise the 'retail God' idea. The 'belief' tradition sees God as a supernatural 'person', whilst, for the 'transformation' tradition, God is 'Spirit', the 'wholesale' God. Personal language may be used, but in a non-literal sense. Many, finding greater satisfaction in the transformation paradigm, still seek a personal relationship, envisaging an 'embodiment' of such a divinity in the person of Jesus⁶.

Borg suggested two 'models', clusters of images of God's relationship with the world and humankind, corresponding with the two religious paradigms:⁷

1. Corresponding to the 'belief' paradigm was the 'Monarchical' model⁸. God was seen as 'Lord' 'Father', 'King'; humankind as subjects or children, owing loyalty and obedience. If they did not stick to God's laws⁹ they 'sinned' and deserved punishment¹⁰. God, loving his subjects, offered escape from punishment through sacrifice. Humankind was too flawed to be capable of the necessary sacrifice. The love of God was, consequently, expressed in Jesus, God's son. Jesus' death was the

¹ Marcus J. Borg, *The Heart of Christianity* 6 – 15 and 'An Emerging Christian Way' in *The Emerging Christian Way* ed. M. Schwartzentruber (Kelowna British Columbia: Copperhouse 2006) 13 - 9

² Marcus J. Borg, 'An Emerging Christian Way' 65 - 70

³ Marcus J. Borg 'An Emerging Christian Way' 20 - 23

⁴ Marcus J. Borg, *The Heart of Christianity* 70 - 3

⁵ William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*: Lecture XX

⁶ Or of a figure from a different faith tradition.

⁷ Marcus J. Borg *The God We Never Knew* 61 – 8, 71 - 9

⁸ based on Sally McFague, *Models of God* (Philadelphia: Fortress 1987) 63- 9

J. Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God* (San Francisco: Harper and Row 1981) calls this model 'monarchical monotheism'

⁹ Legal concepts are held to be common to the model.

¹⁰ Marcus J. Borg, *The God We Never Knew*: 63

sacrifice which atoned for all human sin¹. This model, for Borg, had three important consequences for God’s engagement with humankind:

- It made sin and guilt central to considerations of individual behaviour and much of Christian tradition. Repentance, redemption, liberation and salvation were all seen through the lens of sin.
- It confused ‘God’ with the super-ego, the critical element within the human psyche² making God seem ‘the internalised overseer, the policeman who never sleeps’³
- It resulted in a culture of requirements, to which Individuals needed to ‘measure up’.

This resulted in a ‘performance model’ of behaviour; human destiny depended on ‘how well we perform’.

2. Relating to the ‘transformation’ culture was the ‘Spirit’ model. God was a non-material reality, present throughout, and ‘grounding’, the universe. This ‘evokes a universal perspective and signifies divine activity in its widest reaches’⁴. Whilst associated with God’s immanence, ‘Spirit’ also indicated transcendence, ‘God’s on-going, transcending, engagement with the world’⁵. In Scripture, the term ‘Spirit’ was derived from the Hebrew, *Ruach*, ‘wind’ or ‘breath’. It implied God’s closeness, in a loving, supportive relationship, rather than the distance from humankind emphasised in the ‘Monarchical’ model. This resulted in a ‘relationship’ model of behaviour. In celebrating, together, the intimacy, mutual love and compassion of relationship with divinity, humankind established similar relationships with one another.

Table 1.1 A summary of the Borg models.

<i>Root Concept</i>	Supernatural Theism	Panentheism
<i>Religious paradigm</i>	‘Earlier’, Belief Based.	‘Emerging’, Transformation based.
<i>Conceptions of God</i>	As a supernatural person, ‘out there’, transcendent.	As a, non-material, ‘Spirit’, which embraces, and is the ‘Ground’ of, all life and matter.

¹ Marcus J. Borg, *The God We Never Knew*: 64

² A concept described by Sigmund Freud in his theory of personality. It judges whether actions are right or wrong, an internalised representation of the values and morals of society, which is generally held to comprise the individual’s conscience, and image of the morally ideal person. See R. L. Atkinson, R. C. Atkinson, E. E. Smith and D. J. Bem, *Introduction to Psychology* 11th edition (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1993) 534

³ D. Soelle, *Theology for Skeptics* Transl. Irwin JL (Augsburg: Fortress Press 1995)

⁴ E.A. Johnson, *She Who Is: The mystery of God in feminist theological discourse* (New York: Crossroad, 1992)

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⁵ E.A. Johnson, *She Who Is*: 83

<i>Models of relationship: God - World</i>	Monarchical. Requiring a culture of obedience and performance from humankind.	As Spirit, transforming, loving, guiding and supporting humankind, through intimate relationship .
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1.3.2 A Critique of the Borg Models.

Peters¹, highlighting the difficulty of envisaging divinity and human relationship to it, quotes Anselm²: ‘faith seeks understanding’³. Seeking such understanding, humankind has developed models, material analogues. He lists a series of ‘key models’ of God⁴. Three of these bear examination here:

1. ‘Theism’, ‘belief in God’. For theists, God has aseity⁵, is *a se*, totally independent and free. God created the cosmos out of nothing⁶. Without God’s support, all nature, all reality, including human consciousness, would cease to exist, but, lacking consciousness, humankind would be unaware of the loss. The fact that humans see, hear and perceive the birds is a gift of grace. Such theism relates to God as ‘Ground of Being’, in Borg’s ‘Transformation’ model, but, theists’ God is omnipotent, a monarch. ‘Providence’ is God’s continuing activity in the world. Theists believe in miracles and in the power of prayer. God will listen and incorporate some of their wishes into the divine will. This describes an element of relationship alongside the ‘supernatural theism’ of Borg’s ‘belief’ model.
2. ‘Pantheism’. Seeing God and the world as co-spatial and co-temporal, so whilst each human feels to be individual, at a deeper level all are united in the divine Being. Whilst pantheist views suggest God is finite, as the world is, the concept of a deeper unity suggests transcendence. Clearly, relationship forms part of this view of divinity, which is difficult to disentangle from pantheism.
3. Panentheism. The relation, God-world is like that of mind-body. Whilst God’s being depends upon that of the world, as the mind’s being depends upon the brain, God transcends and controls the world, as the mind controls the body. Panentheist beliefs embrace continuing creation, providence, which Borg associates with a ‘supernatural theist’ model. A panentheist God is finite, co-extensive with the universe; only the mind of God transcends this. God’s love is ‘self-love,’ since all are

¹ Ted Peters, *Models of God: Comparing concepts* adapted from W/JK *Thoughtful Christian* www.ptts.edu/docs/ite_models_god.pdf

² Anselm of Canterbury 11th Century See Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An introduction* 38 – 9

³ *fides quaerens intellectum*

⁴ He lists Atheism, Agnosticism, Deism, Theism/Monotheism, Pantheism, Polytheism, Henotheism and Panentheism.

⁵ Has independent, underived, existence. God is ultimate reality, ground of all reality.

⁶ *creatio ex nihilo* A view based, at least in part, on *Romans* 4: 17 ‘God gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist’.

‘in God.’ It is not like the love of one person for another. This does not accord with the Borg view of ‘relationship’ which he associates with a panentheist God.

Peters’ descriptions cast doubt upon the dualism between the two Borg models. Elements used within each of the models can be seen to be applicable also to the other.

There are many other models of God. McGrath¹ discussed a variety of biblical models², regarding the ‘personal’ model of God as the most powerful. McFague³ characterised theology as ‘mostly fiction’ but, through creating a multiplicity of models, metaphors and images, as collectively enhancing understandings of God. Humankind constantly constructed mental models which it inhabited, forgetting that they are just models and claiming their objective reality⁴. She⁵ sought a model ‘appropriate for our time’, of ethical and ecological challenges. The world should be seen as the body, creation and self-expression, of God. ‘Salvation’ was applicable to all life, ‘creation is the place of salvation; salvation is the direction of creation’⁶. The evolution of life, its diversity and its inter-dependence all were divine, ‘saving’ influences. ‘Sin’ signified offences against the rest of creation. God was not distant, but ‘Being itself’. She thus erected a panentheist model. ‘God’ was the source of all relationship.

I chose to adopt the Borg models, with all their limitations and stereotypes, as the most useful tool for my analysis; albeit a tool to be modified in the course of the study. Written for a wider audience, their stark dualism highlights the principle issues in Quakerism addressed in this study; how a doctrinally based view of an all-powerful, demanding, transcendent, God gave rise to one visualised as within, a supportive guide and companion, without loss of the sense of ethical imperative. Peters illustrates the over-simplified nature of the Borg models. McFague’s model is valuable in examining contemporary thought, with its focus upon the whole of nature, but its applicability to seventeenth century thought is limited.

1.3.3 Modification of the Borg models.

Borg described his ‘transformation’ model as ‘emerging’, suggesting that such perceptions are just appearing. There is, however, evidence of all types of image of God within the first seven centuries of Christianity⁷. Mystical traditions, visualising God as ‘Spirit’, are ancient.

¹ Alister McGrath, *Studies in Doctrine* (Zondervan, 1997) 161 – 172

² God as Shepherd, guides and upholds. As Spirit, inspires, activates, but can judge and punish. As Parent, creates and loves, but also disciplines. As Light, illuminates and keeps safe. As a Rock, provides security.

³ Sallie McFague, *Models of God*: xi, 6, 13

⁴ The ‘personal’ model of God is an obvious example.

⁵ Sallie McFague, *The Body of God*: viii, 47 – 55, 180, 184

⁶ This represented, in theological terms, an affirmation of what ecologists see as the homeostatic mechanisms within the structure of natural ecosystems. Mechanisms which preserve stability in the face of trauma; violent interruptions of the natural order, such as fires, floods etc.

⁷ D.F. Ford, *Theology: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) 94

Teresa of Avila¹ described a transformed, illuminated, personal, relationship with God, as inexpressible adequately in words². *The Cloud of Unknowing*³ portrays a transcendent, ineffable, God, with whom the individual soul was united in contemplation. The long history of such ideas shows their resilience. They are not an 'emerging' aid to encouraging religious belief⁴.

Whilst the Borg models, summarised in **Table 1.1**, are useful, caution is required in applying aspects of them for the purposes of the study. The relationships between God and the individual implied by the two models are a crucial aspect of this investigation. The nature of the relationship felt to exist relates to its perceived origins, whether from an immutable transcendent being or from a Spirit which is part of the 'self' and the natural world. It aids determining whether inspirations are felt as commands, requiring unquestioning obedience or as guidance, requiring flexibility in application. It thus relates to the degree of autonomy felt. Is there a sense of obligation to an 'Other', and if so, is the 'Other' perceived as without⁵ or within? Individuals' trust in their own discernment of requirements is crucial. 'Sin,' in Borg's monarchical model, was failure to obey God's commands, revealed⁶ through scripture and the teachings of the church, so from without. 'Repentance' was seeking forgiveness from a judgemental God. In the Spirit model, all of this is felt within, unmediated. A sense of 'falling short' is possible in either model; an inner dialogue, with inner judgements, but are they independent of the culture of society? Judgement, perceived as divine, may result from social conditioning, based on conventional wisdom, in which case 'repentance' may be misplaced. Transformation implies spiritual guidance, enabling discernment as to when to repent, and when to press on with a prophetic message.

Borg's Spirit model emphasised relationship; intimacy, belonging to God, but also to each-other. 'Sin' was unfaithfulness, betraying the relationship with God. 'Repentance' was returning to the relationship. The unrepentant remained unsatisfied, unfulfilled⁷. Inner, divine, guidance, if followed, avoided sin. Where human desires and inspirations towards virtue conflict, both discernment and 'obedience' are vital. Ideas of a transforming relationship with Spirit, enabling discernment and performance of virtuous actions are attractive, but open to criticism today, in an age where individualistic understandings of Spirit influences are rife⁸.

¹ Teresa of Avila, *The Interior Castle of the Soul* (in Spanish 1588; English translations 1675, 1852, 1912) (Forgotten Books)

² Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction* 56

³ A.C.Spearing transl., *The Cloud of Unknowing and other Works* (London: Penguin Books, 2001) 11 - 101

⁴ As was, clearly, Borg's aim in setting out this model.

⁵ And so, quite possibly, such demands are mediated through 'outward', conventional, interpretations of Scripture or tradition.

⁶ In the associated 'belief' paradigm.

⁷ Marcus J.Borg, *The God We Never Knew* 75, 77/8

⁸ See Chapter 2 Section 2.4 and Chapter 4 Section 4.1

Table 1.2 represents a table for use in the present study, based upon the Borg models, but accommodating the modifications required to facilitate their use as in analysis.

Table 1.2 A Working Model for Analysis of Quaker Writings, derived from the Borg Models.

<i>Tradition</i>	Belief/ Performance (B/P)	Transformation/ Relationship (T/R)
<i>Root Concept</i>	Supernatural theism	Panentheism
<i>Nature of God</i>	A supernatural person 'out there'	'Spirit', immanent but also 'Ground of Being', 'Being itself' ¹
<i>Nature of Faith</i>	<p>Emphasis placed upon Belief :</p> <p>in propositions about God, Christ , Spirit and about 'right/ proper behaviour, 'obeying the rules'.</p> <p>External authority dictates belief.</p> <p>God's grace, rather than individual behaviour, brings salvation, which is linked to eternal life</p>	<p>Trust in loving relationship with 'Spirit', acquired by religious experience.</p> <p>Trusting the 'inward voice' for guidance, aiding discernment of the 'virtuous way'.</p> <p>Trusting God/Spirit to uphold and empower.</p> <p>Salvation is being in right relationship with God/Spirit and with the world. Little concern over the hereafter, which is seen as mystery.</p>
<i>Relationship between God and the believer</i>	<p>God as authority figure, judging performance on fixed criteria, 'the Law', revealed through Scripture and Church tradition; effectively, through human institutions.</p> <p>Sin is breaking the Law and leads to potential damnation.</p> <p>Repentance is obeying the Law again.</p> <p>Salvation requires belief in Christ's atoning death.</p> <p>Humankind are subjects, needing to obey God.</p> <p>Obedience is valued over reason</p>	<p>God as teaching, guiding, loving, empowering, giving 'the courage to be'.</p> <p>Sin is rejection of such guidance, leading to loss of relationship with God/Spirit.</p> <p>Repentance is seeking to restore this relationship.</p> <p>Salvation requires faith and courage, to follow divine guidance. Humanity is, in dialogue with God, enabled to develop an ethical framework to guide behaviour, so ethics are derived more autonomously, requiring use of reason to discern actions.</p>

¹ Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, saw God as such, and insisted that the love of God should be humankind's 'ultimate concern', giving the 'courage to be'

Having applied the elements of this table to analyse the texts in my study two practical problems emerged:

1. As anticipated, elements of each of the two models frequently co- exist within the same text, so I identify features, both of God and of relationship which match the individual elements of the models, namely, 'Belief', 'Performance', 'Transformation' and 'Relationship'.
2. Beliefs about God as ruler, law maker, judge, punishing etc. are regularly employed, but metaphorically, as statements as to how individuals seek to regulate their own behaviour, albeit, as inspired. The ruling, judgement and enforcement are felt within, as part of an intimate relationship. In this way a single axis emerges, from beliefs that behaviour should conform to outward 'laws', be a 'performance', through to a sense that relationship with divinity transforms so that the first understanding of each situation inspires a virtuous response.

The methodology section now explains how I addressed these issues.

1.4 Sources and Methods

Whilst this study addresses a problem in current Liberal Quakerism the roots of Quakerism lie in seventeenth century England and the birth of the movement. There were significant changes between seventeenth century and Liberal Quakerism in Britain, but it was to the faith of early Friends that Liberal Quakers sought to return.¹ I therefore carried out comparable analyses for early and for Liberal Quakers.²

This research required that I:

1. Developed a mode of examining perceptions of God, of relationship with God and of the implications of these for behaviour which is applicable to written materials and which is as objective as possible.
2. Used this mode to examine and compare such perceptions held by early and Liberal Quakers.

My choice, as a Quaker, to study intimate aspects of Quaker beliefs raises issues of impartiality. I have my own views, which can result in bias³ in selection of material, particularly of quotations from texts, to support any assertions I make. Early Quaker writing has been described as being often repetitive, piling up images, largely disordered⁴, but also

¹ See Section 1.5.2 below for more details of such efforts.

² mainly in the period since 1980

³ Conscious or unconscious.

⁴ Rosemary Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences: 78 - 9*

capable of being poetic, showing spiritual incisiveness¹. Within such diversity ambiguity and distortion of meaning is possible.

I chose a quantitative basis to the analysis. Having identified all the features of God and of relationship used throughout the texts, I counted how often each feature was mentioned, to gain a better understanding of the writer's priorities². A similar method was first used in this field by Moore³. She devised questions, including the frequency of use of key words and ideas, applying these to each of the published tracts she analysed. I have developed this methodology, widening the range of concepts, 'features'⁴ to be counted. I then used quotations selected from the texts analysed, along with other, contemporaneous, sources to illustrate the range of interpretations of each feature.

1.4.1. Sources.

The research is entirely text-based. For early Quakers these are the only sources available, so it was logical to use texts from Liberal Quakers too, using as similar a range of texts for each group as possible. Selection of material was based upon the need to understand the breadth of thinking of both groups. I therefore used work by authors spanning as wide a range of perceived theological views as possible, basing such decisions upon what I had learned from conversations with scholars and interested Quakers.

1.4.1.1 Early Quakers.

I chose to use major texts written by George Fox, William Penn, Robert Barclay, and Elizabeth Bathurst.

The study concerned a period⁵ when Quakers' behaviour and attitudes to the world and their relationships with it underwent considerable change, related, at least in part, to changes in social and political conditions.

The first generation of Quakers were most active from 1652 – 1658; from the birth of Quakerism as a significant movement, to the death of Oliver Cromwell, the resulting confusion and moves towards the restoration of the monarchy in 1660⁶. Quaker beliefs in this period varied from expectation of the imminent coming of the 'day of the Lord', to belief that Christ had already arrived in the 'hearts' of believers. It was a radical, evangelising, period⁷. By contrast, following the restoration of the monarchy and continuing

¹ Gerald Guiton, *The Early Quakers and the 'Kingdom of God'* 111 - 2

² For more detail on the methods used, see below, Section 1.4

³ Rosemary Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences*: 236 - 240

⁴ Both of God and of relationship with God

⁵ From late 1640s to 1700.

⁶ See, for example, Christopher Hill. *The World Turned Upside Down*: 344-8

⁷ Rosemary Moore. *The Light in Their Consciences*: 68

until 1689¹, Quakers, previously exposed to intermittent abuse, attack and imprisonment, endured widespread and systematic persecution. This coincided with a decline in religious fervour in the wider population² and Friends' evangelism largely ceased. They became more reflective and self-absorbed, focussing upon maintenance of their own communities³.

I examined writing from these periods, but this was not straightforward. Moore⁴, particularly, notes that Quaker texts published later in the seventeenth century, notably the George Fox *Journal*, could be misleading over thoughts and feelings held during earlier periods. They were edited to express a, later, 'establishment' Quakerism, ignoring early concerns which later troubled the leadership. The *Journal*⁵, for example, whilst accurate on matters of fact⁶, was 'softened'⁷ in passages likely to offend the more orthodox religious opinions at the time. It requires care over its use, particularly concerning events in the more radical 1650s⁸. Similar reservations apply to all the major texts published in the period.

For these reasons I added to the major texts analysed a series of shorter tracts or pamphlets, published over the period. Copies of these are still available, but were never subject to later editing⁹. I also analysed the extensive correspondence of Margaret Fell,¹⁰ finding no claims of selectivity in retaining these¹¹. I analysed a selection of tracts and letters from 3 periods, spanning the seventeenth century, separately, to see if any consistent differences emerged.

1.4.1.2 Liberal Quakers.

Finding nothing comparable with the major texts from the seventeenth century, I chose to look at the current book of discipline¹², *Quaker Faith and Practice*¹. This, the subject of

¹ The date of the Toleration Act, which finally ended their official persecution.

² See John Punshon, *Portrait in Grey*: 95-6

³ See N.C Tousley, 'The Experience of Regeneration and Erosion of Certainty in the Theology of Second-Generation Quakers: No Place for Doubt' in, *Quaker Studies* Vol.13 Issue 1 (2008) 6 - 88

⁴ Rosemary Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences*: 229 - 235

⁵ First dictated in about 1676, but first published, edited by Thomas Ellwood, in 1694.

⁶ Which could be checked independently.

⁷ Compared to the *Short Journal and Itinerary Journals of George Fox*, edited by Norman Penney. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1925), dictated initially in 1664, with the longer version (above) dictated in 1676; all of these were written long after many of the events they describe. See Pink Dandelion *An Introduction to Quakerism* 14

⁸ It is vital for the events before 1652, as there are no other extant sources.

⁹ Rosemary Moore. *The Light in Their Consciences* xii notes that, whilst most of her study was of 'establishment' Quakerism, evidence emerged from time to time of 'fringe', 'popular' Quaker concerns, much as the study identifies for Liberal Quakerism.

¹⁰ For details of Margaret Fell and her role in relation to early Friends see Bonnelyn Young Kunze, *Margaret Fell and the Rise of Quakerism*

¹¹ It is, of course, possible that some letters were excluded.

¹² Whilst Quakers had, and still have, no creeds, they form a, largely, disciplined group, with forms or liturgies for the right holding of meetings, for weddings and funerals, and for running the organisational structures of the Society. They also offer advice and query members on all aspects of their faith and practice. This is achieved by holding current, at all times, a book of discipline. The book is not one of rules, and, currently, uses

extensive consultation throughout the Religious Society of Friends in its compilation², can be thought to embody such orthodoxy as exists among Liberal Quakers³. Each year a Swarthmore Lecture is held and Friends, chosen for being notable in some aspect of their work relevant to Quakerism, are invited to lecture and produce an accompanying book. These texts represent thoughts, some radical, others more conservative, on aspects of current Quaker faith and practice. They form a source of information on the range of thinking within the Society. I chose, for analysis, a selection of these Swarthmore Lectures⁴, opting for more recent texts with a clear theological focus.

Finally, I analysed two texts from the 'non-theist'⁵ tradition within Liberal Quakers, not as central, so not included in the main analysis, but as useful for comparative purposes.

1.4.2 The Difficulties of Text.

Given the breadth of the study I sought to focus attention upon those features, both of God and of relationship which were addressed most frequently in the texts analysed, on the assumption that these were their areas of greatest concern. I recognised the possibility that some features may have been so taken for granted that they were not referred to and was alert to this⁶, but at no time did a relevant theme emerge which had not been identified and scored. I next identified the variety of ways in which each of the most heavily emphasised features are addressed, giving more weight to these features than to isolated comments on other features, which are not further discussed, by the author or by others.

Moore⁷ describes confusion over the nature of early Friends' theological origins and beliefs, which she feels may well result from biased selection of source material. I have attempted to avoid this, both by limiting detailed discussion to identified areas of greatest concern and by systematic selection of quotations relevant to those identified areas. In each case I collected quotations representative of most commonly expressed views on the feature and any which significantly differed from such views. For early Friends this required particular

quotations from Friends, both of the current and all earlier eras, as illustrative, to suggest possible ways of thinking and acting.

¹ *Quaker Faith and Practice*;

² This began in 1985 when the then London Yearly Meeting (now Britain Yearly Meeting) responded to proposals for revision of the previous book of discipline, coming from all over the country, from individual Friends, local meetings and committees. A revision committee was appointed and, finally, in 1994 the new book of discipline was approved by Britain Yearly Meeting in session. See *Quaker Faith and Practice* 13 – 4

³ Pink. Dandelion, *A Sociological Analysis of the Theology of Quakers*: 20

⁴ These are published annually, each the result of research by an invited speaker for the delivery of the annual lecture to Friends assembled for the Yearly Meeting. The purposes of the lectureship, as published in the preface at the beginning of the book of each lecture are: to interpret to the members of the Friends their message and mission, and to bring before the public the spirit, aims and fundamental principles of Friends.

⁵ Or 'non-realist'; the two terms are used interchangeably.

⁶ I address, for example, the fact that early Friends just assumed God to be personal and male, in my discussions in Chapter 2

⁷ Rosemary Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences*: 236

care, given the frequent inconsistency in their use of theological terms¹. Today Quakers write less extravagantly, but use terms, many² also in common, secular and wider religious use, attaching to them their own meanings. The meanings of theological terms are usually fully shared within strongly belief based religious communities. For Liberal Quakers today, however, the possibility of difference in understandings of such terms has become a prescription³. I determine⁴ how widely shared, or understood, Friends' usages are today.

1.4.3 Choice of texts

1.4.3.1 Early Quakers

The major texts chosen were:

1. George Fox *Journal*⁵ published in its first edition in 1694⁶. It was based upon manuscripts thought to have been dictated⁷ in or around 1676, so much of the original manuscript material was written well after the events to which it refers⁸.
2. George Fox *Epistles*⁹ These were written to Quaker communities to encourage, advise and, sometimes, admonish Friends. Their prime focus was upon Quaker faith and practice. Most are only known from a 1698 edition¹⁰. There is no information available on the degree of editing prior to printing and some were, certainly, omitted as unacceptable at the end of the seventeenth century, so they are not a reliable indicator of the range of earlier Quaker belief¹¹. Whilst the *Journal* can be seen, in large part, as outlining Quaker beliefs, the Epistles were pastoral, so different in focus. Examination of all four hundred and twenty Epistles was impractical, so I analysed two samples; Epistles I to LXXVI, (1 – 76), the very earliest, and Epistles CCCC to CCCCXX (400 – 420), the very last¹², seeking any changes in perceptions over his life.

Moore¹³, commenting on the period from 1676 onwards, highlights 'two major Quaker classics', which I also chose for analysis:

¹ See, for example, Gerard Guiton, *The Early Quakers and the Kingdom of God* 1 – 29

² Such as 'spirit', 'truth', 'belief' and 'faith'

³ Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 152

⁴ In Chapters 4 and 5

⁵ The John Nickalls edition, designed, in the words of the editor, in the preface, 'to replace for the general reader the text prepared by Thomas Ellwood...in 1694', after the events to which the text related. See the Preface from John. L. Nickalls, *The Journal of George Fox* vii – xviii for details

⁶ George Fox, *Journal* 1st edition Ed. Thomas Ellwood (London: Sowle, 1694) Now available in *The Works of George Fox* Ed. T.H.S. Wallace (Pennsylvania: New Foundation Publications, George Fox Fund, 1990) [1831] 8 Vols. Vols. 1 and 2

⁷ By Fox, to his son-in-law, Thomas Lower.

⁸ For further details of the *Journal* see Rosemary Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences* 229 - 230

⁹ George Fox, *A Collection of many select and Christian Epistles, letters and testimonies, written on sundry occasions, by that ancient, eminent, faithful Friend and minister of Christ Jesus, George Fox* (New York: AMS Press, 1975) 2 Vols.

¹⁰ Reprinted in: George Fox, *The Works of George Fox*

¹¹ Rosemary Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences*: 229 - 235

¹² Written in the closing years of his life.

¹³ Rosemary Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences*: 227

3. William Penn, *No Cross No Crown*¹. Not a systematic theology, this condemned self-indulgence, urging a life of obedience to the Spirit of Christ.
4. Robert Barclay, *Apology for the True Christian Divinity*². This was the 'first widely read systematic theology of Friends', comprising fifteen propositions, essentially, a scholarly argument for the theological validity of Quakerism³.

I chose also:

5. Elizabeth Bathurst *Truth Vindicated*⁴. This is comparable in scope and scholarship to the Barclay theology⁵, but is from a female writer, unusually for such a document in such times, hence its inclusion for comparative purposes.

I also analysed tracts and letters from each of the following periods:

1653-1658. The earliest period represented by contemporaneously published materials. The initial air of revolution during the English Civil War had given way to an effectively republican period. It ends with the death of Cromwell, at which point 'desperate confusion ensued, in which radical groupings and opinions revived'⁶. This was the period of most vigorous Quaker evangelism.

1659-1668. The period of greatest persecution of Friends⁷. 1668 was the date of the first meeting of Quaker itinerant 'ministers', giving, for the first time, disciplinary powers to meetings. It was a transition period, increasingly seeking to deliver more consistent messages on both faith and practice.

¹ William Penn, *No Cross, No Crown*, Modern English Edition. Revised and Edited by Ronald Selleck (Richmond IN: Friends United Press, 1981) Selleck explained that the title comes from the dying words of Thomas Loe, a modest Quaker minister who impressed and, effectively facilitated the convincement of Penn. The original of this book was short but a second, longer edition, he wrote in 1682, and that forms the basis for the edition analysed. This was written to encourage a wider readership for the book, by making the literary style more accessible to the modern reader. Selleck was quite clear; his purposes were not to please the historian or traditionalist but to popularise Penn's thought by producing a version which 'faithfully represents Penn's meaning if not his exact words'.

² First published in 1678. The edition used was edited by Licia Kuenning (Glenside PA: Quaker Heritage Press, 2002) In the Editor's Introduction (iii – vii) she explained that earlier Quaker publicists had used a distinctive Quaker vocabulary, which was often misunderstood by orthodox contemporary theologians, resulting in sterile debate as each 'talked past' the other, misunderstanding the other's meanings. Barclay was, however, educated to understand orthodox theology, and the *Apology* was able to both explain and defend Quaker usages and doctrine, seeking to show that the latter was superior, both in logic and in faithfulness to scripture.

³ Pink. Dandelion *An Introduction to Quakerism* 54 - 5

⁴ Elizabeth Bathurst *Truth Vindicated by the Faithful Testimony and Writings of the Innocent Servant and Handmaid of the Lord Elizabeth Bathurst* (London: T. Sowle, 1695) [1679]

⁵ Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 54

⁶ Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down*: 122 – 3, 344 - 345

⁷ Under the Quaker Act of 1662 and the Conventicle Act of 1664. See John Punshon, *Portrait in Grey*: 97 – 8

1669-1702. From the end of 1668 a relatively coherent theology was presented to the world¹. With the death of Margaret (Fox) Fell in 1702², the influence of the earliest Friends ended. This period marked the growth of a more 'quietist' and isolationist period.³

The letters and tracts used were:

- a. The letters⁴ of Margaret Fell⁵. She corresponded widely, encouraging and disciplining Friends and seeking to convince both opponents and neutral observers⁶. I divided the letters, all of which were analysed, into sets corresponding to the three periods outlined above.
- b. Tracts⁷, chosen at random by Moore from her database⁸; four tracts from the period 1653-58⁹, four from 1659-68¹⁰ and three from 1669-1702¹¹. Tracts were selected from all the available publications within the specified time frames. The numbers chosen for each period roughly represent relative numbers of tracts published within the period.

1.4.3.2 Liberal Quakers.

¹ See John Punshon, *Portrait in Grey*: 99 – 100, 106

² George Fox having died in 1691.

³ See below, Section 1.5.1.

⁴ E. F. Glines, *Undaunted Zeal: The Letters of Margaret Fell* (Richmond IN: Friends United Press, 2003) contains copies of all the surviving letters.

⁵ Fell, initially married to Judge Thomas Fell, lived at Swarthmore Hall, in Westmoreland. She met George Fox in 1652, and was soon convinced of Friends' message, whereupon she, an educated and articulate woman, her husband influential in the Establishment and the hall itself became crucial to the growth of the movement, which Fell administered from the hall. She met and corresponded with Charles II, on behalf of Friends, following the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660. Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 18 -9 , 29, 42 - 3

⁶ Rosemary Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences*: 27, 30, 32, 77 – 8, 133 – 4, 183, 197

⁷ Tracts or pamphlets were widely published and distributed, setting out Friends' beliefs and practices, arguing with other groups and reporting events, debates etc. See Rosemary Moore *The Light in Their Consciences*: 26, 47, 61 – 4, 67, 92 – 7, 101, 104 – 6, 110, 130 178, 186, 212 – 3

⁸ Rosemary Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences*: In her Preface and Acknowledgements, xi – xiii, Moore explains how she created a computer database of the fifteen hundred publications, along with many more letters, epistles, reports and memoranda, creating lists, by date, author and subject matter. Accessed through, qhpress.org/cgi-bin/q1660s.html

⁹ Henry Clark, *A description of the Prophets, Apostles and Ministers of Christ* (London: Calvert, 1655: C4453)

Richard Hubberthorn, *The Innocency of the Righteous Seed* (London: s.n., 1655)

Edward Burrough, *A Testimony Against a Great Idolatry Committed* (London: Simmonds, 1658:B6032)

Alexander Parker, 1658 *A Testimony of the Appearance of God* (London?: s.n. 1658)

¹⁰ George Fox the younger 1660 *A True Relation of the Unlawful and Unreasonable Proceedings* (London: Wilson, 1660)

Josiah Coale, *An Invitation of Love to the Hungry and Thirsty* (London: Simmonds, 1660: C4754)

John Audland, *The Suffering Condition of the Saints of the Lord* (London: n.p. 1662)

Richard Crane, *Lamentation over Thee o London* (London: n.p. 1665)

¹¹ George Keith and George Whitehead *The Light of Truth* (S.l.: s.n. 1670)

Rebecca Travers, *The Work of God in a Dying Maid* (London: s.n. 1677)

George Keith, *The Christianity of the People Called Quakers* (London: Sowle, 1700)

I analysed Quaker Faith and Practice¹ and eight Swarthmore lecture texts², chosen from the period 1980 to the present time. Choice of these eight aimed to represent different current strands of opinion, Christocentric and Universalist, concerned for, or more relaxed about, Quaker traditions, and focussed primarily upon faith or upon practice, witness. I also sought an approximate gender balance. The two 'non-theist' texts³ were analysed separately, for comparative purposes.

1.4.4 The Method of Analysis Used

Effectively, I used the same technique as Moore⁴ but applied only two questions to each text analysed, each with a host of possible answers: 1. Does this passage describe a feature of God? If so, what feature? 2. Does it describe a feature of relationship with God, or one seen as a consequence of such a relationship? If so, what relationship/consequence? I also adopted Moore's practice of counting, not key words, but identified features, of God and of relationship. Many of these, for example 'powerful' as a feature of God, or 'righteousness' as one of relationship and its consequences, can be summarised in key words, but reference to the concept, not to particular words was what I identified and counted. This required correct identification of the feature⁵ and delineation of separate references to the feature for counting, which matured with practice.

1.4.4.1 Steps in the recording procedure.

1. Four of the texts⁶ I read through, listing distinct features of God or of relationship/consequence encountered and building up cumulative lists of these features. Initially this was fluid, as new features were added and others seen to be variants of a single one and conflated, but eventually I arrived at definitive lists, and drew up

¹ *Quaker Faith and Practice*

² Janet Scott *What canst thou say?*

Gerald Priestland, *Reasonable Uncertainty: A Quaker approach to doctrine*, London: Quaker Home Service, 1982)

John Punshon, *Testimony and Tradition: some aspects of Quaker spirituality*, (London: Quaker Home Service, 1990)

Jonathan Dale, *Beyond the Spirit of the Age*. (London: Quaker Home Service, 1996)

Christine Trevett, *Previous Convictions and end of millennium Quakerism*. (London: Quaker Home Service, 1997)

Young Friends' General Meeting, *Who do we think we are? Young Friends' commitment and belonging*, (London: Quaker Home Service, 1998)

Alex Wildwood, *A faith to call our own. Quaker tradition in the light of contemporary movements of the Spirit*, (London: Quaker Home Service, 1999)

Beth Allen, *Ground and Spring: the foundation of Quaker discipleship* (London: Quaker Books, 2007)

³ David Boulton, *Real Like the Daisies or Real Like I Love You? Essays in Radical Quakerism* (Dent: Dales Historical Monographs in association with Quaker Universalist Group, 2002)

David Boulton, Ed. *Godless for God's Sake: Non- theism in Contemporary Quakerism* (Dent: Dales Historical Monographs, 2006)

⁴ Rosemary Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences*: 236 - 240

⁵ Frequently in the absence of any one defining word.

⁶ Fox, *Journal*, Barclay, *Apology*, Quaker Faith and Practice and Scott, *What Cans't Thou Say?*

recording sheets for use with each text¹, listing all the features, in alphabetical order of words summarising the feature, with spaces for recording each occurrence.

2. I then worked systematically through each text, including revisiting those used to assemble the feature list. I noted the page reference from each text for each identified feature, for later checking of the accuracy of the technique. Such checks involved repeating the exercise from time to time for a few pages of text, focussing particularly on sections which had proved difficult to analyse. The checks continued throughout the process of analysis, to ensure a consistent approach. References to a feature were counted, whether they affirmed or denied it². For each text analysed, quotations were also collected, relating to each of the features identified and counted. I sought quotations typical for that feature in that text and any which seemed to significantly extend or contradict the normal usage. These were all filed under their feature headings, for use in the subsequent discussion.
3. Having completed analysis of a text, I counted the number of references to each feature, then added them all³ to obtain a grand total of feature references. This varied widely between texts⁴. Using the totals, I converted numbers of records for each feature into percentages of all feature references. At this point, I grouped related features.⁵ The grouping, which was to a degree subjective, was for convenience in determining which feature areas were most frequently referred to, so warranting detailed consideration.
4. For each text, the feature groups, and remaining single features were separated into two lists, features of God and features of Relationship. These were each ranked in descending order of frequency⁶.
5. Having examined all the data, I noted that, whilst some individual texts showed distinctive differences in feature frequencies, there were no consistent differences, say, between major early texts and the tracts and letters, or between tracts and letters of any of the three historical periods. Similarly, no consistent differences

¹ A copy of the feature list, used for recording, but without the spaces for records is to be found in appendix 1.

² Thus, for example, for early Friends, one list count appears for God 'Elects', although some affirmed election, as for all who accepted the Light, whilst others denied it as being for a predestined few. For Liberal Friends, all references to God as 'Powerful' were counted, although some denied this, rather, focussing upon a suffering God.

³ whether to 'God' or to 'Relationship'.

⁴ From over 9 000 to less than 100; the latter figures being for one or two short tracts.

⁵ The grouped features of God were: 1. Inward/Light, comprising the features, 'Inward', 'Inward Christ', 'Light', 'Seed', 'That of God' and 'Soul'. 2. Ruler, comprising 'Ruler', 'Kingdom'. 3. Judges/Law, comprising 'Law-maker', 'Judge', 'Just', 'Punishes'. 4. Powerful, comprising 'Powerful', 'Empowers'. 5. Grace, comprising 'Gives', 'Grace'. 6. Gospel, comprising 'Revealed through the Gospel', through the 'Life and teachings of Jesus'. 7. Salvation, comprising 'Saves', 'Redeems'. 8. Father, comprising 'Father/Parent' 'Has His own Children'. 9. Creator, comprising 'Creator', 'Word', 'Wisdom', 'Revealed in Nature'. 10. Works, comprising 'Active in the world', 'Works'. 11. Commands, comprising 'Commands', 'Wills'. 12. Good, comprising 'Good', 'Pure'. 13. Purifies, comprising 'Purifies', 'Sanctifies'. 14. Suffers, comprising 'Atones', 'Suffers for'. 15. Promises, comprising 'Promises', 'Covenants'. 16. Leads, comprises 'Leads', 'Teaches'

The grouped features of Relationship with God were: 1. Sin, comprising 'Sin', 'Separation from God'. 2. Obedience, comprising 'Obedience', 'Service'. 3. Suffering, comprising 'Suffer for God', 'Courage'. 4. Testimony, comprising 'Testimony', 'Witness'. 5. Worship, comprising 'Worship', 'Wait on God', 'in Silence'. 6. Praise, comprising 'Praise', 'Reverence'. 7. Perfection; comprising 'Perfection', 'Union with God'. 8. Experience, comprising 'Experience', 'Mysticism'. 9. Conscience, comprising 'Conscience', 'Consciousness of God'. 10. Formal, comprising 'Formal/Outward', 'Sacraments/ Sacred'.

⁶ These ranked lists, for each text, are included in appendix 4

emerged between feature frequencies in *Quaker Faith and Practice* and the Swarthmore lecture texts. I therefore conflated the seventeenth century data drawn from all texts, letters and tracts¹, to produce overall average feature group/individual feature percentages, which I then ranked in descending order of frequency, in separate tables for features of God and of relationship. I did the same with the Liberal Quaker data². Finally, I combined all individual features, both of God and relationship into single lists, ranked in descending order of frequency, one for early, one for Liberal texts³.

1.4.5 The Use Made of the Analysis data.

In the following four chapters I discuss:

Chapter 2. Early Quaker perceptions of God.

Chapter 3. Early Quaker perceptions of their relationship with God.

Chapter 4 Liberal Quaker perceptions of God.

Chapter 5. Liberal Quaker perceptions of their relationship with God.

I use the feature frequency data to focus discussion upon the six most frequently occurring feature groups/features, examining the range of perceptions encountered within these six areas.

Early Quakers:

Chapter 2. God : 1. Acts Inwardly, as the Inward Christ, Light or Seed, acting in the Soul. 2. Is a Ruler, of a Kingdom. 3. Is a Law- maker, Judges and Punishes. 4. Is Spirit. 5. Is Powerful, Empowers. 6. Leads, Teaches

Chapter 3. Quakers : 1. Sin, becoming Separated from God. 2. Know Truth. 3. Are Obedient, Serve God. 4. Are Righteous, Virtuous. 5. Have Faith. 6. Suffer for God, have Courage.

Liberal Quakers:

Chapter 4. God: 1. is Spirit. 2. Acts Inwardly, as the Inward Christ, Light or Seed, acting in the Soul. 3. Has Meaning and Reality. 4. Is Creator, the Word, Wisdom, revealed in Nature. 5. Leads, Teaches. 6. Is Father, Parent, having his own Children.

¹ By using percentage frequencies all the data could be conflated. Each text, tract or letter set was weighted equally, irrespective of length.

² These, aggregated lists are included in appendix 2.1.1. ,2.1.2., 2.2.1., 2.2.2, 2.3 and 2.4

³ These lists are in appendix 2.5

Chapter 5. Quakers: 1. have Faith. 2. Know Truth. 3. Experience God. 4. Wait upon God in Silent Worship. 5. Live in Love and Unity. 6. Witness ,Testify, to God.

Having identified the features, both of God and of relationship, most important to Quakers for closest scrutiny, it is important that no significant area of their beliefs is neglected in the ensuing discussion. In order to consider the features not examined in detail, I grouped all features identified under a series of broad areas of understanding of God or of relationship. These groupings are again inevitably, subjective to a degree. They represent my analysis of Quaker meaning-making. Below are tables (1.3 and 1.4) which identify the broad areas of understanding and the features¹ included within each of these areas.

Table 1.3 Perceptions of God.

<i>Broad areas of understanding</i>	<i>Features identified and counted</i>
Acts Inwardly/ Within	Inward, Inward Christ, Light, Seed, That of God, in the Soul, Spirit, present In Measure
Ruler	Ruler, Powerful, Empowers, Active in the World
The meaning of 'God'	Meaning, Reality of God, Eternal, Pure, Living, Accessible, Universal, Glorious, Loving.
Leads	Leads/ Teaches, Empowers, Upholds, Calls, Convinces.
Judge	Law- maker, Judge/ Just, Punishes, Tests, Elects.
Saves	Saves, Redeems, Atones/ Suffers for, Heals, Purifies.
Is Gracious	Gives/ Grace.
Commands	Commands, Wills, Covenants
Is Revealed Through Christ	Revealed in Life of Jesus, in the Gospel, Christ is Divine, teaches of the Kingdom
Is Revealed in Scripture	Revealed in Scripture
Father	Father, has His own Children, Personal
Creator	Creator, Word, Wisdom, Revealed in Nature

¹ i.e those which I identified and counted their frequencies in the analysis of texts.

Table 1.4 Perceptions of Relationship to God

<i>Broad areas of understanding</i>	<i>Features identified and counted</i>
Righteousness	Righteousness/ Virtue, Holiness, Perfection, Union with God, Testimony/ Witness, Love/ Unity, Transformed, Commitment, Life, Seek Social Change, Seek Environmental Protection
Truth	Truth, Self- Examination, Selflessness, Discernment, Reason, Humility, Conscience/ Consciousness, Seek, Through Metaphor, Repentance, Use Imagination.
Sin/ Evil	Sin/ Evil, Separation from God, Fear, Apocalyptic Expectations.
Faith	Faith, Suffer for, Freedom, Hope, Joy, Know God.
Worship	Worship, Wait on God, in Silence, Prayer, Outward/ Sacred
Belief	Belief, Doubts, Eternal Life
Experience	Experience, Mysticism, Intimacy with God.
Obedience	Obedience, Service

Having identified these broad areas and their feature contents I scrutinised the quotations and notes collected for each feature within each of the broad areas. Once the full discussion of the prioritised features listed above was complete I examined these and compared them with information on the broad areas to see if any relevant strand of thought had been omitted. I was satisfied that no such omissions were identifiable. The discussion of the prioritised features identified revealed all that had emerged in the analysis concerning the perceptions of each Quaker group in relation to God and relationship.

The discussion chapters (2 – 5) illustrate and analyse the breadth of view found among Quakers of that period on each of the Features discussed. Use is made of quotations and paraphrasing from the analysed texts, but also any material gleaned from other primary and secondary sources which aids understanding.

1.4.6. Modifying the Borg models.

As anticipated, there was no question of applying one or other model unequivocally to either early or Liberal Quakers. What was particularly noticeable was the tendency¹ to use 'Belief' based concepts but to apply them to the self, and to personal behaviour, often in addition to affirming them on their face value as religious propositions. I thus developed the hypothesis that Quaker concerns have always been for the way in which they lived their lives, but that the basis for judgement of the 'righteousness', virtue, of their actions has moved along a single axis. At one pole of that axis was belief in a powerful, external God who judged how they 'performed' in relation to, outward, 'Laws'. At the other pole was a sense that their experience of relationship with God, as Spirit, acting within them, transformed them, inspiring and leading them to virtue.

1.4.7. Evaluation of the methods used.

1.4.7.1 Choice of texts for analysis.

Some of the tracts and Swarthmore lecture texts revealed different emphases, related to differences in the topic focus of the writer, but all of the features identified for counting were represented in the great majority of the texts analysed. The features listed and scored accounted for all references to God or Relationship in each of the analysed texts.

Inevitably, other texts were of interest; some are used as sources of quotations², but complete analysis of texts was a huge task and analysis of more texts would not have significantly changed the weightings found. Whilst other Swarthmore lectures from the period were of interest, to add just one or two more risked biasing the sample, for example, towards activism³, or spirituality⁴ and adding all of them made the task of analysis unmanageable.

1.4.7.2. The method of analysis of texts.

The size of the task involved in this method of analysis limited the number of texts analysed. The analysis required considerable judgement, particularly so for early Quaker writing, which was frequently difficult to penetrate. Nonetheless, the value of the analysis was considerable, in that it enabled clear determination of the areas of greatest Quaker concern. Both groups frequently make similar points in different ways, and, given the difficulties over the use of language to express experiences, and ideas drawn from those experiences, classifying them demands meticulous analysis. As such, an element of subjectivity inevitably

¹ noted in the critique of the Borg models, in **1.3** above

² The writing of Isaac Pennington and James Nayler proved particularly valuable

³ E.g. Simon Fisher, *Spirited Living: Waging conflict, building peace* (Swarthmore Lecture, 2004) (London: Quaker Books, 2004)

⁴ E.g. Christopher Holdsworth, *Steps in a Large Room: A Quaker explores the monastic tradition* (Swarthmore Lecture, 1985) (London: Quaker Home Service, 1985)

remains, but the size of the samples and the numbers of feature references involved¹ eliminate the effects of all but the grossest, systemic, errors, which I am confident I have avoided.

1.4.7.3. *Aggregation of the data from individual texts.*

Having aggregated the data in a variety of different ways and compared the aggregated data with the overall averages, first, for seventeenth century texts and, second, for Liberal texts, I concluded that the only units of interest were the overall averages for each period and the figures for individual texts. Some texts showed particular weightings², but no intermediate grouping of texts, by type or historical period, revealed any significant differences in emphasis. Accordingly, I use the averaged data to guide my discussion of each of the periods.

1.4.7.4. *The use made of the data.*

Detailed discussion of each analysed text would be beyond the scope of the study and would add nothing significant to the conclusions reached. I use overall average data to guide discussion, focussing upon areas of greatest emphasis across all texts, confining detailed discussion to the six most frequent of the features or feature groups in each case. This figure, six, was a compromise between the desire to consider as many features, Quaker perceptions, as possible and the constraints of the study. The exercise identifying the broad areas, described above³, confirmed that no significant strand of thought had been ignored. Feature grouping within the prioritised features involved closely allied features. In each group discussed, the frequency of one or more of the individual features was alone sufficient to ensure its inclusion in the discussions⁴. Grouping with other related features simply enabled the discussion to be fuller. Relating the study findings to those of other scholars⁵ required reference to the priorities given within each Quaker group, to the different features identified. It was for this purpose that individual features were ranked in descending order of frequency of occurrence⁶.

The method of analysis adopted is justified in that it identifies all the priorities of the groups studied in relation to their perceptions of God and of their relationship to God. It was through the identification of joint priorities, both on belief/performance and on transformation/relationship, that the concept of a single axis of belief, seeing performance

¹ These varied between almost 10 000 and less than 100. All frequencies are % frequencies and are treated as equivalent; the error margin in the smaller samples is, obviously, larger, but not worrying as the smaller texts tended to limit the scope of their focus onto relatively few, easily identifiable, features.

² See the data for individual texts in Appendix 4

³ See above, Section 1.4.5.

⁴ That is to place it in the 6 most frequent features referred to.

⁵ In Chapter 6 Section 6.4

⁶ Since separation of perceptions of God and of relationship was a distinctive feature of this, but not other, studies, all features, both of God and of relationship, were combined for this ranking.

under imperatives at one pole and close co-operation, inwardly guided, at the other, emerged. Too often examinations of Quaker beliefs and priorities seem to suggest that their beliefs are skewed towards one or the other of the belief/discipline¹ or transformation/inward inspiration² models, using quotations which support that view. I suggest that selective reading of texts³ lies behind the disagreements, which Moore outlines⁴, over the origins and priorities of Friends. The present study methods ensured that all principle Quaker priorities were addressed.

1.4.7.5. Concluding evaluation of the general approach.

The analysis, by scrutiny of quotations within the texts, identified both 'normal' and 'abnormal' references to each of the features. This, surprisingly, revealed relative uniformity in interpretations of features, as well as the uniformity in feature emphases identified, even in the face of wide changes in the behaviour and outlook of early Quakers over the period studied. Similar uniformity emerged in modern texts with widely different priorities over practice. This suggests that matching theological priorities with attitudes to behaviour is problematical and this is addressed in the following chapters, in part in the discussion of the prioritised features, but especially in the concluding remarks to each of chapters 3 – 5.

1.4.8. Methods Summary.

The methods adopted were:

1. Qualitative: identifying the features of God and of relationship and quotations to illustrate the range of perceptions of these.
2. Quantitative: the frequency data collected and the uses made of this to determine Quaker priorities.

The use of a dualistic pair of models of God and of relationship provided criteria against which to assess what was written. The large volume of data involved in the study aided its reliability in determining the areas of focus of Friends.

1.5. Context to the study: Backgrounds to the two Quaker groups analysed.

1.5.1 Early Quakers.

Quakers emerged in England in the mid-seventeenth century, a difficult period for most of the population. Major harvest failures⁵ had led to severe food shortages and infectious disease was rife. The combination of civil war and the enclosure movement had produced a

¹ For example Hugh Barbour, *The Quakers in Puritan England*

² For example Howard Brinton, *The Religious Philosophy of Quakerism*

³ Quite probably the writer is unconsciously doing so. Evidence supporting preconceptions is more easily identified.

⁴ Rosemary Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences* 236

⁵ From the 1620s to the 1640s

pool of landless, homeless, individuals, comprising up to a third of the population¹. An emerging market economy, generating severe price inflation, along with the 'tithe'², brought poverty to most citizens³.

Belief in an old, sacred, finite, cosmos, full of meanings, omens and symbols, was widespread⁴. Divine providence was held to control events, with little popular awareness of science or philosophy⁵. George Fox⁶ himself believed in witches⁷, a simple example of the superstition which existed.

Puritanism⁸ was the dominant religious movement. Centred on Calvinist theology, it emphasised the total sovereignty of God. Puritans resisted anything which transgressed God's laws, as interpreted from the Bible and the Puritan conscience. Theirs was a world polarised into good and evil. They sought God as ultimate goodness. Humankind was all 'in the Fall'⁹, depraved, needing God's grace, gained through the atoning death of Christ. Grace was, however, only granted to some, 'elect', predestined to salvation, eternal life. Contaminated by sin, humankind lacked the necessary reason or will to wish or know how to be saved. Justification was by faith, trusting that the sacrifice of Christ united believers in 'mystical union' with Christ, having a two-fold effect, a 'double grace'¹⁰. The believer was justified, declared to be righteous in the sight of God, and slowly became more like Christ, through regeneration¹¹. Quakers rejected belief that justification imputed righteousness¹²; this was 'pleading for sin'¹³. Righteousness must be sought. 'Election', Calvinists insisted, was God's decision. All were predetermined, from birth, to salvation or damnation¹⁴.

¹ Gerald Guiton, *The Early Quakers and the Kingdom of God* 32

² A universal church tax; frequently 1/10 of the family's resources. See Rosemary Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences*: 7 - 8

³ John Punshon, *Portrait in Grey*: 14 - 17

⁴ Don Cupitt, *Taking Leave of God* (London: SCM Press, 1980) 16 - 17

⁵ In R.M Keiser and R.Moore, *Knowing the Mystery of Life Within*: 124 Whilst the Royal Society was founded in 1660, this had little influence on the general population. See www.royalsociety.org/about-us/history/ Thomas Spratt, *History of The Royal Society of London , for the improving of natural knowledge* (London 1667) 362 – 5 claimed the job of science and the Royal Society was 'to shake off the shadows and to scatter the mists which fill the minds of men with a vain consternation'

⁶ Widely regarded as the founder of Friends

⁷ David Boulton, in J.L Scully, and P.Dandelion, *Good and Evil: Quaker Perspectives* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007) 185

⁸ See Hugh Barbour, *The Quakers in Puritan England* 2 – 3 for a general introduction to Puritan beliefs.

⁹ That the sins of Adam and Eve were inherited by all, so humankind was innately depraved and could only be saved by the grace of God, earned through belief in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross.

¹⁰ These Puritan views were derived from John Calvin. See Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction* 296 - 7

¹¹ John Calvin, *Institutes III xi 2, 23*

¹² That the believer is righteous, virtuous, in the eyes of God, though still innately sinful.

¹³ See John L. Nickalls, (ed) *The Journal of George Fox* 18

¹⁴ Rosemary Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences*: 99 - 100

Friends rejected this; salvation was universally available, but required obedience to an 'inward guide'¹. Continued obedience led to earthly perfection².

Calvinism was fashionable with the wealthy and powerful.³ It endorsed economic activities and the 'protestant work ethic'⁴. Success, including acquiring wealth, signified election⁵. Concern for election led ordinary people often to despair, faced with the prospect of a short, hard, life then eternal damnation⁶. Those who felt elect often became self-righteous, judgemental and cruel to others. Some, seeing everything as pre-ordained, enjoyed life while they could, often exploiting others in the process. Many Puritans lived earnest and honourable lives, encouraged to a common-sense view that their eternal future would be influenced by their present behaviour⁷.

Puritans mistrusted spirituality⁸. By contrast, Friends had faith that they experienced God, as Christ, inwardly. Fox recounts⁹ hearing a voice: 'there is one, even Jesus Christ that can speak to thy condition', insisting that, 'God and Christ was come to teach his people himself'¹⁰. Whilst echoing the Calvinist idea of Christ as a mediator between humankind and God, this did not emphasise his atoning work. It was an immediate and personal sense of inner guidance and empowerment. Christ's teaching, within, guided Friends to 'righteousness'. Quakers did proclaim the need for Christ's atoning death to cleanse them from sin¹¹, but emphasised the call to obedience to the Word of God, Christ, within. This was the Light. Quaker faith was not about 'notions', beliefs and doctrines, 'professed' to others but about 'the way'¹² to live a righteous, virtuous, life. They sought to recreate the 'primitive Christianity' of New Testament times, having direct personal experience of 'God's

¹ See Gerald Guiton, *The Early Quakers and the Kingdom of God*: 6 and Isaac Penington, *The Works of Isaac Penington: A Minister of the Gospel in the Society of Friends, including his collected Letters* (4 vols. And supplement) (Glenside PA: Quaker Heritage Press) (first published 1681) Vol. 2 487

² Puritans felt perfection was only possible after death and election to eternal life.

³ H. Pyper, in Scully, J. L. and Dandelion, P., *Good and Evil: Quaker Perspectives*. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007) 61 – 2

⁴ See Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* transl. Talcott Parsons (London: Allen and Unwin, 1930) 90 – 3

⁵ Alasdair MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge Classics, 2002) [1967] 145

⁶ See, for example, G. Rofo, *The Righteousness of God* (London: Calvert, 1656: R1788) 14 – 15

⁷ Cecil, W. Sharman, *George Fox and the Quakers* 16 – 17

⁸ Jack Wallis, *Jung and the Quaker Way* 2nd Edition (London: Quaker Home Service, 1999)[1988] 67 – 68

⁹ John L. Nickalls, (ed) *The Journal of George Fox* 3 -11

¹⁰ John L. Nickalls, (ed) *The Journal of George Fox* 98

¹¹ For example, Edward Burrough, *A declaration to all the World of our Faith* (London: Simmons, 1657: B 5995) 2 – 5

¹² See, for example, John L. Nickalls, (ed) *The Journal of George Fox* 13

saving power¹. They rejected all ‘hireling Priests’², although volunteer ministers emerged to spread the Quaker message³.

Early Friends used theological terms, not as objects of belief, but as expressions of experience, evoking an inward sense of the divine⁴. Thus, Isaac Pennington implored, ‘becoming nothing... taking up our cross’⁵; a call for selfless humility. Quaker leaders had an excellent grasp of Scripture, using it extensively in their writing⁶, but not seeing it as primary guidance. This came from the inward Christ⁷, discerned in worship, silently waiting on God. Ministry came from leadings of the Spirit of Christ within. All formal worship and prayer they denied as ‘outward’, lacking inner guidance.

Many early Friends emerged from among the Seekers, who believed that all existent churches, ordinances and liturgies were ‘apostate’⁸. They met in silence, awaiting divine revelation⁹. Quakers, along with other radical groups¹⁰, grew out of the Anabaptist radical Reformation¹¹. All desired greater equality, toleration of difference and an end to the involvement of the State in religious affairs. Where others sought political reform Friends saw the causes of social evils as spiritual, self-obsession and greed. Reform required personal transformation, adopting ‘the cross’, becoming less self-absorbed and more compassionate¹². Transformation was not easy or immediately effective. Fox¹³ retained a sense of being judged throughout his life, subject to inner tensions between the need for love and that for obedience. God judged disobedience harshly, hence Fox’s prioritisation of Church and spiritual reform¹⁴. He was a restraining voice when faced with more radical social reformers; social justice would come when all, obedient to their ‘inward guide’, lived unselfishly and with integrity. Friends’ denial of deference to those holding worldly

¹ Harvey Gillman, *A Light That is Shining: an introduction to the Quakers* (London: Quaker Home Service, 1988) 8

² See, for example, John L. Nickalls, (ed) *The Journal of George Fox* 149

³ Initially, the, so called, ‘valiant sixty’ Quaker evangelists, who set out in pairs to travel the country, spreading the word by preaching in public places. See, e.g. John Punshon, *Portrait in Grey: 76, 136 - 7*

⁴ R.M. Keiser, and R. Moore, *Knowing the Mystery of Life Within: 123*

⁵ R.M. Keiser, and R. Moore, *Knowing the Mystery of Life Within: 137*

⁶ Scripture is found used: as direct quotations, for comment in the text, with marginal references and paraphrasing scattered biblical phrases, run together.

⁷ Rosemary Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences: .53*

⁸ Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 14 ‘Apostacy’ is a familiar theme of early Friends; that the Church was ‘built by the will of men’; i.e. not by the will of God. Fox wrote how ‘The true ministry being lost since the days of the apostacy (means) people have run into heads and parties and sects, and truth among them held in unrighteousness.....men slaying one another about religion and for religion, and about worship which was not the work of the true Christians.....(who) brought people into unity and wrestled against principalities and powers’ George Fox *An Epistle to All People on The Earth* (London: Calvert, 1657: F1805) quoted and explained in Gerald Guiton *The Early Quakers and the ‘Kingdom of God’*: 3

⁹ See Barry Reay, *The Quakers and the English Revolution* 14

¹⁰ Including the Levellers and Diggers, two groups more committed to political and social than religious reform.

¹¹ See, for example, Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction* 48

¹² See John Punshon, *Portrait in Grey: A short history of the Quakers* 39

¹³ Hugh Barbour, *The Quakers in Puritan England* 33

¹⁴ Rosemary Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences: 64*

authority¹ was rooted in their conviction that all were equal under God². They challenged the authoritarian bases of social injustice from religious, not political, motives.³

Many associated Quakers with Ranters; antinomian⁴ libertines who claimed that God was indifferent to sin. They lived drunken, licentious, lives⁵. Both groups rejected absolute authority for Scripture; they had the indwelling spirit of Christ to guide them⁶. For Quakers Scripture was authoritative, matching their inward leadings, if read 'in the spirit in which it was written'⁷. Unlike Ranters, however, Friends insisted on moral rigour⁸. Faced with strict moral requirements, many Seekers, coming to Quakerism, struggled, but the moral stance was also a powerful attractant⁹. Quakers refused to swear oaths; this implied a double standard of truth. They upheld Jesus' condemnation of oath-taking¹⁰. This led to persecution¹¹, but their concern always to be truthful gave them a reputation for honesty which often led to business success¹². Fox warned of the risk of a resulting hubris¹³.

The Quaker movement became significant¹⁴ in 1652¹⁵, well after the civil war¹⁶. Following defeat of the King¹⁷, initial political experiments had disappointed most of the population¹⁸, so many accepted the spiritual approach to social transformation of Quakerism as an alternative. Initially¹⁹ Friends were at their most radical, evangelising and given to

¹ They refused to doff their hats, to use any honorary titles, not even the formal 'you', rather, using the informal 'thee.' See, for example, P. Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 27, 45

² Gerard Guiton, *The Early Quakers and the Kingdom of God*: 306

³ Richard Bauman, *Let Your Words Be Few: Symbolism of speaking and silence in seventeenth century Quakers* (London: Quaker Home Service, 1998)[1970] 74 saw refusal to remove the hat or use the formal 'you' etc. all as symbolic actions, declarations of human equality.

⁴ Antinomianism is the term used for the view that Christians are, by grace, freed from all moral laws. Originating in the ideas of Gnosis, an early Christian group, condemned for heresy, who drew a sharp distinction between 'spirit' and 'matter', deeming the former so opposed to the latter, that bodily actions were indifferent. This idea was revived by the Anabaptists, basing it upon the Lutheran doctrine of justification by faith, not works. See E.A Livingstone, *Oxford Concise Dictionary of the Christian Church* 28

⁵ See Douglas Gwyn, *Apocalypse of the Word*: 17 - 18

⁶ See John Punshon, *Portrait in Grey: A short history of the Quakers* 40 - 41

⁷ See, for example, John L. Nickalls, Ed. *The Journal of George Fox* 32

⁸ Barclay, condemned 'vanity', listing styles of dress and hair deemed inappropriate. He rejected 'games, sports, comedies', all 'divertisement' and 'recreation.' These were inconsistent with 'the seriousness, gravity and godly fear which the Gospel calls for' Robert Barclay, *Apology for the True Christian Divinity* Proposition xv xvii and xviii, 446 - 452

⁹ Rosemary Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences*: 115 – 116

¹⁰ Jesus: 'But let your communication be, Yea, Yea; Nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil' *Matthew* 5: 37

¹¹ Rosemary Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences*: 182 The Quaker Act of 1661, made refusal to take a formal oath, or to encourage others to refuse, unlawful.

¹² Rosemary Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences*: 122

¹³ George Fox, *Epistle 131*, in, *George Fox The Works of George Fox* 8 Vols. Vol. 7

¹⁴ When Fox addressed a large crowd at Firbank Fell In Westmoreland, now part of Cumbria.

¹⁵ John L. Nickalls, Ed. *The Journal of George Fox* 107 - 9

¹⁶ The main Civil War was from 1642 – 5 ;See, for example, John Punshon, *Portrait in Grey*: Chapter 3 64 - 94

¹⁷ Charles I

¹⁸ See, for example, Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down*: Chapters 4, 57 – 72; 5, 73 – 86, 7, 107 – 150 especially

¹⁹ From 1652 to 1660

‘enthusiasm’¹ in their worship². Many suffered abuse and punishment³, often responding peacefully and compassionately⁴. Their behaviour towards others, however, often aggressive to those who did not share their convictions⁵ was criticised⁶. Ingle⁷ described Fox as ‘cocksure.....a prig who took himself very seriously’, linking this to Quaker belief in agency in their own salvation. Initially Friends were not interested in religious tolerance, convinced that they had found the truth and that others would eventually recognise this⁸.

In 1660 the monarchy was restored and persecution of Quakers increased dramatically⁹. Moore describes¹⁰ how they morphed into an introverted, isolationist and increasingly orthodox, religious group, focussing on its inward life and theology. Possibly this was to avoid persecution¹¹, but some desired respectability and adaptation to the new political regime, as Quakerism attracted more of the gentry. Much of the population enjoyed greater security and the restoration of social and cultural life¹². Friends reacted, focussing more on worship, holding the group together, shunning ‘the world’ and supporting those persecuted¹³. Such ‘quietism’ consolidated Friends’ spirituality¹⁴. Indicative of these changes was the growth of ‘the hedge’, self-imposed boundaries from ‘the world.’ Dress and speech both became very ‘plain’ and distinctive. Marriage was restricted to that with other

¹ Charismatic behaviour.

² The term ‘Quaker’ reflected the tendency of some to shake in worship. Fox alleged that the term was applied to them first by Justice Gervase Bennet in 1650, as a riposte to Friends’ demands that people tremble at the word of God. Francis Higginson (Anglican) *A Brief Relation of the Irreligion of the Northern Quakers* (London: TR for HR, 1653) 15 – 16 wrote how many, in worship, ‘fall into quaking fits....as it were in a swoon’....these quakings, he believed, ‘were diabolical raptures proceeding from the power of Satan.’ see John Punshon, *Portrait in Grey*: 86

³ Rosemary Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences* 160 explains how early Friends developed a theology of suffering, rejecting the earlier view that all suffering was punishment for previous sin. They saw it as their ‘cross’, sharing in the sacrifice of Christ.

⁴ See Gerald Guiton, *The Early Quakers and the Kingdom* 186

⁵ Hugh Barbour, *The Quakers in Puritan England* 128 – 9 gives instances of Fox’s intemperate condemnation of others and the ‘neither loving nor helpful’ words he addressed to them.

⁶ Francis Higginson, *A Brief Relation of the Irreligion..* described them as ‘Blasphemous, heretical seducers....tumultuous, factious, impious and barbarous’ and their preachers as: standing or sitting with hat on....eyes and face downwards, with a severe expression....fingers extended....beating their breasts continually....using no Text....voice low....often incoherent’.

⁷ H. Larry Ingle, *First Among Friends: George Fox and the Creation of Quakerism* 37

⁸ Rosemary Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences*: 217

⁹ John Punshon, *Portrait in Grey*: 95 - 99

¹⁰ Rosemary Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences*: 214 - 6

¹¹ Many individuals still bravely upheld their own beliefs despite great suffering.

¹² John Punshon, *Portrait in Grey*: 95

¹³ For example, *Testimony of C. Marshall Concerning the Unity of the Spirit* in *Camm and Audland Works* 1689 ‘Those that have seen the sweet, lovely, precious state of Unity and Concord that the excellent power of the Lord God Almighty gathered into...in the blessed morning of our day.....in this true and spiritual unity with the Lord Jesus...cannot but....greatly dread the turning aside and going out of it’.

¹⁴ For example, Dorothy White, *A Visitation of Heavenly Love* (London: Wilson, 1660: W1759) ‘This is the Living God purifying his Temples; and he is making...an Everlasting dwelling place in the sons and daughters of men; for God is now come to dwell in His people.’

Friends¹. No longer an open group, seeking salvation for all, they came to see themselves as separate, a 'peculiar people'².

1.5.2. The development of Liberal Quakerism.

Liberal Quakerism began as a critique of the changes in faith and practice which had occurred since early Friends. Barclay³ had encouraged Quietism, reducing active involvement, increasing passivity and decline in the teaching ministry⁴. Quakers⁵ had increasingly rejected their own natural 'selves' and the world, as corrupting. They sought a spiritual world, transcending the natural⁶ and engaged less and less with the world in which they lived. In the mid-nineteenth century this changed and British Quakers embraced evangelicalism, an experiential faith in Christ, but guided by scripture and doctrine, with less emphasis upon the unmediated Light within⁷.

Friends pondered these historical changes in their own movement. They also considered the changes in society and growth in intellectual understandings⁸, of the universe, through the sciences, of human nature through the human sciences, of philosophy and of Scripture, through application of literary criticism techniques. These thoughts led to renewed interest in the faith of the earliest Friends and the development of a new 'Liberal Quakerism'.

Davie⁹ set out its four main features. I list and briefly discuss these below:

1. *Experience is Primary* Discerning what is truly 'of God' is seen as a spiritual question. Liberal Friends have re-established primary emphasis upon direct experience, going further. Denying Fox's insistence¹⁰ on scriptural confirmation of inner revelation, they place total authority in inner experience¹¹, raising questions of discernment. Perceptions of divine inspiration can be irrational or naïve¹². Anything truly 'of God' meets all tests of reason¹³ and is free from selfish motives¹⁴. Liberal Quakers use¹⁵ an 'interior moral compass', an intuitive virtue

¹ Douglas Gwyn, *The Covenant Crucified* (Wallingford PA: Pendle Hill, 1995) 236

² See Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 62 – 8

³ See Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 53 – 6

⁴ Edward Grubb, *Authority and the Light Within* (London: James Grubb, 1908)

⁵ Influenced by European continental Quietists, Miguel de Molinos (1628 – 1697), Francois Fenelon (1651 – 1715) and Madame Jeanne Guyon (1648 – 1717)

⁶ So it was one which was, effectively, seen as supernatural. Rufus M. Jones *The Later Periods of Quakerism* 49

⁷ Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 82 – 4

⁸ See Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 129 – 133

⁹ Martin Davie, *British Quaker Theology since 1895* 67 - 72

¹⁰ John L. Nickalls, Ed. *The Journal of George Fox* 33

¹¹ Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 130

¹² Leslie Stevenson, *Open to New Light*: 104 – 5, 110

¹³ Austin Farrer, 'Inspiration by the Spirit' in *The End of Man* (London: SPCK, 1973)

¹⁴ P. Anderson in J.L Scully and P. Dandelion *Good and Evil: Quaker Perspectives* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007) 28

¹⁵ J.L. Scully in J.L Scully and P. Dandelion *Good and Evil: Quaker Perspectives* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007) 226 –

ethics¹, in discerning actions. Some see actions as responses to the will of God, others as end products of moral training and self-discipline, attracting criticism for being 'secular and humanist', showing 'spiritual inexperience'². Farrow³, however, rejects such criticism, pointing to Bonhoeffer's⁴ call for a religion-less, worldly, Christianity. Jesus had not called for a new religion, but for a new life. Fox had made the test of authenticity 'each person's private encounter with God'⁵.

2. *Faith relevant to the Age*. Liberal Quaker faith must not compromise their intellectual understandings. The nature of matter, the universe and its history, life and the factors influencing human wellbeing and behaviour, must all be reconciled with religious beliefs if they are to be held with integrity.
3. *Being Open to New Light*⁶, receptive to new responses to divinity, is regarded as normative for Liberal Friends⁷. Nonetheless, efforts to embrace other faith traditions and include more secular understandings have caused distress and dissension in some Quaker groups.
4. *Progressivism* 'God's truths are timeless and unchanging, but.... revelation of them to humanity is gradual'⁸. New revelations, thus, have authority over old. This has allowed Friends to incorporate advances in human understanding of the cosmos, adapting their beliefs as necessary. Adopting an optimistic view of the human condition, Quakers insist upon the reality of 'that of God' in everyone⁹. James¹⁰ described 'healthy-minded' religion, seeing everything as fundamentally good, by nature. He ascribed the advance of liberalism in Christianity to the victory of healthy-mindedness over the 'morbidness' of the old 'hell-fire theology'. Embracing 'healthy-mindedness', Quakers have renewed emphasis upon the Light¹¹ of God, present in everyone. Early Friends equated this with Christ within them, an 'Inward Light', from a transcendent source, which Barclay¹² separated from the, natural, human conscience. Liberal Friends have, however, 'co-opted conscience as a spiritual faculty.... in which the Light operated'¹³. Early Quakers,

¹ An approach to what is right or wrong based, not upon moral rules but intuitively, emulating what the 'virtuous person' would do in those circumstances; it is thus a flexible, context sensitive, approach to ethics. See Michael Slote, in Ted Honderich, *Oxford Companion to Philosophy* 2nd Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005)[1995] 947 – 8

² Alastair Heron, *Our Quaker Tradition* (Kelso: Curlew, 1999) 33

³ Jo Farrow, in Jo Farrow and Alex Wildwood *Universe as Revelation: An Ecomystical Theology for Friends* (London: Pronoun Press, 2013) 25

⁴ Dietrich Bonhoeffer *Letters and Papers from Prison*, Ed. E. Bethge transl. Reginald Fuller (London: SCM Press, 2001)[1953] 167

⁵ H. Larry Ingle, *First Among Friends*: 52

⁶ Be 'open to new light, from whatever quarter it may come' *Quaker Faith and Practice* 1.02.7

⁷ Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 131 – 2

⁸ E. Isichei, *Victorian Quakers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970) 36

⁹ Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 132 – 3

¹⁰ William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*: 75 – 8

¹¹ Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 132 – 3

¹² Robert Barclay, *Apology for the True Christian Divinity* 129 – 131

¹³ Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 132 – 3

rejecting 'original sin'¹, described the Seed, 'That of God', as present in everyone. Liberal Quakers often invoke an 'Inner Light', monistic, placing divinity within the individual. Early Friends were more dualistic. 'That of God' was the ability to turn to the transcendent Inward Light for spiritual guidance².

Dandelion describes³ Liberal Friends' faith in a 'Light mysticism', guiding all towards religious truth, what was good, what evil. Friends have 'optimism about the world'⁴, affirming a loving God, sustaining and healing all who have faith. They adopt a universal ethic of reciprocity⁵, insisting upon the potential for, but not actual, goodness in all humankind, recognising a universal potential for evil too. They reject a judgemental God⁶.

Significant changes in the meanings of 'Light', 'Spirit', 'conscience' etc. have developed from early to Liberal Friends, many of whom reject ascribed meanings to words and being tied to any text or particular interpretation of Quaker tradition. They rely solely on collective discernment from pure experience. In this is the potential for a Quakerism 'potentially for ever on the move'⁷.

1.5.2.1 Liberal Friends and Pluralism⁸.

Penington affirmed all faith traditions, but interpreted all religious experience in Christian terms⁹, an approach similar to that of some Quaker Universalists¹⁰ today. Thus, Brinton¹¹ denied that Christianity offered a unique way to be 'right with God'. All the great religions gave mystical 'immediate and direct contact with the divine'. Nonetheless, the virtues he affirmed were all those of 'the Kingdom'. Religious pluralism accords with the Quaker 'Advice'¹² to be open to new light, from whatever source¹³. Dandelion¹⁴ noted that the

¹ E. Isichei, *Victorian Quakers* 34

² Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 132 – 3

³ Pink Dandelion, *A Sociological Analysis of the Theology of Quakers*: 154

⁴ the 'healthy minded' approach.

⁵ See Matt 25: 40 'In as much as you have done it unto one of the least of my brethren you have done it unto me'

⁶ M.P. Abbot in J.L. Scully and P. Dandelion, *Good and Evil: Quaker Perspectives* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007) 85 – 6

⁷ Pink Dandelion *A Sociological Analysis of the Theology of Quakers*: 154

⁸ Pluralism is the affirmation that all faith traditions seek a common 'ultimate reality' and all are equally valid; differences in beliefs and liturgy merely reflect human cultural differences. See John Hick, *God and the Universe of Faiths* (London: Macmillan, 1973) and John Hick, *The Second Christianity* (London: SCM Press, 1983) He was a vocal exponent of the pluralist view and a Quaker.

⁹ R.M. Keiser in R.M. Keiser and R. Moore *Knowing the Mystery of Life Within*: 251

¹⁰ The Quaker Universalist Fellowship is a group within Liberal Quakerism committed to religious pluralism. It publishes a journal called *Universalist Friends*. The Quaker Universalist Group is a special interest group within Britain Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends.

¹¹ Howard Brinton *The Religious Philosophy of Quakerism*: 10 – 19

¹² *Quaker Faith and Practice* 1.02.7

¹³ Gale Pilgrim 'Taming Anarchy: Quaker Alternate Ordering and 'Otherness' in P. Dandelion, ed., *The Creation of Quaker Theory: Insider perspectives* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004) 206 – 225, 218

¹⁴ Pink Dandelion, 'The Absolute Perhaps'; a paper presented to the British Sociological association sociology of religion Study group Conference, Durham 7 – 10 April 1999

seeming impossibility of deciding which faith paths revealed 'God's will' meant that all must be regarded as potentially having something to offer.

Some Liberal Quakers, however, question¹ the nature of any alternative Light, Spirit or God. Whilst this is often presented as a criticism, if all faiths lead to the same 'ultimate reality' and to reciprocity², then the criticism is invalid. There is no alternative nature to these, merely personal, often culturally derived, preferences on beliefs. If so, it is insignificant whether Quakers label themselves as Christian or not, what matters is the life lived³.

1.5.2.2. liberal - Liberal Friends.

Dandelion uses this term for a pluralistic, experientially based, Quakerism, forever changing, seeking. It is held together by form, the discipline of the liturgy, the silent meeting for worship, in which the experience is possible⁴. Not constrained by creedal beliefs, it includes Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist,⁵ theist and non-theist,⁶ agnostic and atheist⁷ Quakers. Liberal Friends' insistence upon opposition to creeds, however, constitutes a creedal attitude to form or practice, as is affirmation of Quaker worship, silent waiting for 'leadings'. Friends combine a permissive attitude to belief content with this, conservative, 'behavioural creed', establishing a 'double-culture'⁸. The attachment to silence has masked and accommodated the pluralisation of belief; words are devalued⁹. God¹⁰ being utterly unknowable, silence is the only valid response to divinity. This enriches theology, removing the need to seek a single truth among a host of different perceptions¹¹.

The logic of such an approach to diversity is attractive, but it raises paradoxes. In meeting for worship God is said to be experienced, God's will discerned, then, in business meetings, conducted in the same attitude of worship, actions prompted by such expressions of God's will, are also discerned. This presupposes belief in a God, with a will, which God conveys to Friends¹². If any, or all, of these suppositions are rejected the nature of what occurs in such meetings is open to question.

¹ John H. McCandless, *Quaker Understandings of Christ* (Philadelphia PA: Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 1975) 15 – 16

² This is affirmed by, for example, Karen Armstrong, *The Case for God* (London: Vintage Books, 2010) esp. in Chapters 1 and 2

³ Janet Scott, *What Can't Thou say?* 70

⁴ Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 134 – 139

⁵ K. Hubber, 'The Spirituality of Buddhist Quakers', unpublished MPhil thesis, University of Sunderland, 2001

⁶ D. Rush 'They Too are Quakers: A Survey of 199 Non- Theist Friends,' in, *Woodbrooke Journal II* (Birmingham: Woodbrooke, 2003)

⁷ Pink Dandelion *An Introduction to Quakerism* 134

⁸ Pink Dandelion *A Sociological Analysis of the Theology of Quakers*: Chapter 3

⁹ Pink Dandelion *An Introduction to Quakerism* 137 – 8, 141 – 6

¹⁰ D. Leichty *Theology in Postliberal Perspective* (London: SCM Press, 1990) 83

¹¹ See, for example, J. Hewitt 'Embracing Uncertainty', *The Friend* 148 (1990) 757 – 8

¹² Pink Dandelion *An Introduction to Quakerism* 141 – 2

1.6 Thesis Outline

Chapter 2 analyses early Friends' perceptions of God, using the data collected.

Chapter 3 analyses early Friends' perceptions of relationship with God, using the data collected.

Chapter 4 analyses Liberal Friends' perceptions of God, using the data collected.

Chapter 5 analyses Liberal Friends' perceptions of relationship with God, using the data collected.

Each of Chapters 2 – 5 draw interim conclusions, related to the focus of each Chapter.

Chapter 6 draws overall conclusions from the analyses, comparing early and Liberal Friends in terms of the contrasts suggested by the two models, relating these conclusions to those of other scholars working in the similar studies and suggests further developments, using the approach of this study.

1.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter introduced the thesis objectives, outlined the popular basis for some of the criticisms of Liberal Quakers, hypothesised and developed and critiqued the models used. It then explained and critiqued the methods used, before introducing and outlining early and Liberal Friends, the two groups chosen for analysis.

CHAPTER 2 EARLY QUAKER PERCEPTIONS OF GOD

In this chapter I examine the ways in which early Friends perceive God. I discuss their expressed beliefs about the six features of God most frequently referred to in the texts analysed and set out in Table 2.1:

Table 2.1 The six features of God most frequently referred to by early Quakers.

Feature	% Frequency of Occurrence
Inward/ Inward Christ/Light/ Seed/ Soul	11.39
Ruler/ Kingdom	8.61
Law maker/ Judge/ Just/ Punisher	5.71
Spirit	5.05
Powerful/ Empowering	4.42
Leader/ Guide/ Teacher	2.98

In the following discussions the percentages presented for each feature or feature group represent their frequency of occurrence among all the features, both of God and relationship to God, scored in the study. This chapter argues that early Friends placed total faith in a powerful God, but one acting within them, judging, but, if they accepted such judgement, guiding and empowering them to be 'righteous', acting with integrity, compassion and justice. They felt a close relationship with God, about whom they retained many beliefs, conventional at the time, but, through that relationship, were transformed, embracing the nature of God as an existential guide to their own lives. This placed them well towards the transformation/relationship pole of the single axis.

2.1 Feature Group: Inward/ Inward Christ/ Light/ Seed/ That of God/ Soul.

(11.39%)

The high priority given to these features illustrates the strongly experiential¹ aspect of early Friends' faith, contrasting with the greater emphasis upon acceptance of doctrinal propositions² by Puritans, from among whom Friends emerged. Fox described his anguish, as he sought, unsuccessfully, for help to overcome feelings of sinfulness and unworthiness. So many, even ministers, 'did not possess what they professed'³. They adhered to religious doctrine, but lacked the commitment to apply the lessons of the Gospel to their own lives. For Fox, God was found, neither in buildings nor formal liturgies; 'his people were his temple, and he dwelt in them'⁴. Fox turned to 'the dissenting people'⁵, finding there 'some

¹ Although only 0.44% of all references to relationship with God are explicitly described as experiences, 'experience' is implicit in much that they write.

² References to faith in the texts analysed were over twice as numerous as those to belief: Total feature references: Faith 2.05% Belief 0.82%

³ John L. Nickalls, Ed. *The Journal of George Fox* 4

⁴ John L. Nickalls, Ed. *The Journal of George Fox* 8

⁵ John L. Nickalls, Ed. *The Journal of George Fox* 11 These were mainly Seekers and Levellers

tenderness'. He sought a faith which led to a better life; in those times of social and political turmoil, injustice and cruelty were rife. Finally, he experienced an inward voice¹ telling him that Christ Jesus could 'speak to my condition' and that all were 'concluded under sin and shut up in unbelief, as I had been'. This experience was both intimate and transforming, showing him that most beliefs wrongly focussed upon doctrine and outward forms of worship. They ignored the reality that Christ could guide them in their 'hearts', 'as a gift of grace, faith and power'. Fox believed that Christ within would judge, but also encourage faith in divine power, leading believers to 'righteousness'². Similar inward revelations showed him that the origins of injustice lay within the 'hearts and minds of wicked men'. He needed to recognise and understand these conditions, in order to influence the wicked to repent³. With release from despair came an urge to help others achieve the same, reducing injustice.

Many of Fox's teachings are reminiscent of Jesus' radically inclusive behaviour⁴, seeking salvation for all people, addressing them in public, urging them to 'come off' outward observances and turn to the Spirit, the Light of Christ within. He 'opened', clarified, the true message of the Scriptures, that the Spirit showed the way to salvation⁵. It offered guidance directly 'in the heart'. Fox rejected the State church's authority, traditions and interpretations of Scripture. His, Spirit led, approach, he was confident, led to unity⁶, transforming Friends from pursuit of self-interest to concern for others⁷.

Early Quakers linked perceptions of the Inward Christ, Light and the Seed, 'That of God' within. Experiences felt within could thus be understood as self-judgement and new, repentant, behaviour as inspired by their sense of inward presence, or as direct judgement and guidance from beyond⁸. They described an inward message, supernatural, the Inward Christ or Light, but also an imparted, inner, divine principle, the Seed/that of God, capable of receiving and obeying the Light. Reason and conscience were, by contrast, worldly⁹. Divine command suggests heteronomous control of behaviour. Perceptions of a divine Seed allow application of experience, conscience and Scripture to discern divine guidance,

¹ John L. Nickalls, Ed. *The Journal of George Fox* 11

² My study showed large numbers of references to judgement by God, and to God as leading and upholding: Total feature references: Judges 3.3%, Leads 2.98%, Upholds 1.42%

³ John L. Nickalls, Ed. *The Journal of George Fox* 19

⁴ Flouting the Jewish purity laws, which demanded exclusion, and neglect of the 'unclean'. See, for example, *Matt. 5: 8* 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God' – purity is within, not without.

⁵ John L. Nickalls, Ed. *The Journal of George Fox* 87 – 8

⁶ John L. Nickalls, Ed. *The Journal of George Fox* 235

⁷ Whilst far smaller than the numbers of references to the Light or to the Spirit, reference was made in the texts to God as revealed, and setting out the Law in Scripture, but, in such cases, the Light enabled true discernment of scriptural meanings. Total feature references: Light 3.60%, Spirit 5.05%, cf. Law 0.91%, Revealed in Scripture 2.21%

⁸ References to self-analysis were few, but to conscience were more significant. Total feature references: Self - examination 0.02%, Conscience/ Consciousness of God 1.00%

⁹ References to reason are very few, those to conscience more frequent, but far fewer than those to obedience. Total feature references: Reason 0.05%, Conscience/ Consciousness 1.00%, Obedience 1.97%

introducing autonomy through relationship between the individual and Christ. Friends felt enabled, inwardly, to discern scriptural meanings¹. What that entailed is unsure. To read Scripture metaphorically, as conveying poetic, not literal, truth is a distinctly modern approach. Early Quakers generally saw Scripture literally, ignoring later, doctrinal, interpretations.

My approach to early Friends' beliefs is contestable, as being 'from a modern individualistic perspective'. Gwyn², criticising Damrosch's³ account of James Nayler's⁴ testimony to the Light in human conscience, maintained that Damrosch focussed upon declarations of personal liberty and equality⁵, missing 'the collectivist impetus of the light in early Quaker understanding'. Given that present Liberal Quaker attitudes are frequently criticised as individualistic⁶, such criticisms are important, but claims that early Quaker individualism was precluded by their collectivism are unsupportable from the available evidence. Crediting Fox with founding the early Quaker movement, James⁷ described his psychology as pathological, for example, frequently describing how God had intervened to punish people for minor slights shown towards him⁸. When Nayler sought to kiss him to resolve the disagreements between them he claimed religious motives⁹, that 'the Lord moved him', for slighting Nayler, offering his foot¹⁰. Fox's genius, however, in setting up 'Gospel Order'¹¹, enabled the survival of Friends' movement, whilst other radical sects disappeared. Friends were praised, even by their opponents, for their fortitude and mutual support in adversity¹². To claim they did not show individuality, shortcomings, jealousies and disagreements, as well as intimate relationships and great strengths is foolish. Words of Penington¹³, reminding Friends that their lives should be of 'love and peace and tenderness.... not laying accusations one against another' were written as a reminder, suggesting the need for one. Early Friends, excellent in many ways, did not show seamless, collectivist, perfection. No-one then had the

¹ See, for example, John Macmurray, *Selected Philosophical Writings [of John Macmurray]* Esther McIntosh Ed. (Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2004) 42, 51 – 2

² Douglas Gwyn, 'James Nayler and the Lamb's War' in, *Quaker Studies* Vol. 12, Issue 2 (2008) 172

³ Leo Damrosch, *The Sorrows of the Quaker Jesus: James Nayler and the Puritan Crackdown on the Free Spirit*

⁴ An early Quaker leader

⁵ E.g. Leo Damrosch, *The Sorrows of the Quaker Jesus*: 129, 145, 237

⁶ See Chapter 4 Section 4.1

⁷ William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* 7 – 9 described Quakerism as a 'movement impossible to over-praise'.

⁸ Hilary Hinds, *George Fox and Early Quaker Culture* 69 describes Fox as pre-occupied with divine power intervening to defend him; he saw God as having 'blasted', 'bound', 'chained', 'stopped' and 'crossed' his opponents. George Fox, *Journal* Ed. Nigel Smith (London: Penguin Classics, 1998) 135, 136, 138 and 162, 138 and 218 resp.

⁹ It is, of course, quite possible that Fox did feel moved by God to so act. If so, it would, surely have been because he felt that his, rather than the Nayler approach, offered best hope of salvation.

¹⁰ John L. Nickalls, Ed. *The Journal of George Fox* 268 – 9

¹¹ See Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 48 Box 6

¹² William Penn, *The Rise and Progress of the People Called Quakers* (Philadelphia PA: Friends Bookstore, 1855) reprint 25 noted how critics said 'Look at how the Quakers love and take care of one another'

¹³ Isaac Penington, in *Quaker Faith and Practice* 10.01

understanding of individual psychology that exists today, but the same tensions and ego desires existed.

I divide this Feature group into the following categories, which I consider in turn:

2.1.1 The Inward/ Inward Christ, 2.1.1.1. Revealed through the Life of Jesus/ the Gospel.

2.1.2. The Light, 2.1.2.1. Reason 2.1.2.2. Conscience.

2.1.3. The Seed/That of God.

2.1.4. The Soul

2.1.1. The Inward/ Inward Christ. (4.59%)

*The Great Mystery*¹, an unedited book², represents Fox's 'considered thinking'³. In it he repeatedly stated his personal doctrine. Salvation was enabled by the Light, which emanated from, or was, Christ. He made little distinction between the spiritual and the physical. Fox believed in real union with Christ, being 'flesh of his flesh, bone of his bone'⁴. Christ⁵ was the quickening Spirit⁶. Bailey⁷ suggested that early Friends adopted a metaphysical doctrine, 'Celestial Habitation'⁸ and that Fox saw himself as a prophet, even an avatar of God, a new incarnation of Christ. Christ claimed he and his Father were one. Confident that Christ was present in 'his saints', the Quakers, this meant that they were one with God⁹. Such claims led to blasphemy claims¹⁰. For Puritans, Christ was a person, equal with God¹¹; by claiming Christ within, Quakers claimed equality with God¹². Tarter¹³ suggested that early Friends, who described waiting for 'a divine movement within', an 'ecstatic embodiment', were 'in a sense' united with Christ; a suggestion that their

¹ George Fox, *The Great Mystery of the Great Whore Unfolded* (London: Simmonds, 1659: F1832)

² According to Rosemary Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences*: 46, 108 – 9

³ As Quakerism moved from initial enthusiasm to later soberness.

⁴ George Fox, *The Great Mystery of the Great Whore* 9, 11

⁵ Using Pauline metaphors.

⁶ George Fox, *The Great Mystery of the Great Whore* 48

⁷ Richard Bailey, *New Light on George Fox and Early Quakerism*: 19

⁸ This was similar to the Eastern Orthodox Church's doctrine of 'Celestial Flesh', taken up by many of the Radical Reformation groups. References to a sense of union with God or Christ, overall, were quite infrequent, in the analysed texts, but significant. Total feature references: Perfection/ Union with God 0.83%

⁹ George Fox, in, *Works* 3 180 '...the spirit is distinguished from the Father and the Son from eternity, and Christ saith it proceeds from him and the Father and he is the God and the Father of all spirits of all flesh and the substance of all things.....and are there not three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word and the Spirit and are they not all one? How then are they distinct?....And Christ saith 'I and my Father are one' and he is in the saints and so not distinct'

¹⁰ see Rosemary Moore *The Light in Their Consciences*: 10, 15, 20, 23, 30, 76, 77, 89

¹¹ Hugh Barbour, *The Quakers in Puritan England* 145

¹² Barbour cites Richard Sherlock, *The Quakers Wilde Questions*, quoted in W. C. Braithwaite, *The Beginnings of Quakerism* 109 If Quakers had 'the Spirit of God as they pretend abiding in them personally and essentially, this blasphemy must necessarily follow, that they are equal with God'

¹³ Michelle L. Tarter, 'Sites of Performance: Theorising the History of Sexuality in the Lives and Writings of Quaker Women' Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Colorado, 1993 27

understandings were not totally literal. Early Quaker women described the outpouring of Spirit into their flesh¹, causing them to 'quake' in worship. Feeling in an 'embodied spiritual state', they often enacted 'signs'² in public, causing particular criticism³. Fox⁴ may have been unaware of the significance of his metaphysical claims. He later modified his pronouncements, but inconsistently, continuing to claim that inhabitation by Christ, while not corporeal, was 'tangible'.

Given the beliefs and imaginings current in those times, the imagery Friends used to describe their experiences are of secondary importance. Their sense of the intimate presence of an inward judge, guide and source of empowerment⁵, which they associated with Christ, was paramount.

Such claims were derived from apocalyptic beliefs⁶. Many⁷ anticipated a physical second coming of Christ to rule, along with a pre-ordained elect. Quakers rejected this and the oppression of the many by this, self-styled, 'elect' it upheld⁸. They soon came to regard the second coming as inward, and as already having taken place. God's Light and Kingdom were present in and among everyone, awaiting revelation⁹. For Fox this inward coming was not an intellectual facility, it was the pre-existent 'blood of Christ', supernatural and universal¹⁰. It would enable the eventual consummation of humanity into God¹¹. For Friends, Christ revealed the Gospel within¹². Paul¹³ saw Jesus as a manifestation of eternal Spirit in a human personality, creating 'the image of God'¹⁴. He made little of Jesus' life and teaching, focussing upon the divine Christ, raising believers to mystical union with God and claiming¹⁵ that he had been crucified with Christ. Like Jesus, he had lost his old life and Christ was living in him. His earthly life he lived through his faith in Christ, the Son of God who sacrificed himself for him. These words formed the source of Quaker ideas of union with Christ, a

¹ *Joel* 2: 28 – 9

² Going naked, to symbolise the naked, meaningless, nature they felt attached to formal worship.

³ Michelle L. Tarter, 'Quaking in the Light: The Politics of Quaker Women's Corporeal Prophecy in the Seventeenth century transatlantic World' in J. M. Lindman and M. L. Tarter Eds. *A Centre of Wonders: the Body in Early America* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 2001) 145 – 162

⁴ According to H. Endy, 'George Fox and William Penn: Their Relationship and Their Roles Within the Quaker Movement' *Quaker History* Vol. 93 Issue 1 (2004) 1 – 39 32 – 3

⁵ See, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 19.04, 20.42 Both are quotations from George Fox

⁶ E.g. from *Matt.* 24

⁷ In mid seventeenth century England, particularly during the period 1630 – 60

⁸ For example see Isaac Penington, *The Axe laid to the Root of the Old Corrupt Tree* (London: Lloyd, 1659: P1152) 12 – 3

⁹ Gerald Guiton suggests that early Friends based such claims on 1 *Cor.* 15: 24 – 28 and 2 *Thess.*

¹⁰ Gerald Guiton, *The Early Quakers and the 'Kingdom of God'*: 16, 149 – 150

¹¹ George Fox, *The Journal of George Fox*, Ed. N. Penney 2 Vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911) Vol. 1 24

¹² Total references to the Gospel/ Life and teachings of Jesus: 2.07%

¹³ Whose epistles were very influential on early Friends. See Rosemary Moore *The Light in Their Consciences*: 53 – 4

¹⁴ Edward Grubb, *The Historic and Inward Christ* (Swarthmore Lecture 1914) (London: Headley Brothers, 1914) 17

¹⁵ in *Gal.* 2: 20

process requiring self-sacrifice, being ‘crucified with Christ’. Selfless commitment to justice, integrity and compassion was attainable, given the example of Christ’s faith, trust, in God¹. Thus, Penington² asked who could damp the faith of Friends, who recognised ‘Christ within them, the hope of glory’, a clear claim to relationship. Inspiration such as this was empowering³ and supportive of the Quaker community, especially in times of persecution⁴.

Fox wrote devotions⁵ to the universal Light of Christ, not to Jesus, whose words, with those of the apostles, ‘were declared forth from the Light’⁶. Christ, the Word or *Logos*⁷, who was eternal, pre-existing Jesus, was early Quakers’ earthly authority. It was the Light of Christ which led from the powers of darkness to a Kingdom which had no end⁸. It was the guide to peace. As to revelation of Christ’s inward Gospel, Hinds⁹ maintains that Fox affirmed it as direct, unmediated, following his inner experiences of Christ’s self-revelation¹⁰.

2.1.1.1 Revealed through the Life of Jesus/ the Gospel. (2.07%)

Fox¹¹ wrote that no-one could ‘know’¹² the words of Christ, or his apostles¹³, ‘without his Spirit’. Quakers did accept the Christ ‘who suffered and died at Jerusalem’. They accepted scriptural accounts of the historical Jesus, but did not see them as sufficient for spiritual guidance, which was received directly and inwardly.

Fox¹⁴ addressed crowds¹⁵, setting out his message. Christ had come and said ‘learn of me’ and God had confirmed, ‘This is my beloved son, hear ye him’. Christ was their teacher, counsellor, shepherd, bishop and prophet. The Prophets were ‘figures’, ‘shadows’, pointing to the coming of Christ as Jesus, whose parables, along with the Epistles, were devices to turn people to the Spirit of God, of Truth, from the ‘power of Satan’. The Scriptures were exemplars of leadings of the Light. Fox¹⁶ described how Christ was tempted, endured the cross and despised the shame. Fox grounded all he sought to live by and for in his

¹ References to selflessness in the analysed texts were significant in number, but those to faith much greater: Total feature references: Selflessness 0.46%, Faith 2.05%

² Isaac Penington, ‘Some Queries on Colossians 1: 27 – 29’ in, *The Works of Isaac Penington* Commenting on *Coloss. 1: 27*: ‘To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory’.

³ Total feature references: Empowerment 1.14%

⁴ See Penington’s words, above.

⁵ George Fox, *A Catechism for Children* (London: Calvert, 1657: F 1756) and *A Testimony of the True Light* (London: Calvert, 1657: F1929) 42, 46

⁶ Gerald Guiton, *The Early Quakers and the ‘Kingdom of God’*: 233, 241 – 2
⁷ *Of John 1: 1 – 4*

⁸ Lydia Fairman, *A Few Lines Given Forth* (London: Simmonds, 1659: F 257)

⁹ Hilary Hinds, *George Fox and Early Quaker Culture* 16 – 18

¹⁰ George Fox, *Journal* (1998) 14

¹¹ John L. Nickalls, Ed. *The Journal of George Fox* 32, 63

¹² understand

¹³ from the scriptural account.

¹⁴ Douglas Gwyn, *Apocalypse of the Word*:

¹⁵ At Firbank Fell, in modern Cumbria, in 1652. John L. Nickalls, Ed. *The Journal of George Fox* 109

¹⁶ George Fox, *Newes Coming up out of the North* (London: Calvert, 1654: F1867) 15 – 17

understanding of the message of Jesus¹, but universalised that message. It was for all, even those who had never encountered the Scriptures. The principles of the message would be revealed within them.

The claim that people could respond to the Gospel within, without knowing it through Scripture, was revolutionary. It meant that salvation, living a holy life, was not dependent upon Scripture or church dogma and interpretations of the scriptural message². Barclay³ described members of 'this catholic [Quaker] church among heathens, Turks, Jews and [other Christian groups]'. Membership required 'integrity, simplicity, a desire to be delivered from iniquity....to follow righteousness'. This was a philosophy of freedom from control by church authorities and their teachings, gained by really understanding the message of Jesus.

According to Benson⁴, for Fox Jesus' words 'I am the way'⁵ showed the way to be virtuous. Seeing Jesus' words, 'I am the light of the world'⁶, he questioned how this light could lead. He rejected Scripture, as setting formal laws⁷, conscience, as receiving, not giving moral truth, and the church, as concerned merely to control people. The Light led within; it was directly from Christ. Fox did, however, check his leadings against Scripture, for example, on the wrongness of swearing oaths⁸.

Penington⁹ described treasures of wisdom, knowledge, love, mercy, life, power and grace received from God, 'in the Lord Jesus....dispensed by him' to those who accepted the 'law of his life'. He drew on Jesus' Gospel to develop a philosophy. 'Wisdom' and 'knowledge' empower discernment of loving, merciful, actions. He¹⁰ rejected dependence upon recorded details of Christ, or of the apostles' teaching, affirming instead the value of spiritual union with Christ. He emphasised the law of the spirit, not of the letter¹¹, of Jesus' message and

¹ not in doctrines about the nature of Jesus

² Douglas Gwyn, *Apocalypse of the Word*: 109

³ Robert Barclay *Apology for the true Christian divinity* 232

⁴ Lewis Benson, *A Universal Christian Faith* 23 – 4

⁵ *John* 14: 6

⁶ *John* 8: 12

⁷ Like the Torah of the Old Testament

⁸ In the texts analysed, references to revelation through the Scriptures slightly exceeded those to direct revelation in the Gospel/ life and teachings of Jesus, suggesting that Scripture was still widely used, albeit read illuminated by the Light, as indicative of the Gospel. Total feature references: Revelation in Scripture 2.21, Revelation in Gospel/ Life and teaching of Jesus 2.07%

⁹ Isaac Penington, 'To Friends of Both the Chalfonts' 2 and 3 August 1667 in, *The Works of Isaac Penington*. Vol. 2 494

¹⁰ Isaac Penington, 'Some Questions and Answers Showing Man His Duty' (London: Wilson, 1662) in, *The Works of Isaac Penington*, Vol. 2 268

¹¹ See the postscript to an epistle to 'the brethren in the north' issued by a meeting of elders at Balby, 1656, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 1.01 'these things we do not lay upon you as a rule or form to walk by, but that all, with the measure of light which is pure and holy, may be guided; and so in the light walking and abiding, these may be fulfilled in the Spirit, not from the letter, for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.'

advocated ‘pressing after’ the law, showing obedience, will-power, to apply it. ‘Happiness’, fulfilment, would result¹.

Underwood² claimed that early Friends saw the outward work of the man Jesus as of little consequence, no greater than that of any prominent Quaker leader. Penington³, certainly, emphasised that Christ symbolised an intimate, divine, presence, guiding them within. He made little reference to the Jesus Christ of the Bible and of belief. Quakers rejected doctrinal beliefs about Christ and other, ‘apostate’, churches’ accounts of what the Scriptures demanded. The reality of the intimate divine presence was grounded in their understanding of the message of Jesus, from Light inspired reading of Scripture. Their insistence upon the universality of the message, beyond Christian experience, suggests, however, that they also recognised more universal forms of inner, moral, guidance⁴.

Ethics has been described as a ‘philosophical wasteland’, concerned with rival sets of principles. The ‘Golden Rule’, of reciprocity, however, stands alone, in the light of its own reason⁵. It is fundamental to most major religious and moral traditions⁶. Formulated positively as an injunction to: ‘do unto others as you would have them do unto you’ by Jesus⁷, or negatively by Confucius⁸, the Rule concerns a perspective. Putting oneself in the place of those affected by one’s actions, empathy, the basis of compassion, counteracted the natural tendency to moral short-sightedness. Was the inward message perceived by early Friends as basic as this? At whatever level of prescription, Friends could derive it from their understanding of Jesus’ message from Scripture. All the ‘Kingdom’ teachings⁹ relate directly to the Golden Rule, spelling out its implications for all aspects of life. The Quaker message could be summarised as that the Golden Rule was primary, the Gospel in Scripture derivative, but invaluable, provided it is not obeyed solely in the letter. In codifying the message, in the word of Scripture, it risks becoming ossified.

Peat¹⁰ describes how Paul’s reference to the faith *of* Jesus, in God, empowering ‘righteousness’, had become understood as having faith *in* Jesus¹, accepting Christian

¹ References to joy/ happiness in the texts analysed were infrequent and to ‘wholeness’ zero; early Friends’ writings were, whilst sometimes lyrical, largely austere and self-denying. Total feature references: Joy/ Happiness 0.44%, Self-realisation/Wholeness 0

² T. L. Underwood, ‘Early Quaker Eschatology’ in, P. Toon, Ed., *Puritans, the Millenium and the Future of Israel* (London: James Clarke Co. Ltd., 2003) [1970] 96

³ According to R.M. Keiser, in R. Melvin Keiser and Rosemary Moore *Knowing the Mystery of Life Within*: 149

⁴ See John Macmurray, *Selected Philosophical Writings* 183 – 5

⁵ R. M. MacIver, in Christina and Fred Sommers, *Vice and Virtue in Everyday Life* 5th Edition (Belmont CA: Wadsworth/Thompson, 2001) 259 – 260

⁶ Sissela Bok, in Ted Honderich, Ed., *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy* 348

⁷ *Matt.* 7: 12

⁸ Confucius, *Analects* XV 24 transl. David Hinton, in, Arthur Waley, *The Analects* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1938) A disciple asks ‘Is there any one word that could guide a person through life?’ Confucius replies: ‘How about shu [reciprocity]; never impose upon others what you would not choose for yourself’.

⁹ In the ‘Sermon on the Mount’ *Matt.* 5 – 7

¹⁰ T. Peat, in B. P. Dandelion, D. Gwyn and T. Peat, *Heaven on Earth*: 17 – 18

doctrine about Jesus and his salvific role. Penington, by rejecting such doctrinal beliefs, but accepting the lessons of Jesus' life and teaching, was invoking Jesus' trust, in God, as empowering for everyone. Early Quakers checked all leadings against the 'principles of Jesus' teaching and character' recorded in the Scriptures². Creasey³ argued that Friends left unexamined the relationship between the historical Jesus of tradition and the Christ of revelation, holding the two together existentially, emphasising the spiritual importance of accounts of Jesus' birth, miracles, suffering, death, resurrection and ascension⁴. For Creasey⁵, the Quaker doctrine of the 'inner Light'⁶ required 'a profound interpretation of the person and work of Christ'. Francis Howgill⁷ wrote that Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were not the Gospel, 'Christ is the...everlasting Gospel'; an idea originated in Paul⁸ and common among radical sectarians at the time⁹. By grounding the eternal message in the eternal Word/Christ, they recognised that the written gospels were set in time, and, as such, elements of them could become obsolete. Barclay distinguished between, on the one hand, the 'law' and Bible, both outwardly written, so not a primary rule, and the Gospel¹⁰, 'an inward, spiritual law... in the heart', the 'law of the Spirit of Life'¹¹. Faith in the inward Gospel avoided the rigidity of the written word, allowing flexibility and discernment. It led to salvation, living a divine Life¹². Penington¹³ taught that no-one could see the Gospel, which explained the mystery of life and redemption, until the veil covering their understanding was removed by Christ¹⁴ and their 'minds turned from the darkness to the light, which the..... Gospel was sent by Christ to turn men to'¹⁵. The Gospel showed how to live a virtuous life, by putting self-absorption aside.

¹ Based upon R. B. Hayes, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: an investigation of the narrative sub-structure of Galatians 3:1, 4: 2* (Chico Scholars, 1983)

² Elbert Russell, *The Inner Light in the History and Present Problems of the Society of Friends* (Greensboro NC: Friends Historical Society, 1945)

³ Maurice Creasey, 'The Christ of History and of Experience' The Shrewsbury Lecture, (Shrewsbury NJ: Manasquan and Shrewsbury Monthly Meetings, Religious Society of Friends, 1967) 9

⁴ This is supported by the joint priorities of early Friends, revealed in this study, of inward inspirations and faith in a powerful, judging, ruler.

⁵ Maurice Creasey, 'The Quaker Interpretation of the Significance of Christ' in, *Quaker Religious Thought* Vol. 1 Issue 2 (Autumn 1959) 3 – 4

⁶ It is an indication of the difficulties in maintaining a scholarly dialogue, in which meanings are shared, that Rosemary Moore wrote, in, *The Light in Their Consciences* 81, that, following careful analysis of early Friends' writing, it was clear that they never wrote of an 'inner' Light. Confusions over distinctions between Light, as from without, and Seed, an inner principle, and their implications for beliefs about the degree of divinity and autonomy of individuals abound.

⁷ In Edward Burrough and Francis Howgill, *Fiery Darts of the Devil Quenched* (N.p.: n.p.,1654: H3159)

⁸ E.g. 1 Cor. 4: 15 2Cor.4: 4

⁹ Rosemary Moore *The Light in Their Consciences:* 54

¹⁰ Dorlan Bales, 'Barclay's 'Apology' in Context' (Unpublished PhD Thesis University of Chicago, 1980) 283 – 5

¹¹ Robert Barclay *Apology for the true Christian divinity* 78

¹² References to Life in the texts analysed 1.77%; 7th in rank order of all the features of relationship with God

¹³ Isaac Penington, *For the young and tender ones at T. Zachary's* 10 August 1669 John Penington MSS, MS Vols. 341 – 4 Vol. 341 158

¹⁴ 2 Cor. 3: 14

¹⁵ Acts 26: 18 and 1John 1: 5

Fox saw life in Christ's Gospel as orderly, with all united in a common cause, citing the discipline of the New Testament church¹. Quakers were rebuilding this church, so all could live in the order of Christ's Gospel² of love, light, life, grace and truth³. The 'Gospel order' which Fox created, a hierarchical system of Quaker business meetings, allowed everyone to express their own leadings and truths, and have them heard and considered. This is widely credited with facilitating the survival of Quakerism, when so many other sects later disappeared⁴.

Whilst most 'apostate' churches celebrated the offices of Christ, as prophet, priest and King, their primary focus was upon Christ as priest, sacrificing himself for the sins of all. In contrast, early Friends emphasised Christ as a prophet, teaching 'righteousness', virtue. They sought to restore 'primitive Christianity', recovering the Gospel and life in a community governed by Christ⁵, just, but compassionate and loving; a community which had been lost since apostolic times.

2.1.2. The Light. (3.60%)

Fox saw the Light as a 'command of God'⁶ which 'leads to God'⁷. It was 'your teacher, loving it.....your condemnation hating it'⁸. It enabled God to be 'seen' and from it came 'all pure wisdom'⁹, 'the wisdom by which the creation must be ordered'¹⁰. The Light conveyed God's commands, which had a teaching function, acting directly within each individual. If accepted, the Light conveyed wisdom, which was related to the order in the 'created' world. This was a remarkably prescient idea; wisdom seen as underpinning the operation of a complex world. Anyone rejecting the Light, Fox believed, would be damned¹¹. He maintained belief in a God who could be vengeful.

For Nayler¹² being in the Light was being in the Kingdom, where 'the serpent's wisdom has no jurisdiction'. If one accepted, obeyed, the Light, sin was impossible. The Light enabled the discernment of, 'what led to obedience and disobedience', witnessing the ministry of

¹ 1 Cor. 14: 40, Col. 2: 5)

² Douglas Gwyn, *Apocalypse of the Word*: 30 – 1

³ George Fox, in, *Works* Vol. 8 184

⁴ Pink Dandelion, *An introduction to Quakerism* 48 Box 6

⁵ Lewis Benson, *New Foundation: What Did George Fox Teach About Christ?* (Gloucester: George Fox Fund, 1976) 31 – 2

⁶ George Fox, *A Collection....Epistles* Vol. 1 XXV 33

⁷ George Fox, *A Collection....Epistles* Vol. 1 XXVI 34

⁸ George Fox, *A Collection....Epistles* Vol. 1 XXXIV 42

⁹ George Fox, *A Collection....Epistles* Vol. 1 LI 67

¹⁰ George Fox, *A Collection....Epistles* Vol. 1 LXXXI 93 Concerns for 'wisdom' or to 'know God' do not, explicitly figure heavily in the texts analysed, but are often implicit. Total feature references: Wisdom 0.60%, Know God 0.40%

¹¹ In the texts analysed, Friends placed great emphasis upon both judgement and punishment. Total feature references: Judges 3.30%, Punishes 1.50%

¹² James Nayler, *Sin Kept Out of the Kingdom* (Np: n.p., 1653: N371A) 2 and *A Discovery of the First Wisdom from Beneath* (London: Calvert, 1653: N272 and N273) 4 - 15

Christ to the 'spirit in prison'¹. It showed believers their vulnerability to temptation and showed how to overcome it. The 'Kingdom', Nayler presented as earthly, where selfishness was rejected, overcoming the obstacles to living a divine Life. Penington², similarly, saw living in the Light as living the Life, of virtue, in the Kingdom of God, on earth. Following the Light led to a pure conscience and liberated from doctrinal beliefs and liturgies,³ freeing and guiding, inwardly, towards the divine Life.

Moore⁴ notes a change in use of the term 'Light' by Friends after 1653. Fox, initially, emphasised it as Christ. Its acceptance within the believer indicated union with Christ. Such statements led to charges of blasphemy and the Light came to signify the means by which Christ influenced the conscience. It was still perceived as an overwhelming invasive force, not as 'a mere mental illumination'. It changed Friends materially, as well as spiritually, transforming⁵ them and inspiring 'that of God', the potential for virtue, in them⁶. Hinds⁷ explains that they did not claim it rendered them divine, or equal with God, but gave them a vision of a 'divine omnipresence' in both the material and the spiritual world, dissolving the dualisms: human-divine, material-spiritual, fallen-ness-perfection and secular-sacred. Acceptance of the Light gave entry to God's Kingdom, so all aspects of the world and of life became sacred, demanding respect and reverence. This denial of a separation between the worldly and the spiritual, at the dawn of Quakerism, had implications for their religious life, which became centred upon relationship, community and this world, not on 'other-world'. God was immanent within their every action, so all they did mattered. Fox claimed two functions for the Light, ethical, condemning evil and leading towards good, and soteriological, saving⁸; reconciling believers with God and with one another⁹. Light, for Fox, was always the Inward Christ. It led away from 'the Fall', sinfulness, into a restored, transformed, state¹⁰. It was a source of truth, encouraging self-examination, empowerment to act on that truth, and unity, a redemptive process, reconciling believers to God, to each other and to all creation¹¹.

¹ Gerald Guiton, *The Early Quakers and the 'Kingdom of God'*: 168

² Isaac Penington, in, *The Works of Isaac Penington*: Vol. 4 232

³ R. Melvin Keiser and Rosemary Moore *Knowing the Mystery of Life Within*: 232 – 3 , 222

⁴ Rosemary Moore *The Light in Their Consciences*: 80 – 2

⁵ Friends' ideas of transformation were synonymous with those of conviction. Neither was explicitly emphasised in the texts analysed; Conviction 0.30%, Transformation 0.06%, but the process is implicit in much that was written, for example, about obedience, righteousness etc.

⁶ For example, see John L. Nickalls, Ed., *The Journal of George Fox* 263

⁷ Hilary Hinds, *George Fox and Early Quaker Culture* 3 – 4

⁸ The emphasis placed upon both 'righteousness'/virtue and upon salvation in the texts analysed was considerable. Total feature references: Righteousness 2.20%, Salvation 1.93%

⁹ Rachel Hadley King, *George Fox and the Light Within* (Philadelphia PA: Friends Book Store, 1940) 108

¹⁰ For example George Fox, *The Birth that must be Silent*, in, *Works of George Fox* Vol. 4 96 See Catherine M. Wilcox, *Theology and Women's Ministry in Seventeenth Century English Quakerism: Handmaids of the Lord* (Lewiston/ Queenston/ Lampeter: Edwin Mellen, 1995) 28

¹¹ Howard Brinton, *The Religious Philosophy of Quakerism*: 27

Bishop¹ contrasted the 'Light within' with 'natural reason'², whilst Fox frequently spoke of 'the Light in your conscience'³. It is thus worth examining the relationship, in early Friends' minds, between the Light and both reason and conscience.

2.1.2.1. Reason. (0.05%)

Creasey⁴ considered that for early Friends whilst the Light, always inward, need not always be named as Christ it was seen as divine, contrasting with conscience and reason, which were natural, human, qualities⁵. Identified with the pre-existent Word, the Light was eternal and universal, requiring obedience to God. Friends initially rejected the roles of reason and of conscience in discerning how to respond to it. Responses should be directly 'as led'⁶.

Early Quakers, however, understood 'reason' in a limited sense. To choose to reject what they understood as reason in discernment is itself an act of reason. By contrast, Winstanley,⁷ denied⁸ a God 'beyond the Sun'; God was 'within yourself'. He saw Christ, not as 'a single man, at a distance' but as 'the indwelling power of reason'. The Cambridge Platonists⁹ also saw reason as the Inward Light from God¹⁰. Both affirmed the antithesis of the, contemporary, early Quaker view.

Whilst they rejected intellectualism¹¹, some early Quakers, including Fox, were well versed in both Scripture and theology, so the sources of their antipathy to reason may lie in historical theology. MacIntyre¹² explained that the divine *Logos*¹³ was initially understood as a universal rational principle, governing the actions of the cosmos, including those of humankind¹⁴. As rational beings, humans were conscious of this principle and virtue was to obey, vice to

¹ An early Friend.

² Maurice Creasey, 'The Quaker Interpretation of the Significance of Christ' 5

³ Rosemary Moore *The Light in Their Consciences*: 81

⁴ Maurice Creasey, 'Early Quaker Christology', (Unpublished PhD. Thesis, University of Leeds, 1956) 74 described how early Friends saw Christ as eternal, the Word or Logos; God's agent in both creation and redemption; made incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth.

⁵ This distinction, which was universally upheld by early Friends, sits uncomfortably with their rejection of the spiritual-worldly distinction.

⁶ Wilmer Cooper, *A Living Faith*: 56

⁷ The leader of the True Levellers (Diggers)

⁸ Gerrard Winstanley, *The Mysterie of God* (1648). In Gerrard Winstanley, *The Complete Works of Gerrard Winstanley*, Ed. Thomas N. Corns, Ann Hughes and David Loewenstein (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009)

⁹ A group of philosophically minded clergy; influential in Cambridge, 1633 – 88. They stood between the high Anglicans and the Puritans and advocated tolerance between religious groups. See E. A. Livingstone, Ed. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* 94

¹⁰ See Gerald Guiton, *The Early Quakers and the 'Kingdom of God'*: 281

¹¹ See, for example, John L. Nickalls, Ed., *The Journal of George Fox* 19

¹² Alasdair MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics* 101, 111, 114 – 115, 118

¹³ Initially described by Aristotle, it is equated with the Word in *John* 1: 1 – 4

¹⁴ This was the basis of an early natural theology.

disobey it. From the late Middle Ages¹, however, responding to growing uncertainty in society, people looked beyond that earlier assumption that humankind could, through natural reason, know what was good. They abandoned the old beliefs, that God's goodness was responsible for rational human desires, so to obey God's commands was to satisfy those desires. Instead, humankind looked for a salvation beyond their present turbulent lives, appealing to divine revelation. The gulf between God, eternal and good, and humanity, finite and sinful, became ever more emphasised. William of Occam² saw 'the good' as whatever God commanded. Sinfulness had corrupted human reason, so humankind could no longer discern the good for themselves. This could only be achieved by obedience to divine revelation. Luther³ agreed; the corruption of human nature meant that obedience to God could not satisfy natural desires. Human will and reason could not do what God commands as it was enslaved by sin. Only by divine grace could humanity act against its corrupted will and reason.

These belief centred thoughts may well have underlain Friends' negative attitudes to reason, a faculty central to modern thought. Sometimes their concerns, particularly over the use of reason in seeking religious experience, seem valid today. Crisp⁴, described his experience of 'convincement', acceptance of the Light. He came to recognise that even contemplation of the meaning of total dependence upon the Spirit of God could be a way of avoiding necessary self-examination, substituting an exercise in reason. Sitting in worship he finally felt, emotionally⁵, his dependence upon God's guidance⁶. Penington⁷ urged Friends to pray to God for deliverance from personal understanding and for the gift of God's understanding. He also agreed⁸, however, that just laws were founded in 'right reason', seeing merit in use of reason to discern and implement leadings. For Penington, 'religion' was a way of life, a level of consciousness below that of beliefs and 'forms', outward or inward, so below that of reason. It was a level of 'feeling', experience, consciousness, beyond description. Reason, however, should operate out of these feelings, to implement their promptings⁹. The nature of the 'personal understanding' Penington denied is illustrated by Fox's frequent condemnation of 'deceit'¹⁰, when the words of the Gospels

¹ At a time of rapid social change; a feature also of seventeenth century England.

² (c. 1285 – 1347) See Alasdair MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics* 114 – 115

³ Martin Luther, 'Lectures on Romans (1515 – 6); in *D. Martini Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 56 (Weimar: Bohlau, 1938) 269. 25 – 30; 272. 3 – 21

⁴ Stephen Crisp, *The Christian Experiences, Gospel Labours and Writings of that Ancient Servant of Christ Stephen Crisp* (Philadelphia PA: Benjamin and Thomas Kite, 1822) [1694] 16 – 19,

⁵ And not through any exercise of reason.

⁶ Hugh Barbour, *The Quakers in Puritan England* 150 – 1

⁷ Isaac Penington, 'To Thomas Walmsley' 18 February 1669 in John Penington MSS, MS Vols 341 – 4

⁸ Isaac Penington, *Somewhat Spoken to a Weighty Question Concerning The Magistrates' Protection of the Innocent* (London: Simmonds, 1661) in, *The Works of Isaac Penington* Vol. 2 164

⁹ R. Melvin Keiser and Rosemary Moore *Knowing the Mystery of Life Within*: 213

¹⁰ See, for example, John L. Nickalls, Ed., *The Journal of George Fox* 135

were insisted on, but not their spirit, and ‘professors’¹ constructed reasoned excuses for not applying such a spirit to their own actions.

Later in the seventeenth century Friends began more explicitly to appeal to reason. Penn² insisted that understanding could never be convinced by, nor submit to, theological beliefs, except by arguments which were rational, persuasive and ‘suitable to understanding’s own nature’³; a more questioning approach to religious belief⁴. Friends escaped from the prevailing mode of seeing redemption as a passive process, requiring only belief in God’s saving grace and in one’s inability to change one’s own behaviour. They grew to understand the implications and demands of relationship with an inward divinity, which empowered but made great demands upon them. They must be obedient to divine leadings, which they discerned for themselves, both individually and in community.

2.1.2.2 Conscience. (1.00%)

The question of conscience, its relationship with Spirit, or Light, leadings and the role of these in influencing behaviour, is central for Quakers. Do ethics purely result from human experience in the world, or do they involve divine inspiration, or guidance? If either of the latter, is the source within the individual’s mind or without, supernatural? Early Friends were clear that inspiration and guidance were received, less clear about how. Moore⁵ concludes that they used the term ‘conscience’ in a stronger sense than today, signifying consciousness of God. The ‘Light in the conscience’, if heard and obeyed, involved ‘takeover of one’s personality’, transformation. They rarely equated the Light with the Holy Spirit, rarely expressed it as ‘inward’, never as ‘inner’, making it hard, for Friends and opponents alike, to separate the divine Light from the conscience, which all agreed was natural. Weld,⁶ a critic, described two lights, one ‘natural’, conscience and one divine, the Holy Spirit⁷. Friends and critics alike focussed on the relationship of light to conscience, using apparently contradictory texts, from Paul⁸ describing a natural conscience, distinct from the spirit of Christ and John referring to ‘the light that enlightens every man’⁹, suggesting a unitary light.

¹ See, for example, John L. Nickalls, Ed. *The Journal of George Fox* 203

² William Penn, *The Great Case of Liberty of Conscience....* (1670) in, *The Political Writings of William Penn* introduced and annotated by Andrew R. Murphy (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2002)

³ Hugh Barbour, *The Quakers in Puritan England* 214 – 5

⁴ As early as 1653 Francis Higginson, *The Irreligion of the Northern Quakers* (1653), quoted in Hugh Barbour and Arthur O. Roberts, Eds. *Early Quaker Writings 1650 – 1700* (Wallingford PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 2004) [1973] 72 Higginson reported that Friends virtually never spoke of ‘the miserable estate of all men by nature, of Jesus Christ our redeemer, of his two natures.....his office of mediatorship.....his sacerdotal office, of his meritorious death and resurrection, of the satisfaction he hath given to God for us, of his intercession for us, of remission of sins and justification to life....through faith in his blood....’

⁵ Rosemary Moore *The Light in Their Consciences:* 81 – 2

⁶ Thomas Weld, a prominent critic of early Quakers.

⁷ Rosemary Moore *The Light in Their Consciences:* 103

⁸ in *Romans* 1: 18 – 2: 16

⁹ *John* 1: 9

Moore¹ notes a change in perception of 'conscience' among Quakers. In the 1650s it was the locus of action of the Light. If heard and obeyed, it led to the Quaker faith. In the 1660s², having recognised that all were not hearing or obeying the Light and would not accept their faith, Friends pleaded for liberty of conscience. In matters of religion, conscience should and could not be compelled. Conscience had acquired a value of its own, beyond that of just being recipient of the Light. Penington³ saw it as the seat of the divine life within. Religion and morality were inseparable, but neither was reducible to the other. The Light illuminated moral consciousness, allowing the judgement of right and wrong, provided the 'veiled [self-absorbed] self' did not ignore divine leadings. Locating religion in feeling, and not in understanding or willing, Penington claimed feelings caused moral change, from a natural to a spiritual understanding of situations and how to respond to them; a shift from a self-centred approach to one considering others and the common good. This was a 'virtue'⁴ approach to ethics, not requiring formal moral rules, but responding emotionally, from the heart, showing compassion. Quakers saw transformation in these terms and sought justice for all, focussing upon the needs of others over those of the individual⁵.

Borg⁶ maintained that Jesus had been a wisdom teacher, frequently contrasting conventional with an alternative, subversive, wisdom, challenging convention, particularly where it produced habitual, unthinking, injustices. For Jesus, 'the narrow way' led to life, where 'the broad way' led to destruction⁷. He used parables and aphorisms to encourage re-interpretation of familiar situations, seeking the real locus of justice. Penington⁸ recognised this, noting Jesus' use of 'contradictions to the fleshly understanding'⁹ 'to be offensive to man's wisdom'¹⁰. Jesus was advocating a virtue ethic and Quakers felt the Light led them to such an approach, examining their consciences and responding to each situation by seeking justice and their own integrity, ignoring convention and propriety.

Barbour¹¹, however, described some Quakers as having over-active consciences, showing extreme moral conscientiousness. Their actions, whilst all were perceived as responses to

¹ Rosemary Moore *The Light in Their Consciences*: 219 – 20

² When persecution of Friends was at its height. See Rosemary Moore *The Light in Their Consciences*: 175, 180, 192

³ According to R.M. Keiser, in R. Melvin Keiser and Rosemary Moore *Knowing the Mystery of Life Within*: 214

⁴ Jerrold Levinson, in Ted Honderich, Ed., *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy* 270 – 1 Aesthetics and ethics are branches of theories of value; virtue ethics make an aesthetic appeal, valorising behaviours which demonstrate unity, balance and grace. They propose a natural discernment of appropriate behaviour.

⁵ The texts analysed showed an emphasis placed upon the community, the children of God, and upon love and unity within that community. Total feature references: Children/ God's own people 1.22%, Love/ Unity 1.30%

⁶ Marcus J. Borg, *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995) 30, 69 – 70

⁷ *Matt. 7*: 13 – 4

⁸ R. Melvin Keiser and Rosemary Moore *Knowing the Mystery of Life Within*: 250 – 1

⁹ That he judged no-one, yet criticised the Pharisees often; that he was one with the Father, but the Father was greater than he, etc.

¹⁰ Isaac Penington, *The Jew Outward Being a Glass for the Professors of this Age* (1659) in *The Works of Isaac Penington* Vol. 1 195 – 225

¹¹ Hugh Barbour, *The Quakers in Puritan England* 111 – 2

the Light, differed markedly. They were often preoccupied with moral rectitude¹, but sometimes moved by 'deeper' feelings of 'the Holy'; inward impulses from beyond the conscious self². Reflecting Penington's view of religion as 'feeling', these emotional reactions led them to challenge social conventions they felt to be unjust or wrong. Barbour saw it as a measure of the unity of early Friends' experience that both types of leading were felt to come from the Light. His comments on the relative 'depths' of the leadings suggest that the urges to social justice were more genuinely Light, divinely inspired. Wallis³ described the Puritan tradition⁴ as having leant towards moral rectitude, rather than love, affection and acknowledgement of sexuality, producing a tendency to look to rules and abstention as the answer to many aspects of behaviour. They failed to grasp that well balanced personalities would avoid over-indulgence, so had no need of prohibitions. If Friends adopted this Puritan approach to personal morality it was at variance with their virtue approach to issues of social justice. Their moral stance possibly related to their fears of being associated with the Ranters⁵ dissolute behaviour⁶. They offered an alternative vision of the effects of inward guidance to that of Ranters; their strict moral line was a major attraction to many converts⁷. The somewhat dour personality of George Fox may also have been influential⁸. Fox wrote to Cromwell and Parliament⁹, urging them to suppress begging, as it often led to stealing. His concern was for the souls of the poor if they fell into thievery, not the privations which led them to it¹⁰, illustrating his ongoing fear of eternal judgement. Moore¹¹ cites Nayler's defence¹² to a charge that Quakers advocated the division of estates and common ownership of land, denying it was so, unless the power of the Gospel moved their owners to allow it. He subordinated pressure for social progress to the spiritual urges of landowners. Moore rarely found calls for social justice in Quaker pamphlets. The poor, Friends referred to as 'them', not 'us'. The main Quaker focus was upon Church and spiritual reform. Avoiding the perils of hellfire was an early Quaker concern, but all aspects of their approach to personal and social life sought both to avoid 'worldly' desires and to avoid hurting others. Such hurt was seen as being to God, confirming their sense of unity and relationship, 'in God'. Morally rigorous, 'puritanical', behaviour is widely rejected today, but, if seen as the price of escape from damnation, it would have seemed a small price to pay. Nonetheless, it emphasises persistent beliefs about the need to 'perform'.

¹ Which can be seen to be driven by convention and propriety.

² Rudolph Otto, *The Idea of the Holy* transl. John W. Harvey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1923) [1917]

³ Jack H. Wallis, *Jung and the Quaker Way* 152

⁴ The background from which Quakerism had emerged.

⁵ See Above, Chapter 1 Section 1.5.1

⁶ Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 23

⁷ Douglas Gwyn, *The Covenant Crucified*: 111 – 8

⁸ H. Larry Ingle, *First Among Friends*: 23 – 25 describes Fox's solitary and serious minded, censorial, nature.

⁹ George Fox, *To the Protector and Parliament of England* (London: Calvert, 1658: F 1961) 12

¹⁰ Douglas Gwyn, *Apocalypse of the Word*: 32

¹¹ Rosemary Moore *The Light in Their Consciences*: 64, 21

¹² James Nayler, *A True Discoverie of Faith* (London: Calvert, 1655: N322) 13 – 4

Barclay¹ defined conscience as a 'persuasion of the mind' based upon beliefs on what was true and what false. Acting contrary to conscience was a sin, even if the beliefs upon which it was based were wrong². Whilst regarding conscience as natural, distinct from the Light³ he denied that any man had power over another's conscience, which was 'the seat and throne of God in him', so God, alone, could judge it. Explaining this, Barclay⁴ used as an example, 'the Turk'⁵ who, whilst having a 'false belief' that it was unlawful to drink wine, took several concubines; a clear endorsement of drinking wine, and rejection of polygamy. Given the Quaker rejection of alcohol in the nineteenth century⁶, in response to widespread drunkenness and neglect of family among the poor, this illustrates the dangers of rigid moral rules. Changing social conditions dictate differences in approach.

Bathurst⁷ confined the role of 'natural' conscience to judgement of past actions, contrasting this with that of the divine Light, judging past and contemplated future actions. The Light, uniquely, was guide as well as judge.

2.1.3. The Seed/ That of God. (1.50%)

Fox sometimes referred to Quakers as 'God's faithful and chosen seed'⁸. More frequently he used the term 'Seed' differently, for example, he described being 'born again, of the immortal Seed, by the Word of God'⁹. The immortal Seed was within and was 'the wisdom of God'¹⁰, transforming individuals, bringing wisdom and virtue into their lives. Christ gave, or was, both Light and Seed; the Seed inborn, created as a gift of Grace, the Light entering from without. Christ, the Seed, the will of God, within, superseded 'the Law, the Prophets...types, figures, shadows, parables'¹¹, giving Friends direct guidance and empowerment, freeing them from outward Laws. Though the seat of virtue, within, had been a mystery, 'hidden from the ages'¹², it was now revealed as 'Christ in you, the hope of glory'¹³. The Seed was the risen, returned, Christ, speaking and acting through the lives of transformed believers, 'challenging the injustices of an alienated society'¹⁴. Similarly, for

¹ Robert Barclay *Apology for the True Christian divinity* 408

² *Romans* 14: 23 'whatsoever is not of faith, is sin.' Barclay's thoughts here have a bearing upon the discussion, above, on the reasons for Friends' extreme moral rigour.

³ Dean Freiday and Arthur O. Roberts, Eds., *A Catechism and Expression of Faith by Robert Barclay* (Newberg OR: Barclay Press, 2001) 92

⁴ Robert Barclay *Apology for the True Christian divinity* 127

⁵ Moslem

⁶ See www.quaker.org.uk/Temperance

⁷ Elizabeth Bathurst, *Truth Vindicated* 386

⁸ George Fox, *A Collection....Epistles* Vol. 1 | 10

⁹ George Fox, *A Collection....Epistles* Vol. 1 | 13

¹⁰ George Fox, *A Collection....Epistles* Vol. 1 || 17

¹¹ Douglas Gwyn, *Apocalypse of the Word:* 160 – 1, 109

¹² *Coloss.* 1: 26 *Eph.* 3: 4, 5, 9

¹³ George Fox, in, *The Works of George Fox*, Vol. VII 206 ; quotation from *Coloss.* 1: 27

¹⁴ Douglas Gwyn, in B. P. Dandelion, D. Gwyn and T. Peat, *Heaven on Earth:* 144

Nayler¹, if the mind ‘stayed in the Light’, the Seed, ‘which lies in death’, heard the voice of ‘the Son of God’ and received ‘life and strength from the Word’. It then grew, showing the ‘new creation’ and what was lost in the Fall², restoring, transforming believers. Spiritual rebirth was being ‘born of this Seed....of God’. The Spirit, Light, of Christ entered and activated the Seed, that of God, the potential for virtue. For the Seed, virtue, to grow within, Friends must ‘hear’ and respond to guidance from the Light

Moore³ felt that Nayler’s words blurred the distinction between Christ and human potential, approaching a fusion of the two concepts and a theory of human perfectibility, using the language of union with God. Such blurring is unsurprising. The distinction between ‘inward’, guidance and empowerment from without, and ‘inner’, inspiration and determination within, is a matter for faith; adopting whatever belief inspires trust. Penington⁴ felt he had learned where the doubts and disputes, and where the certainties were, and had been pressed from doubts to certainties. He had learned how and what to trust. The Seed, the potential for virtue, had grown within him and with it his confidence in his ability to discern truth from illusion and deceit. He⁵ felt one with Christ and, through him and knowledge of his faith, to have met with, known and gained faith in God. This released him from worries over what doctrines he should and should not believe. He had seen that what really mattered was to live a virtuous Life, trusting that this would lead to eternal peace.

‘Conviction’, early Quakers’ understanding of transformation, was more than merely abandoning the old self and finding a new personality, life pattern and focus. Nayler felt that a new man grew from the Seed of Christ within, in Christ’s image⁶, enabling him to see the vanity in worldly delights⁷. If ‘tender’, ‘broken hearted’ the Seed would grow, in response to the Light. It was not part of the old, corrupt, self: ‘the seed of God..... bruise the seed of the serpent’⁸. He could be described as learning to reject self-centredness and growing towards a ‘virtuous’ approach to life, using perceptions of Christ as a role model. Friends not only understood how they should change, but felt given, by divine Grace, the drive and determination to do so.

For Barclay, the Seed of God within⁹ enabled receiving the Light. By God’s Grace it made possible the divine-human encounter¹⁰. Fox affirmed the same; this was the Seed, ‘that of

¹ James Nayler, *Love to the Lost* (London: Calvert, 1656: N 294) 2, 35

² A reference to the doctrine of the loss of innocence of Adam, derived from *Genesis* 3 but first emphasised by Augustine of Hippo (354 – 430) See Alistair E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction* 18 – 9

³ Rosemary Moore *The Light in Their Consciences:* 104 – 5

⁴ Isaac Penington, *An account of his spiritual travail* (1667), quoted in *Quaker Faith and Practice* 19. 14

⁵ R. Melvin Keiser and Rosemary Moore *Knowing the Mystery of Life Within:* 24 – 5

⁶ Hugh Barbour, *The Quakers in Puritan England* 109 – 110

⁷ James Nayler, in *A Collection of Sundry Books, Epistles and Papers Written by James Nayler*, (London: Sowle, 1716) 333

⁸ *Genesis* 3

⁹ *The vehiculum Dei*

¹⁰ Robert Barclay, *Apology for the True Christian Divinity* 137, 141

God', within everyone, enabling an intimate, transforming, relationship with God¹. Jones² found 51 references to 'that of God' in Fox's *Epistles*, but felt that Fox saw this, not 'as an inherent part of man's being', as fourteenth century mystics had done, describing the 'divine spark in the soul'. Fox, like Barclay saw it 'as a super-added bestowal of the Divine Spirit'. For early Friends, faced with widespread belief in universal and irreparable human degeneracy, affirming their innate divinity was a leap too far³.

2.1.4 The Soul. (1.68%)

Fox⁴described that 'a heavenly breathing arose in my Soul to the Lord', bringing up his soul, 'which is immortal, up to the immortal God'. Bailey⁵ maintains that Fox⁶ believed the soul was a part of, coming from and returning to, God. This placed an element of divinity into each of humankind, whilst Calvinist doctrine, portrayed all as degenerate, in 'the Fall'. Fox's beliefs thus drew criticism. Penn⁷ re-interpreted Fox's words: God inspired men with something of himself. He attacked a suggestion that Fox claimed God 'breathed life into the fallen Adam's soul'. The 'breath', from God, central to the disagreement, was synonymous with 'Spirit'⁸ whose emanation from God into the hearts and souls of all is a fundamental Christian principle⁹. To envisage such Spirit as reversing the effects of 'the Fall', making the soul divine, was, however, seen as blasphemy.

Barclay¹⁰referred frequently to the soul, without defining it¹¹. It was where good and evil wrestled within the individual. It could be touched by the Light and transformed. The relevant contemporary Christian doctrine was that the soul was immortal, created and infused into each person but then separated from the body at death to be reunited with it at 'the day of the Lord', the final general resurrection. This was a Thomastic¹² not a scriptural doctrine. Friends accepted it, adding their concept of the Seed, a divine principle implanted in the created and infused soul giving, if it was allowed to grow, an element of divinity, a union with God. Thomastic¹³doctrine also described a 'created habit of grace', an

¹ Wilmer Cooper, *A Living Faith*: 18

² Rufus M. Jones, in, *Friends' Intelligencer* 17 July 1948 Vol. 105 408

³ Where they did they were charged with blasphemy. See below, Section 2.1.4.

⁴ John L. Nickalls, Ed. *The Journal of George Fox* 65 – 6, 348

⁵ Richard G. Bailey, 'Was Seventeenth Century Quaker Christology Homogenous?' in Pink Dandelion ed. *The Creation of Quaker Theory: Insider Perspectives* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004) 66

⁶ George Fox, *The Great Mystery of the Great Whore Unfolded* 100 'God breathed into man the breath of life and he became a living soul...and is not this [breath of life] that cometh out from God, which is in God's hand, part of God...and from God and to God again'

⁷ William Penn, *Reason against Railing and Truth against Fiction* (London, 1673) in, *A Collection of the Works of William Penn, to which is prefixed A Journal of His Life, with many Original Letters and Papers* 2 Vols. (London: Sowle, 1726) Vol. 2 65 – 6

⁸ Hebrew: *Ruach*

⁹ See Alistair E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction* 235 – 9

¹⁰ Dean Freiday and Arthur O. Roberts, Eds., *A Catechism and Expression of Faith by Robert Barclay* 152 – 7 especially

¹¹ Patricia A. Williams, *Quakerism: A Theology for our Time* 117

¹² i.e. a doctrine developed by Thomas Aquinas

¹³ See Alistair E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction* 37

intermediate supernatural entity, infused by God into the soul, justifying sinners, reconciling them with God. For William of Occam, however, justification was the direct acceptance of the sinner by God. This was the genesis of the doctrine of imputed righteousness¹. Barclay adopted the Thomastic, rejecting the Occam, doctrine, adding that the infused element did not just justify, it also sanctified. It did not just impute but imparted righteousness, or, strictly, the means to achieve it. It was the Seed. Grace² had converted the soul and was 'operating powerfully in it'; the Seed was a gift of Grace, acting as 'physic in the [darkness of the] Soul....an inward striving in the Soul'. The Light would break through the darkness, 'if the Soul give not its strength to the darkness'³. The soul was corruptible, but the Seed was divine and was within the soul. If the soul allowed, if the individual was obedient to the Light, the Seed could heal the corruption. Barclay was describing an element of divinity within the human soul, a gift from God. It interacted with the divine Light from without, but was innate and required nurturing by the believer. This affirmed a real and intimate sense of relationship, human-divine, very different from the prevailing belief in universal human corruption. The importance of such beliefs lay in the effect they had upon individuals, giving them a sense of value and of meaning and, hence, confidence.

2.2 Spirit. (5.05%)

Burrough⁴ declared Quaker belief in 'one God, a Spirit'. No-one could come to God but his children, born, led and guided by his Spirit. Spirit is, thus, God, at least one form of God, synonymous with Light, leading and guiding. For Fell⁵ God had sent the Spirit of His Son into the heart. God and Christ both were and had Spirits. Penn⁶ declared that those who were 'in Christ' followed not the flesh, but the Spirit; they did not succumb to worldly temptations, but sought self-transcendence. He demanded people question if they had not 'quenched' the Spirit of Christ in their pursuit of wealth. Barclay⁷ saw little merit in knowing Christ 'after the flesh', knowing the stories of his life. All should seek to receive Christ's Spirit, 'searching the deep things of God'. What was present within, 'Seed, Light or Grace', he saw as a 'real spiritual substance' felt in the soul, a gift from God, bringing about spiritual rebirth, transformation. It was the implanted Word⁸, the eternal Christ, of which

¹ See Alistair E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction* 375 – 8

² 'Grace'; the gift of God, of redemption, or the means to achieve it. Hugh Barbour, *The Quakers in Puritan England* 141 – 2 described how both Calvinists and Quakers saw Grace as the power given by God to overcome sin. The two groups differed over how rapidly such 'overcoming' was possible.

Grace was heavily emphasised in the texts analysed: Total feature references: Gives/ Grace 2.34%, ranked 7th of all features of God.

³ Robert Barclay *Apology for the True Christian Divinity* 258, 302, 309

⁴ Edward Burrough, *A Declaration to all The World of Our Faith* 2 – 5

⁵ Elsa Glines, *Undaunted Zeal: The Letters of Margaret Fell* 260

⁶ William Penn *No Cross, No Crown*, 6, 99

⁷ Robert Barclay *Apology for the True Christian Divinity* 26, 121

⁸ A reference to *John* 1: 1 – 4

Jesus was a physical incarnation¹. It would be interesting to know what Barclay meant by knowing the stories of Christ's life. Were these 'stories' doctrines about Jesus' significance or his teachings and the lessons drawn from how he lived and died? Much that Friends affirmed and saw as Spirit led, self-transcendent, modelled Jesus' life. Barclay emphasised the importance of living such a life, not just recounting the biblical stories. Heeding the Spirit within would transform and enable just that.

When 'spirit' is used as a metaphor it suggests an animating energy². Reference to Spirit means the energy is divine. Whilst Penington³ understood Spirit in Christian terms he saw it as beyond words, open to more universal images. Salvation was open to all, not dependent upon knowledge of Jesus or the Gospel as Scripture. The Spirit acted in all people. He did not separate the life of the Spirit from that of the mind, carrying his spirituality into intellectual, socio-economic and political issues of the time. The spiritual life, for him, existed beneath conscious thought. Recognising that he often relied upon his intellect to get him out of difficulties, he described efforts to 'get low' and let the Spirit, not his mind, rule him. By this he meant the need to show humility and compassion, not seeking self-justification.

Cooper⁴ cited Fox's description of the 'Holy Spirit' as the 'Living Christ', resurrected and present within each individual. It was both the promised counsellor⁵ and the Jesus of the Gospels. He was equating the Holy Spirit with the Inward Christ or Light, grounding understandings of these in Jesus' Gospel. Cooper distinguished between 'Spirit-orientated', more evangelical, and 'Light-orientated', more rationalistic, Friends. Spirit implied a mystical presence of God within, so what was learned was immediate and direct⁶ and, as such, the primary basis of religious authority. It was more authoritative than either Scripture, or reason. Such a view had consequences. Spirit orientated Friends, particularly Fox, insisted upon unmediated leadings, where those Light orientated, such as Penington, Penn and Barclay, were more open to reason in discernment of leadings. Spirit based approaches, often lacking 'responsible discernment' resulted in the more 'enthusiastic', charismatic behaviour and writing which emerged in the earliest years of Friends⁷ and which caused such outrage.

¹ See Maurice A. Creasey, 'Early Quaker Christology' 74 – he described the early Quaker view that Christ was eternal, pre-incarnate as God's agent in both creation and redemption; a view which he maintained was based upon *Coloss.1: 15 – 20*

² For example, 'That boy shows spirit!'

³ R. Melvin Keiser and Rosemary Moore *Knowing the Mystery of Life Within: 122, 125, 127, 137*

⁴ Wilmer Cooper, *A Living Faith: 23 – 6*

⁵ Of *John 14: 26*

⁶ To reinforce this he uses words from 'The testimony of Margaret Fox, concerning her late husband', in *Quaker Faith and Practice 19.07* 'You will say, Christ saith this, and the apostles say this; but what canst thou say? Art thou a child of Light, and hast walked in the Light, and what thou speakest, is it inwardly, from God?'

⁷ See, for example, Barry Reay, *The Quakers and the English Revolution 36*

Barclay¹ condemned the positions of both ‘Papists’ and ‘Protestants’, that justification came ‘only by a bare application of the death and sufferings of Christ outwardly performed for them’, that is, by Grace alone, with no spiritual renewal. Early Quakers, rejecting imputed righteousness², insisted upon the need to obey the Inward Christ or Light. This brought spiritual renewal and righteous action³. Barclay⁴ cited Paul⁵: God’s salvation came by the life of Christ, an ‘inward, spiritual thing revealed in the soul’, bringing spiritual rebirth. For Bathurst⁶ ‘that in the conscience’ which condemned sin and encouraged holiness, was the inward, spiritual, voice of Christ. ‘Holiness’, ‘perfection’ and ‘union with the divine’⁷, were all seen to involve the transformation of Friends, who became more virtuous, through heeding the spiritual voice⁸. ‘Spiritual’ messages, then as now, were felt within and urged transcendence, both of ‘natural’ instincts to self-preservation and selfish desires.

2.3. Feature Group: Ruler/ Kingdom (8.61%)

I divide this Feature group into the following categories, which I consider in turn:

2.3.1. God as Ruler

2.3.2. God’s Kingdom

2.3.1. God as Ruler. (8.10%)

God and Christ are both referred to routinely as ‘Lord’ by early Friends. Derived from the Greek *Kurios*⁹, ‘Lord’ is a reference to Yahweh/ Adoni¹⁰, ‘the Ground of all Being’, a name to be used with great caution¹¹. It referred to the numinous, the awe inspiring and mysterious. *Kurios* can, in normal use, mean anything from a, polite, ‘sir’ to an, absolute, ‘master’, but always it is a term of deference¹². Fox, indeed, insisted upon deference: ‘God is our King and rules heaven and earth’¹³. He retained an essentially medieval image of God, as

¹ Robert Barclay, *Apology for the True Christian Divinity* 172

² Rosemary Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences*: 100

³ See Elizabeth Bathurst, *Truth Vindicated*.. 359 She asserts that Quakers deny that righteousness is imputed where it is not imparted.

⁴ Robert Barclay *Apology for the True Christian Divinity* 191

⁵ *Rom.5*: 10

⁶ Elizabeth Bathurst, *Truth Vindicated* 412

⁷ ‘Holiness’ is referred to less in the analysed texts than ‘perfection’, which, in turn, is less frequent than concern for ‘righteousness’ Total feature references: Holiness 0.54%, Perfection/ Union with God 0.83%, Righteousness 2.20%

⁸ Gerald Guiton, *The Early Quakers and the ‘Kingdom of God’*: 295 associates Friends’ ideas of Holiness to those of wholeness or perfection; the development of this state seen as a process, today called one of self-realisation, but perceived then in terms of union with the divine

⁹ in the New Testament

¹⁰ from the Old Testament

¹¹ By the people of Israel.

¹² Michael Hampson, *God without God: Western spirituality without the wrathful king* (Winchester and New York: O Books, 2008) 8 - 10

¹³ George Fox, *A Collection....Epistles* Vol. 2 LX 74

monarchical, demanding absolute obedience¹. The authority and power of God lay in the Gospel, 'not of man nor by man, but of God and from Christ'. This Gospel was felt inwardly, not imposed from without through the law of Scripture².

Fox's sense of the authority of God empowered him to reject the authority of the established church and its interpretations of Scripture. Their sense of the authority and power of a God of Grace lessened Friends' concern for that of officers of the State and others seeking to persecute them. Bathurst described 'the Lord who exerciseth loving kindness, judgement and righteousness'³, whilst Penington⁴, urging 'Lie low in the fear of the Most High', added that 'God begets life in the heart.....a secret living warmth and virtue.....the leaven of the Kingdom'⁵. Such statements reveal a paradox; fear of the Lord and assertions of His love were intimately linked⁶. The variety of scriptural images of God illuminate different aspects of human understanding of the divine⁷; God as King, authoritative, but also as a compassionate, loving, Father⁸ and a shepherd, dedicated to the welfare of his flock⁹. Thus, if they kept their faith, Friends felt to be protected by God's power but also upheld emotionally by His love.

Friends, like the Puritans, believed that the world was accountable to God's order and design. It could be transformed, but only by God's Grace. Friends, however, extended this idea; the whole cosmos could be redeemed into the image of God, a powerful King who could prevail over sin and evil and transform humanity in this life.¹⁰ Whilst firmly retaining dogmatic beliefs about God as a ruler, early Friends developed faith in a God who worked within them, intimately, to transform them into His image; to be virtuous, intuitively seeking the good.

Use of the term 'Lord' extended to, a divine, Christ. For Fell¹¹ Christ was the 'great and last monarchmade higher than the Kings of the Earth.... [who] hath set up the Worship of God in the Spirit'. She validated the simplicity of Quaker spiritual worship as instituted by Christ¹². Powerful, 'belief,' imagery but, underlying it was confidence of closeness to God, in silent worship.

¹ Jo Farrow and Alex Wildwood, *Universe as Revelation*: 31

² George Fox, *The Journal..* (1911) Vol. 2 240 - 1

³ Elizabeth Bathurst, *Truth Vindicated* 410

⁴ Isaac Penington, *Some Directions to the Panting Soul* (1661) in, *The Works of Isaac Penington* Vol. 2 208 - 9

⁵ *Matt. 13: 33, Luke 13: 21*

⁶ References to fear of God, in the texts analysed, almost exactly matched those to the loving nature of God, and the two ideas were frequently associated together. Total feature references: Fear 1.00%, a Loving God 0.91%

⁷ Ian T. Ramsey, *Christian Discourse: Some Logical Explorations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), cited in A. McGrath *Christian Theology: An Introduction* 195 – 6

⁸ eg *Psalms* 103: 13 – 18

⁹ eg *John* 10: 11

¹⁰ Wilmer Cooper, *A Living Faith*: 129

¹¹ Margaret Fell, *A Call to the Universal Seed of God throughout the whole World* (London: s.n., 1665)

¹² Douglas Gwyn, *The Covenant Crucified* 256 – 7

The fear of a monarchical God inspired and led Friends to love and unity; the power of paradox.

2.3.2. God's Kingdom. (0.51%)

This concept had several aspects for Friends. Fox¹ urged, 'live in the seed of life..... the heir of God's everlasting Kingdom'. This suggests, 'live well and go to heaven'. Fox, certainly, described '[God's] Kingdom, where there is no tribulation.... a world in which there is no end ... no corruptible thing enters'², adding to that impression. Barclay³, however, described that God chose 'to lead his children in a path more..... spiritual.....[to] a more inward glory and kingdom'. He quoted Paul,⁴ equating the kingdom of God with the Gospel of Christ. Similarly, both Clark⁵ and Bathurst⁶ declared that the Kingdom [of Heaven/ God] 'is within you'⁷ and Penn⁸ described, here on earth, 'seeking the Kingdom of heaven and the righteousness thereof and trusting God for the rest'⁹. All these indicate belief in the Kingdom as being within the believer, synonymous with the Seed. It was the potential for virtue, which, if heard and 'obeyed', led to righteousness. The terms 'Kingdom of God', 'Kingdom of Heaven', were used interchangeably; referring to virtue lived, both in this life and in an afterlife. Early Friends did believe in an after-life and did see it as related to, if not explicitly claimed as a reward for, living virtuously on earth. They also believed in damnation for living badly. They made Jesus' 'Kingdom' teachings¹⁰ the basis of their inner and outward conduct, feeling to be heralds of a spiritual revolution, restoring the way, followed by Jesus and his followers, to the Kingdom on earth. They sought to create a community of peace and reconciliation, with special concern for the poor and powerless, making this central to their 'Kingdom' thinking and witness. This provided an intimate link with God, transforming them¹¹.

Fox¹² saw the Kingdom as the new covenant¹³; not contractual but one of love, shared between God and humankind. To love God was to love humankind, a recurrent theme. Naylor¹⁴ likened the Kingdom to a tree, strong and fruitful, embracing all, but especially the

¹ George Fox, *A Collection....Epistles* Vol. 2 CCCCXIII

² George Fox, *A Collection....Epistles* Vol. 1 XVI

³ Robert Barclay, *Apology for the True Christian Divinity* 318, 403

⁴ *Rom 14: 17* 'For the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost'.

⁵ Henry Clark, *A description of the Prophets, Apostles and Ministers of Christ.* 18

⁶ Elizabeth Bathurst, *Truth Vindicated* 367

⁷ A paraphrase of Jesus' reported words. *Matt. 16: 28*

⁸ William Penn, *No Cross, No Crown* 61

⁹ Hugh Barbour, *The Quakers in Puritan England* 94 – 5 wrote of early Friends serenity and trust in a sense of daily spiritual direction

¹⁰ From the 'Sermon on the Mount', *Matt.5 – 7*

¹¹ Gerald Guiton *The Early Quakers and the Kingdom of God: 2 – 3*, 152, 176

¹² George Fox, *An Epistle to All People on the Earth*

¹³ References to God as Covenanting/ Promising were quite sparse, 0.64%.

¹⁴ James Naylor, Epistle 11 'Not to Strive but Overcome by Suffering' in *A Collection of Sundry Books... James Naylor 727 - 730*

poor and suffering. It was 'accessible through humility'¹. Penington² compared the Quaker experience of seeking the Kingdom with that of the post-Pentecostal apostles. Both constituted the true church, guided and empowered by Jesus' love. The 'Kingdom' was, however, open to corruption by the 'false church', promoting the letter, and not the spirit, of scripture. Particularly, he attacked the Calvinist belief that, whilst the outward church was the Kingdom of God on earth, it was separated from the earth³; a dualism, contrasting the virtue of the spiritual with the supposed sinfulness of the material world, and all who lived in it. He rejected this; there was no way of serving God without also serving the world⁴. Whilst Friends did appear sometimes to embrace this dualism, they condemned selfish, material, desires, not the material world as a whole.

Early Friends distinguished God or Christ from the Kingdom, but saw them as inseparable. The Kingdom was God⁵. God, their divine inspirations to love and compassion, and the world they felt to be helping create, were all one and the same. They felt an intimate relationship and co-agency with God. Fox⁶ wrote that the 'Kingdom of Heaven' was within; not to be found in the outer world. Finding it required 'innocency', putting aside the cynicisms and fears of life 'in the world'. Whilst living 'in' the Kingdom required engagement with the world, one must resist and seek to mend its corruptions, greed and venality⁷.

Howgill⁸ saw the Kingdom as an everlasting spiritual rule of God, 'in the heart'; a 'path to God', 'out of the world'. This was not to another world, but to earthly unity, with all Friends, with whom he felt 'caught up as in a net'. Fisher⁹ described that working for the Kingdom, for the growth of 'righteousness', led to peace and joy, derived from feelings of 'wholeness'. 'Self-realisation' would be the modern term. This is the sense in which Quakers came to see 'perfection', contrasting others' demands for doctrinal beliefs with their concern for righteousness, a heavenly kingdom on earth, which made them feel 'whole', complete¹⁰.

Moore¹¹ notes that most of the sectarian groups of seventeenth century England expected an imminent 'second coming' and reign of Christ. This 'Kingdom of the Lord' would lead to greater social equality, politicising religion. Most¹² of the earliest Quaker tracts¹³ dealt with

¹ Whilst early Friends, in the texts analysed, did write of the need for humility, it was not emphasised; 0.45% of all references to features.

² Isaac Penington, *The Axe Laid at the Root of the Old Corrupt Tree*.

³ A. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction* 398 – 400

⁴ C. Braaten, *The Future of God* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969) 115

⁵ Gerald Guiton, *The Early Quakers and the Kingdom of God*: 179

⁶ George Fox *The Pearle Found in England* (London: Simmonds, 1658: F 1878)

⁷ Gerald Guiton, *The Early Quakers and the Kingdom of God*: 179

⁸ Francis Howgill, *Some of the Mysteries of God's Kingdom Declared* (London: Simmonds, 1658: H 3179) 39 – 40

⁹ Samuel Fisher 'The Bishop Busied Beside The Business' in, *The Testimony of Truth Exalted by the Collected Labours of....Samuel Fisher* (London?: n.p., 1679) 598 – 9, 312 – 3

¹⁰ Gerald Guiton, *The Early Quakers and the Kingdom of God*: 154 – 5

¹¹ Rosemary Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences*: 4, 61 – 2, 65 – 6

¹² 26/ 36

¹³ published in 1653

this earthly Kingdom, which they hoped to see. When it failed to appear Fox¹ declared that ‘the righteous seed of God is risen’. Through ‘the great and mighty hand of the Lord’ the wicked evil rulers everywhere would be cut down as the King² had been. The Kingdom he was reinterpreting as brought about inwardly. The Quakers were the ‘righteous seed’, having discovered the Seed of virtue within themselves, and they would bring about the downfall of evil rulers, through spiritual, not violent, means. Faced with the contrast between the ways of their present world, riven by dissent and injustice, and those of Christ and His Kingdom, Friends sought, not to withdraw from the world, but to engage with it, to bring about Christ’s Kingdom on earth. This engagement they called the Lamb’s War, using war-like language³ to describe a spiritual war, waged in the hearts of all they encountered, to overcome selfishness and the resultant injustice and oppression⁴. To achieve this many travelled all over Britain, ministering to anyone who would listen, mostly in public places. They sought, by their words, explaining Quaker beliefs, and by their actions, compassionate, peaceful and passively accepting any abuse or attack, to ‘convince’ people to accept the Quaker way⁵.

2.4. Feature Group: Law-maker/ Judge/ Justice/Punishment. (5.71%)

I divide this Feature group into the following categories, which I consider in turn:

2.4.1. God as Law-maker.

2.4.2. God as Judge, implementing Justice.

2.4.3. God as Punishing.

2.4.1. God as Law-maker. (0.91%)

For Barclay⁶, ‘what was commanded by God under the Law.....now is become spiritual under the New Covenant’. The incarnation of the Word, Christ, fulfilled the old covenant, of the law⁷. Jesus, by his life and teaching, showed how the law should be applied, not rigidly,

¹ George Fox, *Newes coming up out of the North* 4, 5, 19, 21

² Charles I, who was executed in 1649

³ For example, Edward Burrough, ‘Epistle to the Reader’ in, George Fox, *The Great Mystery of the Great Whore Unfolded* ‘The Lamb...hath called us to make war in righteousness for his name’s sake, against hell and death and all the powers of darkness...And they that follow the Lamb shall overcome and get the victory over the beast..... the dragon... the gates of hell’.

⁴ Hugh Barbour, *The Quakers in Puritan England* 40 – 1

⁵ Rosemary Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences* 25 – 8

⁶ Robert Barclay, *Apology for the True Christian Divinity* 358

⁷ In the Old Testament/ Hebrew Bible in the Books of Exodus (20:) and Deuteronomy (5:) are set out the Ten Commandments, said to have been given to Moses, by God (Yahweh) on the top of Mount Sinai. These form the basis of the *Torah*, a fuller body of law set out in the Pentateuch; the first five books of the Old Testament. They are held to form part of the Old Covenant (the Mosaic or Divine Law or Covenant). They constituted a set of laws and ethical principles, written down, to be adhered to, as Israel’s contribution to their close

to the letter, but creatively, compassionately, in the spirit, acting in the manner which the law was intended to encourage. Quakers based this belief upon words of Jesus¹. Christ, for Friends, embodied the law, history, promises and prophecies; the life of Israel. For Fox², Quakers were the new Israel, the promised people. The Inward Christ placed the law in their hearts, not as a fixed thing, the letter, but as a spiritual guide to virtue, the divine Life, affirming the laws of Moses, warning against insistence on the letter whilst ignoring the spirit of the law. If Friends obeyed only the letter the laws exposed individual sins³ without revealing the inner condition of sinfulness, alienation from God's inward voice. This would result in creation of a formal 'righteousness'⁴, based upon 'conventional wisdom'⁵. Many, having 'professed Jesus Christ in words, heard him not when he was come'⁶. Christ was come within each individual, conveying the laws in spirit, but many resisted this, choosing to maintain formal religious observances whilst deceiving, exploiting and persecuting others.

Barbour⁷ described the paradox of Puritan diligence in worldly business, combined with a dead-ness to the rest of life. As the initial ideals of the Commonwealth⁸ faded this left the conscience of many, Puritans and Quakers alike, adrift, to acquire an aimless conscientiousness, bound to obey strict moral laws⁹. Penn¹⁰, for example, expressed horror that others 'eat, drink, play, game and sport away their health, estates and, above all, their irrevocable precious time, which should be dedicated to the Lord'. Such attitudes devastated English music, art and drama during the Commonwealth period. Puritanism, intended to purify and simplify national life, degenerated into a quest for personal righteousness¹¹. The extent to which that was true of Friends is arguable. There is a case that it caused Friends' extreme moral rigour. Tousley¹², describing second generation Quakers, found considerable evidence of loss of the self-confidence of the first Quakers, as their sense of inner relationship with the divine diminished, resulting in increasing reversion to Scripture and the written law, not the Light within, as their primary authority.

relationship as the people of God; in return, God would uphold them. The issue, addressed by Jesus, especially in the Sermon on the Mount (*Matt. 5, 6 and 7*) and by early Friends, is one of formalism; adherence to these written laws in the letter, but not in the spirit of the principles they were intended to convey.

¹ *Matt. 5: 17* 'Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am come not to destroy but to fulfil'.

² See Douglas Gwyn, *Apocalypse of the Word*: 66, 104

³ *2Cor. 3: 9*

⁴ *Rom. 10: 3*

⁵ Douglas Gwyn, *Apocalypse of the Word*: 101 – 2

⁶ John L. Nickalls, Ed., *The Journal of George Fox* 203

⁷ Hugh Barbour, *The Quakers in Puritan England* 48

⁸ The ideals were of greater social justice and relief for the suffering of the poor in society.

⁹ Richard S. Peters, *Reason, Mortality and Religion* (FHSC, 1972) 95 described that Puritans shut off their spirits from the love of God or neighbour. Their quest for salvation was 'a denial of the possibility of love' and precluded humour, joy, relaxation or glad responses to beauty or art.

¹⁰ William Penn, *The Witness of William Penn*, 59

¹¹ Hugh Barbour, *The Quakers in Puritan England* 48

¹² N. C. Tousley, 'The Experience of regeneration and Erosion of Certainty in the Theology of Second Generation Quakers:' 6 - 88

Jesus, the source of Quaker inspiration, flouted the purity code of Jewish Law, mixing with outcasts¹, teaching that God's blessing extended beyond the boundaries set by that code². He broke the Sabbath laws, insisting that 'The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath'³ and appealed directly to the law, as against the 'hedge,' the Pharisees own interpretation of it⁴. He radically re-interpreted the moral codes of the Torah in the Sermon on the Mount⁵, adding a prohibition on anger to that on killing, one on lustful thoughts and behaviour to that on adultery. He condemned all untruthfulness, not just oath breaking and advocated radical forgiveness and loving even one's enemies⁶. From such subversive wisdom emerged Friends' radical spiritual and social messages and their morality.

Fox⁷ compared the Light or Spirit of the law⁸ with the outward letter, concluding that they 'answer' one another. The Light showed how to interpret the written law⁹. He reprimed Paul¹⁰: humanity was 'growing up,' internalising the law through adopting Jesus' faith in God and, like him, loving God and all humankind. Faced with Puritan moral rigour and the demands of the Sermon on the Mount, for both inward and outward purity, many Friends struggled. Foster¹¹ wrote how 'the Righteous law of God is rendered in fury and vengeance upon the transgressor in me.... I see that witness raised that never gives rest, day or night to that in me that worships the beast'¹². The combination of residual beliefs on the need to 'perform' and the additional demands of their inward relationship imposed considerable stresses.

Burrough¹³ wrote that Friends must obey 'all just and good laws of the land, but....if anything be commanded of us.... which is not according to equity, justice and a good conscience towards God...we must...obey God only....and patiently suffer what is inflicted upon us for such our disobedience'. Friends were passively resistant to authority, suffering imprisonment for their mode of worship and their refusal to swear oaths of allegiance particularly.

¹ Matt. 9: 11, 11: 19, Mark. 2: 15, Luke. 5: 30, 7: 34, 15: 1

² Timothy Ashworth, in Timothy Ashworth and Alex Wildwood *Rooted in Christianity, Open to New Light : Quaker Spiritual Diversity* (London and Birmingham: Pronoun Press and Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre, 2009) 59 – 60

³ Mark 2: 27

⁴ D. Stephen Long, *Christian Ethics: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) 35

⁵ Matt. 5 – 8

⁶ Keith Ward, *Is Religion Dangerous?* (Oxford: Lion Hudson, 2006) 120

⁷ John L. Nickalls, Ed., *The Journal of George Fox* 15

⁸ Ps. 6: 23

⁹ George Fox, *The Works...* Vol. 4 83

¹⁰ Timothy Peat, in Ben P. Dandelion, Douglas Gwyn and Timothy Peat, *Heaven on Earth: 42 – 4*

¹¹ Thomas Foster Dews, (letter) June 7 1655; cited in Hugh Barbour, *The Quakers in Puritan England* 99

¹² Hugh Barbour, *The Quakers in Puritan England* 99

¹³ Edward Burrough, *Works* 778f

2.4.2 God as Judge, implementing Justice. (3.30%)

Fox¹ urged repentance and openness to 'the Light and Life that judgeth down that which is contrary to [it]'. God's judgements could lead to death and applied beyond death² for those that had 'destroyed God's creatures upon your lust.....wronged by unjust dealing... defrauded.... oppressed..... respected the proud,and lent not your ear to the cry of the poor'. Asserting that God judged worldly, ethical, matters differed from the teachings and example of mainstream churches and ministers, who emphasised judgement of unsound doctrines, sexual and social impropriety but largely ignored injustice, dishonesty and exploitation³. Penn⁴ condemned envy, not the inappropriate doctrinal beliefs which concerned the 'false church'. He urged 'with the Grace... given unto thee... adorn thy soul with enduring beauty'. The gift of Grace was the Seed, enabling moral judgement, given by God, but now in the possession of the believer, free to obey, or reject, God's wishes.

Audland⁵ described 'God'syolk of displeasure' imposed on those who persecuted them, but if Friends abandoned their beliefs, 'we perish by that means'. The Quakers were praised, even by their critics, for their courage and mutual support in the face of persecution⁶. Possibly their fear of the consequences of 'disobedience', neglecting their faith and practice, outweighed their fears of worldly suffering. Burrough⁷, having seen the 'idoltrous' adulation at Cromwell's funeral, wrote that the 'Lord would be avenged [upon]...their souls'. For all their sense of intimate relationship with God as Spirit, Friends retained a fear of potentially harsh judgement of wrongful behaviour.

Quakers also made judgements in God's name. Penington urged 'love and peace and tenderness.....forgiving one another and not laying accusations one against another....'⁸ but Moore⁹ cites two letters from him, to different women. Both had recently lost a child. To the first, he insisted that God had taken her two children as punishment for turning away from Him¹⁰. By contrast, to the second¹¹ he wrote that no punishment was intended; God had merely called the child to Himself¹². Keiser¹ describes Penington as, 'judgemental and

¹ John L. Nickalls, Ed., *The Journal of George Fox* 144, 175, 311

² See, for example, John L. Nickalls, Ed., *The Journal of George Fox* 148, 177, 470

³ See, for example, John Punshon, *Portrait in Grey: 28 – 9*

⁴ William Penn, *No Cross, No Crown* 86, 96

⁵ John Audland *The Suffering Condition of the Saints of the Lord* 12, 23

⁶ For example, Richard Baxter, a prominent Puritan critic, wrote of how 'the fanatics called Quakers....did ..relieve the sober people... for they were so resolute and glorified in their constancy and sufferings.....assembled openly...and were dragged away daily to the common gaol, and yet desisted not...' Quoted in William C. Braithwaite *The Second Period of Quakerism* 41

⁷ Edward Burrough, *A Testimony Against a Great Idolatry Committed*, 3

⁸ Isaac Penington, *Letters in, Quaker Faith and Practice* 10.01 – Not only is it widely quoted in modern Friends' circles it is engraved on the windows of a social area in Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre in Birmingham

⁹ Rosemary Moore, in R. Melvin Keiser and Rosemary Moore, *Knowing the Mystery of Life Within: 85 – 6, 115 – 6*

¹⁰ Isaac Penington, 'To Katherine Skippon, 5 April 1669 in, John Penington, MSS Vol. 34I. 62

¹¹ By which time the Peningtons had lost a child of their own.

¹² Isaac Penington, 'To Sarah Elgar, August 1679 in, *The Works of Isaac Penington* Vol. 4 [sup.] 8

‘preachy’. Certainly, he showed little compassion towards the first woman. Most vigorous, however, were Friends’ judgements of others showing allegiance to ‘apostate’ churches. Fox predicted² ‘the mighty day of the Lord’, when the ‘Lord God of power will reign’ and ‘some... shall burn as an oven’. He, however, called it, ‘Oh happy day’³; the Quakers would be judged righteous⁴. Addressing others whom he saw as taking ‘him [Christ] to be your cloak’, whilst living in ‘vain, wicked and profane ways’, he told them God would deny knowledge of them and see them as cursed. By contrast, those who ‘believe in Christ’ would come from death to light, from judgement and condemnation, inherited from Adam’s offence⁵, into ‘eternal....life in Christ Jesus’. Over them the ‘second death’ would have no power, their names were ‘written in the book of life’⁶. Fell⁷ wrote that God was coming to ‘plead with all flesh by sword and by fire’⁸. Statements such as these were intended for literal interpretation; Friends had no doubts concerning the fates of those who rejected the Inward Christ, who had already come again, to believers, without sin ‘in the Hearts of his People’⁹.

Lurid fears of hellfire declined among Friends over the early years, however, and Barclay¹⁰ denounced ‘foolish’ talk of heaven and hell and the last judgement’. He urged ‘come down to the judgement of Christ in your own hearts and believe in the Light and follow it’. Judgement, like guidance and upholding, was within, existential. The relationship with divinity utterly transformed sincere Friends.

2.4.3 God as Punishing. (1.50%)

Fox¹¹ insisted that God could ‘bring down and abase the mighty’. This belief he carried to a personal level¹².

Bathurst¹ described how God would ‘strive’ with individuals ‘in spirit’ if they rejected the Light, but would, if their rejection continued, allow them to enter the ‘shadow of death...

¹ R. M. Keiser and Rosemary Moore, *Knowing the Mystery of Life Within*: 126

² George Fox, *A Collection ofEpistles* Vol. 1 XXXVIII 48

³ Cecil W. Sharman, *George Fox and the Quakers* 101 – 2 described how many in the seventeenth century were affected by millenarianism; the expectation of a second coming of Christ and ‘the last Judgement’, when the dead would be raised again and judged. Much of this was based upon the Books of Daniel and Revelation and scholars sought to find parallels between the dramatic and catastrophic events in seventeenth century England and biblical predictions.

⁴ Overall, reference to apocalyptic expectations such as these did not figure greatly, just 0.36% of all feature references, in the texts analysed.

⁵ A reference to ‘the Fall’. Early Quaker belief in such doctrines was similar to that of Puritans. Quakers simply had different beliefs concerning the possibilities for overcoming it.

⁶ George Fox, *A Collection ofEpistles* Vol. 1 CCCCX 302

⁷ Bonnelyn Young Kunze, *Margaret Fell and the Rise of Quakerism* 306 written in 1660 to Charles II, just restored to the throne, and James, Duke of York.

⁸ A reference to *Isaiah* 66: 16

⁹ Bonnelyn Young Kunze, *Margaret Fell and the Rise of Quakerism* 466

¹⁰ Robert Barclay, *Apology for the True Christian Divinity* 480

¹¹ John L. Nickalls, Ed., *The Journal of George Fox* 347, 493

¹² See below, Section 2.5

gross darkness', the 'terrors of the Lord'. The soul would fear under the 'just wrath of the Almighty....he that offered himself as a guide is now become a judge in the conscience'. She conflates the old superstitious and the new existential punishments; the recalcitrant would experience guilt in this life and fear for the next one. The immediacy of such concerns is seen in words of Mary², daughter of Margaret Fell. She described her dream of the fate awaiting a local priest. He would be subjected to plagues, seven vials poured on him, a millstone crushing him before, finally, the damnation of hell. 'This did the Lord give me as I lay in bed'. Fell shared the Puritan belief in future blessing or affliction based upon actions in this life³. She sought to conform to God's will even though this meant living a troubled life. Kunze⁴ compared her with Ralph Josselin,⁵ a Puritan contemporary. Whilst both saw God as a stern Father, punishing human failings on the human level, Fell lacked the 'fierce introspective battles against temptation' that Josselin described. The vigour and self-confidence shown by many first generation Quakers suggest many shared similar freedoms.

2.5 Feature Group: God as Powerful/ Empowering. (4.42%)

Fox the Younger wrote⁶ to King Charles II that God had an 'eminent hand' in his father's downfall⁷ and in the toppling of the resulting governments, for their 'covetousness and self-seeking lusts'. He was convinced that God had the power to intervene in history to correct injustices⁸. Fox⁹ felt¹⁰ that God brought about changes which he, Fox, sought. He was preoccupied with divine power as intervening to defend him¹¹. Such ideas, whilst showing his faith¹², also suggest an excessive sense of his own importance. Belief in the earthly power of God was, however, not unusual at the time. God was thought to bring about changes in the weather, crop success or failure, sickness or health, misadventures or safe returns. Satan, the devil, was seen as equally interventionist¹³.

¹ Elizabeth Bathurst, *Truth Vindicated* 392

² Recorded in George Fox, *The Journal of George Fox* (1911) 231 She was aged 8 years.

³ See Hugh Barbour, *The Quakers in Puritan England* 2-3

⁴ Bonnelyn Young Kunze, *Margaret Fell and the Rise of Quakerism* 189 – 190

⁵ Alan Macfarlane, *The Family Life of Ralph Josselin* (New York: WW Norton, 1970) 170 – 6, 193

⁶ George Fox the Younger *The Dread of God's Power* (London: Wilson, 1660: F1999) 5, 8, 9, 17 and in H. Barbour and A. Roberts, Eds. *Early Quaker Writings 1650 – 1700* 388 – 404

⁷ His father had been King Charles I, beheaded following the English Civil War.

⁸ References to God as active in the world in the texts analysed were significant, and included a few seeing God as testing individuals. Total feature references: Active in the world 0.94%, Tests/ Tries individuals 0.09%

⁹ The George Fox widely quoted here and credited with founding Quakerism.

¹⁰ For example, John L. Nickalls, Ed., *The Journal of George Fox* 25 a group of Baptists are convinced and brought to the Quaker cause.

¹¹ Hilary Hinds, *George Fox and Early Quaker Culture* 69 He saw his opponents as being 'blasted', 'bound', 'chained', 'stopped' and 'crossed' by the Lord's power: in, John L. Nickalls, Ed., *The Journal of George Fox* 135,136, 138 and 162, 138, 218 resp.

¹² For example George Fox, *To All that would know the Way to the Kingdom* (N.p.: n.p.,1653: F1942) 5 'before God...the mountains shall melt and the rocks shall cleave....and his thunders...utter their voices that the mysteries of God may be opened'

¹³ Blair Worden, 'Providence and Politics in Cromwellian England' in *Past and Present* 109: 1 (1985) 55 - 99

More commonly Quakers described feeling that God empowered them, as a spiritual gift. Following his early despair at his own perceived sinfulness, Fox¹ felt he experienced Christ within and a resultant triumph over sin. He² was able to see, not just his own sin but also Christ empowering his new will to resist sinfulness. He³ urged, 'heed nothing but the life and power of God', 'dwell in the power of the Lord God that can bear and suffer all things'⁴. Penington⁵ described the power of God sustaining him with the knowledge that it was greater than the power of his persecutors. They had no power to make laws 'in your own will... [and] wisdom' and should listen to and heed the light in their consciences. The power of God acted out of human weakness, 'little weak stirrings of life in the heart.....rising up.....against the mighty strength of corruption' within. If he turned to this divine power within and 'waited upon the Lord.....the strength of the Lord will be made manifest'⁶. He was endorsing humility and self-examination as empowering virtue. Through their intimate relationship with God, Friends felt empowered to live transformed lives of witness to God's will, revealed to them within.

Quakers and Puritans disagreed over the nature of God's power and its influence on humankind. Both identified the Grace of God with the power to overcome sin, but the Puritan Baxter⁷, whilst he accepted that the Quaker Light within was adequate guidance to overcome sin, denied that it had the power to bring obedience, so denying the Quaker claim to earthly perfection⁸. Fox⁹ responded; authority was 'in the Gospelthe power of God.....not of man nor by man but of God and from Christ'. The inward, Christ's, Gospel released God's power in an evil world. Christ had 'come to reign..... in power and authorityyou may all act in his power and authority'¹⁰. Fox distinguished Christ's Gospel within, empowering the believer, from Scripture, which was 'of man...by man' and did not empower¹¹. The Light, the inward Gospel, both guided and empowered believers to overcome sin. For Keith¹² the power of God was the rule which alone allowed understanding of the Scriptures: 'therefore that Power..... is the more Principal and Original Rule'. Christ

¹ Douglas Gwyn, *Apocalypse of the Word*: 60 – 1

² See John L. Nickalls, Ed., *The Journal of George Fox* 13f

³ George Fox, *A Collection ofEpistles* Vol. 1 LXX

⁴ George Fox, *A Collection ofEpistles* Vol. 1 lxii

⁵ In a letter from prison; Isaac Penington, 'To the Earl of Bridgewater 24 August 1666 in, John Penington MSS, Vol. 341 4

⁶ Isaac Penington, 'To All Such as Complain that They Want Power' (1661) in *The Works of Isaac Penington* Vol. 2 287 – 9

⁷ A prominent Puritan thinker, quoted in Samuel Fisher, *Testimony of truth exalted* (1679) 692

⁸ Hugh Barbour *The Quakers in Puritan England* 141 – 2

⁹ George Fox, *Journal* (1902) Vol. 2 240 – 1

¹⁰ George Fox, *Works* Vol. 7 348

¹¹ Lewis Benson, *A Universal Christian Faith* 29 – 30

¹² George Keith, *The Christianity of the People Called Quakers* 1

within them gave the power of discernment, enabling Friends to understand the true meaning of the Scriptures and avoid interpretations put upon them by others¹.

Barclay² contrasted the power of God's Spirit with that 'of this world in which the Prince of darkness bears rule'. Again, this represented a residual dualism, contrasting a virtuous spiritual world with a corrupt, material, one³. According to the Old Testament the cosmos was God's creation, but not a part of, an emanation from, God, so not divine. The earliest Christian doctrines held that it was not perfect either⁴; a view rejected in the Nicene Creed⁵. Created by the Word, the Christian God, the cosmos was perfect, but this left open the question of the origins of evil. Augustine⁶ claimed that evil was due to a 'lack of goodness', originating from humanity's exercise of its freedom. It did not come from God. This lack was due to the 'Fall', a belief which led to the doctrine of the innate and irreversible depravity of humankind, rejected by early Friends⁷. Barclay rejected, not the whole world, merely corrupt, venal, human desires.

2.6 God as Guide/ Teacher/ Leading. (4.24%)

Much can be deduced of Friends' perceptions of their relationship with God from how they described actions of the Light within. Commands suggest imperatives, to be obeyed, unquestioningly. Guidance, teaching, leadings, all imply freedom to discern whether or how to follow what was given⁸.

Fox described experiencing⁹ 'the command of the royal Seed', Christ. He¹⁰ described being 'commanded of the Lord' to remove his shoes, go into the city and call: 'Woe unto the bloody city of Lichfield'. He obeyed¹¹. James¹² related Fox's account of this incident, still describing him as a 'religious genius'. He contrasted the 'acute fever' of Fox's religious experiences with the more 'second-hand' religious experiences of others, noting how

¹ References to the power of God in the analysed texts exceeded those to individual empowerment, suggesting widespread holding to the dominant images of God, but both were extensively used. Total feature references: God is Powerful 3.27%, God empowers 1.14%

² Robert Barclay, *Apology for the True Christian Divinity* Prop 11 sec. xi 310

³ The earliest examples of dualism in Christianity were in forms of Gnosticism, particularly Manichaeism; a world-view which attracted the young Augustine of Hippo.

⁴ Since the Gnostics saw the 'god' of the Old Testament as inferior to the New Testament redeemer God.

⁵ Agreed in 325 CE. This creed stated that Christ was one with God and all things came through Him. See A. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 15

⁶ See A. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction* 226, 232 – 3

⁷ See above, Section 2.1

⁸ In the texts analysed, God was felt to lead more than twice as often as to command, but both features of God were emphasised. Total feature references: Leads 4.24%, Commands 1.83%

⁹ George Fox, *A Collection ofEpistles* Vol. 1 LXXIV 85

¹⁰ John L. Nickalls, Ed., *The Journal of George Fox* 71 – 2

¹¹ Legend has it that around 1 000 Christians were martyred in Lichfield around 300 CE during the reign of the Roman Emperor Diocletian, and that the name 'Lichfield' meant 'field of the dead'. Fox explained that he knew of this and had a sense of their blood upon him as he made his pronouncement.

See 'Lichfield: History to c. 1500' in, *A History of the County of Stafford* Vol. 14: Lichfield (1990) 4 – 14

¹² See William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* 6 – 9

'nervous instability' tended to accompany such religious genius. James' was a reminder of the importance of individual personality in understanding perceptions of religious experiences. Fox frequently felt 'moved', by God; his word for another imperative, sometimes towards more dubious goals, as when he described being 'moved' to denounce a woman as a witch¹ or to 'slight' Nayler, who sought to mend the rift between them. Whilst his actions were probably sincere, they raise questions as to his discernment of such imperatives.

Penington² regarded religion, not as knowing or doing, but as feeling the divine life within, being transformed, seeing everything in a new, less self-absorbed, light. He described two 'seeds' of religion. One was 'profane', devoted to forms and doctrines, dominating and constricting; he rejected it. The other was 'spiritual', centred in the heart, not the intellect. Its leadings were mysterious but transforming, to the way of love, transcending conflict. The 'spiritual' was the religion of Friends. It encompassed the heart of morality, self-transcendence and love. Penn³ described that to 'give freely to his brother that is in need' was a command from God. It is also a moral imperative. Such perceptions make God's mysterious guidance indistinguishable from existential, ethical, urges. For Barclay⁴ what had been commanded under the Law became spiritual under the Gospel of Christ. The commands of the Law could be said to be 'profane', inflexible so potentially unjust. The leadings of the Spirit, 'spiritual' religion were concerned with empathy and love, not obedience and domination. Ethical action can be prompted by fear of the consequences of inaction, a sense of duty, or love. Friends' 'spiritual' religion required that they be performed out of love. Fox⁵ described 'all being led with the Spirit of the living God', claiming a different 'spiritual' relationship with God from that in his references to commands, above. He⁶ urged, 'abide...in your calling with God....walk in newness of life and not in the oldness of the letter', 'being ordered by the pure, gentle, peaceable wisdom, easy to be entreated'⁷. He advocated⁸ keeping to the rule of faith and life within, 'this will lead, guide and instruct you'. Fox was suggesting a new, closer relationship with a divinity which did not command but transformed, giving the wisdom to apply any 'laws' with care, mindful of all the conditions of the moment.

¹ John L. Nickalls, Ed. *The Journal of George Fox* 155, 268 – 9

² R. Melvin Keiser and Rosemary Moore *Knowing the Mystery of Life Within*: 214 – 6

³ William Penn *No Cross, No Crown*, 100

⁴ Robert Barclay *Apology for the True Christian Divinity* 358

⁵ George Fox, *A Collection ofEpistles* Vol. 1 XXXIX 48

⁶ George Fox, *A Collection ofEpistles* Vol. 1 LXXIX 88

⁷ George Fox, *A Collection ofEpistles* Vol. 2 CCCCXVIII 308

⁸ George Fox, *A Collection ofEpistles* Vol. 2 CCXXXVIII (1664)

2.7 Conclusions.

2.7.1. Inward Christ, Light, Seed, Soul, Spirit.

Friends affirmed that Christ was divine and accepted that his death was a sacrifice for all, representing God's Grace. They also believed that humankind was 'Fallen', corrupted in nature. All these were Christian doctrines current at the time. However, they rejected the Calvinist doctrines of limited election and imputed righteousness. In their place, they asserted the possibility of salvation for all, even those unaware of Christ or Christian Scriptures, but that this required all to be obedient to an inner guide, seeking righteousness, the potential for which was imparted. Such claims were revolutionary. Their further claim that this was all made possible by an intimate relationship with a returned Christ within all people, defied all contemporary Christian beliefs, making them vulnerable to blasphemy claims. Initially expressed in physical terms, that Christ was present within as flesh and blood, this belief was hard to accept and soon evolved into a more spiritual form. Christ influenced them from without, as the Light, the Spirit, God. This Light could transform them, from a state of sin, separated from God, to being made 'righteous', virtuous, by intimate relationship with divinity, within them. This divinity judged every action, but, if they accepted judgement, guided and empowered them to live a virtuous Life. The Seed or 'that of God' was within their souls. It was an inborn or imparted divinity, capable of responding to the Light. It grew if they responded. Thus, the relationship human-divine grew, transforming them ever further until perfection was achieved. This claim to perfection further invited claims of blasphemy, since only God was seen to be perfect. Examination of Friends' words, however, suggests that a better term for what they felt was not perfection but 'wholeness', self-realisation. Their relationship with divinity transformed them to the point where they fulfilled their potential, becoming as virtuous as was possible for each individual. Their frequent reference to the 'measure' of each Friend suggests they were aware of individual differences in potential for discernment and virtue.

These novel claims were, nonetheless, expressed in strongly belief/performance terms. Many¹ felt they must obey imperatives, which were perceived within as commands. If they failed to do so they would be judged and punished, ultimately with eternal damnation. Whilst many of the imperatives felt demanded just, honest and compassionate behaviour, features of a transformed life, others were perceived to demand extreme moral rigour, denying Friends many, to modern minds often innocent, worldly pleasures. They endured lives of great seriousness, focussing their thoughts upon divine grace. Only then did they feel worthy of their relationship with God. Whilst this was, undoubtedly, preferable to contemplating eternal damnation, it proved difficult for many to sustain.

Paradoxically, whilst Friends denied the primacy of Scripture as revealing God's will, this was principally a denial of Puritan interpretations of Scripture. They drew much from

¹ Particularly, in the very earliest years.

Scripture but in two different ways. They adopted the 'Kingdom' teachings of Jesus, particularly in the Sermon on the Mount, from the synoptic Gospels, but also attached great importance to the Pauline Epistles and the John Gospel, as the basis of their belief in the eternal Word, the divine Christ, incarnate in Jesus but present from the beginning of time. For them, Jesus exhibited a transformed Life, based upon total faith in God, the faith and inward guidance for which was available to Friends, as it had been to Jesus. They accepted Jesus' 'Kingdom' messages as embodying that guidance. It also led them to a more intimate sense of relationship. Jesus had seen his disciples as friends and his principal command was to love God, but also all humankind, even their opponents and persecutors. Once divine commands were seen in these relational terms obedience took on a new meaning. It was not about 'performing', 'measuring up', but modelling behaviour on that of the beloved, Christ, the incarnation of God. To serve became perfect freedom¹.

This change in perceptions was easier for some early Friends than others, so beliefs in judgement, 'hell-fire and damnation' persisted in some writing, along with those in salvation as being to eternal life. This all represented a residual culture of belief in rewards and sanctions for 'performance'. Steadily, however, through their emphasis that the Light and Seed operated within, judgement and discernment became internalised, made existential. Inspired, empowered, guided, however they interpreted what they felt, they were freed from the outward demands of church traditions and church ministers' interpretations of what Scripture demanded and what the consequences of 'falling short' were.

Arguably, such freedom was not total. Reading the life and teachings of Jesus, in the synoptic Gospels, and comparing this with the ethical code of early Friends, suggests that they shared many of Jesus' passions. They sought justice, rejecting exploitation, showed compassion towards outsiders and the disadvantaged and rejected lust, deceit and disloyalty. They did not, however, share his sociability and love of feasts and parties. Their rejection of such light-heartedness represented residual beliefs in their own depravity and unworthiness; the Light had transformed them, but not entirely. Similarly, their initial rejection of reason and suspicion of their own conscience represented the same sense of unworthiness and incapability. Quakers, like Puritans, saw sin as due to human fault. Friends, unlike Puritans, insisted that righteousness, virtue, was possible in earthly life, if individuals heeded the Light and they even saw, in the growth of the Seed an element of divinity within. This, however, was not seen as an inherent part of humankind, as earlier mystics had claimed², but was conveyed to them, by Grace, to rescue them from their previous depravity; a residue of belief in the 'Fall' seemingly always present in early Friends self-view.

Early Quaker understanding of the meaning of salvation, however, suggests that they had moved along the single axis towards faith in their own transformation and relationship with

¹ A Quote from the 'Collect to Peace' in the Book of Common Prayer.

² See above, Section 2.1.3.

the divine. This is illustrated in their perceptions of the action of the divine, 'Holy' Spirit. This, they believed, transformed and energised them to yearn for virtue. Whilst they sought to change from self-absorption to selfless, compassionate relationships, they did so out of feelings of love for one another, 'in God'. Such emotions, if they maintained unity, would be reciprocated, giving to all a sense of fulfilment and joy. Their emphasis upon the emotional, not the intellectual, impact of the Spirit, saving them, from the fear and insecurity of a self-centred, to the freedom and wholeness of a Spirit-led life, showed an altogether transformed view of salvation. It occurred in the here and now; they lived in the kingdom, on earth.

2.7.2. Ruler, Law-maker, Judge, Just, Punishes

God was, for Friends, a ruler of ultimate authority, inspiring fear at the prospect of incurring divine wrath and punishment. These were belief/performance attitudes, as were those that God was a shepherd, loving and tending 'His' flock, humankind. This created a paradox; to fear God was to love God and love each other. Beliefs about God and divine authority were being apprehended in the mind, or soul, as a rule to live by. The virtuous life was one of self-examination and self-judgement, but also of compassion and support for others.

Their perceptions of the authority of God also emboldened Friends. The divine authority to which they were accountable superseded the authority of church or State when it persecuted them. Whether this belief comforted them or meant that their fear of God's wrath was even greater than that of imprisonment and loss of livelihood varied, but the brave demeanour of many under duress suggests the former; they were empowered by their relationship with God.

Friends saw God's laws as no longer fixed, in Scripture and church tradition, to be used to intimidate them. Nor were they to be obeyed only in token, literalistic, ways. They were communicated to them inwardly, through the Light, which both freed them from outward authority, and placed great demands upon them. They must obey God's will, discerning what that was in each, often unique, situation. They were guided by their relationship with the Light, but the ultimate decision, to pursue the virtuous or the selfish path, was theirs, but not alone. Friends' sense that theirs was an insight given to them to share with, and thus transform, the world, led them to share discernments together, in relationship with one another.

Their sense of what God judged as unacceptable was transformative. They gradually abandoned doctrinal beliefs as important, recognising that greed and injustice were the real sins. Their rejection of 'deceit', the profession of doctrinal beliefs in Christ, but not living up to the implications of those beliefs, showed the nature of Friends' emphases. Their move away from emphasis upon beliefs and towards transformation/relationship was emphasised by their rejection, later in the century, of conventional beliefs concerning heaven and hell as superstition. For Friends judgement was immediate, earthly and in the heart. They punished

themselves by their sense of loss of relationship with divinity, which was a failure to experience wholeness through transformation.

2.7.3. Kingdom.

Friends came to see themselves as living in a new Gospel order; in the Kingdom. It demanded behaviour which must be just, honest, loving and compassionate, not profession of beliefs. They must be transformed, by the growth of the Seed, the potential for virtue, within them. This grew if they responded to the Light, so it was their relationship with the Light, accepting and heeding it, not separating themselves from it, from God, that brought about transformation, bringing them into the Kingdom. In accepting that the Kingdom was in and around them, not away 'in heaven', they broke down the old, belief based, dualism between spiritual and worldly, sacred and secular. All Life¹ became, for them, sacred; the Spirit acting within them at all times². Their attempts to bring all into the Kingdom, the Lamb's War, they expressed in belief-based, war-like, terms but saw as purely spiritual. The old belief/ performance model of faith they had appropriated within. Divinity had the same power and authority as ever, but acted within them.

2.7.4 Powerful, Empowers, Leads.

In line with contemporary beliefs, Friends sometimes envisioned God intervening directly in history, even acting to protect them personally. With their perception of divinity as acting directly within them they placed greater emphasis, however, upon the power of God as empowering them, to resist sin, act virtuously and suffer persecution for their faith bravely. Just as they saw the life of Christ as a model of virtue, so they saw the manner of his death as an example of selflessness and faith in God, empowering them, as it had empowered him. They recognised that such guidance and empowerment required humility, putting 'self' and selfish desires aside, to listen to the 'voice' within, to receive illumination. They used a variety of metaphors, all suggesting that they were guided towards virtue by a divinity which acted closely in relationship with them. Pennington's affirmation of 'spiritual' religion acknowledged Friends' understanding that such guidance was shrouded in mystery, but emphasised their faith that it was divine and led to the good.

2.8 Chapter Conclusions.

Early Friends emerged from a Puritan tradition which emphasised totally a belief/performance model of faith. Much of this they carried into their own perceptions of God and of divine power and authority. They assumed without question that God was a person, male, regal, 'the Lord'. 'He' was responsible for the Law, which set out the values by which they must live. 'He' judged, and, if necessary, punished wrong-doing. To that extent

¹ For this reason the word Life is capitalised in early Friends' writing.

² This led to their rejection of church sacraments, as reminders of the divine. The divine was with them, as Spirit, always, so reminders were unnecessary

Friends retained beliefs that they needed to 'perform'. However, by their experience, that such a divinity acted within them they immediately claimed a relationship with God, and, unlike in modern Liberal, and particularly 'popular' modern Quaker understanding¹, with a God 'who' was totally real and in whom they had total faith. In that sense they, from the outset, lay nearer to transformation/relationship along the single axis than many in popular Quaker culture today, although transformation was seen in terms of 'obedience'; albeit to 'leadings' felt within. They recognised a sense of mystery about the nature of God, of their relationship with 'Him' and the transformational effect this had on them². Friends questioned what was happening to them, recognising that divinity and its influence was unlike anything else in their experience, but their faith that God was real and able to affect their lives, potentially for the better, was unquestioning. By their doctrinal beliefs in Christ, but an Inward Christ, the divinity within them, and by their re-examination of Scripture, reclaiming understandings of the faith, life and teaching of Jesus, they radically re-interpreted the demands of divinity. They re-discovered the meaning of a transformed, virtuous, Life. In 'institutional' Liberal and, especially, 'popular' Quakerism, arguments over beliefs about Christ obscure experience of the 'kingdom' teaching and example of the Jesus of faith. For early Friends, God was powerful, awe-inspiring, and full of grace and love. These attributes acquired a new meaning and significance if they were, as they believed, in direct, unmediated relationship with such a God, who willed their transformation and salvation. They saw salvation as possible for all, but it required sacrifices not unlike those of Christ, showing the same faith in a God who would uphold them in virtue. The extent to which each Quaker sincerely held that faith determined how far along the single axis they moved towards real relationship and transformation. Whilst 'institutional' and even most 'popular' Liberal Quakers attach less importance to many of early Friends' beliefs about God and Christ, where they entertain doubts over the reality of divinity as a supernatural presence this undermines their faith in the experience of relationship with such a divinity and its transformational effects. Whilst this leaves them freer to make their own decisions they lack the sense of empowerment early Friends felt. Where early Friends lay, quite uniformly, some way along the single axis towards transformation/relationship, Liberal and, especially popular, Quaker culture is more widely spread along the single axis.

¹ See Chapter 1 Section 1.1.1

² Total feature references: Meaning of God 1.20% Most of these were references to mystery. For example, Robert Barclay, *Apology For the True Christian Divinity* 406 describes the 'secret sense of the mystery [that by a] feeling experience they can say that the Lord is spiritually present'.

CHAPTER 3 EARLY QUAKER PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AND ITS IMPLICATIONS.

In this chapter I examine the ways in which early Friends perceive their relationship with God. I discuss their expressed beliefs about the six features of relationship with God most frequently referred to in the texts analysed and set out in Table 3.1:

Table 3.1 The six features of relationship with God most frequently referred to by early Quakers.

Feature	% Frequency of Occurrence
Sin/ Separation from God	4.34
Truth	3.87
Obedience/ Service	3.51
Righteousness	2.20
Faith	2.05
Suffering/ Courage	1.82

In the following discussions the percentage figures presented for each feature or feature group indicate their frequency of occurrence among all the features, both of God and relationship to God, scored in the study. The chapter argues that early Friends had faith in their experience of an inward divinity as showing them the truth of their own conditions. They were selfish, self-absorbed, lacking integrity and divorced from God's guidance. Equally they trusted that, if they heard, obeyed their inner voice, they would be reconciled with God, gain a transforming relationship with the Divine and be guided and empowered to virtuous 'being'. If they failed to hear and obey God they would be punished eternally. Thus, they retained elements of the belief-performance model of faith, but were, by the sincerity of their trust in their inner relationship, nearer to the transformation/relationship pole of the single axis.

3.2 Feature Group: Sin and Evil/ Separation from God. (4.34%)

I divide this Feature group into the following categories, which I consider in turn:

3.1.1 Sin and Evil,

3.1.2. Separation from God.

3.1.1 Sin and Evil. (4.06%)

Penn wrote¹ that, 'Sin is of one nature', all who commit sin are slaves to sin², which comes from within, not from without. He¹ saw sin as resulting from hard-heartedness, greed,

¹ William Penn, *No Cross, No Crown*, 3

² He was quoting Jesus, *John* 8: 34

vanity and corruption. It could not be blamed on circumstance; all had a choice, to behave badly or well. Fell² felt similarly, suggesting that 'hardness of heart', a numbed conscience, was the greatest judgement, the greatest failing, to befall a people.

Quakers were influenced by Paul³, who described God's angry response to repeated sinfulness, abandoning the sinner, who had rejected knowledge of God. Sin marked a separation from God⁴; a loss of awareness of divine virtue. Paul⁵ felt he did not do the good that he wanted, but the evil which he did not want. This was not [the true] him but the evil acting in him. He⁶ described Adam and Eve, free in the garden, but given a prohibition, they rebelled. 'Laws' and prohibitions prompted the desire to break them, asserting one's individuality and freedom. Fox⁷ saw the sting of death as sin and the strength of sin as the law. Focussing upon rigidly sticking to outward laws, or seeking ways to circumvent them, brought spiritual death, loss of empathy and compassion.

Barclay⁸ described, natural, untransformed, humankind as fallen, deprived of the 'inward testimony or Seed of God' and having an 'evil seed'. They could 'know nothing rightly' until 'disjointed from this evil seed and united to the divine Light', in the heart, the revelation of God's Spirit 'first sent into the world to reprove it of sin'⁹. For Barclay, embracing the Light saved humankind from sin. He rejected imputed, 'original', sin. Infants, not knowing the law, could not sin¹⁰; they had nothing to rebel against. Whilst 'all men' were fallen, even if they knew nothing of the story of Adam's Fall, so, equally, all could feel the influence of the divine Seed and Light and be turned from evil to good, though they knew nothing of Jesus. The Light was not mediated by Scripture. It taught that virtue required selfless concern for others. Sin was self-absorption and selfishness. Bathurst¹¹ also rejected 'original sin', as not affirmed in Scripture; an example of Friends use of Scripture to guide their beliefs. They rejected interpretations of Scripture as 'notions', products of human reason, not spiritual feelings. Whilst all were defiled by 'Adam's sin', Christ had given the potential for righteousness, the Seed, to everyone. God condemned only 'Actual Transgression'. If they continually sinned, ignored the Light, 'this principle of God may cease striving with them, and so they may not know when they do evil'¹². They become so hardened as to lose the ability to recognise their sinning. Both Paul and early Friends rejected 'the law', affirming

¹ William Penn, *No Cross, No Crown*, 36

² Margaret Fell, *To the Magistrates and People of England* (London: s.n.,1664) and in (Ann Arbor MI: Michigan University Library, 2009)

³ In *Rom.* 1

⁴ Douglas Gwyn, *The Covenant Crucified: Quakers and the Rise of Capitalism*, (Wallingford PA: Pendle Hill, 1995) 258

⁵ *Rom.* 7: 18 – 20

⁶ *Rom.* 7

⁷ George Fox, in, *A Collection of.....Epistles* Vol. 2 CCCCX 301

⁸ Robert Barclay *Apology for the True Christian Divinity* 11, 61, 93

⁹ *John* 16: 8

¹⁰ In *Rom.* 1

¹¹ Elizabeth Bathurst, *Truth Vindicated* 362, 402

¹² Elizabeth Bathurst, *Truth Vindicated* 402

guidance by the inward Christ or Spirit. They rejected moral rules¹, favouring a 'virtue' approach² to 'righteousness'³, creating an inner 'role model'. Rather than ask 'what is the rule here?' they were asking 'what would Christ do here?' Christ freed them from the law; his inner, guiding voice transforming them, leading them away from sinful desires.

An overwhelming sense of personal sinfulness induces incapacitating guilt. Nayler⁴ recognised this and advised: if 'in darkness.....mind it not...[or]...it will fill thee more'. 'Wait in patience' for the Light to 'lead thee'. Guilt and self-recrimination were counterproductive. He advocated reflection, seeking the guidance of the Light towards a transformed, more virtuous, Life.

Fox⁵ called for social justice and concern for the poor and oppressed, seeing denial of such things as important sinfulness. He rejected strict social hierarchies, with greater freedoms and privileges for the wealthy and powerful, advocating a more just, egalitarian and compassionate approach. On worldly pleasures, whether sports and recreation, music, theatre and the arts, or social and sexual relations, he upheld strict moral rules⁶. Whilst excessive, self-indulgent devotion to such activities may cause neglect of others, he showed no concerns for such consequences, only demands for 'due seriousness' and constant reverence for God. Fox⁷ denied that there was any place 'in the spiritual house' for 'outward pleasures... lightness, wantonness, vain glory and profaneness.... idle talk, unrighteousness, proud boasting, loftiness and haughtiness'⁸. Most of this list would stand today, condemning pride and vanity, malicious gossip and profanity. More questionable was rejection of 'outward pleasures....lightness', amusements which lightened life, then as now. Jesus' behaviour⁹ seems repeatedly to have been at odds with what early Friends

¹ Alasdair MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics* 10. 16 – 7, 29 set out the nature of moral rules, questioning the need for them and asking if one whose behaviour is not rule governed is not beyond the limits of human society, as Socrates argued in the *Georgias*. Socrates suggested that if all were 'wolves' or 'sheep' then rules were needed to regulate drives to aggression, and resultant fears, but noted the distinction between rules as pointers to moral behaviour and those which simply form part of civil law, to regulate society and make it more efficient.

² See Michael Slote, in Ted Honderich, Ed., *Oxford Companion to Philosophy* 947 – 8 explains that a virtue approach to ethics plays down or even denies the need for moral rules. Morality is seen as possession of inward traits, virtues, which lead the individual to respond ethically. He links the discussion to the words of Plato, who saw virtue as arising endogenously, and of Aristotle, who saw it as arising in response to situations.

³ Aristotle and Plato regarded Temperance, Wisdom, Justice and Courage as the principle virtues, the most desirable natural character traits. These became known as the 'Cardinal Virtues'. To these Christians added the 'Theological' virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity (Love). James Stalker, *The Seven Cardinal Virtues* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1902) 10 insisted upon emphasising the natural basis of all seven Christian virtues.

⁴ James Nayler, in, *A collection of sundry books...* LV – LVI, 1659

⁵ See, for example, Douglas Gwyn, *Apocalypse of the Word*: 201 and John L. Nickalls, Ed., *The Journal of George Fox* 26 where Fox exhorts justices to set fair wage levels for servants, and the servants to do a fair day's work; an even-handed approach.

⁶ See, for example, John L. Nickalls, Ed., *The Journal of George Fox* 19, where Fox described being shown all the baser moral plights and 38, where he condemned the 'sins of the flesh'

⁷ George Fox, 'Concerning the Kingdom of God' in, *Doctrinals in Works...* Vol. V 1089 – 90

⁸ Gerald Guiton, *The Early Quakers and the Kingdom of God*: 160

⁹ As described by Marcus J. Borg, *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time*: 53 – 61

demanded, attending meals and banquets and consorting with outcasts, tax collectors and sinners. He challenged tithes,¹ criticised priests, Pharisees² and the subordination of women³, all of which became concerns of early Friends, but not his 'lighter' behaviours. Friends' fear of sinfulness in matters of recreation appear to have related more to Puritan prurience⁴, raising questions as to the influences brought to bear in their discernment of spiritual guidance.

Feeling to be in a state of sin, separated from God and divine guidance, however, mattered more to Friends than did individual, sinful, acts. Fox⁵ condemned 'bad language' and 'bad carriage' towards one another. He criticised 'pride and vanity' in fashion, associating it with waste, taking the best, using it for a while, then casting it aside, replacing it with more. This was an early appeal, effectively, for resource conservation, presented as one for simplicity and humility, not ostentation and pride. Friends'⁶ definitions of 'Ungodliness' included; lying, theft, murder, adultery, fornication, 'uncleanness and debauchery', malice, hatred, deceit, cozening and cheating. Fox reserved particular censure for 'deceit'⁷ or 'professing'⁸, quoting Scripture, especially the words of Jesus, but not living out the lessons it delivered. He⁹ condemned invoking, but not fearing, God, particularly in ministers, who failed to turn people 'from their wickedness'. Penn¹⁰ saw the 'doctrine of the cross of Christ' as neglected and misunderstood, contradicted by the 'superstition and intemperance of professed Christians'. 'The cross' was an example to others of self-sacrifice. He contrasted it with 'superstitious' doctrines concerning the nature of Christ, and with greed, exploitation and persecution of the weak. The 'god' many people worshipped was one of 'lusts'; 'what shall we eat?.....drink?.....wear?....how shall we pass our time?.....gather wealth?..... increase our power?' Such statements underscore both the conviction Friends showed to seeking greater justice and, possibly, the origins of their rejection of 'frivolity'. They were vigorous, and courageous, in their advocacy of both justice and compassion. Whilst they saw politics, social reform, and religion as a unity,¹¹ early Quaker leaders' primary objective was reform

¹ Luke 11: 42

² Luke 11: 44

³ Luke 7: 36 – 50, 10: 38 – 42, Mark 7: 24 – 30 and see Walter Wink, *Engaging the Powers* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992) 129, who noted that, 'in every single encounter with women in the four Gospels Jesus violated the mores of his time'.

⁴ Diarmaid MacCulloch, *A History of Christianity* (London: Penguin Books, 2010) [2009] 652 describes the 'straitlaced' nature of Puritans and their resultant unpopularity. Under Oliver Cromwell they abolished Christmas and maypole dancing, for example. John Punshon, *Portrait in Grey*: 21 describes the popular view of Puritans as 'cold, joyless, censorious, fearful of contamination by the ordinary pleasures of life' etc.

⁵ John L. Nickalls, Ed., *The Journal of George Fox* 67, 205 – 6, 699

⁶ Barry Reay, *The Quakers and the English Revolution* 118 saw Friends' attitudes to such failings as being in the tradition of the Puritan 'reformation of manners', referring to K. Wrightson, 'The Puritan Reformation of Manners' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Cambridge, 1973)

⁷ See, for example, John L. Nickalls, Ed., *The Journal of George Fox* 29

⁸ See, for example, John L. Nickalls, Ed., *The Journal of George Fox* 203

⁹ George Fox, *A Collection of....Epistles* Vol. 1 XXIV 32, XXXIV 41

¹⁰ William Penn, *No Cross, No Crown*, 1, 2

¹¹ See, for example, R. Melvin Keiser and Rosemary Moore, *Knowing the Mystery of Life Within*: 124

of the church¹. Fox² condemned ‘false asking and praying’, formal prayers for peace, the sick, bereaved or poor, recited without thought or sincerity, as ‘taking God’s...name in vain’. People, he alleged, sought divine help but lacked faith, hated his Light and turned the Grace, their potential for virtue, into ‘wanton-ness’. They were ‘erred from the faith they should ask in and from the Spirit they should pray by’.

Quakers rejected excessive self-regard. They had no conception of personal freedom, beyond the freedom from sin gained by ‘standing in the Light’³. For Fox⁴, humanity was created to live dependent upon God, so absolute freedom was impossible. Such freedom as there was came through the Gospel. That which was not in the Spirit of God and in his Gospel was in darkness, bonded to sin. The Truth, Christ⁵, made individuals free. Pursuit of worldly desires gave no freedom at all. Freedom came from being transformed, living a selfless, compassionate life, becoming a ‘whole’, ‘perfect’, self-fulfilled, person, through relationship with God and with others, in community. Fox did urge⁶ freedom to minister in worship, ‘as moved’ and to live Spirit-led lives, free from the constraints of convention and external authority. These were Gospel freedoms⁷ and applied equally to men and women, itself a revolutionary idea for its time. It was no sin for women to freely travel the country, ministering to all who came to hear, men, women and children.

3.1.2 Separation from God. (0.28%)

Fox⁸ taught that the Light would show believers their sins and how these caused them to be ‘without God in the world’. The faith of Christ, in God, enabled their victory over the sin which had separated them from God. All, however, before accepting the Light, were in a ‘state of sin’, ‘strangers to the covenant of promise’⁹. Peat¹⁰ explains that Paul, transformed by adopting the faith of Jesus, moved ‘from solution to plight’. Recognising the inadequacy of his former obedience to outward laws, he felt to be ‘crucified with Christ... it is no longer I who live but.... Christ who lives in me’¹¹. Intimacy with Christ was what Friends sought. By contrast, the ‘Fall’¹², was ‘going forth’ from one state, ‘entering’ another, separate from God, through disobedience. It was moving into ‘vanity’, the ‘self’s inventions’¹³. Fox¹⁴ described that which was ‘below’ latent, as what separated people from God. They denied

¹ See Rosemary Moore *The Light in Their Consciences*: 62 – 5

² John L. Nickalls, Ed., *The Journal of George Fox* 15

³ References to Freedom in the texts analysed constituted 0.52% only of all feature references.

⁴ George Fox, in *The Works of George Fox* Vol. 2 339, Vol. 7 312

⁵ Lewis Benson, *A Universal Christian Faith* 28 – 30

⁶ George Fox, in *The Works of George Fox* Vol.1 367, Vol. 4 109

⁷ Rex Ambler, Ed., *Truth of the Heart*: 192, 185

⁸ John L. Nickalls, Ed., *The Journal of George Fox* 225

⁹ John L. Nickalls, Ed., *The Journal of George Fox* 117

¹⁰ T. Peat, in B. P. Dandelion, D. Gwyn and T. Peat, *Heaven on Earth*: 111 – 2

¹¹ *Gal. 2*: 20

¹² The ‘Fall’ meant all were in a ‘state of sin’.

¹³ Catherine M. Wilcox, *Theology and Women’s Ministry* 22 – 3

¹⁴ George Fox, *To All that would Know the Way to the Kingdom* 1 – 3

their relationship with God and the Kingdom, through conceit and pride, being self-absorbed, rejecting any obligation to others. The Light, if accepted, 'convicted' them; showed the error of such conceit¹ and guided them back to relationship with God. The Fall, for Friends, did not mean 'original sin'. It was acquired, through giving in to selfish desires² and neglecting the in-grafted Seed, the potential for virtue, present in all humankind.

Nayler³ was described⁴ as 'running out', spiritual pride and disloyalty, leading him to 'hell', a spiritual void, separated from God's love. He had turned from the unchangeable, God, to the changeable⁵; from eternal values to the shifting values of the world. For Fox this was the result of allowing that which was 'below' to triumph. Fisher⁶ described hell as, 'within the consciences of every malefactor'. It was not a 'place', but, again, a spiritual void, created by self-separation from the Love of God; here people were 'dead to God and alive to all evil'. This represented a marked change in perception from the medieval vision of hell as a place of eternal physical torment, entered after death⁷. Along with Friends' views that the Kingdom began within, with the Light and Seed, it secured their faith in a fully inward relationship with divinity. Audland⁸ developed such concepts further, lamenting how attachment to sinfulness darkened the understanding, leading to loss of the sense of the love of God, leading to ever greater iniquity. Penn⁹ also saw hell as the result of rejection by God, but described it as the eternal anguish of the damned¹⁰, raising questions as to whether he retained belief in physical torment¹¹. None were saved that remained in sin and lost to God. He rejected salvation through faith alone; it also required repentance, rejection of the attachment to worldly, perishable, things, hard heartedness and lack of compassion that he saw as causing God's rejection.

The Calvinist 'notion' that, through 'the Fall', humankind was, intrinsically, separated from God whilst on earth¹², Nayler decried, 'for it is one Spirit'; God and humanity were one¹.

¹ Gerald Guiton, *The Early Quakers and the Kingdom of God*: 160

² Fox does suggest an inherent weakness, a latent tendency to 'Fall'; no-one could be complacent about their sinlessness (transformation)

³ Nayler disagreed with Fox over how Quakerism should be disseminated, finally bringing the movement into disrepute through his actions in Bristol, imitating Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. See Pink Dandelion, *Introduction to Quakerism* 38 – 41

⁴ Gerald Guiton *The Early Quakers and the Kingdom of God*: 243 – 4, 280

⁵ A pre-Quaker description of sin. Anon, *Theologia Germanica*; possibly written by Johannes Tauler. This is a mystical treatise, believed to date from the late fourteenth century.

⁶ Samuel Fisher, *Apokryta: Velata Quoedam Revelata* (London: Wilson, 1666: F 1047) 21 – 2

⁷ See, for example, Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology*: 477 – 9

⁸ John Audland, *The Suffering Condition of the Servants of the Lord* 18

⁹ William Penn *No Cross, No Crown* xvii, 9

¹⁰ This shows partial convergence with medieval views; both saw hell as eternal and damning, but differing over whether physical or spiritual torment was to be expected.

¹¹ This is interesting, given his rejection of superstition and affirmation of human reason. He was an educated and, generally, more 'Light', not 'Spirit' orientated Friend. Was he using a rhetorical device to press home his message?

¹² See Rosemary Moore, *The Light in their Consciences* 99 – 100

Separation from God was not systemic, not the result of ‘original’, inherited, sinfulness, but due to disobedience. For Penington² the ‘Fall’ of man had ‘benumbed all his senses’. Man was dead spiritually, but unable to realise that and bewitched into a ‘fool’s paradise’ of earthly wisdom and dominion. This statement leaves open whether he saw the state as inherited or acquired. None of these assertions address the nature of Fox’s ‘below’. Friends were unclear as to whether they accepted inherited spiritual weakness, alongside their affirmation of an imbued, virtuous Seed. They differed from Calvinists in believing that the ‘Fallen’ state could be overcome by anyone and in this life, not just by a predestined few and only in the next life. To overcome it required obedience to the Light, willpower and effort to reject sinfulness. Barclay³ treated the story of Adam and Eve as historical narrative, seeing God’s threat of death for eating the forbidden fruit as reference to a spiritual, not a physical, death. Since he rejected ‘original’ sin, he believed that some could resist the forbidden fruit. For those who did Fall, spiritual communion with God was lost but was reclaimable through repentance and obedience to the inward Christ, giving immediate salvation, reconciliation with God⁴.

3.2 Truth. (3.87%)

Fox described⁵ God as the ground of Truth. Through walking in the truth Friends reached God, who was the ‘unchangeable truth in the inward parts’⁶. Truth, God, was within the believer. The inward Christ conveyed this truth, which led to the Father, God⁷. Here are two related beliefs. God represented divine, eternal, Truth, notably the sanctity of all life, existence, all of which was grounded in a Creator God. Awareness of this Truth lay within, as the Seed. The unchangeable truth arose in consequence of this. If one heeded the Light the Seed grew and one was transformed. This truth concerned eternal values, selflessness, empathy, compassion, all derived from Truth, the recognition that all were related ‘in God’. If heeded, Truth drew one to God and to virtue; the Seed grew. Bathurst⁸ maintained that ‘the Saving Power and Spirit in the Heart’ led ‘into the way of all Truth, which....is Christ’. Christ, God, Truth, all available within, if heeded, enabled living a virtuous Life, becoming ‘whole’; this was salvation.

Fell, in a letter to Cromwell⁹ described the ‘Truth in all hearts’ which would judge how he lived up to his promises. All could see what was true by subjecting what they experienced to the judgement of Christ, the Truth, within them. The inward Light enabled both self-

¹ James Nayler, ‘Concerning Justification’ in *Love to the Lost* 50 – 52 ‘the wisdom of men in their imaginations separated that which is in one and cannot be divided in the possession; for it is one Spirit that works all these’.

² Isaac Penington, *A Warning of Love from the Bowels of Life* (1660) in, *The Works of Isaac Penington* Vol. 1 404 – 5

³ Robert Barclay, *Apology for the True Christian Divinity* 67

⁴ Patricia A. Williams, *Quakerism: A Theology for our Time* 66 – 7

⁵ George Fox, *A Collection ofEpistles* Vol. 1 XLVIII 64, LXIV 78

⁶ John L. Nickalls, Ed., *The Journal of George Fox* 13

⁷ John L. Nickalls, Ed., *The Journal of George Fox* 13

⁸ Elizabeth Bathurst, *Truth Vindicated* 410

⁹ Bonnelyn Young Kunze, *Margaret Fell and the Rise of Quakerism* 142

judgement and broader discernment of how to foster closer, compassionate, relationships with God and one another, building a fairer society..

‘Truth’ was widely used¹ as an alternative to ‘Gospel.’ For Friends, this was personal, describing their faith and its realisation in their lives². Fox³ saw the Truth as a pearl, hidden by deceit and preoccupation with outward things. To find it required looking inward. Fox⁴ had recognised⁵ that people were unable to face truths about themselves⁶ which contradicted their comfortable self-image⁷, so projected unacceptable truths onto others. He described⁸ people condemning evil or deluded characters in the Bible, whilst failing to see the same faults in their own behaviours. They had learned nothing of the lessons of Scripture. ‘Deceit’, refusal to accept personal truths, was the source of much human misery⁹. Fox found this deceit so puzzling he sought a mythical explanation for it, as the work of the devil. Turning to the Light, to reveal personal truths, then facing them, would liberate the believer¹⁰. Ambler¹¹ notes that the word ‘reality’ was scarcely used in seventeenth century England; ‘truth’ was not seen as a representation of reality, but as reality itself. It was not to be believed but to be faced and lived, particularly personal reality, whether one was separated from, or in, God. Fox saw¹² ‘darkness’ as a metaphor for being unaware of, or not accepting, these personal truths. His response was practical: let the light of Christ, present in all consciences, search, and all would see their own truths¹³. Faced with ‘strife and foolishness’ around¹⁴, he urged: be ‘still and cool’ in the mind¹⁵. Slow the activities of the ‘self’, then one would ‘feel the principle of God to turn [the] mind to ...God’¹⁶; turn from insistent self-consciousness to consciousness of others¹⁷. Quaker, silent, worship facilitated such ‘stillness’.

‘Truth’, in broader religious contexts, then as now, was widely seen as concerning doctrine, what one should believe, and it frequently caused conflict. Fox¹⁸ recognised this, describing

¹ In seventeenth century English religion

² Rosemary Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences*: 82, 119

³ George Fox, in *The Works of George Fox* Vol. 7 27, 24

⁴ Rex Ambler, Ed., *Truth of the Heart*: 178 – 185, 200

⁵ A ‘valuable psychological insight’.

⁶ George Fox, in, *The Works of George Fox* Vol. 7 317 ‘everyone is....to come to the truth in their own particulars.....in their own hearts’

⁷ George Fox, in, *The Works of George Fox* Vol. 4 284 ‘if all men would come to the knowledge of the truth, they must come to that which doth reprove them and lead them unto all truth’.

⁸ George Fox, in, *The Works of George Fox* Vol. 1 87

⁹ George Fox, in, *The Works of George Fox* Vol. 7 238

¹⁰ Rex Ambler, Ed., *Truth of the Heart*: 185

¹¹ Rex Ambler, Ed., *Truth of the Heart*: 182

¹² As in the John Gospel: *John* 1: 5

¹³ George Fox, in, *The Works of George Fox* Vol. 1 295

¹⁴ George Fox, in, *The Works of George Fox* Vol. 8 72f

¹⁵ John L. Nickalls, Ed., *The Journal of George Fox* 346f

¹⁶ John L. Nickalls, Ed., *The Journal of George Fox* 346f

¹⁷ In the texts analysed, a considerable number of references were to the need for waiting on God in worship, as the means to discern truth. Total feature references: Wait on God 0.58%, in Silence 0.03%, Worship 0.84%

¹⁸ George Fox, in, *The Works of George Fox* Vol. 7 297

‘self-religion’ as leading to violence and persecution over invented, doctrinal, differences. He contrasted this with the religion of Christ, which rejected all persecution and hate. When the Puritans asked what [propositions] Fox would have them believe, he¹ ignored their demand, warning them to beware of ‘words without life’, illusions, drawing people out of the real truth, which was personal. It required honesty about personal weaknesses and strengths. People contented themselves with mere forms of words, when all needed to ‘dwell in the truth’; to be what they claimed².

For Fox³ ‘Truth’⁴ was ‘known together’ through silent worship. The Light helped each understand how the ‘self’, defensiveness, impeded seeing the reality of situations, ‘which Light, being owned, self, and the righteousness of self, came to be denied’. Once accepted, the truth, however uncomplimentary, was liberating⁵. If individuals ‘submitted’ to the truth revealed, they would experience ‘mercy’, contentment and peace. The self-deception had ended, leaving them empowered to act differently, ‘righteously’⁶.

Fox conspicuously emphasised the language of Light, with its judgemental connotations, as showing both inner and outer reality, not the language of love or freedom. Truth was always moral and active, requiring justice and honesty⁷: ‘Then ye are a dread and terror to the unjust’⁸. Quakers saw their knowledge of self-truths as transformative, giving them ‘openings’, inspirations on the real meanings of Scripture and direct inward revelations concerning how to ‘be’⁹. Thus, they gained authority, witnessing for God in their actions¹⁰, they upset the comfortable self-satisfaction of others.

For Penington¹¹ all Truth was a shadow, ‘except the last...the utmost’. Yet every truth was true in its place, though it may not be so in another place. He was distinguishing ‘relative’ truths, which changed with context, particularly with greater understanding of situations, from absolute, ‘utmost’, truths; universal, divine, values, centred upon the sanctity of all life. ‘The misery of man’ was that he met not with truth but with vanity, ‘A doctrine of his own framing, out of the Scripture’. This reflected Friends’ conviction that prevalent doctrines, particularly on predestination and the imputation of righteousness, but also on the role of sacraments and formal liturgies, were falsehoods, not justified by the Light or from the

¹ Rex Ambler, Ed., *Truth of the Heart*: 181

² George Fox, in, *The Works of George Fox* Vol. 7 88

³ George Fox, in, *The Works of George Fox* Vol. 1 344

⁴ Derived from the Hebrew word for ‘solidity’.

⁵ George Fox, in, *The Works of George Fox* Vol. 7 275 ‘In the truth live.... And that truth makes you free; (c.f. *John* 8: 32)

⁶ Douglas Gwyn, *The Covenant Crucified*: 110

⁷ Cecil W. Sharman, *George Fox and the Quakers* 5

⁸ George Fox, *The Line of Righteousness and Justice Stretched Forth Over all Merchants etc.* (London: Wilson, 1661: F1857)

⁹ N.C. Tousley, ‘The Experience of Regeneration....’ 22

¹⁰ In the analysed texts, the need to make Testimony/ Witness for God in Friends’ actions amounted to 1.49% of all feature references.

¹¹ Isaac Penington, ‘The Life of a Christian’ (1653) in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 27.22

Scriptures. Friends did engage in doctrinal disputes, but these were not their central concern. They emerged from a feudal society, ritualistic and deriving its truths from church traditions and the Bible, into a society which was evolving into a market economy, wedded to increasingly rational, empiricism. Penn¹ rejected doctrinal differences as belonging to another, superstitious, world. He believed that all spoke the same truth within, a truth to which all had access, but it was dressed in 'divers liveries'. This was early Quaker universalism². Friends' conviction that Truth, the Light and Seed, brought salvation to all who embraced them, fuelled their repudiation of beliefs in the predestination of an 'elect', but not the rest of humankind, to salvation³.

3.3 Feature group: Obedience/ Service. (3.51%)

I divide this Feature group into the following categories, which I consider in turn:

3.3.1. Obedience.

3.3.2. Service

3.3.1. Obedience. (1.97%)

Fox⁴ urged: 'obey, and forsake [worldly lusts] else you will not grow up in the faith....the life of Christ, where the love of God is received'. Obeying the Christ within, even when tempted by selfish desires enabled living in the way portrayed in Jesus' 'kingdom' teaching. This required Jesus' radical faith, trust, in God's love, empowering them to act as he did, lovingly, compassionately, but also bravely. Penn⁵ paraphrased Jesus⁶, 'They that do my Father's will.....shall know of my doctrine'. To do God's will required understand Jesus' teachings. Sharing Jesus' faith in God freed them from fear of the consequences of their, Light inspired, actions. Penn urged, 'obey the Grace that appears in thy soul'. A gift, the Seed, in the soul, enabled discernment and empowered action. 'Obedience' was heeding inner guidance. For Fox⁷ obedience to God's will was practising truth, holiness, godliness and righteousness, so glorifying God. It required integrity, responding to divine, inward promptings to act selflessly and compassionately.

Bathurst⁸ saw humankind as created with 'a willing faculty', corruptible, susceptible to sinful desires and actions. Salvation required that this 'will' be 'bowed and subjected....into

¹ William Penn, 'Some Fruits of Solitude' (1693) in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 27. 01 'The humble, meek, merciful, just, pious and devout souls are everywhere of one religion; and when death has taken off the mask they will know one another, though the divers liveries they wear here makes them strangers'.

² Douglas Gwyn, *The Covenant Crucified*: 327 – 9

³ Total feature references: God is Universal 0.37%, Election 0.14%

⁴ John L. Nickalls, Ed., *The Journal of George Fox* 59

⁵ William Penn *No Cross, No Crown*, 29, 58

⁶ *John 7: 16 – 7*

⁷ John L. Nickalls, Ed., *The Journal of George Fox* 170

⁸ Elizabeth Bathurst, *Truth Vindicated* 370

Obedience of the Lord Jesus'. She described¹ a 'Principle of Divine Light' placed by God in her heart, which pleaded with her 'even when I knew him not'. She did not, initially, recognise her inner inspirations as coming from God, even though she felt compelled to obey them. Only later did she recognise that what she felt was divinely led. She was describing her own transformation, learning for herself to act in virtuous ways which compromised her own self-interest, trusting in her relationship with God and others. Sensing something was 'of God' had suggested obedience to avoid punishment or receive reward². She, however, had felt bound to submit to impulses perceived within, but from an unknown source. She had learned a new conception of God and God's love; that it inspired actions for their own sake, not requiring reinforcement.

Barclay,³ condemning the doctrine of universal, 'original', sinfulness, asserted that, if it existed the sin must have come from God, or from humankind, then rejected the possibility that it came from God, who was perfect and loving. If sin came from humankind it was because they misused and failed to develop the 'power given them, whereby they are capable to obey'. He challenged the prevailing Calvinist belief in inherited sin, substituting belief in an inner potential for virtue, 'the Seed'. To make individuals virtuous, however, required that they were 'obedient' to inner inspirations from the Light. Here was the difference between an optimistic view of the human condition, as potentially virtuous, from Friends and a pessimistic one, as utterly corrupt, from Calvinism. Clarifying his understanding of obedience, Barclay⁴ endorsed Hilary⁵: God taught rather than commanded, not willing a forced confession or obedience. Barclay illustrated belief in real relationship and mutual respect between God and humankind. Obedience was more a matter of willing co-operation to bring about God's will, the good. Fox's reference to what was 'below'⁶ becomes a reference to disobedience. All are born with the potential for virtue. Only if they lack will-power, are disobedient, will they 'Fall'. Audland⁷, however, wrote that Quakers 'dare not' disobey the Lord. Despite being persecuted for it, they must 'meet together in the Name and fear of the Lord'. He retained belief in a wrathful God.

It is quite possible that both Barclay's and Audland's views on 'obedience' co-existed. Not all Friends will have escaped fully from Calvinist perceptions of a more judgemental God. The term 'Obedience' is derived from the Latin *oboedientem*, 'hearing'. Friends heard God's will in the silence of Quaker worship⁸. Audland⁹ urged bearing witness to what was

¹ Elizabeth Bathurst, *Truth Vindicated* 406

² Since the dominant perception was of a powerful God who judged human actions.

³ Robert Barclay, *Apology for the True Christian Divinity* 210

⁴ Robert Barclay, *Apology for the True Christian Divinity* 422

⁵ Hilary of Poitiers, Hilary I. 1. Ad. Const.

⁶ George Fox, *To All that would Know the Way to the Kingdom* 1 – 3 and see above, Section 3.1.1.

⁷ John Audland, *The Suffering Condition..* 12, 20

⁸ Harvey Gillman, *Consider the Blackbird: Reflections on Spirituality and Language* (London: Quaker Books, 2007) 60 The analysed texts showed that early Friends attached considerable importance to the commands/will of God Total feature references: Commands/ Will of God 1.83%

⁹ John Audland, *The Suffering Condition...* 20

'heard' from the Light, in God's name. Humankind belonged to God and should serve the will of God, not of the self, nor even others' wills, unless theirs was in tune with God's will. He, again, took a more fearful view of his motivations, but meeting together was the means to obedience and witness. It allowed Friends collectively to discern that will, making 'obedience' a more interactive process occurring within and between the worshipping group and God.

The Quaker sense of obedience was intimately associated with their self-view as disciples, 'a peculiar people' living on the margins of society¹. Their witness, acting on the will of God, they were convinced, aided the salvation of those they influenced from apostasy² and sin. The possibility of perfect obedience, living a fulfilled, 'righteous', virtuous, life, was their answer to the doctrines of original sin and imputed righteousness. Freedom from sin was possible, but only through total obedience to God. According to Barbour³ there was no question that Friends' virtue was human in origin. Such an apparently bleak view of human nature⁴, nevertheless, represented a major advance. Humans were seen, not as degenerate but as capable of obedience and, hence, of virtue. Add the Barbour and Bathurst views⁵ on the nature of obedience and the strict truth of Barbour's assertion becomes questionable. Fox's frequent references to the need for subjection to Christ⁶ meant, Gwyn⁷ concludes, Christ was the subject and the 'self' the object. Transformation was the death of the self and the 'second birth' of the Seed, Christ within, as a new, divine, will⁸. Obedience to God, therefore, for Fox, was a dynamic conversational relationship⁹. Jesus was Fell's¹⁰ model of an obedience which led to perfection. By receiving Christ's perfecting Spirit Quakers experienced Jesus' closeness to 'the Father', giving them faith, which alleviated their self-doubts, so they heard and 'obeyed', conformed with, the leadings of the Light within them and attained perfection, 'wholeness'.

3.3.2 Service. (1.54%)

Fox¹¹ urged: 'serve [God] ... not the creature'; serve divinity, virtue, not worldly desires. Fell¹ described Quakers as, 'the Elect of God....separated from the world for the service of

¹ Gerald Guiton, *The Early Quakers and the Kingdom of God*: 395

² This term is used for a perceived falling away, both by individuals and by the whole church, from the apostles' faith, in the post-apostolic period. Fox described this as loss of the apostles' 'purity and practice'. See John L. Nickalls, Ed., *The Journal of George Fox* 418

³ Hugh Barbour, *The Quakers in Puritan England* 150

⁴ This must be viewed in the context of seventeenth century beliefs in universal human degeneracy.

⁵ See immediately above, in this section.

⁶ Or subjection to: the Spirit or the Truth.

⁷ Douglas Gwyn, *Apocalypse of the Word*: 79

⁸ For example, John L. Nickalls, Ed., *The Journal of George Fox* 28 'come into subjection to the Spirit of God.....receive the Word of wisdom that opens all things and come to know the hidden unity of the Eternal Being'

⁹ Lewis Benson, *A Universal Christian Faith* 17

¹⁰ Bonnelyn Young Kunze, *Margaret Fell and the Rise of Quakerism* 191

¹¹ George Fox, *A Collection of.....Epistles* Vol. 1 LVI 72

the living God....to testify against the world that the deeds thereof are evil'. She was urging Friends' separation from the materialist values that inspired the evil deeds they were to condemn, not that they withdraw to live in isolated communities. Their witness was frequently one of ministry to others². Fox³ encouraged Friends to examine and search 'with that which is eternal, which speaks to that which is in prison in others' and minister to reprove what destroys human reason⁴. They must use their understandings of the Truth, the true nature of God and the truth of the human condition to aid others' transformation. It could, by revealing to them their potentials, both for selfless virtue and for selfish sinfulness, and the consequences of each, free them from constant self-regard and selfishness. 'The truth doth preserve everything in its place'⁵. According to the doctrine of the 'Fall', sin destroyed human reason, by preventing access to God, Truth, which was the basis of reason. Enabling others to overcome sin freed them to reason and see where the right, virtuous, course lay; what would transform them and make them 'whole'.

For Barclay⁶ 'he that sinneth is the servant of sin'⁷, of the devil, not of God. He⁸ quoted Tertullian⁹: to serve God required a willing heart; thus he rejected coercion. Both he and Bathurst¹⁰ anticipated modern understanding that acts carried out in the hope of avoiding punishment, or gaining reward, are not moral acts at all, but purely instrumental¹¹.

Servant-hood, modelled on Jesus' disciples, is the basis of Christian testimony. Early Friends saw themselves as 'Servants of the Lord'¹², possessing the social consciousness fundamental to prophecy. Given this consciousness, by the Light, they must witness¹³ to God's love and to unity with those who accepted the Light¹⁴ and sought to emulate Jesus. They were conscious of injustice and oppression and must witness to convince others of the Light, illuminating their consciousness, to overcome these evils. There was equality of men and women in Friends' ministry, which was virtually unique at that time. Quaker ministers, especially women, regularly provoked hostility. They were strangers¹⁵, differently dressed,

¹ Elsa Glines, *Undaunted Zeal: The Letters of Margaret Fell* 111 - a letter to Francis Howgill and London Quakers,

² In the 1650s, at least, they sought the salvation of everyone. See, for example, Gerald Guiton *The Early Quakers and the Kingdom of God*: 3 – 6

³ George Fox, *A Collection ofEpistles* Vol. 1 XLIII (1653)

⁴ A good illustration of the basis of Fox's continuing rejection of human reason; it was, too often, corrupted by sinfulness.

⁵ George Fox, *A Collection ofEpistles* Vol. 1 XLIII (1653)

⁶ Robert Barclay, *Apology for the True Christian Divinity* 209

⁷ Rom.6: 16

⁸ Robert Barclay, *Apology for the True Christian Divinity* 423

⁹ Tertullian, (c160 – c225) *Id Apolog.* C28

¹⁰ See above, Section 3.3.1.

¹¹ See, for example Alasdair MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics* 185 – 7

¹² E.g. J. Parnell, *A Trial of Faith* (London: n.p., 1654: P535) 8

¹³ Emphasis upon the need for testimony/ witness to the will of God, (1.49% of all feature references; 8th in rank order of all features of relationship with God) in the analysed texts was considerable.

¹⁴ Gerald Guiton *The Early Quakers and the Kingdom of God*: 258

¹⁵ This was in a country where travel was limited in those times.

often enacting prophetic signs¹. Such service often entailed persecution, so required courage.² Fox saw ministry as a battle to establish knowledge of inward, spiritual, religion³, and of the living God, as opposed to ‘teachings, churches, worships set up by man’s earthly knowledge’⁴. Ministers sought to ‘convince’ individuals, but also to bring whole communities to the ‘religion of the heart’, inwardly converted through adopting the faith of Christ⁵. This required overcoming local mistrust and inspiring people, both by their teaching and witness, to conviction⁶, acceptance of the inward Light. Conviction brought about transformation and relationship, with God and with each-other as communities. The earliest Quakers emphasised the call to ministry over ethics, seeking to convert as many as possible⁷. They saw virtuous behaviour as inspired and guided by the Light, Christ. This required worshipping ‘in spirit and truth’, in open-minded stillness, to receive the Light. Since Friends, virtually alone, worshipped in this way, becoming a Quaker was essential to receive the Light and to embrace the idea of a priesthood of all believers. Initially not content to be a sect, Friends sought to transform the world⁸. Early Quaker leaders expected growing spiritual conquest, convinced that they had found the basis for a universal religion⁹. Service was following God’s leadings to ‘spread the Truth, awaken the witness, confound deceit, gather out of transgression into the life, the covenant of peace with God’¹⁰; no small task¹¹. Fox encouraged all Friends:¹² ‘Be patterns... examples in, all...places.....that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people.....then you will...walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone’. Ministry was as much about how the ministers behaved as the lessons they taught. ‘Walk cheerfully...’ meant rising willingly above worldly temptations, showing that living simply, being open to all they met and showing compassion in their actions was both possible and rewarding. ‘Answering that of God...’ was responding to and encouraging the potential for virtue in all they met.

Brinton¹³ illustrated how early Friends viewed their service, using words of Paul¹⁴: Christians were no longer servants obeying a master’s rules, but free sons and heirs of God. Jesus¹⁵

¹ Mostly going naked, semi-naked, or in sackcloth and ashes.

² Rosemary Moore *The Light in Their Consciences*: 124 – 6

³ Douglas Gwyn, *Apocalypse of the Word*: 137

⁴ George Fox, *Journal* (1891) Vol. 1 316

⁵ Carole Dale Spencer, *Holiness: The Soul of Quakerism*:

⁶ A classic example is found in Fox’s own conviction of Margaret Fell, who wrote of how his words ‘opened me so that it cut me to the heart and then I saw clearly we were all wrong...I cried in my Spirit to the Lord’ in, Bonnelyn Young Kunze, *Margaret Fell and the Rise of Quakerism* 15

⁷ N.C. Tousley, ‘The Experience of Regeneration...’ 20

⁸ Elton D. Trueblood, *The People Called Quakers* (Richmond IN: Friends United Press, 1971) [1966] 8, 9

⁹ Rufus M. Jones, *The Later Periods of Quakerism*

¹⁰ John L. Nickalls, Ed., *The Journal of George Fox* 263

¹¹ Hilary Hinds, *George Fox and Early Quaker Culture* 2

¹² John L. Nickalls, Ed., *The Journal of George Fox* 263 and in *Quaker Faith and Practice* 1.02 42

¹³ Howard Brinton, *The Religious Philosophy of Quakerism*: 33

¹⁴ In *Galatians*

¹⁵ In *John* 15: 15

called his disciples not servants, knowing not what their master was doing, but friends, with whom he shared all he had received from God, his Father. Fox¹ described Quakers as ‘friends of God and .. truth....children of the new covenant’, the new relationship with God instituted by Jesus. These are the origins of Quaker ‘Friendship’. They help explain the self-confidence and courage of the earliest Friends.

3.4 Righteousness/ Virtue. (2.20%)

‘Righteousness’ is a term rarely used today, suggesting ‘self-righteousness’ to many. Anselm² claimed that God had created humanity righteous, to bring them to a state of eternal blessedness. This required obedience to God; prevented by sin, ‘the Fall’. Christ was incarnated with the ability, being divine, and the obligation, being human, to pay the penalty for human sin, redeeming humankind, making it righteous, through his obedience to God in both his life and death. Such doctrines were retained in Calvinist theology³. The Quakers did not repudiate any of them, but modified them, shifting their emphases. Fox⁴ encouraged, ‘a righteous, godly life and conversation’. Setting out what this entailed, he conflated ethical principles, virtue, justice, fair dealing and humility, with religious ones, holiness, godliness, love and righteousness⁵. God and the divine will were, for early Quakers, the total basis for moral and ethical behaviour and such behaviour would be divinely rewarded. Penn⁶ claimed the righteous ‘have more enjoyment’ in this world, because ‘they use the world without rebuke, because they do not abuse it’. They ‘dishonour the wicked’, ‘honour God by helping his poor’ and so ‘adorn [their] soul[s] with enduring beauty’. He quoted Paul⁷, urging not to be covetous, but to be content with what they had, trusting that God would not forsake anyone. The best recreation was ‘to do good..... choose temperance, wisdom, gravity and holiness, and so inherit peace and plenty on earth and eternal happiness hereafter’. Only when the poor, starving, naked, widows, orphans and all fellow creatures were provided for; ‘then...plead for [the] harmlessness of your pleasure’⁸. His promise of eternal happiness suggests that rewards in an after-life still figured highly in Friends’ thoughts, but their ideas on how this was achieved were radically different, emphasising relationship with God, bringing transformation.

¹ George Fox *A Collection of.....Epistles* Vol. 2 399

² Anselm of Canterbury (1033 – 1109) , *Cur Deus homo* See Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction* 338

³ See Rosemary Moore, *The Light in their Consciences* 99 – 100

⁴ George Fox, *A Collection ofEpistles* Vol. 2 CCCCXIII 306

⁵ George Fox, *A Collection ofEpistles* Vol. 2 CCCLXIV 307

⁶ William Penn, *No Cross, No Crown* 36, 71, 73, 86, 97, 108, 126 – 7

⁷ *Heb.* 13: 5

⁸ References to temperance were scattered through many of the texts analysed (and conflated with others, all signifying ‘Righteousness’); those to wisdom were significant in number, as were the slightly smaller, and equal, numbers of references to selflessness and resulting joy. Total feature references: Wisdom 0.60%, Selflessness 0.46%, Joy/ Happiness 0.46%

Just as Friends rejected inherited sin, they also rejected inherited righteousness; they must actively seek it. Bathurst¹ wrote that only by 'submitting to the righteousness of Jesus Christ', by following the example taught by the Light within, did they attain righteousness. Christ did impute his own righteousness, but by an 'applicatory Act and Gift of Grace'. By showing them the example of his sacrifice, 'the cross', and by his gift of the Seed he enabled them to be righteous. Friends must obey 'that principle of Light and Grace'. This illustrates the fine theological line they followed. They asserted the need for obedience to the Light, not to expect salvation simply by faith in Christ's atoning death. They also sought to avoid the claim to righteousness in their own right, like Christ, which was seen as blasphemous. Coal² described the need to 'know the Righteous Law of God in you', which would 'take hold' on the 'unrighteous Nature' of humans, which led them to rebel against God. Whilst sin and disobedience were human, the Seed, the potential for righteousness, whilst within, was from God, not human.

Quaker understandings of righteousness were linked to those of the Kingdom³. Guiton⁴ describes that, for Friends, wherever God's righteousness was found, in individuals or in society, there was the Kingdom. Being in the Kingdom required the right relationships, between all people, before God. They rejected the Calvinist view of the rule of the Elect, alone having access to the Kingdom, and that only in another life. Righteousness concerned action, not beliefs. By one's actions one was 'brought to the touchstone'⁵. They refused to pay tithes, interrupted church services, challenged paid ministers and refused to remove their hats before 'authority'. They were not seeking salvation by works⁶, but regarded action more in the Weberian⁷ sense of right action being a mark of divine favour. Good works flowed from Grace⁸. Such ideas arose from the Calvinist search for evidence of election in virtuous actions⁹. Smith¹⁰ described how 'simple people' saw the prosperity of many Friends¹¹ as indicating election. Friends, when considering the needs of the poor, only helped those deemed to be blameless¹². Moore¹³ describes that many, seeking authentic religion, flocked to join the Quakers, finding no formal membership requirement, but an

¹ Elizabeth Bathurst, *Truth Vindicated* 371, 383, 426

² Josiah Coale, *An Invitation of Love to the Hungry and Thirsty* 4

³ As in *Matt.* 6: 33

⁴ Gerald Guiton, *The Early Quakers and the Kingdom of God*: 129 – 130

⁵ William Tomlinson, *Word of Reproof to the Priests or Ministers* (York: Wayt, 1653: T1855) 6

⁶ A Roman Catholic doctrine.

⁷ M. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*

⁸ Barry Reay, *The Quakers and the English Revolution* 43, 117

⁹ See A. Giddens *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978) Chapter. 9 and Hugh Barbour, *The Quakers in Puritan England* 103

¹⁰ Nathaniel Smith, *The Quakers' Spiritual Court Proclaimed.....* (Ann Arbor MI. Michigan University Library, 2012)[1668] 35 – 8 He was a former Quaker.

¹¹ Often this was the result of their honest dealings in trade leading to their becoming trusted and successful. See Rosemary Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences*: 119, 121 – 2, 138, 214

¹² E.g. Minute Book of Men's Meeting of the Society of Friends in Bristol, 1667 – 1686 (Bristol Record Society xxvi 1971) 4, 108 and ditto 1686 – 1704 (Bristol Record Society xxx 1977) 109, 110 – 2, 115, 152

¹³ Rosemary Moore *The Light in Their Consciences*: 115 – 6

informal one for strict moral righteousness. Whilst she found no disagreement among Quaker leaders as to what constituted righteous, moral behaviour, there were disputes in individual meetings. Fox¹ urged Friends to admonish and reprove others where they saw wrong-doing, avoiding 'foolish pity' and to be diligent against profaneness and sin, or it would overcome the community. He² did, however, condemn judging behind each-others' backs. All should look to their own obedience to the Light, only criticising others openly and when the facts were clear. All should act in a spirit of love and meekness³. Nonetheless, life as a Quaker was very austere⁴.

Bauman⁵ described a Quaker rhetoric of symbolic actions, with significance beyond their immediate frames of reference. Insistent use of 'thee' and 'thou', not the, more formal, 'you' was a declaration of the equality of all before God and a conscious effort to humble the proud. Quaker righteous action included seeking social justice, sometimes by political action, but always rooted in reference to a powerful, ruling, God. Pride was an affront to God. At a time when religious values were so much more significant this was a powerful argument for change.

The early Quaker sense of righteousness was not, however, always what one would expect today. Hinds⁶ describes that in Barbados⁷, whilst some, non-Quaker, commentators⁸ were criticising the poor treatment of slaves, Quaker slave owners were principally concerned for slave attendance at Meetings for Worship. Vokins⁹ drew a clear distinction between 'Friends' and 'negroes' or 'blacks'. They were not Friends, walking in the Light, but not non-Quakers, in darkness. Her priesthood of all believers did not extend to black slaves. Fox¹⁰ 'wrestled' with the problem of slavery. His concern for their salvation was ahead of that of

¹ George Fox, *The Works of George Fox* Vol. 7 328f

² George Fox, Letter in, Swarthmore MSS., 8 Vols. MS Vols. 351 – 60 Vol.2. 79 (1654)

³ George Fox, *Journal* (1891) Vol. 2 152

⁴ Thomas Ellwood, recounted a story of a visit, by his father, to the Penington household soon after their convincement to Quakerism. Their previously 'free, debonair and courtly' behaviour had changed to one of extreme gravity and severity. Thomas Ellwood, *The History of the Life of Thomas Ellwood, Written by Himself* (London: T. Sowle, 1714: ECMC 7266 and London: Routledge and Sons, 1885) 11 – 2

⁵ Richard Bauman, 'Aspects of Seventeenth Century Quaker Rhetoric' in, *The Quarterly Journal of Speech* Vol. lvi (1970) 74

⁶ Hilary Hinds, *George Fox and Early Quaker Culture* 131 – 3

⁷ In the late seventeenth century. There were wealthy Quaker slave owners present at that time.

⁸ E.g. Fr. Antoine Biet – see Jerome S. Handler, 'Father Anthony Biet's Visit to Barbados in 1654' in *The Journal of the Barbados Museum and Historical Society* Vol. 32 (1967) 56 – 76

⁹ Joan Vokins, *God's Mighty Power Magnified: As manifest and revealed in his faithful handmaid, Joan Vokins* (London: Thomas Northcott, 1691) 43 She was part of a slave owning family.

¹⁰ See George Fox, 'To the Ministers, Teachers and Priests (so called and so stiling yourselves) in Barbados' (London: s.n., 1672) Here he refuted criticisms that Quakers encouraged slaves to unrest, insisting that they exhorted them 'To be sober...fear God....love their masters and mistresses....be faithful and diligent in their masters' service and business.....and to avoid polygamy, fornication, cursing, swearing and lying'. He did continue, urging masters and overseers to love the slaves and deal kindly and gently with them.

many Christians, but his focus on saving their souls from sin, ignoring saving their bodies from mistreatment, allowed him to reconcile his view of Quakerism with slave owning¹.

Second generation Friends often expressed doubts concerning their discernment of inner leadings and anxiety over how to remain righteous, avoiding sin and damnation². Benson³ contrasted two possible ethics: of idealism or of obligation. An idealist ethic sees God's perfect righteousness as setting ultimate moral goals, unattainable by definition, since only God is perfect. Hopeless pursuit of such goals can lead to despair or to hedonistic rejection of the project. An ethic of obligation is a requirement to respond to God's commands. This was the basis of Fox's approach⁴; obedience to the Light brought empowerment to follow its leadings. Later generation Quakers, lacking the very first Friends' confidence in their discernment of what the Light demanded, turned to an ethic of idealism, looking more to Scripture, read increasingly without insights from a recognised Light within, to portray those ideals.

Righteousness has often been regarded as meaning maintaining personal integrity; being open, clear as the Light⁵. It led to happiness, inner peace, a sense of justice and right relationships between 'all people'⁶. In the Wisdom tradition⁷ virtue is akin to justice and righteousness, conveying a sense of wholeness through perfect accord within the mind⁸. Docwra⁹ saw divine virtue as within, beyond human power to acquire it. It was a gift from God into the heart, requiring faith and patience, waiting to receive it. Penington¹⁰ agreed; God begat Life in the heart, where 'a secret living warmth and virtue' was felt. He urged 'lie low in the fear' of God and this 'leaven' of the Kingdom would grow¹¹. Virtue was the Seed. A gift from God, it grew within if one had patience and acted on its bidding. This was a form of virtue ethic. Guided by the principle of virtue, embodied in Friends' understanding of the Kingdom, inspired by the Light, they could discern how to act 'righteously'. Fox affirmed that, 'in Christ', the Seed, he knew the virtues in creation, through the openings of 'that divine Word of wisdom and power by which they were made'¹². He experienced virtue growing in him and wisdom. These were gifts from God, the Word and Creator of all¹³.

¹ Hilary Hinds, *George Fox and Early Quaker Culture* 131 – 3

² Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 56 – 7; he draws on the work of N.C. Tousley, 'The Experience of Regeneration.....' 78

³ Lewis Benson, *A Universal Christian Faith* 20 – 2

⁴ See, for example, George Fox, *The Works of George Fox* Vol. 3 553

⁵ *Psalm* 4: 5

⁶ *Psalm* 112

⁷ Familiar to early Friends, for example, J. Parnel, *Goliath's Head Cut Off* (London: Calvert, 1655: P531) 63, quotes *Wisdom* 4: 8 – 9

⁸ Gerald Guiton *The Early Quakers and the Kingdom of God*: 186

⁹ Ann Docwra, *An Epistle of Love and Good Advice* (London: n.p., 1683: D1778) 3 – 4

¹⁰ Isaac Penington, *Some Directions to the Panting Soul*

¹¹ *Matt.* 13: 33, *Luke* 13: 21

¹² John L. Nickalls, Ed., *The Journal of George Fox* 27

¹³ Douglas Gwyn, *Apocalypse of the Word*: 63

3.5 Faith. (2.05%)

Fox¹ taught that, if the Light, the 'inward' law, was obeyed, the outcomes would inspire faith, in God's support, bringing freedom from the 'outward' law. He was echoing Paul². Jesus' Spirit, within, gave him faith, freeing him from the outward, Jewish, law³. Through the inner Spirit he interpreted and applied the law to his own condition and circumstances. Faith in inward guidance, not in church doctrine or interpretations of Scripture, was the basis of Fox's teaching⁴. 'Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen'⁵. Faith demands an experiential approach to beliefs concerning divinity; such trust can only be felt emotionally, never verified intellectually. Faith sustained Friends as they sought their own, inner, transformation, and a wider, societal, transformation to a just world, no longer alienated from God⁶. For Bathurst⁷, emulating Jesus' faith in the power of God enabled resistance to temptation.

Ashworth⁸ describes how Paul evoked 'Faith's heard thing'⁹. He asked whether Christ's followers received the Spirit by 'the works of the law' or by 'hearing of (or with) faith' in the prophetic word of the Spirit. This was heard within, but was objective, 'other' than the one who hears. For Paul, virtue was bestowed through the Spirit and not innate. This was the position of Friends, although through their belief in the 'Seed', uniquely able to receive the Spirit, they add a new dimension, but one still divinely bestowed, not a 'natural' part of humankind. The divinity of what was bestowed enabled faith in it. Faith to heed the 'inner voice', fearless of the consequences, was what Friends sought. Paul's faith was 'complete trust in God' and total reliance on God's enabling; the 'law of faith'. Only such faith evoked the virtuous living that the, outward, law was intended, but failed, to promote¹⁰. Friends sought such faith; James¹¹ certainly felt they had found it, describing Quaker faith as 'of veracity, rooted in spiritual inwardness'.

For Fox¹², faith was 'out of words'. They all had the Seed, Christ, so they were all in relationship, in unity, with Christ and each other, with no need to describe what they felt. The judgement of the Inward Light transformed them and enabled the birth of faith. Fox¹³

¹ John L. Nickalls, Ed., *The Journal of George Fox* 16 – 7

² Rosemary Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences*: 53 notes the Epistles of Paul, along with the Johannean corpus, as influential on early Friends' thought.

³ E.g. *Gal.* 2: 16, 20

⁴ Timothy Ashworth, in Timothy Ashworth and Alex Wildwood, *Rooted in Christianity, Open to New Light* 55

⁵ *Heb.* 11.1

⁶ Douglas Gwyn, in B. P. Dandelion, D. Gwyn and T. Peat, *Heaven on Earth*: 145

⁷ Elizabeth Bathurst, *Truth Vindicated* 412

⁸ Timothy Ashworth, *Paul's Necessary Sin: The Experience of Liberation* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006) 23 – 8

⁹ E.g. *Gal.* 3: 2

¹⁰ James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark/ Grand Rapids MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1998) 641f.

¹¹ William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* 7

¹² Douglas Gwyn, *Apocalypse of the Word*: 69 – 70

¹³ Rex Ambler, Ed., *Truth of the Heart*: 198

encouraged a social order based upon trust in God, which eliminated fear of others and violent retaliation when provoked. Friends should answer the good in others, thus gaining their trust and respect¹.

Gwyn² claimed that Fox saw the light in the conscience as 'a spiritualisation of faith, requiring a material practice'. Actions were the 'touchstone' of truth. He rejected 'creedalists',³ who recited doctrinal beliefs, but made no attempt to live the life they suggested. All who did not accept the ethical rigor the Light required he accused of 'profession without possession'. Religion was about behaviour, not doctrinal beliefs. Penington⁴ saw faith as a pure mystery held only in a pure conscience. The freer from sin and desire one was the closer the relationship with, and trust in, a mysterious divinity. It purified and brought knowledge of 'Christ.... the Father and ...the Spirit', which led, empowered and inspired. Religious faith was trust in the divine Life streaming through the believer. He⁵ contrasted this with 'natural faith', which led to doing what was required by convention, 'right' beliefs, prayer, meditation, self-denial. These could not 'enter into the inward Life and Power'. He rejected unquestioning profession of doctrinal beliefs, formal prayers, 'token' fasting and penances, even meditation if it was constrained, not true 'openness' to the Spirit. These actions were all prompted by a sense of duty, not by love, as Jesus taught. None of them warranted God's support, so did not warrant faith in such support. He described 'two births', the first natural, contending for its knowledge in the letter and the other, feeling 'the stroke of God', a gift from God, a Seed of Life given. This was transformation. Discerning this Seed required, not the application of known principles or reason, but 'sink[ing] down into the principle of one's own life'⁶, to the Light within, which fulfils and unites with the whole of being⁷. Putting self-interest aside and becoming part of universal 'being', acting out of love and concern for all. This evokes nature mysticism⁸, encompassing all of being, rather than the more traditional anthropocentric focus. It is not widely in evidence in the writing of early Friends, but its focus upon action out of love is.

Guiton⁹ describes early Friends' Christ/ Logos mysticism, experiencing Christ as the Word or Logos, the very ground of existence. He then attributes their faith to their confidence in God as love. This is understandable and probably true, but is an anthropocentric view of the role of God as grounding all existence. That they had faith in God as the basis of their sense of 'meaning' or 'wholeness' is a justifiable and more sustainable hypothesis. Barbour¹⁰

¹ See George Fox, *The Works of George Fox* Vol. 8 249 c.f. 1 Peter 5: 7

² Douglas Gwyn, *The Covenant Crucified*: 113

³ Those people emphasising doctrinal beliefs as central to faith.

⁴ Isaac Penington, *The Scattered Sheep Sought After* (London: Lloyd, 1659: P1187)

⁵ Isaac Penington, *The Axe Laid to the Root of the Old Corrupt Tree*

⁶ Isaac Penington, *Some Questions and Answers Showing Man His Duty*

⁷ R. Melvin Keiser and Rosemary Moore *Knowing the Mystery of Life Within*: 149, 184 – 8

⁸ See Rudolph Otto, *Mysticism, East and West* (New York: Macmillan, 1970) [1932] Summarised in Marcus J. Borg, *The God We Never Knew*: 39 – 40

⁹ Gerald Guiton, *The Early Quakers and the 'Kingdom of God'*: 395 – 6

¹⁰ Hugh Barbour, *The Quakers in Puritan England* 95, 104 – 6, 142

maintained that, whilst faith, trust, and spiritual direction were a feature of early Friends, they did not grasp the Puritan message, that complete trust in God freed them to love and that this was the ultimate righteousness. Puritans believed that attempts at self-justification were futile; they must grasp the unconditional Grace of God. This was not a feature of Friends, who devoted many words to justifying their faith and beliefs, frequently showing conspicuous lack of love for their opponents. Penn,¹ reflecting on the persecutions suffered by Friends, wrote that:

‘We are too ready to retaliate rather than forgive or gain by love and information. And yet we could hurt no man that we believe loves us. Let us then try what love will do: for if men did once see we love them, we should soon find they do not harm us. Force may subdue, but love gains: and he that forgives first wins the laurel’.

Bradshaw² accused Quakers of calling men damned, hirelings, carnal, deceivers and proud, often with no supporting evidence. He suggested that the Spirit should give them charity and courtesy. According to Byne³ Friends declined to eat with those not of their company, calling them ‘Devils and Dogs’, whilst Baxter⁴ claimed that he received more railing language in a single letter from Quakers than from all other ‘scolds’ over twenty years⁵. ‘Pure faith’ was an overwhelming preoccupation in seventeenth century England. It often led to saintliness, but sometimes to bitter arguments and persecution over doctrinal distinctions⁶. Quakers frequently allowed their enthusiasms to over-ride their tolerance for those who, whilst deluded in their eyes, were, nonetheless, often sincere in their beliefs.

Campbell⁷ described early Quakerism as a ‘religion of the heart’. It evoked the experiential dimension of faith, promoting awareness of how the separation human-divine could be overcome, through heartfelt conversion experiences. Such experiences gave Friends assurance of their own value, meaning and authority to spread the message, enabling all who were willing to share their experience. Their spiritual peace seemed in marked contrast to the anguish of Puritans, always seeking evidence of their election. Friends had faith in their own intuitions, feeling Spirit led; evidence of a practical relationship with God⁸, giving them meaning and purpose. Symptomatic of that self-assurance was Fox’s use of ‘over’. Rather than look at difficulties, he urged, look at what was over and above them, God

¹ One of the better known came from William Penn, ‘Some Fruits of Solitude’ 1693, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 24.03

² Ellis Bradshaw, *The Quakers Whitest Divell Unvaild* (1654: B4148) 6
(qhp.org/texts/naylor/whitest.html) He was a particular critic of Naylor.

³ Magnus Byne, *The Scornful Quakers Answered* (1656) (N.p.: Eebo Editions, 2010) 1

⁴ Richard Baxter, *One Sheet Against the Quakers* (London: Robert White for Nevil Simmons, 1657) (Ann Arbor MI: University of Michigan Digital Library, 2005) 4 Baxter was a prominent Puritan thinker.

⁵ Rosemary Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences*: 119

⁶ Cecil W. Sharman, *George Fox and the Quakers* 30

⁷ Ted Campbell, *The Religion of the Heart: A Study of European Religious Life in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Columbia SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1991) 11 – 12, 59

⁸ Carole Dale Spencer, *Holiness: The Soul of Quakerism*. 19 – 21, 210

as Spirit¹. With spiritual guidance and support, provided they followed its leadings, they could surmount any difficulties².

Tousley found that such assurance declined in second generation Friends³. The initial leaders of the movement, prophets in their times, inspired others. Later followers, lacking that experience of novelty and excitement, systematised and regularised the beliefs, killing the very spirit of the experience. This replicated what, initially, they had sought to overcome.

Borg⁴ describes how use of the term 'faith' has, over the centuries, become distorted, making it synonymous with 'belief', the acceptance of propositions. The origins of the word 'faith' lie in the Latin *Fiducia*, 'trust'. Early Friends' mostly used 'faith' with this meaning. It can also be derived from the Latin *Fidelitas*, 'fidelity'/'faithfulness'/'commitment'. Fox, certainly, urged⁵ all to be faithful, 'in their measures of his power and life', to God, that they may 'answer' (repay) God's love and mercy to them, as his obedient children, living in love and unity with each other. This was transformation. Friends sought to be faithful to God, seeing that as an imperative, facilitating faithfulness to one another, in relationship with God and building community⁶.

3.6 Suffering/Courage. (1.82%)

Fox⁷ insisted that the cause of all Friends' sufferings was not any evil they had done. It was 'for the worship of our God...in obedience to his requirings of us'. Fell⁸ described Friends' 'joy and rejoicing', not only to believe in [the Inward Christ] but also 'to suffer for his sake'. Moore⁹ describes imprisonments of Friends, blasphemy trials¹⁰, attacks on them¹¹ and government attempts to suppress them¹². The reasons for their persecution were often genuinely religious, concerns that they blasphemed and that their teachings endangered the souls of those who listened to them. They were also political. Friends' testimonies to justice for all and support for the poor and deprived, it was feared, would destabilise the

¹ Howard Brinton, *The Religious Philosophy of Quakerism*: 31

² For example George Fox, *A Collection ofEpistles* Vol. 2 C CXII

³ N.C. Tousley, 'The Experience of Regeneration

⁴ Marcus J. Borg, *'Speaking Christian': Recovering the lost meaning of Christian words* (London: SPCK, 2011) 120 – 3 He was writing for a modern audience.

⁵ John L. Nickalls, Ed., *The Journal of George Fox* 281 – 2

⁶ In the texts analysed explicit references to 'commitment' were very rare, but those to being 'children of God' and to living in 'love and unity' were considerable. Total feature references: Commitment 0.01%, Children/ God's own people 1.22%, Love/ Unity 1.30%

⁷ This was in 1660, the year of the Restoration of the monarchy, when persecution of Friends increased considerably. John L. Nickalls, Ed., *The Journal of George Fox* 401

⁸ Elsa Glines, *Undaunted Zeal*: 104

⁹ Rosemary Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences*: 9 – 10, 23, 29 – 30, 71

¹⁰ Rosemary Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences*: 10, 15, 20, 23, 30, 32, 76 – 9, 89, 157

¹¹ Rosemary Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences*: 25, 125, 126, 156, 162, 170 – 1, 175.

¹² Rosemary Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences*: 26, 28, 40, 69 - 70

established social order. In addition, persecution was sometimes prompted by personal motives as Quaker merchants, respected for their honesty, took trade from others.

Pearson¹, appealing on behalf of imprisoned Friends, described their 'Lamb-like dispositionthey do not resist the evil...knowing that through many tribulations they must enter the Kingdom'. Friends showed their faith in an inward Christ and that, through their suffering for that faith, that they would attain 'the Kingdom', salvation, both in another life and in reconciliation with God in their present one. Baxter² was amazed that Friends 'were so resolute and gloried in their constancy and sufferings..... [they] assembled openly and were dragged away daily to the common Gaol'; this from one of their most vehement critics. He revealed that many died³, but that their courage and dignity attracted many others to join their ranks. Quakers developed a new theology of suffering, rejecting old beliefs that suffering was punishment for past or present sinfulness. They saw suffering as part of God's plan, enabling their union with Christ, through sharing his earthly suffering⁴. There existed still a live tradition of martyrdom, but Quakers did not see themselves as martyrs⁵. They, nonetheless, expected persecution from the outset⁶. Fox⁷ saw suffering as essential to salvation. The Spirit which made the just and the good suffer within, would make them suffer without, when it was cast out from them. Convincement and transformation involved outward suffering, but this removed the inward suffering as they recognised and repudiated their self-centred nature⁸. Fox⁹ did, however, condemn persecution as lacking in wisdom. Those who persecuted did so for their own inventions, not Christ's, 'for Christ's religion doth not admit of any persecution or violence, nor to hate friends or enemies, but self-religion will hate and persecute both'. Friends suffered for their rejection of 'self-religion', notions and doctrines invented for self-interested purposes.

3.7 Conclusions.

3.7.1. Sin and Separation from God.

Early Quakers' focus on avoiding a 'state of sin' emphasises their rejection of beliefs that such a state was unavoidable and of the violent and unjust behaviour they witnessed all

¹ Anthony Pearson, *To the Parliament of the Commonwealth* (N.p.: n.p., 1653, P992) 2

² A prominent Puritan and critic of Quakers; quoted in W. C. Braithwaite, *The Second Period of Quakerism* 41

³ Barry Reay, *The Quakers and the English Revolution* He estimated that 243 Quakers died in prison, in the period 1660 – 1689, that is from the Restoration of the monarchy, to the final end of formal persecution.

⁴ Rosemary Moore *The Light in Their Consciences*: 160 – 1

⁵ Some Friends in New England appeared to accept martyrdom. The authorities banished Quakers, on pain of death. They kept returning, and four were hanged. Edward Burrough, *A Declaration of the Sad and Great Persecution and Martyrdom of the People of God* (London: Wilson, 1660: B5994) 29 quoted Mary Dyer, one of those executed. She came to seek to encourage repealing of the 'unrighteous and unjust' law, in obedience to the will of 'my Father.... even to the death'. See Rosemary Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences*: 161 – 2

⁶ Under the Commonwealth alone, 2 100 people were sent to prison. Barry Reay, *The Quakers and the English Revolution*

⁷ George Fox, *The Journal of George Fox* (1911) Vol. 1 288

⁸ Hugh Barbour, *The Quakers in Puritan England* 207

⁹ George Fox, *Epistle* 249 (1667) in *The Works of George Fox* Vol. 7 297

around them. The established churches, by preaching that justification¹ occurred whilst still 'in sin', effectively permitted such behaviours². Friends' rejection of both beliefs and behaviours around them, condemning them verbally, in print and through symbolic acts³, was a powerful witness, but sometimes showed intolerance and self-righteousness. They were subject to human failings, but, given their insistence that they were led directly by God, were vulnerable to criticism when they fell short of the compassion they affirmed. They rejected beliefs in outward 'law', substituting inner guidance and inspiration from their relationship with Christ, the Light. That and their insistence that all had a choice, to 'obey' or not, emphasises their recognition of human freedom. Friends felt inspired, guided, empowered by an inward Spirit, but free to act and bear the consequences. They had moved along an axis from 'performance' towards feeling transformed, understanding their behaviour as the product of relationship with an inner divinity. Their negative attitudes to what would now be called social and cultural life, along with continuing emphasis upon the hereafter, however, suggest that residual belief/performance elements remained.

Friends' focus upon the relationship⁴ between sin and 'separation from God' emphasised the importance they attached to close relationship with the divine as their source of inspiration. Their espousal of Paul's sense that Christ within freed him from 'laws', enabling his 'growing up' to discern actions for himself, reinforces this. Seeing sin as 'darkening the understanding', they understood that excessive or unreasonable desires distorted decision-taking, further evidence of their embracing inward judgement and discernment. Friends insisted upon the possibility of reconciliation with God, through obedience to the Light. God and humankind shared one Spirit. This was their denial of 'original sin', any inherited effect of 'the Fall'. It was a further rejection of the doctrinal belief culture.

Such ideas made Quakers more free-thinking than most of their contemporaries. This imposed responsibilities. Fox recognised, in his words, 'Be patterns...'⁵ the importance of the witness they showed by their own behaviour. Some early Quaker actions are easy to criticise today, but must be seen in the context of their time. Their condemnation of social injustice and neglect is inspiring and accords with a 'Kingdom' message. However, their focus upon injustice as endangering the souls of the oppressors, not the lives of the oppressed, seems less laudable, again suggesting they still felt the need to 'perform' to avoid eternal punishments, in which they believed. Their apparent rigidity on moral issues seems strange given their recognition, again citing Paul, that 'laws', moral and other rules, both define and provoke 'sin', by encouraging self-assertion. In seeking to encourage temperance, self-restraint and simplicity in their lives their witness was more in keeping

¹ Reconciliation with God

² People would behave badly, trusting that they were 'saved' by their 'faith' in the death of Christ for their sins.

³ Richard Bauman, *Let Your Words be Few* 52 – 3 describes how Quaker use of Thee and Thou, refusal of 'hat honour' etc. was all dismissed as trivial, an affectation, by many. Friends saw it, however, as completely logical; deference should be to God only.

⁴ Often showing different beliefs as to which was cause and which effect.

⁵ See *Quaker Faith and Practice* 19.32 George Fox

with Paul's message. Linking this to 'the cross', seeing denial of desires and restraint as sharing in the sacrifice of Christ, shows how they felt guided within to re-interpret beliefs in a more relational way, as guides to behaviour. The powerful Quaker condemnation of professing Christian beliefs yet behaving less than virtuously, whilst it could be condemned as idealism, was, in fact, advocating obedience to the Light, to inner inspiration, encouraging virtue and growth towards 'wholeness'.

Quaker insistence that both sin and righteousness were potentialities within each person, and their rejection¹ of 'superstitious' views about heaven and hell, insisting that they were states of mind or soul, were all denials of much of the traditional Christian 'belief' model. In condemning excessive guilt and recrimination as self-defeating, and advocating patience, allowing the Light to guide, they, again, emphasised relationship with divinity as transformative.

3.7.2. Truth.

Friends² saw the message of Christ as Truth and as universal, applying to all, Christian and non-Christian alike. By emphasising Truth as inward and personal they rejected church 'Laws' and doctrinal beliefs on irreversible human sinfulness. Through self-examination they sought to follow the guidance of the Light, of Christ, having faith that this led to self-understanding. They re-discovered the importance of the basic religious message, that all were in relationship, all 'in God'. Loss of this had led to 'apostacy' causing fearfulness of personal inadequacy and mistrust of others. Self-awareness and faith in their relationship with a graceful God transformed them, dispelling fear and empowering them to be open and loving. Honest self-understanding was liberating, reducing consciousness of 'self' and selfish needs, allowing consciousness of others³.

Truth, for Friends, was also about eternal values and recognising that some values, some truths, changed with societal understandings⁴. Confident of inner guidance, they discerned their own actions. Friends rejected superstitious beliefs as 'truths', but much of their charismatic behaviour was widely seen as witchcraft⁵. It is not clear how much of the inner leading which they claimed was responsible for their more 'enthusiastic' behaviour was really a product of individual 'willing'. Sometimes their new freedom to discern was abused or misunderstood.

¹ Albeit, only by some writers.

² In the texts analysed.

³ Elizabeth Bathurst, *Truth Vindicated* 421 – 2 described this as a gradual process, by degrees in the soul.

⁴ Isaac Penington, 'The Jew outward: being a glass for the professors of this age' in *The Works...* 100 wrote that God gave a measure of Light, a 'dispensation of truth' in each age, through which one might be saved.

⁵ Elizabeth Bathurst, *Truth Vindicated* 415 – 6

Early Quaker claims that the truths which mattered were personal, potentially obviated conflict over doctrinal beliefs, but they did not have such an effect¹. Claims to religious 'truth', being linked to the sense of the meaning of life and, frequently, to concerns as to what follows death, will always be emotionally charged. Early Quaker 'truths', if accepted, were liberating, but rested upon beliefs in a form of divinity which many did not accept. Their courage in holding to their truths, without violent retaliation to their persecution, affirmed their faith in their relationship with such divinity and the transformation it brought.

3.7.3 Obedience/ Service.

Leadings of the Light, for Friends, represented commands, expressions of the will of God, requiring obedience, hearing and conforming to that will, setting aside personal desires. Obedience, thus required self-examination; what was the virtuous course? It was to live the Life of Christ, showing radical faith in God, which transformed attitudes to those of trust and open-ness to others. This created relationship with others, with God and with the Seed, one's potential for virtue. Obedience, thus, was out of love. It liberated from fear, of others and of a judgemental God, setting aside old beliefs in rigid adherence to outward rules.

Hearing the inner voice of God's will required waiting in stillness, often in collective worship, building relationships and community. Friends reached love and unity as all heard the truth from their own inner voice and from the inspired ministry of others. Doubts over possible divine punishment for neglect of silent worship, in order to avoid persecution, suggest that some retained old beliefs and lacked total faith in inner upholding. Early Friends exhibited a range of beliefs concerning the degree of autonomy surrounding the call to obedience, reflecting a similar range in their faith in their inner relationship with divinity as freeing them.

The idea that Friends could serve, witness for, God showed their faith and confidence in their relationship with the divine. They felt transformed, no longer in the 'Fall'. Service was to convince others, not by teaching doctrines and prescribed, 'righteous', behaviours, but by example. They sought to show the importance of silent waiting on God, to learn the truth, understand their potential for evil and for good. This freed them to discern their own, albeit divinely inspired, behaviour. They witnessed to experience of a close relationship to a living God, actively influencing their daily lives, not one confined to Scripture and tradition.

The terms 'obedience' and 'service' suggest a focus upon 'performance', but how early Friends saw their obedience is best represented by the words of Jesus² to his disciples; 'This my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you'. Jesus described his

¹ Not even among Friends themselves. Rosemary Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences* 224 – 5 describes how the meeting of the Elders at Balby in 1666 led to production of the document *Testimony of the Brethren* which imposed discipline upon travelling ministers and upon publication of tracts. It even allowed overseers to deny individuals and groups access to meetings. There was, plainly, considerable dissent among Friends.

² *John* 15: 12

disciples, not as servants but as friends¹. Friends, certainly those who wrote the texts analysed, sought to serve and obey God, but saw this as liberating, bringing them into close relationship with a God who inspired self-judgement, leading them to be loving of others as they sought the love of God.

3.7.4. Righteousness/ Virtue.

Friends associated righteousness with temperance, moderation and wisdom. It was the result of self-examination, inspired by the Light, not of following rules laid down by the authority of the church. It was being just and compassionate, basing this upon a sense of relationship, with the Light and with others around. It also required moral rigour, which sometimes caused dissent and judgemental words and actions, both within Quaker communities and in their ministry to others, suggesting that old, doctrinal beliefs were still apparent and that personal animosities sometimes overwhelmed the inspirations of the Light. Their faith in their understanding of righteousness, nonetheless, sustained groups who were remarkable in their mutual support². Friends' condemnation of privilege and hubris, challenging social hierarchies and advocating support for the poor and oppressed was righteous, witnessing to their beliefs in the Kingdom.

In their espousal of a 'virtue', not a 'moral rules' approach to ethics Friends did much to avoid the 'deceit' they condemned. They learned, from their understandings of Christ's Gospel, ethical decision-making based upon faith in God and effectively asking 'what would be Jesus' 'kingdom' teaching here?' They exhibited ethical autonomy, guided and empowered by an immanent divinity and reinforced by the sense of wholeness, self-realisation, it brought them, which they called 'perfection'.

3.7.5. Faith.

The strength of early Friends' faith in God's guidance and upholding³ is clear from the courage they often showed in their witness. Seeking to share the faith of Jesus, in God's loving, but watchful, support⁴, they emphasised Jesus' obedience, even in suffering and death, as examples of the freedom derived from such faith; freedom from self-doubt, aiding their growth in virtue. Their faith was in the Light, the 'inward law' giving them freedom from 'outward' laws and restrictions, including those of doctrinal beliefs. Their rejection of faith in formal prayers and liturgies emphasised their conviction that only through close relationship with the divine would they attain salvation. Faith was mysterious, but it required that their conscience be clear. They had no faith in 'salvation' gained through

¹ John 15: 15

² See Gerald Guiton, *The Early Quakers and the 'Kingdom of God'*: 294, 320, 326h

³ Margaret Fell, in Elsa Glines, *Undaunted Zeal* 334 claimed that Friends had free access to God in heaven, who heard them.

⁴ John L. Nickalls, Ed. *The Journal of George Fox* 477 On trial in 1664, Fox described how he had prayed to God before appearing in court, that God would confound the wickedness and envy he felt towards him. He felt that God responded, saying that he had glorified Fox before and would do so again.

simple assent to belief in Christ's atoning death. They must share in Christ's sacrifice for others. They had faith that such concerns would build their relationships with others and with God, creating a fairer, more just society. Experiencing a sense of relationship with divinity, they remained clear that this was dependent upon their obedience and humility before a God they never doubted to be a powerful ruler. They were disciples of Christ, faithful to their communities and to their mission, initially at least, to bring all to faith in the Light.

3.7.6. Suffering/ Courage.

Friends' faith empowered them to endure suffering, believing that they were sharing Christ's sufferings and would be saved, made righteous, by them. They were suffering for their obedience to their leadings and their mutual support and steadfastness showed compassion and courage. This witness inspired others, helping them to gain faith in the Light. Whilst their fortitude was based upon beliefs, these were beliefs in their relationship with a divinity which transformed and empowered them.

3.8. Chapter Conclusions.

Overall, early Friends' relationship with God was experiential but their understandings of it were rooted in doctrine. They applied doctrinal beliefs about the nature of God, Christ and Christ's sacrifice to their own conditions. Everything was enacted within them and in their resulting behaviours. In that sense their understandings were transformative and resulted in a close sense of personal relationship, albeit with a God who was awesome, powerful and judging, but also loving and upholding. Thus, they lay mid-way along the single axis, rooting their sense of transformation in the need to 'obey' a God who, whilst in close relationship with them, still had objective power over them.

Early Quakers disagreed over some beliefs. For example how they visualised transformation and relationship varied. For Fox it was due to actual union with God, through the Light and Seed, whilst others, like Farnworth¹, saw it in spiritual terms only. God acted within through the mysterious action of 'Spirit'. Mostly they disagreed over what constituted right attitude to belief and right action. In seeking to convince others they sometimes forgot their commitment to compassion, and disputes, doctrinal and over conduct, were sometimes bitter. This suggests that neither had they abandoned doctrinal concerns nor learned consistently from their relationship with a compassionate divinity. Neither Friends' rejection of a faith rooted in doctrinal belief nor their transformation was complete, so they fell somewhat short of the transformation/relationship pole of the single axis.

¹ Richard Farnworth, *England's Warring Peace* (York: Wayte, 1653) 15 See Glen D. Reynolds, 'George Fox and Christian Gnosis' in, Pink Dandelion, Ed., *The Creation of Quaker Theory: Insider perspectives* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004) 104 – 5

Significantly, far more of the feature references identified in this study of early Friends were to perceptions of God, not of relationship¹. Through their experience of a divinity acting within, however, many of those features of God were adopted and made existential, symbols of how they sought to judge themselves, love and uphold others and be just and pure. Thus, doctrinal beliefs concerning the nature of God became features of the transformed life. The greater the sense of autonomy, of obedience through love not fear, and inspired self-examination and discernment, the further along the single axis they had moved from emphasis upon performance for an 'outward' God to one on relationship with an inner divinity. This contrasts with Liberal Friends' almost total freedom from belief in 'objective' divine judgement but frequent struggles to experience a transforming inward relationship with a transcendent divinity. Ironically, this sometimes produces similar lack of compassion for others, as 'testimony' is seen as sticking to principles, divorced from spiritual insights. Both groups, thus, frequently fall short of the transformation/relationship pole, but for different reasons.

What is intriguing and relevant is early Friends' change, from charismatic evangelicals to a quietist 'peculiar people' over a relatively short period. It reflected a loss of confidence in their abilities to bring about change. This was not due to doubts over their inward guidance, the Light, but over their ability to discern it and witness to others. It caused them to turn increasingly to more conventional beliefs derived, some from Scripture others from the growing Quaker tradition. This was not apparent in any uniform changes in the emphases in the texts analysed, suggesting that, largely, those writing for others 'held the line', seeking to encourage and vitalise, but that ordinary Friends failed to respond, or that implicit understandings of inward leadings shifted². The tradition of symbolic action, for instance, so became a need to affirm difference and humility that it provoked, for example, Fell to condemn their 'silly poor gospel'³. Friends moved back along the single axis, towards belief based 'performance' as their motivation⁴. This shift has parallels today. 'Institutional Quakerism' and particularly the book of discipline⁵, presents an experiential Quakerism largely free of doctrinal beliefs and close to the transformation/relationship pole⁶. The non-theist texts and popular Quakerism, however, often revert to a more belief based religion⁷, undermining individuals' sense of relationship. This results in individualism and, in reaction

¹ See the data tables in Appendix 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.2.1 and 2.2.2

² Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 53 describes how George Keith, a 1660s convert to Quakerism was, by the 1690s very critical of focus upon the Light at the expense of Scripture. I analysed two tracts by Keith, from 1670 and 1700. Whilst references to the Light more than halved in frequency from 1670 to 1700 frequency of use in the latter still exceeded the overall average for seventeenth century texts. There was no dramatic increase in direct references to revelation through Scripture.

³ See Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 67 – 8

⁴ This is witnessed in the increase in 'disownments', effectively expulsions from the Quaker community, reported by Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 72 – 3

⁵ *Quaker Faith and Practice*

⁶ See both Chapters 4 and 5, particularly the chapter conclusions, Sections 4.8 and 5.8

⁷ See Chapter 1 Section 1.1.1

to this, a greater measure of authoritarianism over testimonies, pushing some Liberal Friends back towards the belief/performance axis.

CHAPTER 4 MODERN, LIBERAL QUAKER PERCEPTIONS OF GOD.

In this chapter I examine the ways in which modern Liberal Quakers perceive God. To facilitate this I discuss their expressed beliefs about the six features of God which I found most frequently referred to and set out in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 The six features of God most frequently referred to by modern Liberal Quakers.

Feature	% Frequency of Occurrence
Spirit	10.00
Inward/ Inward Christ/Light/ Seed/ Soul	6.90
Questioning the Meaning/ Reality of 'God'	5.18
Creator/ Word/ Wisdom	2.63
Leader/ Guide/ Teacher	2.63
Father/ has His own People/ Children	1.96

The % figures presented for each Feature represent their frequency of occurrence among all the features, both of God and relationship to God, scored in the study.¹ The features are examined in turn. The chapter argues that 'institutional' Liberal Quakers have retained a sense of a divinity which acts as Spirit within them, but question the nature of that divinity, risking losing the experience of, transforming, intimate relationship with it. They have largely abandoned fixed beliefs as to the nature of God, but still value a sense of personal relationship, albeit with a God seen as grounding their very being. Whilst still affirming leadings as from God, they interpret these more loosely, feeling a greater degree of autonomy in discernment. This all places such Liberal Quakerism at the transformation/relationship pole of the single axis. Some 'popular' Liberal Quakerism is, however, far more belief-centred, seeking firm, intellectual, understanding of divinity; closer to the belief-performance pole.

4.1 Spirit. (10.00%)

The considerable emphasis upon 'Spirit' reflects wide modern interest in 'spirituality', clearly revealed in the number of books devoted to this topic in a typical bookshop today. Arguably, among Friends and the wider community, it reflects a lack of fulfilment from materialist values. From the outset Quakers have seen Spirit as the mystical presence of God within²; what is learned from Spirit is immediate and direct³. Soul, or that of God, for Gillman⁴, reflects Spirit, the animating principle of the universe; a broader, less personal, view of God and Spirit.

¹ See Chapter 1 Section 1.

² Wilmer Cooper, *A Living Faith* 25 – 6

³ He saw Fox's 'What canst thou say?' as affirming the authority of the Spirit speaking within.

⁴ Harvey Gillman, *Consider the Blackbird* 27 – 8

Modern Christian definitions¹ of 'spirit' describe 'the intelligent and immaterial part of a person, or the human soul.....that aspect....concerned with religious truth and action..... susceptible to Divine influence', or, 'an order of being...superhuman..... not subject to limits of time, space or bodily frame'. Jones² encouraged Quakers to use Spirit as the best representation of the nature of God. It recalled the 'highest, purest inner nature in ourselves'.

'Spirituality' refers to inner experiences of divinity or transcendence, also called 'mystical'. It is distinct from academic aspects of theology³. Difficult to define precisely, spirituality is often said to concern 'felt' experiences of God or the divine and the transformation of lives seen as resulting from them⁴. Cupitt⁵ disagreed; spirituality was 'the highest degree of autonomous self-knowledge and self-transcendence, escaping from the ego into... pure, disinterested awareness'. 'God' was a unifying symbol, personifying all that spirituality requires. Ideas of union with God as Spirit reflected the extra-ordinary capacity required to achieve such a state.

The debate over spirituality concerns whether it is explicable in non-theistic terms. Uniquely, humans, being capable of reflection, can transcend their own nature and this, 'human spirituality', unaided, can be regarded as responsible for ethics. Boulton⁶ asserts that he and 'religious humanists' in general⁷ regard spirituality as a human quality, a predicate of the 'wholly human spirit', seeking the self-same goals as 'religious' spirituality⁸. Some forms of 'spirituality', however, emphasise just the self and self-improvement.⁹ If a theistic approach is adopted it may concern perceptions of inward supernatural influences or be anchored in religious naturalism¹⁰, focussing upon the religious attributes of the

¹ In E. A. Livingstone, Ed. *Oxford Concise Dictionary of the Christian Church* 555

² Rufus Jones, (1928) in, *Christian Faith and Practice in the Experience of the Society of Friends*, (London: London Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends, 1960) 128.

³ McGrath traces the origins of spirituality and mysticism to Dionysius the Areopagite (a pseudonym for an unknown writer in the early 6th Century) *On Mystical Theology* See, Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Complete Works* Transl. Colm Luibheid (New York: Paulist Press, 1987)

⁴ Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction* 109 – 111

⁵ Don Cupitt, *Taking Leave of God* 9, 88

⁶ David Boulton, *The Trouble with God: Religious humanism and the Republic of Heaven* (Aldersford UK: John Hunt Publishing Ltd., 2002) 198 – 9

⁷ It is arguably the case that such views are shared by Quaker non-theists but it is difficult to gain any overall view.

⁸ Boulton (above) quotes from the British Humanist Association: 'all can agree that the 'spiritual' dimension comes from our deepest humanity. It finds expression in aspirations, moral sensibility, creativity, love and friendship, response to natural and human beauty, scientific and artistic endeavour, appreciation and wonder at the natural world, intellectual achievement and physical activity, surmounting suffering and persecution, selfless love, the quest for meaning and for values by which we live'.

⁹ Marcus J. Borg, *The God We Never Knew* 132

¹⁰ See 'Religious Naturalism and Ecomorality' 2009 – 10 Witherspoon Memorial Lecture in Religion and Science artsci.wustl.edu

universe or nature, emphasising the interconnections between all components.¹ Theistic approaches to naturalism see God as the creative process within the universe,² or as its totality, considered religiously. The universe is thus given meaning and purpose³.

Wood⁴ described scientific enquiry as spiritual, requiring rationality, transcending 'self', which was unique to humankind⁵. Gardner⁶ claims a consensus view that spirituality is a quality, arising from life experiences, which motivates feelings, attitudes, actions and perceptions. How inner experiences are perceived depends upon both innate characteristics and previous experiential influences. Ward⁷ describes that everyone has a world-view, often a purely common-sense, naïve, one that the world is as perceived through the senses. A materialist world-view is more sophisticated, accepting reality as being as science describes it. Only through deeper thought⁸ does it emerge that materialist views do not explain consciousness, feelings, intentions, goals and evaluations, all of which are fundamental to human life. In seeking a spiritual reality, a world-view that truth, beauty and goodness are the ultimate realities, one adopts a religious approach to experience.

Quaker perceptions of inner experience are often associated with Christ and the Christian God,⁹ but usually universalising the Christian message.¹⁰ A Hindu Friend¹¹ affirmed Jesus' words that God is Spirit and must be worshipped 'in Spirit and in Truth', but held that the gathered meeting¹² transcended distinctions of Christian or Hindu, 'when we merge our minds in Spirit'. A universal reality¹³, transcending different, culturally determined, ways of perceiving the divine is seen as reflecting ultimate values of self-transcendence and

¹ According to Keith Ward, *The Case for Religion* (Oxford: One World, 2004) 20 belief that the universe shows a moral order, an interplay of creative and destructive spiritual powers, able to do moral good or harm to humans but fundamentally orientated towards the good, is more or less universal amongst all faith groups.

² See H. N. Wieman, *Seeking a faith for a New Age: Essays on the inter-dependence of religion, science and philosophy* (Scarecrow Press, 1975)

³ B. M. Loomer, cited in Jerome A. Stone, *Religious Naturalism Today: The rebirth of a forgotten alternative*. (New York: State University of New York Press, 2008) 44 – 52

⁴ H.G. Wood (1955) in, *Christian Faith and Practice in the Experience of the Society of Friends* 138

⁵ This offers an interesting contrast with early Friends' initial rejection of rationality as applicable to spiritual inspirations. It shows how understandings of rationality have widened.

⁶ Curt Gardner, *God Just Is: Approaches to Silent Worship* 11

⁷ Keith Ward, *Is Religion Dangerous?* 87 – 9

⁸ For many at times of joy or sadness, experiences of birth or death, but also in a gathered meeting for worship.

⁹ For example, in *Quaker Faith and Practice* 1.02. 2 'Bring the whole of your life under the ordering of the spirit of Christ.....'

¹⁰ For example, Roswitha Jarman, *Breakthrough to Unity: The Quaker way held within the mystic traditions* (London: The Kindlers, 2010) 4 sees body and spirit as a unity, advocating the reading of the Scriptures, in a non- literal way, to understand the Spirit within, and the links between the temporal and the eternal, plainly seeing Jesus as a model.

¹¹ Swami Tripurananda [Jonathan Carter], 'In spirit and truth' in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 27.10

¹² This term describes a Quaker meeting for worship in which all present feel in relationship with one another, connecting at some deeper level with each-other and with their perceptions of the Divine.

¹³ Feature references to God as Universal, 0.69%, were infrequent, but, often, universality was implicit in meanings.

reciprocity¹. ‘Jung² rejected collective ideology. Each found their own perception of ‘God’ and ‘Spirit’. Accessing the spiritual was bringing to consciousness what had often been defensively repressed in the unconscious. This was a necessary part of transformation. Solutions to social problems required the accumulation of individual transformations. Change at the political level was secondary to this,³ an idea echoed by Macmurray⁴.

Such ideas, whilst empowering, do little to comfort in times of trouble. Eddington⁵ described the unseen spiritual world as conceived using symbols from our own personality, so its significance lay in feelings of personal relationship. This was why ‘God’ was perceived as a consciousness with a personality.

Rejection of corporate unity of belief has its critics. Trevett⁶ felt Quakers had always acknowledged the law of the Spirit as a scriptural concept⁷, operating within the disciplines of a guided community. She⁸ noted ‘Friends’ reluctance to share their deepest encounters’ through fear of criticism, presumably, for the terms in which they expressed such encounters. A Young Friend⁹, however, affirmed that the doctrinal basis of his/her spirituality was irrelevant. What mattered was how to ‘live it out’ and how it was nurtured by the Quaker community. S/he rejected concern as to what the Society’s corporate beliefs were. All individual beliefs should be respected. This echoed Rousseau:¹⁰ ‘true religion’ was spirituality devoid of doctrinal belief, the simplicity and authenticity of a heart seeking to do good. Wildwood¹¹ felt the lack of such spirituality led to dissociation from one another, the rest of life on earth, and ‘the compassionate core of our own being’, causing humankind to degrade both the natural world and human relationships. Overcoming this, regaining ‘true’ spirituality, required new understandings of divinity and spirituality which did not ‘contradict what we know intellectually, emotionally or from personal experience’.

Mainly, Liberal Quakerism asserts the primacy of the Spirit, evoking experience of God, transforming the believer, through imagining an intimate relationship with an inner God with personality¹². Matthews¹ needed to trust God and the leadings of the Spirit in all of life;

¹ ‘The Golden Rule’; do to others as you would be done to, or, do nothing to others you would not wish for yourself.

² See Jolande Jacobi, *Psychological Reflections: an anthology of the writings of C. G. Jung* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, (Ark Paperbacks), 1986) [1945] 49, 124 Jungian psychology is much valued by many Liberal Friends.

³ Jack Wallis, *Jung and the Quaker Way* 4

⁴ John Macmurray, *Search for Reality in Religion* (Swarthmore Lecture, 1965) (London: Quaker Books, 2008) [1965] 78

⁵ Arthur S. Eddington, (1929) in *Christian Faith and Practice in the Experience of the Society of Friends* 140, *Science and the Unseen World* (Swarthmore Lecture, 1929) (London: Allen and Unwin, 1929) 50

⁶ Christine Trevett, *Previous Convictions* 12 – 13, 60

⁷ *Romans* 8: 12, *2 Cor.* 3: 6, *Gal.* 5: 16 – 8

⁸ Christine Trevett, *Previous Convictions* 83, 162

⁹ Young Friends’ General Meeting, *Who Do We Think We Are?* 51

¹⁰ Jean- Jacques Rousseau (1712 – 1778), cited by D. Stephen Long, *Christian Ethics*: 97

¹¹ Alex Wildwood, *A Faith to Call Our Own*: 8, 35

¹² Francis B. Hall, *Practical Spirituality* (Richmond IN: author’s estate, 1984) 78

life; it gave him strength and empowered the taking of difficult decisions. Gorman², however, denied receiving direct guidance from the Spirit. He felt drawn to one course of action, not another, by experiences, influences and attitudes accumulated over time. The presence, for him, of God as Spirit, was real but not unmediated. Friends, for example, often describe greater openness to the Spirit in times of trouble³. The (Holy) Spirit⁴ was, 'at work in ...ordinary activities...daily life', 'prompting' individuals. If followed, it led into 'truth, unity and love'. Achieving such understandings was the role of Quaker worship⁵; being open 'to one another' was being open to the Spirit⁶. For Quakers 'Spirit' evokes love, empathy and compassion. They frequently do not attempt to address its origins, it is what is experienced. They affirm both Jesus' principle of loving God and neighbour⁷ and Macmurray's⁸ insistence that the reality of all religion lies within individuals and their relationships within communities. Macmurray's⁹ spirituality was embodied; 'friendship is a spiritual relationship.' Rejecting intellectual speculation, he¹⁰ insisted that the Quaker church existed, not for the spiritual benefit of its members, but for the salvation of the world. Spiritual activities were not just about retiring into self and a world of ideas; they required action to seek the good. Thus, Quakers seek 'simplicity'¹¹ as 'spiritual detachment'¹², 'letting the imagination in', 'making room for the Spirit'¹³; focussing upon spiritual values to live by in the world, not rejecting the concerns of the world. Allott¹⁴ saw spiritual guidance, sometimes as an overwhelming invading power, but more often as 'a still small voice' within, requiring willingness to be heard. 'Obedience', whilst uncomfortable, was possible if one had faith in the voice¹⁵.

Quaker tradition so emphasises the wisdom of divinity that to visualise anything but obedience, any ethical autonomy, any influence from worldly experience, for some, feels arrogant. Scott¹⁶, however, argued that the Spirit was available to everyone, speaking to what was universal in the heart, placing divinity within, inspiring, and illuminating. Transformation thus becomes an intimate relationship with divinity based upon faith, not belief in commands, so often mediated outwardly.

¹ Gordon Matthews, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 29.01 1987

² George Gorman, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 26.73 1973

³ *Quaker Faith and Practice* 1.02. 21

⁴ The third person of the Trinity; see E. A. Livingstone, ed. *Oxford Concise Dictionary of the Christian Church* 555. A clear Christian association.

⁵ *Quaker Faith and Practice* 1.02. 7, 9, 1.01

⁶ *Quaker Faith and Practice* 22.02

⁷ *Matt.5: 43 – 6*

⁸ John Macmurray, *Search for Reality in Religion* 32

⁹ John Macmurray, *Search for Reality in Religion* 26, 35, 37

¹⁰ John Macmurray, *Search for Reality in Religion* 64, 72

¹¹ See below, Chapter 5, section 5.6

¹² *Quaker Faith and Practice* 20.27, from *Faith and practice* North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative) 1983

¹³ Mary Lou Levitt, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 20.71 1986

¹⁴ Stephen Allott, 'Meanings', in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 26.74 1981

¹⁵ Gordon Matthews, 'With a smile into the dark', in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 29.01 1987

¹⁶ Janet Scott, *What cans't thou say?:* 42, 73, 2

Dale¹ described focus upon ‘spiritual well-being’ as risking exclusive concern for individual relationships with God, when it must also embrace action on guidance received from those relationships. He saw Friends risking re-developing a dualism, valuing the spiritual over outward witness in the world, a ‘privatised spirituality’. In turn, he rejected other Quakers’ criticisms that ‘the spiritual’ was being neglected in favour of political and social activism²; the balance between faith and practice perennially presents problems. Their resolution requires spiritual discernment. Burnell³ adds words of caution to this activist – spiritualist dispute; for some, who are ‘broken’ or burdened with responsibilities, activism is impractical. Each must respond to inspiration as they are able.

Friends still affirm a corporate belief in a divine Spirit⁴, not limiting perceptions of it to the purely human, but interpret this in varied ways. Some, more conservative, ‘Christocentric’, Friends feel they are commanded by the Spirit. They discern clear, inward, imperatives; in the face of alternative desires they need to ‘perform’. Others perceive ‘leadings’ or inspirations, the latter leaving greater freedom for discernment. These are all felt to transform, inspire Friends’ self-transcendence. The more they are felt to arise within, the greater Friends’ sense of relationship, but the greater their vulnerability to criticism for assuming their own divinity.

4.2 Feature group Inward/ Inward Christ/ Seed/ That of God/ Soul. (6.90%)

I divide this Feature group into the following categories, which I consider in turn:

4.2.1. Inward/ Inward Christ.

4.2.2. Light.

4.2.3. Seed/That of God.

4.2.4. Soul.

4.2.1. Inward/Inward Christ. (2.30%)

Quakers value the ‘inward life of the Spirit’⁵, seeing it as the work of God in and for them⁶. God is ‘within each of us’⁷, as the inward Word, available to all who seek the Truth⁸. God, as Spirit within, represents Truth, the ideal of total integrity. Many acknowledge an inner

¹ Jonathan Dale, *Beyond the Spirit of the Age* 20 – 1

² He quotes Neave Brayshaw, *The Things That are Before Us* (Swarthmore Lecture 1926) (London: Allen and Unwin, 1926) 19 – 21 where he describes such criticisms as having arisen 50 years previously.

³ S. Jocelyn Burnell, *Broken for Life* (Swarthmore Lecture, 1989) (London: Quaker Home Service, 1989)

⁴ See, for example, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 1.01.

⁵ John Wilhelm Rowntree, ‘The basis of the Quaker faith’, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice*, 27.37 1902

⁶ Janet Scott, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice*, 27.42 1994

⁷ Pat Saunders, ‘Dare we hope?’, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 29.03 1987

⁸ *Quaker Faith and Practice*, 29.17, Epistle of the World Gathering of Young Friends, Greensboro North Carolina, 1985

‘universal Spirit of Christ’, ‘witnessed in the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth’¹. Thus, Lonsdale described debating, ‘with Jesus’, the nature of God². These are ‘Christocentric’ Quakers, but Liberal in emphasising Christ as role-model or guide, not as atoning sacrifice³. Harvey⁴ found it impossible to separate the Jesus of history ‘from his risen spirit and personality’, guiding, inspiring and healing whoever sought it. He associated ‘Spirit’ or ‘Light’ with Christ, perceived in the person and teachings of Jesus. These perceptions are drawn from Scripture⁵. That Christ revealed God within the heart was, to Macmurray⁶, the meaning of the resurrection. It inspired emulation of Jesus’ life.

Wildwood⁷, however, questioned if all Quakers saw Christ as either guiding or uniting them. For ‘Universalist’ Quakers Jesus is just one revelation of the divine, Christianity just one among many, equally valid, faiths. Rowntree⁸ described the function of the church as to generate, for each successive generation, ‘the ideal of the Christ in the thought-form of the age’. That thought-form today may value other faith-traditions or question the nature of Christ. Many Quakers struggle to separate the values which Jesus represented, compassion, selflessness and courage, from doctrines as to his uniquely divine nature and purposes, which they reject.

The current book of Quaker discipline⁹ emphasises relationship with God, not Christ¹⁰. Many Quakers, however, seeking to relate to a mysterious God, do focus upon Jesus, whose life and teachings are widely felt to be understood¹¹, as a revelation of the nature of God. Whilst modern scholarship¹² questions the validity of scriptural accounts of what Jesus did and said, this need be of no consequence, the ideal represented serving as the revelation of God. The conventional Christian view, that Christ is uniquely divine¹³, one person in the Trinity,¹⁴ besides having implications for how the Jesus’ story is viewed¹, denies the

¹ *Quaker Faith and Practice*, 1.01, written by the Revision Committee

² Kathleen Lonsdale, ‘A scientist tries to answer some of her own questions about religion’ in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 26.23 1962 Kathleen was an eminent scientist and Quaker

³ In none of the texts analysed was there evidence of belief in ‘atonement’ in any doctrinal sense. ‘The cross’ was seen as an example of courage and sacrifice for one’s values.

⁴ T. Edmund Harvey, ‘Workaday saints’, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 27.29. 1949

⁵ Albeit as it is interpreted today.

⁶ John Macmurray, *Search for Reality in Religion* 53

⁷ Alex Wildwood, *A Faith to Call our Own*: 53

⁸ Quoted in David Boulton, *Real like the Daisies, or Real Like ‘I Love You’?*: 26 speaking at the 1895 Manchester Conference; A major step along the way to the dominance of Liberal Quakerism in the UK, see Chapter 1 Section 1.5.2

⁹ Adopted by London Yearly Meeting, acting on behalf of all British Friends, in 1994. The Book of Discipline, *Quaker Faith and Practice* is an anthology of writings, by Friends, which sets out, both the formal requirements for the governance of the Society and guidance and promptings to enable spiritual self - examination

¹⁰ According to Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 203

¹¹ Many do recognise that not all written concerning the life and teachings of Jesus is likely to be literally true.

¹² See, for example, Geza Vermes, *The Authentic Gospel of Jesus* (London: The Folio Society, 2009) [2003]

¹³ See, for example, Diarmaid MacCulloch, *A History of Christianity* 95 – 6

¹⁴ See, for example, Diarmaid MacCulloch, *A History of Christianity* 8

authenticity of other faiths. This is at odds with modern Quaker universalism, seeing all faith traditions as valid approaches to God². Ceresole³ exemplified a common Quaker view: if he could have Christ as a friend, he may come to see him as [a revelation of] God but, if forced to see Christ as God, he could never see him as a friend.

For many modern Friends, 'that of God in everyone' is the universal principle of Quakerism⁴, replacing 'the Light of Christ Within'⁵. Wildwood⁶ quoted Hicks⁷: 'the anointing Spirit of God is within you'. The inward Spirit which guided Jesus was available to all, regardless of faith-tradition. Ignoring it resulted in blindness to virtue. Jesus showed faith, accepting the need to put 'self' aside and consider 'other', trusting that this drew spiritual help⁸. This faith was universally available. Cupitt,⁹ examining perceptions of divinity, contrasted 'God' understood as within, guiding and liberating, with 'God' seen as the all-seeing outward presence, which merely constrained. Such a view, for most Friends, does not exclude a divinity which commands or prohibits. If felt within, divinity inspires self-examination. The 'outward God' represents inflexible formal 'rules'. Allen¹⁰ asks how to live an inner life in integrity with her own nature; to be true both to a God within and to herself. She cites Howgill¹¹ who sought, not his own development, but what God was doing in him. He was grasping the mystery of God immanent in his own nature. If Allen seeks the Ground of her Being¹², then what God requires of her is that she finds the best of that nature and lives by it. This re-interprets 'obedience'¹³ to God in more autonomous, relational, terms. Recognising one's innate potential for virtue and living true to it is to realise one's true nature. Allen's rationale, equating obedience to the divine with self-realisation, provides a model for how such beliefs are reinforced. Ward¹⁴ reports on named, well controlled, surveys comparing the state of mind, health and longevity of spiritually committed and

¹ For example, Marcus J. Borg, *The Heart of Christianity*: 81 – 3 notes how the inspirational nature of Jesus' life and death, his courage and utter selflessness and self-sacrifice for his principles loses its force if Jesus is seen as divine, and, presumably, as such, able to transcend pain and suffering.

² See Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 133 – 4

³ Pierre Ceresole, 'For peace and truth: from the notebooks of Pierre Ceresole' in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 26.47 1920

⁴ Although understandings of 'that of God' themselves vary enormously.

⁵ See Wilmer Cooper, *A Living Faith*: 63 – 6

⁶ Alex Wildwood, *A Faith to Call our Own*: 17, 77

⁷ Elias Hicks (1827) quoted in Margery Post Abbot, *A Certain Kind of Perfection: An anthology of evangelical and liberal Quaker writers* (Wallingford PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 1997) 215 – 6

⁸ William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* 180 – 1

⁹ Don Cupitt, *The Sea of Faith* (London: BBC Books, 1984) 258

¹⁰ Beth Allen, *Ground and Spring*: 65

¹¹ Francis Howgill, *A lamentation for the scattered tribes* (1656) in, *Quaker Faith and Practice*, 26.71, 'Return home to within and here you will see your Teacher....convincing, instructing, leading, correcting, judging and giving peace to all that love and follow Him'

¹² See below, Chapter 4 Section 4.4.1.

¹³ Obedience, characterised in a variety of ways, was a frequent feature associated with relationship to God: 1.97% of all feature references.

¹⁴ Keith Ward, *Is Religion Dangerous?* 156 – 7

other groups. They consistently portray a greater sense of wholeness and well-being in the former groups.

4.2.2. Light. (2.23%)

Liberal Quakers affirm the Light as 'in us all'¹, but perceptions of it vary. For Marsden² the Light was only recognised by encounter with personal darkness. Both were summoned within. She echoed Jung³; there existed a 'dark antagonist' alongside 'God'⁴. God was in the unconscious, which had a 'shadow side': 'Only thus can the One God be granted the wholeness and the synthesis of opposites that should be His'⁵. God represented both dark and light, evil and good. This emphasised individual freedom and discernment⁶, allowing choosing the good. To grow and become whole required that one assented to the 'inner voice', the Light,⁷ sacrificing 'self', but to vocation⁸, not morality. Morality was, frequently, merely conforming to convention. Vocation emancipated the individual from conventional paths⁹. This message, echoing Jesus' embrace of 'the narrow way'¹⁰, reinforced individual responsibility for right action. For Jung, soul, psyche, and spirit were all equivalents¹¹. Spiritual reality was not apprehended through the mind or intellect, but through the 'heart' or 'soul', the emotions¹². He restated early Friends' valuation of the Light over the conscience, of prophetic urges to change over conventional conformity. This required clear discernment. The Light stimulates change, it illuminates wrong. How to respond requires individual judgement, by 'what feels right'. Quakers still value John Woolman's¹³ description of 'a principle...pure... placed in the mind...with different names but proceeding from God, inward and not confined to any form of religion, nor excluded from any, where the heart stands in perfect sincerity'. 'Obedience' to that principle, the Light, required sincerity. This was the 'real test of faithful living'¹⁴. Individuals 'stand in the light', which reveals if they have grasped the truth¹⁵; a process of deep, spiritual, self-examination.

Faced with such experiential approaches to discernment, some seek reassurance in dogma. Dale¹⁶ lamented a tendency to focus on an 'inner Light', individual divinity. This neglected

¹ *Quaker Faith and Practice*, 1.02. 1, 3, 5, written by the Revision Committee

² Lorna M. Marsden, 'The Arrows of the Almighty' in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 21.10 1983

³ See Jack H. Wallis, *Jung and the Quaker Way* 170

⁴ Carl G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (London: Collins and Kegan Paul, 1963) 249

⁵ Carl G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* 249

⁶ These are given significant weighting in the texts analysed: Total feature references: Freedom 1.01%, Discernment 0.98%

⁷ See Jack H. Wallis, *Jung and the Quaker Way* 113 – 4

⁸ Carl G. Jung, *Selected Writings* Selected and Introduced by Anthony Storr, (London: Fontana, 1983) 203

⁹ Carl G. Jung, *Selected Writings* 199

¹⁰ *Matthew* 7: 14

¹¹ Carl G. Jung, *Selected Writings* 262

¹² Thus, he was affirming Isaac Pennington's idea of religion as feeling.

¹³ John Woolman, 'Considerations on keeping negroes, part second' in, *Quaker Faith and Practice*, 26.61 1762

¹⁴ Alastair Heron, Ralph Hetherington and Joseph Pickvance, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 27.04 1994 .

¹⁵ Janet Scott, *What Cans't Thou Say?:* 47

¹⁶ Jonathan Dale, *Beyond the Spirit of the Age* 22

transcendence¹, making Friends 'objects of their own veneration', celebrating 'the... Light in, but not beyond' the self. Similarly, Ullmann² insisted 'That of God' was of God, not of the unconscious³. Religious experience was not 'a soliloquy of man with himself', but of an 'overwhelming other'⁴. He doubted the redemptive power of the Light if it was not so seen. Such writers express a fear that modern seekers neglect a transcendent divinity, risking self-indulgence. They condemn 'relativism'; ultimate values can, for them, be maintained only by other-worldly sanctions and rewards. The question is, how are these discerned if not within, so individually or in relationship with others? Selfishness is the wilful pursuit of desires at others' expense. Possible within any community, such behaviour is independent of perceptions of divinity, whether as within or without. Some Friends today reject a supernatural, 'Inward' Light, seeing the Light as the religious aspect of human consciousness, arising within, as part of the whole self, others do not. All Friends attach greatest significance to the truths the Light reveals, the need for love and compassion, not to understandings of its origins.

Cooper⁵ distinguished the 'Light within', a God-given human capacity, from 'Spirit', mystical divine presence⁶. Both emphasised the relationship between divinity and humanity, the Spirit inspiring action, the Light within discerning 'how'⁷. For Kelly⁸ the Light guided selfless responses to the world, rejecting materialist values in favour of those of the Spirit. This suggests a dualism, world-Spirit, but actually contrasts selfish with self-transcendent behaviour, Spirit embodying values, the Light showing how to enact them. Ambler⁹, however, rejected the 'common interpretation' of the Light as responsible for individual insights, seeing it more broadly, as a God-given ability to put aside the self. The, true, virtuous way would then become clear. He allowed greater autonomy to believers. It is clear from these comments that distinctions between Light and Spirit are not agreed but that divinity is widely associated with inspiration, allowing varying degrees of human autonomy in application of this to each situation.

However the Light is perceived, clear discernment is vital. Quakers take ethical decisions individually, but also use collective discernment, in meetings for worship and for business. Here all are free to minister as inspired. In business meetings a minute of decision is drawn up when all accept that the decision represents the divine will¹⁰. How such a will is perceived, however, varies enormously. It certainly coincides with finding a course of action

¹ Used in the sense of the supernatural.

² Richard Ullmann, *Friends and Truth* (London: Friends Home Service Committee, 1955) 34

³ Directly contradicting Jungian ideas.

⁴ Richard Ullmann, *Friends and Truth* 34

⁵ Wilmer Cooper, *A Living Faith*: 20 – 1, 25

⁶ These would seem to approximate to early Friends' concepts of Seed and Light respectively.

⁷ This reprises early Friends' Spirit or Light orientation, the former more evangelical, the latter rational.

⁸ Thomas Kelly, *A Testament of Devotion*

⁹ Rex Ambler, *Truth of the Heart*: 188

¹⁰ See, for example, Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 217 – 9, 246 Friends, in the texts analysed, emphasised God/divinity as willing actions: Total feature references: Commands/ Wills 1.17%

which can be endorsed by all present, seeking to avoid the will of the majority prevailing over a disempowered minority.

McGrath¹ argues that associating God with light represents a poetic symbol, evoking an emotional response of commitment to divine values. The texts analysed² also emphasise commitment to the Quaker community as it enacts those values³. Many Friends, however, resist reference to 'God', with its supernatural overtones, preferring terms like 'the Light', 'Spirit' or 'Truth'⁴. Durham⁵ attributes Quaker preferences for 'Light'⁶ to Fox's description of an 'infinite ocean of light and love which flowed over the ocean of darkness'⁷. Possibly, a comment on the world, and God's influence upon it, it can equally signify inner conflict, between individuals' light and their dark, 'shadow side'.

Typical of a common Liberal Quaker usage, Allen⁸ describes holding 'in the Light... situations and people...'; a silent upholding of the sick and troubled and wherever support is needed. Not intended as a substitute for practical help, it is a form of spiritual support for others. It can be interpreted as petitionary prayer, seeking intervention from a supernatural God, or as spiritual upholding, leaving the question of how this is achieved as understood individually.

Whilst the Light is frequently seen as a source of inspiration, guidance or support for Liberal Friends, there was no overt reference to its judging⁹ actions in the texts analysed.

4.2.3. The Seed/ That of God. (1.48%)

Penington¹⁰ wrote that he had met with the Seed... his God... [and] with the Seed's Father. In the Seed he felt God to be his Father too, seeing love as the nature of God 'flowing up through his Seed of life into the creature.'¹¹ This statement¹² represented an understanding that God, revealed through the nature of Christ, a revelation within all and perceived as 'Seed', flows into individuals as the capacity to love, saving them from a life of self-absorption. The Quaker tradition is to respect the Seed, that of God, in everyone. Regardless of the nature, even the existence, of their religious beliefs, everyone has the Seed, the

¹ Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction* 196 – 7

² And particularly in the offering from Young Friends.

³ Total feature references to Commitment 0.92%, but from Young Friends 6.51%

⁴ All of which had narrower, specific, meanings for early Friends. See Geoffrey Durham, *The Spirit of the Quakers* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010) 91

⁵ Geoffrey Durham, *The Spirit of the Quakers* 91

⁶ A 'preference' which must be seen as relative, with references to Spirit, 10.00%, significantly exceeding those to Light, 2.23%

⁷ John L. Nickalls, Ed., *The Journal of George Fox* 19

⁸ Beth Allen, *Ground and Spring*: 110

⁹ Although the Feature reference Judges appeared significantly at 0.96%

¹⁰ Isaac Penington, 'An account of his spiritual travail' in, *Quaker Faith and Practice*, 19.14 1667

¹¹ Isaac Penington, *Some of the mysteries of God's kingdom glanced at*, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice*, 26.30 1663

¹² Still valued by Friends, hence its inclusion in *Quaker Faith and Practice*

potential for, but not necessarily actual, love and virtue. How individuals see it as derived is immaterial¹.

'Seed' metaphors suggest growth. Jung² described growth towards wholeness, self-realisation, 'individuation'. This, not striving for perfection, should be everyone's goal. It involved both the emotions and the intellect, requiring constant compensation for perceived failings. This required opposition³ between conscious desires and, in the unconscious, the divine Seed, potential. Wallis⁴ describes feelings of hostility towards an individual, but also of a religious duty to love, leading to feelings of guilt. Balancing such feelings, guided spiritually, one recognised that moral blame did not attach to inner emotions, only to uncharitable actions. This produced growth, towards a balanced personality, capable of the judgement required to live a good life, free of 'conventional' morality, to follow prophetic vocations. Rejection of guilt for negative emotions not enacted appears to contradict Jesus' teachings, that merely lusting after another constituted adultery 'in [the] heart.'⁵ Reconciliation of this apparent contradiction must be personal, but the Jungian view accords with individual experience. Selfish and destructive impulses seem to be common to all minded to report their states of mind.

Conflict occurs within Quaker communities. The pastoral system of Elders and Overseers⁶, along with 'meetings for clearness'⁷, where all are free to speak, as led, often resolve disputes, but only if all involved recognise that of God, potential for virtue, in everyone, and acknowledge the possibility that 'one may be mistaken'⁸. Leavitt⁹ emphasised the need to trust that of God in oneself and in those on all sides of a conflict; a call for integrity and understanding others' points of view, recognising that they may be equally sincere, and right!

On belief in 'that of God' within everyone, Wallis¹⁰ noted Jung's insistence that God also had a dark side, and his implied criticism of reluctance¹¹ to accept the reality of evil and over-emphasis on God as loving Father and Creator¹² of humankind. This produced naïve

¹ John Lampen, *Twenty questions about Jesus* in, *Quaker Faith and Practice*, 27.03 1985 He was addressing Universalist Friends, who embrace all faiths, and none, as having equal merit. Some reject emphasising the Christian roots of Quakerism.

² See Jack H. Wallis, *Jung and the Quaker Way* 87 – 90

³ Carl G. Jung, *Selected Writings* 167

⁴ Jack H. Wallis, *Jung and the Quaker Way* 90 – 1

⁵ See *Matt.* 5: 28

⁶ See *Quaker Faith and Practice*, 2.71 and Chapter 12

⁷ See *Quaker Faith and Practice* 12.05 – 12.12 (Elders) 12.13 – 12.14, 4.23, 10.21, 11.11, 12. 22 – 12.25 (Overseers and meetings for clearness).

⁸ *Quaker faith and practice, Advices and Queries* 1.02. 17 counsels patience and avoidance of hurtful criticism of others, ending with the words 'Think it possible that you may be mistaken'.

⁹ Mary Lou Leavitt, 'Conflict resolution' in, *Quaker Faith and Practice*, 20.71 1988

¹⁰ Jack H. Wallis, *Jung and the Quaker Way* 8 – 9

¹¹ Among those adopting a 'religious' view.

¹² Of 'all things bright and beautiful.' M. Alexander *Hymns Ancient and Modern* No. 573

assumptions of universal 'goodness'. James¹ described such 'Healthy Minded' religion, leading to enthusiastic, often uncritical, optimism. This can be true of Quakers², unwilling to accept the existence of inner darkness as well as light. Whilst all have the potential for good, exclusive focus on that is ethical irresponsibility, failing to acknowledge evil. Friends do seek to separate evil acts, to be condemned, from their actors, to be upheld and helped to change³. Faced with clear wrong-doing, Friends, however, may choose to recall their own transgressions⁴, effectively, taking the words of Jesus, that only the sinless should punish others⁵, to mean that no action can be taken against evil, since no-one is perfect. This avoids confronting evil and accepts a false 'peace', masking underlying injustice. At worst, Quakers value perceptions of personal piety over the greater good. Robson⁶ found Quaker responses to conflict often failed to confront their real causes by accepting individual intolerances and unreasonable behaviours.

Quaker understandings of 'that of God' vary widely: urges to obey inward leadings, as divine⁷, an innate human capacity to respond to God's leadings⁸, an objective ethical standard, normative for decision taking⁹, or an enlightened conscience¹⁰. These examples show the diversity of Quaker perceptions around divinity, some focussing more upon inner processes and less on the transcendent. Cooper¹¹ condemned placing 'a piece of God' in everyone, giving each worth and dignity, as a denigration of God and an exaltation of humanity. Plainly, there is considerable diversity of view, and, given the nature of the subject and its significance for understandings of 'self', this gives rise to conflict at times.

In spite of such disagreements Dandelion¹² claims belief in 'that of God in everyone' is shared by all 'liberal- Liberal'¹³ Quakers, underpinning the form of worship¹⁴, of testimony,

¹ William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* Lectures IV and V

² Jack H. Wallis, *Jung and the Quaker Way* 9 – 10

³ See, for example Jennifer Kavanagh, Ed. *New Light: Twelve Quaker voices*. (Ropley, Hants.: O Books, 2008) 141 – 150, esp. 149 - 150

⁴ Rachel Muers, in J.L. Scully and Pink Dandelion, eds. *Good and Evil: Quaker Perspectives* 174 – 6

⁵ *John* 8: 7 Jesus is questioned as to whether the Law, that an adulterous woman be stoned, should be applied. He responded 'He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her'.

⁶ Susan Robson, 'Grasping the Nettle: Conflict and the Quaker condition' in *Quaker Studies* Volume 15, Issue 1 2010 67 – 79

⁷ Lewis Benson, 'That of God in Every Man - What Did Fox Mean by it?' in, *Quaker Religious Thought* Spring 1970

⁸ Daniel E. Bassuk, 'Rufus Jones and Mysticism' in *Quaker Religious Thought* Summer 1978

⁹ James F. Childress, 'Answering That of God in Every Man' in, *Quaker Religious Thought* Spring 1974

¹⁰ Glenn Bartoo, *Decisions by Consensus* (Chicago: Progressive, 1978) 4

¹¹ Wilmer Cooper, *A Living Faith*: 38 – 40

¹² Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 151

¹³ See Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 134 Lists the four characteristics of Liberal Quakerism: experience as primary, faith relevant to the age, being open to new light and progressivism, acceptance that new beliefs supersede the old. All are underpinned by a rationalist approach which accepts higher criticism of Scripture and scientific theories and discoveries, particularly on evolution of life forms, Dandelion sees this as freeing Quakerism from any text or tradition, thus creating a 'religious enterprise always on the move'. He labels the modern, pluralistic version of this as liberal- Liberal Quakerism

¹⁴ With all free to minister.

of belief and forming a boundary. Anything which transgresses this belief is rejected, but, echoing Wood¹, he sees meanings of 'that', 'God' and 'everyone' as individual, raising the question of how any boundary is to be validated and agreed. Scully² regards this shared belief as a cornerstone of Quakerism, giving people a soul, making them holy, open to unmediated encounter with divinity. Such beliefs inhibit the commodification of people. All, having divinity, have value and are 'ends' in themselves, not means to others' ends.

4.2.4. The Soul. (0.51%)

A term little used by Liberal Friends, it fails to appear in the index to the current book of discipline³ at all. References within the analysed texts⁴ described it as part of the person, virtuous, and subject to the influence of Spirit. Popular usage of the term suggests the 'feeling' part of the human persona⁵.

To the ancient Greeks the soul gave life⁶. Plato⁷ saw it as immaterial and immortal; Soul and body were two entities, contingently united, thus creating the dualism between the eternal, spiritual, and the finite, physical.⁸ Conversely, for Aristotle⁹, the soul was integral to the body; equivalent to the personality, it included mind and consciousness¹⁰. The nature of these remains a mystery, encompassing religious and secular perceptions. Blackmore¹¹ likened 'mind' to a private theatre, in the head, fed with sensations, which are then coupled with imagination, itself built up from prior experiences, both religious and secular. Together, these elements constitute consciousness. The varying influences of prior experience upon religious consciousness and their potential for producing differences in such consciousness are all obvious. Perceptions conveyed to individuals concerning the merits, or otherwise, of religious belief are rarely neutral or mildly expressed and actual experiences of religious events can be non-existent, positive or negative in effect. In the texts analysed, little explicit attention was paid to 'consciousness', for example of 'God' or of divine values, as a concept¹²; surprising given the attention paid to the meaning of the term 'God'.

¹ H. G. Wood, *The Quaker Understanding of Christian Faith* (London: Friends Home Service Committee, 1955)

9

² Jackie Leach Scully, *Playing in the Presence: Genetics, Ethics and Spirituality* (Swarthmore Lecture, 2002) (London: Quaker Books, 2002) 85

³ *Quaker Faith and Practice*

⁴ John Punshon, *Testimony and Tradition*: 15 and Christine Trevett, *Previous Convictions* 177

⁵ Hence, for example, 'soul music'

⁶ Alasdair MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics* 37 – 8, 61

⁷ In the *Phaedo*, a dialogue written by Plato in, *Plato in Twelve Volumes* Vol. 1 transl. Harold North Fowler (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1966) [1925]

⁸ This included the brain, though no mention was made of the mind.

⁹ In Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* Transl. T.H.Irwin (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1999)

¹⁰ See also, Leslie Stevenson, *Open to New Light*: 49

¹¹ Susan Blackmore, *Consciousness: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005) 13 – 14

¹² Total feature reference: Consciousness/ Conscience 0.29%

Farrer¹ insisted that both God and the soul were real existents, but mysterious, needing poetic, metaphorical, not prosaic, concrete, descriptions. The soul *was* the individual. Its uniqueness precluded any prosaic description; that was the mystery².

In summary, modern Quakers value processes within their consciousness which they perceive as divine and which inspire, lead and empower them to do what is right, if they act upon them. Faced with the mystery of the origins of such feelings some Friends seek to explain them intellectually, affirming dogmatic theistic or non-theistic sources. Most, however, focus upon their experiences, seeking to discern what they mean in terms of actions. They do this alone or in consort with others, in meetings for worship, for business or in discussion. For these Friends the value of the process lies in its outcomes, not in debate over its sources.

4.3 Feature Group: Meaning and Reality of God. (5.18%)

I divide this Feature group into the following categories, which I consider in turn:

4.3.1. The Meaning of God.

4.3.2. Is God Real?

4.3.1. The Meaning of 'God'. (5.13%)

For a Religious Society founded upon the experience of divinity, the degree of concern for intellectual understandings about the nature of divinity within Liberal Friends is remarkable, although, perhaps, understandable in an age preoccupied with the concrete and the empirical.

Dandelion³ describes belief in God as fundamental and assumed for most Quakers. The extent to which God is seen as external and 'real', let alone being the God portrayed in the Christian Scriptures, is, however, variable. The current book of discipline devotes a chapter to 'Reflections'⁴ which suggests that it is in reflecting on personal experience that intimations of the nature of God emerge, not through empirical research or philosophical speculation⁵.

Macmurray⁶ described, in the depths of his own being, facing a contrast between individual, ephemeral existence 'with no point or meaning in itself' and 'something eternal and infinite'

¹ Austin Farrer, 'Poetic Truth' in, Charles Conti, Ed., *Reflective Faith* (London: SPCK, 1972) (the Farrer paper dates from the 1940s) 33 – 5

² In Leslie Stevenson, *Open to New Light*: 146 – 7

³ Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 189 – 190

⁴ *Quaker Faith and Practice*, Ch. 26

⁵ Overall, in the texts analysed, concerns with experience of and faith in divinity significantly outweigh those over belief, although the latter is, still, a major pre-occupation. Total feature references: Experience 3.89%, Faith 4.91%, Belief 2.68%

⁶ John Macmurray, 'What makes an experience religious?' in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 26.11 1967

in which all existence is grounded. This, for him, was the human experience of God and it ignored speculation on the physical existence, power, or nature of God. Similarly, Hubbard¹ experienced 'fully aware, non-thinking' silence and gained a sense of 'something other than myself', losing any sense of unique identity but participating in the whole of existence. This brought an understanding of divine power and its essential identity with 'love, in the widest sense of the word'. Both writers found meaning in life from being part of and seeking to sustain the cosmos. God, the ground of existence, so of that cosmos, represented mutual, sustaining love.

Eddington² extolled³ 'seeking' as appealing to the scientific temperament. The spirit of seeking was 'the prevailing one in our [Quaker] faith', hence Friends' rejection of creeds, of codifying, so ossifying, beliefs. Honest engagement with either science or religious faith provokes awareness of profound mystery. Einstein⁴ described experience of the mystical as 'the most beautiful emotion', source of all true art and science. To know that what is impenetrable to humankind actually exists, was 'the highest wisdom and the most radiant beauty'. This was true religiousness. Seeing the cosmos in this way, the concept of divinity broadens and its mystery is manifest, but not to its detriment. What is lost is any certainty that such a divinity has specific character or aims. Writing jointly, eleven Quaker scientists⁵ accepted that a dichotomy existed between traditional views on God's actions in the universe and scientific understanding of natural laws. Many scientists, nonetheless, experienced a sense of divinity in the elegance, beauty and harmony of nature. They saw both science and religion as searches for greater truth; in both, current beliefs were tentative, open to growth in understanding. As in science, they saw the need for an enquiring, open-minded approach, in seeking to understand God.

Stevenson⁶ sees recognition of poetic truths as vital to such understandings⁷. God is a reality, present and active in the existence and operation of all creatures, which are expressions of continual creative power. Divinity is associated with individual development and creative endeavour⁸. 'Creation' is ongoing and co-operative. He⁹ describes a 'surface grammar' of God, full of inconsistencies. God is disembodied, but male, a consciousness but

¹ Geoffrey Hubbard, 'Quaker by Conviction' in, *Quaker Faith and Practice*, 26.12 1974

² An eminent astrophysicist and Quaker

³ Arthur Eddington, 'Science and the unseen world' in, *Quaker Faith and Practice*, 26.16 1929

⁴ Albert Einstein, 'Strange is Our Situation Here on Earth' in, Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, *The World Treasury of Modern Religious Thought* (Boston MS: Little Brown and Co., 1990) 225 Albert Einstein was a figure closely associated with the 'new science', which undermined the apparent certainties of Newtonian science, ushering in a renewed open-ness to wonder and mystery. See, for example, Karen Armstrong, *The Case For God*: Chapter 11

⁵ They were writing jointly. *Quaker Faith and Practice*, 26.24, Written by eleven Quaker scientists 1989

⁶ Leslie Stevenson, *Open to New Light*: 145, 148

⁷ See Francesco Petrarca, letter to his brother, Gherardo in, petrarch.petersadlon.com/read_letters.html?s=p13html Here he asserted that 'one may almost say that theology is actually poetry; poetry concerning God

⁸ Quoted by Stevenson from Austin Farrer, 'Poetic Truth' in, Charles Conti, Ed *Reflective Faith* 35

⁹ Leslie Stevenson, *Open to New Light*: 149 – 50

indefinable, powerful but suffers, and so on. A 'depth grammar', however, derived from human experience, finds comfort in such paradoxes, seen as metaphors, aids to understanding experience of life and the world. Allen¹ describes God as an 'energy' flowing through the universe, transcendent yet immanent, loving yet full of truth, eternal yet working in time, source of all that is, yet given voice and form in Jesus, and alive in everyone, as a transforming Spirit, a still small voice urging the cherishing of all life. Havel² spoke of perennial values, forming a basis to the world, giving it internal coherence, based upon the assumption that it exists and functions only because of the existence of something beyond human understanding which grounds the world and gives it order and measure, rules and customs. Any attempt to spurn or master this something he saw as hubris, for which humanity would pay a heavy price. Such statements convey no objective facts and are empirically unverifiable, yet each speaks of individual understandings of the world.

Lampen³ described use of the term 'God', in the Christian sense, as to intuit a connection between the natural world, moral law, the life of Jesus, human personality, imaginations about time, death and eternity and the experience of love and forgiveness. To deny the existence of God was, for Lampen, to deny these connections, but individual perceptions of their nature and mode vary enormously. Understanding 'God' in relation to time, death and eternity places individual beliefs in stark contrast to each other. All have experience of the death of a loved one and of words of encouragement, that they will live on in the hearts and memories of those left behind. Often they do, but belief that the dead enter a different realm is entirely an act of faith, either held or not held. No intermediate position is tenable.

Scott⁴ saw God revealed to each person through a model which suited their temperaments and abilities and to communities through models suited to their culture. Individual interpretations of the models were non-uniform, each was a guide to a truth, greater than any, yet accessible in even the simplest way. Understandings of God broadened as experience grew, so there was no room for 'authoritarianism and heresy hunts. Our vision is widened by the vision of others'. 'The point is to live with paradox, not resolve it'⁵. Quakers today live in a world understood empirically, in terms of cause and effect. That world stands in marked contrast to one of 'feeling', experiencing, the mystery of divinity. Some desire 'certainty' about God, soul and Spirit, seeking a 'firm foundation' for life⁶; others recognise

¹ Beth Allen, *Ground and Spring*: 113

² Vaclav Havel, *Living in Truth* Ed., Jan Vadrslav (London: Faber and Faber, 1989) 137 – 8; he was a Czech poet, essayist, dissident and politician.

³ John Lampen, 'Twenty questions about Jesus' in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 26.33 1985

⁴ Janet Scott, *What Cans't Thou Say?* In, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 26.19 1980 The number of feature references to 'Universal', which included any suggestions that divinity was available to all, not just to Christians, was surprisingly small, 0.69%

⁵ David Jenkins, in a talk to the William Temple Association, October 1978, in Janet Scott, *What Cans't Thou Say?:* 23

⁶ In no text analysed, however, was there any claim that God was a 'Being', or 'Person'.

that divinity is a mystery. St Francis asked, 'God, who are you; and who am I?'¹ The twin mysteries of the nature of divinity and of the conscious self, he recognised as intertwined. That sense of mystery can be frustrating or inspiring; inspiration requires faith. Wildwood² struggled to find a sense of awe and mystery in Quaker worship. God seemed to have been domesticated when compared with the sensations gained from the soaring architecture of a great cathedral. Such awe can be experienced in nature, in great art, writing or music. For Pointing³, in the imagination the artist and the mystic made contact, searching for: the 'rhythms of relationships...the unity....mystery...of life'.

Scott⁴ described tension between the Jewish idea of God, active in history and in individual lives, and that of the ancient Greeks, metaphysical, perfect, eternal and unchanging. This produced the paradox of a God seen as changeless, but yet loving and suffering on humanity's behalf, perfect, yet in relationship with individuals and their imperfections. She advocated separating 'God', the concept, from the different models used to represent God. The problems then became associated with the limitations of the mental models, not with God. She⁵ suggested a number of models, God: as 1. noun, 2. adjective or 3. verb.

1. The commonest, emphasised God as transcendent, Creator, powerful, ruling and judging; the classic 'belief' model. She acknowledged problems inherent in this objectifying of God, as a 'being', yet remote and abstract. The Wisdom, Logos, Son, Christ, all served as mediators, 'personalising' 'God'. She advocated use of 'Thou'⁶, a sexless but personal pronoun, avoiding abuse of perceptions of God as 'He' to justify the exercise of male power and authority.

2. The divine, immanent in all creation. The whole world, being in God's presence, is holy, sacramental. The divine in humanity is that element, capable of selflessness, love and compassion, through understanding that all life is common, grounded in the divine.

3. 'Being', God as Spirit or Light, acting within individuals, judging, inspiring, guiding and empowering them.

Both 2. and 3. suggest the possibility of 'transformation' through 'relationship' with divinity. Spong⁷ espoused the Hebrew concept of God as *ruach*, 'wind', 'Spirit', a vitalising force. For him there was no God external to life. God was the depth and centre of all that is, not a being, superior to other beings, but 'being' itself. Confining divinity to life⁸ was insufficient

¹ J. R. H. Moorman, *St Francis of Assisi* (London: SPCK, 1963) 106 Quoted in ¹ Beth Allen, *Ground and Spring*: 18

² Alex Wildwood, *A Faith to Call Our Own*: 86

³ Horace B. Pointing, 'Art, Religion and the Common Life' in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 21.32 1944

⁴ Janet Scott, *What Cans't Thou Say?:* 75 – 80

⁵ Janet Scott, *What Cans't Thou Say?:* 76 – 82

⁶ Martin Buber, *Eclipse of God*, transl. R. G. Smith (London: Gollancz, 1953) 16ff.

⁷ John Selby Spong, *Why Christianity Must Change or Die: a bishop speaks to believers in exile* (San Francisco CA: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998) 70

⁸A pantheist view.

for Borg¹; everything was in God, not vice versa. God was transcendent, more than, but also immanent within everything. Such debates rest upon perceptions of 'ground of being'. Does something external, transcendent, 'convey' being or is it purely immanent, an integral part of being? Dale² saw God as a purpose, a spirit, not personal, but then he recognised that 'love' could not be impersonal, so concluded that God must be personal in some way, though still ultimate; immanent, though still transcendent. Such difficulties arise from equating God with love, but love can be a human response to understanding that in divinity all share a common, as well as a personal, life.

Priestland,³ questioning ideas of an unchanging God, described God's many changes illustrated in the Bible: from Creator of all that is, ultimately, to the Christian God of love, reflecting changes in the needs and capacities of the societies in which God was worshipped. Nonetheless, some aspects of God were eternal; creatorship, father/parenthood and love. God was pro-active, but acted only through humanity. Priestland's anthropocentric vision was of an interventionist God, responsible for natural laws, weakening Himself by giving freedom to humanity to reject Him, and suffering for humanity, in the person of a divine Christ. These were affirmations of God, in a more conventional Christian sense, in a liberal Quaker context. Such views were unique in the texts analysed. Jesus was more frequently held up as a model, illustrating the good, divine, Life. Whilst Harvey⁴ acknowledged that much of the Jesus story was unclear, puzzling, imperfectly reported, he saw it as bringing 'hope... forgiveness.... healing; a new vision and a new spirit'. For some Friends, the central perceptions of Christianity are a perennial source of wisdom. The incarnation, cross, repentance, forgiveness and resurrection, for them, all express deep realities of the human condition: 'incarnation' as 'that of God', in everyone, 'the cross', the need for selflessness, 'repentance', recognition of selfish motives, 'redemption', the feelings of 'wholeness' arising from adopting selfless compassion and 'resurrection', the transformation brought about by acceptance and response to spiritual inspiration⁵. Quakers 'spiritualise' aspects of conventional Christian belief, absorbing them into their consciousness, as prompts, reinforcing behaviours which give meaning to their lives. They become transformative. Living with such a consciousness represents the closest possible relationship with the divine.

¹ Marcus J. Borg, *The God We Never Knew*: Ch. 2

² Jonathan Dale, *Beyond the Spirit of the Age* 10

³ Gerald Priestland, *Reasonable Uncertainty* Ch. 5

⁴ T. Edmund Harvey, 'Workaday Saints' in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 26.48 1949

⁵ Lorna M. Marsden, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 26.51 1985

4.3.2. Is God Real? (0.05%)¹

This is a debate within Liberal Friends, the origins of which can be traced back to Feuerbach,² describing consciousness of God as human self-consciousness. God was ‘the revealed and explicit inner self of a human being’.

There is a dualism between realism and anti-realism. For Williamson³ these terms represent directions, not positions. To assert that something is independent of mind is to move in the realist direction, whilst to deny it is to move towards anti-realism. Kant opposed realism to idealism; ultimate reality was mental or spiritual, not physical. After Kant, ‘realism’ came to signify objects whose existence and nature were independent of human perceptions. To say that ‘God is real’ came to mean that God has an existence beyond human understanding and perceptions. Kant⁴, however, also contrasted phenomena, ‘things that appear’, with noumena, ‘things that are thought’. The intelligible world of noumena was known by pure reason, knowledge of things as they are. Phenomena, however, were known through the senses and only as they appear, not as they ‘are in themselves’. He⁵ denied that noumena, as objects of pure reason, are objects of [practical] knowledge. This is confined to phenomena. Noumena, like God and the soul, were objects of intellectual intuition. To perceive their nature required a mode of practical knowledge which humankind does not possess. He thus denied the logical possibility of ‘knowing’ God, or the nature of the soul, in any meaningful sense. The importance of such reasoning lies in the meaning attached to ‘noumena’. For Kant they gave access to a reality beyond human perceptions. Alternatively, they could be seen as purely products of human thought, with no independent reality. Which of these views is adopted depends upon individual belief in the existence of, and human ability to have intuitions of, things-in-themselves, which are real but not known through the senses.

Boulton⁶ insists, paradoxically, that the ‘reality’ of God is enhanced, not diminished, by seeing divinity as purely a human projection. He compares the reality of a daisy with that of the statement ‘I love you’, insisting that both are equally non-real, having no intrinsic meaning, known only through human perceptions, where ‘thing’, ‘word’, ‘consciousness of the thing’ and ‘consciousness of the word’ form an inseparable unity. He declares the distinction between the reality of the daisy and of the statement ‘I love you’ to be unreal, since both are understood and made manifest only in the mind. Boulton conflates noumena

¹ This question is discussed in spite of its infrequent appearance in the main texts analysed, because of its much greater currency, both in the ‘non-theist’ texts* also examined and in the pages of *The Friend* in recent years. *In David Boulton, *Real like the Daisies*: Total feature references: God: Real or non-real 15.48%

² Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity* in, *Gesammelte Werke* Ed. W. Schuffenhauer Vol. 5 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1973) 46 – 7

³ See T. Williamson in, Ted Honderich, Ed., *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy* 787 – 9

⁴ Immanuel Kant, *Of the Form and Principles of the Sensible and the Intelligible World* (1770) in *Kant’s Latin Writings* ed. L. W. Beck, 2nd Edition (New York, 1992)

⁵ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* 2nd Edition (1787) A 236/B 295 – A260/ B315 Paul Guyer and Allen Wood eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)

⁶ David Boulton, *Real like the Daisies* 12 – 3 He is a Friend embracing ‘non-realist’ perceptions of God.

and phenomena. Such a thesis makes everything 'non-real', having no existence independent of human perception, in which case, God is as unreal as an expression of emotion, or as a daisy. This denies any difference between a concrete object and a spiritual, self-transcendent, emotion. This is a debatable proposition, as is denying any real difference between the reality of God and that of a concrete object, which is not an obvious, common-sense position to take.

An interesting question is why Boulton chose 'I love you', as one possible reality for God, not 'I hate ...', 'I judge ...' or even 'I am indifferent.... to you'. In the search for meaning in life, if God is seen to exist, as Creator or Ground of Being, a loving God, or God as the basis for love, would signify the existence of such meaning. The question then becomes whether such is really the case, or whether humanity wishes it to be so, and hence, subconsciously, imagines it so. Kelly¹, expressing such doubts, asked if it mattered. Did God need to be real, or could God be a valuable hoax? He concluded that one's inner integrity would demand the truth. Having, however, rehearsed and rejected a range of 'proofs' of God's reality, Kelly² then affirmed that individual experiences of God³ provided a sense of joy, beyond intellectual satisfaction. In this situation one's integrity was satisfied by an emotional, not a reasoned, response. The truth was inaccessible, much as Kant concluded. If the reality of God depends upon individual experiences of God, subject, as they are, to the effects of other prior experiences, it is little wonder that the question remains shrouded in mystery and the answers deeply personal.

Boulton⁴ summarises Cupitt's⁵ position that, in seeking to banish perceptions of a purposeless, pitiless, universe, humankind seeks meaning, purpose and benevolence, by evoking a 'transcendent mastermind'. This Cupitt rejected as immature and not credible; only human consciousness can create meaning and purpose. Boulton⁶ cites the loss of a sense of relationship with a 'non-real' God as the greatest source of criticism of his theology⁷. This criticism he rejects, seeing relationship to a God, real as 'I love you' as perfectly possible. The reality of feelings of love felt by one person for another is, certainly, indisputable. The statement, however, is difficult to reconcile with his assertion, above, that there is no greater, or less, reality in such a God than in a concrete God as Being. Boulton actually, claims greater reality for a non-material God, representing the love felt towards all of life and the cosmos. This is not a radically different position from, for example, Lampen, Ambler and Allen, above, who all link very non-specific conceptions of God with ideas on the

¹ Thomas Kelly, *The Gathered Meeting and Reality of the Spiritual World* (London: Quaker Home Service, 1996) [1944] 9 – 10

² See Thomas Kelly, *The Gathered Meeting* 10 - 20

³ These take many forms. One difficulty appears to be that many assume experience of God must be personal. Failing to experience a personal God, the temptation exists to deny the concept entirely.

⁴ David Boulton, *Real like the Daisies* 17 – 8

⁵ See Don Cupitt, *Taking Leave of God and The Sea of Faith*. Arguably, Cupitt's views form the basis of the non-theist, non-realist position within Quakerism today.

⁶ David Boulton, *Real like the Daisies* 18 – 23

⁷ A theology which he describes as 'post- modern'.

natural world, morality, love, depth and trust, yet none claims that God is 'non-real'. Any disagreements stem entirely from failure to agree on the nature of reality. Widespread recognition of the mysteries underlying the 'reality' and nature of, seemingly 'concrete' objects¹ has made distinctions between 'objective' and 'subjective' crucial to thoughts on the 'reality' of God, unclear. Acceptance, with Einstein (above), that mystery underlies all human experience makes perceptions of divinity more tenable and inspiring.

Gillman² explores whether the immaterial can be said to exist. He cites Wittgenstein³ who distinguished between what language could logically say and what it could show. Whilst prose could describe reality, poetry could 'show', invoke, it 'at a different level'.

Wittgenstein⁴ described 'language games', in which the meanings of words depend upon the actions which accompany them and the form of life in which they are embedded, making such meanings specific to a group sharing a specific way of life. He portrayed 'family resemblances' between different language 'games'. None were, however, identical. The meaning of a word⁵ is not the object it denotes, but the use to which it can be put in one or another of the different language games⁶. 'Reality', 'G(g)od' and 'S(s)pirit' are words used in religious and other contexts, where their meanings vary widely. Gillman⁷ assigns the term 'realism' to an external world, independent of what is seen; the thing-in-itself. He contrasts 'critical realism', awareness of different ways of understanding God, with 'naïve realism', which sees its own truth, perceptions of God, as the only possible one. Religious non-realism is a claim that the divine has no existence beyond human perceptions of it; God is reduced to a metaphor for something in the way humankind seeks meaning, a personification of ethical values. For many today, claims to realism demand proof. For the naïve realist proof of the reality of God lies in Scripture, for others it lies in their experience of divinity. A non-realist position arises, surely, either from rejection of experiences felt as adequate proof of the reality of God, or from perceived failure to have felt such experiences.

For Jung⁸ the seat of faith was 'not consciousness but religious experience'. He defined personal experience of the numinous⁹ as mysterious, terrifying, awe-inspiring, but personal, not adequately describable, so it frequently provoked distrust in others, who widely

¹ This has come with more widespread awareness of quantum mechanics and the, seemingly bizarre behaviour of the 'fundamental' particles making up all matter.

² Harvey Gillman, *Consider the Blackbird*: 25 – 6

³ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* transl. C.K.Ogden, (London: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1922)

⁴ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* Ed., G.E.M. Anscombe and R. Rhees (Oxford: Blackwell, 1953) 23, 27, 180, 288, 654 He reported the many uses of language; to describe, report, give orders, ask questions etc.

⁵ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* 66 – 7

⁶ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* 43

⁷ Harvey Gillman, *Consider the Blackbird*: 42 – 3

⁸ Carl G. Jung, *Selected Writings* 391

⁹ A word coined by Rudolf Otto in, *The Idea of the Holy*, to denote elements of a non-rational and amoral kind in experiences of the 'holy'. E. A. Livingstone, Ed., *Oxford Concise Dictionary of the Christian Church*

dismissed such experiences as superstition¹. Everything depends, however, upon what types of experience are felt to be of the divine. Are all divine experiences awe-inspiring? Are all awe-inspiring experiences divine?

Borg², citing Otto³, described two major types of, mystical, experience:

1. Extravert, 'eyes open'; seeing the whole world as one and the boundary between self and the rest of the world as soft, all being united in and by the divine. This gave a sense of connectedness with everything and everyone. Maslow⁴ described these as 'peak experiences'; they brought about a radical shift in perceptions. Concerns for the self, the ego, melted away, transforming the individual. Such experiences are focussed outwards, to the cosmos and a sense of unity within it. Divinity is seen as a unifying force, not as something personal, within the self; indeed it can seem elusive.

2. Introvert, 'eyes closed' experiences, typically in deep meditation; a sense of entry into the presence of God. The boundary of the self is, again, soft, but the sense is one of inward union with God. Gardner⁵ writes extensively of such mysticism, implying that such experience is accessible to all, when many, even if disposed to seek God, are of the extravert type, and lack any such experience. Such lack of intimate experience may well underlie denials of 'religious' experience and so the reality of God. Holloway⁶ describes how the limitation of his mystical experiences to the extravert, forever seeking, in a wondrous and unified world, but never feeling the close presence of God, fuelled his doubts as to God's actual reality.

Dandelion⁷ summarises the thoughts of Boulton⁸ and Rush⁹ to be that religious belief symbolises our highest ideals and refers to nothing 'real'. God is a fiction, but necessary, instrumental, inspiring and empowering individuals to perceive and work to support a unified, benevolent and purposeful world. He describes an implicit 'semi-realist' position as dominant among liberal-Liberal Friends. God is real, but statements about God are interpretations, not facts. Exponents of the 'non-realist' position are often more dogmatic in their assertions, so less compatible with liberal-Liberal permissiveness about belief¹⁰.

¹ Jack H. Wallis, *Jung and the Quaker Way* 50 – 1

² Marcus J. Borg, *The God We Never Knew*: 39 – 40

³ Rudolf Otto, *Mysticism: East and West*

⁴ Abraham Maslow, *Religious Values and Peak Experiences* (Columbus OH: Ohio State University Press, 1964)

⁵ Curt Gardner, *God Just Is*; 29 – 54

⁶ Richard Holloway, *Leaving Alexandria: A memoir of faith and doubt* (Edinburgh and London: Canongate, 2012) Ch. 8

⁷ Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 192 – 3

⁸ David Boulton, *Real like the Daisies*

⁹ D. Rush, 'They Too Are Quakers:

¹⁰ Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 138

Rush¹ uses the term ‘non-theist’ as equivalent to ‘non-realist’. Theism, as understood currently, is a philosophical system which accepts a transcendent and personal God, who created, and now preserves and governs, the world, the contingency of which does not exclude miracles or the exercise of personal freedom². The two terms are not equivalents. Theism, as so defined, is unacceptable to liberal-Liberal Friends, but is often inaccurately embraced as the antithesis of atheism, itself seen as disbelief in God in any sense at all and rejected by most Liberal Friends.

The debate over the reality of God teaches caution in the use of language. In the writings of Liberal Friends I found no evidence of a theistic view of God, in the sense defined above. Whilst God’s transcendence was accepted, God’s immanence was emphasised. Whilst God was often addressed in personal terms, this was widely regarded as metaphorical. Ideas of direct divine intervention in the world, such as miracles, were rejected implicitly or explicitly. Most Liberal Friends regard God as the ultimate cause of all being, but they reject conventional creation stories. All wrote of divinity in terms devoid of any objective reality. They implicitly accept that the distinction objective-subjective is less sustainable today. A concrete object may seem capable of total comprehension by use of the senses, but is now recognised not to be so readily understood.³ The difference between the mystery of the object and that of the divine thus becomes no longer qualitative but merely quantitative. Ward⁴ writes that ‘no-one’ asks a Friend to declare him/herself a theist; this was to impose a creed. So why, he asks, should anyone declare they were atheist or non-theist? This was equally creedal. Mhaille,⁵ however, rejects a theistic God as ‘a block to the divine’, seeing non-theism as bringing one closer to the nature of the divine. Clearly she does not see non-theism as a rejection of the reality of divinity. Through adopting a thoughtful approach to the reality and nature of God Liberal Friends immerse them-selves in a mystery. It is worth remembering that Quakerism is about the experience of the divine and that such experiences are beyond what words can adequately convey⁶.

4.4 Feature Group: Creator/ Word/ Wisdom/ Revealed through Nature.

(2.63%)

I divide this Feature group into the following categories, which I consider in turn:

4.4.1. Creator.

4.4.2. Word.

4.4.3. Wisdom.

¹ D. Rush, ‘They Too Are Quakers:

² E. A. Livingstone, Ed. *Oxford Concise Dictionary of the Christian Church* 581

³ The science of quantum mechanics makes the ‘true nature’ of matter profoundly mysterious.

⁴ John Ward, letter to *The Friend* Vol. 171 no. 13 2013

⁵ Irene Ni Mhaille, letter to *The Friend* Vol. 171 no. 47 2013

⁶ See William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* Lecture III

4.4.4. Revealed through Nature.

4.4.1. Creator. (1.57%)

Friends are urged to respect nature and 'Rejoice in the splendour of God's continuing creation¹, illustrating the basic Quaker assumption that, in some undefined way God is the root cause of all existence, of the cosmos. Using words from Woolman², God's ownership as Creator of the earth is affirmed, as is humankind's dependence upon God for its existence and for the continuing provision for its needs by the earth. How such words are interpreted, of course, varies.

The conventional theist position is that God, as omnipresent Spirit, is the Creator of all logically contingent things, apart from 'himself'.³ Macmurray⁴ described primitive religion as having arisen from reflection by communities on their dependence upon the natural world for all resources. In a pre-scientific age, such provision was seen as coming from a creator god(s). Paley⁵, infamously, likened nature to a watch, concluding, from its complexity, that it must be the design of a watchmaker, God⁶; a view disputed by Dawkins⁷ and rejected by most theologians today⁸. Modern theories of the evolution of living things, far from negating ideas of a Creator God, can reinforce them. For many the exercise of an independent, divine purpose or consciousness is seen as active at the original creation of the universe⁹ and responsible for the natural laws which have determined its subsequent evolution. The processes of physical, organic and social evolution are viewed as showing Creator and creation, God and cosmos, working in harmony, as co-agents. The 'anthropic principle' is a modern analogue of Paley's 'argument from design'. In its 'weak' form, humankind can only observe a universe so ordered that it allows the development of cognitive agents like itself. In its 'strong' form, more controversial, the coincidences between physical constants are explained by the fact that they are necessary for the existence of human life¹⁰. Both forms suggest a causal agent of material existence, but are very anthropocentric in their logic. Science is working to explain a universe which changes

¹ *Quaker Faith and Practice*, 1.02. 42

² John Woolman, 'A plea for the poor' in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 20.32 1763

³ Richard Swinburne, *The Coherence of Theism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977) 126 – 131

⁴ John Macmurray, *Selected Philosophical Writings* 177

⁵ William Paley, 'Natural Theology' in, *The Works of William Paley* (London: William Orr, 1844) 25 – 8

⁶ The so called 'argument from design'.

⁷ Richard Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker: Why the evidence of evolution reveals a universe without design* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1986) Alister McGrath, with Joanna Collicutt McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion: Atheist fundamentalism and the denial of the divine* (London: SPCK, 2007) 7 affirm this book as 'the finest criticism of this argument (from design) in print.' Dawkins argued that evolution by natural selection explained the design in the natural world, without recourse to a transcendent designer.

⁸ Alister McGrath, with Joanna Collicutt McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion: 7*; Alasdair MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics* 184 described Kant's earlier denial that one could infer from the ordered state of nature a benevolent creator; one could only view the universe 'as if' so created.

⁹ A view proposed by F. W. Temple, *The Relationship Between Religion and Science* (London: Macmillan, 1884) 122 – 3

¹⁰ See, for example, Paul Humphreys, in, Ted Honderich, Ed., *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy* 40

according to natural laws. This is not a denial of divine involvement, but whether such involvement exists and at what level, is an open debate. Brinton¹ described science as rediscovering 'the creative mystery of the universe'. It explains the mechanisms of more and more events in the cosmos², but less often their purposes. Bennett and Hacker³ reject as naïve the view that 'science does, or soon will, explain everything'. Medawar⁴ described science as limited by the nature of physical reality, so unable to explain 'transcendent' questions, such as 'how did everything begin?', 'what are we all here for?', 'what is the point of living?'. These were matters for religion.

For Allen⁵ humankind is co-creator with God. She cites Tolkien⁶; God had created humankind as creator itself. This is a reminder that, given its intelligence, creativity and self-consciousness, humankind has enormous constructive, but also destructive, potential on earth. She uses art and science as analogies⁷; whilst both involve material elements, both are creative processes, involving an underlying numinous element of awe in the face of beauty and intricacy. God, Allen⁸ suggests, lies outside, but chooses to create in, time and space, so is limited, acting through the 'stuff' of the universe, adding consciousness, love, creativity, goodness and beauty. Such a poetic statement arises from Allen's faith; its value lies in the inspiration it provides, not on perceptions that it explains anything intellectually. Burnell⁹, more prosaically, insisted that the universe evolved without active participation from God, who interfered only through people and their attitudes. Macmurray¹⁰, however, saw God as 'the unlimited and universal agent' in the development of the universe; the root 'cause', or stimulus, to development. The fact that these can be seen as contradictory statements is a warning to heed the meanings of words. Agency can be direct or through others and stimuli provoke responses. The predominant liberal Quaker view is that divinity stimulates action to preserve and enhance the physical, natural and social worlds. The stimulus arises from the sense of relationship with the rest of the cosmos, through a common 'grounding' in God; all are united in being. Laird¹¹ describes how, in contemplation, there arises a sense of oneness with all. Individuals, like the spokes of a wheel, move apart, but, as they approach the centre, God, they become closer to each-other; an apposite image for what is achieved in a 'gathered [Quaker] meeting'.

¹ Howard H. Brinton, 'Creative Worship', in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 21.42 1931

² Although caution is needed before suggesting that whole mechanisms are understood, as the whole field of quantum mechanics or the study of human brain function, for example, display.

³ M. R. Bennett and P.M.S. Hacker, *Philosophical Foundations of Neuroscience* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003) 372 – 6

⁴ Peter B. Medawar, *The Limits of Science* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985) 66

⁵ Beth Allen, *Ground and Spring*: 20

⁶ J.R.R. Tolkien, *Tree and Leaf* (London: HarperCollins, 2001) [1964] 54, 56

⁷ Beth Allen, *Ground and Spring*: 23 – 4

⁸ Beth Allen, *Ground and Spring*: 44

⁹ S. Jocelyn Burnell, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 26.25 1976 An eminent astronomer.

¹⁰ John Macmurray, *Search for Reality in Religion* 44

¹¹ Martin Laird, *Into the Silent Land: The practice of contemplation* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2006) Chapter 1

Hegel¹ invoked Geist ('Spirit' 'Mind'), his conception of divinity, not as a being, but as 'the inner being of the world, that which essentially is'. Tillich,² developing such ideas, described God as the 'ground of being'. Armstrong³ explains that mystics have always drawn their power of self-affirmation from their experience 'of the power of being-itself, with which they are united'. Similarly, Macmurray's vision of God was as the infinite, eternal ground of life, an expression both of matter in physical objects and of the life process in living organisms. Humans were manifestations of the divine, universal, person. To make sense of the uniqueness of each personal life required assuming that ultimate reality, God is itself personal⁴. It is at this level, seeing God as underlying existence itself, but in a non-specific way, rather than any concern for the mechanisms by which God is the causal agent of matter or life, that Quakers address the issue of creation⁵. It provides a rationale for a 'personal' approach to God, albeit metaphorically not literally.

Lee urged all to: 'live answerable to the design of our creation'⁶, affirming a potential for virtue, created within each individual. This should be seen as a gift and not squandered. Some see humankind as dependent for its virtues upon supernatural, 'inward', control; an idealist position. Others visualise divinity as inspirational, not controlling. Scott⁷ addressed the existence of evil in a world held to have been created by a perfect God. Quoting Hodgson⁸, she re-affirmed the importance of human freedom to develop and mature morally and spiritually as well as physically, even at the cost of many human mistakes and much moral evil. God empowered individuals to change for the better, to be transformed. Priestland⁹ believed that God had self-limited by creating a universe with natural laws. To preserve human freedom¹⁰, God resisted miraculous interventions, making natural and man-made disasters unavoidable. To some, such assertions represent sophistry and justify disbelief in God. If, however, God is not perceived as physically powerful the problem of evil diminishes, but perceptions that God will intervene to relieve suffering diminish too¹¹.

¹ G. W. F. Hegel (1770 – 1831) *The Phenomenology of Mind* Transl. J. B. Baillie (N.p.: Harper and Row, 1967) [1910 in English] [1807 in the original German] 86

² Paul Tillich, *The Courage To Be* 156 – 7

³ Karen Armstrong, *The Case For God*: 224

⁴ D. Ferguson and N. Dower, Eds. *John Macmurray: Critical Perspectives* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002) 39 – 40

⁵ Grace Blindell, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 29.18 1992 writes of 'our outdated world view', a reference to a materialist explanation applied to all that occurs in the world. Science along with mysticism spoke 'with one voice' recognising the integrity and sacredness of the whole planet. This was to recognise the limits to human understanding and an affirmation of the inspirational effects of mystery and paradox.

⁶ Michael Lee, 'Inflation and personal responsibilities', in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 20.34 1976

⁷ Janet Scott, *What Cans't Thou Say?:* 43 – 4

⁸ Leonard Hodgson, *For Faith and Freedom* (London: SCM Press, 1968)

⁹ Gerald Priestland, *Reasonable Uncertainty* 43

¹⁰ This is a statement which illustrates the anthropocentric nature of much of conventional Christianity.

¹¹ Elie Wiesel, in, *The Trial of God*, transl. Marion Wiesel (Shocken Books, 1995) describes a, fictitious, event in which the Jews placed God on trial, basing the story on real events he witnessed in Auschwitz in WW2. The book led to a TV play (BBC/WGBH Boston production, 2008) in which Jewish prisoners in Auschwitz convict God of abandoning His people to the Nazis. At the conclusion of the play, when guards come to take some to the gas chambers, all begin to pray to the God they had just convicted for protection, illustrating the powerful human desire for divine support.

Whilst Quakers affirm a powerful God¹ the meanings they attach to this are spiritual, not physical.

4.4.2. Word. (0.45%)

Franklin² believed that all could be ‘the vessel of God’s word’, act as agents for the divine on earth. On how to discern what that required, Trevett³ saw a difference between knowing words intellectually and knowing the Word which informs them, between adhering to written or spoken principles and applying them compassionately. The conventional Christian view is that the ‘Word’ implies both action and communication. God’s words, character and intentions were revealed through Scripture but also through the person, teaching and actions of Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh⁴. Christ was the eternal Creator, God incarnate. The Gospel of Christ was the message about Christ, what God achieved and made known through Jesus’ life, death and resurrection⁵. Ashworth⁶ concluded that, like Paul, Quakers sought the faith of, and not faith in Christ; to show the radical trust in God exemplified by Jesus, freeing them from fear and mistrust, to be open, loving and compassionate. Liberal Friends generally do not look on Christ as sacrificed on behalf of humanity, but as an example of self-sacrifice and integrity. Humankind, for most Quakers, can redeem itself, with divine inspiration along with human courage and willpower. The Word of God provides such inspiration, but in an undefined way, exemplifying virtue.

4.4.3. Wisdom. (0.21%)

Where human intelligence aids seeking how to act, wisdom concerns knowing why and when to act. As such, as Medawar affirmed above⁷, it falls within the remit of religion. Brinton⁸ evoked Philo of Alexandria⁹, seeing God as revealed mystically as the *Logos*, divine reason, perceived in masculine form as the Word, the eternal Christ¹⁰ and in feminine form as Holy Wisdom, Sophia¹¹. Together, these constituted a blueprint of the universe, drawing chaos into unity; divinity had both male and female elements¹². Brinton¹³ contrasted such a philosophy, that Word and Wisdom, masculine drive and energy, along with feminine creativity and compassion, were responsible for, and driving, the cosmos, with modern

¹ Total feature references : God as Powerful: 1.00%

² Ursula Franklin, ‘Perspectives on Friends’ Testimonies in Today’s World’ in, *Quaker Faith and Practice*, 23.32 1979

³ Christine Trevett, *Previous Convictions*: 29 She was citing D. Gwenallt Jones.

⁴ *John* 1: 14

⁵ See Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction* 127 – 8

⁶ Timothy Ashworth, in, T. Ashworth and A. Wildwood, *Rooted in Christianity, Open to New Light*: 55

⁷ Peter B. Medawar, *The Limits of Science* 66 See section 4.4.1 in this chapter.

⁸ Howard Brinton, *The Religious Philosophy of Quakerism*: 69 – 70

⁹ Philo of Alexandria (c. 20 BCE – c. 50 CE) a Hellenistic Jewish philosopher; he attempted to marry together Plato’s philosophy and Judaism.

¹⁰ See *John* 1: 1 – 4

¹¹ *Hagia Sophia*. In *Proverbs* 8 and *Wisdom (of Solomon)* 7: 25 – 6

¹² Ideas developed by Jacob Boehme (1575 – 1624), a German mystic

¹³ Howard Brinton, *The Religious Philosophy of Quakerism*: 93, 96

materialism, which saw all processes in purely mechanistic terms. The two were incompatible. To understand the role of the divine in the development of the universe was impossible in mechanistic terms. Divine wisdom dictated vigour and purpose, but utilised to achieve unity, mutual dependence and support, conforming to ideas of divinity as grounding and uniting all being. Such perceptions have transformational effects when applied to the world and to all living things. Their application to physical events, particularly within an expanding universe, where events are often violent, whether constructive or destructive in effects, is more challenging, but perceptions of purpose, even at this level, inspire.

Sturge¹ described how both the pleasures and pains of life had power to help growth in 'spiritual wisdom', a moral virtue, enabling understanding the worth of different ends. Its spirituality concerns its demand for self-transcendence, avoiding purely selfish ends. The Jewish tradition sees questioning God as leading to wisdom; distinguishing the metaphorical from the literal and discerning the true meaning of scriptural revelations².

Borg³ emphasised that Jesus was a wisdom teacher. He described two types of 'wisdom':

1. Conventional, 'what everyone does'; 'wisdom' as how to gain rewards and avoid punishments. It reinforced conformity, dictating a life of requirements, rewarded if met, punished if not. It was a system, internalised as the 'super-ego', 'that which stands over me and to which I must measure up'⁴, leading to the image of God as law-maker and judge.

2. Subversive/alternative. This was the true wisdom of the sage⁵, questioning conventional wisdom, prophesying and identifying injustice⁶. God was seen as gracious and compassionate, condemning injustice and inviting all into relationship⁷, to be transformed and act in the same compassionate way⁸.

Liberal Friends aspire to the latter wisdom, but are not immune to the former, seeking comfort in the familiar and reinforcement of their behaviours through adopting rules as guides⁹.

¹ Evelyn Sturge, 'The Glory of Growing Old', in, *Quaker Faith and Practice*, 21.45 1950

² See Keith Ward, *Is Religion Dangerous?* 117

³ Marcus J. Borg, *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time* 69 – 71, 76 – 8

⁴ 'Superego' is a Freudian term but the principle is widely recognised. See John W. Glazer, 'Conscience and Superego' in John J. Heaney, Ed., *Psyche and Spirit* Revised Edition (New York: Paulist, 1984) 31 – 49

⁵ He highlighted Jesus' talk of the 'the narrow way' which led to life, whilst the 'broad way', of convention, led to destruction, *Matt 7: 13 – 4*, and explained how the short aphorisms and longer parables of Jesus all served to encourage his followers to re-examine aspects of their lives and behaviour

⁶ See Kathleen M. O'Connor, *The Wisdom Literature* (Wilmington DE: Michael Glazier, 1988) for a review of wisdom and prophecy within the major faith and philosophical traditions.

⁷ Borg quoted *Mark 12: 30* 'And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with heart....soul....mind.....strength; this is the first commandment.

⁸ *Mark 12: 31* continues: 'And the second is....'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these'.

⁹ See, for example, the discussion of Friends' Witness/ Testimony in Chapter 5 Section 5.6

4.4.4. Revealed Through Nature. (0.40%)

The interdependence of all of nature has become a familiar theme for Liberal Friends. 'Religion' means a 'binding back'¹. This can be seen as binding to dependence on the earth, its productivity and seasons², awareness of and commitment to a 'universal self', uniting all life³. Natural theology⁴ sees God revealed through both the natural world and human nature, which is potentially a 'holy personality'⁵. Humankind sees itself as closest to the divine, capable of inner virtue. It, alone, can reflect upon the purposes and consequences of its actions, wilfully preserving or undermining the unity of human community and of the natural world.

Einstein⁶ described rapturous amazement at the harmony of natural laws as a religious experience. He professed belief in 'Spinoza's God'⁷, revealed in the orderly harmony of what exists, rejecting a God who dictated human actions. The extent to which Liberal Quakers share such views varies widely. From the early Friends, through emphasis upon the Light within, Quakers have embraced autonomy, but this was initially from church teachings. God was within them, as the Light, guiding their actions. That belief is nominally retained today, but many, implicitly or explicitly, share Einstein's views. Dale⁸ described his faith as grounded in 'natural religion'. It was an aspect of humankind as it is, including all its potentialities. He espoused a natural theology, which he characterised as acquisition of truths about God through the natural human capacity to know and reason, rather than by divine revelation⁹. For many Christians¹⁰ revelation is through Scripture. Quakers have always attached greater importance to their experience of direct revelation, through the Spirit or Light¹¹, but they apply to such revelation their own reason, and relate their religious experiences to experiences of the natural and human world, so, in practice, the distinction between revealed and natural theology is not clear. It is hard to see how it could be when discerning a direct revelation.

¹ From the Latin, *re-ligere*.

² Alex Wildwood, *A Faith to Call our Own*: 9, 25 – 6, 44

³ In Young Friends' General Meeting, *Who Do We Think We Are?*: 74

⁴ See Stephen Priest, in Ted Honderich, Ed., *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy* 643

⁵ Elizabeth Brown and Alec Davison, *Journeying the Heartlands: Exploring Spiritual Practices of Quaker Worship* (London: The Kindlers, 2009) 24

⁶ Albert Einstein, *The World As I See It* (New York: Citadel Press, 2006) 31

⁷ A reference to Baruch Spinoza, a seventeenth century Jewish philosopher who equated God with Nature, seeing mind and matter as just two of the infinite attributes of the one primal Substance he called 'God'. See Keith Ward, *God: A guide for the perplexed* 161 – 2

⁸ Jonathan Dale, *Beyond the Spirit of the Age* 10

⁹ Revealed theology is distinguished from natural theology. It is seen as the self-disclosure of God to humanity; God is perceived as revealing unnaturally to humans, especially through 'mighty acts' (as at Pentecost Acts 2, esp. 2:11). See Stephen Priest, in Ted Honderich, Ed., *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy* 816

¹⁰ This is also true for members of some other faiths.

¹¹ See Above in this Chapter, sections 2.1 and 2.2

Non-theist Friends deny the very existence of divine revelation. For Gross¹ there is no God outside the laws of nature and the workings of the human mind. Cresson² describes a religion without God, immortality or spirituality. All behaviour is controlled by 'surrounding environments', not 'influences from other realms'. 'Environment' replaces 'God', 'self' or 'mind', as the initiator of actions. This statement is extraordinary, denying freedom from any but crude stimulus-response behaviours and rejecting human will. Perceptions of God may be fraught with difficulty but denial of the role of the mind in decisions is impossible to accept. In denying consciousness of traditional 'transcendence' some non-theists appear to deny the significance of all human consciousness.

Cupitt³ saw the fact of evolution as evidence that humanity was not a unique metaphysical entity, outside nature, but a product of, and immersed in, nature. He concluded that, therefore, all human thinking was practical, about survival and flourishing. This is an oversimplistic approach. Consideration of human nature involves three central questions⁴:

1. Is human nature qualitatively or just quantitatively different from animal nature?
2. Is any one key feature definitional of human nature?
3. Is human nature good, bad or indifferent?

The one clear qualitative difference between human and animal nature is humankind's capacity for reflection upon its own behaviour⁵. It is definitional of human nature. The capacity to reflect is the basis of the view that humankind is 'in the image of God' and concerns over the origins of human altruism and ethics energise debates over the reality and nature of divinity.

Stevenson⁶ lists three ways in which human nature transcends mere biological existence:

1. Humans remember, and have emotions based upon prior experience. They anticipate the future, balancing prudence with a sense of enquiry and adventure.
2. Humans relate to others in moral ways, transcending prudent self-interest and family, common gene-based, interests, to consider the interests of others. This is altruism.

¹ Philip Gross, in David Boulton, Ed., *Godless for God's Sake: Non-theism in Contemporary Quakerism* (Dent: Dales Historical Monographs, 2006.) 31

² Os Cresson, in David Boulton, Ed., *Godless for God's Sake: 45 – 6* He writes as a Quaker and a 'religious naturalist'

³ Don Cupitt, *The Sea of Faith* 187

⁴ Michael Ruse, in, Ted Honderich, Ed., *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy* 402

⁵ Some would express caution over claims that this represents a qualitative difference as there is extensive evidence, of altruistic and social behaviour and of sophisticated communication modes within some animal species. The sophistication of human language and, crucially, development of a written language, facilitating reflections over historical time, do suggest that humans represent a qualitatively different species in this respect.

⁶ Leslie Stevenson, *Open to New Light: 1 – 3*

3. Humans have ideals, which they care about, disinterestedly, often sharing those ideals with others, facilitating morality towards them¹.

All three features relate to Quaker conceptions of divinity, as valorising 'living adventurously'², selfless compassion and the values/ideals they hold.

Williams,³ approaching similar issues, identifies four basic human dispositions:

1. To pursue resources, to satisfy needs or desires.
2. To reproduce.
3. Altruistic attitudes towards relatives and friends.
4. Understandings of reciprocity, leading to altruistic behaviour towards non-relatives.

1. and 2. result in competition between individuals; 3. and 4. in selfless behaviour.

Williams⁴ explains that science cannot account for reciprocal altruism. Natural selection, operating on gene frequencies, suggests that only altruism towards those sharing the same genes is adaptive⁵, selfishness being the adaptive response to non-relatives. The social sciences do present a possible explanation. Help someone and they are likely to reciprocate later. This requires uniquely human reflection upon behaviour and its possible consequences. It is open to abuse; individuals may take but not reciprocate. Behaviour such as this, whilst, arguably, explicable as resulting from social evolution, is described as divine, raising the inevitable question, has humankind created God in its own image, rather than the reverse? Such thoughts undoubtedly underlie the non-theist Quaker position, but its scope within Friends is wider. Whilst reciprocity, as a phenomenon, may well have evolved, have material causes, the impulse for individuals to show it and forgo the short term advantages of failing to do so can be seen as divine. For Quakers⁶ spiritual transformation explains the wider spread of altruism within humankind. By it humanity's true nature, the 'Seed', grows, and humans approach 'perfection', self-realisation. Neither 'natural selection' or social science models take account of the reinforcement of human altruism by its self-realising effects.

The dominant Judaeo-Christian view has been that human nature was bad, 'Fallen', corrupt, dependent for salvation upon the grace of God. This view was reversed by Rousseau⁷ and

¹ This can, however, lead to a less moral approach to others not sharing those ideals.

² *Quaker Faith and Practice*, 1.02. 27

³ Patricia A. Williams, *Quakerism: A Theology For Our Time* 123 – 5

⁴ Patricia A. Williams, *Quakerism: A Theology For Our Time* 129, 137

⁵ 'Adaptive' is used in this sense to mean 'of value in promoting the survival and reproduction of individuals exhibiting such features and of the genes responsible for them'.

⁶ This is also true of Taoism, Hinduism and Buddhism.

⁷ Jean- Jacques Rousseau (1712 – 78); best known for his political philosophy.

the Romantic Movement¹, suggesting that the young, innocent, child was truly good, the 'noble savage'. Evil resulted from corrupting influences experienced during life. This view was rejected by early evolutionists², convinced of a 'brute nature' of the ape within human nature. Freud³ emphasised that there was both an innate and an acquired element to human nature. Each was a product of both an inherited nature and an acquired past. It was inappropriate to apportion blame or to feel guilt automatically for failings. Effectively, he condemned the idea that 'sin' had to be entirely the result of failure by the sinner. Whilst true, in most cases individuals have a choice in their actions.

4.5 God Leads/Guides/Teaches. (2.63%)

Haines⁴ described listening for 'gentle whispers', telling her how to live in 'greater harmony with heaven'. She was relying upon her experiences of divinity and her discernment of divine virtue to guide her behaviour; a fully intuitive approach. Such approaches are grounded in personal metaphors for God, notably as shepherd, comforting and leading his flock⁵. Allen⁶ describes that many Quakers feel 'led' or 'convinced' to action, but are reluctant to name the divine, the source of such impulses. She asks if this reflects doubts as to the divinity of the leading or if it is a reluctance to seem 'over-familiar' with God. Such reluctance could, equally, stem from discomfort over perceptions of a supernatural God, issuing demands. 'Divine impulses', Quakers see as moving individuals and communities towards 'the best we can aspire to'⁷. In spite of reservations concerning the nature of the Divine, where there is doubt as to the 'divine' nature of an impulse to action, this invariably concerns the rightness of the action; the 'divine' is universally equated with the good.

A sense of divine leading is central to the Quaker tradition⁸, requiring discipline in discerning the nature of the leading, through individual contemplation, meeting for worship and meetings for worship for business. Quaker discernment seeks 'God's will', not by majority decision or the preferences of influential individuals, but by universal acceptance⁹. Such discernment requires humility and open-ness to the views of others, whilst not surrendering sincerely held views. The expectation exists that, if all listen for the divine voice together and respect each other's perceptions of this, God's guidance can be discerned. All have a

¹ Romanticism was an artistic, literary and philosophical movement of the late eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century in Europe.

² Such as Thomas Henry Huxley, *Collected Essays Vol. 9 Evolution and Ethics and other essays* (London, Macmillan, 1894)

³ Sigmund Freud, see: P. Robinson, *Freud and his Critics* (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 1993)

⁴ Deborah Haines, 'Living in Harmony With Heaven on Earth', in, *Quaker Faith and Practice*, 23.52 1978

⁵ Janet Scott, *What Cans't Thou Say?:* 65

⁶ Beth Allen, *Ground and Spring:* 31

⁷ Beth Allen, *Ground and Spring:* 42

⁸ John Punshon, *Testimony and Tradition:* 88

⁹ *Quaker Faith and Practice* 3.02 'In our meetings for worship we seek God's will for ourselves and for the gathered group'.

common purpose, believing that every activity in life should be subject to such guidance¹; albeit perceived in many ways. When individuals are led to act contrary to their material interests, such leadings are universally perceived as 'divine'.²

Some have sought to speculate on the mental processes involved in perceiving inward leadings. Jung³ regarded 'God' as guidance towards unity in the psyche, bringing wholeness, reconciling self-regarding desires and antagonisms with a sense of the good.

Cupitt⁴ described sensations of 'grace' and 'inspiration', felt to be 'given', but questioned if that was from a God 'out there' or from his own subconscious mind. Divine intervention was no more verifiable in the mind than in the external world. Friends are aware of such doubts, but seek the truth, the virtuous course, in each situation, accepting that the paths by which individuals discern it are many and varied⁵.

4.6 Father/Parent who has His own Children/People. (1.96%)

I divide this Feature group into the following categories, which I consider in turn:

4.6.1. God as Father/Parent.

4.6.2. God has His own Children/People.

4.6.1. God as Father/Parent. (0.27%)

In the aftermath of World War One, London Yearly Meeting⁶ affirmed that 'The Fatherhood of God', as revealed by Jesus Christ, led to a 'brotherhood which knows no restriction of race, sex or social class'⁷. Claiming a common Father implied that all were related, providing firm foundations for calls for inclusiveness and mutual support. Macmurray⁸ described that primitive communities were united by a shared commitment to their own god or gods, but, not sharing their god with other communities, they felt no unity with them. Mature religion needed to be universal; if all shared commitment to the same, monotheistic, God, all were united in fraternity. Such a utopian condition still proves elusive.

¹ Timothy Ashworth, in Timothy Ashworth and Alex Wildwood, *Rooted in Christianity, Open to New Light*: 85 – 6

² Pierre Ceresole, Quoted in Geoffrey Durham, *The Spirit of the Quakers* 212

³ Carl G. Jung, *Selected Writings* 25

⁴ Don Cupitt, *Taking Leave of God* 6

⁵ Roswitha Jarman, *Breakthrough to Unity: The Quaker way held within the mystic traditions* (London: The Kindlers, 2010) 32

⁶ This was the title of the Yearly Meeting, the Quaker meeting with ultimate authority for British Quakers, at that time. It was later renamed Britain Yearly Meeting. It was reflecting upon words of John Woolman, 'A Plea for the Poor', Ch. 10, in, Phillips P. Moulton, Ed. *John Woolman: The Journal and Major Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971) 255 'May we look upon our treasures, the furniture of our houses, and our garments, and try whether the seeds of war have nourishment in these our possessions'. They were drawing links between social inequalities and the causes of war.

⁷ *Quaker Faith and Practice* 23.16 'Foundations of a True Social Order', approved by London Yearly Meeting 1918

⁸ John Macmurray, *Search for Reality in Religion* 36 – 7

Scott¹ contrasted two personal metaphors for God: as a 'parent, teaching, feeding; caring for her/his children', or as a 'father-like authority figure.....concerned at human waywardness'. She lamented the dominant male imagery associated with God in most traditions, with its wide-ranging and, largely negative, effects on the perceived status of women. Maternal images see divinity, for example, 'as a birthing and nurturing Power sustaining the whole of Creation'². They emphasise relationship, the closer for its implications of sharing a common womb.

Priestland³ described much religious guilt as traceable to childhood feelings of 'naughtiness', risking losing the love of parents. Equally unhelpful was longing for God as a 'super-parent', omniscient and interventionist, a protector against life's contingencies, prolonging immaturity and dependency. In contrast, Benson⁴ emphasised Fox's insistence that Christ restored human dependence upon God. This is, however, open to many understandings. Faith, trust, in the dependability of divine love frees individuals from fear and opens them to embrace 'the other'. Jung⁵ rejected Jesus'⁶description of God as a loving, caring Father, as sentimental, encouraging dependency and discouraging growth towards maturity and wholeness. Jesus used, for God, *abba* ('daddy'), the trusting word of an infant, and *pater*, 'origin', 'protector'⁷. He encouraged trust in God, obviating the need for excessive prudence, allowing a life of adventurous self-giving⁸. Such radical trust forms the basis of the Quaker invocation to 'live adventurously', to take every opportunity to use one's gifts and talents for the service of God and the common good⁹. Ceresole¹⁰ felt that images of an all-loving, all-powerful, God were incompatible with human experience. He noted Christ's last reported words, on the cross: 'My God.....why hast thou forsaken me?'¹¹ Whilst 'the Father' had abandoned Christ, and humankind, 'the Spirit' had not, and was calling everyone to 'a higher state of unity and peace, reached through and beyond sacrifice'. This is to assert that self-sacrifice and suffering aid spiritual growth, but only if one had faith that there was meaning, if not in some awful event or loss, then in the world in which it occurred and that one's own responses, to such suffering and to life generally, had meaning and value. Burnell¹² quoted the Beatitude 'Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted', reminding Friends that the Latin root of 'comfort' means 'strength', not ease. Through suffering one drew strength and blessing.

¹ Janet Scott, *What Can'st Thou say?:* 65, 77, 81

² Alex Wildwood, *A Faith to Call our Own:* 10, 27

³ Gerald Priestland, *Reasonable Uncertainty* 60

⁴ Lewis Benson, *A Universal Christian Faith* 24

⁵ See Jack H. Wallis, *Jung and the Quaker Way* 103 – 4 and Carl G. Jung, *Selected Writings* 23

⁶ E.g. *Matt.* 7: 9 – 11

⁷ Michael Hampson, *God Without God:* 14

⁸ See, for example, *Matt.* 6: 25 – 34

⁹ *Quaker Faith and Practice* 1.02.27

¹⁰ Quoted in Geoffrey Durham, *The Spirit of the Quakers* 203 – 4

¹¹ *Matt.* 27: 46

¹² S. Jocelyn Burnell, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 21.66 1989

A sense that it enforces immaturity, however, is a common objection to Christian observance. A common justification for doubting 'God' concerns 'his' failure to intervene to relieve the suffering of innocents¹, reflecting widespread difficulty grasping the reality of contingency in life and desire for a protective parent, God.

Faith that there is meaning and purpose to life, that all life shares a common, divine, parent, so all are 'siblings', with a duty of care to one another, provides no individual assurances. It can, however, empower many to find meaning and strength to endure the trials of life, through reflecting that others are equally distressed, so seeking to help them. In this way, through self-transcendence, many are healed, emotionally and even physically.

4.6.2. God has His own Children/People. (1.70%)

In the following discussion I adopt the policy found in the texts analysed, using these terms loosely, to indicate Quakers as a community, but also in the sense of relationship; all were children of God².

For Scott³, Jesus revealed God 'in homeless children, refugees, everyone'. Everyone was a 'child of God....precious and loved'; an inclusive imagery, invoking 'that of God' in all humankind. Oestreicher⁴ saw the mystery as, not that Jesus had become like God, but that 'all my brothers and sisters have'. Through Jesus he had discovered the uniqueness of each person, the religious imperative to value all, as equals.

Quakers seek not to judge but to act in solidarity with everyone, to bring them to conviction of the Quaker way⁵. This requires humility, however much Friends feel they embrace the truth. It also requires persistence, even in the face of apparent failure. Punshon⁶ advocated rejecting a narrow path towards a solitary encounter with God in favour of a broader one of common experience, working out the meaning and significance of life in the society of others. Rejecting a purely private religion, Friends should seek and celebrate direct apprehension of the divine, then share it with others in community, encouraging, enlightening and, where necessary, correcting one another's insights⁷. Their challenge was to retain their Quaker faith and witness, but not to separate from the wider world; to be a real community in the world, for the sake of the world, spreading the Quaker message⁸; to be 'patterns...examples'¹.

¹ John Hick, *Who, or What, is God? and Other Investigations* (London: SCM Press, 2008) 3 quoted Antony Flew, on the difficulty in seeing God as a loving Father when someone close, especially a child, is suffering from a terminal illness and 'the heavenly Father reveals no sign of concern'.

² *Quaker Faith and Practice* 1.02.31

³ Janet Scott, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 26.50 1980

⁴ Paul Oestreicher, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 26.53 1981

⁵ John Punshon, *Testimony and Tradition*: 25

⁶ John Punshon, *Testimony and Tradition*: 57

⁷ Gerald Priestland, *Reasonable Uncertainty* 21

⁸ John Macmurray, *Search for Reality in Religion*

Dale² described how, whilst early Friends' sought to live on earth in the Spirit, so not on the world's terms, that approach had declined among Liberal Friends. They saw 'the world', not as antagonistic to the Spirit but as the context in which the Spirit appears. This was too one-dimensional, worldly. Dale was, once again, affirming a dualism between 'spiritual' and 'worldly' values. The resolution of this ongoing dilemma is vital to the success of Liberal Quaker and wider religious faith communities in convincing others of their message. It hinges on how 'the world' is viewed. If Quakers choose to see all outside their own communities, a world in which all must live and work, as venal, corrupt, materialistic and selfish, then the instinct is to withdraw into an enclave, from which to condemn it. Just as Friends condemn wrong actions but seek 'that of God' in the actor(s), whilst condemning what is wrong in the world they must take their place in it and 'seek to mend it'³.

Trevett⁴ regarded radical, liberal-Liberal Quakers as overly individualistic in their beliefs, sometimes pressing for Friends to become a pressure group, seeking social change. Such individualistic beliefs, exercising their freedoms at the expense of others, she contrasted with 'the Quaker way', subordinating individual interests to those of the group. Dale⁵ complained of self-serving 'spirituality', ignoring any witness to the wider world. These two positions are widely seen as antagonistic. What many, for example Allen⁶, seek is tolerance of diversity and balance between concern for the inward lives of Friends and their meetings and for their witness in the world. Others, notably Best⁷, advocate the spiritual renewal of Quakerism, through greater spiritual orthodoxy, and an end to the 'mistrust of spiritual certainty'. This represents a call for clearer, more decisive, discernment of individual and corporate action, but it highlights both the strength and the weakness of Quaker business method, seeking the 'will of God'. It is open to 'minority veto'⁸. Perceiving that Friends today have no firm standard for membership, creating a community open to all, some feel that the character of the Quaker community will simply conform to the vision of those who join it⁹. Such views lead to advocacy of greater emphasis upon beliefs and behaviours which conform more to 'Quaker traditions'; possibly a form of Quaker 'conventional wisdom'? An alternative view is that, if the community feels truly in unity with God and with itself, then it will accommodate and convince others. For Macmurray¹⁰ the spiritual unity of a community required sharing of both labour and substance. Through co-operation in service

¹ George Fox. See *Quaker Faith and Practice* 19.32

² Jonathan Dale, *Beyond the Spirit of the Age* 55

³ *Quaker Faith and Practice*, 21.17 William Penn, 'True Godliness don't turn men out of the world, but enables them to live better in it, and excites their endeavours to mend it...'

⁴ Christine Trevett, *Previous Convictions* 59, 66, 109

⁵ Jonathan Dale, *Beyond the Spirit of the Age*

⁶ Beth Allen, *Ground and Spring*:

⁷ Simon Best, 'The Religious Society of Friends in Britain: Simple, Contemporary, Radical?' in *Friends' Quarterly* issue 2 (2010) 49 – 63 52 – 3

⁸ See Ben Pink Dandelion, *Open to Transformation* 46 – 7

⁹ Patricia Loring, 'Listening Spiritually' in *Corporate Spiritual Practice Among Friends* Vol. 2 (Philadelphia PA: Openings Press and Quaker Press of Friends General Council, 1999) 43 – 4

¹⁰ John Macmurray, *Selected Philosophical Writings* 154

the community was made real, bringing to birth 'the brotherhood of man'. He saw the real atheism as the refusal of human brotherhood. This seems particularly apposite given the expressions of anger and hurt so often seen in the columns of *The Friend*.

So much of the disunity lamented here hinges around religious beliefs. Whilst Quakers reject doctrines and creeds they are a religious community which attracts thoughtful individuals, many of whom have rejected more creedal churches. What will always divide that community are differences in how personally divinity is perceived, so the extent to which individuals sincerely feel to be led, in any remotely detailed way, by 'something' greater than themselves but acting within them. Such feelings are not available to all, leading to suspicions that those claiming them are valorising their own opinions. The value of love, compassion and respect for all is universal and this has always been the prime focus of Quaker faith.

4.7 Conclusions.

4.7.1 Spirit, Inward, Light, Seed/That of God, Soul, Leads.

All of these perceptions of divinity acting within 'the heart' claim relationship with that divinity. Whilst early Friends saw such relationship as asymmetrical, with the divine dominant, judging individuals and requiring obedience to its leadings, Liberal Quakers are often accused of the reverse. Faced with far greater understanding of human psychology and motivations they enthusiastically embrace 'that of God' within, emphasising their own role in discernment of virtuous action and the importance of their own experiences in mediating their leadings. This leads more conservative Liberal Friends to adopt a more belief based stance, seeing such attitudes as claiming a personal divinity and neglecting 'transcendence'.

'Spirit' and 'Light' are widely portrayed as inspiring and empowering individuals to virtue and 'wholeness'. The mode of such action is seen more as a human concern. Thus, the divine inspires action, embodies broad values, whilst human reason answers questions on how to implement those values. Quakers seek the 'will of God' which is equated with virtue. That there is a God and that God has a 'will' are beliefs shared by virtually all Friends but visualised by each personally, and provisionally. Quaker 'open-ness to new light' means that individual beliefs are largely held only tentatively. The sense of relationship with a mysterious divinity is, however, strong, rooted in relationship within community, primarily the Quaker community, but extending out, ultimately, to the whole of life.

Belief that there is 'that of God', a potential for virtue, in everyone is universally held. Its early Quaker roots in beliefs in an inward Christ, a second coming within the hearts of believers, is largely unacknowledged. More belief based Friends widely dismiss such current beliefs as in 'a little bit of good in everyone', ignoring the need for 'obedience', conscious effort to act upon inner leadings. They readily dismiss the 'performance' of others, showing

an orientation, on the single axis, towards belief/performance. Other Friends, who base their feeling of transformation less dogmatically, affirming a sense of relationship with a more mysterious divinity place greater emphasis upon relationships and not beliefs, even beliefs about 'right ordering', doing things the 'Quaker way'. They too may, however, lament indecision and inaction.

Many disagreements within Quaker communities stem from lack of experience of Quaker discernment processes. Accustomed to argument and majority decisions in the wider world, they fail to recognise the values of inclusiveness and of stillness and reflection as part of the process, sometimes dismissing 'traditional' Quaker beliefs as superstitious, not recognising their value in allowing all to assimilate and discern what has been heard, however this is perceived.

4.7.2. Meaning/ Reality of 'God', the Divine.

The debates surrounding these questions represent a regression to a strongly 'belief' position on the single axis. The experience of divinity and the transformational effects of relationship with a paradoxical but empowering 'God' are readily submerged in intellectual speculation. This loss means that the paramount importance of affirming a form of 'ultimate reality', reinforcing the need for empathy, compassion and reciprocity, embraced by virtually all faith traditions, is lost. Behaviour, as a result, becomes 'performance', driven either by idealistic notions¹ or by humanly agreed moral codes. The sense of inner debate with a source of inspiration and empowerment is lost. The bitterness and hurt of the arguments, where they occur, amply illustrate this.

Such criticisms apply to all protagonists, the evangelical non-theist and anti-Christocentric and equally evangelical, Christocentric believers. It is noteworthy that passionately held doctrinal beliefs, prevent mystical experience, the sense of loss of self in the mystery and paradoxes of contemplating meaning and being, at any level. By engaging the intellect, the prosaic, they inhibit focus upon the imagination, the poetic.

Such heights of disagreement are relatively rare in 'institutional' Quakerism. Analysis of the texts used overwhelmingly show a focus upon the experience, acknowledging the mystery and paradoxes of divinity, but appearing to revel in this, free to imagine and visualise, but, vitally, convinced of the religious message of respect and love for all. The position within 'popular' Quakerism is less clear, but shows worrying signs of reversion to a belief/performance orientation.

4.7.3 Creator, Word, Wisdom, Revealed in Nature.

Quakers today are more concerned with the nature of the world and universe, reflecting broad, societal, interests. Friends routinely refer to 'creation' affirming beliefs, at some

¹ The non-theist view that 'God' is a 'necessary fiction', representing an ideal to aspire to.

level, that divinity is involved in the very existence and the ongoing development of life and the cosmos. Emphasising their sense of relationship with the divine they see themselves as 'co-creators' with God; a view grounded in their belief that humankind is in the 'image of God', able, like God, to reflect and use its imagination to create truth and beauty, work for a just and integrated world. Arguably, much of the soul-searching, from early Friends onwards, over the relative roles of the 'Inward' and the 'Inner', the Light or Spirit and the Seed, that of God, derives from such perceptions. Certainly being able to use these abilities for the common good is seen as transformation and most Quakers today see it as resulting from a creative relationship, however ill-defined, with divinity, the 'ultimate reality' of virtue.

Most Liberal Friends affirm God as 'Ground of Being'; in some undefined way the ultimate cause of all 'being'. Early Friends focussed almost exclusively upon 'all' of humankind¹. Today Friends, with a growing Testimony to Stewardship², are concerned for all living things; God, as Ground of Being, unites all of life. Love, divine and human, should, therefore, extend to all life and to the physical processes required to sustain it³.

The sense of a 'Ground of all Being' facilitates mystical experience, uniting all, 'in God', the ultimate relationship. This makes God both present and beyond, grounding the being of all; a profoundly transformational experience, cementing a sense of belonging and sharing.

Specific references to the Word, Christ by Liberal Quakers are now rare, but serve to remind Friends of the difficulties with 'words', often inadequate for conveying meanings in relation to religious experience. Seeing that the Word, the divine, was needed to inform the words used, affirms the value of inner relationship with divinity, not with written statements and rules. The search for wisdom is implicit in much written about inner inspirations. The universal association of wisdom with insights of the heart⁴ affirms the transforming effect of relationship with a divinity within.

Liberal Quakers more often affirm natural than 'revealed', scriptural, theology. Friends describe numinous experiences in response to beauty in nature or in human artefacts, inspiring them to lose their sense of a separate self, becoming one with God and with the cosmos⁵. These show the transforming effect of relationship, again, with a divinity grounding all being, the sense of union encouraging compassion. Questions as to whether

¹ There are early Quaker references to other life forms, for example when George Fox condemned vanity in dress, seeing it as 'spoiling of the creation' John L. Nickalls,, Ed. *The Journal of George Fox* 206

² This affirms the need for stewardship of the whole of nature and natural resources; a commitment to conservation and sustainability.

³ This I discuss in Chapter 5 Section 5.6.2.5

⁴ With '...the promptings of love and truth in your hearts. Trust them as the leadings of God...' *Quaker Faith and Practice* 1.02.1

⁵ For example, Chris Cook, in Brenda Clifft Heales and Chris Cook, *Images and Silence* (Swarthmore Lecture, 1992) (London: Quaker Home Service, 1992) Chapter 5

divinity is 'inward' or 'inner' concern beliefs about human nature, perceptions of the transforming effects of relationship with the divine and the extent of human autonomy.

4.7.4. Father, Has His own Children/People.

God as an authoritarian Father is not a popular Liberal Quaker concept. Perceptions of God as male is widely regarded as leading to subordination of women, both in many churches and in the wider world. Such attitudes were resisted among early Friends and are by Liberal Friends, who also reject an authoritarian, in favour of a more compassionate God. Whilst the will of God is sought, Liberal Quakers affirm relationship, with a divinity which inspires, not commands. 'Obedience' is hearing inner inspirations which are discerned, individually and collectively through relationship and dialogue with 'Spirit'. God is seen as a loving parent, giving rise to life, much as God is Ground of Being, nurturing, but not by direct intervention in the world. Divinity strengthens and empowers, through relationship, with individuals and through their relationships with each-other. 'Holding in the Light' is not to petition for direct divine help but for God to embrace both those in trouble and those upholding them in a supportive relationship focussed upon present needs.

Quakers value community, seeking to know one another in 'the things that are eternal'¹. In modern times, with other responsibilities, Friends frequently know little of one another in things temporal, meeting, often, only for Sunday worship and little else. Much misunderstanding, over beliefs and the interpretation of experience, results from lack of the confidence to speak out gained from really knowing others in the meeting. Expressing and developing feelings of divine transformation and relationship require intimate, trusting, relationship with others to be open and so gain affirmation, both in beliefs and doubts.

Liberal Quakers are criticised as seeing themselves as guardians of morality, ethical pioneers and standard bearers², but also for unkindness³, using their tradition of plain speaking as an excuse for rudeness and inconsideration towards others. As individuals and as a religious community, Quakers engage in virtuous activities at every level, but also argue and behave badly at times; they are human. What is needed is to recognise and acknowledge that as fact and not seek to 'theologise' it, but seek its causes in the experiences of Friends, both in worship and in wider contexts.

4.8 Chapter Conclusions.

Much reviewed above affirms an open Quaker faith. It describes experiences of divinity as beyond understanding, acting within, inspiring and empowering the search for virtue, not for rigid adherence to moral rules. It expresses no firm beliefs as to the nature or mode of action of such divinity. This very open-ness, however, frees those, unsettled by or unable to

¹ *Quaker Faith and Practice* 1.02.18

² See, for example, letter of John Parkin *The Friend* Vol. 171 No. 5 2013

³ For example, rudeness, shown to domestic staff during a residential Quaker event. See Mary Penny, letter, in, *The Friend* Vol. 172 No. 26 2014

experience the mystery, to seek explanations of the bases of such experiences and this is where disagreement, dissension and hurt result. This is not because such questioning is morally evil, but because it challenges the experience and beliefs of others. The distinction between religious faith and beliefs is hard to maintain today¹. Many base their faith, that trust which empowers their words and actions, upon personal beliefs and models of divinity. If their beliefs are contradicted, this risks destabilising faith. Many Liberal Friends lack early Friends' certainty as to the reality, nature and power of God. As such, whilst they are freer of conventional doctrine, they are more pre-occupied with uncertainty over belief, inhibiting their open-ness to experience, so neither relationship nor transformation is felt emotionally. Some are, in consequence, confused and closer to the 'belief' end of the single axis. This is particularly true for those whose experience is confined to that of a single, often small, meeting and reading, if anything Quaker, just *The Friend*.

Current Quaker disagreements amongst writers to *The Friend*² concern two aspects of belief addressed in this chapter. The first is whether Quakerism remains 'rooted in Christianity'. *Quaker Faith and Practice*³ emphasises God, not Christ, and a 'God' acknowledged as mysterious. Liberal Friends largely feel empowered by their relationship with a mysterious divinity. All relationship, however, is most easily understood on a personal level, so most seek to 'personalise' God. Jesus, for many, reveals God in a way which allows such a 'personal' relationship, but others reject Jesus' unique importance and divorce ideas of the Light from those of Christ. Most Liberal Quakers reject Christian doctrines concerning the divine nature and atoning death of Jesus⁴. Liberal-Liberal Quaker 'universalists' affirm the equal validity of other faith traditions, even adopting elements of them. The result is that, whether in fact or merely perception, for many in popular Quakerism, Jesus' importance⁵ is lost. Again, the focus of Liberal Friends is deflected into debates concerning beliefs, distracting them from and undermining the emotional experience of relationship with the divine.

The second disagreement concerns the reality of God. As shown, the dominant, expressed Liberal Quaker view of divinity is as shrouded in mystery and paradox. Consequentially the debate over its 'reality' differs, intellectually, only quantitatively from that over the reality of, say, a pen, given current understanding⁶ of the mysterious nature of matter. Such is not the case emotionally. The majority of Quakers' faith is rooted in 'the divine'. Many⁷ call that divinity 'God' and value their relationship with God as transforming them, enabling them to seek meaning and virtue. What many of the protagonists in this debate grasp is that a

¹ Again, this reflects the, mistaken, assumption that all truths are empirically verifiable.

² As outlined in Chapter1, Section 1.1.1.

³ This represents the closest Quakerism gets to orthodoxy.

⁴ These concern his presumed divinity, virgin birth, miracle performances, atoning death, physical resurrection and ascension.

⁵ Strictly, the importance of beliefs concerning what Jesus represented and taught as a person, not as God.

⁶ This is derived from the science of Quantum physics.

⁷ This is clear from much written in *The Friend*.

virtuous approach can encompass differences in beliefs. Only when beliefs adversely affect behaviour do they become untenable, and both theist and non-theist Friends are seen regularly to fail in this respect, abandoning empathy and compassion in pursuit of 'their' vision of Truth.

These disagreements illustrate clearly a single axis concerning belief and behaviour. Those, at either of the poles in the disagreements described, adopt firmly belief based positions which produce stereotypical, defensive behaviour, dictated by their respective beliefs. Friends affirming paramount importance of religious experience, transforming them through relationship with a mysterious divinity retain an open, compassionate approach to all. In the texts analysed and particularly in *Quaker Faith and Practice* such an open approach is very largely upheld, suggesting a faith at the transformation/relationship pole of the single axis, but this is far less evident in much 'popular' Quaker thought.

CHAPTER 5. MODERN LIBERAL QUAKERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AND ITS IMPLICATIONS.

In this chapter I examine the ways in which modern Liberal Quakers perceive their relationship with God. To achieve this I discuss their expressed beliefs about the six features of relationship with God which I found most frequently referred to, listed in **Table 5.1**.

Table 5.1 The six features of relationship with God most frequently referred to by modern Liberal Quakers.

Feature	% Frequency of Occurrence
Faith	4.91
Truth	4.58
Experience/ Mysticism	3.89
Worship/ in Silence/ Wait on	3.70
Love/ Unity	3.46
Testimony/ Witness	2.92

The percentage figures presented for each feature represent their frequency of occurrence among all the features, both of God and relationship to God, scored in the study¹. The features are examined in turn. The chapter argues that 'institutional' Liberal Quakerism, overwhelmingly, affirms trust, in, emotional, inner, experience of a mysterious but benign God. This inspires Friends to seek the truth of their own condition and to be transformed into virtuous beings by their relationship with such a divinity. It portrays such relationship as enabling co-agency with God, in discernment and in on-going 'creation', sustaining loving communities and all of life. Such Liberal Quakerism is close to the transformation/relationship pole of the single axis. Some 'institutional' writers and many in 'popular' Liberal Quakerism, however, question the nature of divinity, of Truth, so losing faith, both in their experience of God and of leadings, often seeking to set up moral 'rules' as a substitute. They are closer to the belief/performance pole.

5.1 Faith. (4.91%)

Liberal Quakers equate 'faith' with trust. Leavitt² argued that trusting others required divine strength; it was not possible unaided. Trusting in God's support was difficult but the alternative was 'spiritual death'. Addressing human insecurity and mistrust of others, she affirmed the value of a trusting, transforming, relationship with God. Working for God, for divine values, Ceresole³ saw as faith, trusting that such values were worth striving for, which made one 'more alive, real and powerful'. Smith's⁴ faith brought God into her work,

¹ See Chapter 1 Section 1.4

² Mary Lou Leavitt, 'Star Wars – SDI: the Spiritual Challenge', in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 24.55 1987

³ Pierre Ceresole, in, 'Vivre Sa Verite' *Quaker Faith and Practice* 26.26 1935

⁴ Mary F. Smith, 'The Place of Prayer in Life', in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 20.08 1936

giving it dignity and value. Even if she failed in a task her faith was not lost. If she had worked for divine values this gave meaning to her efforts. Quaker faith enables openness to, and respect for, others¹. Faith in God, and in that of God in oneself, inspired faith in that of God in others. This may seem naïve. Stevenson² reminds Friends that prudence is a virtue, but applied thoughtfully, faith empowers, for example, work in conflict resolution, giving the confidence to be open to all arguments³. Faith, ‘a mystery held in a pure conscience’⁴ empowers in an undefinable way, acting with integrity, confident that, successful or not, one will be upheld emotionally.

Trevett⁵ felt that a robust Quaker faith depended upon individual and corporate relationships with God, ‘who’ was the object of faith. This demanded loyalty to the Quaker community, a demand which reflected her sense of disunity within Quaker communities over both faith and practice. Her comments raise questions for many Liberal Quakers as to what she meant by ‘God’ as the ‘object’ of faith, illustrating the very problems which concerned her. Loyalty is invaluable, but Liberal Quakers do not make it dependent upon firm ‘beliefs’. Punshon⁶ advocated ‘giving faith primacy over knowledge’. Commitment to a ‘clear religious position’ increased ‘spiritual understanding’. This has long been the Christian position; faith leading to understanding, not the reverse⁷. Faith in a benign divinity promotes faith in a world with meaning and purpose. Many, in an increasingly secular, developed, world question such confidence, and this cannot fail to affect Liberal Friends. Punshon’s faith, however, did require recognising the dark, both in him and in the world, not adopting a rosy view of the religious life. He was cautioning against naivety when adopting ‘healthy minded’⁸ religion. Liberal Quakerism promotes faith in the transforming effect of relationship with an inner divinity, however mysterious and its ‘saving’ effects of promoting feelings of self-realisation; a faith close to the transformation through relationship pole of the single axis, independent of dogmatic beliefs.

Rush, a non-theist, accepted that faith in divinity, for some, supported ‘lives of great beauty and integrity’, but rejected its imposition upon everyone⁹. She questioned faith in a transcendent God, limiting her vision of the God she rejected. Macmurray¹⁰, exploring ‘faith’, started from beliefs held in the absence of ‘factual’ experience; beliefs concerning the value of love and compassion. He then considered common experiences, where such beliefs were exemplified, to the benefit of all, concluding that faith completed reason, the

¹ Jane Stokes, unpublished writing, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice*, 23.64 1992

² Leslie Stevenson, *Open to New Light* 1 – 7

³ See, for example, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 24.47 Statement from the Quaker Council for European Affairs 1987 and 24.54 Sue Bowers and Tome Leimdorfer 1990

⁴ George Fox, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice*, 19.22

⁵ Christine Trevett, *Previous Convictions* 99, 103

⁶ John Punshon, *Testimony and Tradition*: 12 – 3

⁷ See, for example, Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: an Introduction* 181 – 2

⁸ See Chapter 1 Section 1.5.2.

⁹ Kitty Rush, in David Boulton, Ed., *Godless for God’s Sake*: 125

¹⁰ John Macmurray, *Search for Reality in Religion* 3

two confirming one another. This is not always so; showing compassion for others sometimes results in being abused or exploited. Experience, however, shows it is better, both for one's own peace of mind and for society generally, to have faith and occasionally be disappointed than to live forever mistrusting others. Macmurray's faith could be described as purely ethical and secular. He, however, criticised¹ the influence of ancient Greek dualisms on Christian faith, particularly those between 'spiritual' and worldly. 'Faith' became 'belief' in theories of the spiritual as transcendent, supernatural; uniquely leading to 'salvation' from a corrupt world. Faith was not belief but trust, giving 'fearless confidence'. He emphasised² Jesus' condemnation of defensive attitudes to life³. The contrast between trust in 'Spirit' and in humankind was false; both were divine. Trusting others is trusting God, just as loving others is to love God⁴. The secular-sacred distinction disappears. This is the Liberal Quaker view; all of life is sacred⁵ and faith can be represented in secular terms yet still be divine.

Many Liberal Friends link their faith to Jesus' life and teaching. Scott⁶ described, not Jesus, but the 'Christ-event' as valuable; his life and death, the resurrection experience, 'whatever that was'⁷ and the stimulus it gave to follow his teachings. To adopt Jesus' faith in God and the love and obedience that it enabled, allowing openness to 'outcasts and sinners', acceptance of all humankind with all its imperfections, illustrates the human ideal. The Spirit of Christ was the Spirit of God in Jesus, in which he had faith, and to which he responded, even to his death. Through his love and weakness Jesus gave hope and showed a way forward to a suffering people. Faith in the Christ-event thus becomes faith in God's redeeming purpose, stimulating Liberal Friends to work for a more just and compassionate society.

Scott⁸ did not, however, claim that Jesus was a unique revelation of God. The Light, shown in Christ, was also manifest in many other situations and faiths, always inspiring trust. Wildwood⁹ described Liberal Quakers unable to identify with Jesus, seeking 'a more personalised faith', which 'reveals vulnerability, accepts the reality of who and what one really is', encouraging receptiveness to change but addressing vulnerabilities and limitations. Arguably, the 'Christ-event' addresses all that Wildwood sought. Trevett¹⁰ feared the faith Wildwood sought risked vagueness, becoming 'a religion of self'. The reservations he addressed reflect a common Liberal Quaker rejection of doctrines about

¹ John Macmurray, *Search for Reality in Religion* 57, 71

² John Macmurray, *Selected Philosophical Writings* 194

³ For example, in the parable of the talents. *Matt.* 25: 14 – 30

⁴ *Mark* 12: 29 – 31

⁵ William G. Sewell, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 10.08 1977

⁶ Janet Scott, *What Can't Thou Say?:* 58 – 60

⁷ So there was no compulsion to view this as a literal event.

⁸ Janet Scott, *What Can't Thou Say?:* 61

⁹ Alex Wildwood, *A Faith to Call Our Own:* 96

¹⁰ Christine Trevett, *Previous Convictions* 99, 103

Christ¹, neglecting the message of the 'Christ-event'. Lampen² regrets lack of reference to Jesus by Liberal Quakers, suggesting that this represents a rejection of faith in those very doctrines, regrettable since the faith of Jesus is so inspiring. Faith in the Light of Christ in the heart is not a call on the supernatural, but reference to 'our search for our deepest truths', not about beliefs but about discernment and action.

Seeking to reinforce their faith, many Liberal Friends turn to a range of faith cultures and traditions, not necessarily rejecting Christian traditions, but finding other approaches helpful. This is acceptable to the Liberal Quaker, seeing all ways as leading to the same divine principles of reciprocity, empathy and compassion³.

Dale⁴ insisted that faith should not be confined to solitary communion with the divine, requiring practical embodiment in relationships with others. Individualistic faith views led to a 'relativistic morality and metaphysics', undermining corporate action⁵ as no-one could agree upon whether or how to act. The experiential nature of Quakerism means that individual faith and beliefs, based on different life experiences, levels of maturity and self-confidence, inspire different priorities. Faith in 'timeless', 'divine' values is difficult. Even principles of reciprocity have evolved as societies have learned to accept the common humanity of all 'classes', genders, and races of humankind⁶, leading some, even among Liberal Quakerism, confused as to what, exactly, to feel faith in. Liberal Friends emphasise the value of faith within the Quaker group, that actions can be discerned by compromise, listening and responding to others, seeking 'the will of God'. Dale was suggesting that such faith was not universally held. Young Friends⁷ rejected all distinctions between faith and action. Faith lay in the spiritual impulse to act, 'the action releasing the divine, the divine releasing the action'⁸. It emerged from experience, of a 'patchwork of emotions, stimuli, people', inspiring response to all these. Belief in 'God' or 'Truth' begged the question as to how faith develops. Based upon experiences, it was dynamic, developing and changing in nature.⁹

Friends seek to be faithful, both to Quaker values and Quaker communities. Allen¹⁰ describes 'faithfulness and discipleship, requiring addressing negative aspects, both of 'self' and of the world, acknowledging them, fitting them, with integrity, into personal

¹ Devised by the church since Jesus' death.

² John Lampen, 'Inspired by Jesus' in *The Friend* Vol.172 No. 13 2014

³ For example, much in the practice of modern Islam, the caste system of Hinduism etc. does not conform to these principles. Neither does much of the practice of fundamentalist Christianity in relation to homosexuality and much modern medical practice, but these are all human, religious (mis?)interpretations of central faith traditions which all do share. See Karen Armstrong, *The Case for God* Chapter 1.

⁴ Jonathan Dale, *Beyond the Spirit of the Age* 19 – 20

⁵ Jonathan Dale, *Beyond the Spirit of the Age* 24, 50

⁶ The evolution of Quaker understandings around the morality of slavery is a classic example.

⁷ Young Friends' General Meeting, *Who Do We Think We Are?* 143, 149 – 50

⁸ An echo of Ceresole, above, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 26.26, Pierre Ceresole, *Vivre Sa Verite* 1935.

⁹ Young Friends' General Meeting, *Who Do We Think We Are?* 142

¹⁰ Beth Allen, *Ground and Spring*: 78

philosophies and theologies, and seeking to correct them'. Such a task involves both practical experience and reflection. Attempting it within a Quaker community requires faith, both in personal conceptions of divinity and in the community. The process transforms, through a profound sense of relationship with God and that of God in all involved. Lonely individuals often seek refuge in Quaker communities. Some come with religious convictions, some to escape damaging previous experiences of religious beliefs and practice, others lack any religious experience. All seek relationship with others. If upheld by the Quaker community, their faith develops. Everyone has faith, readiness to accept a bigger view of reality than the physical evidence justifies. This can be faith in nature, its beauty, intricacy and unity, in human creativity, in the arts or sciences, in a sense of inner guidance and empowerment, or in any combination of these. Each can be perceived as divine, transcending the mundane. All sincerely held faith is transformative, enabling judgements as to what really matters¹. Lewis² believed 'that the sun has risen, not just because I see it but because by it I see everything else'. He had faith in God because that faith reinforced his view of the world. For some, however, religious faith is elusive. They may despise as superstition, or admire as empowering, the faith of others³. Wittgenstein⁴ described his need for certainty, which he found in faith, concluding that redemption was overcoming doubt and finding faith, not through the intellect but through the emotions. This is the Quaker experience, of finding faith in a mysterious divinity, through the contemplation of relationship possible in the stillness of worship⁵.

Cupitt⁶ saw faith, not as a generalisation from facts or a hypothesis to account for them, but as the power to defy adverse facts and overcome evil; faith was that evil will not have the last word. Faith was a virtue, not a means to esoteric knowledge of the occult. It was practical, a way of binding to religious requirements; the 'will of God'. Cupitt is widely cited by Liberal Quaker non-theists⁷, but this view of faith accords with that of Quakers holding a 'semi-realist' view of a deity real but beyond explanation⁸. Dandelion⁹ describes his faith in terms of its implications for actions, not beliefs. It compels him to live differently from the demands of the world, adopting different norms, not deferring to power, treating all humanity equally, not supporting institutions which support or do wrong, and living for justice, peace and the integrity of creation. Many in the world pursue similar ideals, basing them upon different world-views. Some would deny that their view was 'religious' at all; therein lies the paradox of experiential faith.

¹ Alister McGrath, in Mick Gordon and Chris Wilkinson, *Conversations on Religion* (London: Continuum, 2008) 99 – 102

² Quoted in Alister McGrath, in Mick Gordon and Chris Wilkinson, *Conversations on Religion* 102

³ William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* 175 – 6

⁴ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value* 2nd edition, Transl. Peter Winch Ed. G.H. Von Wright and Heikki Nyman (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998)[1980] 33e

⁵ See *Quaker Faith and Practice* 2.38 Conference: *Exploring the fundamental elements of Quakerism* 1986

⁶ Don Cupitt, *Taking Leave of God* 54 – 5

⁷ See, for example, David Boulton, *The Trouble With God* 179 - 185

⁸ See Ben Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 192 – 4

⁹ Ben Pink Dandelion, *Celebrating the Quaker Way* (London: Quaker Books, 2009) 5

Faith, inner assurance, can be mistaken. Kelly¹ listed three stages in religious development:

1. Primitive credulity; the blind trust of the infant.
2. Doubt and criticism, found in adolescents and in those confined to rational investigation. This can be said to apply to some Liberal Quakers, causing many of the problems highlighted in the thesis.
3. Faith, leaving behind both belief in a benevolent, powerful God and tangles of intellectual enquiry. Serene, simple, but not naïve, it sits above intellectual doubts.

Liberal Friends, generally, uphold faith and faithfulness to their largely shared, values. Some become concerned over intellectual beliefs. Whilst debate can be stimulating, encouraging self-examination, when such concerns are voiced stridently and evangelically within the Quaker community this causes dissension, destroying what Quakers clearly value about faith, the inspiration it gives towards compassion and love².

5.2 Truth. (4.58%)

‘Truth’ is complex, its meaning context-specific. MacIntyre,³ described:

1. Logical/analytical truths.⁴
2. Empirical truths.⁵
3. Emotive truths.⁶

The dominant understanding of truth in the western world today is empirical, but seeking to impose empirical tests of truth upon concerns about the Divine and ethics is problematic⁷. In theology, Jung⁸ insisted that anything which was real was true. Beliefs may be delusions but real, so true, for that person at that time. Belief in God, if sincerely held, is true, so real, for the believer, but not necessarily for others. Such ‘belief’ is an emotion, synonymous with faith, trust. Farrer⁹ described that figurative poetry, expressing emotive truths, spoke to the heart, but also illuminated the real object it described. Metaphor was a language of both description and emotion, addressing and combining what the writer sees, in the heart, in dreams and in the real world. Whilst ‘God’ and ‘soul’ were real existents, they needed

¹ Thomas Kelly, *The Gathered Meeting and Reality of the Spiritual World* 18 – 9, 22

² See, for example, Eva I. Pinthus, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 23.04 1987

³ Alasdair MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics* 247 Citing A. J. Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1971) [1936]

⁴ Found in logic and mathematics.

⁵ Found in science and common-sense knowledge.

⁶ Found in both ethics and theology.

⁷ See, for example, Rex Ambler, Ed., *Truth of the Heart*: 180

⁸ Jack H. Wallis, *Jung and the Quaker Way* 97

⁹ Austin Farrer, ‘Poetic Truth’ in *Reflective Faith* 27, 29, 33 – 4

metaphorical description. This supports the 'semi-realism' of liberal-Liberal Friends¹. Truths about God, Spirit, soul, the Light, Farrer² saw as all poetic, 'more than' literal, conveying wider truths than those confined to specific contexts. To assert that 'God is love' was not to portray a loving 'being' but to affirm the power of loving action to solve human problems. That Farrer and Boulton³, 'romantic' theist and non-theist respectively, should choose the same example to make their point amply illustrates the convergence between much non-theistic and theistic religious thought. The truth of a religious faith, for James⁴, lay in its value to the individual and of the individual to the world when guided by such a faith. Religious truths are, thus, ultimately about humankind, not about doctrinal beliefs.

The current Quaker book of discipline⁵ describes⁶ 'Truth' as used, variously, as a synonym for God, for the convictions arising from worship, and for a way of life. Liberal Quakers see 'promptings of love and truth' as 'the leadings of God'⁷, representing truth, guides to life. Addressing potential conflicts in understandings, Sharman⁸ affirmed that love and truth were, indeed, compatible. Seeking truth one loves what is real, sincere, not what is 'duty or fancy' and, unless one speaks the truth, there can never be love. Being honest to others was 'real', but only if grounded in love. No decision or action shows integrity unless its motivations are sincere. Out of fear, one could betray truth; out of bitterness or self-righteousness, betray love⁹.

Liberal Friends may seek 'doctrinal', 'objective', truth in what they profess, but Carter¹⁰ insisted that Quakerism was a religion of uncertainty, 'what we apprehend of truth is limited and partial, and experience may set it all in a new light'. Uncertainty stimulated continued seeking. Assuming certainty in matters of religious belief¹¹ resulted in either disappointment or self-righteousness and judgement of others. Creeds¹², statements of belief, for Rowntree,¹³ were only milestones; doctrines mere interpretations. Truth was a seed, with the power of growth, 'not a fixed crystal, be its facets never so beautiful'; however sure and reassured one felt, it was always possible that there was more to be experienced and learned. Some Liberal Friends, however, seek to impose limits to religious uncertainty.

¹ Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 193 See also above, Section 5.1

² Austin Farrer, cited in Leslie Stevenson, *Open to New Light*: 145 – 7

³ David Boulton, *Real Like the Daisies or Real Like 'I Love You'?*

⁴ William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* 389 – 90

⁵ *Quaker Faith and Practice*

⁶ *Quaker Faith and Practice*, pre- amble to 19.34

⁷ Affirmed in *Quaker Faith and Practice*, 1.02.1 *Advices and Queries* are the closest Friends get to a creed, a set of queries and statements intended to aid Friends in self- examination.

⁸ Alison Sharman [Leonard], in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 20.75 1986

⁹ Margarethe Lachmund, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 24.34 1958

¹⁰ Charles F. Carter, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 26.39 1971

¹¹ Assuming certainty in science is equally misguided.

¹² These are statements of belief, often used as the basis for acceptance into a specific religious sect or denomination.

¹³ John Wilhelm Rowntree, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 27.21 1905

Trevett¹ urged distinction between ‘a pluralism additional to a single God or Truth and a pluralism of Truth’, a demand for a shared Quaker belief in a single God. How that ‘God’ was perceived was a matter of individual experience, but she rejected debate over the reality of God. She was calling for ‘semi-realism’, Dandelion’s² term for acceptance that God is, in some way, ‘real’ but that statements about the nature of God are human constructs. He³ sees a potential threat to the singularity of Truth, to universal Quaker acceptance of the reality of God, in a non-creedal belief system, but only if this is perceived as giving universal licence over belief⁴. Whether the non-realism of Boulton and others⁵ comprises ‘universal licence’ is debatable. I suggest above⁶ that non-realism assertions concern semantics not substance.

Trevett⁷ portrayed the suggestion that Truth was pluralistic⁸ and that personal ‘truths’ were a matter of individual leading or personal preference as often heard from Liberal Friends, questioning what faith and values could be passed on to later generations. Dale⁹, celebrated Liberal Quaker liberation from religious superstitions and absolutism, but feared that relativism and erosion of expressions of ultimate purpose, by nihilistic reasoning, were emerging. Truth risked becoming fragmentary and subjective. Such concerns are rejected, by humanists¹⁰ and others, as suggesting that ‘ultimate purpose’ is impossible without belief in God. Liberal Quakers may be accused of moral relativism and of non-theism, but the two are not necessarily causally related. If Truth concerns values, of love, compassion, reciprocity these are not disputed among Liberal Quakers, though they may not live up to them. They all see them as eternal and divine¹¹, but disagree as to what exactly that means. The same values are accepted by any person of good will. The point of disagreement becomes whether such values are seen as ‘ultimate’, a non-controversial term lacking necessary theistic overtones, or as, in some way, theistic. To deny that anyone of good will is capable of understanding ‘ultimate’ values is uncharitable and intellectually unsustainable. Liberal Quakers do, however, find embracing such values transformational and acting upon them as aided by their sense of relationship, both with one another and an inner divinity. Humanists¹² claim the benefits of human, but not divine, relationships. Liberal Quakers, I suggest, feel empowered by the added sense of relationship with divinity, making actions more meaningful to them.

¹ Christine Trevett, *Previous Convictions* 36; quoting Pink Dandelion, *A Sociological Analysis of the Theology of Quakers*: 313

² Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 193

³ Pink Dandelion, *A Sociological Analysis of the Theology of Quakers*: 313

⁴ In more colloquial terms, ‘if literally anything goes in terms of what Quakers believe’

⁵ See above Chapter 4 section 4.3.2.

⁶ See above, Chapter 4 section 4.3.2

⁷ Christine Trevett, *Previous Convictions* 36

⁸ If so it was redundant; there was no ‘ultimate reality’.

⁹ Jonathan Dale, *Beyond the Spirit of the Age* 43, 48 – 9

¹⁰ See, for example, H.J. Blackham, *Humanism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1968)

¹¹ Whilst disagreeing as to what these terms mean!

¹² And all of atheist or non-theist views.

What ‘truths’ are open to dispute, both among Liberal Friends and elsewhere, are particular ethical ones, concerning abortion, euthanasia, homosexuality etc., as well as those underlying some of Friends’ individual testimonies¹. These are practical derivatives of ultimate and/or divine T(t)ruth, and are, indeed, relative, in that they evolve with the development of human understanding of the issues involved.

In pursuit of selfish desires, individuals may ignore ultimate truths or seek to circumvent them by sophistry²; now there are simply more modes of sophistry, questioning the very existence of such truths. Wildwood³ denied that ‘Truth’ was either a philosophical notion or a matter of ethical principles, seeing it as requiring obedience to something ‘alive and dependable within; a revelation... to all’. He asserted belief in an inner, commanding and upholding voice. Whether such a voice was innate or ‘inward’ is left unclear, as paradox. What mattered was response to it.

Pilgrim⁴ proposes a model of Liberal Friends’ approaches to, doctrinal, ‘truths’, arguing that Quakers have always adopted a ‘heterotopic’ stance, self-defining by creating dissonant contexts⁵. This impulse has now turned inward, celebrating, even prescribing, differences in beliefs, resulting in three types of modern Quaker:

1. ‘Exclusivists’ maintain an unchanging form of doctrinal unity.
2. ‘Syncretists’ maintain unity by continually adding new layers of belief, creating an ever-widening sphere of beliefs which, if not shared, are tolerated by all.
3. ‘Individualists’ follow their own personal belief path.

For Dandelion⁶ this over-emphasises the role of ‘believing’. He asserts a ‘behaviour creed’, an orthopraxy, as defining Liberal Quakerism. The required behaviours are silent waiting together in worship, acceptance of others’ ministry without rancour, and vote-less decision-taking, seeking the ‘will of God’, however perceived. These are accepted as effective ways of seeking spiritual guidance, a concept universally valued⁷. The mode of belief is, thus, prescriptive. Belief in progressivism and being open to new Light⁸ has led to the view that the group can only know Truth personally, provisionally and partially, not just affirming the value of religious seeking, but insisting that Truth can never be found. This controversial

¹ See below, section 5. 6

² See George Fox on ‘deceit’ in Chapter 3 section 3.1

³ Alex Wildwood, *A Faith to Call Our Own*: 83

⁴ Gale Pilgrim, ‘Taming Anarchy’: 206 – 225

⁵ For example, in the seventeenth century, using their appearances before magistrates as an opportunity to set out their beliefs, rather than defend them-selves. See George Fox’s account of his trial in Derby in 1650, in, John L.Nickalls, Ed., *The Journal of George Fox* 51 – 2

⁶ Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 137, 150 – 3

⁷ This concept is understood in different ways. The importance of such guidance to Quakers is understood, not least from the frequency of reference to the Spirit (10.00% of all feature references) in this study.

⁸ These were two of the founding principles of Liberal Quakerism. See Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 129 – 133

view of religious faith recognises the mystery of divinity. Liberal Quakers now largely accept that absolute truths, intelligible intellectually, are illusions and that actions must be determined by experience and intuition. This affirms Quaker worship as the vehicle for such experiences and discerning the resulting intuitions. Macmurray¹ insisted that, if intellectual activity alone was used as a standard of truth, it always led to division. All, tentatively and continuously, sought a truth grounded in their own experience.

Scott² sought 'living truths', difficult to express in words, but summarised tentatively in a series of propositions:

1. All are capable of response to the Divine Spirit.
2. This Spirit/Light/God reaches out to all.
3. If followed it leads out of 'sin', into 'unity with the divine will' and ...
4. into unity with, love and care for, all humankind.

The Christian language used would not appeal to all Liberal Quakers, but the message is universal. It describes transformation through relationship with a divine Spirit, available to everyone, but requiring selfless compassion for others. Truth lay in paradox; certainty contemporaneous with ambiguity, beliefs with experience, reason with feelings, and faith with practice³. This affirmed the need for open-ness, flexibility, in attitudes and behaviours. Not synonymous with relativism, flexibility is required to implement Truth, ultimate values, under differing circumstances. Scott⁴ endorsed the view that 'Truth is a path, not a possession'⁵, asserting that 'the way itself is our goal and the end of our journey'. Liberal Quakers are open always to new truths, but faithful to their sincere understanding of 'truth' at the time.

5.3 God Who is Experienced. (3.89%)

*Advices and Queries*⁶ assert that everyone has an individual experience of God and must discover how to be true to it, leaving open the meaning of such an assertion. Olden⁷ suggested Quakers were 'explorers', not 'seekers'; religious experience required exploring and describing in terms comprehensible to contemporary humankind.

¹ John Macmurray, *Search for Reality in Religion* 57, 71

² Janet Scott, *What Cans't Thou Say?:* 1, 4

³ Janet Scott, *What Cans't Thou Say?:* 23, 25

⁴ Janet Scott, *What Cans't Thou Say?* 25

⁵ Damaris Parker- Rhodes, *Truth; a Path and Not a Possession: A Quaker woman's journey* (Swarthmore Lecture, 1977) (London: Quaker Home Service, 1977)

⁶ In *Quaker Faith and Practice* 1.01, 1.02

⁷ Ole Olden, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 26.17 1955

For Doncaster¹, the Quaker message lay in an inward experience, of a 'universal spirit', 'of power and grace', known individually but recognised as belonging to all. This 'universal spirit' was made personal in Jesus. It was synonymous with the Light of Christ. Such a 'Christocentric' description of experience is in the tradition of Quaker perceptions of their experience, but is not meaningful to all Liberal Quakers. Dandelion² reports on surveys of the extent to which Liberal Friends ground their religious experience in Christianity. If allowed a free interpretation of what 'Christian' means, up to 71% affirmed the importance of Jesus in their religious experience and in their lives. Others relate such experience, variously, to understandings of their unity with the cosmos and all of life, which they see as grounded in divinity³. The two groups are not mutually exclusive, but emphases vary widely.

Liberal Quakers make no formal distinction between 'ordinary' and 'religious' experience judging the validity of religious experiences by the moral quality of the lives of those claiming them⁴. Some doubt the truly religious nature of their experiences at times. Elizabeth Fry's⁵ response to her doubts is still valued. She described resisting despair and scepticism. She had felt God before, and must seek to find God again; a common experience. Parker-Rhodes⁶ described how he found God, the voice speaking within him. If he misheard that voice his friends corrected him. He heard in the silence, pondered his response in solitude, but acted in everyday life. His experience of the inner voice was experience of God, guiding him towards virtue. His greatest imperative was to reject intolerance and his purpose in life to promote unity; an approach to God and religious experience open to all and independent of doctrinal belief. It is an existential message, of an inspirational relationship with the divine.

*The Friend*⁷ described Friends hearing, 'yet not hearing', each other's experience. Both hurt and insensitivity were blatantly exposed, some belittling others and many showing anger⁸. These were disputes between 'Christocentric' and 'Universalist' Friends, effectively, over doctrinal beliefs. For all the assumptions of conservatism or radicalism all were united in regression to beliefs demanding rigid performance, defending their beliefs and abandoning universal Quaker values of tolerance and compassion.

Macmurray⁹ described a dichotomy in religious experience between the real and the unreal. It did not correspond with distinctions between true and false or between what satisfies emotionally and what does not. Real religious experiences could be coupled with

¹ L. Hugh Doncaster, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 26.43 1972

² Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 135 – 6

³ For example, John Macmurray, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 26.11 1970

⁴ *Quaker Faith and Practice*, 27.38, London Yearly Meeting 1987

⁵ Elizabeth Fry, 'Memoire of the life of Elizabeth Fry', in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 26.40 1847

⁶ Frederick Parker- Rhodes, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 26.41 1977

⁷ In an editorial, following the 1994 Yearly Meeting, the largest, most widely attended meeting of Friends, where major issues are discussed and decisions taken.

⁸ Reported by Christine Trevett, *Previous Convictions* 35

⁹ John Macmurray, *Search for Reality in Religion* 9

fallacious, even undesirable, beliefs and practices, whilst beliefs and practices could be upheld with no reality to support them. Genuine religious experiences need not guarantee valid beliefs or virtuous actions. Believers needed to use reason and show concern for the impact of words or actions, however genuinely they arose from religious experience. The atrocious acts committed by some, often at the cost of their own lives, in the sincere belief that theirs was a religious mission, are ample testimony to the truth of Macmurray's words¹. They raise questions as to how the 'religious' nature of such experiences is affirmed. In some individuals that part of the personality Freud labelled the superego², urging conformity to community norms³, becomes unbalanced, often as a result of damaging life-experiences. This results in experiencing an 'inner voice', raising debilitating sensations of guilt for perceived non-conformity, or of judgement of others seen to fail to conform⁴. The true divinity of inner, 'religious', experiences, thus, cannot be taken for granted; they may result from psychological imbalances. Such assertions make discernment vital. Given that this, whilst based in inspiration, requires use of 'natural' reason, it conveys considerable autonomy and responsibility to 'believers'.

For Scott,⁵ no individual religious experience could be 'tied down to any one form of words'. As experience widened, fresh insights into the nature of divinity emerged, so all should respect the experience and response of others. The nature of religious experience was 'wedded to ideas', so mediated by what had gone before⁶. Thus, for example, visions of Christ are not described by Buddhists, nor of the Buddha by Christian mystics. The effects of wider life experiences frequently make religious experience richer, more insightful, with age.

Boulton⁷ describes the experience of 'what was traditionally called God' as 'no less real than' the most intense experience one could hope for. Such a statement affirms, for many Liberal Quakers, the reality of the very God Boulton denies. He continues: for the 'convinced Christian' what is seen as a religious experience of Jesus, for a non-realist⁸, is an experience of 'mercy, pity, peace and love' projected onto a God imagined, and fully understood to be imagined. Both Christian and non-realist share the same experience, the same call to love, compassion and tolerance. For the Christian, it is mediated through beliefs about Jesus as a revelation of God and of divine values. For the non-realist mediation is through experience

¹ 'Suicide bombers'; martyrs to belief in their conceptions of Islam, for example.

² Sigmund Freud's term for that part of the personality which represents the 'internalisation' of conventional values and morality. See, for example, R. L. and R. C. Atkinson, E. E. Smith and D. J. Bem, *Introduction to Psychology* A - 56

³ As such it is often understood as the 'conscience'.

⁴ See Nicky Hayes, *Foundations of Psychology* 2nd edition (Walton-on-Thames, Nelson, 1998)[1994] 401 – 7

⁵ Janet Scott, *What Cans't Thou Say?:* 4, 72

⁶ Alex Wildwood, *A Faith to Call Our Own:* 6

⁷ David Boulton, *Real Like the Daisies* 12, 41

⁸ He also refers to Quaker non-realists/non-theists as 'religious humanists'.

of a William Blake poem¹ which revealed through analogy those same values as ‘divine’, ultimate. Both are real, delivering ultimate, ethical, truths through metaphor. As a further example of the endless potential for confusion over non-theism, Boulton² relates a correspondence with Arriens³. Both agree that religions are human creations⁴. Arriens, however, excludes ‘mystical experience’ as ‘beyond human formalisations and formulations’. Boulton responds, asking: ‘if not from human language and culture, then from where?’ Mystical experience is understood as being of ‘Ultimate Reality’, whether or not this is called ‘God’⁵. If ‘Ultimate Reality’ is a wholly human projection, then, logically, so is mystical experience. If ‘Ultimate Reality’ is an independent reality, accessible to the mind, but not through the senses, there is no need for any distinction.

For Macmurray⁶, all religious experience was of the presence of God, evoking awe and wonder, but not revealing of God’s nature. Language about the nature of God must be mythological, in order to speak in terms of everyday experience of what lay beyond such experience. It must convey the ‘highest, richest and rarest qualities in our experience of human personality’ as a basis for the characterisation of God. Once again, this affirms the truth of the ‘semi-realism’⁷ of Quakers. God is real, but characterisations of God’s nature are human constructs, based upon human experience. Experiences of God, whether as a presence within or as revealed in nature, are awesome reminders of one’s own insignificance. Whilst they inspire emulating the nature of God, discerning the meaning of this is thoroughly human. Ethics, not God, is a human construct. If God is seen as ‘Ground of Being’, the resultant sense of unity ‘in God’ is, however, a major aid to making such ethical constructs.

In a crucial claim, Kee⁸ insisted that no direct experience of God was possible, only experiences which are treated in a religious manner. For Kant⁹, ‘experience’ was not mere passive reception of impressions; it included comprehension of the perceptions, using both concepts and categories. He insisted that: ‘concepts without perceptions are empty, perceptions without concepts are blind’¹⁰. Thus, experiences are analysed by the recipient, conceptualised and categorised according to individual mental models. These the individual has developed, as a result of prior experiences and perceptions. That the models built up and the conclusions drawn are different for different individuals is inevitable. Effectively,

¹ William Blake, ‘The Divine Image’ in, Helen Gardner, Ed. *The New Oxford Book of English Verse* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1997) [1972] 481

² David Boulton, *Real Like the Daisies* 55

³ Letters between Jan Arriens and David Boulton, edited and published in *The Friend* Feb. 20 1998

⁴ Whilst defining religion is acknowledged as being difficult (see Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: an Introduction* 446 – 7) to regard it, as opposed to divinity or faith, as a human construct is uncontroversial. See Karen Armstrong, *The Case For God*: 4 – 7

⁵ See E.A. Livingstone, *Oxford Concise Dictionary of the Christian Church* 401 – 2

⁶ John Macmurray, *Search for Reality in Religion* 53, 45

⁷ Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 193

⁸ Alastair Kee, *The Way of Transcendence* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971) 18

⁹ Emmanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*

¹⁰ Alasdair MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics* 184

experiences are perceived to be of God if prior experiences have led to beliefs that make such perceptions helpful, 'real', to the perceiver.

5.4 God Who is Worshipped/ Waited On/ in Silence. (3.70%)

I divide this Feature group into the following categories, which I consider in turn:

5.4.1. Worship.

5.4.2. Wait upon.

5.4.3. In Silence/ Stillness.

5.4.1. Worship. (2.03%)

*Advices and Queries*¹ describe worship as a 'response to an awareness of God', better done in company with others. It is an expectant waiting, hoping to discover a deeper sense of God's presence and the power of divine love drawing all together and guiding them². Green³ saw worship as 'an act of adoration' of the one true God, in whom all 'live and move and have their being'⁴. It was a call to forget everyday triumphs, failures and concerns and turn to 'the beauty and majesty of God', making the religious life not 'a grim drive towards moral virtue' but a 'response to a vision of greatness'. He made the important distinction between the religious inspiration to act out of love from secular ethics, emphasising action as out of duty.

An anonymous Liberal Quaker woman⁵ regarded such perceptions of 'worship' as self-abasement, preferring to feel she was communing with the divine within herself, in others, and in the wider world. This required belief in her, and others' own 'worth-ship'. Gillman⁶ sought to worship, not by 'bowing and scraping before some tyrannical master', but through seeking worth in his own life. Such attitudes arguably reveal a misunderstanding of the aims of worship, which are to subdue, not the person, but the ego, the self, opening the person to relationship with the Spirit of God, transforming them, not subduing but freeing them from self-absorption. This is the Christian mystical tradition; opening the self to divine compassion and love⁷.

Two strands of thought are apparent; the first, a response to the numinous, of awe and wonder, silent, inward, adoration. This risks idealism, denying self-worth in the face of a

¹ *Quaker Faith and Practice*, 1.02 *Advices and Queries* are intended to stimulate self-examination; they come as close as Friends do to representing a form of creed. The section quoted is 1.02 8

² In the texts analysed, the significance, both of God's perceived leadings and of the importance of being a community, living in love and unity is clear from the great emphasis given to these features. Total feature references: Leads/ Guides/ Teaches 2.63%, Has his own People/ Children 1.70%, Love/ Unity 3.46%

³ Thomas F. Green, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 2.07 1952

⁴ *Acts* 17: 28

⁵ *Quaker Faith and Practice* 2.08 An unidentified member of the Quaker Women's Group 1986

⁶ Harvey Gillman, *A Light That is Shining*: 22

⁷ Gerard Guiton, *The Early Quakers and the 'Kingdom of God'*: 32 – 3

perfect divinity. It can, equally, be a source of inspiration. Which occurs depends upon the mental model, the faith in the grace of divinity, or otherwise, of the individual. The second strand 'domesticates' worship, focussing upon the divine, perceived as immanent in humankind. As such, it risks becoming a worship of the self, but again, with humility, awareness of such inner divinity as a 'gift', to be used responsibly, it can inspire. Punshon¹ saw showing love in what one does and says as worship, the idiom in which to speak to God.

For some Liberal Friends the nature and conduct of Quaker worship is unclear. Some meditate or read, others condemn such practices as individualistic, excluding others, preventing achievement of a 'gathered meeting'; one in which all are focussed in unity on seeking God's will². For such reasons, Best³ questions if many see Quaker action in the world, which should be led by what is discerned in worship, in a religious sense at all.

Many today see sitting in silence, seeking 'stillness' as synonymous with meditation. Pym⁴ describes two types of meditation. The first is passive, waiting on God for inspiration and support. The second is active, seeking to quieten the 'monkey mind' and focus upon divinity. The distinction, in practice, is not entirely clear. A more useful one is between Christian perceptions⁵ of meditation, seeking to focus the mind, classically upon images, often from scripture, and contemplation, seeking to empty it, in order to experience the presence of God. Friends contemplate⁶, seeking assurance, faith, that 'all will be well'⁷; peace of mind, but one which also inspires action for 'the good'. They see worship as a process, of meeting with God, not as an event, but as learning to turn the mind from an out-turned multi-focus to an in-turned 'one-ness'⁸. Friends also meditate⁹ in worship, often upon spoken ministry. Through that process group discernment of leadings is possible. Such processes are not exclusively Quaker. Williams¹⁰, in common with many Universalist Quakers, admires the Buddhist practice of gathering the consciousness, freeing it from selfish distracting emotions and purifying it, but for him, the result is not the emptiness taught by Buddhism, but Christian love, though both inspire compassion. It results, not in

¹ John Punshon, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 22.07 1987

² Christine Trevett, *Previous Convictions* 26, 92

³ Simon Best, 'The Religious Society of Friends in Britain: Simple...', 49 – 63 50 – 2

⁴ Jim Pym, *The Pure Principle: Quakers and other faiths* (York: William Sessions Ltd., 2000) 48 – 53

⁵ See Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology* 488, 491

⁶ Harvey Gillman, *A Light That is Shining*: 23

⁷ Julian of Norwich (c 1342 – c 1416) *Revelations of Divine Love* (London: Penguin Classics, 1999) [1393] included the quotation 'All shall be well and all shall be well and all manner of thing shall be well'

⁸ Carole Hamby, 'How Do Friends Understand 'Unity'?' in, *Friends Quarterly* issue 3 2011 4 – 11 8

⁹ Examples of Christian meditative practices include *Lectio Divina*, the contemplation of passages from Scripture; a Benedictine practice, aimed at direct revelation of God. See M.J. Thompson and E. B. Howard, *Soul Feast: An invitation to the Christian spiritual life* (Westminster: John Knox Press, 2005) 24 Quakers often use readings from *Advices and Queries* in meeting for worship in a similar way.

¹⁰ Rowan Williams, in Mick Gordon and Chris Wilkinson, *Conversations on Religion* (London: Continuum, 2008) 28 – 30

contemplation of an absence, but of a divine, empowering, presence, for him and for Liberal Quakers¹.

In worship, some Liberal Friends are inspired by Jesus' life and teaching, some by less personal perceptions of the numinous, others by Quaker testimonies. None² of these motivates action, merely confirms it. Inspiration comes from the contemplative worship; a space to hear the prophetic voice speaking in the power of the Spirit. Inspiration, for Friends, is unmediated, but guidance, learning how to act upon the inspiration, is mediated through human understandings which speak to the individual, whether of Christ, of perceptions of unity in relationship, of the testimonies or of ethical principles.

Dale³ perceived and rejected Liberal Quaker tendencies to see meeting for worship as a chance to 'recharge spiritual batteries', by being 'plugged in to God in some special way'. This was self-absorbed, a therapeutic motivation for worship, which denied the sense of universal access to God at all times. An ideal is to seek to make the whole of life worship,⁴ filling it with a sense of awe and gratitude, responding to this with love. Worship means paying attention to those things in life which have greatest personal significance⁵.

Tillich⁶ described spirituality as humanity's 'ultimate concern', regretting⁷ that many had 'intellectualised' the spiritual life, replacing 'spirit' with mind, so separating off the element of vitality. Much of humankind possessed 'a bloodless intellect' and a meaningless vitality, lacking the spiritual 'soul' in which vitality and intentionality were united. A 'reductive naturalism' meant people felt affirmed by a merely biological vitality, but nothing was 'merely biological'; everything, for humankind, was spiritual too. Every act of creativity was spiritual. He affirmed the emotional element of faith, which goes to the heart of Friends' worship and experience. Friends are inspired and empowered, not through the intellect, but by feeling at one, in relationship, with each-other and the world, all 'in God', all loved and loving, upheld and upholding. Reason, intellect, comes later, in discernment of how to apply their inspirations. The passionate, creative and active commitment of Friends at their best to concerns which arise from their worshipping lives originates in feelings of inspiration. Arguably, this is what separates them from secular groups sharing similar concerns. Worship leads, not out of, but back into the world; to service, for God and for others⁸. Murgatroyd⁹ affirms that Quaker worship can, and should, be 'energising and

¹ See *Quaker Faith and Practice* 1.02.8

² According to Tim Ashworth, in T. Ashworth and A. Wildwood, *Rooted in Christianity, Open to New Light*: 52 – 3

³ Jonathan Dale, *Beyond the Spirit of the Age* 33

⁴ In, Young Friends General Meeting, *Who Do We Think We Are?* 148

⁵ George H. Gorman, *The Amazing Fact of Quaker Worship* (Swarthmore Lecture, 1973) (London: Quaker Home Service, 1973) 31

⁶ Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be* 47

⁷ Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be* 82 – 3

⁸ Harvey Gillman, *A Light That is Shining*: 23

⁹ Linda Murgatroyd, 'The Future of Quakers in Britain: Holding spaces for the Spirit to act', in, *The Friends' Quarterly* Issue 2 2010 6 – 48, 10

healing'. The more it is practised the greater the power of the Spirit in individual lives, guiding them to peace and joy; hopefully, through virtuous action.

For Macmurray¹, meeting for worship was a ritual, pragmatic, symbolising the freedom and equality of all, which was the basis of all friendship. Such a view, valuable in what it affirms, could be said to limit the function of worship, focussing inwards, on the group. Worship and prayer are not turning away from the world, to be with God, or with one another, but responding in love to God as experienced in others generally². Worship is not always easy, seeking the truth, the will of God, a process which sometimes generates tensions between rival perceptions, discernments. Wallis³ saw worship as a threshing ground in which the way forward was discerned. Nonetheless, it is not a debating forum. Liberal Friends have retained silent worship as central to their 'behavioural creed'. It is the means to experience God, Divinity, the Light, the Spirit, whatever is perceived, but the experience is universally felt to be most reliably received in stillness, waiting together⁴.

Scott⁵ valued the numinous, her sense of the transcendent breaking in to individual lives, through silent worship, or through contemplation of beauty, in art or nature. Its effects depended upon how individuals responded. For some, the sense of a God of 'beauty and majesty' is of an ethical ideal, spiritual, not material, not of this world and perfect, beyond the grasp of the individual. This can cause despair, at the hopelessness of seeking to emulate such a God, leading to withdrawal from the material world into one of spiritual reflection. This was the idealism condemned by Macmurray⁶. Exactly what he condemned is unclear. Spiritual reflection, as in meeting for worship, can inspire a return to the world to 'mend' it. For some, the old and frail, their prayers and upholding of others is the best, even the only, contribution to 'the good' they are able to make. Withdrawal becomes blameworthy only if it constitutes 'escape' into 'self'. Idealism can result in individuals feeling they come closer to the ideal, perhaps, even, they are more 'activist' than others, becoming self-righteous and judging others. Encounters with the numinous, 'peak experiences'⁷, inspire many people⁸, transforming them through a sense of 'oneness' with all that is beautiful, stimulating acts of compassion and love, small or large. Such feelings require no perceptions of the numinous as 'supernatural', or even perfect, but, rather, as the ground of 'worldly' perfections.

¹ John Macmurray, *Search for Reality in Religion* 71

² John A. T. Robinson, *Honest to God* (London SCM Press, 1963)

³ Jack H. Wallis, *Jung and the Quaker Way* 92

⁴ Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 136 – 7

⁵ Janet Scott, *What Cans't Thou Say?:* 69

⁶ John Macmurray, *Search for Reality in Religion* 39, 58 – 60

⁷ See, for example, Marcus J. Borg, *The Heart of Christianity:* Ch. 8

⁸ Gerard Guiton, *The Early Quakers and the 'Kingdom of God':* 32 – 3 describes such moments 'of heightened awareness' as 'practising the presence of God'.

5.4.2. Wait upon God. (0.51%)

Allen¹ proclaims that the God 'to whom we turn.....is waiting for us, as we wait for God'. Individuals reach out in the stillness and may meet God in the heart. She urges 'attentive availability' to the Spirit. Friends seek 'mindfulness'², finding grace, beauty and wonder in the everyday, helping them transcend the 'ego-self' to listen to the Spirit, the inner voice. This Quaker practice, of listening for God in quiet places and situations, is deep rooted in the Judaeo-Christian tradition. Living a simple life leaves space to 'wait on' the Spirit³. Loring⁴ valued waiting and listening to the Spirit and to each-other, without disputes about whom or what was listened to, recognising that 'the end of words is to bring [men] to the knowledge of things beyond what words can utter'⁵. The process is characterised by Muers⁶ as 'listening with God's ears'. 'Listening on', throughout the actions resulting from the initial impulse, she insists, is vital; rational discernment of actions and evaluation of their effects, to discern if they were appropriate. Liberal Friends sometimes feel led to mend the world in one way or another, but less so to 'listen on', to evaluate their actions.

5.4.3. In Silence/ Stillness. (1.16%)

Liberal Friends describe⁷, in the depths of their consciousness, 'the living silence.....stillness, of God' and, in those depths, finding one another in 'the things that are eternal'⁸, upholding and strengthening one another. Bellows⁹ saw no other way of trusting, 'staying upon', God than through 'sinking into the silence before Him'. He rejected reasoning about God, which would 'buffer us to and fro'. Such doubts could not follow into the 'true, solemn silence of the soul'. His was a clarion call to stop thinking and sink into the stillness. Only that way was experience of God possible. Penn¹⁰ recommended silence 'even in the mind'. Sin lay in many thoughts and words. 'True silence' was rest to the mind and spirit, acting, as 'sleep is to the body' giving 'nourishment and refreshment'. In the silence individuals saw truth, and were empowered to act on it. Hubbard¹¹ sought 'true silence...wide awake, fully aware, non-thinking', in which to discover something other than 'self', losing any sense of unique identity and becoming conscious of being 'a participant in the whole of existence'. Through such experience one came to understand the nature of divine power and 'its essential identity with love, in the widest sense'. Love, 'in the widest sense' was empathy and support for all life, the 'whole of existence'.

¹ Beth Allen, *Ground and Spring*: 27 – 8

² See, Elizabeth Brown and Alec Davison, *Journeying the Heartlands*: 5 – 6

³ Linda Murgatroyd, 'The Future of Quakers in Britain:...' 10

⁴ A reference to words of Isaac Penington, in *Quaker Faith and Practice*, 27.27, by Patricia Loring, 'Listening Spiritually'

⁵ Isaac Penington, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 27.27

⁶ Rachel Muers, *Keeping God's Silence* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004) 152

⁷ *Quaker Faith and Practice*, 2.01

⁸ References to 'Eternal', in the analysed texts, are not frequent, 0.40% of all feature references.

⁹ John Bellows, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 2.15 1895

¹⁰ William Penn, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 20.11 1699

¹¹ Geoffrey Hubbard, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 26.12 1974

Yeo¹ extolls Quaker silence as an active presence, collective and experiential, from which Friends 'draw out' inspiration, not 'throw in' what they seek to 'get off their chest'. It should be free of individual egos and competitive urges; a 'constructed', not a natural silence, generative, of inspiration and guidance. Such a silence 'withdraws consent' when used to confront others. The silence of worship should be the place of unity, where all are gathered into God², however that is understood. Macmurray³ urged all to embrace an 'un-dogmatic, hypothetical and temporary' theology, recognising that 'it is impossible to believe what one does not understand and undesirable to profess belief in in what one cannot believe effectively'. Ministry should be sincere and simple, not theologically or intellectually contentious. Liberal Quakers value silence over speech, the experience in the silence gives authority for belief in a God⁴ utterly unknowable, impossible to speak of, so demanding silence⁵. Putting 'God' into words is to trivialise the experience. Only in the silence can Friends share what is beyond words⁶. It, however, bestows significance to vocal ministry, which should represent the discerned will of God and not a reflection of the speaker's own ego-desires. It should be brief, sincere, and enable others to grasp it and engage in their own discernment⁷. The words should continue the silence, guiding the course of contemplation and inviting others into the discernment⁸. Distinct from 'worshipping in silence', where words, ideas and thoughts are engaged with, intellectually and emotionally, in the silence, Friends' 'silent worship' involves waiting on, longing for, God, with a tranquil mind⁹, making 'stillness' more apposite than 'silence'.

Trevett¹⁰ described deep divides 'often invisible in the silence' of meeting, condemning unwillingness to address different beliefs. Silence can conceal widely disparate personal theologies and, whilst the form of worship unites, interpretations of the form may divide. Insistence that the 'will of God' is sought assumes belief in the existence of a God with a 'will'¹¹. Language, thus, is often an impediment, whilst silence renews connection with 'true reality'¹², the reality of faith, in which the actual words used to express shared goals are of no consequence. Trevett, I assume, is not advocating addressing different beliefs during silent worship, but in discussion at other times. Adolescent Liberal Friends emphasise

¹ Stephen Yeo, 'The Politics of Gaia: Towards a Specifically 'Quaker' or 'Deep' Politics' in, *Friends Quarterly* Issue 1 2011 25 - 40 32 – 3

² Gerald Priestland, *Reasonable Uncertainty* 8 – 9

³ John Macmurray, *Search for Reality in Religion* 72 – 3

⁴ Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 141 – 3

⁵ D. Leichty, *Theology in Postliberal Perspective* 83

⁶ Letter to *The Friend* Vol. 150 1992 471

⁷ Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 143 – 4

⁸ Thomas Kelly, *The Gathered Meeting and Reality of the Spirit World* 12

⁹ Curt Gardner, *God just is:* 9

¹⁰ Christine Trevett, *Previous Convictions* 36 – 7 quoting from Pink Dandelion, 'Measuring Quaker Belief or, 'Do Friends Believe?' in, *Friends Quarterly* July 1991 328

¹¹ Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 145

¹² For example, Peter Bien, *Words, Wordlessness and the Word*, Pendle Hill Pamphlet no. 303 (Wallingford PA: Pendle Hill, 1992)

sharing individual theological and ethical beliefs¹ outside the context of worship, which is, basically, silent. From personal experience, this can facilitate deeply 'gathered' worship and forms an excellent model. At what level agreement on theological questions is possible is debatable, but frank discussion is an honest way to approach disagreement, not avoiding differences in beliefs but addressing them directly and seeking common ground. Such a course is only possible in a community showing mutual trust, itself a mark of divinity. Older adult Friends, in many local meeting communities, through age, infirmity or other commitments, often lack the temporal knowledge of one another to enable the trust necessary to share fully what they experience in the silence. Whilst stilling the ego in the silence of worship is essential, honest sharing of beliefs and perceptions in other contexts, both planned and serendipitous, is vital to building trusting communities. These enable, in stillness, Friends to connect with the deepest within themselves, expressing it as the Divine, Light, Truth, Reality, Presence, Source, God, healing Power or creative Energy, all as acceptable ways of describing their experience². An avowed atheist Friend³ describes that, in the silence, she finds 'freedom and space' to plumb her own depths, pursue her doubts and discover her own beliefs. Whilst such objectives are open to criticism as ego-centric and intellectual, sharing the silence, one wonders how genuinely different are her perceptions of what she is doing from those of other Friends. Boulton⁴ describes a 'post 1960s view' that there is no pre- or supra-verbal cognition of religious experience, thus, effectively, denying the possibility of inspiration received from a source and in a form that could not be fully and objectively described in words. This is a narrow view; the emerging mysteries of quantum mechanics⁵ are equally beyond verbal description⁶. Wittgenstein⁷ concluded that 'Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent'. In matters of religion and ethics nothing could be said; they were not 'of the world'. He was suggesting that they were, like Kant's noumena⁸, entities within the mind, not available to human senses or description. The 'institutional' Liberal Quaker position is clear; belief in the presence of God in meeting for worship. This presence is real, mysterious, quite possibly confined within the mind, but inspired and certainly not false⁹.

5.5 Love and Unity. (3.46%)

For Penington¹⁰ 'the true ground of love and unity' was not that another 'walks and does just as I do' but that all have the same Spirit and life, yet each 'walks in his own rank...order...proper way'. This was an affirmation of spiritual equality and of unity in

¹ Simon Best, 'Adolescent Quakers: A Hidden Sect' in, *Quaker Studies* Vol. 13 Issue 1 2008 103 – 113, 106

² Elizabeth Brown and Alec Davison, *Journeying the Heartlands:* 5

³ Anita Bower, in, David Boulton, Ed., *Godless for God's Sake:* 138

⁴ David Boulton, *Real Like the Daisies* 42

⁵ See, for example, Karen Armstrong, *The Case for God:* 254 – 5

⁶ Any attempt to teach the simultaneous wave and particle nature of quanta of energy illustrates this clearly.

⁷ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* Proposition 7, concluding remarks

⁸ See Chapter 4 Section 4.3.2.

⁹ Thomas Kelly, *The Gathered Meeting and Reality of the Spirit World* 59 – 60

¹⁰ Isaac Penington, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 23.74 1659

diversity. Liberal Quakers, seeking greater understanding and tolerance of diversity in sexual orientation, asked¹ if God cannot enter ‘any relationship in which there is a measure of selfless love?’ For Friends, God’s love is ministered through the love of fellow human beings². All should seek to be channels of God’s love and caring³. Everyone was, in some way or other, wounded or feeling inadequate. Such feelings were part of the human condition and, if shared, drew people together⁴. For Gibbins,⁵ sharing the search for ultimate reality, by sharing individual experiences, caused the divine to shine through, for all. Such statements affirm the need to love others, but to be aware of the need to be loved too. All people are united, in shared strengths and shared weaknesses, in relationship with one another. Within that relationship God is revealed and awareness of the unity is transformative. Love for others becomes seen⁶ not as an expression of need or of dependency, but as liberating for both the lover and the beloved.

Macmurray⁷ saw the origins of religion as in community. The first two commandments, to love God and to love one’s neighbour⁸ reflected dependence, both upon natural forces, felt to be controlled by God, and upon each other. Humankind, a social species, has learned that, whilst long term success for communities is more assured if individuals co-operate, not compete, pursuit of personal gain, at the expense of others, brings short-term benefits. Hence it faces a dilemma, to pursue personal gain and lose the benefits of community, or not to do so and risk being exploited by others. For Macmurray⁹, the ‘brotherhood’ which religion expresses and promotes was personal, resting upon affection. It was not a biological but a spiritual unity; its members loved one another. The ‘spiritual’ was grounded in interpersonal relations of love and affection, which constituted divinity. This embraced differences in beliefs, ‘divergent views and doctrines [can] be held within a unity of love’¹⁰.

Examining the nature of love, Macmurray¹¹ described:

1. Pleasurable, felt, emotions, stimulated, in the lover, by the ‘other’. (Sexual or erotic love)
2. Selfless love, making the ‘other’ the object of love. (*Agape*)¹²

He asked, ‘Was love seen purely as gratifying personal desires, or as transcending these to uphold the beloved?’ To be able to love objectively, to behave in terms of the beloved, was the core of rationality. Reciprocity, the ability to see ‘myself’ as an object to other people,

¹ *Quaker Faith and Practice* 22. 18, *Towards a Quaker view of sex* 1963

² Gordon Macphail, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 22. 29 1988

³ Edward H. Milligan, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 21.20 1951

⁴ June Ellis, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 21.14 1986

⁵ Margaret S. Gibbins, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 21.15 1969

⁶ Donald A. Green, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 22.42 1986

⁷ John Macmurray, *Search for Reality in Religion* 33

⁸ *Matt.* 22: 36 – 40

⁹ John Macmurray, *Search for Reality in Religion* 33, 37 – 8

¹⁰ John Macmurray, *Search for Reality in Religion* 73

¹¹ John Macmurray, *Selected Philosophical Writings* 56 – 7, 103 – 4, 147 – 8

¹² Nicholas Dent, in, Ted Honderich, Ed., *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy* 18

just as they are objects to me, allowed development of sympathy, co-operation and compassion, which were divine virtues. Individuals were, naturally, egoistical. The urge to self-preservation was evolved and innate. True, selfless, love was the capacity to break from that egoism to care for others. It led to the development of conscience, a mature sense of self, and reason, which were all based upon the ability to be interested in what is not 'self', not just as a means to the purposes of 'self', but for its own sake. Macmurray sets out a description of transformation and a 'spiritual' relationship with 'other'. How the divine is seen in such an account will be individual, personal, but its most obvious link is as Ground of all, so of all relationships. Macmurray¹ saw religion as the unifying principle of developing personal relationships, giving them meaning and value. His approach, involving no call on the supernatural, can be condemned, or hailed, as 'non-theist', but it is profoundly 'realist'. It locates the good in human self-transcendence and selfless love. For Scott², abandoning the self 'to God' meant abandoning it to other people too, leading to love and unity.

Jung³ noted that Jesus had espoused and loved, not condemned, sinners. Love made an individual better, hate made them worse; even when the individual was oneself⁴. Only through acceptance of one's own inner nature could one learn to love others. It was impossible to love others whilst hating oneself⁵. This is a caution to those condemning some Quaker spirituality as seeking a private relationship with God. The need for self-love is imperative. Only if it neglects others does it become self-indulgent. Jesus taught that reconciliation with God depended upon reconciliation with 'our neighbours' and that divine forgiveness required forgiving others⁶. The truth of the claim that 'God is love' thus, lies in the selfless love each individual shows towards 'other'. There is no spirituality which is not 'for others'. Dale⁷ described a 'divine economy'. The more people gave their love to others the greater the love grew. To do so, however, required an act of will. Love would not grow naturally, simply through the exercise of human self-expression. This represents a modern meaning for religious 'obedience'; to actively love and uphold all others. Where there is a need to censure others, to impart 'truth' to them, this must be done in love, respecting them, even in their error. A young Friend⁸ described her/his religious commitment to faith, hope, and, especially, love, giving her/him courage to commit to what (s)he believed in. These virtues (s)he saw as acquired through belonging to the community of Friends⁹. This shows love and unity empowering both faith and practice.

¹ John Macmurray, *Selected Philosophical Writings* 147 - 8

² Janet Scott, *What Can't Thou Say?* 8, 46, 70

³ See Jack H. Wallis, *Jung and the Quaker Way* 23

⁴ Carl G. Jung, *Selected Writings* 281

⁵ Jack H. Wallis, *Jung and the Quaker Way* 27

⁶ *Matt.* 5: 23 - 4, 6: 12, 14 - 5.

⁷ Jonathan Dale, *Beyond the Spirit of the Age* 19, 34, 59

⁸ Young Friends General Meeting, *Who Do We Think We Are?* 158

⁹ Young Friends placed great emphasis (6.19% of all references to relationship with God) upon commitment and belonging.

A loving approach to others must not blind Friends to the possibility of evil. Bonhoeffer¹ reminded all of good will that peace could not be achieved on the basis of lies and injustice. How Liberal Friends respond to such a statement represents a challenge, given that Bonhoeffer concluded that his contribution to peace included helping in efforts to kill Hitler. Allen² points to a lack of love and unity between some Liberal Friends; particularly between ‘militants’, both of non-realist and Christocentric beliefs. People, she feels, are ‘mostly right’ in what they affirm and ‘mostly wrong’ in what they deny. Among ‘non-militant’ Friends, she criticises a tendency to expect not to be challenged or made uncomfortable by the words or actions of others. Friends should face up to differences, work through and think about them. They risk, otherwise, valuing unity over truth, confusing unity with unanimity. Whilst Liberal Friends seek a better, more just world, ironically, they are often averse to addressing conflict within their own communities³. It is impossible to address theology, words about God, without exposing differences in perception. The task is to resolve these through seeking to see the other’s point of view⁴ and this requires trust, which is, in turn, based upon selfless love. ‘To express all we have on our minds with gentleness we must have love’⁵.

5.6 Testimony and Witness. (2.92%)

Dandelion⁶ defines Quaker ‘testimony’, historically, as the consequences of the spiritual life as expressed in daily life. For the earliest Friends, the whole of life was seen as a testimony or witness to their inward spiritual experience. These spiritual consequences, however, soon became rules⁷. That risks being the case for Liberal Friends, whose ‘testimony’ has evolved into five ‘testimonies’: 1.To peace, 2.To simplicity, 3. To equality, 4. To integrity and 5.To stewardship; both of community and of the natural world.

I discuss this section under seven headings:

5.6.1. Witness.

5.6.2. Testimony: General.

5.6.3.1 Peace, 5.6.3.2. Simplicity, 5.6.3.3. Equality, 5.6.3.4. Integrity and 5.6.3.5. Stewardship.

5.6.1. Witness.

‘Witness’ is used in a general sense, of witnessing to divine values. Liberal Friends are enjoined, both in their personal and their communal lives, to know ‘the guidance of the

¹ Rachel Muers, in J.L. Scully and P. Dandelion, Eds., *Good and Evil*: 177

² Beth Allen, *Ground and Spring*: 61 – 2, 75, 103

³ Susan Robson, ‘Grasping the Nettle’: 67 – 83 68

⁴ Gerald Priestland, *Reasonable Uncertainty* 8

⁵ Pierre Ceresole, from a selection of Ceresole’s writing for the period 1920 – 33 in, Geoffrey Durham, *The Spirit of the Quakers* 203

⁶ Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 221

⁷ Over ‘plain speech’, ‘plain dress’ etc. See Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 66 – 68.

universal spirit of Christ, witnessed to in the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth¹. Noticeably, when Liberal Friends evoke the 'spirit of Christ', they explicitly associate it with their understandings of Jesus, drawn from Scripture and its, modern, analysis. Ashworth² saw all Quaker work in the world as a witness to resurrection, living with the faith of Jesus, in the Spirit, within each Friend, teaching, empowering and inspiring the work. Other, less 'Christocentric', Friends seek to make their lives a witness for 'justice, peace and the integrity of creation'³. Witness may be helping to make important changes, or, simply, small acts. Each, however, is enjoined to develop their 'unique social witness in obedience to God'. Small actions, faithfully carried out, are seen to be of value⁴. For Scott,⁵ the Liberal Quaker witness was that the Spirit could bring everyone into 'the life of obedience and love'. Friends must witness, show, that their faith led them to act in love, not out of self-interest.

Some question the adequacy, courage or determination, of Liberal Quaker witness. Wildwood⁶ was sceptical that the 'friendliness and tolerance' exhibited by Liberal Friends was more than a 'pale shadow' of earlier witness, asking what it was that had 'burned within the souls' of early Friends. It was more than 'political radicalism' or 'ethical principles', which he saw as driving many Quakers today. That perceptions of the origins of inspirations to witness vary is unsurprising, given the diversity of Liberal Quaker beliefs. It is more worrying if the actual commitment to witness has declined. If so, this may reflect uncertainties over the truth of leadings, or generally reduced commitment to Quakerism, in a complex world with many secular pressures. Many Friends do seek to witness to their faith and values, acting selflessly and compassionately in their relationships with others and, often, their relationships with the natural world. In every generation, there have been Quaker leaders who have devoted their whole being to visible witness, to evangelism or conspicuous service, whilst others have been more modest in their undertakings. This is inevitable, and frequently a reflection of differences in individual talents and obligations. What has always been seen as important is the sincerity and integrity with which every act of witness, large or small, is undertaken.

5.6.2. Testimonies: General.

For Gillman⁷, 'testimony' described witness to the living truth in the heart, presumably, that love and compassion to all was central. This truth was acted out, not in words but in a mode of life, based upon the realisation that there was 'that of God' in everyone. Thus, the need for compassion is justified by relationship to one another as all are grounded in God; all

¹ *Quaker Faith and Practice*, 1.01

² Tim Ashworth, in T. Ashworth and A. Wildwood, *Rooted in Christianity, Open to New Light*: 63

³ Gordon Matthews, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 23.10 1989

⁴ Deborah Haines, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 23.52 1978

⁵ Janet Scott, *What Cans't Thou Say?:* 3

⁶ Alex Wildwood, *A Faith to Call Our Own*: 17

⁷ Harvey Gillman, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 23.12 1988

have the Light or Spirit within. Dale¹ saw testimony as the corporate working out of Quaker faith in the world. It expressed Friends' 'core values' of peace, truth, equality, simplicity, integrity and community. The separation out of specific testimonies, concerned with different aspects of life, should not obscure their original meaning. They are each matters of practice, which, whilst they refer to human behaviour, are statements as to the nature of God². For Young Friends³ it was to the testimonies that all should be committed. They were the basis of Quaker unity, values and beliefs, indicating a route to follow. They represented statements of experience, going beyond words to a way of life. They 'must apply to the words we speak' and should reflect total honesty and integrity. Crucially, they were ways of behaving, not a set of rules or an ethical code⁴. As such, they emphasise a 'virtue' based approach to life⁵, acting flexibly and lovingly, applying divine, eternal, values to all words and actions.

Punshon⁶ emphasised a distinction between 'testimony' and 'opinions' or 'beliefs'. The validity of a testimony was about the value of what was testified to and not of the testifier. Testimonies should represent eternal truths, transcending individual opinions about them. Quaker testimonies were, 'religious, ethical, collective, demanding, developing....and vague'⁷. Vague because they were developing constantly, allowing flexibility in what they demanded as conditions changed. Vagueness, however, leaves some Friends unclear, seeking 'what the Quaker action should be' in a given situation. This is to misunderstand the meaning of 'testimony' and easily leads to testimonies becoming creedal, rules on behaviour. The 'Light within' has always guided the application of broad values to specific instances. This must be so in relation to testimony. The Quaker response of 'testimony' is like the freedoms of the Gospel, as opposed to the literalism of the law. Punshon⁸ denied, however, that this should allow a 'supermarket' approach, individuals focussing upon those testimonies that interested them, ignoring the others. All of life was a testimony; a view not always sympathetic to the 'dominating modern humanistic and rationalistic approach', presumably, of some Friends. Muers⁹ criticises Quaker over-emphasis upon the testimonies, as 'rules', ignoring their theological depth and grounding in worship, making them 'merely ethical principles'. Seeing testimonies as rules promotes self-righteousness. The primary concern becomes preserving the individual conscience, whilst failing to address the realities

¹ Jonathan Dale, *Beyond the Spirit of the Age* 97

² John Punshon, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 20.18 1987

³ Young Friends General Meeting, *Who Do We Think We Are?* 51, 156

⁴ Young Friends General Meeting, *Who Do We Think We Are?* 75, 138

⁵ See, L. Zagzebski, *Virtues of the Mind: An enquiry into the nature of virtue and the ethical foundations of knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) 'Virtue ethics' seeks to model behaviour upon 'how a virtuous person would respond' to each situation. In that sense it seeks role models. Jesus Christ forms and obvious example relevant to Quakers over the course of their history.

⁶ John Punshon, *Testimony and Tradition*: 18

⁷ John Punshon, *Testimony and Tradition*: 19

⁸ John Punshon, *Testimony and Tradition*: 19

⁹ Rachel Muers, in J. L. Scully and P. Dandelion, Eds., *Good and Evil*: 175

of the situation. Such an approach risks that the testimonies become idols, 'worshipped' as rigid 'principles', not as symbols of divine virtue.

Contrasting Liberal Quaker testimony with the approach of others, seeking to live equally just, peaceful or simple life-styles, with integrity, Punshon¹ saw the Quaker approach as spiritual, not ethical or intellectual. It was a matter of personal salvation, reconciliation with God, and the world. Unless Friends' approach produced 'goodness and love to others' it was of no value. He² regretted that some saw the testimonies as principles of activity and not means of evangelism, so worked together with secular groups sharing similar concerns. This led to a secular bias, where testimonies should be regarded as guides to the nature of God, a mystical path to God. Punshon's criticisms are inappropriate to Liberal Quakerism today. Much that is discussed above, concerning the bases of faith, truth and love, shows that Liberal Quaker perceptions of divinity are compatible with co-operation with others seeking to show 'goodness and love to others', but grounding their actions in human-centred beliefs. Quaker beliefs are personal and should not preclude adopting a rational and co-operative approach, with others, to resolve social or environmental problems. Ideally such co-operation, if the Friends involved witness compassion and love, forms a means of evangelism. An 'isolationist' approach indicates a lack of confidence, by Friends, in their own message. They have always sought to live as if the Kingdom of God existed on earth, seeking to be prophets in the wider social and political world. Such aims today require a grasp of the complexities of issues where Friends seek influence. This dictates co-operation with others, expert in their field, if not in Friends' ways. It should not be beyond the resources of Friends to blend the two without spiritual compromise. Dandelion³ sees Quaker testimony as to live faithfully, for the greater good and to seek justice for all, not just for Friends' own communities. This suggests, or certainly does not preclude, co-operating with others.

Adoption of the five testimonies requires embracing values⁴, which are then interpreted individually. Liberal Friends are more world accepting than many other Quaker communities. They are counter-cultural in their attitudes to materialism and consumption, which they widely reject. Ethically contentious issues like homosexuality and abortion, however, they broadly support. Liberal Friends lay down criteria for integrity then advocate that individuals act on their, Spirit guided, consciences⁵. Thus, differences in interpretation of different testimonies exist. Friends differ over how to be peaceful, yet defend others and over their approach to alcohol consumption or gambling, for example. Ideally, they agree that each should have the freedom, Spirit-led, to discern the right personal course of action⁶. That is, certainly, the thrust of liberal-Liberal Quaker witness. Some, however, see

¹ John Punshon, *Testimony and Tradition*: 28

² John Punshon, *Testimony and Tradition*: 77

³ Ben Pink Dandelion, *Celebrating the Quaker Way* 6, 24 – 5

⁴ Peace, simplicity, integrity etc.

⁵ Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 221, 230

⁶ Ben Pink Dandelion, *Celebrating the Quaker Way* 6, 24 – 5

this as individualism and a failure to uphold Quaker values. The account of George Fox's advice to William Penn¹ to wear his sword for as long as he could, for as long as his conscience allowed, is a valuable lesson on the need to respect individual conscience. Friends, tasked to examine testimonies², concluded that they should arise from love, not fear, have a corporate dimension, be about witness, but also, as in worship, both come from and lead to the divine. Above all, the testimonies should be lived. For that to be possible what is testified to must be sincerely felt.

Testimonies to the grace of God, as shown in an individual life, have been written by Quakers from the outset³. These show how the individual's faith enabled them to be who they were and do what they did. Always, emphasis is placed upon individuals' sincerity, humility and commitment. The virtues set down represent a gift of Grace, in whatever sense that may be seen.

5.6.3.1. Peace testimony.

The peace testimony is described⁴ as a way of living, rejecting many widespread world categories, definitions and priorities; a Spirit-led quest to oppose injustice and to 'wage peace'. Liberal Friends emphasise peace, security and justice for both individuals and communities, not giving weight to national territorial, economic or political priorities and treaties. Theirs is more than a testimony against war. For Muers⁵, Quaker active non-violence and peace-making is grounded in a commitment to truthfulness. Also, though, it often represents a personal conviction never to use violence. She questions whether this is the reality of God and of the world. She, thus, suggests the possibility of legitimate use of force in specific situations. She asks if the peace testimony has not become a badge of commitment for many Friends; one not necessarily relevant to all situations. Braun's⁶ view was that any war, however great the claim that it was waged for the sake of justice, was corrupting and made a just peace unattainable. Any militarisation, inevitably, led to war. Hamilton⁷ takes issue with this view, suggesting the possibility of a 'just war'. He notes Penington's⁸ claim that the need to establish justice required violence, at times, to achieve it, but that Quakers should not be involved in such violence. It was essential that some⁹

¹ See www.qhpress.org/quakerpages/qwhp/pennswor.htm This may not be a true account of an actual event.

² Quaker Peace and Social Witness Testimonies Committee, *Engaging with the Quaker Testimonies: a Toolkit* (London: Quaker Books, 2007) 4

³ John Punshon, *Testimony and Tradition*: 18 A selection are published in *Quaker Faith and Practice*, Chapter 18

⁴ *Quaker Faith and Practice*, 24.11 Minute 23 (part) of London Yearly Meeting (1993)

⁵ Rachel Muers, in J. L. Scully and P. Dandelion, Eds., *Good and Evil*: 177 – 8

⁶ Konrad Braun, *Justice and the Law of Love* (Swarthmore Lecture, 1950) (London: Quaker Home Service, 1950) 45

⁷ David Hamilton, 'The Sword Borne Uprightly: Isaac Penington's alternative to pacifism' *Friends Quarterly* Issue 3 (2012) 24 – 30

⁸ See Konrad Braun, *Justice and the Law of Love* 72

⁹ Namely, the Quakers.

recognise that violence was, ultimately, not the answer to anything. Braun¹ had seen that this suggested hypocrisy, allowing others to fight for a more just society, from which Friends benefited. Hamilton, however, agreed with Penington, that Quakers strengthened the nation's moral consciousness by their firm stand against violence.

Whilst the need for restraining voices when others urge a rush to arms is clear, less clear is that some should, when conflict has begun and all are at risk, play no part in active defence. The issues are complex; the value, for example, of a Quaker presence in the United Nations at Geneva² and elsewhere, facilitating protagonists' discussions away from the glare of publicity, is obvious. Equally, Friends' involvement in ambulance³ and other, similar, roles in and around conflicts, serving all parties indiscriminately, is facilitated by their pacifist stance and is an act of witness. Even involvement in domestic support, in agriculture and production of valuable resources, contributing to the well-being of the home population is valuable, but easily misunderstood when others' loved ones are dying in battle.

Not all Liberal Quakers demand total pacifism. Bailey⁴, who chose not to fight in World War 2, recorded his respect for others who felt the need to fight against tyranny and condemned Quakers who insisted that no-one should fight. There were equally sincerely held opinions on either side of the argument. Whilst transformation, seeing a relationship with that of God in all people, inspires, its application, in conflict situations, demands discernment. Are there situations when to do violence to others, even to take their lives, is the lesser of two evils? Such moral questions are set out most starkly when those suffering, innocently, are, conveniently, far away and unknown personally.

The peace testimony is more than just opposition to war. It forms the basis for a broader social and political testimony to greater justice and equality, seeing many of the dominant social relationships as violent in them-selves⁵. This links it to other testimonies, illustrating the original Quaker view; all of life should form a testimony to God.

5.6.3.2 Testimony to Simplicity.

Friends resist involvements which dilute energies, scatter thoughts, 'reduc[ing] the individual to a life of triviality and mediocrity'⁶. A simple life-style is extolled as minimising resource consumption⁷, leaving more for others¹. Doncaster,² however, counselled caution

¹ Konrad Braun, *Justice and the Law of Love* 47

² See Rachel Brett, *Snakes and Ladders: A personal exploration of Quaker work for human rights at the United Nations*. (Swarthmore Lecture, 2012) (London: Quaker Books, 2012)

³ See Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 160 – 1

⁴ Quoted in Konrad Braun, *Justice and the Law of Love* 45

⁵ Stephen Yeo, 'The Politics of Gaia: 25 – 40 30 – 2

⁶ *Quaker Faith and Practice*, 20.27, North Carolina Yearly Meeting (1983)

⁷ See *Quaker Faith and Practice*, 1.02.41 which suggests that a simple life-style is a source of strength and invites reflection on the effects of life-style on the global economy and environment.

over doing without things, reducing one's standard of living as an aid to resource availability, seeing it as virtually irrelevant, given the scale of need within the world. He advocated simplicity, rather, as a spiritual quality, rectifying distorted values and freeing one from material complexity. Reduced consumption would flow naturally from this transformation and simplicity would become a 'natural' virtue. Similarly, Gardner³ described how a simple life allowed inward peace and stillness. Such views exemplify Liberal Friends' 'virtue' approach to behaviour. If simplicity is embraced spiritually, one's demands become 'naturally' modest, requiring no rules as to what or how much to consume.

James⁴ noted that most religions saw poverty as a lofty spiritual state, free of the philosophy of 'possessing' to focus on 'being' and 'doing'. Religious communities may specifically disapprove of alcohol, drugs, sex, loud music or strong emotions, all as reducing spiritual awareness⁵. Liberal Friends' opinions vary. *Advices and Queries*⁶ invite consideration of the addictive and harmful effects of alcohol, tobacco and drugs, suggesting that Friends limit or exclude their use. Emphasis is, largely, upon moderation, rather than prohibition, valuing a simple life over one obsessed with commercialism, materialism and greed and a focus upon needs, not wants⁷.

A simple life is seen to eliminate the greed which often forms the basis for conflict, and to reduce the consumption of scarce resources⁸. Kavanagh⁹ points out that, while living a very simple life often involved self-sacrifice, such sacrifice was not an end in itself and was only justified when some useful purpose was served. Thus, reducing expenditure on clothing does not release that clothing for others in greater need and may impoverish those who produce it. It was better to enable all to enjoy the benefits of the age, not to extend to all the privations of the past. This is a view not always encountered among Friends. The difference between being a responsible consumer of, sustainably produced, goods and a rush to buy cheap goods, produced by exploitation of the workforce is not always acknowledged. The material and energy resource implications of consumption are significant, but, again, the only known means of eliminating the worst forms of poverty at national level is through industrial development, with the resource implications this, potentially, represents. Such considerations illustrate the complexity of the issues involved and the need to apply reason in discerning action to live for the maximum benefit of all and not in pursuit of personal 'righteousness'.

¹ Ghandi's invocation to 'live simply that others may simply live' Friends often quote. See Pam Lunn, *Costing Not Less Than Everything: sustainability and spirituality in challenging times* (Swarthmore Lecture, 2011) (London: Quaker Books, 2011) 41

² L. Hugh Doncaster, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 20.35 1976

³ Curt Gardner, *God just is:* 56

⁴ William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* 272 – 5

⁵ Don Cupitt, *Taking Leave of God* 101

⁶ *Quaker Faith and Practice*, 1.02.40

⁷ Ben Pink Dandelion, *Celebrating the Quaker Way* 5

⁸ Quaker Peace and Social Witness Testimonies Committee, *Engaging with the Quaker Testimonies:* 24

⁹ Jennifer Kavanagh, Ed. *New Light: twelve Quaker voices* 155 – 6 She cites the words of Shipley Brayshaw.

Kananagh¹ describes a familiar Liberal Quaker tendency to deny many of the pleasures of living, choosing asceticism. This can lead to narrow-mindedness and spiritual pride; simplicity becomes its own idol. Creatively simple living, rejecting simple minded refusal to acknowledge the necessary complexities of modern life, produced beautiful and useful lives.

5.6.3.3. Testimony to Equality.

Penn² described as 'gross impiety' that 'a nation's pride should be maintained in the face of its poor'. Liberal Friends share the same sentiments, basing them, as Penn did, in their conviction that all were equal in the sight of God, having 'that of God' within. Making no distinction between the secular and the sacred, they translate this conviction into a call for greater social justice³. Pinthus⁴ warned that, whilst Friends had a duty to be a voice for the oppressed, they must also recognise that they were part of the oppression, lodged, as they were, in both the kingdom of the world and God's Kingdom. Although they called for justice and equality, as consumers in the market, investors, contributors to pension plans etc., they risked contributing to the exploitation of others.

The call for greater equality and social justice is familiar in some political parties and politically active special interest groups. Quakers, while sharing such concerns, ground them in their experience of the divine as so binding them in relationship with others that 'they can do no other'. They widely share Macmurray's⁵ conviction that social reform depends, ultimately, not on the State and its laws but upon the transformation of each individual, through the church. Convinced of the unique value of each human being, concern for social reform to promote justice and equality of opportunity becomes 'natural', intuitive, a 'virtue' approach to social policy.

5.6.3.4. Testimony to Integrity.

Barnes⁶ deconstructed the term 'integrity'. It was a virtuous state, not achieved by self-conscious effort or adherence to a rigid principle, but by developing, through practice, a 'natural', virtuous, tendency to renounce opportunism and self-seeking. He was describing early Friends' concept of the growth of the divine 'Seed'. Integrity required humility and selflessness. It embraced far more than merely telling the truth. *Advices and Queries*⁷ encourages honesty in dealings with all individuals and organisations, truthfulness at all

¹ Jennifer Kavanagh, Ed. *New Light*: 170

² William Penn, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 20.29 1669

³ Ursula Franklin, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 23.32 1979

⁴ Eva I. Pinthus, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 23.04 1987

⁵ John Macmurray, *The search for Reality in Religion* 78 – 81

⁶ Kenneth C. Barnes, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 20.44 1972

⁷ *Quaker Faith and Practice*, 1.02.37 – 8

times¹, discretion and responsibility in use, both of money and information, and courage to resist any temptation to reduce one's integrity for personal gain.

Scott² insisted that integrity was the first principle of Quakerism; integrity in word, worship and actions. If the worship was right, truth would emerge, resulting in actions which reflected love.

5.6.3.5. Testimony to Stewardship of the Earth.

Woolman³ described the 'produce of the earth' as a gift from God, not to be exploited 'to support outward greatness', resulting in 'an injury to the succeeding age'. Two hundred years later, Friends agreed⁴ that the earth's future health was under threat, due to human 'selfishness, ignorance and greed', and that the greatest impact of this crisis was upon the poor. Stewardship of 'God's creation' was vital. The environmental crisis⁵ was 'at root a spiritual and religious crisis', requiring recognition that the purpose of human 'being' upon the earth was to sustain it. They recognised the inter-dependence of all living things; 'wherever we touch [the web of creation⁶] ...we affect justice and peace and the health of all, everywhere'⁷.

Liberal Quakers, corporately⁸, addressed wider strategies, adopting a faith inspired challenge to each individual to examine their lifestyle and to recognise the truth of Gandhi's words: 'Those who say religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion means'⁹. They adopted a challenge to work politically for a fairer, more equitable and more sustainable sharing of the earth's resources, seeking both social justice and resource conservation. Jarman¹⁰ emphasises the need to look to the effects of human decisions, particularly concerning economic growth, upon the natural world. This is significant, given Quaker concerns over poverty. Economic growth, which, inevitably, requires consumption of natural resources, is, commonly, the means to reduce poverty, by providing employment. Friends describe¹¹ that they seek, 'to remake society as a communion of people, living

¹ Quakers are entreated to 'affirm' not 'swear' oaths, thus maintaining a uniform level of honesty in all dealings. Nonetheless, the Quaker body *Quaker Peace and Service*, in 1992 (*Quaker Faith and Practice*, 20.45) described how, working in sensitive areas of conflict, they needed to avoid disclosing information revealed in confidence.

² Janet Scott, 'On Being a Faithful People' in, *Friends Quarterly* Vol. 22 No. 12 1982 Repr. In Geoffrey Durham, *The Spirit of the Quakers* 79 – 80

³ John Woolman, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 25.01 1772

⁴ *Quaker Faith and Practice*, 25.02, Minute 25 of London Yearly Meeting (1988)

⁵ Environmental 'crisis' concerns a host of man-made problems, notably, widespread depletion of finite resources, pollution disrupting the natural self-regulating functions of natural systems and reduction in biodiversity, mainly through the imposition of intensive agriculture and monoculture.

⁶ The scientific term most appropriate to this concept is the world ecosystem, or biosphere.

⁷ Audrey Urry, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 25.04 1994

⁸ *Quaker Faith and Practice*, 25.10 Epistle of London Yearly Meeting 1989

⁹ The World Council of Churches' concern for: 'Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation'.

¹⁰ Roswitha Jarman, *Breakthrough to Unity*: 44

¹¹ In their statement: 'A Quaker response to climate change', Meeting for Sufferings, Britain Yearly Meeting June 2009

sustainably as part of the natural world'. This is a huge aim. It would require massive changes in life-style for most people, particularly in the wealthier, developed, world. Yeo¹ maintains that Friends' faith and practice, at its best, involving interdependence and full, equitable, mutuality, could form a model for a new politics, free of domination by factional interests, enabling a 'radical individuality', allowing each to achieve self-realisation through recognition of the total interdependence of all community members. These are inspiring words, but their application would require personal transformation of people, throughout the world. The problems, set out in this thesis, facing Liberal Quakers in maintaining and living out their own transformation, hint at the difficulty of the task.

Some Liberal Friends regard devastation of the biosphere as the greatest threat to the world today and attempts to prevent this as giving opportunities for spiritual renewal. The Bible gave two models of human interaction with the world; having dominion over², or having stewardship of it³. Whilst much of human society has opted for dominion, exploiting resources freely, Friends seek stewardship, but selectively. Murgatroyd⁴ insists that they seek to protect what they treasure, whilst still enjoying the fruits of exploitation elsewhere. Friends require further growth in perspective. This is an honest assessment, recognising the considerable changes in life-style required, even for Quakers, bent on a simple life. Lunn⁵, using a calculator to assess individual carbon footprint⁶, shows that the poor⁷ have a smaller footprint than even the most responsible affluent individuals.

As to why so little progress is made in changing attitudes of the public to environmental issues, Canadian research shows what inhibits sustainable behaviours in people⁸ identifying six barriers to action:

1. Structural; feelings that the changes needed were far too expensive for the individual to afford.
2. All had a sense of entitlement; they worked hard and expected material rewards.
3. Inability to make informed choices, through lack of, accessible, information.
4. Lack of trust that leaders, pundits or the general population, would make their own contributions to the changes.
5. Isolation; with few people engaged in change, there were frequently few, if any, to provide support and advice.

¹ Stephen Yeo, 'The Politics of Gaia:' 27, 30 – 1

² Genesis 1: 28

³ Genesis 2: 15

⁴ Linda Murgatroyd, 'The Future of Quakers in Britain:' 11 – 2

⁵ Pam Lunn, *Costing Not Less Than Everything*: chapter 3

⁶ A measure of the amount of greenhouse gas, which is mostly carbon based, especially carbon dioxide and methane, generated directly or indirectly, as a result of the lifestyle of an individual or group.

This is just one of many indicators of the resource implications of human behaviour.

⁷ Very few Liberal Quakers could be classed as poor.

⁸ *Listening to the Public: understanding and overcoming barriers to sustainability. Executive Summary* (San Diego CA: Viewpoint Learning, 2006)

6. The term 'sustainability' is seen as too remote from every-day concerns.

Friends can support one another in overcoming many of these barriers, both through worshipful discernment, discussion and fact-sharing, but shared support is vital. Judging others' commitment is counter-productive. Cadman¹ notes that much behaviour which is bad for the environment is carried out, not out of malice but from ignorance of the consequences of actions. Advice, help and support, not moral posturing, seems most appropriate to a concern, the complexities of which are difficult to grasp.

5.7 Conclusions

5.7.1. Truth and Experience

Central to any faith group is its sense of the nature of 'Truth', of 'Ultimate Reality', the Divine. This determines both how it perceives and understands 'religious' experience, and its beliefs concerning the meaning of those experiences, of existence and of the nature of ethics.

I conclude, from examination of Liberal Quaker texts, that disagreements, over 'Truth', the nature and reality of 'God', the equivalence of 'Christian' and other faith traditions and the meaning of 'spirituality', are often merely 'presenting problems'. They mask differences in individual experience of the divine and failure to acknowledge them as such. Many Friends describe 'eyes closed' mystical experiences of a personal divinity in the depths of their hearts, 'accompanying' and 'leading' them. 'Eyes open' mysticism, perceiving a mysterious divinity, revealed in truth and beauty in the world, not personal, but grounding and giving meaning to all existence, is more rarely directly affirmed, but often alluded to. The two perceptions are not mutually exclusive. If the Divine is the source and part of all being, then it is within each individual. Likewise, if all have divinity within, all are related, grounded in that divinity. The two do, however, place different emphases. They constitute a single axis, in part, paralleling the belief/performance-transformation/relationship axis. Belief that one is led, directly by a divinity speaking within suggests 'performance', requiring obedience to such leadings. From the outset, Friends have emphasised the need to discern, and 'obey' 'the will of God'. Such mysticism also, however, suggests a direct, transforming, relationship. Emphasising that of God in all, it embraces relationship with humankind. 'Eyes open' mysticism emphasises, more directly, relationship with all 'other'. All are 'in God' so, mysteriously, inter-related, demanding to be loved and upheld. Such inspiration is transformative, requiring selfless love. It is rooted in the sense of relationship, with others, but, since all are 'in God', also with God. Beyond a demand for selfless love it is not prescriptive, freeing individuals to develop ethical codes, individually, but also in community. This form of mysticism, far from denying the reality of the divine, affirms it but makes morality more explicitly a human projection. This could well explain many

¹ David Cadman, 'Divine Abiding and the Holy Life: A guide to stewardship' in, *Friends Quarterly* Issue 1 2008 28 – 33, 29

misunderstandings; the inspiration to love and compassion is divine, but mysteriously so; how to show these virtues is determined by human creativity and reason. Dight¹, for example, points out that spiritual truths require reconciling some paradoxes, for example, justice with mercy, but not the reconciliation of, say, societal values with selfishness; so rejecting the utility of 'market forces'.

To hypothesise a direct correlation 'eyes closed' mysticism-belief/performance and 'eyes open'-transformation/relationship is over-simplistic. Adherence to beliefs concerning the need to behave in ways which are codified, whether in text or tradition, reflects personality type and will be, broadly, independent of perceptions of divinity. Most Liberal Friends feel divinely inspired to discern virtuous 'being' and 'doing'. What differ are their understandings of the role of divinity in such discernment. Friends cannot believe what they like, but believe what they must, that promptings of love and truth are leadings² 'of' God³. Core beliefs, truths, for Liberal Quakers are rooted in the equal value of all, requiring universal love and compassion⁴.

The need for human reason and imagination in responding to apparent, religious experiences is seen, both in the misplaced guilt felt by those suffering from a distorted conscience and in the uncharitable, cruel, actions of others acting upon a, perceived, religious 'concern'⁵. Truth requires careful and compassionate human discernment.

5.7.2. Faith.

Liberal Quaker faith, trust, is, overwhelmingly, in God as representing 'the good', virtuous 'being' and 'doing'. Friends have confidence, not that they will be safe from all harm, but that they will be empowered to endure difficulties, if they follow their inspirations, trusting that of God, in themselves and in others, transforming them. This gives a clearer sense of what really matters, whilst freeing them from fear and mistrust, to be open and bold. Such an approach can be misjudged, even naïve, at times and prudence is always required, but, faithful, open-ness to inspiration gives courage and discernment.

If seeking the intellectual basis for faith, individuals lose the emotional experience which inspires the faith, by over-analysing it.

5.7.3. Worship.

Liberal Quakers uphold silent worship, being still, emptying the mind of thoughts. They trust that they will, then, encounter a deeper level of consciousness, where the 'self' dissolves into a sense of union with the source of inspiration. Some believe this to be direct

¹ Dave Dight, 'Truth, Lies and Paradox' in, *The Friend* Vol. 171, No. 14 2013

² Not 'of', not 'from'; they can be seen as emanating from within or without.

³ Geoffrey Durham, 'What it Means to be a Quaker Today' in, *the Friends' Quarterly* Issue 3 2012 7

⁴ Hugh Rock, letter, 'The Core Beliefs of Quakerism' in, *The Friend* Vol.172 No. 26 2014

⁵ See, for example, Dorothy Searle, 'Tunnel Vision' in *the Friends' Quarterly* Issue 3 2012 41 – 4

relationship with God, who will lead them to right understandings and right actions. Others gain inspiration, not from such direct encounter, but from a sense of union with all around them, working towards a 'gathered meeting', but, further, union, relationship, with all of humankind, all of life. These inspirations they must interpret more obviously for themselves. Either way, such experience of divinity, if heeded, helps to transform them, into more intuitively virtuous beings. Strongly 'belief' based approaches give perceptions of action out of duty, obedience, to God. This is not the normal Liberal Quaker response, which is, rather, to act out of love. Whilst more inspiring and giving a greater sense of human freedom, it makes Friends vulnerable to feelings of self-satisfaction, so requires humility. Many Friends retain a sense of divine Grace, that their abilities to act depend upon gifts, divinely bestowed, however that is interpreted.

Experiences of worship, whether formal, or informal and serendipitous, can be of awe, in the face of the numinous. With faith, such a sense of awe inspires; this is often the key to a sense of God as Ground of Being, holding all that is, 'in God'. Lacking a sincerely held faith, a sense of the numinous can lead to idealism; faced with a divinity, perfect in every way, feeling inadequate, guilty for failing to 'measure up' to such perfection.

If worship leads to perceptions of close relationship with a divinity, 'domesticated' within the worshipper, this can promote 'self-worship'. This is an undesirably self-satisfied attitude, perceived and condemned more broadly by those advocating a more belief based Quakerism. It need not occur if the relationship is seen as a gift, inspiring boldness and action, at whatever level, for the general good.

5.7.4. Love and Unity.

Friends seek to show selfless love and trust, being transformed from a life of self-regarding caution and mistrust of others. Such transformation is achieved through relationship with others, the beloved. For Liberal Quakers that is achieved through faith in relationship with God, the Ultimate Cause, the Ground of all Being. Friends holding a wide variety of beliefs share the belief that the statement: 'God is love' represents an endorsement of the divinity, the ultimate value, of selfless love. What seems less universally accepted is that such love embraces difference, in gender, race, sexual orientation, but also in religious beliefs. At their best, Friends affirm unity in diversity, grounding it in selfless love. In practice most Quaker meetings are predominantly white, middle class; often predominantly intellectual in orientation¹. Arguably this deters others not within such a demographic, whilst intellectualising in worship distracts those present from the emotional experience which inspires love and unity.

¹ See, for example, Marisa Johnson, in a letter to *The Friend* Vol.167 No. 37 2009

Friends can be patronising, dispensing love, moral and practical help, to others, in a one-sided way¹. Some Liberal Friends remind others of the vulnerability of many Quakers themselves and the need for all to feel loved² and to love themselves. Whilst condemned as self-indulgent at times, Liberal Friends have come to recognise that self-love enables love of others, giving the confidence needed to see the 'self' as an object to others. This is the basis of reciprocity.

5.7.5. Testimony and Witness.

Quakers have always sought to live as a witness, or testimony, to God; to their perception of divine values. Seen in such a light, testimony is a guide to every aspect, every moment, of life. Understanding that the divine life is one of love, empathy and compassion, each action or word is regarded as sacred, holy. Such understanding is not always easy and all fall short, but the merit in dissecting 'testimony' into a series of discrete 'testimonies' is not immediately apparent. Whilst each individual testimony is useful as a guide and aid to discernment, 'testimonies', too easily, become codified as rules to live by. As such they are belief/performance based, often inflexible, allowing little discernment and, given the technical complexity of issues, say of economic justice, social policy, maintaining the peace in a violent world and environmental protection, they easily lend themselves to simplistic solutions. Such 'solutions', whilst naïve, can be sincerely held to, but if held with the primary aim of preserving a sense of personal propriety and 'holiness', with little thought as to the wider needs of the situation, they are unworthy of the inspirations from which they arose.

Most Liberal Friends try to apply the principles of each testimony thoughtfully and compassionately, seeing all aspects of them as aspects of their relationship with God, with divine values and virtues. Where individual testimonies appeal to some individuals then vigorous evangelising for particular interpretations of their implications cause dissension and hurt. Choosing to neglect some testimonies, through disinterest or dislike of how they are interpreted is equally unhelpful.

5.8 Chapter Conclusions.

Liberal Friends largely emphasise their experience of relationship with the divine, focussing upon the consequences of these more than early Friends did. For most their experience of relationship is principally emotional. Its effect is inspirational; faith in the Divine stimulating commitment to a life of love and compassion. All are perceived as united 'in God', their Ultimate Cause and Reality. Such experience and faith does not give rules to live by. Its merit is in its flexibility, enabling Liberal Friends, feeling Spirit-led, however that is perceived, to adapt to a changing world yet hold on to timeless underlying values. Such an

¹ This is not new. See Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 130 – 1 where he describes such attitudes at the outset of the Liberal Quaker movement in the 1900s. See also John Parkin, in a letter to *The Friend* Vol. 171 No. 5 2013

² See Jean Fisher, in a letter to *The Friend* Vol.171 No. 4 2013

approach is profoundly transformative; enabling a life lived with enjoyment and hope, intimately linked with all around and with all of life. It lies at the transformation/relationship end of the single axis. Those beliefs, in a powerful and ever-vigilant but gracious God, which early Friends began to internalise, have become fully existential, producing an attitude of self-examination inspired by Liberal Friends' sense of relationship with God.

The inspirational nature of such perceptions is lost if faith in divinity is lost, and, for Liberal Friends, this occurs when its nature and reality are questioned, seeking to define and verify individual beliefs. Humankind, uniquely self-reflective, seeks meaning and value in all that is done. Experience of a divinity representing their very being and meaning inspires and empowers. The 'institutional' Liberal Quakerism of the texts analysed overwhelmingly affirms such a divinity and a faith based upon a sense of transformation by relationship with that divinity. Some, within the 'non-realists' and in 'popular' Liberal Quakerism, however, agonise about the bases of their faith, thereby undermining their emotional experiences of 'other', leaving them struggling over 'beliefs' and seeking affirmation of their 'being' and actions.

In the course of that search, recourse is often made to ethical codes as blueprints for the good life. Some misuse Quaker testimony to that end, placing them well towards the belief/performance end of the single axis. This tendency is very small in the book of discipline¹; the agreed institutional position is very close to the transformation/relationship pole. Popular Quakerism, however, often reveals examples of particular enthusiasm for one or other of the testimonies, by a 'special interest group', formal or otherwise. They demand a particular, effectively creedal, stance, often ignoring the sensitivities, beliefs, even the possibilities open to others in their zealous pursuit of perfection, as they see it. Such zeal may well be all-embracing, the same individuals showing little interest in other aspects of testimony. Where transformation is sincere testimony, as for early Friends, is total influencing all aspects of relationship, both with others and with the world. This is what 'institutional' Liberal Quakerism advocates; a faith right at the transformation/relationship pole of the single axis.

¹ *Quaker Faith and Practice*

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSIONS.

This chapter concludes the Thesis. It reminds the reader of the Borg models of God and of relationship and how these have been adapted in the present study. It makes wider use of the numerical data to compare the priorities of the two Quaker groups over a wider range of features, both of God and of relationship, emphasising similarities and differences both between early and Liberal and between the 'institutional' and the 'popular' Liberal Quaker priorities, drawing conclusions over the extent to which Liberal Quakerism has embraced and built upon early Friends' inspirations. It also summarises the problems identified within Quakerism today and suggests possible solutions. The Chapter then examines the implications of the study findings for existing scholarship and suggests future research which might, usefully, emerge using the methodology and findings of this study.

6.1 The Borg models and their use in this study.

Borg suggested¹ that religious faith² conformed:

1. To a model requiring doctrinal belief in an all-powerful, judgemental God and a culture of 'performance', obeying God's commands as the price of 'salvation', seen, mainly, in terms of an after-life, or
2. To one of being transformed by a divinity seen as an intimate part of the 'self', in close relationship, guiding and empowering it to 'salvation', seen as becoming a virtuous individual.

This dualism I found to be inappropriately rigid, and have used the four 'elements' of the two models, 'Belief', 'Performance', 'Transformation' and 'Relationship' independently³ to propose that individual and corporate religious faith, certainly for Quakers and, arguably, more widely lies along a single axis, of which 1. and 2., above, describe the two poles.

6.2 Comparing the feature emphases of the two groups.

This section, principally, examines features which are more particularly prioritised by early or by Liberal Quakers, showing how these changed priorities relate to changes in perceptions of God or relationship. Early and Liberal Quakers prioritised 'Spirit' above all other 'inward' features, so the section begins by seeking any differences in how they perceived Spirit.

Liberal Friends frequently refer to Spirit in conventional, Christian, senses⁴, describing a 'real, spiritual world', where 'all space...time...life are boundless and eternal'¹, suggesting

¹ Marcus J Borg, *The Heart of Christianity*: and see Chapter 1 part 1.3

² Mainly, but not exclusively, in a Christian context.

³ In the discussions of features in Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5,

⁴ For example, in *Quaker Faith and Practice* 1.01 reference to the 'universal Spirit of Christ', 1.02.9 refers to 'promptings of the Holy Spirit' and in 26.60 1987 Richard Rowntree refers to 'that God whom Jesus of Nazareth referred to as Spirit'.

belief in an 'other' world. Wood² described 'man' as living in two worlds, the physical and the spiritual, the natural and the supernatural. Most, more recent, references, however, do not emphasise such a duality. They describe a S(s)pirit which guides³, is accessed through human imagination⁴ and inspires self-transcendence⁵. Access to Spirit is through 'open-ness to one another'⁶; 'we are all one in the Spirit'⁷. God perceived as ground of all being. Such a God/Spirit loves beauty for its own sake⁸, is the 'still small voice' within⁹, inspiring 'peace, truth, love and redeeming power'¹⁰. Being Spirit led depends less on belief in God as upon willingness to be led¹¹. Spirit is valued for its inspirational and transforming effects. Thus, for many Liberal Friends, beliefs as to its nature and origins are regarded as secondary to the message; one of transformation/relationship¹². This experiential approach is what Friends seek, but there may also be a self-conscious avoidance of supernatural implications, as superstitious, doctrinal. If God is held to 'ground all being', then, however mysteriously, such a God must transcend natural 'being'.

By contrast, early Friends' references to Spirit are routinely dualistic, contrasting being 'born of the Spirit' with birth 'of the flesh'¹³. None could call Christ 'Lord' unless inspired by the Holy Ghost. If so inspired Christ would reign within them¹⁴. Affirming God as Spirit justified silent, not formal, worship¹⁵. Whilst 'belief' language is used the 'graces' of the Spirit are listed as 'humility, temperance, love, patience [and] heavenly mindedness'¹⁶, encompassing transformed human virtues. The elders at Balby¹⁷, setting out guidance for Friends, insisted that it did not constitute 'a rule or form to walk by', but a guide; 'not from the letter, for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life'. This represents the approach to God which early Friends rediscovered, inspiring them, within, to interpret religious and moral 'law', seeking, beyond its obvious, 'letter', the broad meaning, 'spirit', it portrayed. They applied the

¹ Peter Tatton-Brown, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 22.85 1989

² H. G. Wood, in, *Christian Faith and Practice* 138 1955

³ *Quaker Faith and Practice* 2.20

⁴ Mary Lou Leavitt, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 20.71 1986

⁵ Donald Court, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 20.09 1970, 20.27 *Faith and Practice* North Carolina Yearly meeting (1983)

⁶ *Quaker Faith and Practice* 22.02 (1994)

⁷ Quaker Women's Group, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 23.44 1982, 1986

⁸ Rufus Jones, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 26.32 1920

⁹ Stephen Allott, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 26.74 1981

¹⁰ Beatrice Saxon Snell, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 26.77 1961

¹¹ Gordon Matthews, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 29.01 1987

¹² See also Chapter 4 Section 4.1

¹³ George Fox *Epistles* VIII

¹⁴ George Fox *Epistles* XXXVIII

¹⁵ For example William Penn, *No Cross, No Crown* 39 'He is a Spirit to whom words, places or times are inadequate'

¹⁶ William Penn, *No Cross, No Crown* 52

¹⁷ In a postscript to an epistle to 'the brethren in the north', in 1656. See *Quaker Faith and Practice* 1.01

principle understood from Jesus¹, who taught his followers to apply the spirit of the laws of Moses, internalising and ‘spiritualising’ them, as guides to a virtuous life.

Both early and Liberal Quakers are, thus, towards the transformation/relationship pole of the single axis, but, whilst early Friends described their experience in terms adopted from Christian doctrine, Liberal Friends avoid this.

Early Friends’ greater emphasis upon God as ruler², judging³ them and requiring obedience⁴ shows greater concern to ‘perform’, to please a watchful and wrathful God; inevitable, given the climate of belief at that time. Although God guided and upheld them within, they must obey. Liberal Friends retain⁵ Barclay’s words that, the ‘Spirit of...God’ was the ‘.. ruler...’ in the true church and assert that ‘the world,..... belongs to God’⁶. Scott⁷, however, described an ‘institutional’ Liberal Quaker view of God’s judgement, as guiding, enabling, individuals, not to remove their imperfection, but ‘to turn to the shape of the good’. Judgement, thus, was gentle and not final, but ongoing; she emphasised God’s love and mercy. This view of divine judgement is more that of a loving parent than ruler, emphasising a greater sense of relationship. *Quaker Faith and Practice(QFP)* calls for obedience to Spirit⁸, describing God’s ‘total claim’⁹ on individuals. The only obedience specified, however, is to love¹⁰, recalling Jesus’ command¹¹. O’Shea¹² considers risking the ‘disturbing, transfiguring presence of the Spirit’ in her life, obeying it and making sacrifices as ‘I discover and nurture who I am before God’. Spirit, thus, inspires, demands, but also enables self-realisation; a transforming relationship with God, at the transformation/relationship pole of the single axis. Liberal Friends avoid perceptions of a powerful, wrathful, God, emphasising self-judgement; they have made such concerns fully existential. This is not universal within popular Quakerism, Dandelion¹³ questions whether Fox asking, ‘What cans’t thou say?’ is not now taken as licence to pluralism of beliefs, rather than to self-judgement. He describes¹⁴ a tendency, not to ‘need’, just ‘enjoy’ being Quaker ignoring the requirement for transformation, leaving one’s ‘comfort zone’ and making sacrifices for the greater good.

¹ *Matt. 5: 17* ‘Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets... but to fulfil [them]’

² Feature, Ruler: Early Friends 8.10% Liberal Friends 0.55%

³ Feature, Judges; Early Friends 3.30% Liberal Friends 0.64%

⁴ Feature, Obedience: Early Friends 1.97% Liberal Friends 0.71%

⁵ Robert Barclay, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 19.23

⁶ *Quaker Faith and Practice* 29.14 Meeting for Sufferings 1988

⁷ Janet Scott, *What Cans’t Thou Say?* 44

⁸ *Quaker Faith and Practice* 2.55 Advices 1964

⁹ Dorothy Havergal Shaw, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 10.30 1994

¹⁰ Sandra Cronk, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 22.03 1983

¹¹ *John 15: 12* ‘love one another, as I have loved you’

¹² Janey O’Shea, *Living the Way* (London: Quaker Books, 2003) quoted by Beth Allen, *Ground and Spring* 106

¹³ Ben Pink Dandelion, *Open for Transformation: Being Quaker* (Swarthmore Lecture, 2014) (London: Quaker Books, 2014) 12 – 13

¹⁴ Ben Pink Dandelion, *Open for Transformation* 29 – 30

Early and Liberal Quakers placed similar emphasis upon God's Gifts and Grace¹. *QFP* asked that Friends be faithful to God, valiant for 'His' Truth and so receive 'His' reward of righteousness². Virtue, as for early Friends, is seen as a divine gift, not a cause for self-congratulation. Thought³, creativity⁴, personality, sex, race, culture and experience⁵ all are described as God's gifts, and Kung⁶ celebrates that, 'God does not demand but gives.... oppress but raises up.... wound but heals'. He, thus, invokes a 'parental' God in intimate and supportive relationship with humankind. Dandelion⁷, contemplating many Quaker meetings, suggests that Friends often neglect 'gifts', under-using talents, through failure to recognise them, or misunderstanding the testimony to equality, and ignoring the value of particular talents. Thus, whilst 'institutional' Liberal Quakerism sees gifts as fruits of transformation, 'popular' Quakerism frets over the risks of privilege. Seeing talents as gifts potentially reduces envy and promotes humility within those so gifted⁸.

QFP describes God's forgiveness⁹ of failings¹⁰ and 'the excess of God's love for us'¹¹, but Trevett¹² saw God as '... not morally blind-eyed or liberally absent-minded'. She shared the concerns, expressed by Dandelion, that some, in an era of individualism, welcome social and spiritual support from Friends but choose their own self-indulgent path. God's Spirit spoke even if Friends did not listen. Friends, feeling religiously inspired, could easily neglect an act of kindness¹³; a warning against zealous self-righteousness. Doubting the experience of relationship for some Liberal Quakers, Dale¹⁴ feared that many had lost faith in a God personal enough to forgive.

Affirmations of the experience of relationship with a forgiving, inspiring and upholding God requiring only acceptance and use of the gifts received abound in the texts analysed, both early and Liberal¹⁵. Early Friends regarded everything¹⁶ as a gift of Grace. Fox¹⁷ urged all to 'heed' their measure of grace; then their minds would be 'kept up to God'. Penn¹⁸ described 'the cross mystical' as the grace which enabled Friends to transcend worldly desire to

¹ Feature, Gives/Grace: Early Friends 2.34% Liberal Friends 1.62%

² Elizabeth Bathurst, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 19.25 1683

³ John Macmurray, *Search for Reality in Religion* 3

⁴ Jo Farrow, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 21.38 1994

⁵ Meg Maslin, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 23.33 1990

⁶ Hans Kung, *On Being a Christian* Transl. E Quinn (London: Collins, 1977) 312 – 3, quoted in Janet Scott, *What Can'st Thou Say?* 59

⁷ Ben Pink Dandelion, *Open for Transformation* 49 – 50

⁸ As early Friends recognised.

⁹ *Quaker Faith and Practice* 1.02.18

¹⁰ Thomas F. Green, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 2.49 1952

¹¹ Phyllis Richards, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 21.23 1952

¹² Christine Trevett, *Previous Convictions* 38

¹³ Janet Scott, *What Can'st Thou Say?* 2, 47

¹⁴ Jonathan Dale, *Beyond the Spirit of the Age* 60

¹⁵ At the transformation/relationship pole of the single axis.

¹⁶ Except disobedience and sinfulness.

¹⁷ George Fox, *Epistles LII*

¹⁸ William Penn, *No Cross, No Crown* 19

become 'conformable to the will of God'. Grace was the gift of virtue, selflessness, 'for others' inspired by Christ's, selfless, death. This was the transformation message. Penn¹ was robust, condemning those who pleaded that God may enable them to do better, but later. Relationship with inner divinity was challenging. Scott², however, for Liberal Friends, placed more emphasis upon Grace, forgiveness, than upon judgement; the rule of grace, unrestricted, supplanted the law. This, comfortable, view is open to abuse. Allen³ describes Quakers' struggle to acknowledge their failings and accept their need for forgiveness, with no way to handle this religiously. Priestland⁴ had offered such a way, insisting that transformation, which requires self-examination and self-judgement, required Grace, the gift of love, to be accepted and responded to, loving God and others. Too often beliefs about God, or testimony, undermine transforming, open, loving relationships, leading to emphasis upon performance, doing the 'right' thing, regardless of any collateral damage. In popular Quakerism it is too familiar to hear 'plain speaking' used to excuse rude or thoughtless comments and assertions.

Whilst focus upon Righteousness/Virtue was similar for the two groups, Liberal Friends placed significantly less emphasis upon Sin, virtually never equating it with separation from God⁵. *QFP* insists⁶ that all fall short of virtue and have the potential for evil. Farrow⁷ described the potential for evil, as well as that for virtue, in the human unconscious. Thus that of God, the Seed, was in the unconscious, in ultimate relationship with humankind. Greater modern understanding of motivation and the role of previous experience in human behaviour can be accused of justifying wrongdoing, denying the possibility of 'pure evil'. Sensibly applied, they provide mitigating evidence, but most recognise that, ultimately, all⁸ have a choice, to do evil or not⁹. Liberal Quaker Castle¹⁰ described Fox's 'psychological insight', emphasising, not the sin but the Light which revealed it; not the corruption of humankind but its potential for redemption and virtue. Such statements reflect Liberal Quaker optimism over the human condition¹¹, focussing upon transformation through relationship and rejecting the hellfire visions of belief/performance models of religion¹². Macmurray¹³ saw God's purpose for 'man' as 'man's true nature. If at enmity with God humankind was at odds with itself; an assertion that humankind is Spirit led towards virtue.

¹ William Penn, *No Cross, No Crown* 29

² Janet Scott, *What Cans't Thou Say?* 59, 81

³ Beth Allen, *Ground and Spring* 83

⁴ Gerald Priestland, *Reasonable Uncertainty* 48

⁵ Early Friends: Sin etc. 4.34% Righteousness 2.20% Liberal Friends: Sin etc. 1.99% Righteousness 2.07%

⁶ Elizabeth Fry, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 23.98 1827

⁷ Jo Farrow, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 26.29 1984

⁸ Except, arguably, the insane.

⁹ A popular version of this debate occurs in the musical *West Side Story* when teenage hoodlums are confronted by police officer Krupke and seek to justify their actions by reference to their poor backgrounds; they are 'misunderstood'.

¹⁰ Edgar B. Castle, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 26.69 1961

¹¹ Ben Pink Dandelion, *Open for Transformation* 27

¹² See, for example, William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* Lectures VI and VII, esp. 138

¹³ John Macmurray, *Search for Reality in Religion* 45

If tempted by self-indulgence, it undermines its own peace of mind. Such a view affirms a close, transforming, relationship with divinity.

Liberal, but not early, Quakers question the origins of evil and suffering. Keeping faith in a powerful, loving God is challenging when faced with suffering. Both groups do modify perceptions of God's power to intervene directly in the world, but this is not universal for early Friends¹. Many texts emphasised God's suffering for and with humankind, often relating this to Jesus' sacrifice². Early Friends initially regarded suffering as punishment for sin³, but came to see their own persecution as redemptive, by sharing Christ's suffering. *QFP* makes no mention of suffering as punishment for wrong-doing. It invokes Jesus as a symbol of God, sharing human vulnerability, giving up power to take on pain and mortality⁴. Such imagery empowers⁵, evoking a particularly close relationship with God in times of suffering. The common Liberal Quaker claim to 'hold in the Light' individuals and communities in their times of need represents faith that Friends can uphold one another, 'in God'. Parker-Rhodes⁶ lost any sense of God, following an operation for cancer, but the love of visitors to her bedside mediated God's love for her. What is asked, expected, of God in times of suffering is a matter of personal faith. Whilst I encountered nothing⁷ which anticipated divine intervention to change events, many experience support from their relationship with divinity and with each other. Burnell⁸ rejected that religion was 'offering easy cures for pain'. She cited the Beatitude promising comfort to those who mourn; *cum forte* meant 'with strength', not 'at ease'. Fawell⁹ asked if Friends always offered encouragement to those suffering, along with sympathy. They do not always share joys and humour as well as sorrows within their meeting communities¹⁰ and are often unaware of events in others' lives, so fail to engage sensitively with them, or to recognise the value of shared joy and laughter as well as deeper sharing. Dandelion¹¹ describes the need to 'inhabit' Quakerism; to experience an open-ended, mutual, promise keeping relationship, with God and with one another. This is a transforming relationship, enabling actions for one another in love and not out of obligation or duty. It promotes the 'wholeness' of all concerned and a sense of real community, with the trust and sharing that promotes.

¹ Who frequently showed their belief in God's power to intervene in all aspects of the world and human life.

² Atones/ Suffers for humankind: Early Friends 0.55%. Liberal Friends 0.66%

³ For example, William Penn, *No Cross, No Crown* 65 emphasised how humankind had long, under profession of religion 'grieved God's Holy Spirit'. Early Friends' persecution led them to modify such beliefs, certainly in their own cases. Their suffering was a sharing of that of Christ and was redemptive.

⁴ Janet Scott, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 26.50 1980

⁵ It also embodies an implicit assumption that Jesus could have used his power to change events, so was, effectively, divine, but fails to emphasise the point.

⁶ Damaris Parker-Rhodes, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 21.70 1985

⁷ In the texts analysed or in popular Quakerism.

⁸ S. Jocelyn Burnell, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 21.66 1989

⁹ Ruth Fawell, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 10.12 1967

¹⁰ June Ellis, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 10.11 1986, 12.20

¹¹ Ben Pink Dandelion, *Open for Transformation* 15 – 18

Early Friends attached greater significance to Salvation/Redemption¹, seeing it as available universally. Fox² experiences God showing that all had the Light of Christ within; all must believe in it and obey it, to be brought 'out of condemnation' and become 'children of Light'. God called and 'elected' the faithful, to 'eternal riches'³; salvation to eternal life⁴. Liberal Friends still value Penington's⁵ evoking of 'true peace... rest of the soul, the everlasting habitation which the redeemed dwell in', but associate⁶ salvation with a need for 'help from something or someone outside myself', to make their lives better than they were⁷. Scott⁸ described the wish for salvation from being meaningless, and Macmurray⁹ denied that Christianity's purpose was saving its members; it was to inspire them to save the world. Salvation, thus, becomes living a transformed, meaningful, life, living for others as well as for 'self'. For Priestland¹⁰ humankind was not fallen or depraved but needing to strive towards a height, to which all are called by God. God's will was that all sought their true nature, but, given free will, many felt they knew better. Only through experience of God within could individuals see the truth and be inspired to fulfil their full nature, their virtuous potential.

Dandelion¹¹ notes that, often in popular Quakerism, ideas, both of sin and of salvation have become diffuse and optional. Many do not feel that they are saving people from, or for, anything. They do not need Quakerism, but merely enjoy it. The Quaker experience of God they do not feel; it has no great significance for them, suggesting neither relationship nor transformation. Boulton¹² sees doubting the 'reality' of God as losing a God by whom to be saved. He then questions the value of saving one's own soul whilst doing nothing to 'mend the world', no suggestion of which emerged in either the texts analysed or in 'popular' Quaker materials. He is implying that theism induces a primary emphasis upon notions of belief in life after death, a familiar 'popular' criticism of religious believers. QFP devotes a section to thoughts around death¹³, relating the account of one who almost died¹⁴ and her experience, that God 'is'. Life and death seen as part of one 'wholeness' 'in God'; eternal life was in each moment of life, to be lived to its full potential. Hosking¹⁵ described longing to

¹ Early Friends 1.93% c.f. Liberal Friends 0.84%

² John L. Nickalls, Ed., *The Journal of George Fox* 33 c.f. *John* 3: 19, 12: 36

³ George Fox, *Epistles* XVIII, XXIII

⁴⁴ Early Friends devoted 0.80% of feature references to Eternal Life, Liberal Friends 0.20%. Neither figure is large, but the disparity between the two is marked.

⁵ Isaac Penington, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 19.14

⁶ Francis H. Knight, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 26.10 1945

⁷ Such statements can be regarded as acknowledging the mystery of the divine and of salvation, or as vague and, somewhat, meaningless.

⁸ Janet Scott, *What Cans't Thou Say?* 41

⁹ John Macmurray, *Search for Reality in Religion* 65

¹⁰ Gerald Priestland, *Reasonable Uncertainty* 61 – 2

¹¹ Ben Pink Dandelion, *Open for Transformation* 28

¹² David Boulton, *Real like the Daisies....* 18, 31

¹³ *Quaker Faith and Practice* 21.49 – 21.58

¹⁴ Jenifer Faulkner, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 21.57 1982

¹⁵ Anne Hosking, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 21.52 1980

be, somehow, immortal, but, on the death of her mother, amid grief, remorse and anger she experienced confidence that their loving one another could continue, unabated. Littleboy¹ described death as a freeing of the spirit; loved ones were not lost but comfort, encourage and 'beckon us on'. Faith in eternal life is not based upon literal beliefs for Friends today, but upon an on-going relationship, with that of God in the departed, which embraces and fortifies both the dying and those left behind.

Early Friends described all their experiences, of judgement, inspiration, guidance and upholding, in terms of an inward Christ, the eternal Word, responsible for Creation and incarnate in Jesus. Thus, their understandings of the will of God were grounded in the Gospel. This was revealed inwardly, but was supported by their understandings of Scripture, illuminated by the Light². Liberal Friends' emphasis upon Gospel and Scripture is significantly less³. Dandelion⁴ describes how Liberal Quakers have removed the need for scriptural confirmation of inward revelation, discerning, individually and collectively, what is, truly, 'of God'. For early Friends it was imperative to 'know' the scriptures, reading them, but enlightened by the Light⁵. Scripture was written by prophets or apostles, similarly enlightened⁶. Fox⁷ condemned those who professed the words of Scripture but were 'strangers to the Light and Life'. He recognised the importance of seeking the 'spirit', the underlying message, of Scripture and not simply reciting it, as a sign of 'holiness', without thought for its meaning. In this way Friends felt in relationship with, and transformed by God, who was revealed through the Spirit, expressed in the inspired words of Scripture. Barclay⁸, whilst insisting that Scripture was a secondary rule, was clear that Friends' discernment of Spirit leadings, 'neither do nor can ever contradict the outward testimony of the Scriptures'. Like their unswerving convictions of the reality and nature of God and Christ, their faith in Scripture, read in the Spirit, grounded their sense of relationship with divinity and resulting transformation, giving them overwhelming confidence in all they did.

Whilst *QFP* refers to Scripture almost every reference is from early Friends' writings. Lunn⁹ summarises the dilemma for 'institutional' Liberal Quakerism. For some, the language of Scripture 'is experienced....as expressing truth and reality, as they perceive it'. The stories, the tradition, the perception of God as revealed in Jesus, constitute their beliefs and support their faith. For others, such language and imagery does not express their deepest truths and may deny or violate them, because of the historical accretions and distortions of the Christian message, which for them make it at best, meaningless, at worst, a falsification of truth. It was rejection of some accretions and distortions which inspired early Friends to a

¹ William Littleboy, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 21.54 1917

² Feature references: Scripture 2.21% Gospel 2.07%.

³ Feature references: Scripture 0.84% Gospel 1.93%

⁴ Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 130

⁵ For example George Fox, *Epistles I*

⁶ George Fox, *Epistles XCI*

⁷ George Fox, *Epistles XCI*

⁸ Robert Barclay, *Apology for the True Christian Divinity* 11, 21 – 2

⁹ Pam Lunn, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 26.76 1990

new vision of Christ, representing a God who sought relationship with them and, by dying, giving an example of selflessness. By emulating this they were transformed, becoming 'whole'. Seen as divine or as an inspired human teacher, understandings of Jesus' Gospel, particularly his interpretation of God's will and purposes, has great value. Saxon Snell¹ insisted that Liberal Friends' unity came from the kind of God they worshipped², not from how they apprehended Jesus.

Over many years there has been a decline in the proportion of 'birth-right' Quakers³. Most Liberal Quakers today have been 'convinced'⁴, usually as adults. Some of these have left other Christian denominations, often because of difficulties over accepting doctrinal beliefs. Others have little or no experience of Christianity. For different reasons, neither of these groups values such doctrine, which they associate with Scripture. In the west today, there is a popular view that organised religion, including Christianity, lies behind much conflict and suffering in the world. This, along with a tendency to reject church hierarchy and authority, has led to a widespread aversion to what is popularly perceived as Christian. Parallel with this is increasing multiculturalism and increasing awareness of other cultures and faiths. Liberal Quakers are affected by all these factors. Hampton⁵ identifies three groups of self-identifying Quakers. A 'traditional' group comprise 32% of the whole. They largely self-identify as Christian, reading the Bible regularly, seeing Jesus as an important life-influence and often using Christ-language. A further 50% are 'liberal', less likely to read the Bible or to claim to be Christian. The remaining 18%, 'non-theists' are very unlikely to claim to be Christian or read the Bible. A significant proportion of liberal and non-theist Quakers feel no need of a text, Scripture, seeing their relationship with divinity as sufficient in itself to transform them⁶. Many are 'universalist', recognising all faiths and none as of equal value. All humankind has that of God within and should be equally respected. All three groups, if their faith is sincere, share the same close relationship with God and one another, empowering them, equally, to witness Quaker values to the world.

Disagreements between 'Christocentric' and 'universalist' Friends caused dissension and hurt, mainly in popular Quakerism, in the later twentieth century, but the issue was

¹ Beatrice Saxon Snell, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 26.77 1961, so 30 years before Lunn (above)

² And there seems little doubt that much of Liberal Quaker understanding of such a God is derived from understandings of Jesus' message, however conveyed, directly or indirectly.

³ Those born into Quaker families and continuing as Quakers all their lives. In fact, since 1959, all children of Quaker parents have been required to apply for membership themselves as they mature, so, eventually, all Quakers will have been 'convinced'.

⁴ They have come to value Quakerism during their lives sufficiently to become members or consistent attenders of meeting for worship. The figure for the proportion of 'convinced' Friends, according to Jennifer Hampton, 'The British Quaker survey, 2013: Examining religious beliefs and practices in the 21st century' in, *Quaker Studies* Vol. 19 Issue 1 (2014) forthcoming, was 87%

⁵ Jennifer Hampton 'The British Quaker survey, 2013: Examining religious beliefs and practices in the 21st century' in, *Quaker Studies* Vol. 19 Issue 1 (2014) forthcoming.

⁶ Ben Pink Dandelion, *Open for Transformation* 27

resolved¹, by an affirmation that Universalism was, by definition, inclusive, accepting the free expression of all points of view, including those of Christians. Early Friends saw that salvation was open to all, including those with no knowledge of Jesus or of the scriptures. The intolerance shown by some, on both sides of the dispute, went against all the principles of a transformed life.

This section has broadened further the comparison between early and Liberal Friends, including both 'institutional' Liberal Quakerism, represented in the texts analysed, and its more 'popular' form. It provides further evidence that early Friends pioneered a more transformation/ relationship type of faith, based upon their experience of God, subordinating doctrinal beliefs to that. It also provides further evidence, both of the continuation of that process within most Liberal Quakerism, and of misgivings and misunderstandings within some, particularly 'popular' Quakers which suggest a reversion to greater focus upon beliefs about 'doctrine'. The information from the section is combined with that in Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5 to draw, overall, conclusions below.

6.3 Overall conclusions from the findings of the study.

Early Friends represented a new and, for a time, significant influence within seventeenth century England. Their faith in their experience of a divinity within, in close relationship with, inspiring, guiding and empowering them directly, obviating the need for priests or doctrines, whilst not unique², was hugely important. By rejecting limited election, proclaiming that all could be saved, and the authority of the established church, they freed themselves, and all who followed them, to live confident, transformed, lives. Such self-confidence, preaching that all were equal before God, challenging authority, advocating and practising justice, integrity and compassion, inspired many. Their courage, meeting openly to worship in spite of harassment, attack, imprisonment and loss of property and their mutual support, witnessed to others of their faith in their relationship with God. They were towards the transformation/relationship pole of the single axis.

Their faith was, however, grounded in doctrinal belief, in the divinity of Christ, virgin birth, miracles, atoning death and resurrection. God, they were sure, was, albeit in some mysterious way, a person, male, all-powerful, judging and, if necessary, punishing them with eternal damnation. None of these did they deny, although they changed the emphasis placed upon such beliefs. Christ's resurrection was within them, his death an example to them of the selfless life they should lead, for the love of God and of one another. God was powerful but gracious, willing that they be transformed, to live in the kingdom, both on

¹ By a joint statement by major protagonists in the debates, See, Alastair Heron, Ralph Hetherington and Joseph Pickvance, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 27.04 1994. It was resolved at 'institutional' level, but some 'ordinary' Friends, within 'popular' Quakerism remain at odds over the matter.

² See, for example, Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down* 25 – 8 where he describes the Lollards (16th century) and Familists, and 81 – 4 the Grindletonians ,(17th Century) all of whom affirmed an inner divinity in direct relationship with believers, but the ideas are even earlier in the traditions of Christian mysticism. See Karen Armstrong, *The Case for God* 149 – 155

earth and in heaven. In this way they made their doctrinal beliefs, not into instruments of oppression but into blueprints for freedom, from excessive self-regard, selfishness, fear and mistrust of others. Their beliefs steadily became existential, a guide to living, giving them meaning and self-respect. All such changes, in beliefs and in witness, were grounded in their experience of the Inward Christ or Light, the meaning of which they must discern. This required that they worship and discern together, building community, cementing their relationship and love, for God and for each other¹.

The efficacy of their faith varied, both between individuals and different concerns. Thus, their insistence upon personal integrity was strong, as was that upon justice and compassion for the disadvantaged². Such feelings did not, however, always embrace the personal level. The poor remained as 'them', rarely 'us'. Later, with increasing wealth, some Quakers' lack of compassion became more systemic, as in the case of slave-owning³. Quaker discernment in relation to the arts, sporting and social life seems bizarre, wrong, to modern minds, but it is worth reflecting upon the decadence of many of the rich and powerful, who financed their patronage of such events by exploitation of others and upon the gambling, drunkenness, abuse and neglect of other family members, which probably accompanied many fairs and sporting events. Much of early Quaker response to practices, not least to the use of Scripture, was not about the practices themselves, but the manner in which they were carried out⁴.

Early Quakers were fallible. As so often with a new and prophetic faith-conviction, their enthusiasm for the beliefs they espoused sometimes led them to forget the witness such beliefs demanded, in their desire to convince others. This led them to 'rail', attack others, verbally and in print; not only those who merited attack by their own intolerance, but also others, quietly following their own, different, beliefs. Friends were quarrelsome and schismatic at times. Hill⁵ described the Proud Quakers⁶, who showed 'ranting' tendencies, using profanity, drinking and womanising; some were wrestlers and football players. Perrot led a dissident group which opposed removing their hats, even when others prayed⁷, and advocated worship, not at fixed times and places but 'as moved'. Fox responded by tightening 'Gospel Order'⁸, but, later, this provoked the Story-Wilkinson separation¹. They

¹ This placed them firmly at the transformation/relationship pole of the single axis.

² The poor, widows, orphans and the disabled.

³ Such behaviours suggest a residual element of belief in the need to 'perform'; their commitment to compassion was less than total.

⁴ Again, this suggests a more belief/performance orientation on the single axis, but may, in part, at least represent transformed compassion.

⁵ Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down* 254 – 8

⁶ In the 1650s.

⁷ This was the only time when Quakers did remove their hats, showing deference to God, but Perrot argued that Jesus had not shown such deference, so neither should they.

⁸ See Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 48 Box 6. Gospel Order was collective governance and discipline of Quaker utterances and actions by a hierarchical system of meetings, at which all could minister, speak, and which arrived at a decision on each issue without voting. Such decisions were seen as the will of God.

opposed subordination of the individual Light, the discernment of one individual, to the collective discernment of the group and condemned the hierarchical structure of meetings as the return of a national church².

Perhaps most remarkable of all was the progressive change in Quaker witness from the Restoration³ onwards. Whilst the same beliefs and priorities were maintained⁴ a self-confident, evangelising, expanding, community, open to the world, gave way to an introspective, cautious and, ultimately, diminishing, group; a 'peculiar people' separating themselves from 'the world' by a 'hedge' of plain speech, plain dress and suspicion of others. Significantly, they represented a second generation, who had not experienced the excitement of discovering an experience of divinity which felt liberating, not least, because of its utter difference from what had gone before. They had not seen the message spread and influence events. The second generation experienced all this 'second hand'. Their own experience of Quaker influence was less inspiring and many came to mistrust their inner experience, turning back to doctrinal beliefs, including those about 'righteous' behaviour⁵.

Analysis of Liberal Friends texts has shown an 'official', 'institutional' faith, written in the book of discipline, or in Swarthmore lecture texts⁶, which is right at the transformation/relationship pole of the single axis. It is a religion stripped to the essentials, personal experience⁷ of an inner 'other', which Friends call spiritual. Beliefs are, thus, non-doctrinal, permitting freedom in understanding the origins and nature of the experience, requiring only that it be seen as real, though mysterious⁸, and transforming. *QFP*⁹ sets out four 'fundamental elements' to Liberal Quaker faith; an understanding that the Divine can be encountered directly, if worship is silent, waiting and that divine guidance can be discerned through a business method allowing all to share their insights. Finally, an understanding that experience of intimate relationship with the divine transforms anyone ready to accept and act upon it, enabling them to live a life of testimony or witness to God; a virtuous life, seeking the common good. Thus, the only 'doctrinal' beliefs required are in the reality, albeit mysterious, of the Divine and in that of the experience of relationship with, and inspiration by, such divinity. It is hard to perceive of such a divinity as anything other than supernatural¹⁰. Most frequently Friends see God as a force/energy/consciousness responsible for all 'being', thus, relationship with such a divinity

¹ In the 1670s.

² All of these behaviours, which seem to be reflected in the problems of Liberal Friends today, represent reversion to disputes over beliefs.

³ Of the monarchy; in 1660 King Charles II came to the throne and greater order was established across England, along with restoration of many of the old privileges and injustices.

⁴ The results of this study show a consistent pattern of emphasis, overall, throughout the seventeenth century in spite of big changes in witness and visibility of Quakers.

⁵ They, thus, moved back towards the belief/performance pole of the single axis.

⁶ These are sponsored by the Religious Society of Friends in Britain.

⁷ Jan Arriens, 'Spiritual Connectedness' in *The Friend* Vol. 172 No. 34 2014

⁸ Ben Pink Dandelion, *Open for Transformation* 1

⁹ Quaker Faith and Practice 11.01 The meaning of membership

¹⁰ 'Above nature'.

is relationship with one's deepest self, one's 'being'. How such experience inspires transformation concerns how it develops a sense of meaning and purpose, in the cosmos and, ultimately, in each person. Faith becomes trusting that 'creation', the cosmos, is divine, 'gracious'¹. Transformation then becomes working to aid a gracious world, in which all has value, all is respected. If this is accepted, the experience of relationship with the divine inspires a desire to work to those ends. How to do this becomes a matter for discernment. God's love² translates as concern for the continuation of all 'being'. How this is achieved will be different for humankind; complex, self-reflective, long-lived individuals, whose 'being' is best supported living in mutually supportive communities. Almost uniquely³, humans flourish in ethically aware communities. Morality, not divinity, is a purely human construct. Liberal Quaker faith requires no beliefs in detailed imperatives received from scripture or church tradition. 'God's' imperatives are generic, inspirations⁴. The beauty and integrity of 'creation' provides the inspiration from a God seen to ground it all. The McFague⁵ model of God⁶ is valuable today, portraying the world as God's body, creation as an ongoing process, God's self-expression, and salvation as the continuation of all life on earth. God is seen as the ground of all being and of all relationships.

As with early Friends, regression from the transformation/relationship pole of the single axis⁷ into concerns over beliefs, as acceptance of propositions, and over rule dominated behaviours, results from human uncertainties, eroding self-confidence.

71% of Quakers today are graduates, 32% having higher degrees⁸. It is, thus, unsurprising that much Quaker discourse concerns 'head', intellectual concerns, rather than 'heart', emotions. Early Friends, however, discovered that 'true', sincere, religious experience was

¹ Ursula Goodenough, *The Sacred Depths of Nature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) 171 writes of how the existence of complexity, intent and beauty in nature serves, for her, as the ultimate meaning and value. She is expressing, in religious terms, the understanding that, in the world certainly, and, arguably, throughout the universe, the complexity and interdependence of all the elements within a system, all the living things in an ecosystem, all the individuals within a human community, ensure its continuation. Wilful human interference, alone can permanently undermine such continuity. John Haught, *What is God? How to think about the divine*. (Paulist Press, 1986) saw two religious truths, that God was mysterious and that the mystery was gracious.

² A very popular Liberal Quaker perception is of a loving God.

³ In most life forms the number of offspring is larger than among humans, sometimes vast, and individual life has little value. In times of food shortage cannibalism is common in many species. Whilst altruistic behaviour exists it is largely confined to genetically related groups. The continuation of the 'being' of such groups, of equal value to a God of all 'being', requires strategies which would be regarded as deeply immoral in human society.

⁴ Just as it is widely accepted that a God of 'being' can only act through humankind (and all living things?), so, arguably, discernment of virtuous action may occur at individual and at community level, when that of God, the potential for understanding and doing the virtuous thing, is employed. In this way the 'will of God' and the 'sense of the meeting (to discern the right way forward)' are one and the same.

⁵ Sally McFague, *Models of God: Theology for an ecological, nuclear, age*. (Philadelphia PA: Fortress Press, 1987)

⁶ Which I found to be inappropriate for the analysis of early Friends' writing.

⁷ As shown by the analysis of present-day popular Quaker discourse in Chapter 1. Section 1.1.1.

⁸ Jennifer Hampton 'The British Quaker survey, 2013: Examining religious beliefs and practices in the 21st century'.

felt in the 'heart'. The intellectual struggles of the 'self', seen by early Friends as 'natural', so to be over-ridden by the, supernatural, Light, are now worried over, particularly where they concern the nature of such Light. Dandelion¹ suggests that, in over analysing it, the experience of encounter and relationship is lost. Striving to explain the origins and nature of the experience reduces it to one of secular logic, losing its inspirational, transformational, effect. Some, among Friends, dismiss such experiences as superstitious, unreal. Arriens², however, quotes a man on death row, 'we have been touched by some force or some 'thing' greater than we are, and it is good'. Reading popular Quaker material, particularly in *The Friend*, one is struck by the reductionist nature of much that is written. Assuming stark contrasts between 'subjective' and 'objective' statements or objects is seen as naïve today. The world is, everywhere, shrouded in mystery. Scientific research constantly shows that what was once thought to be clearly understood is not so at all, with multiple layers of complexity and, ultimately, mystery. In none of the modern texts studied was God or Spirit defined in concrete terms. Both were described by early Friends as mysteries and both remain so. Dandelion³ notes how Christocentric and Universalist Friends, really examining their positions, discovered more that united than divided them. The same is true of the theist - non-theist debate. Liberal Friends are, largely, united by their faith in their experience in worship and in their conviction that revelation is on-going⁴. It is the affirmation of certainty, more than what they claim to be certain of, which alienates many Friends from the non-theist position. Haught⁵ saw 'God' as anchored in mystery and listed five ways of encounter with mystery; through experience of depth, future, freedom, beauty and truth. Experience of these made explanations of God superfluous. Such a list encompasses the range of experiences felt in Quaker worship; they are experiences of God.

Some Liberal Friends seek, or impose, rules on behaviour, whilst others avoid them. Testimony, for early Friends, was a direct consequence of transformation. It was how they lived their lives, witnessing to God and God's will. Liberal Quakers, formally, reduce 'testimony' to a series of discrete 'testimonies', each, too easily, seen as a set of principles or rules. The 'rules' often appear to be used as evidence of the intensity of personal commitment or to judge one another, with enthusiasts for each of the testimonies, whilst others regard them as optional, ignoring one or more of them.

Whilst overt references to dogmatic belief, or to sinfulness or judgement⁶ are rare in Liberal Quakerism and that portrayed, in the texts analysed, is clearly describing aspirations for, and experience of, the transformation/relationship pole of the single axis, some popular Quakerism is in a different place. It argues or is distressed over beliefs and is either concerned about 'rules' on behaviour, in relation to testimonies, or ignores them

¹ Ben Pink Dandelion, *Open for Transformation* 76 – 7 He is reprising worries felt by early Friends.

² Jan Arriens, 'Spiritual Connectedness'.

³ Ben Pink Dandelion, *Open for Transformation* 89

⁴ Ben Pink Dandelion, *Open for Transformation* 40

⁵ John Haught, *What is God? How to think about the divine*. (Paulist Press, 1986)

⁶ 'performance'.

completely. This places such individuals towards the belief/performance pole of the single axis. The 'beliefs' are expressed as doubts or unwarranted certainties. The 'performance' concerns conforming to human, not divine, principles.

Such perceptions are derived from what is written, largely in *The Friend*, and contributors to such a publication are self-selecting. Many Friends do not get involved in such disagreements, but the large number of courses concerned with 'Conflict Resolution', run for Friends, nonetheless, suggests that disagreement and hurt are significant features of many Quaker communities.

Many of the reasons for the disparity, between inspiring institutional and, sometimes¹, dispiriting popular, Quaker views of their faith reflect differing levels of individual commitment. Early Friends' faith was the central feature of their lives, their dominant explanatory principle and a cause for concern as to their eternal future. Whilst the authors of the texts analysed were mainly leaders, so, inevitably, committed, one gains the impression that most Friends were deeply involved and thousands, certainly, bravely and voluntarily, suffered persecution, directly or indirectly. Today, religious faith rests with a minority and Quakers have other commitments, to work, family², leisure and voluntary activities. For many, Quakerism is a Sunday morning activity; often not each week. Lacking a paid priesthood³ all 'meeting' responsibilities fall to members of the meeting. The result is, too often, that too much time and energy is devoted to fulfilling the necessary functions, inducing anxiety and dissension. Time for building friendship and community is limited, so Friends do not know each other in things temporal. When deeper issues of faith arise, the necessary relationship and trust is lacking and, whilst a voluble few posture over the matters addressed in this study, others remain silent, feeling, often, hurt, or out of sympathy with the, apparently dominant, mood. Many become discouraged and drift away.

If those are the reasons for the difficulties, the solutions⁴ lie in greater engagement with one another. Families and secular groups, which talk, eat and socialise together flourish. This, I suggest, is also true of Quaker meetings. The problems are not those of the intellect. They do not require great intellectual understanding. They do require trust, in one another and in the process, of worshipping in stillness to evoke the experience which will transform and bring all into relationship, with one another and with God, however perceived. Most Friends today⁵ value rationality. They question the belief/ performance model, rejecting doctrinal 'belief'; assent to propositions, some of which seem fantastic to the modern mind. They reject behaving according to inflexible 'laws' enforced by perceptions of divine judgement

¹ It must be emphasised that many Quaker communities are inspirational. The problems highlighted are by no means universal, but the effects upon corporate self-regard within the Society are worrying.

² Many Friends today are the only person in their family involved in Quakerism, so time devoted to Quaker activities is time denied to the family.

³ Or, largely, any other paid staff.

⁴ Many are set out in greater detail by Ben Pink Dandelion, *Open for Transformation* Chapter 3

⁵ Along with much of wider society.

imposed by formal 'authority' and by conventional wisdom. An informed rational view today denies certainty in understandings of the world and of life, which are mysteries. The possibility of 'God', in some 'form' or sense in the mystery, is real. For some, God is felt within, for others hinted at in the beauty, intricacy and inter-dependence at all levels in the world, but, for all who experience them, such experiences are inspirational. This was what early Friends re-discovered, in their embracing of a God who acted within them; was, effectively, part of them. Their cultural background and level of understanding of the world did not allow them to fully acknowledge such ideas, which were perceived as blasphemous, but they acted, largely, as free agents, emboldened by their inner experiences. That is what has weakened in modern Quakerism and is the problem I perceive. There is no place for such a belief/performance model in an inspirational and fulfilling Quaker faith.

6.4 Implications of the study for existing scholarship.

The present study, uniquely, quantifies the emphasis placed by Friends upon each aspect of their faith and practice. Thus, when an assertion is made elsewhere, in scholarly analysis of the theology of Quakers, this could refer to a single instance, or, if several are cited, these could have been gleaned from a wide variety of examined sources. I determined what mattered most to the writers, and, by comprehensive analysis of a wide selection of texts, what mattered most to Friends of the period generally, based upon the assumption¹ that what was deemed most important would be referred to most often.

In the following discussions, where a feature, either of God or of relationship, is referred to a figure accompanies it. This refers to the rank order of that feature², based upon its frequency as a percentage of all the features scored in this study. For early Friends the total number of features was 89, for Liberal Friends, 93.

6.4.1. Early Friends.

Early Friends were confident that, if they obeyed the, divine, Light(5) in their, natural(86), consciences(33), they would not sin. Moore³describes Nayler's dispute⁴with Weld⁵ on Quaker claims to a divine Light, which, to Puritans, was natural, like conscience, so corrupted and unable to free them from sin(3). Puritans regarded Quakers as arrogant, blasphemous, in claiming that human perfection(41) was possible. Friends, however, valued humility(60) and denied credit for righteousness, which was a gift of Grace(10). Considerations of this disagreement have ignored the ambiguity surrounding Friends' ideas on obedience. They recognised their freedom(57) to disobey, but saw the Light(5) within and the Seed(24), as empowering(31) obedience, which was, itself, a gift of Grace. Light and Seed, the Divine, was within them, theirs to reject but not to own. If they disobeyed they

¹ Which I validated by analysis, showing that no other, unrecognised, features could be inferred.

² See the table of all features, ranked by frequency, in Appendix 2.5

³ Rosemary Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences*: 101 – 3

⁴ Which was conducted through the publication of rival pamphlets/ tracts.

⁵ He was a Puritan minister.

were sinful; if they obeyed this was a gift. The gift, I suggest, was, actually, the ability, Light inspired, to discern how to act. To obey, or not, was their own decision, for which they bore responsibility before God, as judge(6). Discernment grew with use, enabling progression towards perfection, not being without sin but being 'whole', a mature, fulfilled, individual. The Light within freed them from outward(75) righteousness(12), conforming to conventional wisdom¹. Instead, they sought virtue, empathy and understanding. Moore² suggests Nayler confused the Seed with human potential. Given early Friends' sense of the transformational effects of their relationship with divinity, I see no distinction. Humankind was created, itself a divine gift. Friends further, felt they received the gift of the Seed, the potential for virtue, divine, but part of their being. The distinctions became meaningless.

Moore³, noted that Friends' Light, or Spirit(2), led approach left them open to incorrect discernment, resulting in sinful acts. Emphasising their beliefs in a powerful(7) God, judging(6) their actions, she described their resorting to Scripture(11) as a final check upon leadings. Friends saw the Light as freeing them from the 'Law'(37), the rigidities of Scripture, applied selectively by the church to enforce its will. This enabled them to apply such 'Laws' to their own conditions. Whilst Fox claimed all his leadings were endorsed by Scripture this he only found later, having acted on them⁴. Friends understood the Gospel(13) inwardly(8) but showed understanding of Scripture, which they quoted frequently⁵. They emphasised the 'Kingdom'(56) teachings⁶, universalising them as calls to compassionate lives of integrity. Where Friends, explicitly, made use of Scripture it was to reinforce their own beliefs⁷. Their rejection was not of Scripture but of the ways in which it was employed by churches as a means of control, justifying doctrines, prohibitions and imperatives and upholding an unjust social order. Friends were not above employing their own selective emphasis upon particular texts, but, crucially, did so to uphold a more just and compassionate Life(19), in the Kingdom.

Fox⁸ and Barclay⁹ both rejected the value of human reason(79), in faith matters, but Penn¹⁰ advocated its general use and Penington¹¹ supported its use in discerning right actions. Stevenson¹² denies that any early Friends ever really rejected reason; to do so was to reject the co-agency with God that faith in the Light implied. This study goes further. The largely unconscious use of reason was fundamental to their whole message. What was

¹ The extent to which they achieved this is debatable, but the argument is that this was their intent.

² Rosemary Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences*: 100 – 105

³ Rosemary Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences*: 9 – 10, 51

⁴ See John.L. Nickalls, Ed., *The Journal of George Fox* 34

⁵ See Rosemary Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences*: 53

⁶ Particularly from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, *Matt.* 5 – 7

⁷ They were not above using Scripture to endorse what the Light showed them, as in their refusal to swear oaths, which they justified from reference to *Matt.* 5: 37.

⁸ John. L. Nickalls, Ed., *The Journal of George Fox* 14 – 16

⁹ In the Second Proposition of his *Apology*, cited and discussed by Leslie Stevenson, *Open to New Light*: 105 – 8

¹⁰ Hugh Barbour *The Quakers in Puritan England* 214 – 5

¹¹ R.M. Keiser and Rosemary Moore, *Knowing the Mystery of Life Within*: 189 – 190

¹² Leslie Stevenson, *Open to New Light*: 105 – 8

initially rejected was a limited perception of a reason tainted by sin and used to justify selfishness and injustices. The significance of inward inspiration was that it was not rule but virtue-based, allowing discernment of actions and this, as Penington intimates, required reason. Any apparent rejection of human reason emphasises Friends' convictions that their relationship with God was so close as to be in some undefined sense a union with God(41), the Word(44), ultimate, divine, reason. They had no need of human, corrupted, reason as pure, divine, reason was integral to the Light within.

Jantzen¹ emphasises preoccupation with death in early Friends' times, reflecting both the violence and destruction around and Puritan insistence upon the 'Fall', predestination, salvation and damnation. She seeks, in Friends' writing, concern for beauty, but finds little, only for moral rigour and seriousness. Friends particularly saw the body, especially the female, as sinful. The truth of this is undeniable². I found little reference to physical beauty, save scattered remarks on nature(86) and environmental concerns(83). They did value, however, the beauty of human relations, living a divine Life(19), seeking personal truths(4) which, whilst they demanded selflessness (61)³, also celebrated love and unity(28), linking fear(32) of God to the call to emulate a loving, compassionate, God(38). Truth was the beauty of relationship. Their concern for moral rigour, whilst reflecting Puritan roots, possibly also indicated concern to avoid neglect and hurt arising from excess. Friends have always struggled with the balance between temperance and prohibition, but early Friends erred on the side of prohibition⁴. They were still affected by the culture of 'performance'.

Davie⁵ set out a 'core of conviction' of Christian beliefs⁶, embodying beliefs expressed in the Apostles' Creed⁷. He argued that, whilst early Friends believed in the revelation of God through the inward Christ, not directly through Scripture, they rejected beliefs not supported by Scripture. Trinitarian doctrine was seen as not scriptural, but they tacitly accepted the three 'persons' of God⁸. Christ was 'a man filled with Spirit'⁹, so less than fully

¹ Grace Jantzen, *A Place of Springs*: 8, 22 – 4

² Robert Barclay's strictures against all form of sport, recreation and aesthetic appreciation are an example. See Robert Barclay, *Apology for the True Christian Divinity* 446 – 454

³ seen often as 'the Cross'

⁴ See, for example, Robert Barclay, *Apology.... The Fifteenth Proposition. Concerning Salutations and Recreations*.

⁵ Martin Davie *British Quaker Theology since 1895* 7 – 8

⁶ Beliefs accepted by most Christian theologians. See, Gabriel Fackre, *The Christian Story* (Grand Rapids MI: Eerdmans, 1978) 15

⁷ 'I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of the heavens and earth: and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord: who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary; he suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried (he descended into hell). On the third day he was raised from the dead, he ascended into the heavens and sits at the right hand of God, the father almighty; from which he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, in the holy Catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the flesh and eternal life'.

⁸ See, for example, Isaac Penington, *An Examination of the Grounds and Causes which are said to Induce the Court of Boston...* (London 1660) 9 – 10 in, Isaac Penington, *The Works of Isaac Penington* Vol. 1 315

⁹ See Howard Brinton *Friends for 300 years* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1953) 39 – 40. He explains how early Friends knew by experience how the Light was related to their own human consciousness and saw the

divine¹ and humankind was wholly 'fallen'². They accepted human salvation by Christ³, through his death on the cross⁴ and that some may be damned⁵, but modified these beliefs, making salvation a two stage process, made possible by 'the cross' but achieved through obedience to the inward Christ. Davie's assertions are challenged by many findings in the study. Friends', Light(5) inspired, interpretation of Scripture(11) underpinned their rejection of doctrinal beliefs(42), particularly on predestination, imputed righteousness and its attendant neglect of demands for obedience(15) and denial of the possibility of human virtue(12). They used Scripture, less to judge(6), more to uphold(26) and empower(31) their actions. Judgement was within the heart and was by the Light⁶. No evidence emerged that the divinity of Christ was questioned; their sense of inner divinity was grounded in the divine Word, Christ, giving them the sense of personal relationship with God which suffused all their writing. As to focus upon 'the Cross' as atonement, whilst this was never denied and phrases like being 'washed in the blood of the lamb' abounded, their emphasis was always upon Christ's death as an example of sacrifice for others⁷. Friends sought the salvation of all and used reason to seek how that might best be achieved. All the texts analysed placed their main focus upon inward/inner(8) guidance(9) as the means to salvation. Whilst Friends retained the possibility of damnation(23)⁸, in all the texts analysed it was seen as a warning as to the consequences of disobedience. On accepting inward guidance salvation was assured; this faith gave early Friends their courage(18) and self-assurance.

In summary, I argue, from information gained concerning early Friends' priorities and applying this to interpretation of their words, that scholars have neglected the possibility that, behind the words expressed, drawn largely from a 'belief' culture, were meanings which were far more existential. Their assumption of a God who was, principally, 'within', made statements of the nature and actions of God, in effect, descriptors of feelings they had themselves and their reasoning, based upon these. Perceptions of being judged, guided, empowered, upheld, were all psychological processes, understood as actions of God, but, whilst divinely inspired, they were acted out in their minds; minds which, they felt confident, were imbued with the gift of divine reason.

relation between the divine Spirit and the human mind in Jesus as being similar but 'God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him' (*John*3: 34). Because Friends had experienced a measure of the Spirit they realised what it might be to experience it completely.

¹ So they rejected the central core belief.

² Though they rejected the 'sinfulness' of infants. See, Robert Barclay, *Apology for the True Christian Divinity* Proposition 4 'Concerning the condition of man in the fall'

³ See, for example, William Burrough, *Declaration to all the world of our Faith* 2

⁴ Elizabeth Bathurst, *Truth Vindicated* 14

⁵ William Dewsbury, *A True Prophecy of the Mighty Day of the Lord* (London: Calvert, 1654: D1279) 12

⁶ This was the core of their faith in transformation through relationship to an inward divinity.

⁷ Rosemary Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences*: 106 cites two publications by Burrough. The first, intended for a wider audience, refers to being washed free of sins by the blood of Jesus. The second, written for Friends, ignores this entirely, focussing upon the indwelling God and rebirth, transformation.

⁸ References to it I categorised under Eternal Life; whilst some suggested the possibility of this being damnation, all emphasised the heavenly rewards of living a virtuous life.

6.4.2. Liberal Friends.

Davie¹ argued that Liberal Quakerism had grown² diverse and diverged, moving further from the Christian 'core of conviction' and from the teachings of early Friends. Using Scott's 1980 Swarthmore Lecture³ as a 'watershed' he identified⁴ both diversity and divergence in her accounts of Liberal Quakers' attitudes to:

1. Revelation: This did not come primarily through Christ(13) or the Bible(38), but through mental constructs, indicating, '..aspects of God's being'⁵. Davie challenged the origins of these models; no model developed by human minds was adequate or valuable.

This attitude, with its emphasis upon beliefs in the utter transcendence of divinity, is contrary to my findings on Friends' largely confident search for the close relationship with divinity which could transform them. Scott's models⁶ are rooted in beliefs in an all-embracing divinity, demanding love and compassion, conforming to the 'Golden Rule'⁷. None is incompatible with 'Gospel'(13) revelation, but none demand it exclusively. It is not the Gospel but later, doctrinal, beliefs which Liberal, even more than early Friends, repudiate. Many Liberal Friends adopt a model of God from their understandings of Jesus' life and Gospel. Those adopting a 'universalist' approach, still conform to the same principles, as the texts analysed illustrate⁸. Examination of popular Quakerism suggests that emphasis upon revelation through Scripture is infrequent, but some of its proponents are vociferous in their advocacy of it.

2. God. Scott regarded the Trinitarian model⁹ as inadequate for explaining how Christ was both God and human and divisive of Christians, both within Christianity and from those of other faiths, disrupting the unity of all humankind in God¹⁰. It limited God, suggesting that the Divine could be understood and described. Her multiple models reduced the problem of 'belief', avoiding, incredible, metaphysical notions. Concerns over the Trinity are largely irrelevant to the concerns addressed in the texts studied, which ignore such 'belief' constructs, focussing upon relationship with a mysterious divinity. If the paradoxes involved in such a sense of relationship are accepted, this, Friends trust, will transform them in a way that doctrinal beliefs cannot. Some, a minority, in popular Quakerism, however, still yearn for the

¹ Martin Davie, *British Quaker Theology since 1895* Chapters 4 and 5 He was a conservative critic of Liberal Quakerism.

² Particularly since the 1960s.

³ Janet Scott, *What Cans't Thou Say?*

⁴ Martin Davie, *British Quaker Theology since 1895* Chapter 6

⁵ Janet Scott *What Cans't Thou Say?* 63

⁶ See Chapter 4, section 4.3

⁷ Do unto others as you would they do unto you; do nothing to others you would not have them do to you.

⁸ For institutional support for this view see Alastair Heron, Ralph Hetherington and Joseph Pickvance, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 27.04 1994

⁹ Janet Scott *What Cans't Thou Say?* 49 - 51

¹⁰ John Hick, Ed., *The Myth of God Incarnate* (London: SCM, 1977) 180

Trinitarian beliefs espoused by Davie. He sought, they still seek, a 'belief' model of God which was questioned even by early Friends.

3. Christ:¹ was a man, not God. Scott's Christology was based on her perceptions of the historical Jesus. Claims to Jesus' perfection she deemed unacceptable, since he showed little evidence of love for family or home community. Jesus was not definitive of God and man², because of such failures and his inability to reflect female qualities. Scott was expressing her own opinions. I found no other evidence of such a critique of Jesus³. Most writers saw the examples he set⁴ generically; what was believed about the significance of Jesus⁵ example and message mattered, not the biographical details. This was the overwhelming message of the texts; I dispute the priorities both of Davie, criticising her, and of Scott herself. Disagreements over the significance of Jesus are few in institutional Quakerism today. That is less true of popular Quakerism. The use of 'Jesus' and scriptural language is contentious in some meetings, representing more evidence of a resurgent 'belief' orientation, distracting Friends from the experience of relationship with a divinity, for many, portrayed by understandings of Jesus as an inspiring teacher and exemplar.
4. Man:⁶ The 'fallen-ness(77) of humanity and 'original sin' Scott saw as contrary both to Quaker tradition⁷ and to current psychological theory. She affirmed a basic 'goodness'(11) in human nature; the reverse of beliefs concerning the 'Fall'. Grounded in Quaker belief in that of God(22) in everyone, this can lead to complacency and over-optimism about the human condition. Several texts advocate caution⁸. Whilst Scott's approach is preferable to life-denying beliefs in inherited human sinfulness, it risks naivety. Within popular Quakerism some are reluctant to accept that humans can be evil, with disturbing consequences for attitudes to testimony; again, a reversion to a belief/performance model of faith.
5. Salvation:⁹ The traditional view of the saving(39) significance of Christ's death(45) was theologically and morally unsatisfactory. Scott asked from what Christ saved humanity; certainly not from sin, suffering or death. If from a wrathful God, this was contrary to Jesus' teaching that God willed mercy(20) and love(6), not sacrifice. Jesus, for many Liberal Friends, saves by demonstrating the love of God(17), inspiring people to emulate such a God(54). Understandings of his life model virtue(11); a view overwhelmingly exhibited in the texts analysed, wherever reference to Jesus is

¹ Janet Scott *What Cans't Thou Say?* 55 – 8

² A claim made by John Macquarrie, *Principles of Christian Theology* Revised Edition ((London: SCM, 1977) [1966])

³ Except that, as a man, he could not form an exemplar of feminine virtues.

⁴ Or of other prophetic figures.

⁵ Or the life of any other role model.

⁶ Janet Scott *What Cans't Thou Say?* 38

⁷ She cites Rachel H. King, *George Fox and the Light Within* 41 that Fox rejected any description of man's nature that 'takes away his responsibility for sin by making him incapable of doing good'.

⁸ Particularly, but not exclusively, in relation to the peace testimony. See Chapter 5, Section 5.6

⁹ Janet Scott *What Cans't Thou Say?* 41

made. The traditional association with eternal life(80), is not prioritised in Liberal Friends' perceptions of God(4) or relationship(26) in the texts. These address salvation(39) as virtue(11), service(23), commitment(34), self-examination, finding personal truths(3) and living in unity(6). Scott, in repudiating Davie's 'core of conviction' beliefs on salvation, reflected Liberal Friends' views and Davie is unrepresentative in advocating their retention. However, in her interpretation of Jesus, Scott undermined much of her own message.

6. Diversity: The Scott lecture both reflected and contributed to Liberal Quaker diversity, her models of God adding a new aspect to that diversity. Davie saw this as undesirable.

Scott's models of God allowed a more inclusive belief(8) system, the need for which is demonstrated in Friends' efforts to understand and experience divinity, revealed in the texts analysed. She sought to bridge a gap between a radical wing, which has moved away from traditional Quaker Christian beliefs, becoming more 'universalist', and a more conservative, 'Christocentric' wing, by emphasising the non-creedal traditions of Friends. Doctrines can never fully describe either Quakerism or Christianity¹. This research suggests that Scott was more representative than Davie of recent 'institutional' Liberal Quaker thought. Davie sought a more belief/performance model of faith. His insistence upon revelation of God as exclusively through Scripture was rejected even by early Friends. Davie's arguments proved incompatible with even the most conservative, 'Christocentric' authors' texts analysed. The degree of currency his views represent remains unclear, but examples of similar beliefs regularly appear in popular Quaker publications. His advocacy of perceptions of human 'sinfulness' are an antidote to naïve insistence upon that of God' in all as meaning all are good. That of belief in Christ's death as atonement, and the perception of a wrathful God that entails, undermines the experience of relationship with a loving God, as exemplar of transformation.

Ultimately, any religious quest seeks what is genuinely 'of God'. Doncaster² saw the Light(10)³ in everyone as the central Liberal Quaker affirmation. It implied that knowledge(48) of God involved was both subjective and objective. If seen purely subjectively, it risked individualism and anarchy, but, seen more objectively, as the Light of the God revealed in Jesus, it brought unity. Such statements, unambiguous about the nature of Jesus' message, ignore other prophets from other faiths with equally objective messages, so fail to satisfy some Liberal Quakers today.

Insistence upon an 'objective' basis to the Light is to see it as mediated, for example, by understandings of Jesus, derived, albeit by 'Light inspired' reading, from Scripture. The

¹ Martin Davie *British Quaker Theology since 1895* 262 – 6

² L. Hugh Doncaster, in, *Quaker Faith and Practice*, 26. 65 1972

³ Which he saw as 'the Christ- like God'.

ability to discern what is 'of God' is central to the transformation/relationship model of faith. Potentially, individuals could feel inspired to anything, by misunderstanding a sense of inner relationship. Farrer¹ concluded that indiscrete belief in inspiration smothered reason; a perceived leading which seemed irrational was misguided². Such a conclusion, whilst valuable, requires caution. Conventional wisdom may dictate that challenge to a long-held view is irrational, but such challenges form the nature of prophecy. Nonetheless, the discussion of aspects of Liberal Friends' approach to the testimonies³(7) and their social(15) and environmental(51) concerns reveals that uncritical approaches to inspiration can have unexpected, and undesirable, consequences. Genuine, unmediated, messages may be received from the Divine⁴. Given human understandings of the wisdom of divinity, it is reasonable to assume that inspirations which defy rationality are not divine but human. As to 'objective' inspirations derived through understandings of Jesus⁵, these risk return to a scriptural, 'belief' based approach. They require an enlightened reading of Scripture and modern scriptural commentary.

Stevenson⁶ rejects debates on the reality of God as invalid. Only having defined what one means by 'God' is a decision on reality possible. He saw the process as more of deciding one's degree of commitment to a tradition of figurative language and spiritual practice, than of testing any scientific hypothesis⁷ or reasoned argument for a metaphysical entity. This I endorse; much of the disagreement and misunderstanding uncovered in this study resulted from failure to heed such advice, and was, invariably, destructive of relationship, to divinity and to community. It inhibited confidence in transformation, casting doubt that guidance was divine and not self-interested. The debate concerning the meaning of God(4) showed individuals' attempts to communicate their perceptions, only to have others expressing different perceptions. Those contributing to the discussion had, generally, found a sense of meaning and relationship with what they understood as divinity, but wide variations in understandings emerged and it is hard to judge the impact of such discussions upon seekers with less experience or self-confidence. Stevenson's study, whilst erecting many metaphors for the divine, fails to address their use by and effects on, Friends. The present study found significant differences in the effects of two types of metaphor. Those of a divinity within were, sometimes, associated with perceptions of such a God as moral arbiter. Friends embracing such metaphors were more likely to see seeking the 'will of God' in more literal terms, emphasising Quaker traditions, as a form of 'law'. Other, 'nature' mystics, saw

¹ Austin Farrer and Charles Conti, *The End of Man* 64 – 5

² Leslie Stevenson, *Open to New Light*: 110 – 2

³ See Chapter 5 Section 5.6

⁴ William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* reports many claims to just such, but it seems significant that all are related to the previous experience of the individual concerned. Messages from the Virgin Mary, for example, seem confined to those of Roman Catholic persuasion.

⁵ Or even if an alternative prophet is cited; the Buddha is popular with many Friends today.

⁶ Leslie Stevenson, *Open to New Light*: 135 – 7

⁷ To seek God using science methods is what philosophers call a 'category mistake'; a point clearly made by Arthur Eddington, *Science and the Unseen World* 45

divinity as 'ground of being' but elusive. They described, not moral judgement, but a sense of union with, and respect for, life. God was a mystery. Action arose from a sense of universal relationship, with all, seen as, mysteriously, 'in God'.

Williams¹ claims a 'stable core' of Quaker theology: Belief(8) in the divine Light(10) within everyone(22), in measure(91) and witnessed(7) in personal transformation, leading to humility(58) and concern for others(36);² all had the Light/That of God³, so all warranted respect. This study throws doubt, particularly, upon the stability of current understanding of experience of the Light witnessed by the greater emphasis placed upon Spirit(1). Early Friends saw the Light within as, first, judging them, then, if they accepted its judgements, guiding and empowering them to be obedient to its leadings; to righteousness. There were ample examples of similar beliefs held by Liberal Friends, although emphasis upon judgement(47) was small compared with that on leading(9) and empowering(33)⁴. Modern perceptions of 'Spirit' within Friends largely ignore judgement, emphasising personal empowerment and self-realisation. Frazer⁵ rejects broad aspects of 'Spirituality' as 'a supermarket of religious ideas and a form of self-help'. Carrette and King⁶ dismiss Spirituality, as currently regarded, as 'a commodity in the market', 'privatising religion'. Concern for self-realisation, valuable in itself, is incomplete without addressing judgement of past, or guidance towards future, action. Early Friends perceived judgement, guidance, empowerment and upholding, all as within them, acting in harmony. Each had their own 'measure'; each showed their own degree of discernment and virtue. Liberal Friends, emphasising testimony to equality are reluctant to affirm that each has their own measure, different gifts, talents⁷. Some Friends express guilt and doubts about their own transformation, whilst others seem indifferent, concerned more with 'self-realisation'. Such problems often arise from doubts as to the power of a divinity to transform. Whilst Williams' confidence in the stability of her perceptions of 'core' Quakerism is, largely, well-founded in the institutional texts examined, a significant minority within popular Quakerism stray from that core into a more self-indulgent view of their own 'spirituality'. Any sense of relationship they claim does not transform and their behaviour can be anything but compassionate.

Scully⁸ discusses how Liberal Friends derive, simultaneously, their moral behaviour and Quaker identity, not by a deontological, rules based, approach, but by using a 'moral

¹ Patricia A. Williams, *Quakerism: A theology for our time* 61

² Both of these features were present in quite low frequencies in the analysed Liberal texts: Selflessness 0.88% and Humility 0.45%, but Social concerns 1.85% and concern for Love/ Unity 3.46% also reflect these.

³ Seed/ That of God 1.48%

⁴ Further evidence of optimism over the human condition.

⁵ Giles Frazer, in Mark Gordon and Chris Wilkinson, *Conversations on Religion* 18 – 25

⁶ Jeremy Carrette and Richard King, *Selling Spirituality: The silent takeover of religion* (London: Routledge, 2005)

⁷ See Ben Pink Dandelion, *Open to Transformation* 19 – 21

⁸ Jackie Leach Scully, 'Virtuous Friends: Morality and Quaker Identity', in, *Quaker Studies* Vol. 14, Issue 1 2009 108 – 122

collage' of different philosophical approaches, broadly emphasising 'virtue-ethics'. They reject 'covenantal' reasoning, not seeking rewards¹, and 'utilitarian' arguments, valuing the rights of minorities². She also suggests that Friends do use 'consequentialist' reasoning. Whilst research shows this is largely so, some attitudes to testimony reveal a failure to consider the broader implications of, supposedly, 'spirit-led' decisions. Principally, Friends seek to be 'virtuous persons'(11), valuing 'being' over 'doing'. Right action would stem from right being. Actions are not just reflections of one's nature but generated by it. That nature results from Friends' primary authority, not rules but experience(5) of the Light(10) acting within(14). Scully addresses the importance of discernment(31) of such actions, and the role of 'phronesis', practical wisdom, in the process, applying reason, gained through experience, to the emotional roots of their actions. Models of virtue, for Friends, were initially derived from their understandings of 'the Christian life'. This, for early Friends³, was 'primitive', non-doctrinal, 'spiritual', Christianity, based upon the Gospel(13), particularly the 'peaceable Kingdom'(40). Many liberal-Liberal Friends⁴ de-emphasise or reject, Christian teachings, so depriving themselves of such models. Scully suggests that the testimonies(7), for many, provide an alternative virtue model. This, I suggest, is fraught with risk⁵. Macmurray⁶ saw the role of religion as to 'save the world', transforming individuals, whose lives then became testimony to the 'brotherhood of man'. This could transform society in a way that the State, using contracts, law and compulsion, could not do. This is so, but it is a long-term process. To argue that one is fully transformed is dangerously presumptuous; that all around are transformed, naïve. The move from 'testimony' to individual 'testimonies' brings Friends into the political arena. Here meaningful contribution requires technical expertise and, arguably, willingness to compromise, avoiding idealistic rigidity. Whilst the spiritual insights of Friends are valuable in ethical, political and technical debate, naïve desires for perfect solutions and concerns to preserve perceptions of personal purity are unhelpful⁷. *QFP*⁸ introduces testimony as derived from the experience that the Light led to an understanding of Christian life and how it should be lived. 'Institutional' Quakerism still grounds testimony in values which are universal, but which are generally understood in Christian terms.

¹ Liberal Friends' de-emphasis of, conventional, beliefs in 'eternal life' illustrate this.

² The Quaker business method, if properly applied, ensures that majority wishes do not over-ride those of minorities.

³ Whom Liberal Friends have sought to emulate.

⁴ See Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 134, 138, 140, 152

⁵ See Chapter 5 Section 5.6.

⁶ John Macmurray, *Selected Philosophical Writings* 163 – 5, 179 – 180

⁷ To give an example, Britain Yearly Meeting, in 2012, devoted two sessions to the subject of 'Economic Justice'. The ministry in the first session, advocating complete dismantling of the global economic system and starting again, was so unhelpful and self-righteous that it prompted Harvey Gilman, in worship before the second session, to remind Friends of their own, generally comfortable, circumstances and ask them to consider the immediate problems of so many in society around them. I am also informed that one Friend, with expertise in economics, was so appalled at the level of economic illiteracy displayed that they offered to run a crash course for Friends.

⁸ *Quaker Faith and Practice* In the pre-amble to 19.33

What is apparent from passages identified in the analysed texts relating to the Light, the meaning of God(4), of leadings(9), faith(2) and truth(3), is that some 'universalist' Friends seek alternatives to the 'Christian', even to the 'theist', role model, suitable for modern culture, which they can internalise and so confidently judge their own 'being'. Scully¹ re-interprets Dandelion's² model of the Liberal Quaker 'double culture', less as a separation of belief, viewed liberally, and practice, regulated by the 'behavioural creed,' and more as an attempt to spiritualise ethical identity and performance, through focus upon the testimonies. Friends, seeking to live out the testimonies adopt a model of virtue which judges, guides and empowers. Whilst recognising the logic of this, it begs the question of how the testimonies come to be viewed in such an open, empowering, way, offering guidance but not prescription. The analysis of Friends' approaches to Testimony/Witness³ suggests that, too easily, they become creedal, reverting to a deontological approach. Whilst this is also addressed by Muers⁴ the present study identifies the significance given, by a wide selection of Friends, to Testimony in relation to Gospel, kingdom and truth, particularly. It also pursues, through analysis of expressions of opinion, how the nature of each testimony is justified and how it is applied to inspire virtuous being and actions. It identifies how rigid, creedal, attitudes can arise, by neglect of reason in discernment, too often through self-righteous enthusiasm.

Dandelion⁵ addresses Friends' 'behavioural creed'; in particular, the culture of silent worship. Adopted by early Friends, it enables religious experience, hearing the 'inner voice'. It also, however, conceals the diversity of beliefs⁶, even as to what is or should be going on in the silence. This raises questions as to the extent to which a meeting can be 'gathered', with all members feeling united, waiting on revelation, understood by all present in a sufficiently shared fashion as to be meaningful. Sometimes misunderstandings or doubts do become obvious when vocal ministry is given which challenges the beliefs of others; more often, nothing of the kind happens. Often the meeting inspires, but its role in building mutual understanding and community, practical reflections of experiences of transformation and relationship, is, at times, questionable. Of all the texts analysed, that composed by Young Friends⁷ is remarkable in its emphasis, upon silent waiting upon God(53) in worship(12), their experience(5) of God and, particularly, their resulting love, unity(6) and commitment(34)⁸. The few references to beliefs, whether about the Gospel or the meaning of doctrine, were, largely, dismissive. Whilst the meaning of God was addressed this was, overwhelmingly, seen as a mystery. Best⁹ describes worship among

¹ Jackie Leach Scully, 'Virtuous Friends: Morality and Quaker Identity'. 108 – 122

² Pink Dandelion, *A Sociological Analysis...*

³ See Chapter 5 section 5.6

⁴ Rachel Muers, in J. L. Scully and P. Dandelion, *Good and Evil...* 175

⁵ Dandelion, Pink, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 141 – 6

⁶ As Dandelion states; see above, note 5

⁷ Young Friends General Meeting, *Who Do We Think We Are?*

⁸ 6.79% of all feature references were to Love/Unity, 6.51% to Commitment.

⁹ Simon Best, 'Adolescent Quakers: A hidden sect'.

adolescent Friends which, whilst grounded in silence, is 'semi-programmed', using a variety of aids to contemplation in the silence. They also have a tradition of open, vigorous, debate, which encourages trust and the commitment to community found. Young Friends espouse belief in, and commitment to, transformation through their experience of relationship in worship. They, I suggest, offer a model for liberal-Liberal Friends, of what effects such experience can have; the witness, both in community together and in the world, combined with open-ness to friendly debate on the basis of their experience. As to Dandelion¹'s view that the behavioural creed acts as the 'social glue' linking Liberal Friends together, the present study suggests this could usefully be revisited and examination made of the results of attempts at liberalisation of behaviour, for example, experiments in 'all-age' worship², and adoption of discussion and study sessions³, along with worship in action among the community⁴.

In summary, I argue that the study shows that scholars have largely under-estimated the effects on Friends today of doubts on the nature of divinity and that there is a dimension of reality which transcends all possibility of comprehending it. Such doubts have undermined, to varying degrees, Friends' confidence in their religious experience and their faith in relationship with a 'more', a 'beyond', able to transform them, lift them out of constant self-absorption, to rejoice in a wider 'togetherness'. Finally, this reduces inspiration to act, 'as led', free of deontological pressures to conform.

6.4.3. The Borg Models.

As I have suggested⁵ the two models put forward as alternatives are too starkly dualistic, and take no account of any tendency to see demands for beliefs and 'performance', behaving in particular ways, existentially, as demands felt within. The study has shown that for both early and Liberal Friends, emphasis was upon transformation and relationship with divinity, felt to be achieved through a source which transcended the 'self', demanding actions contrary to both self-protective and competitive urges. Where the reality of such a source is accepted, albeit seen as full of mystery and paradox, the experience of relationship inspires and transforms. If it is analysed and doubted this experience is lost. A spiritual, experiential, approach to 'belief' and 'performance' enables their incorporation into a model of transformation and relationship. Thus, if viewed broadly and metaphorically, the four separate 'elements' of the two models, 'Belief', 'Performance', 'Transformation' and

¹ Dandelion, Pink, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 137 – 8

² See, Simon Best, 'Adolescent Quakers: A hidden sect'

³ Initiatives like www.Quakerquest.org.uk provide materials and support for discussion within Quaker meetings and other forums. Swarthmore lectures, over recent years, have provided questions and stimulus materials to facilitate discussion of the content addressed in the published versions. These are just two of the many discussion materials provided, mostly through Woodbrooke Quaker study centre (www.woodbrooke.org.uk) and Quaker Life (www.quaker.org.uk/quaker-life).

⁴ For example, C. Wess Daniels, 'Convergent Friends: The emergence of post-modern Quakerism' in, *Quaker Studies* Vol. 14 Issue 2 2010 236 – 250 which describes 'a decentralised, international, body of Quakers' interacting with wider culture 'missionally', making much use of on-line modes of interaction.

⁵ In Chapter 1 Sections 1.1.2, 1.3.2, 1.3.3 and Chapter 6 Section 6.1

'Relationship', proved to be excellent tools for the analysis of Friends' writing. I conclude that the two models, presented by Borg as alternatives, are best viewed as poles along a single axis, if a nuanced model of God and relationship is to be achieved.

6.5 Implications for Future Scholarship.

The methodology developed in the present study, with relevant refinements, can be applied widely, to analyse more closely perceptions about God and relationship, across the entire history of Quakerism and within 'ordinary' contemporary Friends. It can be used for comparisons of such perceptions between Friends and other Christian denominations and faith traditions.

Whilst the analytical technique developed proved robust and useful for determining the priorities of authors, some refinements emerged as desirable, in particular, including distinctions between affirmative and rejecting references to each of the features. A pilot study of texts from two or more, theologically divergent, writers employing the list of features, adding positive and negative distinctions for each, would prove informative.

Whilst the present study showed a broad consensus of views, sufficient to allow legitimate pooling of data from all the texts for each of the groups studied, there were distinct differences, particularly within shorter, more polemical, tracts of early Friends. Similar distinctions would be found if detailed analysis of, for example, articles and letters in *The Friend* were analysed in the same fashion. Together with use of positive and negative distinctions, this would identify both the extremes of view and any shared views.

By focussing on the earliest and modern Liberal Quakers¹, the study ignored the intervening period, which included evangelical, Bible, rather than Light, based Quakerism². Applying the analytical technique developed to texts from both the eighteenth century Quietist and nineteenth century Evangelical periods of British Quakerism, would give a view of relevant perceptions across a fuller history of Quakerism.

The exclusively text-based approach adopted meant analysis was confined to sources committed enough to expose their thoughts to publication³. To utilise the same analytical tool on transcripts of interviews or discussions of God and relationship involving 'ordinary' Friends, adding this to text-based results, would give a broader, more representative, picture of modern Liberal Quakerism, particularly of the degree of divergence between 'institutional' and 'popular' Quakerism.

¹ This was the strategy employed because of Liberal Friends' avowed wish to 'get back to' original 'primitive' Quakerism.

² See, for example, Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* 92 – 5

³ Writers of articles or letters to popular, widely read publications are notoriously inclined to be individuals with strongly held views.

Further application of the method developed would, I argue, be instructive, showing the faith priorities, in relation to fundamental beliefs about divinity and relationship, of other religious groups. Applied to other Christian denominations, both through analysis of writings and interview or discussion transcripts, from both relevant theologians and ordinary members, it would give an indication of how belief-orientated they actually are, what the range of perceptions is and how different from that of Friends today¹.

Extension of such a study into other faith traditions would also be instructive. To compare perceptions of God and relationship between the Monotheistic, 'Abrahamic', faiths, Judaism, Christianity and Islam is a practical proposition. To identify lists of features of God and relationship and determine which are prioritised in each of these faith traditions would, alone, prove interesting. Eastern faiths, embracing polytheism and non-theism, superficially, would seem more difficult to analyse in this way, but all focus upon transcendence, elements of divinity or 'ultimate reality' and upon the effects of relationship with that divinity, so the same basic approach is possible. It would be instructive, given Liberal Friends' particular interest in Buddhism², to examine historic and contemporary Buddhist texts, seeking features of the transcendent, as seen by them and their perceptions of their relationship to such transcendence.

6.6 Chapter Summary.

In this chapter I have drawn together findings concerning each of the groups studied and their perceptions, both of God and of relationship, from Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5. Using the numerical data generated³, I have examined a wider range of the features identified and illustrated the relative emphasis placed upon each within the two Quaker groups. I have related my findings to relevant work by other scholars, identifying both areas of agreement with previous scholarship and areas where the present study has extended understandings or opened up new lines of enquiry.

My conclusions, overall, are that:

- Early Friends, having rediscovered the inward, mystical, experiential approach to faith applied this to their existing, doctrinal, beliefs and adapted these, making them existential guides to 'being'. They combined the inspirational effects of their experience of mystical union with divinity with the rigour of the demands they felt from a God who, whilst loving, was regal, powerful and judged them. They emphasised obedience, but to an imperative to be just, compassionate and loving; to live a transformed Life, in relationship with a God, the fear of whom inspired love. Initially enthusiastic, seeking to spread their message and 'save the world', as events

¹ Quakers make much of their 'non-creedal' nature, sometimes inferring that other Christian denominations are somewhat 'strait-jacketed'. The extent to which this is true is debatable.

² See, for example, David Cadman, *Holiness in the Everyday* (London: Quaker Books, 2009)

³ Which is set out in tables in the Appendices

frustrated their hopes, they became cautious and separatist, but never lost their underlying inspirations.

- Modern Liberal Friends seek to embrace early Friends' initial inspirations and to be transformed, living in relationship with each other in God. Their greater scientific, philosophical and psychological understandings have, however, led them to question the nature of divinity and of experience of relationship with the Divine. Many have, through focus upon the emotional effects of the experience, rejoicing in the paradoxes it raises, retained the sense of relationship and transformation. Others, however, have regressed into intellectual speculations, over the nature of divinity, of relationship and of transformation, thereby undermining their ability to access their deepest experiences and inspirations. Though sharing many concerns with secular, ethically focussed, groups, most Friends continue to witness to their commitment to individual transformation as the key to justice and peace. Largely abandoning dogma, they have continued and developed the process of making religious beliefs into existential guides. Faced with an increasingly secular world, some Quakers have, however, become anxious and doubting, undermining their confidence that their experience is real, true, and valuable. Only by returning to deep experience as their prime focus and acting upon inspirations to closer relationship and commitment can they regain confidence in their own transformation.
- Models of God need to distinguish between beliefs demanding performance and perceptions of transformation due to relationship with divinity, assessing the extent to which such beliefs are incorporated into those perceptions. Only then can such models encapsulate the nuances of a faith group's theological position.

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Appendix 1 Alphabetical list of the 'Features' identified and scored in the Thesis

Accessible	Holiness	Purifies
Active in the world/ Works/ Providence	Hope	Question Reality of 'God'
Apocalyptic	Humility	Reason
Belief	Imagination/ Creativity to understand	Repentance
Blesses	Intimate with God	Revealed through Scripture
Calls	Revealed Inwardly	Righteousness/ Virtue
Children/ God's own people	Jesus Christ Atones	Ruler
Commands/ Wills	Jesus Christ Inward	Sacrament/ Sacred
Commitment	Revealed through Life/ teaching of Jesus	Salvation/Redemption
Consciousness of God/ Conscience	Jesus Christ Divine	Seed/ That of God
Continuously reveals/ Mysterious	Judges/Just	Selflessness/ the Cross
Convinces	Kingdom	Self-Examination
Courage/ Suffer for	Know God	Separation from God
Covenant/ Promise	Law maker	Service
Creator/ Ground of Being	Leads/ Guides/ Teaches	Silence/ Stillness
Discernment	Life	Sin/ Evil
Divine/ Meaning of God	Light	Social concerns
Doubts/ Absent	Living	Soul
Elects	God is Loving	Spirit
Empowers	Love/ Unity	Testimony/ Witness
Environmental concerns	Seek Meaning of 'God'	Tests humankind
Eternal	In Measure	Transforms
Eternal Life	Mysterious	Trinity
Experienced/ Mysticism	Revealed through Myth/ Metaphor	Truth
Faith	Revealed in Nature	Universal
Father/ Parent	Obedience	Upholds/Protects/ gives Meaning
Fear/ Awe	Perfection	Waited on
Formal/ Outward/ Sacraments	Personal	Wisdom
Freedom	Powerful/ Omnipotent	Word
Gives/ Grace	Praise/ Reverence	Worshipped
Glorious	Prayer/ Intercession	
Revealed in the Gospel	Present/ Immanent	
Happiness/ Joy	Punishes	
Heals	Pure	

Appendix 2 The data summary tables

All values are percentages of the whole for that text; all features/ feature groups are in rank order of overall average percentage

A.2.1.1. Early Friends' perceptions of God Summary table: part 1

feature	Fox Journal	Fox Epistles 1	Fox Epistles 2	Penn	Barclay	Bathurst	Fell letters 1	Clark	Hubberthorn	Parker
Inward / Light	8.93	15.56	6.94	7.06	12.33	12.11	18.43	14.98	24.03	5.21
Ruler/Kingdom	15.75	3.57	13.63	5.70	2.98	6.78	7.84	8.42	1.81	5.54
Judges/Law	2.20	2.54	3.87	7.63	3.85	3.07	6.46	7.00	1.30	1.64
Spirit	4.08	3.29	6.17	6.61	13.30	6.18	2.67	4.35	2.85	3.58
Powerful/Empowers	9.23	11.18	6.94	3.99	2.26	2.82	3.68	1.44	0.78	3.59
Leads	4.93	2.26	0.52	1.36	3.00	2.89	3.74	4.83	2.33	4.24
Gives/ Grace	1.08	0.96	3.09	3.53	5.09	4.32	1.81	2.17	0.78	
Revealed in Scripture	0.87	0.34		1.14	1.30	1.70	1.07	0.48	4.15	28.34
Revealed thro' Gospel/ Jesus	1.87		0.77	2.96	3.07	1.06	0.93	3.14	6.73	4.89
Saves/Redeems	1.56	0.69	2.83	2.85	4.36	4.12	1.06	1.69	1.30	0.65
Father/ Has own people	0.97	2.54	1.04	2.17	1.27	2.83	1.92	3.62	3.38	1.95
Creator / Word/ Wisdom	2.88	6.72	4.12	1.59	1.88	2.92	1.03	0.96	2.34	0.66
Commands/ Wills	1.28	0.62	0.52	3.76	1.38	1.06	0.58	0.72	3.11	
Upholds	1.97	2.33	2.83	1.25	0.37	1.04	1.45	0.48		0.33
Eternal	1.81	1.85	1.29	0.80	0.26	0.86	4.94	0.48	1.04	0.65
Meaning of God	1.41	1.10	0.26	1.37	1.66	1.79	1.13	0.72	1.04	0.65
Active/works	2.70	0.07	1.55	0.56	0.38	0.23	0.44			1.30
Good/ Pure	0.50	1.65	0.26	0.80	1.48	0.67	1.47	1.46	1.81	0.98
Loving	0.43	1.17	0.77	0.34	0.55	1.23	0.71	0.72		0.33
Accessible	1.31	0.75		0.34	0.30	0.40	0.24	0.96	0.26	0.98
Covenants/ Promises	0.48	1.44	2.32	0.46	0.67	0.77	0.45	0.24	0.26	0.33
Living	0.26	2.40	0.52	0.34	0.05	0.40	2.23		0.52	0.98
Blesses	1.15	0.69	2.06	1.48	0.19	0.30	0.14		0.26	
Christ divine	0.38		1.29	0.80	0.42	1.30	0.22	1.21	1.30	
Atones/Suffers for	0.48	0.27	2.83	0.45	1.61	1.13	0.45	0.48	0.26	
Purifies/ Sanctifies	0.35	0.07	0.26	1.03	3.54	1.43	0.73	0.48		0.33
Glorious	0.98	1.23	0.77	0.57	0.41	0.73	0.45	0.24	0.52	0.33
Calls	0.02				0.67	0.63	0.31		0.26	0.33
Universal	0.18		0.26		1.08	1.03	0.02	0.97	1.04	
In Measure	0.14	2.06			0.67	0.96	1.23	0.24		
Convinces	2.21		0.26		0.15	0.50				
Elects	0.15				0.16	0.27	0.24			
Tests	0.03	0.07		0.11	0.03	0.03	0.86			
Heals	0.17				0.03	0.10				
Personal										

A.2.1.2 Early Friends' perceptions of God Summary table: part 2

<i>feature</i>	<i>Burrough</i>	<i>Fell letters 2</i>	<i>Fox the Younger</i>	<i>Coal</i>	<i>Audland</i>	<i>Crane</i>	<i>Fell letters 3</i>	<i>Keith 1670</i>	<i>Travers</i>	<i>Keith 1700</i>	Overall Average %
Inward / Light	8.56	11.25	4.58	16.35	7.33		8.22	26.37	6.56	12.91	11.39
Ruler/Kingdom	15.24	9.75	14.77	4.41	12.41	18.00	10.29	0.60	11.48	3.23	8.61
Judges/Law	12.38	5.13	5.67	3.52	4.71	25.00	1.49	4.24	9.84	2.59	5.71
Spirit	14.29	2.76	3.41	1.33	3.44	2.00	2.33	4.55	1.64	12.25	5.05
Powerful/Empowers	0.95	5.27	4.56	1.32	5.06	8.00	4.30	1.52	8.20	3.23	4.42
Leads	0.95	1.87	2.28	6.63	4.26	2.00	4.38	0.30	1.64	5.16	2.98
Gives/ Grace	0.95	2.57		2.66	1.17	2.00	2.89	2.73	9.04		2.34
Revealed in Scripture		0.54		0.44	0.63		0.37	1.52		1.29	2.21
Revealed thro' Gospel/ Jesus		1.15	3.41	1.32	1.72		2.24	4.84		1.29	2.07
Saves/ Redeems		1.11		3.09	0.45		0.93	9.40		2.59	1.93
Father/ Has own people		2.61	1.13	3.98	1.45	3.00	1.40	0.91		1.94	1.91
Creator / Word/ Wisdom		2.47		1.32	0.45		0.74	1.21	1.64	3.88	1.84
Commands		2.47	4.56	2.65	3.08	2.00	2.43	0.60		5.81	1.83
Upholds		3.59	1.13	1.77	1.90	3.00	4.38			0.65	1.42
Eternal		2.69	1.13	3.10	0.54		4.57		1.64		1.38
Meaning of God		0.94		1.32	2.26	2.00	2.04	2.42		1.94	1.20
Active/works	1.90	2.08	2.28		0.18		1.87		3.28		0.94
Good/ Pure		1.22		1.32	0.91		0.93	0.60	1.64	0.65	0.92
Loving		2.08			2.26	3.00	1.03	0.30	3.28		0.91
Accessible		0.67	2.28	3.98	0.54		1.02		3.28		0.87
Covenants/ Promises		0.75		0.44			0.56	3.63			0.64
Living		1.04	1.13		0.18		0.37		1.64	0.65	0.64
Blesses		0.54			0.82	1.00	2.24		1.64		0.63
Christ divine		0.11		0.88	0.27		0.09	2.12		1.94	0.62
Atones/ Suffers for		1.01					0.19			1.93	0.55
Purifies/ Sanctifies		0.65		1.33			0.28				0.52
Glorious		0.25		0.88	0.54		0.37	0.30		0.65	0.46
Calls		0.22	1.13	2.65	0.54		0.19			0.65	0.38
Universal				2.21			0.09	0.60			0.37
In Measure		0.68		0.88			0.28	0.30			0.37
Convinces		0.08	2.28		0.09		0.19	0.30			0.30
Elects		0.19		0.44	0.09		0.28	0.91			0.14
Tests		0.61									0.09
Heals											0.02
Personal											0.00

A.2.2.1 Early Friends' perceptions of Relationship with God Summary table: part 1

feature	Fox Journal	Fox Epistles 1	Fox Epistles 2	Penn	Barclay	Bathurst	Fell letters 1	Clark	Hubberthorn	Parker
Sin/Separation	2.38	0.63	0.78	3.75	2.83	3.76	2.09	9.18	4.66	10.10
Truth	6.33	1.99	4.11	0.91	3.00	2.43	3.06	3.14	4.40	4.23
Obedience/ Service	2.16	2.33	3.34	4.90	1.38	2.03	4.61	2.41	2.07	3.59
Righteousness	1.20	1.78	3.34	2.96	3.08	3.19	1.10	1.93	1.55	1.63
Faith	1.24	1.44	4.37	2.39	2.49	2.83	2.28	1.21	0.52	0.98
Suffer/ Courage	1.62			1.14	0.36	0.54	0.96	0.48	0.26	1.95
Life	2.43	5.42	1.80	0.44	1.23	1.30	2.07	3.38	0.52	1.63
Testimony/ Witness	0.65	0.27	0.52	0.11	1.94	1.62	2.19	0.24	9.33	1.63
Worship etc.	0.68	3.64	0.52	3.64	2.50	0.70	0.63	1.20	3.11	0.98
Love/Unity	1.00	3.50	2.83	0.91	0.21	0.43	1.65	1.45	1.04	
Fear	0.85	2.88	0.26	1.93	0.57	0.66	0.95	2.17		
Praise/ Reverence	0.99	2.33	1.54	1.94	0.37	0.66	1.14	0.48	0.26	0.33
Perfection/ Union with God	0.54	0.48		0.11	0.92	1.43	1.06	0.97		
Belief	0.60		1.29	0.34	0.68	1.73	0.53	0.48	0.78	
Eternal life	0.31	0.48	2.31	1.25	0.30	0.93	0.60		0.26	0.33
Prayer	0.59	2.61	0.52	1.03	1.61	0.40	0.73	0.48	0.52	0.33
Conscience/ Consciousness	0.65	1.17	0.26	0.68	0.81	1.90	0.92	0.48	1.30	0.33
Holiness	0.37				1.18	0.83	0.16	0.97	1.04	2.28
Freedom	0.10				0.23	0.70	0.45		0.52	0.98
Humility	0.09	0.69	1.54	0.80	0.21	0.37	0.82	1.21		0.33
Selflessness	0.17		0.78	2.96	0.14	0.13	0.22	1.45		
Joy/ Happiness	0.18	0.41	0.78	1.94	0.13	0.33	0.25			
Know	0.25		0.52	0.68	0.85	0.70	0.95	0.97	1.04	0.65
Repentance	0.36			1.37	0.45	0.50	0.33	0.97		
Apocalypse	0.68	0.27	0.26	0.23	0.07	0.17	0.73	0.72	1.55	
Intimacy/ Relationship	0.10			1.82	0.37	0.39	0.09	0.24		
Experience/ Mysticism	0.09			0.34	0.31	0.43	0.04	0.24		
Image of God	0.21	0.41	0.26		0.04	0.27			1.55	
Formality/ Sacraments	0.32	0.34			0.39	0.54	0.04	0.24		
Trans-formed	0.03			0.11			0.02			
Use Reason		0.27		0.11	0.47	0.17	0.05			
Seek God	0.03			0.11	0.10	0.47	0.05			
Discernment	0.09			0.11	0.12		0.07		0.52	
Hope	0.12				0.05	0.47	0.07			

feature	Fox Journal	Fox Epistles 1	Fox Epistles 2	Penn	Barclay	Bathurst	Fell letters 1	Clark	Hubberthorn	Parker
Environmental concerns			0.52							
Self examination							0.24			
Seek social change	0.16				0.03					
Absence/ Doubts	0.05				0.03					
Commitment					0.01					
Creativity/ Imagination										
Self realisation/ Wholeness										

A.2.2.2 Early Friends' perceptions of Relationship with God Summary table part 2

feature	Burrough	Fell letters 2	Fox the Younger	Coal	Audland	Crane	Fell letters 3	Keith 1670	Travers	Keith 1700	Overall Average %
Sin/Separation	24.76	0.62	3.41	3.54	2.63	2.00	1.22	3.33	3.28	1.94	4.34
Truth	0.95	2.33	15.91	0.44	4.35	1.00	7.14	4.85	1.64	5.16	3.87
Obedience/ Service	3.81	3.29	2.28	6.63	6.71	6.00	3.55	4.85	1.64	2.59	3.51
Righteousness	1.90	2.91	5.68	2.65	1.36	1.00	1.59	1.82	3.28		2.20
Faith	0.95	2.51		0.44	1.54	2.00	2.52	3.63		7.74	2.05
Suffer/ Courage	0.95	4.26	4.56		2.45	15.00	1.77				1.82
Life		1.62		4.87	1.72		1.21	2.73	1.64	1.29	1.77
Testimony/ Witness	2.85	1.14		0.44	2.36	1.00	1.96	0.90		0.65	1.49
Worship etc.		1.33	4.56	0.44	4.62		0.47				1.45
Love/Unity		2.74	1.13	1.33	2.72		4.38			0.65	1.30
Fear	2.85	1.22	1.13		2.54		0.39		1.64		1.00
Conscience/ Consciousness	3.81	0.19	3.41	0.44	2.90		0.37	0.30			1.00
Praise/ Reverence		1.01			0.63		2.89		4.92		0.97
Perfection/ Union with God		0.44		0.44			0.09	2.42		7.74	0.83
Belief		0.29		0.88	0.82		0.28	2.73	1.64	3.23	0.82
Eternal life		1.29		2.21	0.36		0.93	0.60	3.28	0.65	0.80
Prayer		0.93			0.91		1.68		1.64		0.70
Holiness		0.39		1.77	0.09		1.68				0.54
Freedom		1.22	1.13	1.33	0.18	1.00	0.47	0.60		1.29	0.51
Humility		0.57	1.13		0.27		0.56			0.65	0.46
Selflessness		0.08		0.44	1.09		0.09		1.64		0.46
Joy/ Happiness		0.25			0.72		0.56		3.28		0.44
Know		0.68		0.88	0.18		0.47				0.44
Apocalypse		0.11			0.63	1.00	0.19			0.65	0.36
Repentance		0.04	1.13		0.09			1.21			0.32
Intimacy/ Relationship	0.95	0.15					0.19		1.64		0.30
Experience/ Mysticism									1.64		0.15
Image of God		0.12			0.09		0.09				0.15
Formal/ Outward							0.37				0.11
Transformed				0.44	0.54						0.06
Use Reason											0.05
Discernment											0.05
Seek God							0.09				0.04
Hope		0.12									0.04
Environmental concerns											0.03

feature	Burrough	Fell	Fox the	Coal	Audlan	Crane	Fell	Keith	Trave	Keith	Overall
	h	letters 2	Younger		d		letters	1670	rs	1700	Average
							3				%
Self examination		0.15									0.02
Social change											0.01
Absence/ Doubts					0.09						0.01
Commitment		0.04									0.01
Creativity/Imagination											0.00
Self realisation/ Wholeness											0.00

A.2.3.1. Liberal Friends' Perceptions of God: Summary Table

feature	QFP	Scott 1980	Priestland 1982	Punshon 1990	Dale 1996	Trevett 1997	YFGM 1998	Wildwood 1999	Allen 2007	Overall Average %
Spirit	6.53	5.29	4.37	7.81	17.22	14.11	13.73	10.85	10.11	10.00
Inward / Light	10.58	5.19	3.90	6.40	5.58	5.70	7.91	9.32	7.54	6.90
Meaning of God	3.79	10. 69	3.88	2.61	4.07	1.20	6.87	7.39	6.09	5.18
Creator/ Word/ Wisdom	3.66	3.38	3.65	1.98	0.90	1.50	1.29	3.66	3.69	2.63
Leads	4.77	2.36	2.42	1.83	1.66	2.40	1.72	2.71	3.77	2.63
Father/ has own people	1.72	2.14	1.70	0.92	2.26	3.30	2.87	1.29	1.46	1.96
Powerful/ Empowers	4.41	2.36	1.21	1.85	0.60	1.80	1.29	2.48	1.63	1.96
Revealed thro' Gospel/ Jesus	2.16	2.81	2.91	3.66	0.75	1.20	0.57	0.82	2.48	1.93
Loving	2.69	3.27	3.16	0.75	1.21	1.20	0.72	0.71	1.63	1.70
Gives/ Grace	2.95	2.81	3.40	1.00	0.45	0.90	0.44	1.18	1.46	1.62
Ruler/ Kingdom	1.72	2.48	0.24	2.16	1.36	2.10	0.15	0.94	0.77	1.32
Commands	2.12	0.56	1.45	0.26	0.91	1.80	2.72	0.24	0.43	1.17
Active/Works	0.40	3.15	2.18	0.34	0.30			0.47	3.00	1.09
Judges/Law	0.79	1.70	1.70	1.01	0.91	1.20	0.57	0.59	0.18	0.96
Christ divine	0.75	2.02	3.40	0.50			0.15	0.35	0.43	0.84
Revealed in Scripture	0.62	0.79	1.21	1.83		3.00	0.15			0.84
Saves/ Redeems	0.75	2.92	1.21	1.59	0.15			0.94		0.84
Universal	0.93	2.36	1.21	0.26		0.30	0.43	0.59	0.17	0.69
Atones/ Suffers for	0.31	1.80	2.19	0.91	0.15			0.24	0.35	0.66
Upholds	1.50	0.79	0.24	0.50	0.15	0.90	0.29	0.47	1.03	0.65
Convinces	0.04			0.50	0.15	2.70	0.29	0.47	0.09	0.47
Eternal	0.66	1.01	0.49		0.30		0.15	0.12	0.86	0.40
Living	0.84	0.56			0.30	0.30	0.57	0.12	0.34	0.34
Calls		0.34	0.73	0.42		0.30	0.15	0.35	0.43	0.30
Good/ Pure			0.24	0.67	0.30			0.24	0.94	0.27
Accessible	0.26	0.45	0.24	0.67	0.30			0.12	0.35	0.27
Personal	0.35	0.23			0.45	0.30	0.29	0.24	0.26	0.24
Heals	0.35			0.09				0.35	0.68	0.16
Glorious	0.62	0.23		0.17				0.35		0.15
Blesses	0.31	0.11				0.30		0.12	0.34	0.13
Tests	0.18		0.49	0.17	0.15				0.18	0.13
Covenants/ Promises	0.18	0.11		0.26	0.15			0.24	0.17	0.12
In Measure	0.22	0.34		0.09				0.12		0.09
Elects				0.09				0.12		0.02

A.2.3.2. Liberal Friends' Perceptions of Relationship with God: Summary Table

Feature	QFP	Scott 1980	Priestland 1982	Punshon 1990	Dale 1996	Trevett 1997	YFGM 1998	Wildwood 1999	Allen 2007	Overall Average %
Faith	1.81	1.69	5.34	5.28	9.67	9.01	3.58	3.91	3.94	4.91
Truth	3.27	3.94	4.13	4.71	6.19	7.21	5.01	3.30	3.43	4.58
Experience/ Mysticism	1.06	3.15	5.34	3.34	2.11	4.20	3.86	5.19	6.76	3.89
Worship/ Wait on	4.02	1.36	2.91	0.67	1.51	4.20	6.73	3.78	8.13	3.70
Love/Unity	4.28	3.60	2.67	3.49	3.02	2.10	6.79	3.07	2.14	3.46
Testimony/ Witness	1.37	0.23		9.64	8.31	1.20	3.16	1.41	0.94	2.92
Belief	0.40	2.03	7.77	0.92	1.06	6.61	2.15	2.36	0.86	2.68
Righteousness	2.47	2.03	0.97	2.33	3.17	3.00	2.86	0.71	1.11	2.07
Sin/Separation	1.27	2.14	3.64	2.26	2.26	1.20	0.58	2.36	2.24	1.99
Obedience/ Service	3.71	2.03	0.24	1.25	2.87	1.50	3.29	2.12	0.86	1.99
Seek social change	6.18			1.58	6.65		0.85	0.71	0.69	1.85
Prayer	2.47		1.46	2.16	1.51	0.60	1.14	2.59	3.08	1.67
Intimacy/ Relationship	1.28	1.13	1.22	0.42	0.75	1.50	0.29	0.47	3.09	1.13
Suffer/ Courage	0.31	2.03	0.73	2.02		1.50	0.30	1.42	0.95	1.03
Freedom	0.13	1.58	3.16	0.92	0.45	1.20	0.57	0.35	0.69	1.01
Discernment	0.35			1.66	0.45	3.00	1.00	1.18	1.20	0.98
Life	1.68	0.56	1.46	0.50		0.60	0.43	3.07	0.26	0.95
Commitment	0.04			1.09		0.30	6.51		0.34	0.92
Selflessness		0.68		3.58	2.27		0.15	1.06	0.17	0.88
Transformed	0.35	0.34	0.24	1.25	1.21	1.20		0.59	0.17	0.71
Know through Myth/ Metaphor		0.23	2.43	1.00				0.47	1.89	0.67
Know God...	0.31	0.79	0.97	1.00	0.15		0.29	0.24	1.54	0.60
Formality/ Outward Sacred	0.04	0.45	0.97	0.16	0.60		1.14	1.41	0.34	0.57
Environmental concerns	0.75			0.25	0.75		1.43	1.30	0.51	0.55
Reason	0.71	0.56	1.46	0.66	0.30	0.30	0.15			0.46
Humility	1.06	0.23	0.24	0.83	0.30		0.29	0.71	0.43	0.45
Joy/ Happiness	0.84	0.56		0.16		0.90	0.57	0.71		0.42
Self - examination				0.33	1.66		0.29	1.18		0.38
Creativity/ Imagination	0.13	0.11	0.97				0.72	1.06	0.43	0.38
Perfection/Union with God	0.22	1.24	0.24	0.52	0.15		0.15	0.36	0.18	0.34
Fear	0.35	1.35	0.24				0.29	0.59	0.17	0.33
Praise/ Reverence	1.14	0.22	0.24	0.32		0.60		0.12	0.18	0.31
Absence/ Doubts	0.09	0.11	0.24	0.09	0.60	0.90	0.43	0.24	0.09	0.31
Repentance		0.23	0.73	0.25		0.30	0.15	1.06		0.30
Conscious of.../ Conscience	0.49	0.11	0.97	0.42			0.15	0.48		0.29
Holiness		0.45		0.33	0.30			0.94	0.26	0.25

Feature	QFP	Scott 1980	Priestland 1982	Punshon 1990	Dale 1996	Trevett 1997	YFGM 1998	Wildwood 1999	Allen 2007	Overall Average %
Seek God	0.26	0.34			0.15		0.72	0.12	0.34	0.21
Eternal life	0.44			0.83	0.45			0.12		0.20
Hope		0.68		0.58				0.24	0.09	0.18
Image of God	0.26	0.34	0.24	0.42				0.12	0.09	0.16
Apocalypse	0.04	0.68		0.09		0.30		0.24		0.15

A.2.4.1. All individual features for early Friends combined and placed in rank order of frequency

Feature	Frequency %	Rank order	Feature	Frequency%	Rank order
Ruler	8.10	1	Father	0.69	46
Spirit	5.05	2	Covenants/ Promises	0.64	47
Sin/Evil	4.06	3	Living	0.64	48
Truth	3.87	4	Blesses	0.63	49
Light	3.60	5	Christ divine	0.62	50
Judges	3.30	6	Wisdom	0.60	51
Powerful	3.27	7	Wait on	0.58	52
Inward Christ	3.03	8	Atones	0.55	53
Leads	2.98	9	Holiness	0.54	54
Gives/Grace	2.34	10	Purifies/ Sanctifies	0.52	55
Revealed in Scripture	2.21	11	Kingdom	0.51	56=
Righteousness	2.20	12	Freedom	0.51	56=
Revealed in Gospel	2.07	13	Creator	0.47	58
Faith	2.05	14	Glorious	0.46	59=
Obedience	1.97	15	Humility	0.46	59=
Saves/ Redeems	1.93	16	Selflessness	0.46	59=
Commands/ Wills	1.83	17	Know God	0.44	62=
Suffer/ Courage	1.82	18	Joy/ Happiness	0.44	62=
Life	1.77	19	Calls	0.38	64
Soul	1.68	20	In measure	0.37	65=
Revealed Inwardly	1.56	21	Universal	0.37	65=
Service	1.54	22	Apocalyptic	0.36	67
Punishes	1.50	23	Repentance	0.32	68
Seed/ That of God	1.50	24	Intimacy with God	0.30	69
Testimony/ Witness	1.49	25	Convinces	0.30	70
Upholds	1.42	26	Separation From God	0.25	71
Eternal	1.38	27	Image of God	0.15	72
Love/Unity	1.30	28	Experience	0.15	73
Children of God	1.22	29	Elects	0.14	74
God as Mystery	1.19	30	Formal/ Outward	0.11	75
Empowers	1.14	31	Tests	0.09	76
Fear	1.00	32=	Transformed	0.06	77
Conscience	1.00	32=	Discern	0.05	78=
Praise	0.97	34	Reason	0.05	78=

Feature	Frequency %	Rank order	Feature	Frequency%	Rank order
Active in World	0.94	35	Seek God	0.04	80=
Good/Pure	0.92	36	Hope	0.04	80=
Lawmaker	0.91	37=	Silence	0.03	82=
Loving	0.91	37=	Environmental concerns	0.03	82=
Accessible	0.87	39	Heals	0.02	84=
Worship	0.84	40	Self-examination	0.02	84=
Perfection/ Union with God	0.83	41	Revealed in nature	0.02	84=
Belief	0.82	42	Doubts	0.01	87=
Eternal life	0.80	43	Social concerns	0.01	87=
Word	0.77	44	Commitment	0.01	87=
Prayer	0.70	45			

A.2.4.2. All individual features for Liberal Friends combined and placed in rank order of frequency.

Feature	Frequency %	Rank order	Feature	Frequency%	Rank order
Spirit	10.00	1	Know God	0.60	48
Faith	4.91	2	Formal/ Outward	0.57	49
Truth	4.58	3	Ruler	0.55	50=
Meaning of God	4.23	4	Environmental concerns	0.55	50=
Experience	3.89	5	Soul	0.51	52=
Love/Unity	3.46	6	Wait on God	0.51	52=
Testimony/ Witness	2.92	7	Convinces	0.47	54
Belief	2.68	8	Reason	0.46	55
Leads	2.63	9	Word	0.45	56=
Light	2.23	10	Inward Christ	0.45	56=
Virtue	2.07	11	Humility	0.45	56=
Worship	2.03	12	Eternal	0.40	59=
Revealed in Gospel	1.93	13	Revealed in nature	0.40	59=
Revealed Inwardly	1.85	14	Joy/Happiness	0.38	61=
Social concerns	1.85	15	Self- examination	0.38	61=
Sin/Evil	1.76	16	Use imagination	0.38	61=
Loving	1.70	17=	Perfection/ Wholeness	0.34	64=
Children of God	1.70	17=	Living God	0.34=	64=
Prayer	1.67	19	Fear	0.33	66
Gives/Grace	1.62	20	Praise	0.31	67=
Creator/Ground Of Being	1.57	21	Doubts	0.31	67=
Seed/ That of God	1.48	22	Repentance	0.30	69=
Service	1.27	23	Calls	0.30	69=
Commands/Wills	1.17	24	Conscience	0.29	71
Silence	1.16	25	Good/Pure	0.27	72=
Intimate with God	1.13	26	Parent /Father	0.27	72=
Active in world	1.09	27	Accessible	0.27	72=
Suffer/ Courage	1.03	28	Holiness	0.25	75
Freedom	1.01	29	Personal	0.24	76=
Powerful	1.00	30	Separation from God	0.24	76=
Discern	0.98	31	Seek God	0.21	78=
Life	0.95	32=	Wisdom	0.21	78=
Empowers	0.95	32=	Eternal life	0.20	80

Feature	Frequency %	Rank order	Feature	Frequency%	Rank order
Commitment	0.92	34	Hope	0.18	81
God as mystery	0.90	35	Lawmaker	0.17	82
Selflessness	0.88	36	Image of God	0.16	83=
Christ divine	0.84	37=	Heals	0.16	83=
Revealed in Scripture	0.84	37=	Punishes	0.15	85=
Saves/ Redeems	0.84	37=	Glorious	0.15	85=
Kingdom	0.78	40	Apocalyptic	0.15	85=
Obedience	0.71	41=	Tests	0.13	88=
Transformation	0.71	41=	Blesses	0.13	88=
Universal	0.69	43	Covenants/ Promises	0.12	90
Understood thro' myth	0.67	44	In measure	0.09	91
Atones	0.66	45	Reality of God	0.05	92
Upholds	0.65	46	Elects	0.02	93
Judges	0.64	47			

Appendix 3 The major feature groups separated out.

A.3.1 Early Friends : Perceptions of God The grouped features separated out

<i>feature</i>	<i>Fox Journal</i>	<i>Fox Epistles 1</i>	<i>Fox Epistles 2</i>	<i>Penn</i>	<i>Barclay</i>	<i>Bathurst</i>	<i>Fell letters 1</i>	<i>Clark</i>	<i>Hubber-thorn</i>	<i>Parker</i>
light	2.81	5.14	3.08	2.73	3.15	4.36	9.20	6.76	10.62	1.95
inward	1.26	1.37	0.26	1.71	4.16	2.53	0.66	1.45	2.07	0
inward Christ	3.01	4.18	2.57	2.51	2.16	2.16	3.17	4.11	8.81	1.95
Seed/ That of God	1.53	4.87	1.03	0.11	1.15	0.93	2.93	0.24	1.81	0.33
Soul	0.32	0	0	0	1.71	2.13	2.47	2.42	0.52	0.98
Ruler	15.30	2.13	12.34	3.76	2.49	6.02	7.44	8.18	1.81	4.89
Kingdom	0.45	1.44	1.29	1.94	0.49	0.76	0.40	0.24	0	0.65
Powerful	7.54	7.96	6.17	2.62	1.69	1.76	3.25	0.48	0.52	1.96
Empowers	1.69	3.22	0.77	1.37	0.57	1.06	0.43	0.96	0.26	1.63
Creator	0.58	0.89	1.29	0.80	0.31	0.66	0.11	0	0.78	0.33
Word	1.60	2.13	0.77	0.11	1.11	1.56	0.54	0.48	1.04	0.33
Wisdom	0.69	3.70	2.06	0.68	0.45	0.50	0.36	0.48	0.52	0
Revealed in nature	0.01	0	0	0	0.01	0.20	0.02	0	0	0
Sets the law	0.61	0.14	1.29	1.59	1.94	0.50	0.71	0.72	0.52	0.33
Judges	1.12	1.44	1.29	4.33	1.80	1.87	3.77	3.38	0.78	0.98
Punishes	0.47	0.96	1.29	1.71	0.11	0.70	1.98	2.90	0	0.33
Meaning of God	1.41	0.76	0.26	1.37	1.66	1.79	1.13	0.72	1.04	0.65
Reality of God	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Father	0.24	0.62	0	1.03	0.41	1.50	1.12	1.45	1.04	0
Has His own people	0.73	1.92	1.04	1.14	0.86	1.33	0.80	2.17	2.34	1.95

Early Friends : Perceptions of God The grouped features separated out: continued

<i>feature</i>	<i>Burrough</i>	<i>Fell letters 2</i>	<i>Fox the Younger</i>	<i>Coal</i>	<i>Audland</i>	<i>Crane</i>	<i>Fell letters 3</i>	<i>Keith 1670</i>	<i>Travers</i>	<i>Keith 1700</i>	<i>Overall %</i>
light	0.95	3.48	1.15	6.19	0.45	0	1.68	5.76	0	2.58	3.60
inward	0	1.28	0	2.21	3.17	0	1.40	1.82	0	5.81	1.56
inward Christ	0	3.19	0	3.98	2.26	0	2.24	8.79	1.64	3.87	3.03
Seed/ That of God	1.90	1.58	1.15	2.21	0	0	1.59	6.67	0	0	1.50
Soul	5.71	1.72	2.28	1.76	1.45	0	1.31	3.33	4.92	0.65	1.68
Ruler	15.24	9.46	14.77	2.65	12.23	18.00	10.01	0.60	11.48	3.23	8.10
Kingdom	0	0.29	0	1.76	0.18	0	0.28	0	0	0	0.51
Powerful	0	4.48	2.28	0.88	2.89	8.00	3.18	0	6.56	3.23	3.27
Empowers	0.95	0.79	2.28	0.44	2.17	0	1.12	1.52	1.64	0	1.14
Creator	0	0.47	0	0.44	0.09	0	0.28	0	1.64	0.65	0.47
Word	0	1.61	0	0.44	0.36	0	0.09	1.21	0	1.94	0.77
Wisdom	0	0.39	0	0.44	0	0	0.37	0	0	1.29	0.60
Revealed in nature	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.01
Sets the law	0	1.22	1.13	0.44	1.27	0	0.19	3.64	0	1.94	0.91

<i>feature</i>	<i>Burrough</i>	<i>Fell letters 2</i>	<i>Fox the Younger</i>	<i>Coal</i>	<i>Audland</i>	<i>Crane</i>	<i>Fell letters 3</i>	<i>Keith 1670</i>	<i>Travers</i>	<i>Keith 1700</i>	<i>Overall %</i>
Judges	7.62	2.62	3.41	2.20	1.54	16.00	0.74	0.60	9.84	0.65	3.30
Punishes	4.76	1.29	1.13	0.88	1.90	9.00	0.56	0	0	0	1.50
Meaning of God	0	0.94	0	1.32	2.26	2.00	2.04	2.42	0	1.94	1.19
Reality of God	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Father	0	0.79	0	3.98	0	0	0.28	0	0	1.29	0.69
Has His own people	0	1.82	1.13	0	1.45	3.00	1.12	0.91	0	0.65	1.22

A.3.2. Early Friends Relationships with God: The grouped features separated out.

<i>feature</i>	<i>Fox Journal</i>	<i>Fox Epistles 1</i>	<i>Fox Epistles 2</i>	<i>Penn</i>	<i>Barclay</i>	<i>Bathurst</i>	<i>Fell letters 1</i>	<i>Clark</i>	<i>Hubberthorn</i>	<i>Parker</i>
Sin/ evil	2.34	0	0.78	1.93	2.72	3.63	1.73	8.46	4.66	10.10
Separation from God	0.04	0	0	1.82	0.11	0.13	0.36	0.72	0	0
Obedience	1.12	0.96	1.03	4.10	0.66	1.20	3.24	0.48	2.07	0.33
Service	1.04	1.37	2.31	0.80	0.72	0.83	1.37	1.93	0	3.26
Worship	0.29	0.69	0.52	2.39	1.53	0.30	0.13	0.72	3.11	0.98
Wait on	0.28	2.95	0	1.25	0.55	0.37	0.43	0.48	0	0
Silence	0.11	0	0	0	0.42	0.03	0.07	0	0	0

<i>feature</i>	<i>Burrough</i>	<i>Fell letters 2</i>	<i>Fox the Younger</i>	<i>Coal</i>	<i>Audland</i>	<i>Crane</i>	<i>Fell letters 3</i>	<i>Keith 1670</i>	<i>Travers</i>	<i>Keith 1700</i>	<i>Overall %</i>
Sin/ evil	24.76	0.51	3.41	3.10	1.81	2.00	0.75	3.33	3.28	1.94	4.06
Separation from God	0	0.11	0	0.44	0.82	0	0.47	0	0	0	0.25
Obedience	0	2.29	0	5.75	4.26	2.00	1.68	4.55	1.64	1.94	1.97
Service	3.81	1.00	2.28	0.88	2.45	4.00	1.87	0.30	0	0.65	1.54
Worship	0	0.86	2.28	0	2.81	0	0.28	0	0	0	0.84
Wait on	0	0.47	2.28	0.44	1.81	0	0.19	0	0	0	0.58
Silence	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.03

A.3.3. Liberal Friends: Perceptions of God. The grouped features separated out.

<i>feature</i>	<i>QFP</i>	<i>Scott 1980</i>	<i>Priestland 1982</i>	<i>Punshon 1990</i>	<i>Dale 1996</i>	<i>Trevett 1997</i>	<i>YFGM 1998</i>	<i>Wildwood 1999</i>	<i>Allen 2007</i>	Over-all %
light	2.91	3.04	0.97	2.16	2.11	1.80	0.86	4.01	2.23	2.23
inward	3.00	1.24	0.73	2.83	1.06	0.60	1.00	2.83	3.34	1.85
inward Christ	2.60	0.45	0.49	0.66	0	1.80	0.43	0.71	0.43	0.45
Seed/ That of God	2.07	0.23	0.98	0.09	2.11	1.20	4.58	0.94	1.11	1.48
Soul	0	0.23	0.73	0.66	0.30	0.30	1.14	0.83	0.43	0.51
Ruler	0.75	1.13	0	0.50	0	1.80	0	0.59	0.17	0.55
Kingdom	0.97	1.35	0.24	1.66	1.36	0.30	0.15	0.35	0.60	0.78
Powerful	2.69	1.91	0.97	0.66	0.15	0	0.43	1.54	0.69	1.00
Empowers	1.72	0.45	0.24	1.19	0.45	1.80	0.86	0.94	0.94	0.95
Creator	1.10	1.80	3.16	1.63	0.15	0.60	0.72	1.53	3.43	1.57
Word	1.68	0.45	0.49	0.09	0.15	0.90	0	0.12	0.17	0.45
Wisdom	0.75	0.23	0	0.26	0	0	0	0.59	0.09	0.21
Revealed in nature	0.13	0.90	0	0	0.60	0	0.57	1.42	0	0.40
Sets the law	0.22	0.34	0.24	0.26	0	0.30	0	0.12	0.09	0.17
Judges	0.53	1.02	0.73	0.66	0.91	0.90	0.42	0.47	0.09	0.64
Punishes	0.04	0.34	0.73	0.09	0	0	0.15	0	0	0.15
Meaning of God	3.79	10.58	3.88	2.61	3.92	1.20	6.87	7.39	5.92	5.13
Reality of God	0	0.11	0	0	0.15	0	0	0	0.17	0.05
Father	0.53	0.34	0.73	0.17	0	0	0.15	0.47	0	0.27
Has His own people	1.19	1.80	0.97	0.75	2.26	3.30	2.72	0.82	1.46	1.70

A.3.4. Liberal Friends: Perceptions of Relationships. The grouped features separated out.

<i>feature</i>	<i>QFP</i>	<i>Scott 1980</i>	<i>Priestland 1982</i>	<i>Punshon 1990</i>	<i>Dale 1996</i>	<i>Trevett 1997</i>	<i>YFGM 1998</i>	<i>Wildwood 1999</i>	<i>Allen 2007</i>	Over-all %
Sin/ evil	1.01	2.14	2.91	2.26	2.11	1.20	0.29	1.65	2.24	1.76
Separation from God	0.26	0	0.73	0	0.15	0	0.29	0.71	0	0.24
Obedience	0.93	1.24	0.24	0.75	0.60	0.90	0	1.65	0.09	0.71
Service	2.78	0.79	0	0.50	2.27	0.60	3.29	0.47	0.77	2.17
Worship	1.59	0.79	0.97	0.42	1.36	2.70	4.58	2.12	3.77	2.03
Wait on	1.46	0.23	0	0.09	0	0.60	0	0.83	1.36	0.51
Silence	0.97	0.34	1.94	0.16	0.15	0.90	2.15	0.83	3.00	1.16

APPENDIX 4 THE DATA TABLES FOR THE INDIVIDUAL TEXTS.

A.4.1. Early Friends.

A. 4.1.1. Analysis Data: George Fox *Journal* 9 617 refs.to features in total

A.4.1.1.1 Perceptions of Features of God.

Feature	%	Feature	%
Ruler*	15.30	Meaning of 'God'/Divinity*	1.21
Kingdom*	0.45	Mysterious*	0.20
total	15.75	total	1.41
Powerful*	7.54	Accessible	1.31
Empowers*	1.69	Commands*	1.04
total	9.23	Wills*	0.24
Light*	2.81	total	1.28
Reveals Inwardly*	1.26	Blesses	1.15
Inward as Christ*	3.01	Gives*	0.23
Seed/That of God*	1.53	Grace*	0.85
Soul*	0.32	total	1.08
total	8.93	Glorious	0.98
Leads/Teaches	4.93	Father*	0.24
Spirit	4.08	Has His own people*	0.73
Creator*	0.58	total	0.97
Word*	1.60	Revealed thro' Scripture	0.87
Wisdom*	0.69	Good/ Pure	0.50
Revealed in Nature*	0.01	Covenants/Promises	0.48
total	2.88	Atones*	0.43
Active/Works	2.70	Suffers for*	0.05
Law*	0.61	total	0.48
Judges*	1.12	Loving	0.43
Punishes*	0.47	Christ divine*	0.37
total	2.20	Trinity*	0.01
Convinces	2.21	total	0.38
Upholds	1.97	Purifies/Sanctifies	0.35
Revealed thro': Gospel*	0.90	Living	0.26
Revealed thro' Life of Christ*	0.97	Universal	0.18
total	1.87	Heals	0.17
Eternal	1.81	Elects	0.15
Redeems*	0.27	In Measure	0.14
Saves*	1.29	Tests	0.03
total	1.56	Calls	0.02
		Total	71.59

A.4.1.1.2 Perceptions of Relationship with God.

Feature	%	Feature	%
Truth	6.33	Perfection*	0.49
Life	2.43	Union with God*	0.05
Sin*	2.34	total	0.54
Separation from God*	0.04	Holiness	0.37
total	2.38	Repentance	0.36
Obedience*	1.12	Outward/Formal*	0.26
Service*	1.04	Sacraments*	0.06
total	2.16	total	0.32
Suffer for*	1.55	Eternal Life	0.31
Courage*	0.07	Know God	0.25
total	1.62	Image of God	0.21
Faith	1.24	Joy/ Happiness	0.18
Righteousness	1.20	Self-denial/ Selflessness	0.17
Love/ Unity	1.00	Seek Social change	0.16
Praise*	0.96	Hope	0.12
Reverence*	0.03	Freedom	0.10
total	0.99	Intimacy with God	0.10
Fear	0.85	Humility	0.09
Apocalyptic	0.68	Experience	0.09
Worship*	0.29	Discernment	0.09
Silence*	0.11	Absence of God	0.05
Wait on*	0.28	Transformation	0.03
total	0.68	Seek God	0.03
Testimony/ Witness	0.65		
Conscious of / Conscience	0.65		
Belief	0.60	Total	27.62
Prayer	0.59		

*Asterisks indicate grouped features

A.4.1.2. Analysis Data: George Fox *Epistles* sample 1 1 458 refs. to features in total

A.4.1.2.1. Perceptions of Features of God. *Asterisks indicate grouped features

Feature	%	Feature	%
Light*	5.14	Living	2.40
Reveals Inwardly*	1.37	Upholds	2.33
Inward as Christ*	4.18	Leads/Teaches	2.26
Seed/That of God*	4.87	In Measure	2.06
total	15.56	Eternal	1.85
Powerful*	7.96	Good/ Pure	1.65
Empowers*	3.22	Covenants/Promises	1.44
total	11.18	Glorious	1.23
Creator*	0.89	Loving	1.17
Word*	2.13	Grace	0.96
Wisdom*	3.70	Meaning of 'God'/Divinity	0.62
total	6.72	Mysterious	0.14
Ruler*	2.13	total	0.76
Kingdom*	1.44	Accessible	0.75
total	3.57	Blesses	0.69
Spirit	3.29	Redeems*	0.21
Law*	0.14	Saves*	0.48
Judges*	1.44	total	0.69
Punishes*	0.96	Commands	0.62
total	2.54	Revealed in Scripture	0.34
Father*	0.62	Atones	0.27
Has His own people*	1.92	Active/Works	0.07
total	2.54	Tests	0.07
		Purifies/Sanctifies	0.07
		Total	67.08

A.4.1.2.2. Perceptions of Relationship with God.

Feature	%	Feature	%
Life	5.42	Humility	0.69
Worship*	0.69	Sin	0.63
Wait on*	2.95	Union with God*	0.41
total	3.64	Perfection*	0.07
Love/Unity	3.50	total	0.48
Fear	2.88	Eternal Life	0.48
Prayer	2.61	Image of God	0.41
Obedience*	0.96	Joy/ Happiness	0.41
Service*	1.37	Outward/Formal	0.34
total	2.33	Apocalyptic	0.27
Praise	2.33	Testimony	0.27
Truth	1.99	Reason about God	0.27
Righteousness	1.78		
Faith	1.44		
Conscious of / Conscience	1.17	Total	33.34

A.4.1.3 Analysis data: George Fox Epistles Sample 2 389 refs. to features in total

A.4.1.3.1. Perceptions of Features of God. *Asterisks indicate grouped features

Feature	%	Feature	%
Ruler*	12.34	Atones	2.83
Kingdom*	1.29	Saves	2.83
total	13.63	Upholds	2.83
Light**	3.08	Covenants/Promises	2.32
Reveals Inwardly**	0.26	Blesses	2.06
Inward as Christ**	2.57	Active/Works	1.55
Seed/That of God**	1.03	Eternal	1.29
total	6.94	Christ divine	1.29
Powerful*	6.17	Has His own people	1.04
Empowers*	0.77	Glorious	0.77
total	6.94	Revealed thro': Gospel	0.77
Spirit	6.17	Loving	0.77
Creator*	1.29	Commands	0.52
Word*	0.77	Living	0.52
Wisdom*	2.06	Leads/Teaches	0.52
total	4.12	Purifies/Sanctifies	0.26
Law*	1.29	Universal	0.26
Judges*	1.29	Good/ Pure	0.26
Punishes*	1.29	Convinces	0.26
total	3.87	Meaning of 'God'/Divinity	0.26
Gives*	0.52		
Grace*	2.57	Total	67.97
total	3.09		

A.4.1.3.2. Perceptions of Relationship with God.

Feature	%	Feature	%
Faith	4.37	Self –denial/ Selflessness	0.78
Truth	4.11	Joy/ Happiness	0.78
Righteousness	3.34	Prayer	0.52
Obedience*	1.03	Worship	0.52
Service*	2.31	Testimony/ Witness	0.52
total	3.34	Know God	0.52
Love/Unity	2.83	Environmental concerns	0.52
Eternal Life	2.31	Image of God	0.26
Life	1.80	Apocalyptic	0.26
Praise	1.54	Fear	0.26
Humility	1.54	Consciousness of God	0.26
Belief	1.29		
Sin	0.78	Total	32.45

A.4.1.4 Analysis Data: William Penn *No Cross No Crown* 878 refs. to features in total

A.4.1.4.1 Perceptions of Features of God.

Feature	%	Feature	%
Law*	1.59	Creator*	0.80
Judges*	4.33	Word*	0.11
Punishes*	1.71	Wisdom*	0.68
total	7.63	total	1.59
Light*	2.73	Blesses	1.48
Reveals Inwardly*	1.71	Meaning of 'God'/Divinity*	1.14
Inward as Christ*	2.51	Mysterious*	0.23
Seed/That of God*	0.11	total	1.37
total	7.06	Leads/Teaches	1.36
Spirit	6.61	Upholds	1.25
Ruler*	3.76	Revealed thro' Scripture	1.14
Kingdom*	1.94	Purifies/Sanctifies	1.03
total	5.70	Eternal	0.80
Powerful*	2.62	Christ divine	0.80
Empowers*	1.37	Good/ Pure	0.80
total	3.99	Glorious	0.57
Commands*	1.25	Active/Works	0.56
Wills*	2.51	Covenants/Promises	0.46
total	3.76	Atones*	0.34
Gives*	1.59	Suffers for*	0.11
Grace*	1.94	total	0.45
total	3.53	Loving	0.34
Revealed thro': Gospel*	0.34	Accessible	0.34
Revealed thro' Life of Christ*	2.62	Living	0.34
total	2.96	Tests	0.11
Redeems*	0.57		
Saves*	2.28		
total	2.85	Total	61.05
Father*	1.03		
Has His own people*	1.14		
total	2.17		

A.4.1.4.2. Perceptions of Relationship with God.

Feature	%	Feature	%
Obedience*	4.10	Suffer for	1.14
Service*	0.80	Prayer	1.03
total	4.90	Truth	0.91
Sin*	1.93	Love/Unity	0.91
Separation from God*	1.82	Humility	0.80
total	3.75	Know God	0.68
Worship*	2.39	Conscious of / Conscience	0.68
Wait on*	1.25	Life	0.44
total	3.64	Experience	0.34
Righteousness	2.96	Belief	0.34
Self –denial/ Selflessness	2.96	Apocalyptic	0.23
Faith	2.39	Testimony	0.11
Joy/ Happiness	1.94	Seek God	0.11
Praise*	1.48	Discernment	0.11
Reverence*	0.46	Transformation	0.11
total	1.94	Perfection	0.11
Fear	1.93	Reason	0.11
Intimacy with God	1.82		
Repentance	1.37		
Eternal Life	1.25	Total	39.01

*Asterisks indicate grouped features

A.4.1.5. Analysis Data: Robert Barclay *Apology*..... 7311 refs. to features in total

A.4.1.5.1. Perceptions of Features of God.

Feature	%	Feature	%
Spirit	13.30	Meaning of 'God'/Divinity*	1.44
Reveals Inwardly*	4.16	Mysterious*	0.22
Inward as Christ*	2.16	total	1.66
Light*	3.15	Atones*	1.31
Seed/That of God*	1.15	Suffers for*	0.30
Soul *	1.71	total	1.61
total	12.33	Good/ Pure	1.48
Grace**	3.91	Commands*	0.78
Gives**	1.18	Wills*	0.60
total	5.09	total	1.38
Saves*	3.39	Revealed in Scripture	1.30
Redeems*	0.97	Father*	0.41
total	4.36	Has His own people*	0.86
Law*	1.94	total	1.27
Judges*	1.80	Universal	1.08
Punishes*	0.11	Calls	0.67
total	3.85	In Measure	0.67
Purifies/Sanctifies	3.54	Covenants/Promises	0.66
Revealed thro': Gospel**	2.19	Loving	0.55
Revealed thro' Life of Christ**	0.88	Christ divine*	0.41
total	3.07	Trinity*	0.01
Leads/Teaches	3.00	total	0.42
Ruler*	2.49	Glorious	0.41
Kingdom*	0.49	Active/Works	0.38
total	2.98	Upholds	0.37
Powerful**	1.69	Accessible	0.30
Empowers**	0.57	Eternal	0.26
total	2.26	Blesses	0.19
Creator*	0.31	Elects	0.16
Word*	1.11	Convinces	0.15
Wisdom*	0.45	Living	0.05
Revealed in nature*	0.01	Heals	0.03
total	1.88	Tests	0.03
		Total	70.74

A.4.1.5.2. Perceptions of Relationship with God.

Feature	%	Feature	%
Righteousness	3.08	Outward/Formal	0.27
Truth	3.00	Sacred/ Sacrament	0.12
Sin*	2.72	total	0.39
Separation from God*	0.11	Praise*	0.29
total	2.83	Reverence*	0.08
Worship*	1.53	total	0.37
Silence*	0.42	Intimate with God	0.37
Wait on*	0.55	Suffer for*	0.33
total	2.50	Courage*	0.03
Faith/ Faithful	2.49	total	0.36
Testimony/ Witness	1.94	Experience	0.31
Prayer	1.61	Eternal Life	0.30
Obedience*	0.66	Freedom	0.23
Service*	0.72	Love/ Unity	0.21
total	1.38	Humility	0.21
Life	1.23	Self- denial/ Selflessness	0.14
Holiness	1.18	Joy/ Happiness	0.13
Perfection*	0.82	Discernment	0.12
Union with God*	0.10	Seek	0.10
total	0.92	Apocalyptic	0.07
Know	0.85	Hope	0.05
Conscious of.../ Conscience	0.81	Image of God	0.04
Belief	0.68	Seek Social change	0.03
Fear	0.57	Absence of God	0.03
Reason about God	0.47	Commitment	0.01
Repentance	0.45		
		Total	29.46

*Asterisks indicate grouped features

A.4.1.6. Analysis Data: Elizabeth Bathurst *Truth Vindicated* 3008 refs. to features in total

A.4.1.6.1 Perceptions of Features of God.

Feature	%	Feature	%
Light**	4.36	Meaning of God/Divinity*	1.56
Reveals Inwardly**	2.53	Mysterious*	0.23
Inward as Christ**	2.16	total	1.79
Seed/That of God**	0.93	Revealed thro' Scripture	1.70
Soul**	2.13	Purifies/ Sanctifies	1.43
total	12.11	Christ divine	1.30
Ruler*	6.02	Loving	1.23
Kingdom*	0.76	Atones*	0.96
total	6.78	Suffers for*	0.17
Spirit	6.18	total	1.13
Gives*	1.16	Revealed thro': Gospel*	0.40
Grace*	3.16	Revealed thro' Life of Christ*	0.66
total	4.32	total	1.06
Redeems*	1.23	Commands*	0.63
Saves*	2.89	Wills*	0.43
total	4.12	total	1.06
Judges/ Just*	1.87	Upholds	1.04
Punishes*	0.70	Universal	1.03
Law*	0.50	In Measure	0.96
total	3.07	Eternal	0.86
Creator*	0.66	Covenants/Promises	0.77
Word*	1.56	Glorious	0.73
Wisdom*	0.50	Good/ Pure	0.67
Revealed in Nature*	0.20	Calls	0.63
total	2.92	Convinces	0.50
Leads/Teaches	2.89	Living	0.40
Father*	1.50	Accessible	0.40
Has His own people*	1.33	Blesses	0.30
total	2.83	Elects	0.27
Powerful**	1.76	Active/Works	0.23
Empowers**	1.06	Heals	0.10
total	2.82	Tests	0.03
		Total	67.66

A. 4.1.6.2. Perceptions of Relationship with God.

Feature	%	Feature	%
Sin*	3.63	Praise*	0.63
Separation from God*	0.13	Reverence*	0.03
total	3.76	total	0.66
Righteousness	3.19	Suffer for*	0.37
Faith/ Faithful	2.83	Courage*	0.17
Truth	2.43	total	0.54
Obedience*	1.20	Outward/Formal*	0.37
Service*	0.83	Sacraments*	0.17
total	2.03	total	0.54
Conscious of / Conscience	1.90	Repentance	0.50
Belief	1.73	Hope	0.47
Testimony/ Witness	1.62	Seek	0.47
Perfection*	1.23	Love/ Unity	0.43
Union with God*	0.20	Experience	0.43
total	1.43	Prayer	0.40
Life	1.30	Intimacy with God	0.39
Eternal Life	0.93	Humility	0.37
Holiness	0.83	Joy	0.33
Freedom	0.70	Image of God	0.27
Know	0.70	Apocalyptic	0.17
Silence*	0.03	Reason about God	0.17
Wait on*	0.37	Self -sacrifice/ Selflessness	0.13
Worship*	0.30		
total	0.70	Total	33.04

*Asterisks indicate linked features

A.4.1.7 Analysis Data: Margaret Fell Letters 1653 – 1658 5531 refs. to features in total

A.4.1.7.1 Perceptions of Features of God.

Feature	%	Feature	%
Light*	9.20	Redeems*	0.29
Reveals Inwardly*	0.66	Saves*	0.77
Inward as Christ*	3.17	total	1.06
Seed/That of God*	2.93	Creator*	0.11
Soul*	2.47	Word*	0.54
total	18.43	Wisdom*	0.36
Ruler*	7.44	Revealed in Nature*	0.02
Kingdom*	0.40	total	1.03
total	7.84	Revealed thro': Gospel*	0.38
Law*	0.71	Revealed thro' Life of Christ*	0.55
Judges*	3.77	total	0.93
Punishes*	1.98	Tests	0.82
total	6.46	Purifies/Sanctifies	0.73
Eternal	4.94	Loving	0.71
Leads/Teaches	3.74	Commands*	0.31
Powerful*	3.25	Wills*	0.27
Empowers*	0.43	total	0.58
total	3.68	Covenants/Promises	0.45
Spirit	2.67	Glorious	0.45
Living	2.23	Atones for*	0.38
Father*	1.12	Suffers for*	0.07
Has His own people*	0.80	total	0.45
total	1.92	Active/Works	0.44
Gives*	1.17	Calls	0.31
Grace*	0.64	Elects	0.24
total	1.81	Accessible	0.24
Good/ Pure	1.47	Christ divine*	0.20
Upholds	1.45	Trinity*	0.02
In Measure	1.23	total	0.22
Meaning of 'God'/Divinity*	0.68	Blesses	0.14
Mysterious*	0.45	Universal	0.02
total	1.13		
Revealed thro' Scripture	1.07	Total	68.89

A.4.1.7.2. Perceptions of Relationships with God.

Feature	%	Feature	%
Obedience*	3.24	Humility	0.82
Service*	1.37	Apocalyptic	0.73
total	4.61	Prayer	0.73
Truth	3.06	Eternal Life	0.60
Faith	2.28	Worship*	0.13
Testimony	2.19	Silence*	0.07
Sin*	1.73	Wait on*	0.43
Separation from God*	0.36	total	0.63
total	2.09	Belief	0.53
Life	2.07	Freedom	0.45
Love/Unity	1.65	Repentance	0.33
Praise*	1.12	Joy/ Happiness	0.25
Reverence*	0.02	Self- examination	0.24
total	1.14	Self- denial/ Selflessness	0.22
Righteousness	1.10	Holiness	0.16
Perfection*	0.90	Intimacy with God	0.09
Union with God*	0.16	Hope	0.07
total	1.06	Discernment	0.07
Suffer for*	0.83	Seek God	0.05
Courage*	0.13	Reason about God	0.05
total	0.96	Outward/Formal	0.04
Fear	0.95	Experience	0.04
Know God	0.95	Transformation	0.02
Conscious of God	0.92		
		Total	31.15

*Asterisks indicate grouped features

A.4.1.8. Analysis data: Henry Clark *A description.....* 1655 410 refs. to features in total

A.4.1.8.1. *Perceptions of Features of God.* *Asterisks indicate grouped features

Feature	%	Feature	%
Light*	6.76	Saves	1.69
Reveals Inwardly*	1.45	Good/ Pure	1.46
Inward as Christ*	4.11	Powerful*	0.48
Seed/That of God*	0.24	Empowers*	0.96
Soul*	2.42	total	1.44
total	14.98	Christ divine	1.21
Ruler*	8.18	Universal	0.97
Kingdom*	0.24	Word*	0.48
total	8.42	Wisdom*	0.48
Law*	0.72	total	0.96
Judges*	3.38	Accessible	0.96
Punishes*	2.90	Commands	0.72
total	7.00	Loving	0.72
Leads/Teaches	4.83	Meaning of 'God'/Divinity	0.72
Spirit	4.35	Revealed thro' Scripture	0.48
Father*	1.45	Eternal	0.48
Has His own people*	2.17	Atones	0.48
total	3.62	Purifies/Sanctifies	0.48
Revealed thro': Gospel*	1.93	Upholds	0.48
Revealed thro' Life of Christ*	1.21	Glorious	0.24
total	3.14	Covenants/Promises	0.24
Gives*	0.96	In Measure	0.24
Grace*	1.21		
total	2.17	Total	62.48

A.4.1.8.2. *Perceptions of Relationship with God.*

Feature	%	Feature	%
Sin*	8.46	Repentance	0.97
Separation from God*	0.72	Holiness	0.97
total	9.18	Know God	0.97
Life	3.38	Perfection	0.97
Truth	3.14	Apocalyptic	0.72
Obedience*	0.48	Suffer for	0.48
Service*	1.93	Belief	0.48
total	2.41	Prayer	0.48
Fear	2.17	Praise	0.48
Righteousness	1.93	Conscious of.../ Conscience	0.48
Self –denial/ Selflessness	1.45	Sacraments	0.24
Love/Unity	1.45	Testimony/ Witness	0.24
Humility	1.21	Experience	0.24
Faith	1.21	Intimacy with God	0.24
Worship*	0.72		
Wait on*	0.48		
total	1.20	Total	36.69

A.4.1.9 Analysis Data: Richard Hubberthorn *The Innocency...* 1655 386 refs. to features in total

A.4.1.9.1. *Perceptions of Features of God.* *Asterisks indicate grouped features

Feature	%	Feature	%
Light*	10.62	Christ divine	1.30
Reveals Inwardly*	2.07	Law*	0.52
Inward as Christ*	8.81	Judges*	0.78
Seed/That of God*	1.81	total	1.30
Soul *	0.52	Redeems*	0.52
total	24.03	Saves*	0.78
Revealed thro': Gospel*	2.33	total	1.30
Revealed thro' Life of Christ*	4.40	Eternal	1.04
total	6.73	Universal	1.04
Revealed thro' Scripture	4.15	Meaning of 'God'/Divinity	1.04
Father*	1.04	Powerful*	0.52
Has His own people*	2.34	Empowers*	0.26
total	3.38	total	0.78
Commands*	2.59	Grace	0.78
Wills*	0.52	Glorious	0.52
total	3.11	Living	0.52
Spirit	2.85	Atones	0.26
Creator*	0.78	Blesses	0.26
Word*	1.04	Accessible	0.26
Wisdom*	0.52	Covenants/Promises	0.26
total	2.34	Calls	0.26
Leads/Teaches	2.33		
Ruler	1.81		
Good/ Pure	1.81	Total	63.46

A.4.1.9.2. *Perceptions of Relationship with God.*

Feature	%	Feature	%
Testimony	9.33	Love/Unity	1.04
Sin	4.66	Belief	0.78
Truth	4.40	Prayer	0.52
Worship	3.11	Life	0.52
Obedience	2.07	Faith	0.52
Righteousness	1.55	Discernment	0.52
Image of God	1.55	Freedom	0.52
Apocalyptic	1.55	Eternal Life	0.26
Conscious of..../ Conscience	1.30	Suffer for	0.26
Holiness	1.04	Praise	0.26
Know God	1.04		
		Total	36.80

**A.4.1.10 Analysis Data: Alexander Parker *A Testimony of the Appearance of God*
1658 307 refs. to features in total**

A.4.1.10.1. *Perceptions of Features of God.*

Feature	%	Feature	%
Scripture	28.34	Active/Works	1.30
Ruler*	4.89	Living	0.98
Kingdom*	0.65	Good/ Pure	0.98
total	5.54	Accessible	0.98
Light*	1.95	Creator*	0.33
Inward as Christ*	1.95	Word*	0.33
Seed/That of God*	0.33	total	0.66
Soul*	0.98	Eternal	0.65
total	5.21	Redeems	0.65
Revealed thro' Life of Christ*	4.56	Meaning of 'God'/Divinity	0.65
Revealed thro': Gospel*	0.33	Glorious	0.33
total	4.89	Loving	0.33
Leads/Teaches	4.24	Purifies/Sanctifies	0.33
Powerful*	1.96	Calls	0.33
Empowers*	1.63	Upholds	0.33
total	3.59	Covenants/Promises	0.33
Spirit	3.58		
Has His own people	1.95		
Judges/ Just*	0.98		
Law*	0.33		
Punishes*	0.33		
total	1.64	Total	66.81

A.4.1.10.2. *Perceptions of relationships with God.*

Feature	%	Feature	%
Sin	10.10	Worship	0.98
Truth	4.23	Freedom	0.98
Service*	3.26	Faith	0.98
Obedience*	0.33	Know God	0.65
total	3.59	Eternal Life	0.33
Holiness	2.28	Prayer	0.33
Suffer for	1.95	Praise	0.33
Righteousness	1.63	Humility	0.33
Testimony/ Witness	1.63		
Life	1.63	Conscious of.../ Conscience	0.33
		Total	32.28

*Asterisks indicate grouped features

A.4.1.11. Analysis Data: Edward Burrough *A Testimony Against.....*1658 105 refs.to features in total

A.4.1.11.1. Perceptions of Features of God.

Feature	%	Feature	%
Ruler	15.24	Active/Works	1.90
Spirit	14.29	Gives	0.95
Judges*	7.62	Leads/Teaches	0.95
Punishes*	4.76	Empowers	0.95
total	12.38		
Light*	0.95		
Seed/That of God*	1.90	Total	55.22
Soul*	5.71		
total	8.56		

*Asterisks indicate grouped features

A.4.1.11.2. Perceptions of Relationship with God.

Feature	%	Feature	%
Sin	24.76	Suffer for	0.95
Service	3.81	Truth	0.95
Conscious of.../ Conscience	3.81	Faith/ Faithful	0.95
Fear	2.85	Intimacy with God	0.95
Testimony/ Witness	2.85		
Righteousness	1.90	Total	43.78

A.4.1.12. Analysis Data: Margaret Fell *Letters* 1659 – 1668 2691 refs. to features in total

A.4.1.12.1. Perceptions of Features of God.

Feature	%	Feature	%
Light*	3.48	Loving	2.08
Reveals Inwardly*	1.28	Active/Works	2.08
Inward as Christ*	3.19	Leads/Teaches	1.87
Seed/That of God*	1.58	Good/ Pure	1.22
Soul**	1.72	Revealed thro': Gospel*	0.29
total	11.25	Revealed thro' Life of Christ*	0.86
Ruler*	9.46	total	1.15
Kingdom*	0.29	Redeems*	0.36
total	9.75	Saves*	0.75
Powerful*	4.48	total	1.11
Empowers*	0.79	Living	1.04
total	5.27	Atones*	0.82
Law*	1.22	Suffers for*	0.19
Judges*	2.62	total	1.01
Punishes*	1.29	Meaning of 'God'/Divinity*	0.65
total	5.13	Mysterious*	0.29
Upholds	3.59	total	0.94
Spirit	2.76	Covenants/Promises	0.75
Eternal	2.69	In Measure	0.68
Father*	0.79	Accessible	0.67
Has His own people*	1.82	Purifies/Sanctifies	0.65
total	2.61	Tests	0.61
Gives*	1.21	Revealed thro' Scripture	0.54
Grace*	1.36	Blesses	0.54
total	2.57	Glorious	0.25
Commands*	0.61	Calls	0.22
Wills*	1.86	Elects	0.19
total	2.47	Christ divine	0.11
Creator*	0.47	Convinces	0.08
Word*	1.61		
Wisdom*	0.39		
total	2.47	Total	68.38

A.4.1.12.2. Perceptions of Relationship with God. *Asterisks indicate grouped features.

Feature	%	Feature	%
Suffer for*	2.79	Know God	0.68
Courage*	1.47	Sin*	0.51
total	4.26	Separation from God*	0.11
Obedience**	2.29	total	0.62
Service**	1.00	Humility	0.57
total	3.29	Perfection*	0.29
Righteousness	2.91	Union with God*	0.15
Love/Unity	2.74	total	0.44
Faith/ Faithful	2.51	Holiness	0.39
Truth	2.33	Belief	0.29
Life	1.62	Joy/ Happiness	0.25
Worship*	0.86	Conscious of ..	0.19
Wait on*	0.47	Self- examination	0.15
total	1.33	Intimate with God	0.15
Eternal Life	1.29	Image of God	0.12
Freedom	1.22	Hope	0.12
Fear	1.22	Apocalyptic	0.11
Testimony/ Witness	1.14	Self- denial/Selflessness	0.08
Praise*	0.97	Repentance	0.04
Reverence*	0.04	Commitment	0.04
total	1.01		
Prayer	0.93	Total	32.04

A. 4.1.13 Analysis data: George Fox the younger *A True Relation of.....* 1660 89 refs. to features in total

A.4.1.13.1. Perceptions of Features of God.

Feature	%	Feature	%
Ruler	14.77	Revealed thro': Gospel**	2.28
Law*	1.13	Revealed thro' Life of Christ**	1.13
Judges*	3.41	total	3.41
Punishes*	1.13	Spirit	3.41
total	5.67	Active/Works	2.28
Light*	1.15	Convinces	2.28
Seed/That of God*	1.15	Leads/Teaches	2.28
Soul*	2.28	Accessible	2.28
total	4.58	Eternal	1.13
Powerful*	2.28	Has His own people	1.13
Empowers*	2.28	Calls	1.13
total	4.56	Living	1.13
Commands**	2.28	Upholds	1.13
Wills**	2.28		
total	4.56	Total	55.73

A. 4.1.13.2. Perceptions of Relationship with God.

Feature	%	Feature	%
Truth	15.91	Service	2.28
Righteousness	5.68	Repentance	1.13
Suffer for	4.56	Fear	1.13
Worship*	2.28	Humility	1.13
Wait on*	2.28	Love/Unity	1.13
total	4.56	Freedom	1.13
Sin	3.41		
Conscious of.../Conscience	3.41	Total	45.46

*Asterisks indicate grouped features

A. 4.1.14. Analysis Data: Josiah Coale *An Invitation of Love to....* 1660 223 refs. to features in total

A.4.1.14.1. *Perceptions of Features of God.* *Asterisks indicate grouped features

Feature	%	Feature	%
Light*	6.19	Universal	2.21
Reveals Inwardly*	2.21	Upholds	1.77
Inward as Christ*	3.98	Powerful*	0.88
Seed/That of God*	2.21	Empowers*	0.44
Soul*	1.76	total	1.32
total	16.35	Purifies/Sanctifies	1.32
Leads/Teaches	6.63	Good/ Pure	1.32
Ruler*	2.65	Spirit	1.32
Kingdom*	1.76	Meaning of 'God'/Divinity	1.32
total	4.41	Creator*	0.44
Father	3.98	Word*	0.44
Accessible	3.98	Wisdom*	0.44
Law*	0.44	total	1.32
Judges*	2.20	Revealed thro': Gospel*	0.44
Punishes*	0.88	Revealed thro' Life of Christ*	0.88
total	3.52	total	1.32
Eternal	3.10	Christ divine	0.88
Redeems*	0.44	Glorious	0.88
Saves*	2.65	In Measure	0.88
total	3.09	Covenants/Promises	0.44
Gives*	1.33	Revealed thro' Scripture	0.44
Grace*	1.33	Elects	0.44
total	2.66		
Calls	2.65		
Commands*	0.88		
Wills*	1.77		
total	2.65	Total	70.20

A.4.1.14.2. *Perceptions of Relationship with God.*

Feature	%	Feature	%
Obedience*	5.75	Know God	0.88
Service*	0.88	Belief	0.88
total	6.63	Self –denial/ Selflessness	0.44
Life	4.87	Testimony/ Witness	0.44
Sin*	3.10	Truth	0.44
Separation from God*	0.44	Wait on	0.44
total	3.54	Transformation	0.44
Righteousness	2.65	Union with God	0.44
Eternal Life	2.21	Conscious of.../ Conscience	0.44
Holiness	1.77	Faith/ Faithful	0.44
Love/Unity	1.33		
Freedom	1.33	Total	29.61

A.4.1.15 Analysis Data: John Audland *The Suffering Condition....* 1662 1104 refs. to features in total

A.4.1.15.1. Perceptions of Features of God. *Asterisks indicate grouped features

Feature	%	Feature	%
Ruler*	12.23	Revealed thro': Gospel*	0.45
Kingdom*	0.18	Revealed thro' Life of Christ*	1.27
total	12.41	total	1.72
Light*	0.45	Has His own people	1.45
Reveals Inwardly*	3.17	Gives*	0.72
Inward as Christ*	2.26	Grace*	0.45
Soul *	1.45	total	1.17
total	7.33	Good/ Pure	0.91
Powerful*	2.89	Blesses	0.82
Empowers*	2.17	Revealed thro' Scripture	0.63
total	5.06	Glorious	0.54
Leads/Teaches	4.26	Eternal	0.54
Law*	1.27	Accessible	0.54
Judges*	1.54	Calls	0.54
Punishes*	1.90	Creator*	0.09
total	4.71	Word*	0.36
Spirit	3.44	total	0.45
Commands*	1.63	Redeems*	0.27
Wills*	1.45	Saves*	0.18
total	3.08	total	0.45
Loving	2.26	Christ divine	0.27
Meaning of God	2.26	Active/Works	0.18
Upholds	1.90	Living	0.18
		Elects	0.09
		Convinces	0.09
		Total	56.78

A.4.1.15.2. Perceptions of Relationship with God.

Feature	%	Feature	%
Obedience*	4.26	Prayer	0.91
Service*	2.45	Belief	0.82
total	6.71	Joy/ Happiness	0.72
Worship*	2.81	Apocalyptic	0.63
Wait on*	1.81	Praise*	0.54
total	4.62	Reverence*	0.09
Truth	4.35	total	0.63
Conscious of/ Conscience	2.90	Transformation	0.54
Love/Unity	2.72	Eternal Life	0.36
Sin*	1.81	Humility	0.27
Separation from God*	0.82	Know God	0.18
total	2.63	Freedom	0.18
Fear	2.54	Repentance	0.09
Suffer for	2.45	Image of God	0.09
Testimony/ Witness	2.36	Holiness	0.09
Life	1.72	Doubts	0.09
Faith	1.54		
Righteousness	1.36	Total	42.59
Self –denial/ Selflessness	1.09		

A.4.1.16 Analysis Data: Richard Crane *Lamentation over thee o London* 1665 101 refs. to features in total

A.4.1.16.1. Perceptions of Features of God.

Feature	%	Feature	%
Judges*	16.00	Grace	2.00
Punishes*	9.00	Spirit	2.00
total	25.00	Leads/Teaches	2.00
Ruler	18.00	Meaning of 'God'/Divinity	2.00
Powerful	8.00	Wills	2.00
Loving	3.00	Blesses	1.00
Upholds	3.00		
Has His own people	3.00	Total	71.00

A.4.1.16.2. Perceptions of Relationship with God. *Asterisks indicate linked features

Feature	%	Feature	%
Suffer for	15.00	Righteousness	1.00
Obedience*	2.00	Apocalyptic	1.00
Service*	4.00	Testimony/ Witness	1.00
total	6.00	Truth	1.00
Sin	2.00	Freedom	1.00
Faith/ Faithful	2.00		
		Total	30.00

A.4.1.17 Analysis Data: Margaret Fell Letters 1669- 1702 1072 refs. to features in total

A.4.1.17.1. Perceptions of Features of God. *Asterisks indicate grouped features

Feature	%	Feature	%
Ruler*	10.01	Law*	0.19
Kingdom*	0.28	Judges*	0.74
total	10.29	Punishes*	0.56
Light*	1.68	total	1.49
Reveals Inwardly*	1.40	Father*	0.28
Inward as Christ*	2.24	Has His own people*	1.12
Seed/That of God*	1.59	total	1.40
Soul*	1.31	Loving	1.03
total	8.22	Accessible	1.02
Eternal	4.57	Good/ Pure	0.93
Upholds	4.38	Redeems*	0.09
Leads/Teaches	4.38	Saves*	0.84
Powerful*	3.18	total	0.93
Empowers*	1.12	Creator*	0.28
total	4.30	Word*	0.09
Gives*	1.77	Wisdom*	0.37
Grace*	1.12	total	0.74
total	2.89	Covenants/Promises	0.56
Commands*	0.19	Revealed thro' Scripture	0.37
Wills*	2.24	Glorious	0.37
total	2.43	Living	0.37
Spirit	2.33	Elects	0.28
Revealed thro': Gospel*	0.93	Purifies/Sanctifies	0.28
Revealed thro' Life of Christ*	1.40	In Measure	0.28
total	2.24	Atones	0.19
Blesses	2.24	Convinces	0.19
Meaning of 'God'/Divinity*	1.95	Calls	0.19
Mysterious*	0.09	Universal	0.09
total	2.04	Christ divine	0.09
Active/Works	1.87		
		Total	62.98

A.4.1.17.2. Perceptions of Relationship with God .

Feature	%	Feature	%
Truth	7.14	Joy/ Happiness	0.56
Love/Unity	4.38	Humility	0.56
Obedience*	1.68	Know God	0.47
Service*	1.87	Freedom	0.47
total	3.55	Worship*	0.28
Praise	2.89	Wait on*	0.19
Faith	2.52	total	0.47
Testimony	1.96	Fear	0.39
Suffer for*	1.40	Outward/Formal	0.37
Courage*	0.37	Conscious of/ Conscience	0.37
total	1.77	Belief	0.28
Holiness	1.68	Apocalyptic	0.19
Prayer	1.68	Intimacy with God	0.19
Righteousness	1.59	Image of God	0.09
Sin*	0.75	Self- denial/ Selflessness	0.09
Separation from God*	0.47	Seek God	0.09
total	1.22	Perfection	0.09
Life	1.21		
Eternal Life	0.93	Total	37.20

A. 4.1.18. Analysis data: George Keith *The Light of Truth* 1670 330 refs. to features in total.

A.4.1.18.1. Perceptions of Features of God.

Feature	%	Feature	%
Light*	5.76	Meaning of God*	0.90
Reveals Inwardly*	1.82	Mysterious*	1.52
Inward as Christ*	8.79	total	2.42
Seed*	6.67	Christ divine	2.12
Soul*	3.33	Empowers	1.52
total	26.37	Revealed thro' Scripture	1.52
Redeems**	1.82	Word	1.21
Saves**	7.58	Elects	0.91
total	9.40	Has His own People	0.91
Revealed thro' the life of Jesus*	4.24	Universal	0.60
Revealed thro' the Gospel*	0.60	Ruler	0.60
total	4.84	Good/ Pure	0.60
Spirit	4.55	Commands*	0.30
Law**	3.64	Wills*	0.30
Judges**	0.60	total	0.60
total	4.24	Leads/ Teaches	0.30
Covenants/ promises	3.63	Glorious	0.30
Gives*	0.91	Convinces	0.30
Grace*	1.82	In measure	0.30
total	2.73	Loving	0.30
		Total	70.27

A.4.1.18.2. Perceptions of Relationship with God.

Feature	%	Feature	%
Truth	4.85	Righteousness	1.82
Obedience*	4.55	Repentance	1.21
Service*	0.30	Testimony/ Witness	0.90
total	4.85	Freedom	0.60
Faith/ Faithful	3.63	Eternal Life	0.60
Sin	3.33	Conscious of.../ Conscience	0.30
Belief	2.73		
Life	2.73		
Perfection	2.42	Total	29.97

*Asterisks indicate linked features

A.4.1.19. Analysis data: Rebecca Travers *The Work of God in a Dying Maid* 1677 60 refs. to features in total

A.4.1.19.1. Perceptions of Features of God.

Feature	%	Feature	%
Ruler	11.48	Accessible	3.28
Judges	9.84	Creator	1.64
Grace	9.04	Eternal	1.64
Powerful*	6.56	Blesses	1.64
Empowers*	1.64	Good/ Pure	1.64
total	8.20	Spirit	1.64
Inward as Christ*	1.64	Living	1.64
Soul *	4.92	Leads/Teaches	1.64
total	6.56		
Active/Works	3.28		
Loving	3.28	Total	66.44

A.4.1.19.2. Perceptions of Relationship with God.

Feature	%	Feature	%
Praise	4.92	Obedience	1.64
Sin	3.28	Self- denial/ Selflessness	1.64
Righteousness	3.28	Truth	1.64
Eternal Life	3.28	Life	1.64
Joy/ Happiness	3.28	Experience	1.64
Fear	1.64	Intimacy with God	1.64
Belief	1.64		
Prayer	1.64	Total	32.80

*Asterisks indicate linked features

A.4.1.20 Analysis data: George Keith *The Christianity of the People Called Quakers Alerted* 1700 145 refs. to features in total

A.4.1. 20.1. Perceptions of Features of God.

Feature	%	Feature	%
Light*	2.58	Redeems*	0.65
Revealed Inwardly*	5.81	Saves*	1.94
Inward thro' Christ*	3.87	total	2.59
Soul*	0.65	Meaning of God	1.94
total	12.91	Father*	1.29
Spirit	12.25	Has His own People*	0.65
Commands*	3.87	total	1.94
Wills*	1.94	Christ divine*	1.29
total	5.81	Trinity*	0.65
Leads	5.16	total	1.94
Creator*	0.65	Atones	1.93
Word*	1.94	Revealed thro' the Gospel	1.29
Wisdom*	1.29	Revealed thro' Scripture	1.29
total	3.88	Calls	0.65
Ruler	3.23	Glorious	0.65
Powerful	3.23	Living	0.65
Judges*	0.65	Pure/ Good	0.65
Law*	1.94	Upholds	0.65
total	2.59		
		Total	65.23

A.4.1. 20.2. Perceptions of Relationship with God.

Feature	%	Feature	%
Faith/ Faithful	7.74	Freedom	1.29
Perfection	7.74	Life	1.29
Truth	5.16	Testimony/ Witness	0.65
Belief	3.23	Humility	0.65
Obedience*	1.94	Love/ Unity	0.65
Service*	0.65	Eternal Life	0.65
total	2.59	Apocalyptic	0.65
Sin	1.94		
		Total	34.23

*Asterisks indicate grouped features

A.4.2. Modern Liberal Friends. SL indicates Swarthmore Lecture text

A.4.2.1. Analysis Data: *Quaker Faith and Practice* 2266 refs. to features in total

A.4.2.1.1. Perceptions of Features of God.

Feature	%	Feature	%
Light*	2.91	Father*	0.53
Reveals Inwardly*	3.00	Has His own people*	1.19
Inward as Christ*	2.60	total	1.72
Seed/That of God*	2.07	Upholds	1.50
total	10.58	Universal	0.93
Spirit	6.53	Living	0.84
Leads/Teaches	4.77	Law*	0.22
Powerful*	2.69	Judges*	0.53
Empowers*	1.72	Punishes*	0.04
total	4.41	total	0.79
Meaning of 'God'/Divinity*	3.26	Christ divine*	0.71
Mysterious*	0.53	Trinity*	0.04
total	3.79	total	0.75
Creator*	1.10	Redeems*	0.35
Word*	1.68	Saves*	0.40
Wisdom*	0.75	total	0.75
Revealed in Nature*	0.13	Eternal	0.66
total	3.66	Glorious	0.62
Gives*	1.10	Revealed thro' Scripture	0.62
Grace*	1.85	Active/Works	0.40
total	2.95	Personal	0.35
Loving	2.69	Heals	0.35
Revealed thro': Gospel*	0.13	Blesses	0.31
Revealed thro' Life of Christ*	2.03	Atones*	0.18
total	2.16	Suffers for*	0.13
Commands*	0.62	total	0.31
Wills*	1.50	Accessible	0.26
total	2.12	In Measure	0.22
Ruler*	0.75	Tests	0.18
Kingdom*	0.97	Covenants/Promises	0.18
total	1.72	Convinces	0.04
		Total	55.43

A.4.2.1.2. Perceptions of Relationship with God.

Feature	%	Feature	%
Seek social change	6.18	Experience	1.06
Love/Unity	4.28	Joy/ Happiness	0.84
Worship*	1.59	Environmental concerns	0.75
Silence*	0.97	Reason	0.71
Wait on*	1.46	Conscious of/ Conscience	0.49
total	4.02	Eternal Life	0.44
Obedience*	0.93	Belief	0.40
Service*	2.78	Fear	0.35
total	3.71	Discernment	0.35
Truth	3.27	Transformation	0.35
Righteousness	2.47	Suffer for	0.31
Prayer	2.47	Know God	0.31
Faith/ Faithful	1.81	Image of God	0.26
Life	1.68	Seek God	0.26
Testimony/ Witness	1.37	Union with God	0.22
Intimacy with God	1.28	Imagination/Creative	0.13
Sin*	1.01	Freedom	0.13
Separation from God*	0.26	Absent/ Doubts	0.09
total	1.27	Commitment	0.04
Praise	1.14	Outward/Formal	0.04
Humility	1.06	Apocalyptic	0.04
		Overall Total	43.58

*Asterisks indicate liked features

A.4.2.2. Analysis Data: Janet Scott *What Can'st Thou Say?....* SL 1980 888 refs. to features in total

A.4.2.2.1. Perceptions of Features of God.

Feature	%	Feature	%
Meaning of 'God'/Divinity*	9.12	Powerful*	1.91
Real or not?*	0.11	Empowers*	0.45
Reveals continuously*	0.56	total	2.36
Mysterious*	0.90	Universal	2.36
total	10.69	Leads/Teaches	2.36
Spirit	5.29	Father*	0.34
Light*	3.04	Has His own people*	1.80
Reveals Inwardly*	1.24	total	2.14
Inward as Christ*	0.45	Christ divine*	1.46
Seed/That of God*	0.23	Trinity*	0.56
Soul *	0.23	total	2.02
total	5.19	Atones*	1.35
Creator*	1.80	Suffers for*	0.45
Word*	0.45	total	1.80
Wisdom*	0.23	Law*	0.34
Revealed in Nature*	0.90	Judges*	1.02
total	3.38	Punishes*	0.34
Loving	3.27	total	1.70
Active/Works	3.15	Eternal	1.01
Redeems*	0.56	Revealed thro' Scripture	0.79
Saves*	2.36	Upholds	0.79
total	2.92	Wills	0.56
Revealed thro': Gospel*	0.11	Living	0.56
Revealed thro' Life of Christ*	2.70	Accessible	0.45
total	2.81	Calls	0.34
Gives*	0.45	In Measure	0.34
Grace*	2.36	Glorious	0.23
total	2.81	Personal	0.23
Ruler*	1.13	Blesses	0.11
Kingdom*	1.35	Covenants/Promises	0.11
total	2.48		
		Overall Total	62.25

A.4.2.2.2. Perceptions of Relationship with God.

Feature	%	Feature	%
Truth	3.94	Know God	0.79
Love/Unity	3.60	Apocalyptic	0.68
Experience*	3.04	Self –denial/Selflessness	0.68
Mysticism*	0.11	Hope	0.68
total	3.15	Gain meaning to life	0.68
Sin	2.14	Joy/ Happiness	0.56
Righteousness	2.03	Life	0.56
Belief	2.03	Reason	0.56
Obedience*	1.24	Sacraments	0.45
Service*	0.79	Holiness	0.45
total	2.03	Image of God	0.34
Suffer for*	1.69	Seek God	0.34
Courage*	0.34	Transformation	0.34
total	2.03	Repentance	0.23
Faith/ Faithful	1.69	Humility	0.23
Freedom	1.58	Testimony/ Witness	0.23
Worship*	0.79	Thro' Myth	0.23
Silence*	0.34	Praise*	0.11
Wait on*	0.23	Reverence*	0.11
total	1.36	total	0.22
Perfection*	0.45	Conscious of/ Conscience	0.11
Union with God*	0.79	Absence of God	0.11
total	1.24	Imagination/ Creative	0.11
Fear	1.35		
Intimate with...	1.13		
		Total	37.88

*Asterisks indicate grouped features

A. 4.2.3. Analysis Data: Gerald Priestland *Reasonable Uncertainty* 1982 SL 412 refs. to features in total

A.4.2.3.1. *Perceptions of Features of God.* * Asterisks indicate grouped features

Feature	%	Feature	%
Spirit	4.37	Active/Works	2.18
Light*	0.97	Law*	0.24
Reveals Inwardly*	0.73	Judges*	0.73
Inward as Christ*	0.49	Punishes*	0.73
Seed/That of God*	0.98	total	1.70
Soul*	0.73	Father*	0.73
total	3.90	Has His own people*	0.97
Meaning of 'God'/Divinity*	1.94	total	1.70
Reveals continuously*	0.73	Commands*	0.24
Mysterious*	1.21	Wills*	1.21
total	3.88	total	1.45
Creator*	3.16	Powerful*	0.97
Word*	0.49	Empowers*	0.24
total	3.65	total	1.21
Gives*	0.73	Redeems*	0.24
Grace*	2.67	Saves*	0.97
total	3.40	total	1.21
Christ divine*	2.43	Universal	1.21
Trinity*	0.97	Revealed thro' Scripture	1.21
total	3.40	Calls	0.73
Loving	3.16	Tests	0.49
Revealed thro': Gospel*	0.73	Eternal	0.49
Revealed thro' Life of Christ*	2.18	Kingdom	0.24
total	2.91	Upholds	0.24
Leads/Teaches	2.42	Accessible	0.24
Atones*	0.73	Good/ Pure	0.24
Suffers for*	1.46		
total	2.19	Total	47.83

A.4.2.3.2. Perceptions of Relationship with God.

Feature	%	Feature	%
Belief	7.77	Intimacy with God	1.22
Faith	5.34	Righteousness	0.97
Experience*	4.85	Sacred/ Sacrament	0.97
Mysticism*	0.49	Know God	0.97
total	5.34	Imagination/Creative	0.97
Truth	4.13	Conscious of.../ Conscience	0.97
Sin*	2.91	Repentance	0.73
Separation from God*	0.73	Suffer for	0.73
total	3.64	Gain meaning to life	0.73
Freedom	3.16	Image of God	0.24
Worship*	0.97	Praise	0.24
Silence*	1.94	Humility	0.24
total	2.91	Obedience	0.24
Love/Unity	2.67	Transformation	0.24
Thro' Myth	2.43	Perfection	0.24
Prayer	1.46	Absence of God	0.24
Life	1.46	Fear	0.24
Reason about God	1.46		
		Total	51.95

A.4.2.4. Analysis Data: John Punshon *Testimony and Tradition* 1990 SL 1176 refs. to features in total

A.4.2.4.1. *Perceptions of Features of God.*

Feature	%	Feature	%
Spirit	7.81	Gives*	0.09
Light*	2.16	Grace*	0.91
Reveals Inwardly*	2.83	total	1.00
Inward as Christ*	0.66	Father*	0.17
Seed/That of God*	0.09	Has His own people*	0.75
Soul *	0.66	total	0.92
total	6.40	Atones*	0.25
Revealed thro': Gospel**	1.33	Suffers for*	0.66
Revealed thro' Life of Christ**	2.33	total	0.91
total	3.66	Loving	0.75
Meaning of 'God'/Divinity*	2.18	Accessible	0.67
Reveals continuously*	0.17	Good/ Pure	0.67
Mysterious*	0.26		
total	2.61	Christ divine	0.50
Ruler*	0.50	Upholds	0.50
Kingdom*	1.66	Convinces	0.50
total	2.16	Calls	0.42
Creator*	1.63	Active/Works	0.34
Word*	0.09	Wills	0.26
Wisdom*	0.26		
total	1.98	Universal	0.26
Revealed thro' Scripture	1.83	Covenants/Promises	0.26
Leads/Teaches	1.83	Glorious	0.17
Powerful*	0.66	Tests	0.17
Empowers*	1.19	Elects	0.09
total	1.85	Heals	0.09
Redeems*	0.50	In Measure	0.09
Saves*	1.09		
total	1.59	Total	41.30
Law*	0.26		
Judges*	0.66		
Punishes*	0.09		
total	1.01		

A.4.2.4.2. Perceptions of Relationship with God.

Feature	%	Feature	%
Testimony/ Witness	9.64	Reason	0.66
Faith/ Faithful	5.28	Gain meaning to life	0.66
Truth	4.71	Worship*	0.42
Self- denial/ Selflessness	3.58	Silence*	0.16
Love/Unity	3.49	Wait on*	0.09
Experience*	2.75	total	0.67
Mysticism*	0.59	Hope	0.58
total	3.34	Perfection*	0.26
Righteousness	2.33	Union with God*	0.26
Sin	2.26	total	0.52
Prayer	2.16	Life	0.50
Suffer for*	1.93	Image of God	0.42
Courage*	0.09	Intimacy with God	0.42
total	2.02	Conscious/ Conscience..	0.42
Discernment	1.66	Holiness	0.33
Seek social change	1.58	Self- examination	0.33
Obedience*	0.75	Praise*	0.16
Service*	0.50	Reverence*	0.16
total	1.25	total	0.32
Transformation	1.25	Repentance	0.25
Commitment	1.09	Environmental concerns	0.25
Know God	1.00	Joy/ Happiness	0.16
Thro' Myth	1.00	Outward/Formal	0.16
Freedom	0.92	Absence of God	0.09
Belief	0.92	Apocalyptic	0.09
Eternal Life	0.83		
Humility	0.83	Total	58.18

*Asterisks indicate grouped features

A.4.2.5. Analysis Data: Jonathan Dale *Beyond the Spirit of the Age* 1996 SL 662 refs. to features in total

A.4.2.5.1. *Perceptions of Features of God.* *Asterisks indicate grouped features

Feature	%	Feature	%
Spirit	17.22	Revealed thro': Gospel*	0.15
Light*	2.11	Revealed thro' Life of Christ*	0.60
Reveals Inwardly*	1.06	total	0.75
Seed/That of God*	2.11	Powerful*	0.15
Soul *	0.30	Empowers*	0.45
total	5.58	total	0.60
Meaning of 'God'/Divinity*	3.77	Personal	0.45
Real or not?*	0.15	Grace	0.45
Reveals continuously*	0.15	Eternal	0.30
total	4.07	Living	0.30
Has His own people	2.26	Active/Works	0.30
Leads/Teaches	1.66	Good/ Pure	0.30
Kingdom	1.36	Accessible	0.30
Loving	1.21	Tests us	0.15
Judges	0.91	Saves	0.15
Wills	0.91	Suffers for	0.15
Creator*	0.15	Covenants/Promises	0.15
Word*	0.15	Upholds	0.15
Revealed in Nature*	0.60	Convinces	0.15
total	0.90		
		Total	40.73

A.4.2.5.2. Perceptions of Relationship with God.

Feature	%	Feature	%
Faith	9.67	Transformation	1.21
Testimony	8.31	Belief	1.06
Seek social change	6.65	Environmental concerns	0.75
Truth	6.19	Intimacy with God	0.75
Righteousness	3.17	Absence of God	0.60
Love/Unity	3.02	Outward/Formal*	0.15
Obedience*	0.60	Sacraments*	0.45
Service*	2.27	total	0.60
total	2.87	Discernment	0.45
Self –denial/ Selflessness	2.27	Eternal Life	0.45
Sin*	2.11	Freedom	0.45
Separation from God*	0.15	Humility	0.30
total	2.26	Holiness	0.30
Experience	2.11	Reason	0.30
Self -examination	1.66	Gain meaning to life	0.30
Prayer	1.51	Seek God	0.15
Worship*	1.36	Know God	0.15
Silence*	0.15	Perfection	0.15
total	1.51		
		Total	59.17

A.4.2.6. Analysis Data: Christine Trevett *Previous Convictions* 1997 SL 333 refs. to features in total *Asterisks indicate grouped features

A.4.2.6.1. *Perceptions of Features of God.*

Feature	%	Feature	%
Spirit	14.11	Law*	0.30
Light*	1.80	Judges*	0.90
Reveals Inwardly*	0.60	total	1.20
Inward as Christ*	1.80	Meaning of 'God'/Divinity*	0.30
Seed/That of God*	1.20	Reveals continuously*	0.30
Soul *	0.30	Mysterious*	0.60
total	5.70	total	1.20
Has His own people	3.30	Revealed in Life of Christ	1.20
Revealed in Scripture	3.00	Loving	1.20
Convinces	2.70	Gives*	0.30
Leads/Teaches	2.40	Grace*	0.60
Ruler*	1.80	total	0.90
Kingdom*	0.30	Upholds	0.90
total	2.10	Personal	0.30
Empowers	1.80	Universal	0.30
Commands*	0.60	Blesses	0.30
Wills*	1.20	Calls	0.30
total	1.80	Living	0.30
Creator*	0.60		
Word*	0.90		
total	1.50	Total	46.51

A.4.2.6.2. *Perceptions of relationship with God.*

Feature	%	Feature	%
Faith	9.01	Intimacy with God	1.50
Truth	7.21	Freedom	1.20
Belief	6.61	Sin	1.20
Experience	4.20	Testimony	1.20
Worship*	2.70	Transformation	1.20
Silence*	0.90	Joy/ Happiness	0.90
Wait on*	0.60	Absence/ Doubts	0.90
total	4.20	Prayer	0.60
Righteousness	3.00	Praise	0.60
Discernment	3.00	Life	0.60
Love/ Unity	2.10	Repentance	0.30
Suffer for*	1.20	Apocalyptic	0.30
Courage*	0.30	Commitment	0.30
total	1.50	Reason about God	0.30
Obedience*	0.90		
Service*	0.60		
total	1.50	Total	53.43

A.4.2.7. Analysis Data: Young Friends' General Meeting *Who Do we Think We Are?*
1998 SL 678 refs. to features in total

A.4.2.7.1. Perceptions of Features of God.

Feature	%	Feature	%
Spirit	13.73	Loving	0.72
Light*	0.86	Living	0.57
Reveals Inwardly*	1.00	Judges*	0.42
Inward as Christ*	0.43	Punishes*	0.15
Seed/That of God*	4.58	total	0.57
Soul *	1.14	Revealed thro' Life of Christ	0.57
total	7.91	Universal	0.43
Meaning of 'God'/Divinity*	6.44	Gives*	0.15
Mysterious*	0.43	Grace*	0.29
total	6.87	total	0.44
Father*	0.15	Convinces	0.29
Has His own people*	2.72	Upholds	0.29
total	2.87	Personal	0.29
Wills	2.72	Eternal	0.15
Leads/Teaches	1.72	Kingdom	0.15
Powerful*	0.43	Christ divine	0.15
Empowers*	0.86	Calls	0.15
total	1.29	Revealed thro' Scripture	0.15
Creator*	0.72		
Revealed in Nature*	0.57	Total	42.75
total	1.29		

A.4.2.7.2. Perceptions of Relationship with God.

Feature	%	Feature	%
Love/Unity	6.79	Imagination/ creative	0.72
Worship*	4.58	Joy/ Happiness	0.57
Silence*	2.15	Freedom	0.57
total	6.73	Sin*	0.29
Commitment	6.51	Separation from God*	0.29
Truth	5.01	total	0.58
Experience*	3.43	Life	0.43
Mysticism*	0.43	Absence of God	0.43
total	3.86	Suffer for*	0.15
Faith	3.58	Courage*	0.15
Service	3.29	total	0.30
Testimony	3.16	Humility	0.29
Righteousness	2.86	Self -examination	0.29
Belief	2.15	Know God	0.29
Environmental concerns	1.43	Intimacy with God	0.29
Prayer	1.14	Fear	0.29
Sacraments	1.14	Repentance	0.15
Discernment	1.00	Self –denial/ Selflessness	0.15
Seek Social Change	0.85	Union with God	0.15
Seek God	0.72	Reason about God	0.15
Gain meaning to life	0.72	Conscious of / Conscience	0.15
		Total	56.67

*Asterisks indicate linked features

A.4.2.8. Analysis Data: Alex Wildwood *A Faith to Call Our Own* 1999 SL 848 refs. to features in total

A.4.2.8.1. Perceptions of Features of God.

Feature	%	Feature	%
Spirit	10.85	Redeems*	0.59
Light*	4.01	Saves*	0.35
Reveals Inwardly*	2.83	total	0.94
Inward as Christ*	0.71	Revealed thro' Life of Christ*	0.47
Seed/That of God*	0.94	Revealed thro': Gospel*	0.35
Soul*	0.83	total	0.82
total	9.32	Loving	0.71
Meaning of 'God'/Divinity*	5.50	Universal	0.59
Reveals continuously*	0.12	Judges*	0.47
Mysterious*	1.77	Law*	0.12
total	7.39	total	0.59
Creator*	1.53	Active/Works	0.47
Word*	0.12	Upholds	0.47
Wisdom*	0.59	Convinces/Transforms	0.47
Revealed in Nature*	1.42	Glorious	0.35
total	3.66	Christ divine	0.35
Leads/Teaches	2.71	Calls	0.35
Powerful*	1.54	Heals	0.35
Empowers*	0.94	Personal	0.24
total	2.48	Wills	0.24
Father*	0.47	Covenants/Promises	0.24
Has His own people*	0.82	Good/ Pure	0.24
total	1.29	Atones/ Suffers for	0.24
Grace*	0.83	Eternal	0.12
Gives*	0.35	Elects	0.12
total	1.18	Blesses	0.12
Kingdom*	0.35	Living	0.12
Ruler*	0.59	In Measure	0.12
total	0.94	Accessible	0.12
		Total	48.20

A.4.2.8.2. Perceptions of Relationship with God.

Feature	%	Feature	%
Experience*	4.48	Imaginative/Creative	1.06
Mysticism*	0.71	Self- denial/ Selflessness	1.06
total	5.19	Repentance	1.06
Faith/faithful	3.91	Holiness	0.94
Worship*	2.12	Joy/ Happiness	0.71
Wait on*	0.83	Humility	0.71
Silence/Stillness*	0.83	Righteousness	0.71
total	3.78	Seek Social Change	0.71
Truth	3.30	Transformed	0.59
Life	3.07	Fear	0.59
Love/ Peace/Unity	3.07	Conscious / Conscience	0.48
Prayer	2.59	Intimate with...	0.47
Belief	2.36	Use Myth	0.47
Sin/ Evil*	1.65	Perfection*	0.24
Separation from God*	0.71	Union with God*	0.12
total	2.36	total	0.36
Obedience*	1.65	Freedom	0.35
Service*	0.47	Meaning to life	0.35
total	2.12	Sacred/ Sacrament	0.35
Suffer for...*	1.18	Absent	0.24
Courage*	0.24	Apocalypse	0.24
total	1.42	Hope	0.24
Formal/ Outward*	1.06	Know.....	0.24
Sacraments*	0.35	Eternal life	0.12
total	1.41	Image of God	0.12
Testimony/Witness	1.41	Praise	0.12
Environmental concerns	1.30	Seek God	0.12
Self -examination	1.18		
Discernment	1.18	Total	51.36

*Asterisks indicate linked features

A.4.2.9. Analysis Data: Beth Allen *Ground and Spring...* 2007 SL 1167 refs. to features in total

A.4.2.9.1. Perceptions of Features of God.

Feature	%	Feature	%
Spirit	10.11	Gives*	0.09
Light*	2.23	Grace*	1.37
Reveals Inwardly*	3.34	total	1.46
Inward as Christ*	0.43	Upholds	1.03
Seed/That of God*	1.11	Eternal	0.86
Soul*	0.43	Good/ Pure	0.94
total	7.54	Ruler*	0.17
Meaning of 'God'/Divinity*	5.57	Kingdom*	0.60
Real or not?*	0.17	total	0.77
Reveals continuously*	0.09	Heals	0.68
Mysterious*	0.26	Wills	0.43
total	6.09	Christ divine	0.43
Leads/Teaches	3.77	Calls	0.43
Creator*	3.43	Atones / Suffers for	0.35
Word*	0.17	Accessible	0.35
Wisdom	0.09	Blesses	0.34
total	3.69	Living	0.34
Active/Works	3.00	Personal	0.26
Revealed thro': Gospel*	0.34	Law*	0.09
Revealed thro' Life of Christ*	2.14	Judges*	0.09
total	2.48	total	0.18
Powerful*	0.69	Universal	0.17
Empowers*	0.94	Covenants/Promises	0.17
total	1.63	Tests	0.18
Loving	1.63	Convinces	0.09
Has His own people	1.46		
		Total	50.86

A.4.2.9.2. Perceptions of Relationship with God.

Feature	%	Feature	%
Worship*	3.77	Freedom	0.69
Silence*	3.00	Gain meaning to life	0.69
Wait on*	1.36	Environmental concerns	0.51
total	8.13	Imagination/Creative	0.43
Experience	6.76	Humility	0.43
Faith/Faithful	3.94	Sacred/ Sacraments	0.34
Truth	3.43	Seek God	0.34
Intimacy with God	3.09	Commitment	0.34
Prayer	3.08	Holiness	0.26
Sin	2.24	Life	0.26
Love/Unity	2.14	Praise*	0.09
Thro' Myth	1.89	Reverence*	0.09
Know God	1.54	total	0.18
Discernment	1.20	Perfection*	0.09
Righteousness	1.11	Union with God*	0.09
Suffer for*	0.69	total	0.18
Courage*	0.26	Self- denial/ Selflessness	0.17
total	0.95	Transformation	0.17
Testimony/Witness	0.94	Fear	0.17
Obedience*	0.09	Image of God	0.09
Service*	0.77	Hope	0.09
total	0.86	Doubts	0.09
Belief	0.86		
Seek social change	0.69	Total	48.44

*Asterisks indicate grouped features