The way cast up: the Keithian schism in an English Enlightenment context

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Boston College
The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
Department of History

THE WAY CAST UP
THE KEITHIAN SCHISM IN AN ENGLISH ENLIGHTENMENT CONTEXT
A Dissertation

By
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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

May 2009
Abstract

The Way Cast Up

The Keithian Schism in an English Enlightenment Context

by Kenneth Andrew Shelton

Advisor: Cynthia Lynn Lyerly

This dissertation uses the Keithian Schism, a split within the Society of Friends in the last decade of the seventeenth century led by George Keith, to integrate and thus better explore several aspects of Quakerism, the public sphere, and early Enlightenment fears of religious heterodoxy. Quaker history has often narrowly focused on those aspects of Quakerism that set it apart from English society as a whole. The Schism, I first seek to show, reveals how very early modern the Quakers were in their handling of honor culture, public dispute, identity, and political authority.

At the same time, these common elements of Quakerism and early modern society are examined within the specific needs of the Society. Starting in the 1670s, the Society of Friends pursued a project of theological reform, and political lobbying in order to achieve legal toleration of their sect. Central to this effort was their ability to control how it was represented by opponents and members alike. Keith was involved with this project, at the levels of creating a less heterodox theological façade for the doctrine of the Inner Light and of using his more educated demeanor to cultivate elite allies (such as the Cambridge professor Dr. Henry More and his student, Anne Conway). Keith’s adoption of a
Renaissance system of ideas known as the “Ancient Theology” led him toward a more traditional formulation of the nature of Christ that helped provoke the Schism (without determining it). Influenced by English “revisionist” historians, however, I then focus on the narrative of the Schism, first within Pennsilvania and then London, to show that the Schism was also very much about personal honor, corporate identities, and reputation.

Finally, the dissertation turns to the period after Keith’s expulsion from the Society to reveal two often neglected aspect of the Schism: the role of non-Quakers and of the public sphere produced by the lapsing of the Licensing Act in 1695. These events reveal first the interest of a broader public in what is usually understood as an event solely within Quaker or colonial Pennsylvanian history. Likewise the entry into the press of numerous former Quakers, Dissenters, Anglicans and printers seeking to use the Schism to their own religious or commercial advantage elaborates recent historical literature concerning the perceived dangers of the public sphere. I set a portion of this Keithian literature, which consisted of a High Anglican attack on Quakerism as Deistic, within the contemporaneous Socinian Crisis and the rise of “societies for the reformation of manners,” such as the Anglican S.P.G. and S.P.C.K., which were fundamentally anti-Quaker in their focus, both in England and the colonies. Ultimately, the ability of the Society to utilize it highly organized meeting structure to control its representation in the public sphere demonstrates the manner in which the public sphere of 1690s England was simultaneous dangerous and essential to the Quaker effort to achieve a toleration that extended beyond the merely legal.
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acknowledgements</th>
<th>ii</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part I</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter I “Though There Were As Many Books of Scripture as the Whole World Could Contain”</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter II “As to My Learning, That is But Ordinary”</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter III “To Use Such Means as Consists with the Unity of Friends”</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part II</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter IV “Quakerism is Pure Paganism”</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter V “How Shall It Be Told in Gath and Published in the Streets of Askelon”</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part III</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter VI “Among a Gang and Sort of Quakers”</td>
<td>293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter VII “He Was a Little Troublesome Petulant Man”</td>
<td>339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter VIII “This Busie, Confident, Officious Tool”</td>
<td>399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter IX “Some Men are Best Answered by Silence”</td>
<td>436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epilogue</td>
<td>475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>480</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acknowledgements

My first and greatest debt is to the Graduate History Program at Boston College, whose patience and financial support was indispensable to the writing of this dissertation. More directly, I have to thank my advisor, Cynthia Lyerly, whom I have known longer than most non-blood relatives and who has always mixed kindness with wisdom and seriousness. I would also like to thank my other readers, Sarah Ross (to whom I am grateful for coming in last minute) and James O’Toole (another long-time provider of guidance), who helped provide a stimulating defense. David Quigley has read and commented on much of my dissertation in various stages and has the ability to read in areas of history with which he is unfamiliar and provide a student with very astute observations and suggestions on the broader historical questions of methodology and interpretation. In addition, I thank Burke Griggs, who, while leaving before he could comment on the dissertation itself, sparked my interest in early modern Britain. Many of my fellow graduate students, especially those in the Americanist writing group, also provided helpful commentary and advice, not merely on the dissertation but grad life as well. In particular, I would name Todd Romero, Elizabeth Macdonald-Bischof, and Edward Rugemer.

My research has taken me to numerous archives, and while all have been very helpful, I would especially like to thank the staffs of the three Quaker archives I have visited: The Library of the Society of Friends, London; The Friends Historical Library at Swarthmore College; and Haverford College Library. In particular, I would like to recognize the help provided me by Christopher Densmore at Swarthmore.
Several institutions have also supported my research with fellowships, including the John Nicholas Brown Center and the McNeil Center for Early American Studies. The second fellowship, in particular, provided me one of the most amazing and important experiences of my graduate career, combining financial support, archival access, and an unparalleled scholarly community.

On a personal note, I would first like to thank my parents, Marjorie and Franklin, whose love and support I have, do, and always will treasure. Secondly, I wish to express my appreciation to my siblings, Jonathan, Stephanie, David, and Gregory, and my brother-in-law Jeremiah. Finally, I would like to thank my close friend Robin Smith, whose compassion and toleration has gotten me through some of the most stressed times of these final few months.
Preface

This dissertation was once to be subtitled: how the Quakers experienced the Enlightenment. The question might now be rephrased: how the Quakers avoided it. The concept of an English Enlightenment has always been somewhat fraught, much like comparisons of the American and French Revolutions. If one was radical, then the other must have been conservative, and therefore a dubious fit to the original category. In addition, there is the classic problem of definition and the related question of the degree to which the Enlightenment (to quote Jon Butler in a different context) is an historian’s fiction? These two questions then combine to ask: if the Enlightenment is real, should it be interpreted narrowly (at the expense of marginalizing its influence and impact) or broadly (and risk diluting it to meaninglessness). J. C. D. Clarke has impishly asked “Did the Enlightenment fail?” a question that challenges historians’ definitions of the Enlightenment as much as it questions the event itself. The question of an English Enlightenment - as opposed to the more accepted Scottish and French Enlightenments – connects all of these questions.1

At the expense of simplicity, I would apply Occam’s razor to the whole of these issues. The Society of Friends, a product of the circumstances of the English seventeenth century, professed ideas that came very close to those of a number of radical thinkers in the same period, and yet pulled away from the abyss. Those familiar with Puritan

sermons will be aware of how the minister’s first task was to parse the grammar of their scriptural passage, and the same shall be applied here. The Society of Friends were clearly an English religious development (though there were continental influences) and part of the ongoing debate between religious authority, erastianism, and an anti-Catholic hostility to clericalism. Historians of the English Enlightenment have identified its origins as far different from that of the French philosophes who founded an anti-Society in the context of the Ancien Regime. Britain, in contrast, produced a different domestic and imperial space, in which establishment and dissent, orthodoxy and heterodoxy were debated in a public sphere that was itself a subject of debate.²

**Anticlericalism**

Hostility to the sacramental authority of clergy was at the center of English conceptions of the Reformation. From Henry VIII’s claim that the Papacy was merely the bishop of Rome to the Congregational argument that churches consisted of individual covenanted communities, the idea of a jure divino class held potentially dangerous consequences. These conceptual dangers were combined in English consciousness with the very real national dangers of French and Spanish invasion. The inter-relationship between these internal and external threats produced, in Justin Champion’s words, a series of “crises of popery,” which further confirmed the anticlerical hostility in English minds. Anti-popery and anti-clericalism were not so much a system of ideas as a lingua

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franca for the expression of many ideas in the period. These could be used to defend religious unity, in order to confront hostile powers, and religious dissent, to legitimize the refusal to participate in “popish” forms of worship. At the same time, anti-clericalism could travel into more heterodox directions, not merely towards the radical and spiritualist end of Protestantism, but towards a rejection of mystery (in the form of either empiricism, or a deified individual, whose subjective illuminated experience became, in Pocock’s description, indiscernible from glorified man of the High Enlightenment), along with scripture and organized religion as a whole. It was precisely this abyss that the Society stepped up to, and then rejected in favor of a more orthodox profession.

The Public Sphere

A central pillar in the notion of an English Enlightenment is the public sphere: the space created in which public events could be rationally discussed. Recent criticisms of the public sphere, however, have come in two forms: doubts concerning the periodization of Habermas’s formulation, and (as historians have sought both to address the first objection and to include marginal groups within the public sphere or “spheres”) the sense that the concept has been expanded so far that it has been drained of any real content and explanatory power. The Ur-text, Habermas’s The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere, described a historical process from the classical polis through medieval concepts of personal rule and into, beginning in the early modern period, the impersonal administrative state. The removal of economic activity from the home, and the interaction
between mercantilism and private economic actors transformed the Republic of Letters (previously focused on art and literary criticism) into a space for political debate through the universal, egalitarian exercise of reason. While historical, Habermas’s work was not primarily history, but a discussion of the role of the public sphere in a democracy and the consequences of that sphere’s decline with the rise of mass media. As such, it suffers from a teleological eclecticism in its use of evidence, and a structuralist focus upon economics as the moving factor in history. In particular, David Zaret and others have pointed to the striking absence of religious conflict in the creation both of public debate, print culture and factional politics.³

Other historians have also pointed out that the public sphere was hardly a welcome development in the eyes even of its participants. Brian Cowan has shown that contemporaries saw the coffeehouse as a dangerous and unseemly place, to which elites appealed only as a last resort. Periodicals such as *The Spectator* did not seek to inform, but to discipline public debate. They were not “prescient progenitors of liberal democracy and bourgeois society,” he argues, but “must be understood as a product of the bitterly partisan, but oligarchic nevertheless, political culture of Queen Anne’s reign.” The public sphere only came to be seen as a positive thing in the Hanoverian period, among those excluded from political power. In an important recent reconsideration of the public sphere and seventeenth-century English history more broadly, Steven Pincus and Peter

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³ Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* transl. Thomas burger and Frederick Lawrence (orig. German edition, 1962; American edition, 1989; Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1991); David Zaret, *Origins of Democratic Culture: Printing, Petitions, and the Public Sphere in Early Modern England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000). Also worth noting is Habermas’s quiet shifting between urban and rural environments. His discussion of the Classical world focuses upon the urban polis, but then turns to the rural manor to discuss the medieval world, and then returns to an urban space (London) to explain the rise of the public sphere. He is thus able to highlight the changes he describes, but in the process may distort the course of those changes.
Lake have set out a similar trajectory for the public sphere, though back-dating the acceptance of its existence to the 1690s. Unlike Habermas, Pincus and Lake identified the public sphere’s origins in the Reformation, when “issues of religious identity and division came together with issues of dynastic and geopolitical rivalry to create a series of public spheres.” These spheres were temporary “emergency measures” utilized by the oligarchy, but, nonetheless, an important foundation for later developments. While Pincus and Lake see this view of the public sphere as giving way slowly to the acceptance of open-ended debate as a public good, the Society of Friends remained disconcerted with it.4

Related to this criticism is the suggestion that some historians have reified the public sphere. According to Harold Mah, describing the public sphere spatially - as a site where, in addition to the bourgeoisie, more marginal groups could “enter” and participate - ignores Habermas’s characterization of the public as stripped of individual and group identity in favor of a singular “public opinion.” Such a unitary public sphere or individual subject free from group identity was a fiction. Both Habermas and subsequent historians “are misled if they treat the idea of the public sphere as if it ever were or could ever be a real institution.” The public sphere was created by groups to advance their interests, making “their social or group particularity invisible” in order to lay claim to universal “public opinion.” How and why this was achieved by certain groups at particular times and not by others thus becomes the proper “historical problem.” Craig Calhoun has similarly pointed out that public discourse “cannot be about everything all at once. Some structuring of attention, imposed by dominant ideology, hegemonic powers, or social

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movements, must always exist.” The Society of Friends’ use of the public sphere after the Restoration exemplified this observation, as it was an active attempt to push an extreme (for the time) form of religious toleration.5

A religious public sphere - such as it was - did seem to come into being in the latter half of the seventeenth century, as a mediator between a private intimate sphere (the conscience) and the state. The public representation of this intimate sphere (represented not by economic and familial activity, but by denominational ecclesiological organization) did produce public discussion about the nature of that policy, though that discussion was born not of the Republic of Letters but of the sectarian battles of the Civil War. This sphere was entered defensively and apologetically - literally, as authors often excused their entry into print as a defensive action against others. Two justifications existed for doing so. The first came out of corporate identities, as groups such as the Society policed their public presentation in order to alleviate persecution. The second justification, conversely, derived from honor culture, and constituted another component of this early public sphere, one not entirely missing in Habermas but masked by his emphasis upon a type of rational individualism grounded in the intimate space of the home. An accusation in print could result in a need to defend one’s honor. In both respects, public representation was a throwback to the medieval “publicity” that embodied political power in those who wielded it. The interconnection between these elements: print, public sphere and honor culture have been little explored by historians, who usually focus either on the first two or the third, independent of one another. Yet, as

the Society of Friends’ disputes from the 1670s, and even more the Schism itself, reveal, identity and the public sphere are inseparable.6

The Society of Friends

The historiography of the Keithian Schism, the last of the great disputes faced by the Society of Friends before the withdrawal of the Society from public life in the eighteenth century (and the Hicksite division in the nineteenth), has suffered from the inability to integrate the various aspects of the fight. Ned Landsman and Gary Nash have provided the classic structural treatments, Landsman seeing it as a dispute between Scottish and English Friends and Nash as an aspect of the class-based political disputes within the nascent colony of Pennsylvania. While Nash’s work remains the indispensable study of the colony’s early politics, both authors treat the Schism as an entirely American event with the manner it played out in England depicted as coda. Related to this is a relative disinterest in the theology of the dispute, as little understood or cared about by most of the participants. This approach, however, as other historians have pointed out, ignores

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6 Brian Cowan, “Mr. Spectator and the Coffeehouse Public Sphere” Eighteenth-Century Studies 37 (2004): p. 345-366, 359; Steve Pincus, “‘Coffee Politicians Does Create:’ Coffeehouses and Restoration Political Culture” The Journal of Modern History 67 (1995): p. 807-834. Ann Hughes has seen a similar difficulty facing Civil War ministers, who did not wish to debase themselves by meeting with less educated radicals, in scenarios which might turn badly for them, but also feared being labeled as afraid to dispute with them, “The Pulpit Guarded: Confrontations Between Orthodox and Radicals in Revolutionary England” in John Bunyan and His England, 1628-88 eds. Anne Laurence, W. R. Owens, and Stuart Sim (London: The Hambledon Press, 1990), p. 31-50. Mark Knights has similarly argued that the public sphere expanded in spite of itself, making England a “representative society.” It was not a democratic society, but one “in which public representation, defined both as a political concept and as a mode of communication, was key to justification and exercise of power.” Representation and Misrepresentation in Later Stuart Britain: Partisanship and Political Culture (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 8. Roger Chartier has compared his own formulation of representation against “the theatricality of social life in ancien regime society. All forms of dramatization aimed at assuring that being would be inferred from appearance, identity from representation and the thing would have no other existence save in the sign that exhibited it.” Cultural History (New York: Cornell University Press, 1988), p. 8.
most of what the participants said about the Schism at the time, as well as larger developments occurring within the Society in both Britain and America.\(^7\)

A second strain of interpretation seeks to remedy this defect by focusing on theology. This has included scholars such as J. William Frost and Ethyn Kirby, who are primarily concerned with the Schism, and others such as Alison Coudert, Sarah Hutton, and Richard Bailey, who commented on the Schism while studying other subjects. The problem here is a tendency towards a positivist interpretation of Quaker theology, which was admittedly more amorphous, and the habit of the Society to argue they did not fundamentally disagree with Keith. As a result, this interpretation usually focuses on Keith’s personality to suggest his contentiousness exacerbated the intellectual divide.\(^8\)

A final line has seen the Schism as fundamentally about power dynamics within the Society. According to Jon Butler, Keith led an insurgency against the consolidation of ministerial power into a few hands within the colony. Often dismissed, the interpretation does pick up on an issue often buried by the tendency to see Keith as trying to impose greater order on the meeting: the use of meeting power to dispense with the schism and to silence Keith. Clare Martin adopts a similar stance, seeing the Keithian Schism as the mirror opposite of the earlier Wilkinson-Story rebellion against the meeting system. As will be seen, however, the relationship between authority and community was more


complicated and variable, with Keith at points adopting the language of the Wilkinson-
Story dispute to attack his enemies in the Schism.9

This dissertation is in one sense, therefore, a study in integration. The literature on the
Society of Friends is both deep and narrow, dealing extensively with a few questions and
periods of time, to a virtual silence on others. The Society’s founding and its relationship
to the religious politics of the English Civil War, its transformation from a movement to a
denomination at the Restoration, its influences on the founding of Pennsylvania, and its
withdrawal from Pennsylvania politics in the mid-eighteenth century dominate much of
the scholarship. Most of the literature addressing these chronological subjects also
contains a geographic focus upon a single Atlantic coast. Considering that the Friends
possessed one of the first and most coherent Atlantic organizations, Atlantic history has
surprisingly made comparatively little impact on much of the historiography. Jack D.
Marietta’s *The Transformation of American Quakerism 1748-1783* is an interesting
exception, by showing the importance of the interaction between the American and
British meetings and especially ministers in spreading and institutionalizing the changes
he documents within the Society. Another exception has been the simple fact that Penn
spent little time in the colonies, making any description of his involvement in
Pennsylvania politics necessarily Atlantic. The inter-relationship between Friends on both

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9 Jon Butler, ““Gospel Order Improved”: The Keithian Schism and the Exercise of Quaker Ministerial
Authority in Pennsylvania” *WMQ* XXXI (1974): p. 431-452; Clare Martin, “Controversy and Division in
Post-Restoration Quakerism: the Hat, Wilkinson-Story and Keithian Controversies and Comparisons with
the Internal Divisions of Other Seventeenth-Century Nonconformist Groups” (Diss. D.Phil, Open
University, 2004).
sides of the Atlantic and the power of the executive meetings in London, such as Marietta made the center of his interpretation, are understudied.\(^\text{10}\)

Unlike the more geographically and narratively organized studies, topically focused literature has shown more interest in an Atlantic perspective. In addition to a generational difference, accompanying the rise of Atlantic history, the thinner evidence facing studies of female preachers and prophets, dreams, speech etc. create a necessity for wider ranging research. Lacking from these more topical works is a sense of narrative that depicts exactly how the Society operated as an organization, in response to specific events and contexts. This is particularly true of routinization - the process by which a radical, amorphous movement became a more “respectable” Christian denomination – a development that is often treated as a purely theological process internal to the meeting. The events of the Keithian Schism, and the coterminus radical theological threats of the 1690s, shed new light on how the Society operated, not merely at the level of ideas, but at that of an organization seeking to work within a particular political climate.\(^\text{11}\)

\(^{10}\)The most specifically Atlantic studies of the Society came much earlier. See Henry J. Cadbury, “Intercolonial Solidarity of American Quakerism” *PMHB* 60 (1936): p. 362-374; Frederick B. Tolles, *Quakers and the Atlantic Culture* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1960); and Edwin B. Bronner, “Intercolonial Relations Among Quakers Before 1750” *QH* 56 (1967): p. 3-17. Jack D. Marietta, *The Transformation of American Quakerism 1748-1783* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984) also treats the Society in a transatlantic fashion. Marietta describes the demands for greater attention to social discipline and denominational identity. While the American meetings were able to achieve their social reforms alone, their desire for political reform was stymied by a combination of “imperial policy-makers at Whitehall, the proprietary Penn family, hostile politicians in Philadelphia, discontented settlers in the province, and aggrieved Indians,” p. xiii. The result, in the second half of the eighteenth century, was that the Society retained its denominational identity by strengthening family discipline and birthright membership. Comparatively, Sydney V. James, in *A People Among Peoples, Quaker Benevolence in Eighteenth-Century America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), argues that Friends were forced into social benevolence by their withdrawal from politics during the French and Indian War, and is largely America focused.

Quaker history has suffered from a general problem of failing to integrate itself into a variety of literatures. Again, an exception to this has been many of the early histories of the Delaware Valley colonies, which were immediately presented with a historiography rich in models of the frontier, creolization, and the reproduction of British culture. This factor led historians not to focus merely upon the uniqueness of Quakerism, but to relate their histories to larger questions of process and development. As stated, an unfortunate side effect in some of this literature is a focus on structural factors and dismissal of the importance of religion. Yet, the cultural turn has found a home in the study of colonization. These colonial histories, not primarily interested in Quakerism, however, have largely proved the exception.12

Most studies of Quakerism, especially after the Restoration, by contrast, usually focus on those elements peculiar to the Society. This critique may seem odd, until one looks at

12 The literature on colonization is far too wide-ranging and complex to be easily summarized. The point being illustrated here is best done through some examples. Obviously, no study crudely fits in any of these camps, but the issues can be roughly sketched thusly. The meta-question has always been at least tangentially related to the American Revolution. Was it the product of a uniquely American society, formed either through the shock of colonization to transported European norms or through a more gradual process of assimilation to new realities following that initial shock. These works, however, all possessed a regional focus, which has subsequently been challenged. Virginia is the classic example. For Edmund Morgan, the colony underwent a process of abandoning the original ideals born out of Elizabethan anti-Spanish attitudes in favor of a “boom” culture stabilized around the institution of slavery. The Rutmans have attacked, in turn, the notion that colonial Virginia was inherently less stable than New England. In contrast, James Horn has made the strongest argument for a strong transferal of English values to the Chesapeake (compare his interpretation of Bacon’s rebellion as typical of county disturbances in England, to Morgan’s analysis of it as the pivotal moment in the colony’s development). More recent scholarship has developed a more nuanced approach. Jack Greene has offered a model of colonial development, whereby each went through an initial stage consisting of the “simplification” of inherited European norms, followed by an “elaboration” of their institutions in the wake of economic and demographic growth, and finally a “replication” of British culture. Edmund S. Morgan, American Slavery, American Freedom : the Ordeal of Colonial Virginia (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2003); Darrett B. and Anita H. Rutman, A Place in Time : Middlesex County, Virginia, 1650-1750 (New York: Norton, 1984); James Horn, Adapting to a New World : English Society in the Seventeenth-Century Chesapeake (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994); Jack Greene, Pursuits of Happiness, The Social Development of Early Modern British Colonies and the Formation of American Culture (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988).
the more developed literature for English and American Puritanism. Rarely today would someone formulate a question such as Elizabeth Reis asked about New England witchcraft: “What was it about New England Puritanism that linked women more closely with the devil?” Not that the question is at root invalid, but because of the implied unique causality of New England, Puritanism, or even Anglo-America. Since Quakerism was a clearly definable religious movement from an early period, it has not had to undergo the definitional debates that Puritanism has. The result is that little attempt has been made to demonstrate how Quakerism was typical of its time and place. One example is the non-existence of a literature integrating Quaker beliefs with the popular culture of wonders and magic. Of particular importance to this study has been Jane Kamensky’s research into Puritan understandings of speech, which was itself based upon Richard Bauman’s work on Quaker speech. In the case of the Keithian Schism, there has been a striking lack of interest in the performative aspects, especially given the extensive literature on personal abuse, honor culture and the “public sphere” in the early modern period. Much of the schism occurred within an ongoing debate about precisely these issues. Keith’s disownment was largely for publishing against the Society, and occurred in 1695, after the lapse of the Licensing Act. Alone among historians of the Schism, John Smolenski has looked at public culture, but solely in the context of Pennsylvania and as part of the historiography of colonial political development. In the process, he also seems to lay at the door of Quakerism elements of that colony’s culture having to do with speech that seem more broadly early modern. For Smolenski and many others, contemporary complaints about Keith’s personality as uniquely disruptive and obnoxious, has been taken as purely factual and requiring little more analysis on the way to the more
substantive issues. This observation is not to dismiss these important works of scholarship, but rather to point out a blind spot that becomes all the more striking given the value of these works. Thus an important component of this dissertation is simply to ask the question: how does the Keithian Schism reveal the ways in which Friends were early modern? 13

Identity

The heart of this dissertation is the integration of the corporate, intellectual and public/performative elements of early modern identity. Unlike modern forms of identity, early modern people drew most of their sense of self from a web of hierarchical relationships. As Rhys Isaac has argued, “European Civilization took shape under the rule of patriarchal monarchies,” in which everyone below the patriarch was “defined by their subordination.” Children existed under their parents, as servants did under their heads of household. Heads of household were likewise subjects of local lords and distant kings. Failure to participate in these hierarchies, was to be a “masterless man” and a disintegrative force to society. Nor were these hierarchies purely those defined by social

13 Elizabeth Reis, Damned Women: Sinners and Witches in Puritan New England (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), p. xi; Jane Kamensky, Governing the Tongue (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Bauman, Let Your Words Be Few. As stated, the major exception to this historiographical tradition has been studies of the English Civil War, the birth of the Society, and the resulting question of the relationship of Quakerism to Puritanism. Most often, however, these studies were typological and theological in focus, seeking to define the spectrum of religious thought rather than to integrate Quakerism into broader cultural institutions. For a notable exception, see Phyllis Mack’s work, which grounds her study of prophetic self-representation in Renaissance and Early modern conceptions of the self and gender. Phyllis Mack, Visionary Women: Ecstatic Prophecy in Seventeenth-Century England (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).
class. Metaphysical and trans-historical hierarchies served to define the most central identity of all: that of being Christian, which penetrated all the others. Important to the definition of the true church was the argument that it had never gone out of existence, which was used by Roman Catholics to undermine Protestantism (“Where was your church before Luther?”) and vice versa (the myth of “pope Joan” whose concealed femininity broke the claim of continuous papal succession). The legitimacy of the church hierarchy mirrored that of succession found in both familial and political contexts. For laity, ceremonies of adoption, such as baptism, covenants and professions of faith, likewise determined religious identity more than a purely credal belief. For the Quakers, the common indwelling presence of Christ within all people (a more literal form of the metaphor of the Church as Christ’s body) served a similar function.14

In her study of gender in colonial New England, Laurel Thatcher Ulrich used “role analysis” as a way of unpacking the different statuses and performances engaged in by colonial women. “Female life was defined,” she argues, “in a series of discrete duties rather than by a self-consistent and all-embracing ‘sphere.’” Another way of saying this would be that women’s roles were almost always defined by dependence to some other being, from wife-husband to witch-Satan. The performative aspects of identity were not strictly separable from the corporate. Particular importance will be laid in this study on

14 Rhys Isaac, Landon Carter’s Uneasy Kingdom: Revolution and Rebellion on a Virginia Plantation (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. xi. Gender historians have been particularly keen to these elements of identity, as a part of their general concern with gender roles, especially as they have move beyond a purely polemical stance. See Kathleen Brown’s Good Wives, Nasty Wenches and Anxious Patriots, Gender, Race and Power in Colonial Virginia (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), which begins with the fears in Early Modern Europe of social dislocation and demonstrates the dangers of disruptive (particularly female) speech, especially gossip.

As previously stated, reputation and honor culture interconnect with the nature of early modern representation. In colonial historiography, these concepts have most often been deployed in the Chesapeake and (to a lesser degree) New England colonies. In the scholarship on Friends, these categories have most often been understood in reverse: the Quaker challenge to the reputation of magistrates and clergy and their rejection of the performance of deference. But this simplifies the underlying reality. Mervyn James argued several years ago that the early modern period saw a change in notions of honor from a lineage based system of knightly virtues of aggression and self-assertion to one of “godly magistrates” emphasizing Protestantism, honesty and self-controlled virtue. Richard Cust has challenged this claim, arguing that elements of both notions existed simultaneously, and could be deployed variously according to need. In his study of the “decline of insult,” Robert B. Shoemaker has seen a falling of prosecutions for defamation prompted by the anonymity of urbanization and the dismantling communal enforcement of norms over the course of the eighteenth century. While the forms that reputation took could vary, however, from godliness to masculine sexual aggression, the dominance of communal perception over internalized senses of self in the maintenance of identity remains a constant in scholarship on the seventeenth century.\footnote{Mervyn James, \textit{English Politics and the Concept of Honor 1485-1742}, \textit{Past and Present Supplements} III (1978); Richard Cust, “Honor and Politics is Early Stuart England: the Case of Beaumont v. Hastings” \textit{Past and Present} 149 (1995): p. 57-94; Richard B. Shoemaker, “The Decline of Public Insult in London 1660-1800” \textit{Past and Present} 169 (1995): p. 97-131.}
None of the above is surprising to the student of early modern history. But this understanding of identity was even more central to post-Restoration Quakerism. Interpretation of the Quakers before the return of the Stuarts, has typically focused on anti-authoritarianism. For Christopher Hill and Barry Reah, the Quakers, as a part of Civil War radicalism, challenged both traditional and bourgeois power structures. The Restoration, therefore, was a moment of “defeat” (in Hill’s words), which saw the adoption of a more hierarchical church and greater formalization of doctrine. This declension narrative has never quite known what to do with the anti-authoritarianism of the Society until the rise of abolitionism. For Gary Nash, “The Quaker was instinctively negative in his opposition to authority, especially to civil authority,” but “he was not an unrestrained individualist.” Pressures of persecution and fears of atomism promoted a communal identity, and Friends “held the usual seventeenth-century view that society, by the nature of things, should be stratified.” In England, these two elements existed in tension, but in Penn’s “Holy Experiment,” the antiauthoritarian strain won out. As this dissertation will argue, the reality is more complex. There are two forms of anti-authoritarianism. The first was in Quaker-magisterial relations. As many have argued, the Society did abandon much of their Civil War-era radicalism in favor of pursuing toleration for their sect within established power structures. This project, as will be seen, led them to seek relationships with important members of the nobility, in pursuit of
protection and of the respectability that the conversion of such individuals would provide. Quakers maintained their difficult reputation with the magistracy not from a principle of anti-authoritarianism but as a result of specific issues such as opposition to tithes and oaths, the symbols of deference, and the breaking up of Quaker worship meetings. This persecution shifted in intensity over time, but it disappeared with Toleration (excepting the zeal of some individuals). Restoration Quakers, however, sought to minimize the threat by accepting the basic legitimacy of political offices. Keith himself argued, that: “We deny not, but that some ought to be Respected more than another” not just on the basis of the person’s piety, “but also, upon the account of Relation, and Superiority of Authority,” just as children were to obey their parents.17

In contrast, the second form of anti-authoritarianism, anti-clericalism, was directed towards the power of the office: the problem was not with the corrupt priest, but priestcraft itself. Keith, in the same tract, showed little of the hesitancy in attacking “hireling ministers” that he did in attacking civil authority, asking: “have they [the laity] the less [spirit], because they are Tradesmen and Farmers, and Shepheards, and Fishermen, ... and have you more, because ye Labour not with your hands, but live upon the sweat of other mens honest Labours?” For the Society, priestcraft was a central concept, combining their notions of history, epistemology and worship. Anticlericalism, however, was both too central to be abandoned and too explosive to be fully admitted to.

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It was the focus, in addition, of Freethought attacks on the political/religious establishment of England.\textsuperscript{18}

Anticlericalism consumed a huge quantity of the controversial literature of the Society because opposition to sacramental clergy took a variety of forms: opposition to tithes, rejection of the sacraments, and the placing of one’s inward spiritual state over education as a qualification for the ministry. When a Friend wrote that scripture constituted the “words,” not the “Word” of God, he was not merely attacking the bible as an epistemological tool, but the minister in his study pouring over his concordances, and his Hebrew and Greek grammars. The rejection of tithes similarly related to the professional status of the minister, and especially constituted an attack on a national church structure. That Quakers undermined the historical situation of the Gospel, as a unique text requiring that level of study, revealed a further historical dimension to anticlericalism. The concept of the succession of religious authority, whether papal, episcopal, or of a succession of proto-Protestant dissenters to the medieval church (such as the Waldensians and Lollards) who preserved the existence of Christ’s church throughout history was undermined by Friends’ tendency to blur history and to engage in a presentism that turned gospel “events” into metaphors. Finally, the sacraments were inter-related both to this historically legitimizing of the clergy and the community produced by participation in the sacraments - though how varied according to the various denominations’ understandings of the sacraments.\textsuperscript{19}


\textsuperscript{19} For the ministerial construction of sermons, see Stout, for sacramental theology, see E. Brooks Holifield, \textit{The Covenant Sealed: the Development of Puritan Sacramental Theology in Old and New England, 1570-}
Thus greater emphasis needs to be placed upon the organizational operation of the meeting and the ways it produced and maintained its authority and constructed the identity of the Society and its members. This requires studying a series of components to this process. First is the construction of religious identity at a series of layers of community: meeting, denomination, Christendom. In part this was conceptual and polemical. Kate Peters, in a recent book, has shown the importance of print to the construction of Quaker denominational identity and the authority of public Friends (Quaker ministers). Far from eschewing the printed word, the wide traveling “First Publishers of Truth” used manuscript and print works as an extension of their preaching duties and as a way of creating a homogeneity of message. “Those individuals who wrote the vast majority of Quaker tracts and papers,” she writes, “were the effective leaders of the movement.” By the 1670s, however, the purpose of Quaker writing had shifted, becoming more defensive. If the Civil War Quakers published the Truth, most post-Restoration Quakers were more concerned to explain it.20

The Community of Ideas and the Public Sphere

But explaining the Truth required a language with which to do so. By then, Quakerism had developed its own diction, collapsing eschatology, scriptural language and Christian history into immediate personal experiences, which scholars have studied at


20 Kate Peters, Print Culture and the Early Quakers (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 36.
length. In chapter 1, Keith’s own formulation of this language is laid out, as well as its context within the British Civil War. This diction, however, was of limited use when making the case to those who were not and could not be converted. For Restoration Friends, this was the most difficult problem of the prevailing British power structure. Friends’ apologetics, therefore, needed to adopt methodologies and concepts from other intellectual traditions. A traditional interpretation of the Keithian Schism argued that it was the result of the overly intellectual Keith never fully understanding the mysticism and spiritualism at the core of Quakerism. Jon Butler, among others, has disputed this directly, arguing that many Friends were engaged in an eclectic use of high theology and philosophical traditions. Here again, however, this dissertation makes a distinction, between the pastoral works discussed in chapter one and the polemics and apologetics discussed in chapter two. Keith’s activities reflected not an early divorcement from the Society, but an ongoing project of apologetic reform connected to their use of political engagement and the public sphere in the pursuit of toleration. This project is laid out in chapters 2 and 3.

For Keith, the central system of ideas was a Renaissance tradition known as the Ancient Theology. A mixture of Platonism, Hermetism and Kabbalah, the use of this conceptual tool not only provided him with a philosophical language and system of authority with which to nullify accusations of heterodoxy, but also provided him access to intellectual circles in England and on the Continent. The interest in the Ancient Theology and illuminism more generally among these thinkers provided Keith and other Friends with a form of social currency that they sought to use to the Society’s benefit. Friends, in this case, were particularly concerned with the potential of the Inner Light to
produce a universal religion divorced from everything specifically Christian. The Ancient
Theology, with its attempt to assimilate aspects of pagan and Jewish thought to
Christianity in a broader tradition that would uphold the truth of the Christian belief,
could also reinforce the Inner Light, by showing people without access to Christian
knowledge reproducing Christian doctrine. Dr. Henry More, the Platonist professor of
divinity at Cambridge University, became the subject of a campaign by leading Friends to
obtain a statement from him clearing the Friends of heterodoxy. While ultimately a
failure, the project occurred simultaneously with a renewed lobbying effort, directed
towards the Parliament, for religious Toleration. This political campaign is described in
chapter 3.

Given the political and apologetic nature of these intellectual activities, attention must
be given to the question of a public sphere. This sphere, while existing, was very different
from the bourgeois space of rational individuals, for which Habermas has argued.
Instead, it was a dangerous site dominated by the categories of honor culture and
collective representation. Two debates from the 1670s will serve as case studies of the
way in which the Society sought to stage-manage its disputes with other denominations
in order to minimize the chances of being represented according to either dominant
Quaker stereotype: the heretic and the unruly madman. A later series of abortive disputes
in the context of the schism will reveal the Society’s half-effective attempt to withdraw
from the public sphere in the 1690s, once their political goals had been achieved.

These three chapters, forming the first part of the dissertation, seek to set out the
major tools that will be used to analyze the Schism itself. Its American stage will
emphasize the dominance of the London leadership and the dispute as an Atlantic crisis
from the beginning. Chapter 4 discusses the attempt to transfer the reforms born out of the political efforts of the Society from the 1670s. They included trying to produce a local center of printing for Friends’ texts and to improve religious instruction of children, as well as Keith’s attempts to both broaden the meeting and create a clearer boundary between the Society and heterodox outsiders. All these efforts, it will be argued, combined in the mind of Keith and his supporters to form a program to grant Friends a clearer Christian denominational identity. This identity, however, was never purely colonial but Atlantic, occupying an imagined space maintained by the regular exchange of epistles between meetings. The next chapter demonstrates how Friends shared traditional concepts of slander and honor culture, but combined them with Christian identity and theology. Unusual in Quaker scholarship, the Schism reveals Friends taking offense as well as giving it, both orally and in print, and defending personal honor as well as defaming it. The result was the unravelling of the Delaware Valley meetings along lines of corporate identities that sought authorization for their actions from their competing claims to being the legitimate voice of the Society.

While the theme of formulating schismatic identities continues in chapter 6, the chapter also serves as a transition back to the issue of the public sphere. The end of licensing rapidly expanded the publicity of these events, bringing in the agendas of parties not directly interested in the dispute. This event is discussed in chapter 7, in the context of the Society’s participation in the disciplining of the public sphere. This process, engaged in most fully in a political context by Whigs seeking to retain a more seemly public space for party purposes, was adopted hesitantly by the Society as they were forced to deal with the accusations of Keith and other ex-Friends seeking to
undermine Friends’ political gains in the wake of the Glorious Revolution. It will be argued that the ensuing debate between Keith and the Society over the nature of the public sphere was deeply implicated in denominational and Christian identities (both inseparable from the high theology which consumed most of the ink of the debate).

Chapter eight connects the disciplining of the public sphere to the Reformation of Manners, a broader movement for religious and social reform. Specifically, it will look at the early years of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, founded in 1698 to combat the dangers of widespread irreligion. But, for many of its members’, Quakerism was itself a form of irreligion and de-Christianization. This allows a new perspective to be provided on the work of Charles Leslie, a nonjuring anti-Deist writer most often studied for his Jacobite political beliefs, but understudied in regard to the series of scurrilous anti-Quaker writings he produced in the last half decade of the seventeenth century. Leslie provides a window into the inter-relationship between Anti-Quakerism and anti-Freethought: the attack on institutional worship and clergy discussed earlier. The S.P.C.K.’s work and Charles Leslie’s thought will also prove crucial in explaining Keith’s eventual conversion to Anglicanism. The final major chapter will look at Keith’s missionary tour of the colonies for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. Here the combination of High Church Anglicanism with fears of Deism and Quakerism would reveal the ambiguous religious geography of the American colonies through perceptions of Dissent and establishment. It will also contrast the comparatively open public sphere of Britain with the narrower and constrained world of the colonies, where print and debate were more dependent on local power structures.
George Keith and the events he precipitated are significant in several ways. For the study of Quakerism and early modern Anglo-American religious history, the Schism was one of the largest and most public religious disputes of the colonial era. It thus possesses an intrinsic importance. The fact that it occurred in this highly public fashion, however, also makes it of wider concern. First, it allows a case study in the mechanisms of public debate and print culture in the late seventeenth century, one informed by narrative, the ongoing and changing agendas of its participants, and the specific concerns of a particular (and somewhat peculiar) group. Secondly, Keith’s ongoing attempts to formulate and defend Quaker doctrine, and then to dismantle it, allows us to see a critical engagement by an individual with the new and potentially more dangerous religious climate of the English Enlightenment. It permits this, moreover, with persons (religious Dissenters) who are rarely integrated with these larger trends, except in generalities. The question of a broad or narrow Enlightenment thus becomes more complicated. The Keithian Schism was not merely a product of Quaker theology, or of Keith’s own ideas towards it, but the confluence of these elements in a certain intellectual climate and media environment.
Part I

Perhaps it was just curiosity, joined with the lull in religious persecution during the period between the 1664 “Clarendon Code” and the Quaker Act of 1670, which led a mother and daughter who were congregants of the Presbyterian church in Spittle-Yard, London, to visit a Friends’ worship meeting. Regardless of the initial attraction, their regular minister, Thomas Vincent, was displeased by their new religious interest, and met with the two women privately. He explained that: “It was worse to go to the Quakers meetings than to a bawdyhouse,” and that “If there stood a cup of poyson in the window, I would rather drink it than suck in their damnable Doctrines.” This encounter had not been his first with Quakerism. A previous dispute held at a private home had descended into chaos over the question of whether one could live without sin after conversion. According to William Penn - though Vincent denied it, blaming the mother’s conversion on the “influence” of her daughter - the Presbyterian minister then sought out the women’s “Pater-familias” (male head of household, husband to one and father to the other) to insist that he refuse them permission to attend the Quaker meeting. 21

The minister’s efforts to reclaim the two women put him into increasing contact and conflict with Friends seeking to offer the women religious counsel, transforming a question of pastoral care into a public dispute over Friends’ orthodoxy. At one meeting, it was reported that Quakers “denied that there were three persons in the Godhead; and that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost was a threefold variety or manifestation of God.” A meeting time was then set up to debate this point of doctrine at the minister’s home, in which William Penn and George Whitehead were the major participants. Despite the ostensibly

private arrangement of the dispute, much of Vincent’s congregation appeared. With little resolved at the ensuing raucous meeting, first William Penn, then Vincent, then Whitehead and finally Thomas Danson (a fellow Presbyterian ally of Vincent’s) exposed and explored the dispute in the press.\textsuperscript{22}

This extended discussion of the mechanics of theological debate demonstrates the inter-relationship between the communal, personal and ideological in Quaker disputes with other sects and in theological debates of the period in general. All were the variable and contested components of a “public sphere” that preceded the commercial/political framework set forth by Habermas and others. The public sphere, as shall be seen, was perceived as an unfortunate and dangerous place, into which one only entered apologetically. The fact of its existence, however, and of the highly public nature of early modern identity (exemplified by honor culture) made avoiding it nearly impossible. This consideration was especially true for a religious community such as the Society of Friends, which sought during the 1660s and 1670s to control its message and institutionalize its Christian orthodoxy. George Keith’s work in this period, both personal and in print, must be understood as part of this project, rather than mined for signs of future schism. Chapter three explores this inter-relationship between personal identity and the Society’s control of its public reputation.

The dispute between the Presbyterians and Friends also reveals why this apologetic political project was necessary. The Society of Friends experienced difficulty

in articulating an understanding of the Christian Trinity, which reflected a larger problem experienced by some Christians in the period. In attacking the notion of God as three persons, William Penn was repeating the arguments of John Fry, a Parliamentarian, whose 1648 tract, *The Accuser Shamed*, challenged not so much the notion of Father-Son-Holy Spirit as one God, as the description of these three as “persons.” The argument between the Quakers and the Presbyterians was structured by scholastic categories of substances and accidents. A substance was something defined without any dependence upon something else, while an accident was a dependent quality. Thus, in the example of a red book, the book is the substance while its quality of being red is an accident (the application of this terminology, of course, proved slippery). Penn, Fry, Vincent and Thomas Danson all agreed that the elements of the Trinity could not each be a substance, since that would have made them three gods. God alone (the being who comprehended the three persons of the Trinity, as opposed to God the Father, the first person of the Trinity) could have a divine substance. Neither could these three aspects or persons of God be accidents, since this would have made the persons of the Trinity non-essential qualities, and especially undermined the Gospel story of Christ (whose suffering and death would seem distinctly less significant if he were not completely God as well as man). Vincent and Danson, accordingly, professed that they meant by a person not a substance, but a subsistence, a mode of being. What they meant by this was less clear. Penn, again repeating Fry, declared “No one Substance can have three distinct Subsistences, and preserve its Unity,” because every subsistence required a substance, which meant “consequently three Gods.” Moreover, “if the infinite God-head subsists in three separate manners or forms,” then no individual subsistence would be “a perfect and
compleat subsistence without the other two,” which would mean that God was divisible into parts. These parts then had to be either finite or infinite. The presence of something finite within God violated the concept of God’s perfection, while infinite parts would again make them three Gods (God being the only infinite being). Penn ultimately had no answer to the difficulties he was raising, and his tract, *The Sandy Foundation Shaken*, led to Penn’s arrest on charges of denying the divinity of Christ.23

Thus Friends’ difficulty with the person of Christ (as both inward Light and outward Man) reflected a similar difficulty that underlay the whole notion of the Trinity. Philip Dixon has argued that after the Restoration, as a result of the growth of radical thought during the Civil War (of which Fry was a part), orthodox expositions of the Trinity became less imaginative and more defensive. Specifically, the Civil War had seen the first broaching of Socinianism in print in England. Faustus Socinus was born in 1539 in Siena, but produced most of his work in Racow, Poland. He argued that belief must be based upon scripture analyzed in accord with reason, that there was no original sin, that Christ’s death was exemplary not propitiatory (i.e. that it was an example of perfect obedience to the divine will, not a payment for Adam’s sin), which views led him to challenge the Trinity (especially Christ’s coequal divinity with God the Father). These last two (if not three) views were equally held by Friends, as the London dispute revealed. Yet Socinianism was to prove the more conservative end of the new radical threats, because it still accepted the authority of scripture, and argued from it. Penn similarly argued that the term “person” was unscriptural and proclaimed the terminology

to be a post-Biblical tradition. But Penn, like others in this period, was unable to actually formulate a doctrine explaining the relationship between Christ and God, beyond asserting a traditional belief in the divinity of Christ and the unity of God. Keith’s attempts to deal with this and other issues of Quaker orthodoxy are the subject of chapter two, which revolves around two of three major strains within Keith’s pre-Schism writing.24

The first strain is dealt with in chapter one. The Vincent-Penn dispute was waged in clandestine presses distributing dissenting ideas that attacked the foundations of the hierarchical, clerical church, events usually identified with the radical Enlightenment. Anticlericalism, has been identified by historian Jason Champion as the product of a series of “crises of popery.” Keith’s earliest depictions of the Inner Light deployed a particular Protestant historical understanding that reflected both these crises and the resulting anti-Catholicism and anti-clericalism within a millenarian framework. Chapter one explores this system of thought within the history of the Civil War and the Society of Friends.

As mentioned, the result of printing the *Sandy Foundation* for William Penn was that he was arrested for blasphemy and held for several months, until he printed a tract that asserted his belief in the full divinity and humanity of Christ. The Bishop of Worcester, Edward Stillingfleet held several personal conferences with Penn that

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24 For Socinus see Dixon, *Nice & Hot Disputes*, p. 39-42. The argument of both sides in the 1668 also reflected what Dixon has referred to as a clash between formal and analogical terminology - between a metaphorical language and an insistence on “univocal” language. Where Penn and Fry were distressed by the use of the term “person” being applied to the divine beings mentioned in scripture, because “person” must be understood in the same way with regards to the divine as to the humane, Thomas Danson argued at length that the term should be applied differently to each category of beings. The members of the Trinity were persons “though not strictly, yet proportionably, or Analogically so call’d.” Danson, *A Synopsis of Quakerism*, p. 4.
convinced the Bishop of the latter’s orthodoxy, and Penn was released. This was not the first or last time that Friends would use elite connections to ameliorate persecution and seek release from one of Britain’s hellish prisons. Chapter three, in presenting the various public strategies deployed by the Society in its own defence, looks at two cases of the Society grooming such connections, as well as the role of ideas as a social currency within such networks.

The bridge between personal ideology and the public sphere of religious debate was the Society of Friends, a movement that grounded all of its doctrines in the public and expressive. Friends were not Freethinkers, but at heart dogmatic English Protestants steeped in the heavy Biblicism of the period. But in the new context of the post-Civil War period such traditional hedges against heterodoxy were unsatisfying. Keith’s use of the Ancient Theology to tease out the nature of the Inner Light, therefore, will be interpreted not, as traditional Quaker histories have often suggested, as a personal over-intellectualization of the Inner Light, but as part of a larger apologetic project within the society necessitated by the greater dangers of heterodoxy and the larger volume of public discourse in the Restoration period. As this section will seek to make clear, the personal, the ideological and the expressive were always a collective not an individual act for the Society of Friends, and as the meeting system coalesced, they all became of great concern to the Society’s leadership in their pursuit of legal toleration.
Chapter I
“Though There Were As Many Books of Scripture as the Whole World Could Contain”25
George Keith, Post-Restoration Quaker

Civil War proved the ineradicable memory in British consciousness. In his earliest works, George Keith combined it, the dominant experience of his generation, within an understanding of the English and Scottish Reformations, which will be called here “Protestant historiography.” The Reformation split with Rome opened the question of the legitimacy of church and monarchy in Protestant countries possessing established churches. A millenarian interpretation of the papacy as the Antichrist and of England as a bulwark for “true religion,” however, both alleviated this problem and met with the practicalities of war and statecraft through the Elizabethan and early Stuart periods to reinforce Protestantism as a central component of British political identities.

Ideologically and rhetorically, this positioning of English identities anchored on the conception of the Church of Rome as, not simply a competing institution and ideology, but as one of the twin polar dichotomies (the other being – at times – anabaptism or ranterism) between which British Protestant thinkers defended their own position as the golden mean.26

This language, unremarkably, was the diction of Quakerism, or (as they phrased

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25 Keith, Immediate Revelation Not Ceased (2nd edition, n.p. 1675), p. 60, original edition ([Amsterdam?], 1668) All page numbers are taken from the second edition and have been referenced against the original (1675). The lack of a publisher reflects the fact that many of Friends’ tracts in this period were produced clandestinely, often in Holland.
26 I use here the remark “Reformation split with Rome,” in reference to the considerable body of literature that sees a series of “reformations” both within and ultimately divisive from the institutional medieval church.
it) the Lamb’s War: the struggle of the inward spirit against the darkness of a corrupt and antichristian world. This central metaphor served as the basis for a series of similar dichotomies that made the outward historical world and the believer’s inward spiritual state nearly interchangeable. At both levels, the common enemy was clericalism: an over-powerful, sacramental priesthood identified with antichristian Roman tyranny. The mediation of this dichotomy between the godly and the profane structured Keith’s initial answer to this epistemic crisis: his need for certainty in the chaotic religious world produced by the Civil War and in the larger dispute over the nature of knowledge in Europe.

**The Civil War and the Rise of Quakerism**

The onset of armed conflict between King Charles I and Parliament resulted in the collapse of press censorship and an outpouring of religious enthusiasm. Puritanism - a strain of English Protestant temperament concerned with the purging of “popish” vestiges within the Church of England and fueled by an evangelical fervor for personal and public moral reform - suddenly found itself released from the institutional constraints created by early Stuart society.²⁷ The presbyterian wing of Puritanism became dominant in the

²⁷ The definition of Puritanism has long been in contention, and the literature on the subject is vast. William Haller identified it as part of a single movement extending from the Elizabethan Church settlement through the Civil War, shifting from political to social reform with the breaking of the Classis movement during the reign of Elizabeth I. Christopher Hill and other Marxists have developed this interpretation according to a structural framework and argued that the Puritan social and moral ethos was a central component in creating the modern capitalist work ethic. The problem of terminology lies in the fact that Puritanism, like Quakerism, was a term of abuse, but unlike the latter, Puritanism was not institutionally or programmatically coherent. There has been a counter tendency, therefore, to claim either that Puritanism did not exist, or to limit it to presbyterians and independents. Peter Lake and Patrick Collinson have produced a series of interesting works that, while rejecting the idea of a single Puritan “movement,” see in Early Modern English religious discourse a clear identification of individuals on the basis of religious
Parliament, and proceeded (under pressure from Parliament’s Scottish allies) to remake the Church of England in its own image. The result was the Westminster Assembly and eventually the Westminster Confession, which failed as a model for the national church, but succeeded as the confession of denominational Presbyterianism. The eventual defeat of a presbyterian settlement and the earlier outlawing of episcopacy by Parliament meant that the Church of England ceased to exist as an organizationally coherent body. At the same time, Baptists and Independents appeared more openly and were able to increase their numbers.28

There was also a proliferation of more radical sects. As the Civil War progressed through the execution of the King and the establishment of the Commonwealth, many sectaries understood these events in millennial terms. For the politically minded, especially those in the army, this meant that the “Man of Blood” (Charles I) should be replaced by the “Rule of the Saints,” making the creation of a stable government increasingly difficult. The Levellers, a movement within the army, sought an open

political settlement with the franchise extended to all male heads of families. An economic parallel to this group existed in Gerard Winstanley and the Diggers, who argued in favor of communal economic relationships. Both movements were crushed militarily.29

At the extreme fringe were the Ranters, an antinomian sect who believed that the spirit of Christ purified them to such a degree that they could transcend all moral laws. They were also militantly anti-clerical, given to public haranguing, and in some cases pantheistic. According to Christopher Hill, there were two revolutions during the Civil War: a first which succeeded in securing the rights of property, and a second, which failed but “might have established communal property, a far wider democracy in political and legal institutions, might have disestablished the state church and rejected the protestant ethic.” Ranterism, for Hill, was a reaction by the lower orders - temporarily severed from the social hierarchy by the war - against middle-class Puritanism. This interpretation, both of the Ranters and of radical sects generally, has come under attack. The actual number and significance of these groups, even within the New Model Army, has been challenged, as has Hill’s overly economic reading of their beliefs. J.C. Davies has launched the most sustained charge, declaring the Ranters to be little more than a paranoid fiction in the minds of Parliamentarians. There is little question that there were individual Ranters, such as Abiezer Coppe and Lawrence Clarkson. Whether they existed in any significant numbers or constituted a coherent sect, let alone whether they sought to “reject the protestant ethic,” is less clear. Of greater significance is the role of the idea of

Ranterism - of an antinomian disintegration of all social and moral order - to religious discourse. The Ranters became a bogeyman both for the enemies of Quakers (who sought to conflate Quakerism and Ranterism) and Friends themselves (who used Ranterism to rhetorically situate themselves as a less dangerous sect).30

The last important Civil War sect was the Muggletonians. In 1652, Lodowick Muggleton and John Reeve declared themselves to be the two witnesses whose coming was prophesied in Revelations 11, and who would die and be resurrected in order to herald the second coming of Christ. They rejected not only clergy, but all outward communal worship (to such a degree that, when E.P. Thompson located the last known Muggletonian in the late 1970s his religious affiliation was unknown to both his wife and


There is a danger in caricaturing Hill’s work, which was some of the first to interpret radical Civil War sects as something more than quaint eccentrics. While he saw in these sects a lost radical possibility, he conceded the strength of ideas of monarchy and hierarchy among much of the population. Hill defended this position against the onslaught of Revisionist scholarship, in “Why Bother About the Muggletonians?” in Christopher Hill, Barry Reah, and William Lamont, eds. *The World of the Muggletonians* (London: Temple Smith, 1983), p. 6-23. There has been considerable debate over the social origins of the Society of Friends. Hill, as mentioned, saw Civil War radicalism as essentially a failed revolt by the lower orders. Richard T. Vann has shown that Quakers drew broadly from all social classes “except the very highest and the very lowest,” but that after the Restoration fewer gentry joined. Regional studies have both rebutted and confirmed these conclusions. Additional connections have been made to longer standing regional traditions of religious radicalism such as Lollardy. Baptist congregations also proved an important source of converts. Hugh Barbour has argued that Quakers grew on the fringes of Puritanism, appealing to people “who had been strongly reached but not claimed by puritanism.” It is clear from this literature that the reasons for joining the Society were variable according to region, and that a single over-arching cause is probably untenable. See Alan Cole, “The Social Origins of the Early Friends” *Past and Present* 10 (1956): p. 99-118; Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down*; Richard T. Vann, *The Social Development of English Quakerism 1655-1755* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), p. 73; Judith Hurwisch, “The Social Origins of the Early Quakers” *Past and Present* 48 (1970): p. 156-61; Hugh Barbour, *The Quakers in Puritan England* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1964) p. 92; Margaret Spufford “The Importance of Religion” and Patrick Collinson “Critical Conclusion” in *The World of Rural Dissenters* ed. Margaret Spufford. Adrian Davies summarizes this literature and presents his own research on Essex in *Quakers in English Society, 1655-1725* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), chs 10 & 11.
children). This was another group against whom the Quakers set themselves, to whom they were often compared.³¹

It was out of this milieu that the Friends, or as they were earlier known “the Children of Light,” were born. There were numerous “proto-Quaker” sects, and Fox found allies in individuals who had trod paths very similar to his own, including many Baptists. One of the most important of these was Fox’s future wife Margaret Fell, a gentry woman whose home at Swarthmore Hall became a base for the early Friends, and who played an important role handling their finances and doctrinal disagreements within the Society. Of equal or greater importance was James Nayler. A former quartermaster in the Parliamentary army, he was the only Friend who did not defer to Fox, and he became a rival for leadership in the Society. He was also the Friends’ most valuable controversial writer, able to argue effectively in the press on behalf of Friends’ beliefs more capably than Fox.³²

³¹ The standard work remains Christopher Hill, et al. The World of the Muggletonians.
With their refusal to take oaths, to show “hat honor,” their Ranter-like claims to have Christ within them, and their often scandalous public behavior (including, most luridly, “going naked as a sign”), the Quakers were seen as a unique threat to religious orthodoxy in the 1650s. An infamous incident involving James Nayler in 1656 seemed to confirm these perceptions. Recovering at the home of a Friend and prophet named Martha Simmonds from both exhaustion and a marathon fast during one of his imprisonments, Nayler was approached by Martha and her followers to prove his authority as a voice of the Spirit. These women had previously been disrupting the meetings of fellow Friends Edward Burroughs and Francis Howgill and wanted Nayler to reveal his greater charismatic power against George Fox. Having possibly already suffered a mental breakdown, Nayler was persuaded and rode into the city of Bristol astride a horse (because they couldn’t find a donkey) while Simmonds and her followers waved branches before him chanting either “holy, holy, holy,” or “hosanna, hosanna, hosanna.” Nayler was subsequently arrested for blasphemy and whipped so severely that it broke his health permanently. He recanted his beliefs and died a few years later. The Society’s ability to isolate Nayler and disown his actions, however, proved a successful test of the sect’s durability.33

that made them a part of god, but were forced to conceal this fact (and ultimately reject the doctrine itself) after the Nayler incident, New Light on George Fox and Early Quakerism: The Making and Unmaking of a God (San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, 1992). The best recent treatment of Nayler is Leo Damrosch, The Sorrows of the Quaker Jesus, James Nayler and the Puritan Crackdown on the Free Spirit (London: Harvard University Press, 1996). Larry Ingle treats the subject in First Among Friends, p. 128-152, where he stresses Nayler’s mental and physical disintegration and Simmonds’ influence upon him, on the one hand, and George Fox’s binary enemy/friend worldview and failure to meet and deal with Nayler tactfully at certain key moments. For Margaret Fell, see Bonnelyn Young Kunze, Margaret Fell and the Rise of Quakerism (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994).

33 Friends were not actually nude when “going naked as a sign,” but in some form of underclothing. Ronald Hutton and Barry Reah have both seen the threat posed by Quakerism and radical sectarianism generally as a major impetus for Parliament's recalling of the Charles II to the throne, see Hutton, The Restoration, a
The Restoration of Charles II to the throne of England forced the Quakers, like all Dissenters, to adapt. Charles, who had secretly converted to Catholicism while in exile, did not desire a narrow or persecutory religious settlement; but events in England, particularly the push by conservative elements within the Parliament and the abortive Fifth Monarchist Venner uprising in 1661, drove the adoption of a more repressive policy. These laws became known as the Clarendon Code: the Conventicle Act (passed in 1664, renewed in 1670), banning non-Church of England religious assemblies and the Five Mile Act, prohibiting dissenting clergymen from living near corporate towns. They resulted in the arrest of perhaps thousands of Quakers and other sectaries. The Restoration also saw the gradual adoption of the Peace Testimony. Many early Friends, including George Bishop and James Naylor, had served and become radicalized in the Parliamentary army. While Fox had himself opposed violence, and sought suffering at the hands of his enemies as a form of religious expression, it was not until now that the Society of Friends adopted pacifism as a statement of principle. 

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Political and Religious History of England and Wales 1658-1667 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986) and Barry Reay, The Quakers and the English Revolution (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1985). For the Restoration religious settlement, see I.M. Green, The Re-Establishment of the Church of England, 1660-1663 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978) and John Spurr, The Restoration Church of England, 1646-1689. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991). Adrian Davies has shown that enforcement was not constant but coincided with periods of political tension, the early to mid 1660s, 1670-72, and 1682-85, Quakers in English Society. Understanding of the Peace Testimony has developed considerably over the century. Rufus Jones (himself a Friend, who tried personally to prevent the outbreak of the Second World War by meeting with Hitler) saw the Testimony through the lens of his own religious experience as a part of Quakerism from the very beginning. Christopher Hill and Barry Reay have revised this interpretation, arguing that the adoption of pacifism was a strategic move after the Restoration to avoid persecution and to distance themselves from more revolutionary sects such as the Fifth Monarchy Men. Meredith Weddle, most recently, has combined the two positions, seeing a strong strain of quietist pacifism among the earliest Friends, but no attempt to promulgate it as official doctrine until the Restoration. After its adoption, as Weddle has described, there was little attempt to preach it to non-Friends, and at times a willingness to rely on non-Friends’s use of violence. See Christopher Hill, The Experience of Defeat, Milton and Some Contemporaries (New York: Elizabeth Sifton Books, 1984), p. 160-163; Barry Reay, The Quakers and the English Revolution; Meredith Baldwin Weddle, Walking in the Way of Peace, Quaker Pacifism in the Seventeenth Century (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).
Nor was Nayler the last schismatic threat to the Society. In 1660, John Perrot returned to England. A particularly charismatic Irish Friend, he was arrested abroad by the Roman Inquisition and incarcerated in the Prison for Madmen. Upon returning to England, he embroiled the Society in a fight over whether one should remove one’s hat during prayer (afterward known as the “Hat Controversy“). The issue expanded to a fight over Fox’s authority over the Society, and rallied many Friends who were not personally connected to Perrot. In particular, John Pennyman, a Yorkshire Quaker, who attacked Fox for, among other things, the expense of his wedding to Fell, also joined in the dispute. Perrot’s followers remained a nuisance even after their leader’s arrest and exile to America and became part of the community upon which the Keithian Schism would draw. The controversy, moreover, occurred just as the Society was seeking to present a less threatening and radical face to the monarchy and at a time when persecution was increasing.35

The Restoration most importantly resulted in the adoption of the meeting system. Friends had formed *ad hoc* committees (to aid imprisoned Friends, support ministers and provide charity) from the 1650s. In 1665, in the wake of the Hat Controversy and during one of Fox’s imprisonments, the remaining leadership adopted "The Testimony of the Brethren," which strengthened control over the expression of the spirit. Fox accepted the decision upon his release, and a system of monthly and quarterly meetings was established throughout England. This structure was centralized by the creation of the Meeting for Sufferings in 1673 and the London Yearly Meeting in 1680. A primary job

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of the meeting system, with its control over all Friends’ publications, became the policing of the boundaries of the Society and the legitimizing of voices within it.36

In the late 1670s there was a reaction lead by John Story and John Wilkinson to these developments, and to the formation of women’s meetings and Fox’s demand that Friends not avoid persecution. As Clare Martin has pointed out, the irony was that the meeting system adopted to deal with the Hat Controversy became the basis for the subsequent Wilkinson Story Schism. More broadly, this schism (like Perrot's) marshaled opposition to the authority of Fox within the Society. Although outmaneuvered by Fox, the followers of the “two Johns” joined a chorus of disaffected Quaker voices at the periphery of the Society. Separate meetings came to exist, including one on Harp’s Lane in London near the Gracechurch meetinghouse. John Pennyman reappeared to contribute his own thoughts in print, while three others, Thomas Crispe, Francis Bugg and his aunt Ann Dowcra entered the lists against Fox. These meetings and people would serve as the infrastructure for the later Keithian Schism.37

36 Moore, *The Light in their Consciences*; Arnold Lloyd, *Quaker Social History 1669-1738*. (Westport: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1950). Lloyd sees the adoption of the meeting system as having doomed the Society to mediocre leadership and a movement away from the “Spirit.” Thus, his work fits in with a large body of scholarship that interprets early Quaker history as a declension narrative. There is perhaps a danger in interpreting events as a betrayal of the faith, because they involve the abandonment of those elements most attractive to our twentieth century ears (especially ironic since many, such as anti-slavery, were only adopted later, and enforced through the meeting system).

37 Martin, *Controversy and Division*, chapter 2. Martin interprets the Schism as part of a larger conflict between the centralizing tendencies produced within the Society by the need to survive persecution and the autonomy of the individual conscience. Her own evidence, however, seems to demonstrate less annoyance at the Society’s impositions on the individual than on the local meetings. As she herself argues, community was important to Quakerism and the schismatics did not object to business meetings in and of themselves. A better model for the schism (or perhaps merely another dimension of it), therefore, might be the larger English phenomenon of localism. See J. S. Morrill, *The Revolt in the Provinces: The People of England and the Tragedies of War, 1630-1648* (New York: Longman, 1999); Muriel C. McClendon, *The Quiet Reformation: Magistrates and the Emergence of Protestantism in Tudor Norwich* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999); T. H. Breen, “Persistent Localism: English Social Change and the Shaping of New England Institutions” in *Puritans and Adventurers: Change and Persistance in Early America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 3-23.
The Restoration was also marked by the deaths of much of the old Quaker leadership and the rise of a second generation of Friends. George Burroughs died in 1662, Richard Hubberthorne in 1662, and Francis Howgill in 1669. Over the course of the 1670s, moreover, Fox’s health would begin its decline, slowing him down considerably. The new generation of Friends, including George Keith, William Penn and Robert Barclay were all “convinced” after the return of Charles II, and cut their sectarian teeth under the new religious settlement, rather than during the heady times of the Civil War. For them, “walking in the Spirit” was an experience defined entirely by persecution, not hopes of an imminent millennium. These individuals as a group were also better educated. Penn (born 1644) was the son of the famous Admiral Sir Thomas Penn, attended Oxford (until he was expelled for nonconformity), went on a Grand Tour of the continent, and was trained in the law. Barclay was part of the important Scottish family, the Barclays of Urie, and educated in Paris (where he had been briefly a Roman Catholic). While an important development, this changeover in personnel should not be exaggerated; continuity was provided to the Society not only by Fell and Fox, but Isaac Penington (convinced c. 1657), George Whitehead (c. 1652), and John Milton’s former secretary Thomas Ellwood (1659). With the gradual death and disintegration of the original leadership, however, a new generation of men did rise to prominence within the Society.  

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Quaker Theology

Quakerism, more than most seventeenth-century faiths, was more experiential than doctrinal. Historians have long since ceased to trust Fox’s *Journal* as a reliable source for either a narrative of Fox’s conversion or the early history of the Society of Friends. Compiled from a series of autobiographies written by Fox decades after the events described, these manuscripts were edited into a single narrative (playing down Fox’s millennialism and self-identification with Christ) by Thomas Ellwood after Fox’s death in 1691. Fox’s language, however, is still a valuable entry point for understanding early Quaker doctrine:

Now the Lord God hath opened to me by his invisible power how that every man was enlightened by the divine light of Christ; and I saw it shine through all, and that they that believed in it came out of condemnation and came to the light of life and became children of it, but they that hated it, and did not believe in it, were condemned by it, though they made a profession of Christ. This I saw in the pure openings of the Light without the help of any man, neither did I then know where to find it in the Scriptures; though afterwards, searching the Scriptures, I found it. For I saw in that Light and Spirit which was before Scripture was given forth, and which led the holy men of God to give them forth, that all must come to that Spirit, if they would know God, or Christ, or the Scriptures aright, which they that gave them forth were taught and led by.39

39 George Fox, *The Journal of George Fox* ed. Norman Penney, esq. 2 Volumes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911), p. 33. This interpretation of Quaker theology is centered in the post-Restoration period, when Richard Bailey has argued that Friends, in particular William Penn and Robert Barclay, “bowdlerized” Fox’s original doctrine of “celestial inhabitation” and divinization in response to persecution and the Nayler trial. He is less clear on what the motivations of these two Friends was for joining a community whose central doctrine they felt an immediate need to radically re-write. It is not in the scope of this dissertation to challenge his reading of Civil War Friends’ theology (which he identifies almost exclusively with Fox, drawing most of his citations from a not easily acquired nineteenth century collection of Fox’s writings). The question of Friends’ re-writing of their theology will come up later, but interestingly, Anglican charges to this effect mainly applied to tracts written by Penn and Whitehead in the 1670s, and less to those by Fox in the 1650s.
The central tenet, therefore, was the presence of Christ’s Spirit (or Light or Truth, the terms are usually interchangeable) within all believers, a fact that transcended any formal statement of doctrine, set liturgy, or even scripture itself. For, as Friends quoted endlessly from St. Paul: “the letter killeth.” While Friends were essentially Biblicist Protestants, with assumptions inherited from the larger Christian culture, this essential premise could and at times did push them into more radical directions.

Explaining Quakerism solely by what differentiated it from Calvinism unfortunately defines it according to what most angered its enemies. At the same time, early Quakerism was extraordinarily adversarial in its thinking, judgmental rather than utopian. To begin, Quakerism was universalist. Against the Calvinist creed that Christ had died only to save the elect, Friends believed that the inner Light of Christ was present within all, and, therefore, that all had the potential to “walk in the Truth” and realize salvation. Damnation became a conscious act of rejecting this truth. At most, some Friends argued acceptance constituted assent to a specific call from God, rather than a completely self-willed act. Even this understanding, however, robbed the state and church of any coercive role in conversion. Whereas Calvinists argued that a sermon could be the means by which God’s grace worked in the heart of a sinner, and that the state thereby acted according to the divine plan by forcing one's attendance at worship, Friends’ demand for an immediate spiritual experience denied formal worship any inherent function. This gave Quakerism an anti-clerical caste, the importance of which will become clear in the ensuing chapters.

As T. L. Underwood has argued, the foundation for this faith was a particular form of primitivism, the desire to restore the Christian faith to its primitive roots in the
teachings of Christ and the actions of the Apostles. Historiography was central to the English Protestant imagination. The Reformation was understood as a particular moment in Christian history: the reemergence of Christ’s Church from the depths of papist apostasy. According to this argument, the Pope was not simply the head of a heretical church, but the Anti-Christ predicted in Revelations, who had accreted various forms of idolatry atop the original ecclesiology, sacraments, and ministry instituted by Christ. The purpose of Protestantism, therefore, was not the achievement of any progressive aims, but the return to the primitive, or original state of Christian worship. Friends extended this moment backwards, however, to before the writing of Scripture, when the Apostles acted in accordance with the direct experience of the Spirit.40

The presence of Christ within the believer, “one and the same Christ, who died and rose again, and ascended, &c. and is revealed within, was and is Spiritually in the Saints their Hope of Glory,” ultimately led saints to the perfection of Adam before the Fall. Such perfectionism was at odds with the tension in Calvinism between the saint’s striving to live according to God’s law (an instinct produced by the inward renewal of saving grace) and the inherently fallen state of man in a corrupt and carnal world. Oddly, this belief made Friends less ecumenical in their views of other churches than most other Protestant groups. The fallen state of man meant a Presbyterian (for example) could believe Congregationalists to be wrong on ecclesiology without denying the sincerity of their faith, but for a Quaker, the stubborn insistence of a person in listening to clerical

preaching and participating in the sacraments revealed their rejection of the spirit and thereby their unconverted state.

The direct reliance upon the spirit in all one's actions had several other consequences. The first was a rejection of the outward administering of the sacraments, in favor of a "spiritual" baptism and Lord's Supper, understood as part of the conversion experience. In the process, Friends renounced the essential skeleton of Christian worship, which gave meaning to both the life cycle and the calendar. Secondly, the Friends had a tendency to allegorize “historical” elements of Christian belief into stages in the individual convert's journey towards accepting the Spirit within. George Fox, for example, declared of the AntiChrist that since “John saith that many deceivers are entred into the world, who confess not that Jesus is come in the flesh, this is a deceiver and an Antichrist.” What appears to be an orthodox scriptural exegesis was then muddled by Fox, who continued: “they are the deceivers that hate the light, and such turn into the wicked world which lyes in wickedness, and they are the Antichrists which deny the light and hate it, which are turned into the world, which opposes the light.” In this statement (typical of Fox in its overlapping clauses repeated ad nauseam throughout the work), Fox provided himself some cover against denying the outward Christ, but by combining the two statements so closely, he made it less than clear what he meant by the flesh: Christ’s incarnation or the Inner Light’s, i.e. Christ’s, entrance into the individual believer’s body. This problem is only exacerbated by the sheer volume of text transforming Quakerism’s temporal enemies into antichrists (if such men were false Christs, did that make believers something akin to Christ?) and declaring the importance of not having one’s “eyes abroad” in seeking Christ, and the few small references to his flesh. Combined with the
belief that Christ existed within all believers in all times (even those before the incarnation), and that the Inner Light could potentially provide all knowledge necessary to salvation, and the historical significance of the Gospel narrative and the future history of the Apocalypse become unclear. On another occasion, Fox denied calling the scriptures “Antichrist” but insisted “they which profess the Scriptures, and live not in the life and power of them, as they did that gave them forth, that I witness to be Antichrist.” Christ and Antichrist all but ceased being actual personages. Friends in general, as we shall see, generally rejected the notion of the atonement as the imputation of Christ’s righteous to the individual as a ransom for original sin (arguing that this merely promoted sin). As will be seen, this mixture of opaque language and a potentially radical rejection of the necessity of the Gospel as history was to prove significant in the Schism.41

Not that Keith himself in these early years was averse to precisely the same rhetoric, forming a series of interlocking dichotomies. In an exegesis of the scriptural passage referring to the two witnesses with which the Muggletonians identified, he described the witnesses as the testimony of the Spirit, who were killed

by the Dragon and his followers, [i.e. those who reject the Light within] ... and as it wer the dead bodies of the slain witnesses, which have lain in the streets of Sodom and Egypt, spiritually so called, that is to say of the fals and Antichristian Sinagogue, Babylon, the Mother of fornications with her daughters, ... Now these Merchants of Babylon, and bloody Butchers, and Murderers of the two witnesses, and testimonies of God, have traded and made their merchandise of these dead bodies, viz. the words and forms of truth, after they had slain the life that appeared therin ... and sold them, in the streets, or market places, of the false Church, ... Well! the judgement of this great whore is com, and truly begun.

41 George Fox, The Unmasking and Discovering of Anti-Christ (London, 1653), p. 3; idem, Saul’s Errand to Damascus (London: Giles Calvert, 1653), p. 11, 14.
What for other sects would have been interpreted as a description of events to come, in Keith's hands, became metaphors of spiritual authenticity and the distinction between “Spiritual” and clerical worship. The most serious form that this might take, however, was an allegorizing of the incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. Although the Society frequently denied this heresy when pressed, their writings often devalued the "historical Christ" in favor of the Christ within. The incarnation was the human condition, the resurrection became spiritual, the sufferings were embodied by the believer. While, for early Quakerism, this effect was often the result of Friends’ rhetorical style, as shall be seen, it later became an intentional technique to disguise doctrine.42

**Restoration Scotland and Keith’s Early Years**

Little is known of Keith's conversion. The Cambridge Platonist philosopher Henry More recounted to his pupil and friend Anne Conway a report, which More had heard from "a Bishops son in Scotland," that:

> G. Keith says that the reading of my Mystery of Godlinesse first turned him Quaker. I must confesse I always had a suspicion that he had read that book, but that he should soile the good he thence received by such an evill

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42 George Keith, *The Universall Free Grace of the Gospell Asserted* (n.p., 1671), p. 5; for similar imagery, see also Fox, *The Great Mistery of the Great Whore* (London: Thomas Simmons, 1659); for the internalization of the Biblical story, see Owen Walkins, “Some Early Quaker Autobiographies” *JFHS* 45 (1953): p. 65-74; and Richard Bailey, *New Light on George Fox and Early Quakerism*, p. 40-41; for the allegorizing of Christ specifically, see Barbour, *The Quakers in Puritan England*; and Endy, *William Penn and Early Quakerism*. The references to commercial exchange were common to Friends, who attacked salaried clergymen for commodifying their services. As Christopher Hill has described Quaker writings: they “become almost a stream of consciousness, pouring out endlessly and uncritically, one thing leading to another, most things leading to the wickedness of hireling priests.” *The Experience of Defeat*, p. 128.
apostasy from the Church way and order is a signe to me he did not drinke deepe enough of what was there offered to him.  

There is indeed an irony in Keith's attraction to a work that was in part an attack on Quakers (along with Familists and Thomas Hobbes). In the introduction, More had denounced those, “whether out of the power of Melancholy that calls the thoughts inward [towards the Inner Light], or the scandal they take from abuse of the personal Offices of our blessed Saviour (they seeing the generality of Christians make the external frame of Religion but a palliation for sin), or whether from the obscurity of some Articles of the Christian Faith” who “have become plain Infidels and misbelievers of the whole History of Christ, and will have nothing to do with his person, but look upon the Mystery of Christianity as a thing wholly within us, and that has no other object then what is either acting or acted in our selves.” Henry More will be discussed more fully in the next chapter; here it will suffice to point to Keith’s early interest in More as an example of his attraction to illuminism as a solution to the quest for certain truth. Yet the path of illuminism was not individualistic, but led immediately to a community, the Society of Friends.

Born in 1638, in Peterhead, Aberdeenshire, to Presbyterian parents, Keith received a Masters of Arts Degree from Marischall College in 1658. He received a traditional scholastic education, learning Greek, Latin and Hebrew. His primary interest was in mathematics, and he tutored the future Anglican bishop Gilbert Burnet, and read Descartes and Pierre Gassendi with him in the early 1660s. Burnet described,

considerably after the fact,

I set myself to study mathematics that winter [of 1662], and made a considerable progress with the help of George Keith that is now a quaker; he is a great mathematician, and a very extraordinary man, only too fanciful and enthusiastic. He was then a presbyterian, and I took him off from that, but he never settled to anything till he turned quaker, yet in many things he differs from them.

In a separate manuscript, Burnet explained “I applied myself to Philosophy and Mathematicks, and run thro Des Cartes and Gassendi and George Keith, afterwards a famous Quaker and in conclusion as famous an ennemy to them, led me thro all the Elementary parts but not into Algebra or the Conick Sections.”45

Keith’s education, while continuing over his lifetime, proved unsatisfying spiritually. “So was it with my self, and with many others who had much literal knowldg, we had drunk in partly from our own reading, and partly from mens speaking upon the Scriptures,” he later remarked, “but there was somewhat that cryed unto the Lord in our Souls.” They sought, Keith explained, “a Better Knowldg, a Knowldg that was Life and Peace, and fruitful in the Works of Righteousness,” while “that other Knowldg became a Burden to us, and was as Death; for we found it Empty, Barren and Unfruitful in the works of Righteousness.” This search for an immediate truth, constituting an experiential and behavioral whole and beyond the trappings of rational debate, reflected what Richard Popkin has called the crisis of skepticism. The Reformation, and the ensuing Wars of Religion, including the English Civil War

45 BL, Harl. MSS 6584 ff. 18(b) – 19(b), Bodl. Add. MSS D. 24, ff. 198 both printed in H. C. Foxcroft, A Supplement From Unpublished MSS to Burnet’s History of My Own Time (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1902). All quotations are from this transcription.
combined with the re-discovery of Classical skepticism (a philosophy which held that no certain knowledge could be obtained) to undermine confidence in traditional sources of intellectual certainty, leading some thinkers to question the possibility of such knowledge entirely. The mutually interlocking authorities of Church and Monarchy so crucial to the northern European medieval world, were set in contest with one another, as England and to a lesser extent Scotland descended into sectarianism.⁴⁶

In addition to these intellectual changes, Keith grew up in chaotic times. Civil War Scotland, while not as religiously efflorescent as England, experienced the general crisis of the Civil War. The year before Keith was born, the Prayer Book Riots in Edinburgh had signaled the refusal of the Scots to accept the Anglican-style innovations to the Presbyterian Kirk instituted by Charles I and the Archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud. The rebellion proceeded through the signing of the National Covenant to defend King and true religion (ignoring how those two goals might contradict one another) and the Bishops Wars against the King. In the summer of 1643, the Scots signed the Solemn League and Covenant with the English Parliament, which included a provision which Scotland understood to mean that England would reform its national church along presbyterian lines (and thus permanently remove the threat of English intrusion into Scottish religious affairs). The Covenanter government in Scotland,

however, switched sides after becoming both dissatisfied with the New Model Army’s political dominance in England and concerned with the spread of religious radicalism. In 1648, the Scots signed the Engagement with the King (at which point the Covenanting movement itself began fracturing) and began the Second Civil War, until the execution of the King at the hands of the English army the following year. Cromwell’s subsequent invasion, defeat and occupation of Scotland brought in English garrisons containing precisely the religious sectarians (such as the Friends) that the Scottish leadership had feared. The English towns of Westmoreland and Yorkshire in the north became bases for Friends’ missionary efforts into Scotland through the mid 1650s. In September of 1657, George Fox began a five-month trip through Scotland, with limited results; but the fear generated by the seeming spread of unorthodox religious belief was threatening enough that General George Monck - commander of the English forces garrisoning Scotland - purged all Quakers from the army and eventually supported the restoration of the Stuarts from the throne.47

The Restoration saw the return of bishops to the Church of Scotland. Unrepentant covenanters were punished, and roughly a quarter of the Scottish national clergy were expelled from their parishes for rejecting the religious settlement. This isolated even

some of those who had opposed the National Covenant from the start, transforming them into a disaffected group outside the church, known as the “Conventiclers,” after their illegal religious meetings. Much as for English Presbyterians, therefore, the Restoration in Scotland (despite being born of a broad fear of radical sectarianism) turned on many of its more moderate allies.

For Friends, the Restoration meant the passage of a separate Scottish Quaker Act in 1661. It also saw both the flowering of Quakerism in Aberdeen and a backlash by local ministers, including George Meldrum, a rector at Marischall College. A leading Friend, William Dewsbury, made numerous converts during his visit there in 1663, most importantly the Convenanter and soldier Alexander Jaffray. As with their English coreligionists, suffering served as a defining characteristic of Scottish Friends’ individual and collective identity. Yet, in England, this was to become a subject of contention. Wilkinson and Story objected in part to Fox’s insistence that Friends not avoid persecution, such as by paying tithes. William Penn, meanwhile, was developing legal strategies and using his political connections to aid imprisoned Friends (and receiving criticism from other Friends), which Craig Horle has argued were crucial to the survival of the Society. The collection by the Meeting for Sufferings of accounts of persecution experienced by Friends, however, was both part of the Quaker lobbying effort for toleration and a *de facto* agent in the promotion of suffering as a symbol of the Society.\(^48\)

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\(^{48}\) Craig W. Horle, *The Quakers and the English Legal System 1660-1688* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988); Mary Dunn, *William Penn*; Ethyn Williams Kirby, “The Quakers’ Efforts to Secure Civil and Religious Liberty, 1660-96” *The Journal of Modern History* 7 (1935): p. 401-421. As will be seen this issue became of even more concern after the passage of the Act of Toleration, when Friends began lobbying for an “affirmation” that Friends could substitute for the verboten oath. While crucial for Friends to survive in society, many saw the affirmation as an oath by another name and a betrayal of principle.
Keith himself experienced numerous imprisonments over the course of the 1660s and 1670s. Banished from the city of Aberdeen in 1663, he returned with his fellow Friend Patrick Livingston to visit incarcerated Friends and was himself confined in the Aberdeen Tolbooth for ten months. In a 1665 encounter that demonstrates Friends’ interpretation of their “sufferings:”

*George Keith* being under a religious Concern to bear his Testimony to the Truth in the Great Steeple-house of *Aberdeen*, was, in attempting that Service, violently assaulted, beaten, and knockt down to the Ground, by one *James Horne*, their Bell-ringer. It was observed, that in a short Time after, the said *James Horne* going up the Steeple-house to ring the Bell, suddenly fell down through an Hole above four Stories high, and was instantly killed by the Fall, on the same Place of the Pavement where he had beaten the said *George Keith*.

In a similar fashion, it was recorded that in 1671 a James Skein, known as “Black James,” “a very wicked and abusive Man, who struck *George Keith* violently with his Cane in the Street, and otherwise assaulted and abused him, shortly after died of a virulent Humour, remarkably issuing out of that Arm which had been exercised in the inflicting of those Abuses.” This vicious glee at their persecutors’ misfortunes had replaced in part the expectation of imminent historical vindication for Restoration era Friends. But the surviving records of these events (collected by the local meeting and sent on to London) also reveal how Keith’s actions were incorporated into the operation of the larger Society.49

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The Rhetorical Structure of Keith’s Thought

The intellectual crisis that led Keith into the Quaker fold revealed itself in his early works as a common set of ideas concerning epistemology and authority. The first of these ideas was a traditional Protestant historiography, positing the Society of Friends as the proper continuation of the movement to restore the Church of Christ from Roman apostasy that had begun with Martin Luther. As J. A. I. Champion has argued, in the context of Freethought: “Christianity as an ideology is not simply a set of articles of faith but includes a necessary historical dimension,” including the history of the Christian Church as transmitter or corrupter of those doctrines. Champion further states that: “writing in an English context about Christian belief becomes an even more historical enterprise given that Anglicanism, as a schism from the Roman Catholic faith, rests its validity on the legitimacy (or not) of the historical events of the Reformation.” Yet this argument could be extended to all those sects who subsequently defended their own schism from the British national churches. All such historical judgments, however, necessarily reflected existed in tension with the willingness of those who made them to “unchurch” those previous religious institutions, and thus deny Christian salvation to all of their members. In Keith’s formulation of this history, he rejected the extreme view, arguing that many early Protestants were no doubt saved “according to their faithfulness” at the same time, he defended the unique importance of the Quaker message by stating that “alas, there hath been a great backsliding, and defection since, which some of the Lords servants then saw, that it would come, and that Christ should be again crucified in
Scotland.” Comparing the Scots Presbyterians to the faithless Israelites who followed Moses from Egypt, Keith condemned “the Apostacy of your Church and Priests and People, from what the primitive Protestants and first Reformers were, whose successors ye boast your selves to be.” He pointed to “some of your Fathers, who were honest and faithful servants to God in their day, who saw your Apostacy and defection coming” such as the important Scots Reformers John Knox, George Wishart and John Welsh. Thus Keith declared his intention to draw “a parallel betwixt your fore-fathers principles and practices, and yours,” and thereby show “how ye have gone from them, and quite lost the true Protestant cause, for which the Lord first raised them up, and how ye have healed the wound of the beast, which your fathers gave it.” This parochial Scottish view of history, relieved only by his Biblicism, was in stark contrast to his later works.50

50 J. A. I. Champion, The Pillars of Priestcraft Shaken: The Church of England and its Enemies, 1660-1730 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 224; Keith, A Salutation of Dear and Tender Love to the Seed of God, (n.p. 1665), p. 2-3; George Keith, Help in a Time of Need (n.p. 1664), p. 21-24. John Knox was probably the most famous figure in the Scottish Reformation, and one of the Marian Martyrs. John Welsh was a Scottish minister, who supported the Presbyterian General Assembly against the Episcopal innovations of James I, and was expelled to France where he became a Huguenot preacher until the crackdowns by Louis XIII. He then returned to England, where he died. George Wishart (c.1513?-1546), was a Scottish minister executed for being a Protestant. DNB. The Beast is the Beast of Baylon from Revelations 13, and is being used here by Keith as a metaphor either for the Church of Rome or the Pope. The annotations in the Geneva translation of the Bible identifies the Beast with pre-Christian Rome and its persecution of Christians, The Geneva Bible, a Facsimile of the 1560 Edition (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1969) all references to the Geneva Bible (which had been replaced by the Authorized Version by this time, but whose commentary are still useful) will come from this edition. See also Paul Christianson, Reformers in Babylon, English Apocalyptic Visions From the Reformation to the Eve of the Civil War (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978). Richard Bailey’s interpretation of George Fox as a magus and avatar contains similarities to and differences from my interpretation of Keith. While acknowledging that Fox’s distinction between true inward and false outward religion “was a variation on an English apocalyptic interpretation of the history of Christianity,” and the general influence of the Civil War, he sees in early Quakerism a radical christopresentism that distinguished it from this tradition and connected it to a recurring theme within Christian history. In the process, he most notably scants the role of anti-papery in structuring English Protestant thought, including Fox’s, connecting history, millenarianism and anti-clericalism. New Light on George Fox and Early Quakerism, p. 39. According to Hugh Barbour, a spiritual and physical dualism was characteristic of many early Friends, but sees William Penn as moving away from this over time, instead “the contrast of inner and outer is based on conflicting sources of motivation, of conscience against temptation.” Hugh Barbour, “William Penn, Model of Protestant Liberalism” CH 48 (1979): p. 156-173.
Keith extended this interpretation to the point of arguing that the early Reformers had in fact agreed with Friends’ notion of the light within. In one work, Keith traced the Reformation through the rise of English Puritanism under Elizabeth and James I & VI in opposition to the Book of Common Prayer. Puritanism, moreover, provided a precedent for separating from a false church. Yet, despite this pedigree, Keith pointed out that Presbyterian ministers of the Scottish Church now affiliated themselves with the idolatrous “rabble of the world” who were worse than “Papists, Turks, Pagans,” and with the “Popish and Prelatical Party.” In his most extensive treatment of Quaker Protestantism, *A Looking-Glass For All those Called Protestants in These Nations*, Keith grouped quotations out of the works of William Tyndale (an early Protestant martyr famous for his English translation of the New Testament) under the headings of Friends’ more controversial doctrines, such as Christ’s having died for all men, the nature of scripture, the presence of the Spirit within all men, and the role of good works in justification. Keith told the major sects “let us try your Faith,” and Friends would do likewise, “that it may appear, whose faith is most agreeable to the faith of Antient Protestants and Martyrs.” Knox and other Reformers, according to Keith, accepted the principle “that the Spirit of Prophecie was not ceased, but witnessed the same in themselves.” The Reformation was an unfolding event for Keith, from which these groups had backslid toward the “relics” of Roman apostasy. At the same time, though, Keith understood this unfolding of the Reformation in primitivist terms: as a return to early Christian “simplicity” not a progression toward a new future.51

51 George Keith, *Help in a Time of Need*, p. 26, 23; George Keith, *A Looking Glass For All Those Called Protestants* (London: n.p., 1674), p. 26; see also Keith, *The Benefit, Advantage and Glory of Silent Meetings*, (London, 1670), p. 1. Such historical interpretations of the Reformation for apologetic purposes were hardly unique to Quakers, as Champion has argued; a famous example is William Bradford’s history
The first component to Keith’s theology was thus his interpretation of Reformation history. The second was his use of popery and Protestantism as dialectical metaphors, wherein the former was transformed from a specific organizational body or set of doctrines into the rejection of the Light of Christ within all people. Just as Fox identified rejection of the Inner Light with the Antichrist, both Keith and Fox identified rejection of the Light and of the immediate revelation it provided with the Pope, who was traditionally interpreted by British Protestants as the literal Antichrist. By denying the Inner Light, Keith asked

   do ye [Scottish Presbyterians] not hereby demonstrate your selves to be of the whorish Church? for hath not this been her plea all along this dark night of Apostacy, that the Revelation, Teachings, and leadings of the Spirit of Christ is ceased? therefore another Head was set up in the Church than Christ Jesus, and the Pope and his Council was made Judge to determine all controversies of Religion, and no man was to look at an infallible Judge, (the Spirit of truth within him).

The “whorish church” (the Whore of Babylon) therefore tied together the Christ as Light – Antichrist as those who rejected the Light duality, with the Reformation – Roman apostasy duality into a millennial forum – since while Quakers tended to allegorize these events, they nonetheless believed in an End of Days. These interlocking dualities, thereby, fused the corporate and experiential aspects of Quaker worship with the apocalyptic and historic. In an epistle to Friends Keith called upon them to “remember the Cross of the Lord Jesus, which is his Power in you in every measure of its appearance and revelation in your inward parts,” and not to “follow him that is contrary unto him, of the Plymouth colony, much of which is likewise a history of the Reformation.
who is the Antichrist, who leads contrary to the leadings of Christ.” Central to this hortatory argument was the claim that the Inner Light was the only legitimate basis for personal faith and public ministry, and therefore for the church itself.52

A third major element in these works, therefore, was another binary: godly speech against carnal speech, which was used by Keith and other Quakers in defending their anti-clericalism. Those who lived “In under, and through the Crosse, and by the Cross” can discern “the voyces, differing sounds, the differing apearings, the differing motions, the differing workings, the differnt spirits, [powers], and principals,” and “how the Creaturs work differ from the Work of God, the Creaturs voyce, from Gods voyce, the Creaturs motion, from Gods motion, the Creatures spirit, from Gods spirit.” Being led by the spirit, “hierin also wee have Learned the many and diverse tymes and seasones of bringing forth prayers and thanksgivings unto verball and outward expressions, ... which Come not at all in mans Will & tyme, but have the apoynted seasson, of being brought forth” The most striking aspect of Friends’ attitude towards speech was the silent meeting, to which Keith devoted a tract. He situated this style historically within the history of the Civil War, and a pre-Quaker dissatisfaction among some with preaching that was “at best but that of the Letter.” Yet even these “foremost” people “had to[o] much an eye to words, and too much a life in them.” God then sent messengers, i.e. Friends, to preach Christ within and led them to worship God in the communal enjoyment of the Spirit. The result was a system of communal worship that sought a suppression of the self, and, as Richard Bauman has argued, distrusted language. More

than other activities, speech was subject to expressing the carnal self. Friends “being turned towards God to wait upon him, for his teachings in their silent meetings, have not their meetings to depend upon any speakers, or speaker without;” in contrast, with “all other professions and professors, it is quite otherwise, for if they have no speaker, they have no meeting and so their meetings depend upon the words and lips of men.” Again, therefore, Keith accommodated his understanding of ministry and his anticlericalism into the mutually interrelated dichotomies based upon the Inner Light.53

Even his defense of women’s preaching was less concerned with modern notions of gender equality than in asserting the primacy of the Inner Light in defining the clergy. He focused upon the “Woman of Samaria,” who after recognizing Christ as the Messiah, delivered that message to men in Jerusalem. Keith interpreted this as a call to preach, and as having come not from outward ordinances and education (such as defined ministers in the national churches of Scotland and England, and among most dissenters), but from hearing Christ’s words directly. She, moreover, had not received payment for her preaching, in contrast to the social climbing and mercenary preaching of Conformists and Dissenters alike. Thus the usefulness of her gender for Keith was to strip the ministry of its traditionally male accoutrements and to present it in what, for Keith and other Friends, was its only legitimate basis. Yet by adopting the story of someone who had literally heard Christ speak, Keith reigned in some of the potentially more enthusiastic qualities of female prophecy. Finally, Keith interpreted the Pauline injunction against women speaking in the church as a metaphor for the need of the flesh to be commanded by the

spirit. Quoting the patristic theologian Bernard, Keith declared that “the Woman in this place,” was the flesh, and “the Flesh ought to be Converted unto the Spirit, that she may serve, and not be served; ... for so our Wife shall be, as a fruitful Vine, and shall be saved by bearing of Children, which are good works.” Thus, even gender became for Keith a way of explaining his central concerns of speech and the sources of religious truth, and again a text traditionally interpreted literally became pure metaphor for his central concern with the Inner Light (here set against, not Antichrist, but carnal flesh).54

These strands came together in a series of manuscript interrogatories written by Keith around 1668. They reveal little of his inward spiritual turmoil, but do show his attempts to work out his relationship with his previous affiliation:

Q- Why doe you forsake the good old way of the presbuterians wherein ye formerly walked and Joyne w[ith] the quakers In ther new way
A- So far as any of the presbiterians doe or have walked in their way of god wee have not forsaken them only wee have Left them In thes thinges which are not in nor of the trew way but In and of Antichrysts Way -
Q- you grant them that the presbiterians have been fund In the way of god In some things -
A- yea In several things beyond many others and some others have been fund in the trew way beyond them as the Independents And baptists but the presbiterians ware gott much beyond thes of the Episcopall way which is fardest off among any of them that profess the protestant or reformed religione
Q- you Judge then that the presbiterians are part of the way of god In many things and are not throughly reformed or Turned unto the trew way-

54 George Keith, The Woman-Preacher of Samaria (n.p., 1674). The Story of the Woman of Samaria is told in John 4. Elaine Hobby has stressed the variety and contextualized nature of the arguments for women’s preaching. Among other examples, she demonstrates how Priscilla Cotton and Mary Margaret Fell, similar to Keith, attacked learning, gendered false speakers “filthy” women, and identified (not actual women) but educated clergy as the women who were not to speak. “Handmaids of the Lord and Mothers in Israel: Early Vindications of Quaker Women’s Prophecy” in The Emergence of Quaker Writing, Dissenting Literature in Seventeenth-Century England Thomas N. Corns and David Loewenstein eds. (Portland: Frank Cass and Company Limited, 1995), p. 88-98.
A- yea we Judge so (as In many particulars could be) Instanced both In the doctrine and practise
Q- you doe not then plead that you find a new way quyt diffrent from the good old way that the saints walked in from the begining
A- Nay the trew way is the same yesterday and today and for ever and changeth not only wee say a fuller and mor perfyt and clear dissrobrie is given unto us of this way then unto others befor us

Keith went on to answer the question of why Christians “ware more on[e] in ther professione many hundred years agoe even under popry.” Keith’s reply pointed to “the [power] and Spirit of darknes ... which they Imagened to be the trew way.” Thus Keith returned to the dualities of Christ/Antichrist; unity did not betoken perfection but merely one of two poles. Disunity was an element on the path towards a new, proper unity. Thus “when god Comanded the Light to shyne out of that gross and palpabell darknes that was over them many Came to see ther former way to be false and Could have no peace therin but sought after the trew way.” Keith’s response to the Crisis of Skepticism (itself engendered in part by the splintering of the Christian church) was to reunite the resulting sects along a continuum of opposing dualities at once epistemic and historical.

Quakerism was born out of the experience of the Civil War, but the war itself was understood in terms of a longer imagined history of the Christian church derived from the Protestant Reformation. This history both defined and united communities and could be used to explain divisions between them. History was only one, and hardly the most original, of the ways by which Keith sought for the source of authentic truth. Yet Keith’s answer, the Inner Light, presented a subsequent question. After his conversion, Keith appears never to have doubted his experience of the Inner Light or the truth of what it

55 Misc MSS 1757, The Way of God ...
presented to him, until late in his life. What remained for Keith was to explain what the Light was, in order to defend its accordance with Christian orthodoxy. Keith underwent conversion and undertook this project precisely in the period when the Society of Friends was fighting for its survival and defending its very identity as a Christian denomination in print, the courts, and Parliament. While Keith retained the Protestant historiography in his future works, he increasingly adopted new (and marginally less adversarial) tools over the course of the 1670s.
Millennialism and anti-clericalism are the more familiar aspects of early modern Quakerism, so much so that any greater fleshing out of Friends’ doctrine is often interpreted as a form of betrayal. Yet other historians remind us that this was a caricature of the Society, certainly in its post-Restoration form. The apologetic needs of the Society, in the wake of the failure of Friends’ millennial hopes made a more articulate defense of the Society’s doctrines necessary. While any process of elaboration entailed limits to the beliefs that could be expressed publicly by Friends, much like the Christian tradition more broadly, the simplicity of Quakerism’s basic doctrines provided great flexibility of theological formulation. Yet it always returned Friends to the root principle of the presence of Christ within all believers.

As Keith developed the second and third strains of his early theology, his epistemology and Christology, he found a valuable tool in the prisca theologia or Ancient Theology. This Renaissance concept was a Platonized reading of Christian belief, with the added influences of Cabbalism and Hermeticism, transformed into a universal philosophy. In Keith’s hands, and under the influence of Henry More and the Ragley House circle, the Ancient Theology became the centerpiece to an illuminist epistemology

56 George Keith, Truth’s Defence: or the Pretended Examination by John Alexander of Leith, of The Principles of Those (Called Quakers) Falsly Term’d by Him Jesuitico-Quakerism, Re-Examined and Confuted (London: Benjamin Clark, 1682), p. 69.

57 Cabbalism spelled with a “C” will be used here to distinguish the often spuriously grounded use of the term by Christian Cabbalists (including Henry More) from the work Francis van Helmont and others were doing with actual Kabbalist texts, as well as to the ideas of Kabbalah itself.
(one that was not purely empirical or rational, but argued that certain truths could only be apprehended through an inward light, often connected to grace and shading off into mysticism) and an attempt to explain the nature of Christ’s presence in the world. Read into the doctrine of the Inner Light, this idea simultaneously brought up and sought to solve the problem created by the universalism of the Inner Light and the historical, textual and geographic specificity of the Gospel revelation. But initially, for Keith, the Ancient Theology was primarily a means to an apologetic end. As stated in the previous chapter, Keith was already convinced that he had the answer to all questions in the direct experience of the Inner Light. What he sought from his intellectual systems was an explanation sufficient to convince others; but, in the process, his beliefs did in fact change as he adopted a wider ideology connected to what is known as the Third Force.

The Third Force is a concept developed by Richard Popkin to describe not merely certain consequences for the use of the Ancient Theology in seventeenth-century history but a wider set of historical concerns. The Crisis of Skepticism produced, in Popkin’s terminology, an ideological trend at once revealed and rational, set between English empiricism and French rationalism. This trend encompassed a network of people from the influential millennialist Joseph Mede, to the Protestant internationalist John Dury and the circle surrounding Samuel Hartlib, to Henry More and Anne Conway. While not forming a single ideology, these various thinkers shared similar concerns and hopes. They began with the seeming inability to ascertain certain truth, and particularly scriptural truth, with the splintering of the Christian Church. The result, according to them, was not merely the horrors of the continental Wars of Religion and the English Civil War, but the staving off of the return of Christ. Like Keith’s, their pursuit of truth
incorporated both millennialism and illuminism. At the same time, Keith’s concerns were not merely epistemic, but psychological, his system of truth not only a basis from which to order church power and construct identity, but the essence of that church and identity. The diction of Friends’ writing described in the previous chapter was the form as well as the medium of truth. Illuminism often went hand in hand with purification and transcendence. One apprehended truth by silencing the carnal and the individual to hear the spiritual and universal. Combined, these strands (the Ancient Theology, illuminism, the Inner Light) could also be both a pantheistic acid to the unique identity of Christianity, and the base that countered it. In that respect, it reflected the creative attempts to reach conservative ends that were at the root of the Third Force.58

The Plutonic Pillar

Ironically for what follows, Neoplatonists were intensely hostile to Christianity. Yet patristic writers were drawn to Classical philosophy. In part, this was simply a function of living in the Roman Empire; Jewish writers in Alexandria, most famously Philo, were also assimilating Greek categories into their own tradition. Christianity’s eventual pursuit of converts outside of the Jewish community meant even more trade in Greek culture as the intellectual common currency of the Mediterranean. Christianity’s pagan enemies often pointed to the inelegant simplicity of the New Testament’s koine Greek and the lack of a philosophical system behind its doctrines. St. Augustine wrote

that in his early years he was put off by the “absurd doctrines” contained in the scriptures, texts which “seemed quite unworthy of comparison with the stately prose of Cicero, because I had too much conceit to accept their simplicity and not enough insight to penetrate their depths.” Even after his conversion, Augustine for a while assimilated Platonism into his theology, although he eventually abandoned much of this in favor of a belief in God’s inscrutability and reliance upon pure faith. Neoplatonism also had a final attraction: it gave to the patristics important intellectual tools for explaining controversial doctrines in the early Christian church.59

Platonism, Middle Platonism and Neoplatonism are terms created by later scholars to describe stages in a developing philosophical school, all of whose students believed they were articulating and elaborating the ideas of Plato. Central to Plato’s philosophy was the relationship between universal categories and the particular things classified under those categories. Plato’s solution was the “forms” or “ideas”, which were to him real metaphysical entities of which particular things were less perfect images. The mind, as a reflection of the intelligible realm of these forms, contained these ideas within itself. Discovering them, therefore, was an inward process of learning, at times described as recollection. A form, as the more real and perfect archetype of particular things, also implied moral and aesthetic properties (especially in Hellenistic culture, which collapsed

the two and believed virtue, beauty and nobility were synonymous) rather than being purely definitonal. They thus worked well when applied to neutral or positive things (ex. a perfect horse, ideal justice), but presented a difficulty in the case of things deemed ignoble (perfect or ideal evil and ugliness).60

Middle Platonism (Platonic thought of the early Roman Empire) and, beginning with Plotinus (204-270 A.D.), Neoplatonism, also developed Plato’s cosmology, specifically the concepts of emanation and the division of God into a threefold division, or Triad, called hypostases. The first hypostasis, called the One, spontaneously emanated forth its inexhaustible creative principle (like light shining from the sun, according to a common metaphor). That emanation, turning backward toward the One, defined its separate existence as Mind (nous or logos in Greek). Mind also emanated forth a less distinct light, which through a similar act of “reversion” became Soul. Soul then created a “false hypostasis” called Nature, but this was too weak at that point to produce any further levels of existence. Although described sequentially and spatially, this process occurred outside of both time and the physical world, and reflected a logical necessity rather than an event. For Neoplatonists, the hypostases were also not so much deities as principles; the One was the principle of unity, which was necessary to the existence of any particular thing (ex. man, defined as a rational animal, is the unity of the forms of animal and rationality). Mind similarly contained all intellects and the forms, and Soul contained all souls. Man himself was a microcosm of this triune macrocosm.

Neoplatonism was not merely an epistemology or cosmology however, but also a religion. The human animal’s highest goal was contemplation of and union with the One

60 Anne Sheppard, “Plato and the Neoplatonists” p. 3-18, and Dominic Scott, “Reason, Recollection, and the Cambridge Platonists” p. 139-150, both in Platonism and the English Imagination.
(mimicking the reversion of the hypostases), through the training of the body so as not to be hindered by physical passions and desires. The active life existed merely to serve the contemplative; and thus positive moral action was not an end in itself. Dividing the soul into two components, Neoplatonists argued that the higher soul was purified to focus on the intelligible world, while the lower soul was meant to calm the passions through reason, until ultimately one could ignore the passions. At other times, they distinguished these two principles by classifying the higher as soul and the lower spirit. This ascetic principle gave Neoplatonism a strong element of mysticism.61

Christian thinkers found this system simultaneous attractive and problematic. The Neoplatonist One was not the anthropomorphic God of Christianity. The idea that the One loved (or was even particularly aware of) its creatures at the individual level was alien. The Platonic love that bound the universe together was not personal but sympathetic (i.e. reflected an inherent unity). The Neoplatonic world, moreover, was created spontaneously, rather than as an act of grace, and lacked a temporal beginning or end since Creation and Armageddon contradicted the unchanging perfection of God. Neoplatonists, similarly, held that souls pre-existed their embodiment and experienced reincarnation (metempsychosis). The Incarnation seemed similarly horrifying to a philosophy that rejected the Stoic idea that God was corporeal. Finally, Platonists believed the soul was good inherently, not simply by grace. Christian Platonists, however, were attracted to the similarity between the One/Mind/Soul and the Christian

Trinity. In particular, they pointed to the opening of John’s Gospel where the Son of God is referred to as the *logos*, or “Word.” The patristic writer Origen made conspicuous use of Platonic ideas, to the point of rejecting eternal damnation and adopting metempsychosis, for which he was denounced after his death. Origen’s ideas enjoyed renewed interest in some circles in the 15th and 16th centuries, and would influence Henry More Keith on several points. Platonism in its various forms became an important, if selectively applied, influence on the early Church. With the fall of the Roman Empire, however, most of the writings of Plato and the Neoplatonists were lost to the Christian West until the Renaissance.62

Although written much later, the *Theologia Germanica*, which influenced both Dr. Henry More and George Keith, is a valuable introduction to the uses to which Christians could put the Platonic tradition. This famous work of German mysticism, most closely identified with the translation made by Martin Luther, begins by defining God as a perfect being “which comprehends and includes all existences in Itself and in Its Essence.” As in Plotinus, the *Theologia*’s conception of God is practically inert, requiring complete union within a person to achieve any anthropomorphic qualities. “And out of this recognition and revealing of Himself to Himself,” the author declares, “arises

distinction and Personality.” To apprehend such a being, the convert (or “creature”) must purify him/herself, in the form of near self-annihilation. Sin was the act of turning away from this perfect being towards the imperfect, and demonstrating self-will rather than eliminating the will. “Deification” (a term also used by Henry More) consisted in turning towards the “best things,” in which “the Eternal Good most manifests itself, shines forth, works, is most known and loved.” At times this even allowed the soul “to cast a glance into eternity, and there receive a foretaste of eternal life and eternal bliss.” Here, therefore, the *Theologia* melded Neoplatonism with the Christian idea of salvation.63

The path to perfection moved through three stages: purification (“contrition and sorrow for sin”), enlightening (good works and avoidance of sin), and finally union. Union is the state of perfection, and comes about “by pureness and singleness of heart, by godly love, and by the contemplation of God.” In the process, the creature was to become “so free from himself, that is, from selfhood, I-hood, Me, Mine, and the like, that in all things he should no more seek and regard himself and his own than if he did not exist, and should take as little account of himself as if he were not and another had done all his works.” All good works, and will should be identified as God’s to the point where God and the creature are at times used interchangeably in the *Theologia*. Finally, in language that mirrors the sensuality of much of Keith’s early writing, the *Theologia* explains the Good “needs not to enter the soul,” since it is already present, and that “When we say we should come to it, we mean that we should seek it, feel it, and taste it.” These same

themes of self-annihilation through obedience to a divine principle within all people appeared in the writings of Keith and other Quakers.64

Platonism was also the glue to the Renaissance idea of a *prisca theologia* ("Ancient Theology"). According to its proponents, there existed a common philosophical and theological system derived from what God told Moses on Mount Sinai as an oral tradition separate from the written word of the tablets. While for Christians the revelation contained in the Gospels remained the pure source for this truth, it could also be found in obscured form in non-Christian writings. *Prisca* thinkers principally singled out the works of Plato, Pythagoras, along with Hermeticism and Kabbalah, but they also pointed to more obscure and esoteric works such as the *Orphic Hymns*, *Chaldean Oracles* and Zoroastrianism. Renewed interest in Plato had begun with the translation of his major works into a single Latin edition by Marsilio Ficino (who also translated Plotinus’s *Enneads* and the *Corpus Hermeticum*) under the patronage of Cosimo de Medici. Giovanni Pico della Mirandola expanded this approach by introducing the Kabbalah. Formulations varied, but *prisca* thinkers generally believed that Plato and Pythagoras constructed their philosophies after encounters with rabbis in Egypt. Others held that the “Egyptian Priest” Hermes Trismegistus (the mythic author of the *Hermetica*) served as an intermediary between Jewish and Platonic belief, while, in yet another form, Ficino suggested Hermes was Moses. Just as some early Christians had constructed their theology through the dominant categories of Classical philosophy, so Renaissance *prisca* thinkers now interpreted Classical ideas through the categories of Christianity.

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Neoplatonic philosophy, moreover, influenced both Hermeticism and Kabbalah further tying the whole together.\textsuperscript{65}

The Ancient Theology provided a religious tradition that -- while explicitly Christian -- provided a new perspective to the religious chaos of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Obviously this tradition also contained the implicit danger that, by stressing universal religious principles, it might mute the specificities of Christian revelation. Giordano Bruno was burned at the stake in 1600 for precisely this heresy, and the Quakers approached a similarly heterodox position through different means. The concept of the \textit{prisca} suffered significant damage in 1614, when Isaac Casaubon determined that the Hermetic writings actually dated from late antiquity; but the flexibility of the \textit{prisca}, as shall be seen, allowed it to continue to be used. Keith saw a Neoplatonic Christ shining throughout creation, with which one could seek reunion, as an important bolster to the concept of the Inner Light. It also, however, pushed Keith toward Quakerism’s most dangerous possibilities.\textsuperscript{66}


\textsuperscript{66} Yates, \textit{Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition}, p. 180-181. A second important component of the \textit{prisca} is elite sympathetic magic (the belief that metaphysical, astrological entities and terrestrial objects shared sympathies and that manipulating the latter could allow one to control nature through the former). Ernst Cassirer has distinguished the Italian Renaissance, which resulted in irreligious skepticism, from the English offshoot, which instead focused on attacking scholasticism. \textit{The Platonic Renaissance in England} trans. James P. Pettegrove (original 1953, New York: Gordian Press, 1970). Sir Thomas More, despite his later notoriety for persecuting Protestants, had earlier defended religious toleration in \textit{Utopia} (his own take on Plato’s \textit{Republic}) utilizing a concept similar to the \textit{prisca} to explain that the Utopians, despite possessing numerous religions, “thinketh [their various chief gods] to be the very same nature,” and that they were gradually abandoning their differences “to agree together in that religion which seemeth by reason to pass and excel the residue [of “superstitions”]. This preparation made the Utopians amenable to
Dr. Henry More and the Cambridge Platonists

The new interest in Plato did not last. While not disappearing from the intellectual scene, other developments, including the rediscovery of Classical skepticism, the rise of Cartesianism and the new science significantly displaced it. For some, however, Platonism retained its influence. The name “Cambridge Platonist,” like many labels from the time period, is imprecise but not fanciful. Cambridge University was home to a collection of professors who combined their interest in Platonism and other elements of the *prisca* with their experience of the Civil War and fears of Hobbesian atheism.\(^{67}\)

Few philosophers, until the appearance of Spinoza in English in the 1690s, produced as much fear and hatred in England as the “Monster of Malmesbury.” For Hobbes, the natural world consisted entirely of physical bodies. Spiritual actors were read completely out of the physical universe, and he extended this mechanical principle even to the human mind. Thought, for Hobbes, was merely a response to the stimuli of outward objects and memory was the imprint of those stimuli on the mind, “For after the object is removed, or the eye shut, wee still retain an image of the thing seen.” The human animal was therefore purely a mechanism of matter and motion. For Henry More, who had become disillusioned with Descartes’s mechanical philosophy because it seemed to point inexorably toward atheism, Hobbes’s elimination of spirit entirely only seemed to confirm his fears.\(^{68}\)

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As a nominalist, Hobbes held that all categories or ideas were merely names invented and then applied to objects in the process of thinking, with no transcendent relationship to those objects. Since order could only be created through the act of reasoning, a stable and safe society required the presence of a single intellect that would define categories such as justice according to his sovereign will. Since scripture was open to endless interpretation -- an opinion that reflected Hobbes’s horror at the sectarianism of the Civil War -- the sovereign was likewise to establish religion in a state church. But Hobbes went further than this, attacking the authorship and thus the authority of the scriptural canon. Whether Hobbes was an atheist is still debated -- he claimed to believe in a highly unorthodox God, who was material and a distant first cause of all creation. The term atheism itself was used more flexibly in this period, referring not merely to those who rejected a deity, but to those who so removed God from an active role in creation that he became irrelevant. To Hobbes’ enemies, however, atheism and libertinism seemed to be the unifying characteristic of his various challenges to traditional Christian belief.69


Henry More was primarily neither a Platonist nor a mystic, but a Christian apologist. As Robert Crocker and others have argued, the student More’s bout of religious despair, revolving around his terror at the thought that the individual’s consciousness met annihilation upon death, was resolved by his conviction of a central premise: that the deity was good in a humanly comprehensible fashion. This set him at odds with Calvinist voluntarism, which argued that God only “volunteered” to being constrained by the moral laws of his own creation (usually in the form of a covenant). One of the attractions of Platonism was its belief in real principles of justice and goodness that defined God. Hobbes’s nominalist, if not atheistic, philosophy and his rejection both of a spiritual dimension to human existence and of an afterlife shocked the Cambridge professor. Thus More produced three of his earliest major works, *An Antidote to Atheisme* (1653), *The Immortality of the Soul* (1659), and *An Explanation of the Grand Mystery of Godliness* (1660), as a coherent triumvirate designed to combat this threat.70

Dr. Henry More’s use of Platonism and the *prisca* was eclectic, illuminist and rationalist. He explicitly used the term hypostases to refer to and explain the Trinity (although he understood God more anthropomorphically than Plotinus and re-asserted God’s love). At the same time, More had to defend his conception of the Trinity not simply from those who argued he was Platonizing Christianity, but from those who challenged that the Trinity itself was “a Pagan or Heathenish Figment brought out of the

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70 “More’s early support for the new philosophy [of Descartes and Galileo], with its emphasis upon experiment and abstraction, mathematical and geometric relations, direct observation and close rational argument, was therefore founded upon a polemical need to find supporting rational arguments to help clearly distinguish between the spheres of matter and spirit and their dependent relations.” Robert Crocker, *Henry More*, p. 41. For More’s plan of works see More, *An Explanation of the Grand Mystery of Godliness* (London: James Flesher, 1660), vii-viii.
Philosophy of Pythagoras and Plato, and inserted into the doctrine of the Church by the ancient Fathers who most of them were Platonists.” Attacking this notion, however, was merely the prelude to defending the prisca. After arguing that the Trinity was not taken from Plato, he re-asserted its similarity to the Platonic Triad, but insisted that this did not make the concept “a Pagan or Heathenish Mystery,” since Pythagoras and Plato might not have “received it from Pagans or Heathens, but from the learned of the Jews, as sundry Authors assert.” More similarly defended his attack on psychopannichism (the idea that the soul sleeps after death, until resurrection on Judgment day, which played to More’s fears of annihilation and libertinism and which would reappear in the Keithian Schism) from the charge “that the contrary opinion is not Christian but Heathenish, derived from the philosophy of Plato (which the Greek Fathers had imbibed) and thence introduced into the Church of Christ.” More, therefore, used the concept of the prisca carefully, denying it the same universality that Keith did. Even Descartes, according to a younger More, “has interwoven [elements of the creation story] into that noble System of the World according to the Tradition of Pythagoras and his Followers, or if you will, of the ancient Cabbala of Moses.” More similarly questioned, regarding non-Christian monotheists, whether those who were, “such as Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Plotinus, Plutarch, and the like, are to be reputed mere Pagans, or whether they came nearer to the nature of Σεβομυλοι [“awe stricken”], having been imbued with the Knowledge of that one Eternal Spirit which is the Creator and Governor of all things, by conversing with the Jews,” or with someone who had knowledge of Judaism. Thus they had knowledge by “some hidden tradition or Cabala” of a non-material, “triune” God. Even the natural
sciences for More came back to his apologetic concerns, and thus he read authors he approved of into the *prisca* tradition as a way of preserving their Christian identity.\textsuperscript{71}

As with Plotinus, intellection for More was both a rational discursive activity and an intuitive act of a purified soul. Reflecting an ambiguity over the moral quality of the body and physical world (since the Platonic forms made the physical world at best an inferior reflection, while the Christian God required his creation to reflect his goodness and love), More contrasted the Animal and the Divine Life. The Animal Life was “that which is to be discerned in *Brutes* as well as in *Men,*” and “consists in the Exercise of the Senses, and all those Passions that Nature has implanted in them,” while the Divine was “an high and precious modification of our own Minds,” from which we derive true happiness “and are made thereby capable of enjoying God, the highest Good that is conceivable.” True knowledge was realized by pursuing virtue in order to move from the Animal to the Divine Life, and from the lowest to the highest parts of the soul. Despite this, the Animal Life was not inherently evil; rather “our undue use of, or immoderate complacency in, such Motions [of the Animal Life] is the only *Sin.*” In the highest level of the human soul, More also believed that people possessed a “boniform faculty,” which allowed one to perceive the good. This was not a rational comprehension of the truth, which occurred at the level of the rational soul, but rather an illuminist apprehension of divine truth.\textsuperscript{72}

\textsuperscript{71} More, *The Grand Mystery of Godliness* (London: James Flesher, 1660), p. 7, 9, 16, & 68, see also *Ibid*, p. 21. More’s quote concerning Descartes is quoted in Crocker, *Henry More* p. 149. More specifically credited Descartes with rediscovering the true atomism of Plato, which had been hidden by Democritus’ “atheistic materialism.” “The *prisci theologi,* it seems to me, were understood not as omniscient sages but as precursors whom the moderns had surpassed.” While this might be true in the context of the new science, precisely the opposite case is true in theology (which is admittedly not Hall’s focus). A. Rupert Hall, *Henry More*, p. 114, 113.

\textsuperscript{72} Henry More, *The Grand Mystery of Godliness*, p. 44, 46.
More’s epistemology therefore came close to Quakerism, making the distinctions between the two even more crucial to maintain. Obviously More did not oppose the concept truth derived from illumination, “I grant that it is still this Light within us, that judges and concludes after the perusal of either the Volumes of Nature or of Divine Revelation,” but he distinguished this from the heretical and antinomian dangers of granting this principle too much autonomy. In particular, More attacked Quakers for their placing the Inner Light on a par with, or potentially above, the scriptures. In 1656 he published Enthusiasmus Triumphatus, or, a Discourse of the Nature, Causes, Kinds, and Cure, of Enthusiasme. Enthusiasm, according to More, was “a misconceit of being inspired,” itself defined as “to be moved in an extraordinary manner by the power or Spirit of God to act, speak, or think what is holy, just and true.” Just as the senses could be deceived by a dream, so the enthusiast could allow his/her imagination to manufacture a false inspiration, especially when aided by illness. If enthusiasts used their reason and conscience, they would eventually reach truth, “But if they call any hot, wild Imagination or forcible and unaccountable Suggestion, the Light within them, and follow that,” they would not “keep to Reason and Conscience, but to be delivered up to a reprobate sense.” In their refusal to submit the Inner Light to the test of Scripture, More argued, enthusiasts contradicted themselves, “For they vilifie that by which they have been taught, and retain the very phrases of what they have learned out of Scripture, and know not how to speak without Scripture-terms, nor can make any show without Scriptural allusions.”

Illuminism for More provided affective truth, much as it did for Keith, but for More this was necessarily structured by reasoned argument, purification, and scriptural evidence.73

Related to illuminism was a second issue, which would haunt religious epistemology in the ensuing decades: mystery and its relationship to reason. The nature of the divine necessarily meant that aspects of Christian belief could not be rationally comprehended, at the same time, most theologians and philosophers of the period wished to distinguish between those things that were beyond reason and those things that were contrary to reason. If everything related to religion were beyond reason, then anything theological proposition could be proffered and defended as “part of the mystery of God;” but if every component of theology had to be rational, concepts such as the Trinity came under attack, as did a sacramental clergy and the whole notion of faith (since religion became the assent to clearly demonstrable principles). Deists such as John Toland, who moved this boundary line within the nature of knowledge towards the rational in his work *Christianity Not Mysterious*, sought to exploit just these heterodox possibilities. Simply put, concepts like the Trinity were not explicable in a purely rational fashion (as William Penn’s opponents were forced to concede), which left open how one created limits for a realm one had already conceded to faith in “mystery.” More’s often-digressive *Grand Mystery* was therefore organized around his definition of mystery as “a piece of Knowledge” that is “for some Religious End” that incorporates four properties: “competent” obscurity (a category that reflects precisely the divide between reason and mystery), an appropriate intelligibility, evident truthfulness, and a profitable usefulness. These criteria allowed him to reduce Christian faith down to what he felt to be essentials.

*Enthusiastical Concerns of Dr. Henry More: Religious Meaning and the Psychology of Delusion* (New York: E. J. Brill, 1997), studies More’s attitudes toward Quakerism (which Foulke interprets as essentially Neoplatonist, via the influence of continental mysticism), focusing first on a tension between seeing Quakers as either mad or demonic and on his attempts to control religious language as a way of separating his own views from that of Friends. His work, primarily philosophical, lacks much of a historical perspective, treating his views as relatively static in time.
and to avoid unnecessary squabbling. Much of the central part of the book was dedicated
to defenses of the necessary existence of God, the “reasonableness” of the incarnation,
resurrection and of a fiery Armageddon, and a defense of bodily resurrection.\textsuperscript{74}

This defense, however, increasingly pulled him into a broader discussion
concerning what today would be called comparative religion. He cited non-Christian
histories and defended the provenance of the Gospels (which Hobbes had challenged).
Frequently sought to disprove paganism using his division between the Animal and
Divines Lives. Idolatry, according to More, was a function of the animal life: worship of
material objects without any transcendent movement of the mind beyond the material
towards God. Even animals such as apes and elephants seem to worship the sun, “So
great power have the more notable Objects of Nature upon the weak Animal senses.”
Thus, using the example of the “\textit{Idolaters of the East-Indies},” More distinguished their
use of “the Sagacity of their \textit{Superior} Faculties of their Souls” to argue that the
organization of the world proved the existence of God, and their worship of the sun and
moon which “proceeded from the brutish admiration and dull astonishment of the \textit{Animal}
\textit{Senses} in them.” This argument simultaneously explained the seeming universality of
religious belief, which undermined atheism, while avoiding a world religion that negated
the value of Christian revelation.\textsuperscript{75}

After easily dismissing polytheistic religions (since his conception of God made it
necessarily a single unified entity), More then had to address the problem of monotheistic
pagans, who came closer to his conception of God while rejecting Christian tenets. More

\textsuperscript{74} More, \textit{Grand Mystery}, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{75} More used the “existence” of witches to prove that of devils and therefore of angels and souls. More and
his friend Thomas Glanvil collected accounts of supernatural occurrences for this purpose. Michel de
Montaigne also referred to animals worshipping the sun in his \textit{Essais}. 

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committed most of book four of *The Grand Mystery* to addressing the problem of
Apollonius Tynaeus, a second century A.D. figure to whom were attributed both miracles
and a bodily resurrection similar to Christ’s. Disproving these similarities (which
included comparisons to Mohammed), therefore, was important since the miracles of
Christ were a central element in defending the authority of scripture. Among other
arguments, More pointed to the cruelty of pagan faiths (which he documented from
Classical, Biblical and American examples) as demonstrating their essentially Satanic
origins.  

After dismantling the veracity of pagan poly- and monotheism, More then felt
safe in using their existence as a support for religious belief. Pagan religions served as
preparation to eventual Christian conversion: “*Christianity is not only the Compleatment
and Perfection of Judaisme*, but also of universal *Paganisme*; the Summe or Substance of
whatever was considerable in any Religion being comprehended in the Gospel of Christ.”
More’s treatment of non-Christian religions reveals the way in which this Christian
apologist was pulled both by the intellectual climate created by global exploration,
Hobbesianism and his own illuminist epistemology to exactly this arena. Yet, as his
treatment of these religions and of the Ancient Theology reveal, More’s basic Christian
orthodoxy limited how far he could go in the direction of a universalized faith.
Quakerism was considerably less constrained.

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77 More, *Grand Mystery*, p. 97. More’s study of non-Christian religion was never as developed or comprehensive as his friend and fellow Platonist, Ralph Cudworth’s, whose three volume *The True Intellectual System of the Universe* (London: Richard Royston, 1678) has only begun to receive serious study in recent years.
Keith and More

George Keith never expressed the full-throated Neoplatonism of either Henry More or the *Theologica Germanica*, but explicit references to *prisci theologi* (“Ancient Theologians”) began to enter his writings over time. In good part, this was simply a part of how Friends expressed themselves: the notion of immediate revelation precluded intellectual influences. This is not the same thing as saying they did not have intellectual influences, merely that there was a performative aspect to Friends’ speech that made it not openly referential. While their polemical works increasingly backed off from this diction after the Restoration (compare Fox’s quotations from the first chapter with those of other Friends in subsequent ones) the tendency was to use direct citations of authorities sparingly and largely defensively. The following discussion of Keith’s use of the Ancient Theology, therefore, must necessarily make seemingly over-elaborate use of a relatively small number of passages. As the previous sections will hopefully have demonstrated, however, these quotations are not haphazard or opportunistic elements of Keith’s apologetics, but fit into a larger intellectual framework and tradition. This tradition would eventually structure Keith’s millennial worldview, incorporating the concept of reincarnation, and ultimately generate the central theological issues of the Schism.

*Immediate Revelation* -- the work for which he was best known -- contained his first reference to Plotinus, in defending revelation “by [Christ’s] own immediate light (which can only make him manifest as the Sun can only be made manifest and seen with its own beams, as said Plotinus a Gentile, who saw further into this mistery than many called Christians).” In what appears to have been a pattern, Keith was much more
forthright about his influences in private. Henry More described Keith as “very philosophically and platonically given, and is pleased with the Notion of the Spirit of Nature [More’s Platonic concept of the operative principle in the material world],” and Penn wrote approvingly in 1692 of Keith’s “Platonick Studies.” As explained above, in his written work (as opposed to his private conversation), Keith to buried most of his intellectual influences in the language of Quakerism, as will be especially clear in the discussion of his interest in Kabbalah. As the decade proceeded, and the Society pursued the political lobbying efforts discussed in the next chapter, Keith made more open use of “authorities” as part of this project. But in doing so, he was making explicit longer standing influences connected to a second strain of thought within his writings. Whereas the first strain focused upon history, speech, authority and anti-clericalism, in the second strain, Keith’s epistemology, was dominated by his belief in “immediate revelation.”

Even with his attempt to make this doctrine respectable, anti-clericalism remained central to Keith’s thinking. He declared that the clergy defended their “Error” of opposing unmediated revelation because “the greatest part of their other Errors are built upon it, and indeed the whole superstructure of their Church, and Ministry, and Worship, as to its outward constitutions.” Immediate revelation eliminated the necessity of scripture to a “true and saving Knowledge of God,” and demonstrated that the Bible was not a “filled up canon,” by proving that it was possible to speak as infallibly as the

Apostles. Secondly, it replaced “[human] qualifications” (as well as gender) in defining a minister. Finally, immediate revelation made it possible to infallibly distinguish true ministers and believers from false. Anticlericalism was inseparable from most aspects of Keith’s thought.79

By immediate revelation Keith meant “God speaking in man by the Word proceeding immediately from his own mouth.” This was the direct inspiration usually identified as having existed among and ended with the Apostles, and thus far more radical than Dr. More’s Bible and reason dependent illumination. For Keith, “There hath been no Age, nor Generation, but hath had somewhat of the Gospel, and new Covenant-dispensation in it, even the darkest time,” though he conceded it had become clearer and fuller after Christ’s coming. Even “the believing Jews in Moses’s time, made not a Church different from that in the time of the Apostles,” but all “are one Church, and under one Covenant, and were saved by one Faith, in one Lord and Redeemer.” In a similar work written several years later, Keith elaborated: “if [Gentiles] did cleave unto, and believe in the light, they believe in Christ, for hee is the light, nor is the outward name that which saves, but the inward nature, vertue and power, signified theirby [sic], which was made manifest in them.” Again, Keith’s point set him at odds with More. The Inner Light for Keith was not a divine influence on one’s human faculties, it was Christ. Thus those who had never heard the historical elements of the Gospel story, “the outward name,” believed in Christ when they surrendered to the Inner Light; since the Light was not only Christ, but the effective element of Christ (“the nature, virtue and power). While

79 George Keith, Immediate Revelation, unpaginated preface.
still operating within an essentially Christian framework, Keith was undermining the historical component of the Gospel, a problem that would inspire future works.\textsuperscript{80}

The potential radicalism of this idea was tamped down by a series of distinctions Keith proceeded to make. First, revelation was less a transmission of specific intellectual content, than the affective experience of that knowledge. “The faith of another man, and his knowledge and experience, is not sufficient unto me,” Keith explained “but I must be saved by my own faith, or the faith, knowledge, and experience given me of God.” Thus even Scripture was insufficient of itself, “nor were these things recorded in Writ, that I or any other man should sit down, upon the History, or Relation of what God had wrought, or revealed in others.” Others’ testimony could point one inward toward such an experience, but could not replace it.\textsuperscript{81}

From Platonism Keith drew upon the principle of relation: that intuitive knowledge of things required “a principle that is proportional to them, and which can apprehend them in their own proper forms, properties, qualities, and ideas.” Matters of faith were above natural reason, but “not contrary to Reason.” While man “has a Rational principle in him; whereby, in this he excels the Beast of the Field,” it is limited in two ways. First, is its inherent unsuitability towards understanding spiritual truth. Secondly, the Fall had implanted another seed besides that of Christ within man, “and hereby Man is a Child of the Devil.” This seed “has a Wisdom and Knowledge, Which is Carnall, Earthly, and Devilish, and is direct Opposite, and Contrary to the Wisdom of God.” The

\textsuperscript{81} Immediate Revelation, p. 4.
distorting effect of this opposing seed meant that even “the Plainest Scripture in the Bible” lacked the ability to convince, despite one’s comprehension of the words.\textsuperscript{82}

As such, “the true saving satisfactory and intuitive knowledge of these supernatural things” required a supernatural organ -- Platonic philosophy assuming a lesser thing could not be the cause of a greater (a natural organ could not produce supernatural knowledge). According to Keith, this organ or “seed and birth” was not God but “of the heavenly, spiritual and invisible substance and being, that is the most glorious being and principle, in which God, as Father, Son, and holy Ghost doth dwel [sic].” The seed was also “Christ formed within, the body of Christ, his flesh and blood, which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life to man.” The organ was thus connected to conversion and spiritual purification, so that over time it would “shine forth in the most glorious brightness, beauty, sweetness and majesty that the noblest of creatures, in their highest supernatural elevation, can reach unto to behold him, and have fellowship with him, which is the Holy of Holies, and the Heaven of Heavens.” In another work, Keith stressed the self-annihilating elements of conversion, in which “,” a description reminiscent of the \textit{Theologica Germanica}. The growth of the religious principle and its displacement of the carnal combined both Neoplatonic ideas of union with God, and Christ’s emanation into the created world through the forms (which lies behind the nature of conversion as a change in substance in the believer).\textsuperscript{83}

Being separate from the soul, this organ also produced a substantial, rather than a merely accidental change, in the believer. This seemingly technical distinction reveals a

\textsuperscript{82} \textit{Ibid}, p. 8, 164, 166, 171.
\textsuperscript{83} \textit{Ibid}, p. 8, 11, 12. For other examples of Keith’s use of Neoplatonic categories see George Keith, \textit{The Universall Free Grace of the Gospell Asserted}, p. 92, 97.
limit to Keith’s willingness to legitimate the Inner Light to orthodox believers: the seed was not a human faculty empowered with greater clarity by grace (“an accidental (though supernatural) change on the mind”) but an actual divine presence distinct from the human which essentially transformed the human. Arguing “it is as vain and false a thing, to say, [that] the inward birth is but an accident, as to say, the outward [human or natural] birth is but an accident,” Keith then contrasted the “real spiritual senses” of the seed and the “natural senses” of the soul “which no Accident can have.” This allowed the organ to feel, taste, smell, hear and touch “the substantial things of this inward and invisible world.” Keith’s technical language explained a point common to most Quaker writings: the fusion of the epistemological and the ontological by means of a radical infusion into the individual by the divine.84

Defending immediate revelation, as a result, required navigating the tricky assertion that it constituted a higher source of truth than scripture. Discounting the sufficiency of the text of the Bible, Keith pointed out that the Jews who had heard Moses’ foretelling of Christ or the words of Christ himself were not convinced. The Lord, in contrast, could “be heard, seen, tasted and felt,” even “if all scripture words were out of our present remembrance, so that if we had not one scripture expression in our view, to mind it, or turn it up or down in our minds, we could feel and enjoy the Lord, and have

84 Keith, Immediate Revelation, p. 10. The depth of this transformation has received only occasional historical treatment. Martin Endy argued that Quakers held that Christ did not possess a human body and that Fox “implied that regeneration meant not simply the rebirth of the soul but a transformation of the body in the direction of incorruptibility through the impartation of a spiritual substance, namely Christ’s heavenly flesh,” an interpretation Keith avoided at this point by focusing upon epistemology. Melvin B. Endy, Jr. William Penn and Early Quakerism (?: Princeton University Press, 1973), p. 81 n. 69. More controversially, Richard Bailey has suggested that Fox preached a form of radical deification, in which Christ was bodily present in saints, making them “gods” in their own right. The reaction to the Nayler episode resulted in the retrenchment from this view by the Society (though Fox still held it surreptitiously) as its doctrines were rewritten by Penn and Barclay. New Light on George Fox and Early Quakerism: The Making and Unmaking of a God (San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, 1992).
fellowship with him.” Applying a stark literalness, Keith argued that scripture was insufficient “to tell a man, what he is to do in all Circumstances,” even “a World full of Books could not contain Rules and Directions to a Man in all things.” The space between theory and praxis was another point of contact between ontology and epistemology, since closing that gap required a regenerate state and not merely reason.

But Keith simultaneously asserted and then qualified his devaluing of the Biblical text. Keith’s interest was to defend the Inner Light as the indispensable instrument of conversion, not to de-Christianize that experience. Keith explained that while “[Friends] despise not words, nay we dearly esteem and value them as a sweet and [precious] testimony of the eternal life, from which they came,” they nonetheless “feel and find the sweetness and comfort of them, when the same eternal life, which first breathed them forth, do either again break or speak them forth to us.” Just as a person required his or her own faith, a person also required his or her own Gospel. This experience might occur through scriptures “as they have a place in our minds, or memories;” but if the Light should withdraw its influence, “they are but as an empty Vessel, which we cannot make use of for our refreshment, till the life again open, and send forth of its living streams into them.” The written Gospel formed “a full and perfect Testimony of all the essentials of the Christian Religion.” Revelation, however, presented “greater and more manifest, and full, and clear discoveries, of the same Gospel, and way of God, and misteries of Religion.” Keith’s argumentation thus oscillated between the poles of challenging Christian orthodoxy and reasserting it.85

85 Keith, Immediate Revelation, p. 32-33, 147, 3-4. In chapter VI of Keith’s Quakerism no Popery (n.p. 1675), Keith defended Samuel Fisher’s use of the Apocrypha to undermine the scriptural canon; but he likewise did so in the process of asserting the Inner Light as the arbiter of the truth of scriptural truth.
At times, the argument drove Keith towards a more radical attack upon the authority of scripture. Since the authors of scripture are not alive “to tell us, that they spoke or wrote so,” and “their Writings are transmitted to us, through many Generations from Hand to Hand,” and especially, given that scripture has “fallen into Enemies Hands, ... how can a man be so fully Assured ... that Papists, Jews, and others who had them before us” haven’t altered scripture? In particular, Keith cited the fact that the points representing vowels did not exist in ancient written Hebrew, and could change the meanings of entire sentences (a point also made by Spinoza). Keith also declared it a “Popish fansie” that the “Canon of the Scripture is so filled up and Composed of such Books as are to be found in the Bible, betwixt Genesis, and Revelations, excluding all other Writings whatsoever.” “Some Popish Counsels,” he pointed out, determined which books were and were not canonical, and scripture itself refers to “several other writings of the holy Men, Inspired of God, ... yet because of their Counsel-acts, they are not received.” Immediate revelation alone is able to provide assurance of an uncontaminated canon. Whereas More sought to establish the provenance of the scriptures on a rational basis, Keith undermined such arguments (as Hobbes and Spinoza had) while re-establishing the authenticity of scripture purely on illuminist grounds. Keith again used a radical approach within conservative assumptions in the dangerous context of the intellectual challenges and threats of the seventeenth century.86

Keith also stripped immediate revelation of the overtly miraculous. He asserted that it did not require visions or “any outward audible voice.” No burning bushes were to be expected. Keith’s heavily sensual descriptions of walking in the light, however, left

86 Keith, Immediate Revelation, p. 159, 160-161, 204-205.
unclear exactly what Friends were perceiving. At his most explicit, he referred to a sense of morality that was more important than specific historical knowledge, because “it is not the meer outward name that saves, but the life, the power of Christ that quickens, cleanses, purifies.” He explicitly opposed, nonetheless, identifying the light as merely natural conscience, instead of as a real presence and sensation of the divine. Keith explained that the “living substantial communication and knowledge of Christ,” the Father, and the Holy Spirit allowed one to be “a partaker of Heavenly things, by seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and touching or feeling them,” having fellowship with the saints together in Zion, where they “eat together of the feast of fat things, and the Wine well refined in the kingdom of the Father is given unto them in an overflowing cup.” In an earlier tract, Keith wrote that conversion involved the “Exersise of our spirituall senses” so as:


even to have a reall sence [because] ther is no kynd of relieffe or help that Can Cum to us from the Lord, but is the object of some one sence, or a nother, ether of the hearing, seing, smelling, tasting, or feelling, and our faith is helped, grunded and made to subsist in any of thes, & in all of them.

This physical understanding of union stood in contrast to More’s and Plotinus’s distrust of the material and physical, and revivified the Classical Platonic/Christian dispute over the incarnation. Keith’s attempts to defend Friends against their enemies’ charges of heresy and madness ran into the problem of doing so without stripping the Inner Light of its essentially radical epistemic nature.87

An additional difficulty lay in the professed infallibility of the Light, a loaded term for Protestants because of its identification with popery. Keith denied that Friends’ accorded themselves infallibility in all things, but only those things done through the Spirit. Keith argued that Friends’ opponents rejected infallibility because “they are so sunk down into the natural principles of the animal and humane life,” that they fail to “apprehend a higher principle to be in the very saints,” namely the “birth” as a “substantive” principle. While every human has a principle “which is natural and essential to him,” and which grants to him a higher understanding “than the other animals can, in their animal principle,” the divine organ of the seed infallibly apprehends spiritual truth. These three principles, the animal, human, and divine were similar to More’s division of the soul into bodily vitalism, reason and the boniform faculty.88

Friends’ belief in the earthly perfection of saints gave Keith’s understanding of revelation corporate as well as individual implications. Revelation was the key to apprehending the true church of Christ in the world, because immediate revelation was the principle by which one discerned the spiritual states of others. Just as spiritual understanding required a spiritual organ, so “The Members of the true Church know one another, being children of the same Father and Mother, Members of the same Body, having one Mind, Soul, Spirit, and Life in them all.” This collective element to the Inner Light was central to Friends’ identity and ability to respond to persecution.89

Keith wrote Immediate Revelation -- as he wrote most of his early works -- while imprisoned in Aberdeen in 1665 and published it three years later. As his relationship

89 Keith, Immediate Revelation, p. 187.
with Henry More developed over the course of the 1670s, they discussed the issues Keith raised in this work. Eventually More gave Keith a manuscript containing several interrogatories, which Keith published anonymously along with his answers in the second edition of *Immediate Revelation*. In his response, Keith recited his emanationist understanding of the presence of Christ within all believers, and asserted that the “Historical knowledge and Faith” of the Gospels was part of the “Intirement or fulness” of “Religion” but not necessary to the “being of it.” In his final objection, More had challenged Keith by arguing that the “Birth of God” or “Divine Seed” did not have sensation, and therefore could not be a thing separate from the soul. It was the soul alone, through its “boniform faculty” excited “by the Operation of the Eternal Spirit,” whereby “Divine Sensations are excited … and such faculties of Life and Perception awakened, as were before dormant.” More was attacking the radical notion that the Inner Light was an emanation of Christ substantially distinct from the human rather than some divine influence that mediated between the human and the divine by operating through the natural structures of the mind. In response, Keith reaffirmed his own position, refusing to accept that “Christ formed in us is nothing else but our own souls” The seed and the soul were separate but in union with one another, just as the body and the soul were. Important to this distinction, for Keith, was the incorruptibility of the seed, which separated it from anything human (the Quaker notion of human perfectibility resulting from the soul submitting to the seed). This seed constituted “the Spirit of Christ, as he is the Second Adam, or Heavenly Man,” and “a measure of the same Spirit” that was within the earthly historical Christ and by which he prayed to the Father was that which “doth now pray in us.” Through this principle, moreover, “we have immediate Fellowship with Christ Jesus
as Man, even without us, as truly as within us.” Explaining that becoming regenerate involved “obtaining the Divine Spirit of Christ,” which grants the body sensation, Keith then sought to assimilate More’s boniform faculty into his understanding of conversion, as a faculty vivified by the Spirit of Christ, a part of the soul, but not part of the natural man “in the same sense the Platonists do speak, understanding thereby the Supream, or Highest Part and Faculty of the Soul.” Having, therefore, conceded some epistemic ground on revelation, Keith re-asserted the same radical notion of the presence of Christ within all, on the basis of his religious community. Like most Christian thinkers, Keith saw the Christian church as the body of Christ, but this took on greater meaning for a Quaker, such as Keith, who believed in the literal presence of Christ throughout the member of that church. Keith asked: “How is the Church of Christ his Body, if She do not in some measure partake of his Body?” Friends’ idea of the Church was necessarily defined by the presence of Christ’s spirit and spiritual body within its members. This substitution of community and epistemology serves as both the background for the ensuing chapters and ultimately the Keithian Schism.90

The private exchange between Keith and More was very different from those to be discussed in the next chapter. When Keith finally published the exchange, it was

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90 *Ibid*, p. 229-230, 250-251, 252, 257-258, 259. Robert Crocker has argued that Keith’s concessions reduced the seed to a faculty of the soul. While, as I will argue, Keith would reach this position later, seeing this change in the Appendix is an exaggeration. Keith described the seed as present in all people in some rudimentary form, but this merely reflected Friends’ belief that Christ was present in all people as the Inner Light. This did not make the Seed (as Crocker has stated) the same as More’s boniform faculty. Keith explicitly described the Seed as the Spirit of Christ (after several interchanges of terms: Divine Birth, Divine Seed, Spirit), which was separate from the divine body (More’s boniform) and possessed independent sensation. Thus the Seed did not become a faculty, rather, Keith merely assimilated More’s category into his own epistemology, while retaining his focus upon an immediate real presence of Christ within. Also interesting for future developments was Keith’s suggestion that anti-Quaker opponents attacked Friends for dividing Christ into an inward and outward Christ, an issue that appeared during the Schism. Crocker, *Henry More*, p. 192-195.
without any explicit reference to Henry More, calling him only the “Objector.” But it must also be placed within an ongoing continental exchange involving skepticism, illuminism and heterodoxy. The Collegiants -- a movement born from the Dutch Remonstrants (Arminian opponents of the strict Calvinism of the 1618-1619 Synod of Dort) and Mennonites -- had responded to the vicious sectarianism of the preceding century by challenging the human capacity to reach certain religious truth, to the point of opposing all organized churches and clergy and formulating a simplified, morality-based piety. All of this made them attractive to the Quaker missionaries who began coming to the Netherlands in the 1650s. But the Collegiants were less enthusiastic, finding Quaker behavior offensive and their theological perfectionism (given the Collegiants’ skepticism and belief that they lived in a decaying world) impossible. They therefore defended a moderate illuminism against the extreme form preached by the Society. This produced a series of debates in public and print between the two sides, beginning in 1660 with William Ames, and eventually incorporating Benjamin Furly and William Penn. Evidence that Friends were willing to reflect charges of heterodoxy back on their opponents, Penn charged the influential Collegiant Abraham Galenus with being “the Great Father of the Socinian-Mennists.” This attack pointed to a trend in Collegiantism (one which Andrew Fix has identified as in part proceeding from their reaction to Quakerism) toward a secular rationalism and away from spiritual illumination. In addition, some Collegiants had begun to associate with Spinoza, producing a response from their fellow Collegiant Francis Kuyper, whose attack simultaneously targeted Quakers and drew two anti-Spinoza works from Henry More. The Dutch context reminds us that none of these debates remained within England or Britain. The Collegiant debate
and Keith’s discussions with More also differed strongly from those in the following chapter in that they occurred within a freer system of discourse, one less ossified within sectarian identities and incorporating more heterodox ideas.91

Hermeticism and Universal Natural Religion

Inseparable from Keith’s epistemology was the question of the soteriological capacity of the Inner Light within non-Christians, in particular those unexposed to Christian doctrine. While Quaker apologetics always needed to address this issue, Keith’s concern with it developed along more specific lines starting with his 1671 book The Universall Free Grace of the Gospell Asserted, which also contained Keith’s first reference to another component of the Ancient Theology: Hermeticism. The Hermetica were a series of not entirely consistent texts espousing a late Antiquity syncretism of Greek, Gnostic and native Egyptian thought, attributed to the Egyptian priest Hermes Trismegistus (‘Thrice Great Hermes,’ a mythic figure who was a fusion of the Egyptian god Thoth and the Greek messenger god Hermes, both identified with the invention of writing and with magic).92


92 Garth Fowden has argued that Hermeticism cannot simply be reduced to Neoplatonic and other Greek influences, but contains as well an indigenous component, The Egyptian Hermes: A Historical Aproach to the Late Pagan Mind (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986).
As with Platonism, the Renaissance saw the rediscovery of and renewed Christian interest in these texts. Focusing upon those aspects of the treatises that seemed to mirror the Genesis story, as well as upon references to the Son of God as *Logos* and to regeneration, Ficino identified Trismegistus first as a precursor to Moses and later as Moses himself. Hermetic works were thereby incorporated into the Ancient Theology, based upon their similar Platonic content. As Francis Yates has shown, the Christian interpretation of Hermeticism was so strong that even Casaubon thought they had been forged by Christians. Hermeticism also had a significant impact on English Renaissance thinkers, such as the alchemists Robert Fludd and John Dee. When the *Hermetica* were dated, however, the ideology began its prolonged demise, most rapidly in science. Henry More accepted that Hermeticism was not a pre-Mosaic philosophy, but found components of it useful in defending his own vitalist vision of the universe. Elsewhere, however, Hermes retained greater luster.93

As with many of Keith’s intellectual influences, the role of Hermeticism must be teased out of a larger system of Quaker Biblicism and of Christian Platonism. The place of other influences on the Quakers must thus be discussed. In this case, the radical Puritan John Everard, who showed a consistent interest in various forms of mysticism, including Familism, as well as in Platonism and Hermeticism, played an important role.

William Penn was conversant with Everard’s sermons, and George Fox with his translations of writings by the Family of Love, and thus Everard’s work cannot be seen as simply an oddity of Keith’s reading. He translated the *Theologia Germanica* and later the *Hermetica* (in its first English edition), and *The Summary of Physics Restored* by the French Hermetist Jean D’Espagnet. Keith was familiar with all three works, the second specifically in Everard’s translation. Either ignorant of Casaubon or choosing to ignore him, Everard declared Hermes Trismegistus to have been a “King of Egypt” who had lived before Moses (based upon his purportedly having invented written language) and stated that his writings “contained more true knowledge of God and Nature, than in all the Books in the World besides, except only Sacred Writ.” Like most Quaker influences, the role of Everard must be inferred, but the overlapping references in the writings of Friends known to be acquainted is suggestive of his writings larger influence within the Society.94

Keith made even fewer references to Hermeticism than he did to Neoplatonism. Why Keith was attracted to the Hermetica is clear. He explained that rejecting the principle of a universal Inner Light "hath been a most mischievous hindrance ... unto the

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Extension, or spreading of true piety, and knowledge abroad among people in the world.” Accepting the idea, in contrast, could “tend so much to the universall gathering of all the nations, Kingdoms, languages and kindreds of the earth.” His attempts to defend the universality of the Inner Light led him to seek it in both the Ancient Theology and in non-Christian religions.  

In *The Universall Free Grace of the Gospell Asserted* (1671), Keith first used the *Hermetica* and pointed specifically to the dialogue entitled “His Secret Sermon in the Mount of Regeneration, & the Profession of Silence,” which was staged between Hermes and his son Tat. Keith declared that anyone who read the text, “if he understand what he reads, shall without all hesitation say, the things there uttered transcend the reach of naturall wisdome and proceed from a more profound source.” In addition to the suggestiveness of the name, the work contained numerous passages that were similar to the language of Keith’s concerns. Hermes described the act of regeneration as a “seed” and explained that “this Wisdom is to be understood in silence, and the Seed is the true Good.” Hermes named the “Author and Maker of Regeneration” as “The Child of God, one Man by the Will of God,” who created the world with his “Word.” Keith obviously used this language in different ways, but he was presented with a familiar terminology dealing with legitimate and illegitimate speech and the idea of a god/man who was the son of God and operated through his Word (Logos) in these works.  

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96 *Ibid.*, p. 128; *Hermes Mercurius Trismegistus, His Divine Pymander*, p. 94, 97. In 1673, another Friend, Robert Ruckhill, discussing Friends’ use of scripture (in opposition to the Baptists), asked as an aside: “Whether the first Pen-man of the Scriptures was Moses or Hermes, or whether both of these are not one.” Robert Ruckhill, *The Quakers Refuge Fixed Upon the Rock of Ages* (n.p. 1673), p. 17. Former Quaker Francis Bugg would later make much of this quote, asking “If Moses and Hermes be all one, then why is the Query put, unless you would have Moses to be Hermes, and not Hermes to be Moses? And so Moses being lost, and Hermes only a Philosopher in Egypt being found, the Books going under the Name of Moses shall be lost also.” These according to Bugg, constituted “Atheistical Queries.” Francis Bugg, *New
Aside from these similarities to Christian and Quaker thought, the general focus of the Hermetic works that Keith singled out were heavily Neoplatonic discussions of regeneration and truth. When Tat asked Hermes how to discover truth, the latter replied that it could not be found by contemplation of earthly objects, “But I beseech and pray to the Minde, which alone can understand the Generation, which is in God.” Previously, this “Minde” was described as “that Light the Minde, thy God.” This discovery was achieved by freeing oneself “from unreasonable brutish torments of Matter” such as greed and deceit through countervailing virtues. The result was that a person would enter a state “leaving all bodily sense, knoweth himself to consist of divine things, and rejoyceth, being made by God stable and immutable.” The Platonic influences, of achieving truth and union with God by transcending the carnal, are clear, and so, presumably were Keith’s interests in the work.97

In addition to a general message of illumination and moral regeneration derived from the above text, Keith reached a more specifically Christian interpretation of “the Baptism of Christ” from the “Crater” text. The “Crater or Monas” [“Vessel” or “One”] described the world as created by God, “not with his Hands, but his Word.” The work begins with the creation, and God’s endowment of all men with speech, but only some with “Minde.” Hermes explained, He “set that [the Crater] in the middle among all souls, as a reward to strive for.” But God “envied not any,” in not providing Mind to all. Keith’s reading of this work can only be speculated at, but in the context of Keith’s hostility to Rome Unmask’d and Her Foundation Shaken (London: John Gwillin, 1692), p. 23. Frances Yates has described many other similarities Christians found in Hermetica; but I have focused here upon those that appear to my reading most likely to have struck Keith. The character of Tat was originally a Greek mispronunciation of Thoth, but then transformed into Hermes’s son. Garth Fowden, The Egyptian Hermes, p. 32-33, 107-110.
Calvinist predestination, it is reasonable to believe that he saw in these passages human cooperation in grace (“striving”) instead of an arbitrary decree (“envy”) that provided some with the means of salvation but not all. The idea of baptism was introduced by Hermes’ metaphor of God filling a “large Cup or Bowl” (the Crater, Vessel, of the title) with Mind, in which they “that beleevest, that thou shalt return to him that sent this Cup” could wash themselves. In the process they became perfect and “partakers of Knowledge,” who sought only union with the One (hating the body and the self in the process). Keith, using similar Neoplatonic categories, might have seen this as a discussion of the union with Christ achieved by means of the Inner Light and the inward baptism. Hermes, moreover, declared that those who missed the proclamation, “received the Speech, but not Minde,” which fits easily into Keith’s concern with valid and invalid speech discussed in the previous chapter. Finally, in a later text, Keith cited Hermes that “God is a Circle, whose center is every where, and is no where circumscribed,” to argue that God’s “center” was only in Christ and “from him doth ray into us,” but that “the Blessed Deity is as centrally and essentially in us, as in the Man Christ Jesus.”

Yet, in keeping with a general tendency among Friends to bury their influences and speak according to the leadings of the “Light,” Keith felt little need to spell any of this out, and his specific references to the *Hermetica* were few. Instead he and Amsterdam Friend Benjamin Furly mentioned the writings of Hermes in a postscript they co-authored, alongside numerous other sources that they claimed demonstrated non-scriptural examples of quasi-Christian beliefs. They excerpted an account of an alleged encounter between Alexander the Great and the “Dindimus King of the Brachmans,” in

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98 *Ibid*, p. 183, 184, 185; George Keith, *The Way Cast Up* (s.n. [1677?]).
which Keith felt the Indian King gave the prideful and violent conqueror “excellent and Christian Evangelicall lessons.” In addition to opposing war, Dindimus refused a bribe from Alexander (being uninterested in worldly goods), instead sacrificing to God oil given as part of the offer. Keith concluded from this tale that it was clear “from what Spirit these Doctrines and exhortations flow,” specifically not from nature but “grace and that Evangelicall.” Keith derived a similar lesson from the Chinese Emperor Lieupang and others stating the virtues of forgiving one’s enemies. *The Universall Free Grace of the Gospell Asserted*, therefore, marks Keith’s shift in worldview when describing the Inner Light, to one rooted in the older tradition of the *prisca theologia* (from which it derived its intellectual cachet), but which at least potentially led in dangerous new directions. Furly himself may have played an important role, although his relationship with Keith is obscure beyond his role as printer of Keith’s works and translator of some of them into Dutch. His later connections to radical circles, however, is more easily traced. By the 1690s, having cultivated relationships with John Locke, Francis van Helmont and John Toland, Furly’s home and personal library became an important center for the discussion of heterodox ideas, and possibly the production site of the notorious atheist manuscript, *The Treatise of the Three Imposters*. Furly represented the dangers that Keith sought to avoid; but, while Keith never assumed a position this radical, his restraint was in large part a matter of intellectual choice.99

The connections between Keith, Furly and more radical circles are further revealed by another work of Keith’s. The same year as *The Universal Free Grace* appeared in print, Edward Pococke (son of a famous Arabic scholar of the same name)

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printed a Latin translation of the Spanish Islamic novel *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*. Historian Nabil Matar has pointed out the uses of Islam (and of this text) by Civil War Royalists against religious sectaries; but there was another line of interpretation, which Keith skirted. In 1672, Johannes Bouwmeester produced a Dutch translation of the *Hayy*, possibly at the suggestion of his friend Spinoza. Keith’s awareness of this Dutch translation is yet another oblique connection to Benjamin Furly and the radical circles in the Netherlands.

As stated, Spinoza enjoyed only a limited reading in England until the 1690s. In the Netherlands, however, he provoked a more serious controversy, especially in the Collegiant circles in which Penn and Keith were mingling. There is other oblique evidence for a relationship between members of the Society (in particular Furly) and Spinoza, including the possible hiring of the excommunicate rabbinical student to translate into Hebrew a Quaker tract seeking the conversion of the Jews. In this context, Keith made his English translation of the *Hayy* from Pococke’s Latin, “as believing it might be profitable unto many.”

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The novel tells the story of Hayy Ibn Yaqzan (“Awake, Son of Alive”), who is alternately described as either the product of an illicit marriage who was floated away by his mother to a deserted island, or as a spontaneous generation of the fermented clay of that island (to which Keith objected, pointing out that all men descended from Adam). Yaqzan is raised by goats, and -- through the power of reason -- works out an entire intellectual system. This begins with teaching himself speech and shame at his nakedness. After the death of his “mother,” a goat, he dissects her in an attempt to find the “her” within the body, ultimately concluding that the body is merely a husk or container for the true self. Yaqzan then moves on to a series of observations about the natural world, and through contemplation of cause and effect conceives of an “effector” of all natural causes. Rejecting his first opinion of it as a material thing, he concludes it to be spiritual: “So this whole world is effected and created by this Efficient without time.” Yaqzan then determines that the thing within him that perceives this “necessary existent being” could not be corruptible, such as the body, which necessitates Yaqzan having a soul separate from his body. The existence of a soul allows him to distinguish the human self from that of the other animals. Finally, he develops a system of worship consisting of “assimilations” that move him from the animal up to a self-annihilating perception of the divine. This quasi-liturgy involves various forms of asceticism in an attempt to block out

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attempt to learn and a tendency to speak as if he had, could not read Hebrew; nor (given the fact that Keith was only aware of it through a reference in Pococke’s introduction) is there any evidence that he had encountered the Hebrew edition. While Fox did in fact read a highly flawed English translation of the Koran, Tufayl’s work would have been unavailable until the Latin edition by Pococke (which Fox also could not have read) and the English edition by Keith. See Nabil Matar, “Some Notes on George Fox and Islam” JFHS 55 (1989): p. 271-276 and Lawrence I. Conrad, “Introduction: the World of Ibn Tufayl” in *The World of Ibn Tufayl: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Hayy Ibn Yaqzan* ed. Lawrence I. Conrad (New York: E. J. Brill, 1996), p. 25.
sensory distractions. Yaqzan struggles, however, to conceive of the unity of god (i.e. the Plotinian “One”), when his mind could only think of god in parts.\textsuperscript{101}

The story then changes, as a philosopher named Asal comes to the island and meets Yaqzan. Introducing him to Islamic Law, Yaqzan finds it agrees with his preconceived system. Asal, in return, comes to better understand Islam through the purified intellection of Yaqzan. Both then decides to leave the island and join civilization. Yaqzan, however, finds the philosophers there unwilling to move beyond their own self-interest to contemplate the sublime nature of God, even mocking Yaqzan for his piety. The result is the realization that some people are neither intelligent nor virtuous enough to reach a true understanding of God. For them, legalistic obedience is a necessary substitute for genuine understanding. Yaqzan therefore formerly recants his true beliefs before the philosophers and calls them to such obedience; he then returns to the island, where he can properly worship in peace. Quakerism was never as formerly elitist as this. The Inner Light remained an egalitarian notion. At the same time, How Keith understood Tufayl’s esoteric/exoteric division in religious knowledge is also of interest. Friends’ doctrine attacked what they saw as the obscure superstition of lordly clericalism. Yet, the Society of Friends was also desperate to protect its public reputation against scandal, which required using communal pressure to achieve message control. Keith himself

\textsuperscript{101} Tufayl, An Account of the Oriental Philosophy, p. 18, 63, 78, 82-82, 88-90. This work has generated a considerable historiography for historians of Islam, much of it not germane to the present discussion. One major debate has been over the meaning of the novel, whether it is an attempt to assimilate philosophy and religion as the central problem within Islam, as Gauthier has argued, or a study of “a hidden science” concerning “mystical experience,” in George Hourani’s words, or a more complicated text in which Tufayl reveled in contradictions. George F. Hourani, “The Principle Subject of Ibn Tufayl’s Hayy Ibn Yaqzan” Journal of Near Eastern Studies 15 (1956): p. 40-46. Similarly, Nabil Matar has written about the appeal of the “esoteric value of the Arab-Islamic legacy” and especially “the Sufism of that legacy” through the influence of the Hayy. Matar, Islam and Britain, p. 98. But Hourani has downplayed the importance of Sufism, arguing that “The whole argument is couched rather in neo-Platonic or Avicennan terms,” p. 44.
maintained this practice until the Schism, having most of his books approved by the Second Day Morning Meeting.

Keith almost certain read the Hayy with an eye to its Neoplatonist influences. In the introduction, Keith declared his particular approval for three passages. The first was: “Preach not thou the sweet savour of a thing thou hast not tasted.” This suggested for Keith the idea that true religious knowledge came through immediate spiritual experience, rather than purely outward knowledge. Secondly, the axiom “In the rising of the Sun is that which maketh, that thou hast not need of Saturn,” is derived from a larger quote that suggested that when one has access to the font of religious truth one does not require mediating sources, in the same way that the direct light of the sun made the reflected light of a planet unnecessary. Finally, Keith expressed approval that:

he showeth excellently how far the knowledge of a man, whose eyes are spiritually opened, differeth from that knowledge that men acquire simply by hear-say, or reading: and what he speaks of a degree of knowledge attainable, that is not by premises premised and conclusions deduced, is a certain truth, the which is enjoyed in the conjunction of the mind of man with the supreme Intellect, after the mind is purified from its corruptions, and is separated from all bodily images, and is gathered into a profound stillness.

Keith defended his use of an Islamic source by saying that one should not avoid anything that may be “profitable,” and pointed to Justin Martyr, who “stuck not to call Socrates a Christian.” Keith also interested Robert Barclay in the Hayy, and Barclay referenced it in a similar way (closely paraphrasing Keith’s introduction) in his magnum opus, The Apology for the True Christian Divinity. Keith was not interested in discovering a de-Christianized universal religion. Even after expressing support for the statements above, Keith warned his readers against believing everything contained in the book, re-opening
all the epistemological problems of the Inner Light. He declared that outward (and thus expressly Christian) means to religious truth were not to be entirely eschewed, but only over-reliance on them. 102

Keith’s interests in Eastern religion may not have been limited to the afar. In a 1670 letter to Anne Conway, Henry More had referred to a trip Keith planned to the East Indies. Since there is no other reference or evidence for this intention, More perhaps mistook a plan by Keith to travel instead to the West Indies. George Fox himself traveled to the colonies a year later, in part because the Caribbean had become a new home for supporters of John Perrot, so discussion of such a trip may have already been in the air. 103

But there is also obvious evidence of Keith’s interest in the Orient. The use of the latter term is intentional. Keith’s understanding of the non-Christian East in relation to his conception of the Inner Light bears an ambiguous relationship to Edward Said’s description of an “Orient” constructed by Enlightenment Europeans in the process of defining their own Occidental identity through the technology of imperialism. Said’s deconstruction of an imposed common Oriental identity is not entirely distinct from Keith’s view of Islam, Hinduism and China. As stated before, however, Keith’s adaptation of the Ancient Theology involved an implicit contradiction between reducing


all Eastern religions down to a Christian framework and in the process undermining Christ’s uniquely historical revelation (the Light is Christ, the Light exist in people who have never heard of Christ). This fact made it impossible for Keith to construct an Oriental “Other” or even to study the specific groupings as independent cultures.\textsuperscript{104}

During his time in the American colonies, in contrast, Keith was almost totally disinterested in the indigenous peoples. They certainly hardly fit into the Hermes – Moses – Plato lineage; but the translation of the Hayy demonstrates that Keith was interested in making a more radical claim for the Inner Light than simply a set of “outward” ideas passed down through an oral and written tradition. The prisca theologia nonetheless rooted him in a Eurasian worldview. On those occasions in which he did refer to American Indians, it was to their uncivilized state. Thus he described the immorality of congregants in non-Quaker churches as “more barbarous, wicked and ungodly than the savage Indians,” and his rumor mongering opponents during the schism as “skulking like Indians.” Civilization was an important category both in English colonization of America and Ireland and the Ancient Theology. Although one could be civilized without being Christian (in the ideology of the period) being Christian necessarily meant being

\textsuperscript{104} Edward Said, \textit{Orientalism} (New York: Vintage Books, 1979). Nabil Matar points out a second problem with applying Said’s formulation to this period: the actual power relationship, “Although many English and Scottish theologians and writers vilified and misrepresented Islam and Muslims in their works, they realized that Ottoman military power had a forceful impact on them and that the lands of Islam were beyond colonization and ‘domination.’” Nabil Matar, \textit{Islam and Britain} p. 12; Carlo M. Cipolla has distinguished naval and land military superiority and described Europe’s seaborn power as granting it “predominance over the coasts of Asia, Africa and the Americas,” even while “on her eastern border she was spiritlessly retreating under the pressure of the Turkish [land-based] forces.” \textit{Guns, Sails, and Empires: Technological Innovation and the Early Phases of European Expansion, 1400-1700} (Manhattan, Kansas: Sunflower University Press, 1965), p. 140.
civilized. Thus Keith’s perceptions of Indian savagery prohibited him from incorporating them into his understanding of the Inner Light.\textsuperscript{105}

Keith generally derived doctrinal support solely from works easily assimilated to the \textit{prisca} (such as Hermeticism and the \textit{Hayy}) while he only found morality in descriptions of more alien cultures (China and India). A book like Tufayl’s novel – Neoplatonic in origins, and subsequently Latinized and stripped of Islamic references by Pococke – was, as a result, familiar to him. Keith was not an anthropologist, however, and so any attempt to study and interpret the oral and symbolic system of American Indians must have seemed a more alien task.

\textbf{Kabbalah and van Helmont}

At the same time that Keith was preparing the second edition of \textit{Immediate Revelation}, More wrote to Anne Conway declaring that it “is come to passe which I suspected if [Keith] went to Ragley, that he would light on those notions of the Cabbalists. Which would be as sweet and pleasing to him as new milk to any Kittin.” More was referring to the Kabbalistic manuscripts circulating between Francis Mercury van Helmont, Anne Conway, and Christian Knorr von Rosenroth. Most of Keith’s use of Kabbalah appears in these private contexts; rarely did he discuss them in print, yet they had a profound effect on his theology and worldview.\textsuperscript{106}

\textsuperscript{105} Keith, \textit{Immediate Revelation}, p. 138. For the connection between civilization and Christianity, see Nicholas Canny’s discussion of how the English employed it to justify colonization in Ireland, Nicholas P. Canny, “The Ideology of English Colonization: From Ireland to America” WMQ 30 (1973)p. 575-598.

\textsuperscript{106} Henry More to Anne Conway, December 29, 1675, in \textit{Conway Letters}, p. 408, 415. In response to an attack on his Kabbalistic interpretations of Hebrew words, citing Buxtorf’s Hebrew and Chaldaic \textit{Lexicon}, Keith lashed back, saying “unto Buxtorf’s Authority, I oppose the Testimony of others better skilled, and namely the Author of the \textit{Apparatus in Librum}, Zohar, [one of the texts include in the Kabbalah}
Lady Anne, Viscountess of Conway, was England’s first published female philosopher. A student of Henry More’s, she read Descartes, Hobbes, and Spinoza (though she shared her teacher’s antipathy toward the latter two). Her home became a meetinghouse for More, Keith, William Penn, and the Continental alchemist van Helmont. Ragley House in addition served as a clearinghouse for letters and manuscripts between these men (with her reading and commenting upon them) as well as the Continental Kabbalist Christian Knorr von Rosenroth. Suffering from a variety of medical problems, in particular paralyzing migraines, she found the Quaker ennoblement of suffering attractive, prompting her eventual conversion to the Society.

Not surprisingly, the Ancient Theology provided a common framework to these thinkers. Even van Helmont, who believed that Classical Greek philosophy had been a baleful influence on Christianity, could not avoid Platonic influences. In the mid-1670s, however, the Jewish mystical tradition of Kabbalah assumed a particular prominence for Conway, van Helmont, and Keith. Pico della Mirandola had first introduced Kabbalah into elite magic during the Renaissance, but also used it to defend orthodox Christian ideas such as the Trinity. Johannes Reuchlin, however, would have provided most Englishmen with specific knowledge of the Kabbalah until the 1670s. Fitting Kabbalist texts to the Ancient Theology was made even easier by the Neoplatonic influence on Kabbalah itself, especially on the Lurianic school, which influenced the Ragley Hall circle.¹⁰⁷

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Kabbalah was based upon an esoteric reading of the Creation story. In the beginning, its adherents postulated, there existed a void completely filled by God or the Ein Sof, which like the One was defined mainly by its inscrutability. God contracted itself (tsimtsum) in order to create the world and to purify itself of its evil component, which became matter. This universe was divided into four “worlds” or levels of creation (azilut, beri‘ah, yezirah, and asiyyah). Into this inert mass God then sent a ray of light to provide it with form and animation. The light possessed ten gradations which were then contained within vessels, called sephirot. Christian Cabbalists subsequently assimilated this concept of an emanating light to Neoplatonism and the sephirot to orders of angels. Unlike in Platonism and Christianity, this Creation was inherently unstable, leading the sephirot to crash down and shatter, creating the physical world. This failure in creation resulted in a new emanation of divine light into creation in the form of Adam Qadmon, which created five partsufim (‘faces’) from the remains of the sephirot. Arikh Anpin came from the first sephirah, Keter. The sephirah Hokhmah was transformed into Abba (“father”) and Binah into Imma (“mother”). The marital union of these latter two Partsufim produced Ze’ir Anpin from the next six sephirot and then Nuqba de-Ze’ir from the final sephirah.

The marital union of these last two partsufim ultimately produced Adam and Eve. This universe was complicated by being multiplied and self-reflecting, each partsufim containing the structure of the sephirot, and each of the four worlds containing a

For the Platonizing of Kabbalah, see Scholem, Kabbalah, p. 87-91, 98-103; Sarah Hutton, Anne Conway, A Woman Philosopher (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 164-166. The central Kabbalistic text with which Keith and others in his time were concerned, the Zohar, consisted of midrashim (commentaries on the Torah) purported to be written by rabbi Shimon bar Yohai in the second century, but in fact forgeries written by the thirteenth century figure Moses de Leon. Lawrence Fine, Physician of the Soul, Healer of the Cosmos, Isaac Luria and His Kabbalistic Fellowship (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), p. 101.
complement of the partsufim, and therefore of the sephirot. Adam was initially entirely spiritual, without a body identified with the physical world (asiyyah), but with a spiritual body from the next lowest world (yezirah), a lower soul (nefesh) identified with Beri’ah, a middle soul (ruah) from Nuqba de-Ze ’ir of azilut, a higher soul (neshamah) from Ze’eir Anpin of azilut, and a higher one from Abba and Imma of azilut. Adam’s sin then sent the world crashing down again; and, subsequently, the primary human duty consisted of healing the universe through good actions (tiggun), particularly Sabbath and dietary observations, which would release the spirits trapped in the fragments of the sephirot to re-ascend from the earthly realm into the spiritual. This seemingly endlessly elaborate system of divisions and interconnections between souls, the universe and the divinity eventually provided Keith with numerous ways in which to think about the relationship between Christ as God, Manhood and physical incarnation. These distinctions were important for the Society, because Friends believed that the Light existed within all people from all times and was always sufficient for salvation. This belief, however, required believing Christ to be eternally both God and Man, in order to maintain the central mystery of the Christian Church.\footnote{This description is based upon Fine, \textit{Physician of the Soul}; Gershom Scholem, \textit{Kabbalah}; and Christian Freiherr Knorr von Rosenroth, \textit{Kabbala Denudata} (New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1974).}

Henry More had earlier written a caballist treatise based upon his readings of Reuchlin and Cornelius Agrippa, although he had not read any actual Kabbalistic texts. In this work, the \textit{Conjectura Cabalistica}, More set forth his own esoteric reading of \textit{Genesis}, rejecting a literal interpretation of the Genesis story as too fantastic to defend against the assaults of atheists. Influenced by the work of Philo of Alexandria and especially Origen, More created a threefold interpretation of scripture: “literal,”
“philosophical,” and “Mystical” or “moral.” More, desiring to defend God’s rational goodness, sought to solve the evident problem that some people were born into circumstances unconducive to their salvation, a fact that came dangerously close to the arbitrary God of predestinarian Calvinism. In addition, More’s distrust of the physical and the bodily left open the question of why human souls were ever incarnated by a loving (rather than a perverse) God. The solution, for More, was to argue for the praexistance of souls in a non-earthly realm, from which they had subsequently fallen. Incarnation, therefore, was a punishment for disobedience, an expulsion from, not a literal, but a spiritual garden. As will be seen, Keith would adopt a modified version of this thesis during the Schism.109

In the mid 1670s von Rosenroth and van Helmont were engaged in translating The Zohar and other Kabbalist commentaries into Latin, eventually printing them alongside their own interpretations in a two-volume work, Kabbalah Denudata. This understudied work, read both by Leibniz and Locke, has recently begun receiving more attention from scholars. More was able to read many of these texts in manuscript and, horrified by actual Kabbalah, contributed several critiques that were published in the work. The notion of tsimtsum suggested God had a physical body and Kabbalah’s monism posited a continuum between spirit and matter (and that one could be transformed into the other, such as through tikkun) in contrast to More’s dualistic

109 Henry More, Conjectura Cabbalistica (London: James Flesher, 1653). Origen likewise believed in the praexistance of souls, but he also believed that the world itself did not come to a single end, but was consumed in a massive conflagration only to be replaced by a new world into which souls that had previously lived would again be incarnated. Eventually apokatastasis would be reached, in which all souls would achieve unity with God in purified bodies. Antonia Triopolitis, Origen: A Critical Reading (New York: Peter Lang, 1985). More was less extreme in his position, stopping short of reincarnation. See D. P. Walker, The Decline of Hell, Seventeenth-Century Discussions of Eternal Torment (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964); and Crocker, Henry More, p. 101. See also Philip C. Almond, Heaven and Hell in Enlightenment England (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 7-17.
separation of the two. Yet he still felt there was something of value in those texts, which had been heavily obscured by later corruptions.¹¹⁰

Van Helmont and Anne Conway were more taken with Kabbalah. Van Helmont used the notion of a pure strain of Mosaic revelation to argue that the true Word of God had been corrupted by the mendacious accretions of pagan Greek philosophers, and then to accuse these corruptions with being behind the divisions among Christians. Kabbalah, therefore, could be a means to recapture the original Jewish-Christian religion, which was the true Ancient Theology, and could therefore reunite the Christian Church. In addition, because the Kabbalah, according to Rosenroth and van Helmont, revealed Christ’s divinity and the Trinity, it would convince Jews of those truths through their own texts.

Keith similarly argued “it might be a great help whereby to convince the Jews, ... to make use of those Testimonies, which are in their own books, unto Christ, although under other names.” This irenic religious project was connected to the Lurianic idea of “healing the world.” Luria’s animism, which saw matter and spirit as a continuum and all bodies as filled with an infinite number of spirits, meant that matter could be purified into spirit.

Lurianic Kabbalah was exceptional for its millennial focus, which Gershom Scholem has argued was a palliative for the experience of the expulsion of Jews from Spain, and this notion of active human effort to produce the final days was likewise attractive to individuals whose society has been traumatized by the decades of religious conflict that

had followed the Reformation. Alison Coudert has thus seen a unity between Hermetic, alchemic, Kabbalistic and radical Protestant conceptions of “reform.” By the end of the century, as will be seen, there was an even broader concern among many Englishmen with “godly reform” or the “reformation of manners,” something with which Keith himself would become involved.111

Keith’s use of Kabbalah, like most of his intellectual influences, must be divided into two categories: his exoteric use of certain concepts to as authorities in his apologetics, and what seems to have been a more privately kept set of beliefs that adhered much closer to Conway and van Helmont. As with Platonism and Hermeticism, the amount of actual text Keith generated specifically referencing Kabbalah is deceptive. While in the 1690s his works were largely devoid of specific Kabbalistic references, at the very time, a former Friend living in Rhode Island in the early 1690s, Christian Lodowick, noted Keith’s use of “the Writings of some Rabbis among the Eastern Jews.” The specificity of Lodowick’s knowledge, including Keith’s particular use of the work of “R[abi] Jichack” (Isaac Luria), is surprising until he refers to von Rosenroth as a man,

“whose Children I Tutored some years agoe.” That even an opponent of Keith’s could recognize his use of Kabbalistic concepts reveals the very different way print and private discussions were held by members of the Society. Keith’s more common use of the Kabbalah was in keeping with his idiosyncratic assimilation of ideas to Quaker apologetics, and was related to the third major strain within his theology: the nature of Christ and of the resurrected bodies of saints. Martin Endy, in his discussion of William Penn’s theology, has teased out the problems inherent in the belief that Christ’s eternal existence as the Inner Light, and both the soteriological role of the incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection and the nature of Christ as both God and man. Christ’s resurrected body was intimately connected with the resurrected bodies of saints, as the former was the grounds of belief in the latter and a denial of the latter was an undermining of belief in the former. Drawing upon his reading of the Kabbalah, Keith attempted to fashion an elaborate series of distinctions that explained precisely this issue.112

Keith’s first concern, in keeping with his general interest in epistemology, was to apply Kabbalah to the notion of Christ as Inner Light. In a letter to Henry More, Anne Conway defended Keith’s Kabbalism, asserting that Keith’s “opinion, if true, would facilitate the understanding of many places in Scripture, as well as it would make better sense of the Cabbalists Soir Anpin and Arich-Aupin [the first two partsufim].” She intended to wait, however, until she had read More’s and Keith’s responses to one another “in those passages relating to the extension of the soul of Christ” before she

112 Christian Lodowick. A Letter From the Most Ingenious Mr. Lodowick (Boston: Bartholomew Green, 1692), p. 6, both the brackets and the bracketed text exist in the original. Melvin B. Endy, Jr. William Penn and Early Quakerism, p. 80, 82-83.
rendered her own judgment. As we have seen, Friends’ belief in the internal presence of Christ was a major source of the hatred directed against them by their enemies. More particularly objected to Keith’s concept of Christ’s soul as emanating throughout the universe, and was still less impressed with Keith’s new formulation and its use of Kabbalistic terms. More declared that Keith’s “new opinion … about the soul of Christ extended every way out of his body through the whole Creation is a haplesse and groundless conceit. . . All this is to cover and palliate their views and erroneous Fantastical expressions touching Christ within us,” which, according to More, were identical to those of the Family of Love. Always the more conservative thinker in Ragley, More found himself increasingly at odds with (and shut out by) van Helmont and his former student Conway.113

In two surviving letters by Keith to von Rosenroth, Keith similarly identified Christ with the partsufim Arich Anpin (the Macroprosopos, or “great man,” identified with Christ as creator) and Dseir Anpin (the Microposopos, or “small man” identified with Christ as incarnate). As Sarah Hutton has shown, Keith was seeking to Christianize the Logos by connecting him to the two partsufim respectively identified in Kabbalah with divine love, suffering, mercy and with “God as Lord of the universe.” Von Rosenroth agreed with Keith’s identification of Christ with Dseir Anpin, but not with the connection to Arich Anpin, whom von Rosenroth believed to be God the Father. Keith replied that even his correspondent’s concession “will be of sufficient use for my point and will confirm my proposition” that “in Christ there is a certain most divine soul,” which was also present throughout the world and “illuminates and vivifies” every human

soul “with the result that impious souls are turned back towards God” and sanctified. God could not be approached immediately by the human soul, and required Christ as intermediary. This position reveals (as More pointed out) how intertwined Keith’s reading was with his preconceived ideas drawn from Quakerism. In his Christology, as elsewhere, Keith was seeking new authorities to defend his preconceived beliefs; though in the process his own (especially private) beliefs were changing. In his later debate with the Boston minister Cotton Mather, Keith used the sephirot (although leaving out the first one, Kether) to describe the stages of an illuminist scale of understanding leading up to wisdom (Cochmah), “all which make up, by way of allegory and analogy the parts and Members of the Son of Man, or heavenly Adam, as both Ezekiel and John saw him upon his Throne.” Arguing that Friends did not value their own works above scripture despite their both being produced by the same spirit, Keith claimed the authors of scripture possessed a superior level of understanding, despite it being the same in kind. Starting with the identification of Adam Qadmon, the Heavenly Adam and Son of Man, as Christ extended throughout the universe and into all men, Keith was combining the Neoplatonic notion of ascent towards God with his Quaker conception of the indwelling presence of Christ and authorizing it with Kabbalistic terminology, “all which [Hebrew words] are found in Scripture.”

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The second concept that Keith pulled from the Kabbalah -- ultimately related to the first -- was that of multiple souls or multiple faculties of the soul present within the body. Kabbalah held that Adam had had within him all human souls, and that his descendants likewise contained multiple souls, an idea that Keith combined with Platonic and Kabbalistic divisions of the soul. Conway, in the above letter, remarked that Keith “seemes to be of the Jewes opinion, that there may be many soules in man, and that our sensitive soul is really distinct from that endued with understanding, since his finding them to agree with him … about the extension of the soul of Christ” seemed to be motivating his adoption of the multiplicity of souls within individual humans. Most directly, Conway was referring to the debate between More and Keith eventually published in the second edition of *Immediate Revelation*, over whether the “seed” could be separate from the soul, since it did not possess sensation. Keith’s printed answer makes no reference to these Kabbalistic categories, again demonstrating the ways Keith’s audience structured his responses.¹¹⁵

Further evidence that Keith was much more circumspect in print can be adduced from Keith’s two published works in which the Kabbalah played a clear role: *The Way Cast up* (1677) and its follow-up (responding to an anonymous critique) *The True Christ Owned* (1679). Abandoning references to *Adam Qadmon* and the *partsufim* (beyond referring to Christ as the “Heavenly Adam”) he drew the basis for his Christology from Origen’s Neoplatonic formulation: that the Word/Logos existed from all time and took on a human soul and body at the incarnation. Keith argued that it was Socinian to believe

¹¹⁵ *Conway Letters*, p. 407. Later, in print, Keith backed away from the idea that humans possessed several souls, declaring that whether the various elements of the soul were “principles” or merely “faculties” of the same principle was unimportant, *The True Christ Owned*, p. 60-63.
that Christ did not pre-exist the incarnation, otherwise the prophets “had no Christ, nor no Saviour, no Mediator.” But Keith used Kabbalistic terminology to argue that, not only was the Logos coeternal with the Father, but Christ’s manhood as well. This view represented a change from his position of a few years before (articulated during the Barbican debates) that Christ was most properly the Logos. Now he held that “Christ had flesh and blood to wit, heavenly and spirituall, even from the beginning, on which the Saints in all ages did feed.” This manhood, moreover, was separate from the mortal body assumed at the incarnation, a necessary point if he were to avoid suggesting that God was corporeal. It was “not the outward flesh and blood, that is the Man,” he explained, but “it is the Soul or inward Man that dwelleth in the outward flesh or body that is the Man most properly.” Keith thus sought to solve the problem of Christ as eternal God and as historical incarnate savior, while retaining the soteriological universality of the Light throughout history by the invention of a third category of Christ’s manhood, distinct from both his divinity and his created human soul. 116

Such a complication of the nature of Christ required Keith to articulate the nature of Christ’s extension into the souls of all people through a complicated discussion -- with human parallels -- of the true locus of personal identity. He explained that he meant “that the Man Christ Jesus is really present in and among us … I do not mean by his externall or outward person, for that is ascended into Heaven,” but his “Soul extended into us in his Divine Seed and Body, which is his Heavenly flesh and blood.” Keith distinguished, in the Kabbalistic language referred to by Anne Conway, between the “Nephesch” and “Neschamah” of the Soul of Christ. Kabbalists divided the soul into nefesh (animal

116 Keith, The Way Cast Up, p. 95-96, 102. For the charge of Socinianism, see Keith, The True Christ Owned, p. 8-9, repeated 18, for Christ as Heavenly Adam see p. 41, 51.
vitality), *ru’ah* (a vague faculty developed with the intellect) and *neshamah* (highest power of apprehension, especially the mystical perception of God). Keith dropped the *ru’ah*, as a term with little distinct meaning in Hebrew beyond “spirit,” and distinguished instead between the *nefesh*, or “that of the *Soul* of Christ common to him with the Souls of other men, as namely, the Root and Life of the Animal Senses, and discursive parts,” and the *neshamah*, or “that *substantial dignity* and *excellency* of the *Soul* of Christ, that it hath in its nature … above and beyond the Souls of all other men, and Spirits of the most excellent and holy Angels.” This distinction drew upon Neoplatonic divisions between purely discursive human knowledge and higher contemplation. Some Kabbalists identified the *ru’ah* with moral judgment, making it unsurprising that Keith -- with his belief that moral judgment required vivification by inward spirit, in this case Christ’s *neshamah* -- would find little use for the middle category. The anonymous author who responded to *The Way Cast Up* attacked Keith on precisely this point, asking if Adam possessed a rational soul, separate from the *nefesh*, and then declaring that, if he did, it would make Adam more human than Christ’s manhood.\footnote{Keith, *The Way Cast Up*, p. 102, 123, 143; idem, *The True Christ Owned*, p. 24-25; Anonymous, *The Quakers Creed Concerning the Man Christ Jesus* (London : Printed for Jonathan Robinson, [1678?]), p. 10-12. This explanation of the division of the soul is a simplification of a more varied tradition within Kabbalah, see Scholem, *Kabbalah* p. 154-156. Origen likewise divided the human animal into body, spirit and soul. Spirit served as a bridge between body and soul. Alternatively Origen at times divided man into body and soul with a further division of the soul into rational and irrational components.}

Subdividing Christ’s soul provided Keith with a less simple solution than he originally thought. His opponent attacked his notion that the manhood of Christ was eternal by presenting scriptural passages suggesting Christ (while on earth) had learned things. Keith responded that Christ, “as in respect of the [*nefesh*] of his soul, might grow in *Wisdome*, as other Men, as also he did in stature.” And that “even the [*neshamah*],
although *Omnipercipient* and *Omniscient* of things,” also learned because Christ’s soul was omniscient “by the perception of the objects, or things, as they dayly appear: and therefore his Soul may grow in experimental Wisdome and Knowledge, as properly as the soul of any other man,” although this increase was still above the purely mortal. This concession ultimately reveals the failure of Keith’s attempt to use Kabbalistic psychology to resolve the problems in Quaker Christology. Eternalizing Christ’s manhood necessarily removed the importance of Gospel history, but humanizing the neshamah simply became incoherent.

Keith was also forced to address the possibility that his taxonomy of Christ’s soul was creating multiple Christs. In *The Way Cast Up*, he avoided the question by stating he could not be sure whether his division was between faculties within one soul or possibly two separate souls, an ambiguity likewise exhibited in Origen. In response, Keith turned to a final Kabbalistic analogy: the four worlds of “Asiah,” “Jezirah,” “Briah,” and “Aziluth.” Keith had previously mentioned this division to win a semantic point while disputing the nature of Christ’s manhood as created or emanated. He had assured his readers these worlds were not the “idle fictions of latter Jews, but real things,” which were “warranted” by scripture. Keith now used the idea of man as a microcosm of the universe (leaving out the Aziluth, since it was identified with the divine emanation, rather than creation) to argue “that out of each of these three Worlds, Man is Made, or Created,” in order to explain that the division of the human soul did not eliminate its unity.

Kabbalah, as mentioned, was intensely self-complicating and referential, producing a three-dimensional panorama of distinctions and levels along an x-axis of souls, a y-axis of *partsufim* and a z-axis of worlds. The esoterica of this system granted to Keith ancient
foundations for his own understanding of the physical, human and divine distinctions within Christ and *Logos*.\textsuperscript{118}

By 1681, Keith appears to have moved from using Kabbalah to defend the Inner Light, to articulating it in its own right. Central to this change was Keith’s adoption of the Revolution of Souls, or reincarnation. Keith, Anne Conway, and van Helmont collaborated (to an ultimately unknown degree) on *Two Hundred Queries*, a defense of this doctrine. The concept had roots both in Platonism (which believed in the immortality of the soul but not in otherworldly salvation) and in Lurianic Kabbalah. The argument in the *Two Hundred Queries* was in part a polemic against predestination, defending universal redemption and repudiating absolute damnation. God, they argued, could not both be just and damn people who lacked the means of salvation. Every person, instead, was granted twelve lives totaling one thousand years in which to achieve salvation through Christian faith. In the hands of Gospel Biblicists contrasting the universality of Christ’s promise with the historical and geographic narrowness of the Christian story, this Judaic idea ironically led to a greater influence on explicit Christian doctrine. Queries 37-39 argued that explicit knowledge of the Gospels was necessary for salvation. Later, in Queries 40-43 a particularly Keithian spin was placed upon this point, as the work asserted that one had to believe in an inward and outward coming of Christ, including the outward blood of Christ, and that the doctrine of the Revolutions was preferable than either emphasizing the inward light alone (which equaled “Paganism”) or making God a “Respecter of Persons” (i.e. predestination).\textsuperscript{119}

\textsuperscript{118} Keith, *The True Christ Owned*, p. 68, 48-49, 61.
But spiritual reincarnation brought up physical reincarnation: would the physical body be recycled in addition to the soul; and, if not, how was the body related to individual identity? Which reincarnation would be resurrected? More had earlier rejected the belief that the same body was resurrected -- that it would be reconstituted in heaven from its long scattered matter (some of it presumably incorporated into new bodies) -- as absurd and thereby granting ammunition to atheists. Sarah Hutton has pointed to a passage in *The Way Cast Up* that suggests Keith utilized the idea that matter could be purified into spiritualized forms to explain how physical bodies were resurrected, an idea present both in Origen (who argued that all souls possess an ethereal body that could become either more pure or more corrupt and corporeal) and Kabbalah. *Two Hundred Queries* made numerous distinctions, including proposing in Queries 115-118 the idea that the substance of the earthly body would be resurrected but then been given an “Heavenly and Immortal body” -- a concept also related to that of the “astral body” which some philosophers proposed as an intermediate bond between soul and body -- to wear as “its everlasting Garment.” This interpretation, nonetheless, left open the question of how the reincarnated soul, before its eventual ascent to heaven, would retain its bodily identity. Here the authors of the *Queries* proposed that a revolution of bodies would accompany that of souls, as each body’s substance (remaining the same across incarnations) drew its material particles to itself like a magnet.\(^{120}\)

The degree of Keith’s belief in the Revolution of Souls has to be pieced together from obscure, and often hostile, sources. When placed alongside the more documented

ideas of Conway and van Helmont, however, a pattern does emerge. In the early 1680s Keith wrote his own manuscript defense of the doctrine of the Revolutions and sought the assent of George Fox and George Whitehead to its printing. They balked, however, and Keith suppressed the work at their insistence. *The Way Cast Up* itself provoked a reaction in the form of several Friends charging him with deviating from the accepted doctrines of the Society. The only evidence for this confrontation are Keith’s recollections after the schism, when he stated that William Shewen attacked him for proclaiming that Christ’s body was resurrected, that Friends should pray to Christ in heaven rather than within, and that one could only approach God through the intermediary of Christ. These concerns are notable (but also questionable, since they were retold after the fact) for being similar to those raised during the future schism. The dispute was resolved when both Whitehead and Penn (Fox appears not to have taken part) took Keith’s side, with Whitehead even applauding Keith for producing a clear exposition of Quaker doctrine on a point -- Christ’s resurrected body -- on which Friends had previously been evasive. Intriguingly, Keith described William Penn defending prayer directed to the outward Christ, with the result that some Friends described Penn as “not an Antient Friend of the Ministery [sic].” This required Whitehead to intervene, though he also did not fare well. While roughly the same age as Penn, Whitehead had joined the Society much earlier, and was closer to the first generation of Friends. When Whitehead quoted scripture in defense of Penn, their opponents called St. Paul “dark and ignorant,” which Whitehead denounced as bound to provoke the Society’s enemies. Two conclusions can be drawn from these early disputes involving Keith. While George Keith had theological disputes with other Friends, the meeting system of the Society could function to contain them. Second, the changes in
Keith’s theology prompted by his reading of Kabbalah, often pointed to by scholars as the root of the schism, was part of larger shift in the Society’s theology that was shared by other leading Friends and need not, of itself, have provoked a schism.

The fact that the meeting system served to suppress open disagreements between Friends, and that Keith was willing to remain circumspect in how he stated some of his odder ideas, makes discovering his actual beliefs tricky. A tract published by Keith in 1694, alongside statements supposedly by Keith but recorded by his enemies years after the fact put forth an intriguing possibility. In the tract, *The Truth Advanced*, Keith included an Appendix that appears to date the end of the world to 1700. The tract also contains, short of the Revolution of Souls, some of his more openly Kabbalistic ideas. Specifically, he rejected the notion of physical resurrection as a replacement of one sort of matter with another, as not “a Transmutation of the body, or Transformation, but a Commutation or Exchange of one thing for another;” and instead argued for a change “in Form and Mode, or in Manner and Quality, as when Sand and Ashes is turned into clear Glass.” Keith distinguished between the human bodies which would be resurrected and “the Bodies of Inferior Creatures, as Vegetables, Animals, Mettals, … still mingled or mixed with the more gross parts,” which would not, and so “by a sort of innate appetite and desire, incline to be joyned unto Man, as their Head, and to be his food.” At the same time, Keith distinguished a second earth to which the resurrected would go (D’Espagnet had also postulated the existence of several worlds), which distinguished it from this earth where “by the singular blessing of God the Heavens shall give more kindly and favorable Influences to the Earth, and to all mortal Creatures, whether Men, Beasts or Vegetables.” This concept suggests something much closer to the idea of tiqqun, and of
“healing the world,” which (when seen in the light of an imminent end times) could have meant Keith was concealing a far more heterodox position than he let on. In addition, in a later dispute with the Pennsylvania Friend Caleb Pusey, Keith is accused of claiming he would be “called” to preach the Revolutions. Finally, Keith’s conversion to Anglicanism in 1700, presumably in the wake of the failed millennium, is suggestive of his being disillusioned with precisely this worldview. ¹²¹

Van Helmont, who had converted to Quakerism, did not fare as well. The record is sparse, but the Society appears principally to have objected to some of his doctrines and especially his refusal to submit his books to the meeting for approval. In 1684 they experienced a relatively amicable break. Keith, by that point, was probably in the colonies, but carried the effects over with him. ¹²²

The Road to Exile

¹²² The only references to Keith’s manuscript appeared in 1696: “as to the Manuscript [Whitehead] mentions that I shewed him; it is true, there was such a Manuscript, which I read both to him and George Fox, wherein I did undertake to Answer to some Objections against the Universal Principle; and there were some things in that Manuscript modestly proposed concerning the Revolutions of some Souls, but not ways as any positive Conclusion, but simple as an Hypothesis or Supposition.” George Keith, *Anti-Christs and Sadduces Detected Among a Sort of Quakers* (London: n.p. 1696), p. 31. The meeting over Shewen’s charges was referred to by Keith during the first Turner Hall debate George Keith, *An Exact Narrative*, p. 38-39; and in an account written by Keith and published in an appendix to Charles Leslie’s *A Defence of a Book Intituled, The Snake in the Grass* (London: Charles Brome, 1700), “The Collection”, p. 16-39. Keith recalled William Mead taking Shewen’s side, which may have also prompted Penn -- no friend of Mead’s - to take the opposite (as Mead would take Keith’s side in 1694, again in opposition to Penn). The Presbyterian Samuel Young described Mead calling “Penn’s party ... Actors for Popery.” Young was not an especially trustworthy writer, but his choice of individuals suggest that the dispute between the two men was well known. p. 15. Obviously Keith’s memory may have been selective, especially since he was using the incident to explain why he had been able to remain in the Society and even to defend the orthodoxy of Penn and Whitehead before the Schism. At Turners Hall, Keith was challenged to name the Friend who called St. Paul “dark and ignorant,” but this action may have been an attempt to isolate the Society from the particular Friend. Thomas Ellwood, in 1696, asked Penn and Whitehead about the incident, and reported that Penn could not recall the incident and that Whitehead only remembered some rejected praying to Christ. Ellwood, *An Answer to George Keith’s Narrative of his Proceedings at Turner’s-Hall* (London: Tace Sowle, 1696), p. 157.
By the early 1680s Keith’s theology had clearly changed. Often he is described as having become more orthodox, but this simplifies the situation. Rather, Keith’s theological concerns were becoming more complicated and in the process his answers less coherent. There was also an issue of context. Keith’s printed output in the early 1680s slackened both in volume and creativity. Fourteen works appeared between 1670-1681 (the date of his defense of *The Way Cast Up*), while only three further works were published in Britain before his departure for the colonies. One was a challenge to the Scottish minister John Alexander, and largely derivative, often directing readers to his previous books. The second was an English edition of a Latin tract written against a Lutheran minister named William Bajer, bound together with a response to the Anglican minister (and future Jacobite) George Hicke’s sermon against enthusiasm. The content of these last two combined works is the centerpiece of the argument of Keith’s increased conservatism, nor is this interpretation misplaced. At the same time, there are numerous considerations that played into Keith’s more conservative turn in these tracts. The work against Bajer was a defense of Robert Barclay’s *Apology* from charges of making scripture irrelevant, in which Keith sought to transform the distinction between the Lutheran’s use of illumination and his own into one over semantics. Written several years after the push by the Society for legal toleration failed (as will be discussed in the next chapter) and in the wake of renewed persecution, Keith was compelled to emphasize the biblical text. Keith focused on scripture as a pastoral tool, rather than an epistemic one, although those two were not strictly separable. The use of scripture, Keith elaborated, did not negate the immediacy of revelation, since it was revelation that was the primary source. Despite Keith’s torturous attempts to maintain a position consistent with his
original radical epistemic claims, this new emphasis on scripture nonetheless represented a significant movement away from it. At the same time, this change was in many respects more in emphasis than in substance. Keith was defending Friends’ use of scripture, rather than immediate revelation; Friends rarely argued that scripture was useless or unimportant, and Keith’s defense of a higher level of contemplation (relating both to his Neoplatonism and the Inner Light) implicitly preserved much of his radicalism.123

When discussing non-Christians, Keith distinguished between a general revelation granted to all and a specific revelation provided to Christians. Keith defended the idea of a general inward religion possessed by all people by citing Plato and Plotinus, “and others among those called Philosophers,” along with early Christian Platonists such as Clement of Alexandria and Origen, and then finally the *Theologica Germanica* and other medieval Platonic works. All these “Mysticks, and Writers upon Mystick Divinity so called” professed “a certain Knowledge of God, which is received without all words, by a certain inward gust, taste, and touch, and inward feeling of God, and Divine Things” in those who had reached a “due state and degree of purity and holiness.” Scripture passages themselves “plainly imply that there were many such good and honest men, fearing God and working righteousness, who were acceptable unto God through Christ, although they had not heard of Christ as yet outwardly.” Obedience to this general revelation meant one was “in a safe state, as to the present, and hath a firm and sure hope of future happiness.” Future access to special revelation remained necessary “in order to obtain a more perfect

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123 The tract was first printed in Latin as *Ad Joh: Guilelmi Bajeri Theologiae Doctoris & Professoris, Sic Dicti, Jenensis Dissertationem Primam Contra Quakeros* (Amsterdam: Jacobum Clausium, 1683); it was subsequently translated and reprinted in George Keith, *Divine Immediate Revelation and Inspiration Continued in the True Church, in Two Treatises* (London: n.p. 1684). For scripture as secondary rule, see *Truth’s Defence*, p. 62-64.
state through Christ, of Eternal Life.” On another occasion John Alexander posed the question: “if every Man have the Rule of Faith revealed to him by a Dictat within, Why have not *Americans* as much knowledge of that Rule as we Christians?” Keith responded that the presence of a moral law within all people was necessary if Indians were to be condemned for their polytheism (despite the fact that the Light did not reveal the “History of the Gospel”). Seemingly exhausted with the subject and unable to answer it openly through the Revolution of Souls, Keith later remarked that the question “belongeth to the secret Judgments of God” and those with access to scripture should simply be grateful. Keith’s continuing concern was the rejection of the Calvinist notion of absolute reprobation (the idea that God forever damned the majority of people purely by his own inscrutable will and without respect to their actions), by opening up some path to salvation to all people. As will be seen, however, this dual perspective (of attempting to explain while also relying on mystery as an escape route) was also the one many of his opponents in the Society would later adopt against him.124

As stated, Kabbalah and the doctrine of the revolution of souls offered a strange and unorthodox way to reinforce orthodox doctrines. There are only oblique possible references to the theory of the Revolutions in these final two works. Keith explained in the preface to his response to Bajer the importance of scripture in teaching specific Christian doctrines, which were not available to everyone “*yet it shall most certainly come into all before the end of the World … to the Salvation of them that believe, and to the greater condemnation of these* [sic] *who believe not*.” This is very close to arguments made in *Two Hundred Queries*, in particular the claim that God would not condemn

people without offering them some access to Christian doctrine. Similarly, Keith chided John Alexander for believing that God’s grace was withheld from “most of the Nations of the Earth,” and stated that “if God require men to believe in Christ,” it was only just that “some foundation or ground for such a belief is to be made known unto them.”

The specifically Christian revelation described by Keith was arrived at through scripture, though nonetheless it remained an immediate revelation. “We do also acknowledge,” he asserted “that in respect of the more special Heads and Doctrines of the Christian Religion, the Scripture is necessary, both by necessity of precept and also of means.” After assigning this importance to scripture, Keith used a Neoplatonic framework to explain this level of piety was merely preparatory for a higher state in which one experienced “God in Christ, and with Christ in a deep silence as well inward as outward of all words, (the discursive thoughts, and reasonings of the mind being also excluded for some time,)” which “is much better, and more clearly and delightfully felt and known than by all the words, that the tongues of men and Angels ever did Utter.” This wordless state was one in which “the use and exercise of the Scripture Words, in reading, hearing and meditation of them [were] to be rejected and laid aside.” Again, Keith turned to the dichotomy of carnal language and silent resignation to the influence of the divine to explain the highest level of grace.

While adopting this more orthodox stance towards Bajer, Keith defended more radical positions in his nearly simultaneous reply to Alexander. While showing some discomfort with the question of scripture’s provenance, he asked “is it any Crime to ask if these additions [to scripture by translators] be the words of God, or only the words of

125 Keith, Divine Immediate Revelation, unpag preface & p. 207.
man; and if such Additions be any part of the Rule of Faith and Manners? And yet those very Additions are of such consequence, that they may occasion the Reader to take up another sense of the Sentences, then otherwise he would, or perhaps the Spirit of God did really intend.” Keith also challenged Alexander’s claim to certain scriptural knowledge beyond the most basic doctrines. Against the charge that Quakers allegorized the Gospel, Keith explained “that by the Gospel, we mean not the Power of God abstractly considered without the Doctrine, and suitable words, inwardly or outwardly Preached, nor yet the Doctrine and Works, without the Power, and Life, and Spirit of God, but both conjunctly.” Keith, while attacking the provenance of Scripture, nonetheless, attempted to maintain a balance that would prevent the Inner Light from spinning into doctrinal chaos and preserving the centrality of the Light as experience and epistemology.127

In addition to his increased focus on scripture, Keith had also changed his understanding of the relationship between Christ and the faculties of the soul. Keith’s response to Bajer referred to an “intuitive faculty and power of the Soul, whereby God himself … is seen … and enjoyed.” Similarly, the general revelation was supernatural in respect to its “Author” or “Efficient Cause” (God) but natural in relation to “the Subject of its Inherence” (man). Revelation presented itself to our “inward and spiritual sense without words.” Keith still maintained, however, that revelation was “of God himself,” and was not an accident but had a “place in the Souls intuitive power,” it “is to be called substantial.” These positions represent a significant retreat from Keith’s earlier discussion of the seed as the literal presence of Christ within people, and a movement toward something more resembling Dr. More’s boniform faculty. Keith even explained to

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Alexander that “God dealeth not with Men in Conversion, as with Stocks [sic] and Stones, but as with Reasonable Creatures, having some capacity of understanding.” Keith continued to assert, however, that this revelation was not natural conscience but supernatural and “above the Soul, and the Souls nature.” Thus Keith adopted a tactic common to Quaker apologetics: stating both sides of an issue in different contexts, while feeling no need to integrate them.¹²⁸

Underneath this, however, Keith had changed his emphasis, he was no longer proclaiming a radical episteme while defending its basic orthodoxy; rather he was preaching a more orthodox position while defending its concordance with his previous more radical claims. In this respect, Keith was following the direction of the Society as a whole. This is an important, though not the sole, element of the future American schism: it made it difficult if not impossible for Keith to fully answer his opponents while making him more distrustful of their positions. In the context of early modern understandings of identity, this irresolvable argument quickly took on a life of its own.

For Friends, heavy politicking and sporadic persecution marked the 1670s. The cultivation of aristocratic allies, and debates with Baptists, Anglicans, and Scots Presbyterians were the practical extension of Keith’s intellectual endeavors. While the previous chapter teased out Keith’s role in these re-interpretations of Quaker doctrine, they occurred as acts within an emerging public sphere. The communal component to Quaker identity, rooted both in the corporate nature of early modern identity, and the experience of the Inner Light, made group representation not merely central to Quaker apologetics but the forum for individual comprehension of the experience of the Light. Keith’s writings are incoherent except as part of this apologetic effort.

This program in the 1670s can be seen as a complication of these several issues. The Society of Friends made no claim to being the “public,” their theology prohibited such an identification. The public for them was essentially the carnal, the untransformed by the Spirit. Yet Friends’ construction shared much in common with the system of public representativeness Habermas has identified as preceding the creation of the public sphere. Just as the king was not an individual who held monarchical office, but one who represented kingship through his person, so Friends represented their denominational identity through their public behavior, rather than through contractual covenants or

geographic parishes. There are two important caveats. First, representativeness was rarely personal for Friends but communal, consisting not in the distinction between the public/common and the private/unique (as in the creation of the modern state), but in the near complete fusion of them through the presence of Christ within. This meant that the actions of individual Friends redounded to the Society, since they were the physical manifestations of an infallible Inner Light, of Christ, which provided the unity of that Society. Thus to be Friend was often to construct the image of the Society. This could take the form of anything from mundane business dealings to extraordinary charismatic acts such as “going naked as a sign.” If more traditional Protestant churches existed to discipline and instruct the laity, the Quaker meeting existed to give forum to the expression of the Inner Light (thus the focus on silence and legitimate speech). The persistence of honor culture, however, also played into this element of Quaker behavior. Friends were hardly divorced from this aspect of early modern identity; indeed, they could not be, because of its grounding in the credit relationships essential to economic activity. As we shall see, personal reputation was an important aspect of how and why disputes between members of the Society and their enemies arose. Secondly, and related to this point, the public face of the Society was also a carefully controlled creation of the Society in its role as a social movement. Precisely because individual behavior was the expression of the Society, it needed to adopt this directing role, in order to achieve its practical ambitions relating to toleration, the taking of oaths, and the payment of tithes, which expressed themselves in the moral discipline imposed by the local meetings and
the approval of Quaker publications by the Morning Meeting in London. As a whole, therefore, Quakerism operated as a combination of a stage play and a political party.\footnote{Meiling Hazelton has argued, against Nigel Smith (among others) that Friends added nothing new to radical ideology and were hostile to the public sphere, that they in fact pushed beyond a “free market” Leveller conception of language (in which religious speech was not monopolized by the clergy) to a “communism” of language that sought to remove speech from the realm of commodity exchange entirely. “‘Mony Choaks’: The Quaker Critique of the Seventeenth-Century Public Sphere” \textit{Modern Philology} 98 (2000): p. 251-270. While exposing interesting correlations between economic and religious thought, Hazelton over-reaches. For Friends, the experience of the Spirit at war with the carnality of the flesh was the central experience. The fury of Quaker anti-clericalism proceeded from their sense that making a trade of the Gospel elided this distinction.}

It is not the intention of this chapter to say something dramatically new about the public sphere as an institution, its role in democratic development, or its comprehensiveness. The Society does, however, provide an important reminder in regard to these issues. For Friends, the public sphere was entirely instrumental, not structural. They entered it for the achievement of a very specific set of goals (religious toleration, freedom from oaths and tithes, etc.) and having accomplished these goals sought to leave it. Politics were not an end unto themselves, or a progression toward democracy but a tool for the achievement of concrete ends.

\textbf{The Barbican and Aberdeen Debates}

Two debates in the 1670s in which Keith was involved reveal these concerns. The first was the “Barbican debates” (though only the first occurred at the Baptist meetinghouse in the Barbican section of London) against a coalition of Baptists. In 1673, the Particular Baptist\footnote{The Baptists in this period were actually two denominations: the particular Baptists, who were predestinarian Calvinists, and the General Baptists, who were Arminians (they held that man served an active role in choosing the receive Grace). B. R. White, \textit{The English Baptists of the 17th Century} (Didcot: The Baptist Historical Society, 1996).} Thomas Hicks published \textit{A Dialogue Between a Christian and a}
Quaker, in which he accused Quakers of following the Inner Light in the place of Scripture and charged Keith specifically with polytheism. George Whitehead briefly dismissed the tract in a separate work, and Hicks published a continuation, to which William Penn felt compelled to answer. Challenges to debate were then exchanged. This occurred in the middle of significant events in English religious policy. In March of 1672, Charles II had issued his Declaration of Indulgence, suspending the penal laws against Dissenters and Roman Catholics in fulfillment of a secret component in the treaty signed between him and Louis XIV to renew their mutual war against the Dutch. The war was executed badly, however, and Charles was forced to recall Parliament in order to raise funds in a climate of anti-Catholicism and fears of French tyranny, as Anglicans within Parliament opposed the Act of Indulgence for being both pro-Catholic and a violation of the legislative powers of Parliament. The repeal of the Declaration almost exactly a year after its passage and the passage of the Test Act of 1673 (which required that all public officials receive Anglican communion and swear an oath rejecting transubstantiation), was Parliament’s price for continued financing of the war.132

In this context of renewed religious persecution, Hicks wrote his fictional debate between a “Christian” and “Quaker,” demonstrating the radical dangers of Quakerism and arguing for unity among moderate Dissenters. In the process, he opened a debate over the nature of how identity was to be represented in sectarian conflict. William Penn

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assailed Hicks’s exclusion of Friends from the community of Christians and for not drawing the statements of his “Quaker” from published works by Friends, instead of inventing them out of whole cloth. Penn declared that Hick’s act of invention, his creation of a Quaker as “a Fool and an Heretick both,” was “no less then [sic] a Rape, because [it was] a violent Robbery committed upon those that go under that Name.” this act violated Christian principles to such a degree as to mark Hicks, in Penn’s words, as “Antichristian.” While Hicks that he had presented the true content of Friend’s doctrine (even if in other words), Penn and his allies rejected this argument. It was a major function of the meeting to control Friends image to the public, including approving all publications, fictional “Quakers” created by their enemies represented a serious threat to this project. For Friends, the speaker and the spoken were inseparable, the act of speech deriving its legitimacy from the formers spiritual state, while Hicks asserted something more akin to the modern public sphere, where content is distinguishable from the specific context of the speech act and opened to rational scrutiny.

Concern over how a denomination was represented was central to religious debate, especially among radical sects. Although a specific contextualized act, works like Hicks’s were not individual but communal acts. A participant entered the lists as a spokesman for a larger body, from which he also drew his identity. Assigning denominational identity to individual speakers was crucial to ascertaining the seriousness of the threat, especially with regard to decentralized denominations such as the Baptists. Thus, after Hicks had responded to Penn and Penn once again to Hicks, a Friend wrote a challenge to the Baptists that if they did “not publicly clear your selves of Tho. Hicks, and these his unjust proceedings against us” then Friends “may justly deal with him, and
pursue him, not only as Tho. Hicks, but as the Baptists great Champion, peculiar Agent, or Representative.” If the Baptists disavowed Hicks, however, “then his future miscarriages will be chargeable onely upon Tho. Hicks himself, and you shall appear to the world so far clear thereof.” Friends sought, at least in part, to marginalize the theological issues by isolating Hicks and de-legitimating him as a “forger.” Instead of addressing the charges of heterodoxy, they demanded that the Baptists affirm or repudiate Hicks.  

Copies of Penn’s books were then left at the doors of several Baptist meetinghouses. The Baptist response was to offer to hold a public meeting at their meetinghouse in the Barbican section of London, at which Hicks was expected to defend his books, admit his errors, or be disowned, and Penn was expected to defend his accusations against Hicks. When Penn’s steward Phillip Ford and George Whitehead’s wife, Anne, sent back replies that both men were away from London and would be unable to return in time, the Baptists, regardless, held their meeting on August 28, 1674. Obviously, this presented a problem to the Baptists, since Friends were already charging

133 William Penn, *Reason Against Railing, and Truth Against Fiction* (s.n. 1673), p. 7, 3; Thomas Hicks, *A Dialogue Between a Christian and a Quaker* (London: Henry Hills, 1673); *idem, A Continuation of the Dialogue Between a Christian and a Quaker* (London: Peter Parker, 1673); *idem, The Quakers Appeal Answered* (London: Peter Parker, 1674) unpaginated Epistle; *idem, The Quaker Condemned Out of His own Mouth* (London: Peter Parker, 1674). The challenge was issued as a postscript to Penn’s *The Counterfeit Christian Detected* (n.p. 1674). In a letter concerning the Wilkinson-Story, dated November 47, 1678, George Fox complained that his enemies used manufactured statements “like Hicks Dialogue, to fforge Lyes, & Father them upon mee, which I never speak nor thought of as they have made them:” *ARB* 206, Library of the Society of Friends, London. I do not wish to overdraw this distinction, in an earlier fight with the Baptists, in which the Baptists pointed to a providential affliction of a Quaker’s family with leprosy, Thomas Rudyard responded by first disputing that the individual was in fact a Quaker (rather than someone who frequented both Quaker and Baptist meetings without entering into communion with either) and then that leprosy had beset his children. Comparing his rhetorical position to a court trial he declared that while “we might object against [the witnesses to the leprosy] as Parties [i.e. as non-impartial], and so set them aside” he would instead examine their testimony. Thus a more rational/evidentiary procedure was possible. Rudyard, *The Anabaptists Lying Wonder, &c. Returned Upon Themselves* (n.p. 1672), p. 8.
them with forging Friends’ statements. The Baptists defended their actions by parodying a remark concerning the Inner Light by William Penn, claiming that one could only properly appeal in matters of dispute to something that can judge infallibly. They concluded that Penn would not have demanded that the Baptists assess Hicks unless he believed them capable of judging him infallibly. “Nevertheless,” the Baptist leaders argued, “we were unwilling to be single Judges in this matter; therefore we thought it convenient to make [the meeting] so Publick as we did.” They then published an account of the meeting in print. Thrusting the dispute into public may have served several functions. Most obviously, it pre-empted challenges by Friends that the Baptists had held the meeting without them. But it also provided Baptists with a public avenue to address Friends’ accusations against them with regards to Hicks. Ultimately the Baptists concluded that Hicks had not misrepresented Quaker views, and they saw “no cause of just blame to be laid unto Tho. Hicks.” In response, the Friend Thomas Rudyard declared that the Baptists had by their actions affirmed Hicks to be their “Agent and Representative.”

The Baptists’ defense of their actions clearly proved less than satisfactory to the publicly impugned Friends. In a letter to George Fox (in prison for refusing to take the oath of allegiance), Penn complained that the Baptists publicly declared Penn and Whitehead had been too afraid to meet with them, “so that the whole Citty are up against us, . . . & all Coffe [sic] houses & such like publique places are filld with the manor of it.” Arrangements were made to between the two sides to meet on October 8th, with Penn, Whitehead, Keith and Stephen Crispe representing the Society. The Baptist side drew an

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interesting collection: the Particular Baptists Thomas Hicks and William Kiffin, the
General Baptist (and ex-Cromwellian soldier and Leveller) Jeremiah Ives, and even a
Scottish Presbyterian minister named Robert Ferguson. Ives’s presence is interesting.
Most obviously, he had been a vocal opponent of the Quakers for several decades. In
addition, however, the Arminian theology of the General Baptists had at times led some
to unorthodox positions on the nature of Christ. Ives had himself been involved in
attempting to have John Biddle, the Socinian Parliament member, released from prison in
the mid-1650s. That he should have taken the lead (especially in the final debate),
suggests a to distance himself from charges of heterodoxy.\footnote{William Penn to George Fox,” September 5, 1674, \textit{PWP I}, p. 292. See Jeremiah Ives’ entry in the
\textit{DNB}.}

At the meeting, new charges arose, but the concern to draw denominational
boundaries remained. William Penn and George Whitehead first demanded satisfaction
for the accusation that they had purposely avoided the August 28th meeting. William
Kiffin responded by saying “\textit{If you were so reflected on, it came from none of Us that we
know of.}” Penn then asked “Where is that (Us) limited?” and Kiffin explained: to those
\textit{“concerned in that Meeting.”} Finally Penn asserted “if those called \textit{Anabaptists} belong to
any part of that (Us) we can prove several of them guilty in that particular.” The Society
of Friends went to great lengths to defend itself against those pretending to speak for the
Society. When the Baptists had asserted that Hicks had only used “\textit{the Books of the chief
Leaders among the Quakers},” Thomas Rudyard assailed Hicks for using a book entitled
\textit{The Mystery of the Hat} by an “apostate” Friend.\footnote{William Mead, \textit{A Brief Account of the Most Material Passages} (n.p., n.d.), p. 5, Thomas Rudyard, \textit{The
Barbican-Cheat Detected} (1674), p. 21-22, an anonymous author accused Penn and Whitehead in \textit{The Quakers Last Shift Found Out} (London: T. M., 1674). See also Thomas Rudyard, \textit{An Answer to a
Scandalous Paper of T. Hicks, Term’d A Rebuke to T. R. &c.} (s.n. 1674); Henry Hedworth, \textit{The Quakers...}
But the issue of representation ultimately returned back to the initial question of the proper use of Friends’ words and doctrines by their enemies. After Penn had read a selection of passages out of *A Dialogue*, Hicks asserted that he could defend the passages with statements from Friends’ own books. Drawing a distinction between “Expressions,” or Friends’ own words, and “Consequences,” or legitimate conclusions drawn from Friends’ words, Penn replied that while they would permit William Kiffin or “any sober Man to draw Natural and Genuine Consequences upon us, from our Principles; yet we cannot give that Liberty to T[homas] H[icks] he having already excluded himself.” Even while pulling himself closer to the Baptists conception of the public sphere, Penn still used the issue of personal reputation to prevent Hicks’s participation. Hicks had shown himself to be disreputable (he was presumably not a “sober man”), and thus could not be permitted to draw conclusions from Friends’ words. Preventing the scurrilous and vulgar from speaking was not merely about preserving personal honor but about controlling the dangers of the public sphere.137

This attempt to exclude Hicks did not long last, however, and by the end of the debate he was again charging the Quakers with denying the Trinity. This forced Friends to deal with the doctrinal issues; whereupon the dangers of heterodoxy quickly appeared (which is, of course, why Friends had sought to avoid them). Using Neoplatonic categories, George Keith sought to defend Friends against the charge of not believing in Christ’s manhood by distinguishing Christ as God, as man, and as body, and declaring only the first to be properly called Christ (i.e. as the divine Logos). Hicks interrupted

*Quibbles Set Forth* (London: Francis Smith, 1674); Thomas Hicks, *The Quakers Appeal Answered* (London: Peter Parker, 1674); Thomas Thompson, *The Second Part of the Quakers Quibbles* (London: F. Smith, 1675).

Keith to re-assert his ability to prove the Quakers not to be Christians. An unidentified Friend announced: “There are two Wayes of proving a Man no Christian; the one by Principle, the other by PRACTICE.” Reversing this challenge, Penn demanded of Ives whether or not he believed Christ to be “the Christ of God before he was manifested in the Flesh?” Ives said he believed him to be the Son of God, which failed to satisfy Penn and led Keith to call their opponents Socinians (even declaring that a man standing by the pulpit was “a profest Socinian confederated with them”). Although it is not clear, the distinction appears to be over whether Christ offered saving grace (which the idea of the Inner Light and Friends’ rejections of Christ’s death as propitiatory suggested) before the incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection. Muffle it though they might, the energy of this debate thus came down to the threat of heterodoxy, as the strategies and procedures adopted by both sides were concerned to address (not necessarily answer) this fundamental threat. Yet the accusations of forgery and unchristian behavior, as demonstrated by the unnamed Friend’s challenge to Ives, demonstrate how these two layers easily blended together: a Christian was one both in principle and practice.¹³⁸

Probably because Thomas Hicks’s first Dialogue did not cite specific Friends’ works, the attacks were considered non-personal, and thereby did not constitute slander, which would have required a personal response from Hicks himself. In contrast, Hicks’s later works did cite Friends’ books, and often badly. Thus George Keith demanded several personal encounters with him. Hicks had cited a passage from Keith’s Immediate Revelation to argue that Keith believed “That Christ redeems himself,” which implied a

¹³⁸ Mead, A Brief Account, p. 20-21; Thomas Plant, A Contest For Christianity or a Faithful Relation of Two Late Meetings Between the Baptists and the Quakers (London: Francis Smith, 1674), p. 21-25; Henry Hedworth, The Quakers Quibbles Set Forth (London: Francis Smith, 1674).
polytheistic belief in two Christs. Hicks wrote a summation of the passage from Keith’s book:

That which was lost, is still in mans heart, and there it must be sought; for it remains still in the house (that is) mans heart: This is the thing to be sought for. This Christ came to seek and save, and all his Ministers preach’d people to this; the lost in man, that it might be found; a lost God, a lost Christ.\(^{139}\)

The quotation was in fact a distortion, as Keith pointed out when he met with Hicks on August 10, 1674. Hicks was mixing two different uses of the word “lost,” and so combined Christ saving “the Lost” (i.e. sinners) with ministers preaching that people seek the lost in them (i.e. Christ or God), so that Hicks made Keith to say, Christ was saving the Christ within people. This accusation gained its importance from the popular anti-Quaker belief that Quakers distinguished between an inward and an outward Christ, and probably denied or devalued the latter. When Keith, in his meeting with Hicks, accused him of distorting Keith’s words, Hicks responded by pointing, as he had in his earlier writings, to the frequent slippage in Quakers’ language, melding the Seed with Christ. Explaining Keith’s idea of the Seed in terms of this less careful terminology, Hicks renewed his charge that Keith was preaching that Christ saved Christ within sinners. In essence, this was the charge of preaching two Christs that, as shall be seen, dogged Keith in Pennsylvania. What remains important here, however, is the fact that Keith insisted upon a public encounter with Hicks himself, rather than an inter-denominational encounter over Hicks. This point will be expanded on later in discussing

the Schism, but for now it is sufficient to point out this distinction from the Habermasian public sphere; the most “individual” component of the sphere was not the exercise of reason but the assertion of personal honor. The ideological content of a dispute intermingled with accusations and counter-charges over the etiquette of debate and with personal attacks.\footnote{The original quote is in Keith, \textit{Immediate Revelation} (1668), p. 76; Hicks, \textit{The Quakers Appeal Answered}, p. 14-15.}

In a letter to George Fox, Alexander Parker described the Barbican meeting, and felt “Truth had a great advantage in the sight and sense of all moderate unbiased people.” The meeting ended in disorder, however, when the galleries in the meetinghouse began to strain and crack under the weight of the crowd, and negotiations began for a second, more orderly, encounter. Ives and other Baptist leaders sent a letter to the four Friends involved, suggesting that “forasmuch, that in publick Meetings Tumults and Noises happen, and we know not where to lay the blame, nor how to prevent; besides the Hazards of many persons lives” in addition to the general resulting failure of the debate itself, they suggested a series of rules. Each side was to be limited to fifty or sixty auditors, who were to bring “tickets” bearing their names in order to be admitted, and they were to remain on their own sides of the room, so that disruptions could be assigned to the correct offenders. Only three each were to be designated speakers, while both sides were to bring a total of four independent moderators, and two clerks. Finally, the whole of the debate would be then “drawn up, [and] published to the World.” The need to set out the terms of the debate in this intricate fashion reveals both the tendency of these encounters to descend into chaos and the tendentious nature of the public sphere. Forced to enter it, the Baptists then sought to discipline it. This debate was designed as a public
display, coordinated for presentation to a wider public, one inclined to dislike both Quakers and Baptists. The transferal of the event into the press was, at least in principle, also predetermined according to these rules.141

Friends announced this meeting (held at the Friends’ meeting house on Wheelock Street), and then sent a message to the Baptists requesting their attendance. This represented a failure of negotiations, as the Friends had rejected a number of the Baptists’ demands. By now the Friends were satisfied that the Baptists owned Hicks’s statements and had inculpated themselves thereby. As such, the debate took on more of the personal characteristics of Keith’s aborted dispute with Hicks. The Friends objected to the Baptist desire to limit the size of the audience, asking “Did you not promise to right us, as publicly as we complain’d we had wrong done us; . . . Not a private one, if you intended as we intended, for that could not reach our Case.” This represented an important shift, unlike the previous fight, where they had sought to either isolate Hicks or to use his Dialogue to discredit the Baptists; here they were seeking the public redress of a public wrong. Thus, where they had formerly demanded that Hicks not be allowed to speak, William Penn now assailed both Hicks and the Baptists for the former’s failure to appear at the debate. He declared that

had they answered [Friends’ initial appeal to own or disown Hicks’ writings] by Way of Church-Censure, and not so publicly, with such very hard Measure, to the great and and unreserved Reproach of our Principles, Profession and Persons (which had shown more Justice, at least Discretion) we had not prest a publick Meeting, as we have done.

Penn, pointing to Hicks’s absence at the meeting, declared that: “seeing he has thus willingly absented himself, who is the Person chiefly concerned in that black Charge (for so it is) we shall not so much as proceed to read his Charge in his Absence (how hardly soever he has treated us) unless any of you’l [sic] espouse and undertake to defend his Cause.” The argument continued as they debated whether Hicks had received sufficient notice to attend. Finally, Jeremiah Ives agreed to assume Hicks’s place; but this involved both groups in a question of representation. To what degree could or would Ives substitute himself for the absent man?142

This became of especial concern as much of the debate descended into an argument over what was to be debated. Penn and the other Friends insisted that the issue was Hicks’s “Forgeries” and his writing in a dialogue form. This question had appeared in the earlier debate, as George Keith argued that “It is one Thing to write Dialogue-wise, and another to write a Dialogue; for many in England did take it for a real Dialogue.” This crucial difference, between a fictional and a non-fictional narrative was important to the Friends on two counts. Obviously, it undercut the ability of the Society to control its own representation, by creating a “Quaker” whose publication was not under the control of the Second Days Morning Meeting. More personally for members of the Society, it was a forgery because it did not proceed from the Spirit. For a religious society that believed their words and behavior proceeded from a direct inspiration of the Light of Christ within, manufacturing quotations went beyond doctrinal misrepresentation.

Friends proclaimed that even Scripture was a dead letter without the spiritually

142 Plant, A Contest For Christianity, p. 33; William Mead, A Brief Narrative of the Second Meeting Between the People Called Quakers and Baptists (s.n.), p. 11-12.
invigorating motivation of the Light, and so it must have seemed a religious hijacking to have the voice of a Friend fabricated within a fictionalized narrative. In almost identical language, Keith took up the charge in the Wheeler Street debate: “T.H. saith, it is *A Dialogue*; and I say, its *No Dialogue*, but a *Fiction*; so that it being no *True Dialogue*, it is an *Abuse* to the Nation.” Neither Keith, nor the other Friends claimed to object to a purely fictional account, but they argued that Hicks’s account blurred the distinction between fiction and nonfiction.143

Conversely, Ives suggested that the question of forgery could not be separated from the issue of doctrine; whatever the choice of words, if the content of those words could be proven to be Quaker doctrine, it did not constitute a forgery. As such, Ives sought to move beyond the issue of representation to, in his eyes, the more central issue of doctrine. As in the first debate, this difference quickly bled into the question of Christian identity. Friends objected to Hicks positing a debate between a “Christian” and a “Quaker” because of its representational quality: it obviously suggested that the two were distinct. In response, George Whitehead asked “What *Christian* is this [the “Christian” of the *Dialogue*]? It must be understood an *Anabaptist Christian*;” but “this *Anabaptist* is no *Christian*; . . . [whoever] perverts [Friends’] Sense and Meaning in their Writings is a *Forger*, and no *Christian*. . . and then whether we be *Christians* or not, let that follow: this *Christian* that opposeth himself to the *Quaker*, is not to be understood of all *Christians*, but of an *Anabaptist-Christian*.” In this statement Friends played to the contest between the denominational claim to unique certainty of religious truth (which defended dissent from the Church of England both emotionally and intellectually) and the

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practical political need to tolerate other denominations. Ives denounced Friends’ attempt to accuse the Baptists of uncharitableness, stating that by Christian they meant “all Men that seriously believe in the lord Jesus Christ, that was Crucified for the sins of Men, and is now ascended into Glory . . . We say they are good Christians, whatsoever Names or Appellations are given to them in this unhappy Age we live in.” Implicit in this definition, of course, was the claim that Quakers denied the historical Christ. Unlike Friends, who were always on the defensive in asserting their Christian orthodoxy and identity, Baptists were able to use their comparative doctrinal orthodoxy to reaffirm their own Christianity at Quakers’ expense.\footnote{Ibid, p. 27-28; Plant, A Contest, p. 58.}

Again, however, this returned to the difficult question of who represented the group and its relationship to religious orthodoxy: “we do not go about to vindicate our selves meerly as Men or Persons, that go under the name of Quakers, but we go about to Detect a Forger for abusing of us as Religious Persons.” Later, in defending the Society against Ives’s offer to prove that Quakers were not Christians from their writings, George Whitehead responded: “Because some of our Friends have writ so, is it Reasonable that we should all be concluded by them, . . . to conclude, all are no Christians, this is not fair; because you your selves would not be so concluded, that because some Baptists have denied the Divinity of Christ, the Immortality of the Soul, and the free Grace of God to all Men, that therefore all the Baptists should be concluded no Christians.” In answer to this attack on the General Baptists, who, as mentioned, flirted with heterodox Christological opinions, Ives reversed the challenge, claiming that this proved that some Quakers were not Christians, and that they did not possess the unanimity of belief the
Society claimed. Ives then argued that Baptists had denounced those who rejected Christian doctrine amongst themselves, and asked when had Quakers done the same? Again, as with the initial distinction over the nature of the debate, the Friends sought to evade difficult questions and focus on the debate itself. When Penn suggested he could prove Hicks was not a Christian by disproving his *Dialogue*, “and if I do so, then you are no Christians, and Consequently we are Christians,” Ives suggested that the Friends were more concerned to defend their personal reputations than true religion.145

At several points, this debate, firmly grounded in early Stuart and Civil War categories of religious discourse, spilled over into dangerous new possibilities. When an unnamed person sought to defend the Friends, William Russell suggested he was a Roman Catholic. When the accused individual, however, denied being Roman Catholic, Jeremiah Ives then asked (probably sarcastically) “What are ye then? Are ye a Hobist?” While the unnamed individual denied having read any books by Thomas Hobbes, the attempt to dismiss the speaker in this way, essentially accusing him of atheism, reveals the new religious dangers of the Restoration period. Finally, Ives pointed to the amount of effort Quakers spent disproving this man’s popery and atheism, as opposed to their refusal to defend their own Christianity.146

Even when the Friends agreed to defend the doctrinal issues proposed by the Baptists, the dispute again turned into a debate over the debate, first over whether the Friends were conceding a point in agreeing to debate the Christianity of Quakerism, and secondly whether the burden of proof lay with the Friends to prove themselves Christians, or with the Baptists to prove the Quakers to be “no Christians.” Then arose

the issue of the subjectivity of the Inner Light. Ives asked Keith for a demonstrable proof of another’s immediate revelation “for in your sense any Imposter may have it, for if you should go to the professors of Mohumetism, or Muggleton, they will all tell you they have an inward feeling within themselves” as the basis of their religion. Keith argued it was not for him to prove (in this case) William Penn to be a Christian, but for Ives to prove that Penn was not. “If I have Evidence within my self,” Keith asked, “that I am a Christian, it is enough though I cannot evidence it to others,” so long as he did not seek to persecute others. Keith sought to shift the burden of proof onto the Baptists by removing Christian identity from the public square entirely. While no direct connection can be made, this is precisely what Pennsylvania Friends did do in the mid-eighteenth century. The structure of Restoration religious conflict was less amenable to such strategies, and the epistemological returned wrapped in the representational. Keith soon declared: “What Evidence wouldst thou have? Must I be no Christian because I cannot express my inward Sentiments to natural and prejudiced Men? We can at least give as good Evidence, that we are Christians, as J. Ives, or any Baptists on Earth can give, that they are Christians; if by Evidence he means a Life and Practice, answerable to Christianity.” With time run out, and Friends still refusing to articulate an argument in defense of the Light Within, the debate closed soon after, to continue in the press.

The Restoration public sphere was an inherently chaotic and dangerous place. Individuals entered, but brought with them a series of issues and dangers concerning representation. The threat of Ranterism during the Civil War was precisely the danger of individual religious expression, and had been rejected by most denominations by the Restoration. The very act of entering itself had to be excused as the result of
circumstances beyond the speaker’s control. Once there, corporate and personal identity intermingled and presented their own series of difficulties. The corporate authorized the individual’s words, and the individual brought the corporate into being. But honor culture, itself a form of identity that exists solely in the eyes of others, and public representativeness meant that public dispute quickly became personal and vice versa.

Alexander Parker was again confident in a letter to George Fox: “The Truth did Tryumph over its adversaries, onely Geo: Keith reasoning scholastically tho in a matter deep and weighty, yet his Scotch tone, and [his] manner of delivery was not soe takeing to the multitude.” Keith’s scholasticism and Scots brogue were on display, but less conspicuous, in the next debate.147

In contrast to the Barbican debates and their origins in the world of print, the Aberdeen debate began in more private encounters. Three Church of Scotland Ministers - John Menzies, George Meldrum (deprived for refusing the oath and subsequently a rector of Marischall College), and William Mitchel -- had been agitating against the Quakers before the Scottish Privy Council and in the press. Robert Barclay responded by distributing a list of queries (which would become the structure of his Apology) under the title of Theses Theologicae, printing them first in Latin in Amsterdam and later in English in London. He also issued a challenge to debate. Menzies ignored Barclay, but several

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147 Plant, A Contest, p. 85, 93-95; Mead, A Brief Narrative p. 60; [Alexander Parker] to George Fox, October 20, 1674, p. 306. The debate continued in the press in William Penn, Jeremy Ives’s Sober Request Proved in the Matter of It, to Be False, Impertinent and Impudent (London: n.p. 1674); William Loddington, The Twelve Pagan Principles, or Opinions, For Which Thomas Hicks Hath Published the Quaker to Be No Christian (n.p. 1674); William Russel, Quakerism is Paganism by W.L’s Confession (London: Francis Smith, 1674); William Loddington, Quakerism No Paganism: or a Friendly Reply to W.R. his Unfriendly Discourse Intituled Quakerism is Paganism (London: s.n. 1674).
university students accepted the challenge. In their own account, the students described frequent disputes between the students at the University and local Friends, both in the streets and the Quaker meetings. During one encounter, the students, having managed to sneak into the meetinghouse before the doors were locked, were challenged to a dispute. Instead, they began to leave, discussing aloud the “errors” they had heard during the meeting. Again they were challenged. Refusing, they were denounced as “Currs, cowards, backbiters, slanderers &c.” So the students then replied in part, and were met by the Quakers’ “only answer and evasion . . . passionate railing, calling us barking dogs, unreasonable beasts, &c. especially G. K. which we dare not deny.” Thus a series of rowdy encounters in the meetinghouse led the students to accept what their elders had refused (or possibly had passed onto their pupils as beneath themselves): a public debate.

On April 14, 1675, a large crowd gathered in the yard of one Alexander Harper where two “publick stages” had been erected. While we cannot know what occurred behind the scenes, the dangers identified by Ann Hughes of legitimating one’s opponents by meeting with them, and the fact that the students seem not to have suffered professional repercussions from the meeting (not to mention their future access to the press) strongly suggests that their professors may have encouraged them. Their youth would protect the students and the Churches reputation should events go badly.148

148 This account comes from George Keith, A True and Faithful Accompot of the Most Material Passages of a Dispute Betwixt Some Students of Divinity (so called) of the University of Aberdeen, and the People Called Quakers (London, 1675); and [John Lesly, Alexander Shirreff, & Paul Gellie], Quakerism Canvassed, Robin Barclay Baffled in the Defending of His Theses Against Young Students at Aberdene ..., or, A most true and faithful accopmt of a dispute betwixt some students of divinity at Aberdene and the Quakers in and about the place (n.p., 1675); see also Keith, Quakerism No Popery (n.p. 1675) his response to John Menzies, Roma Mendax (London: Abel Roper, 1675); Ann Hughes, “The Pulpit Guarded: Confrontations Between Orthodox and Radicals in Revolutionary England” in John Bunyan and His England, 1628-88 eds. Anne Laurence, W.R. Owens and Stuart Sim (London: The Hambledon Press, 1990), p. 31-50; For an interpretation of this event from the perspective of the history of education, see Gordon Des Brisay, “Quakers and the University: The Aberdeen Debate of 1675” History of the
Ostensibly, the meeting was supposed to be a “private conference.” The two Friends declared that it was only intended “as a fulfilling of any Challenge wherein these Students may be included,” but that this did not release Menzies, who owed the Friends a response to the “Publick Challenge” in “Publick places ... before the Auditories, before whom they conceive they have been misrepresented.” Again the distinction between personal and private dispute arose, and reveals the defensive posture taken by all those who entered the public sphere. The students later complained that the Quakers had “invited most of Aberdeen.” Yet the fourth rule agreed to by the parties enjoined “each side abstain from School-terms and distinctions (as much as possible) but if any use them, that they may be opened to the People in plain English, so that any ordinary capacity (that are not educated in Colledges) may understand them.” True to their word, both sides went to great lengths in the debate to define the formal terminology to which each often resorted. For three hours, they argued the nature of the Inner Light and the sacraments. The audience at times laughed at and at other times jeered the two Friends. Finally, with the appointed time over, Keith and Barclay demanded a second meeting to defend themselves further and to challenge the Confession of the Scottish Kirk. Their student opponents refused, on the grounds that challenging the state church in such a direct manner was inappropriate. At this point, the audience began to get out of control, finally degenerating into throwing turf and stones at Barclay and Keith, both of whom escaped with injuries. Keith later angrily described the scene:

The Students (the Masters of Art) and their Companions who had been disputing in matters of Religion instead of interposing themselves to prevent, stood divers of them laughing, hollowing, and clamouring thereat, and so the meeting broke up. G. K. said to others more sober that were present, these are your Church members.149

As has been shown, Friends sought out encounters such as these, expressing their identity through suffering, and occasionally reaffirming that identity in the providential deaths of their persecutors. For Friends, the immediacy of the Spirit of Christ suffused their entire earthly existence, providing a series of tests of authenticity to their experiences and understanding. For the students and audience, in contrast, ending the debate involved a return to hierarchical categories and expectations. The students appealed to the political and religious authorities of the established church to return discourse to an elite, hidden sphere. The audience, meanwhile, removed itself from its temporary entrée into that sphere of rational, elite religious discourse by fulfilling elite expectations and becoming a mob.

Also, as with the Barbican debates, the event was not limited to the organized face-to-face exchange itself. Originating in a series of encounters in the street and in print, it quickly returned to the press. Barclay and Keith published their narrative of events, they claimed, because their opponents “boasted of a victory,” and so Barclay and Keith “thought it our concernment for Truths sake, and to undeceive these that may be abused by such reports, to give this true and faithful accompt of what past.” Apparently an attempt to produce a common account of the meeting fell apart, as the students felt that the Quakers could not be impartial. They had learned, moreover, that the students

intended to publish their own account of events. *Quakerism Canvassed, Robin Barclay Baffled in the Defending of His Theses Against Young Students at Aberdene* appeared soon after. The students, signing only their initials, gave their reasons for entering the press as a mixture of public propriety and personal honor. They charged Friends with “publishing a forged and false accompt of our late Dispute . . . Wherein they have egregiously wronged us, by their wonderfully, grosse misrepresentations.” Though they conceded that this insult “had not been a sufficient argument to have induced us to expose our selves so soon to the publick view of a critical world, joined with the undoubted assault of deceitful and scribling adversaries,” Keith and Barclay had also blasphemed against God.

Upping the ante, Keith and Barclay published *Quakerism Confirmed*, in which they claimed the students “being of so small reputation among their own, that neither teachers nor people will hold themselves accomptable for any of their positions, and seeme zealous to have it believed they would not bestow time to read it, nor yet hold themselves obliged to approve [their account].” Thus again, the issue of representation appeared, but here in a more polemical form, as an argument for dismissing them in the very act of responding to them. The question of authorization also raised once again the problem that had preceded the debate: how to respond to the Quakers without legitimating them. Whether Keith and Barclay’s analysis of the hidden machinations of the production of *Quakerism Canvassed* are accurate or not, the Friends’ approach was a useful way of recreating that wider debate in the face of a church hierarchy that preferred to persecute. The two Friends, nonetheless, stated they would respond to the tract as if it had been issued from the Scottish Kirk, "*however they seek to shift it, and hide*
themselves, since their book is licenced by the bishop of Edinburgh, and he being challenged said, he did it not without a recommendation from Aberdeen." First, this statement reveals the degree which post-Restoration Quakerism, far from forming an anti-society, increasingly accepted the traditional methods of authorization in the world around it. More importantly, it reveals the manner in which institutional affiliations and the press were central to identity formation in the early modern period. These disputes were not about individual speakers, but group conflicts in which control of denominational representation was important both to determining the danger of accusations and the holding of speakers accountable for the disorder of their speech.¹⁵⁰

In the Scottish context the spectrum of religious threats was narrower than in the English, and, likewise, so were the available categories of heresy that could be used to define the identity of one’s opponents. Terms such as Socinianism were absent, and the rhetorical focus fell especially upon the dangers of Roman Catholicism. The centrality of Anti-popery in the Scottish context is revealed in the concerns of the Aberdeen debate. John Menzies's initial salvo against the Quakers, Roma Mendax [“lying Rome”] occurred in the course of attacking a Jesuit priest, William Dempster. Yet this debate still reflected the crisis of skepticism. Menzies defended Scripture as the sole basis of religious faith and knowledge by arguing that the authority claimed by the Papacy provided no more certain a claim to truth than could be made by any heretic. He then compared that authority to the Quaker claim that inward revelation was the sole source of religious truth. This was a Protestant version of the adoption of classical skepticism by Counter-Reformation writers. These Catholic thinkers argued that, contra Martin Luther, human

¹⁵⁰ Keith, A True and Faithful Accompmt, p. 3; Anon, Quakerism canvassed, Unpaginated preface. George Keith and Robert Barclay, Quakerism Confirmed (n.p., 1676).
reason and logic, even applied to the fixed text of scripture, were deficient for
discovering and recognizing certain truth, and that the mysteries of God were essentially
beyond human reason regardless. Where the Protestant pointed to the “clear and plain”
sense of the written Word, the Catholic pointed to the profusion of Protestant sects. One
should, therefore, according to Catholic apologists, rely upon the traditions of the Church
of Rome. Menzies shifted the object of faith, from tradition to scripture, and deployed the
same argument against the Quakers.151

This issue of epistemology appeared again during the debates with the students,
and in Barclay’s challenge to Menzies. “If it be said divers men pretending to the Spirit
contradict one another,” Barclay asked, “doth not the same recur as to the Scriptures?”
Menzies himself was proof of this: “need we go further, John, than thy self to prove this,
who hath all along acknowledged the Scripture to be the Rule, and yet sometime judged
the Congregational way to be preferable to the Presbyterian, & then the Presbyterian
better then the Independent, and now the Episcopal preferable to both?” John Leslie, one
of the students, declared: “that which hath not a sufficient evidence, to evidence it self to
be a Rule, is not to be a Rule,” and that “the Spirit in the Quakers” did not meet that
standard. Barclay claimed that the Spirit evidenced itself in that “it teacheth us to deny
ungodliness and worldly Lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present
World.” Barclay’s definition of epistemology returned him to behavior, and thus
implicitly to public conduct and reputation. Leslie argued that heretics could also make
such claims, to which Barclay replied that the same could be said (and against Menzies

151 Richard H. Popkin, The History of Scepticism From Erasmus to Spinoza (Berkeley: University of
held that it was impossible to acquire truth, and the Pyrrhonists, who denied even that certain proposition,
and argued that judgment should simply withheld.
by Dempster was said) with respect to scripture. Barclay was rehearsing a traditional argument for the Inner Light, but in a potentially dangerous manner. By answering with a “retortion,” Barclay was essentially arguing for the inability to achieve religious certainty by any means. Here we also see a concern with the splintering of British Protestantism, since all sects, Barclay pointed out, made similar Scriptural claims. When Barclay made this argument during the debate, however, Keith intruded “to answer directly to [Leslie’s] argument.” He declared the spirit had two sources of evidence, which heretics could not claim: “the inward evidence of the Spirit of God, by its own immediate Testimony in our hearts,” and scripture, “which I affirm in the Name of the People called Quakers, is the best external and outward evidence, and rule that can be given.” Leslie pointed out that Friends believed that scripture deceived without the Light, and therefore could not be an Evidence for the Light. While the debate then shifted into various challenges to the students’ logic (with suggestions they had embarrassed their teachers), the skeptical argument had reached its ultimate dead end: the need for a criterion of truth accepted in itself.\footnote{Keith, \textit{A True and Faithful Accompt}, p. 14-16. Barclay was referring to Menzies shifting denominational identities during the Civil War and Restoration, see his entry in \textit{DNB}.}

In the postscript to the Friends’ narrative of the debate, Keith used the acceptance of the Spirit to establish the binary by which he understood religious authenticity and authority. If the Church was Christ’s body, then it was singular and whole, and “so I may say concerning Antichrist, and his spirit and body.” While having many “members” this body possessed a common “root.” “And what is this body of Antichrist, but all these (whether Papists or others, though pretending to Reformation, under whatsoever designation, as Episcopal, Presbyterian, Independent, Anabaptist, or any else) who
oppose the Spirit of Christ in his spiritual appearances and operations in the body of Christ, which is his Church.” This fight over epistemology and how religious authority could be grounded was, for Keith and other Friends, rooted in a sense of identity that was both communal and millennial.153

These same issues also appeared in a 1677 English dispute between several Friends and William Haworth, an Independent minister in Hartford, one which eventually incorporated Keith and demonstrated his importance as Quaker apologist. First came charges of heterodoxy. After an initial tract by Haworth, which accused Friends of Socinianism and argued that Christians should “abhorr [Quakers’] Society as [one would that] of a Jew, Turk or Heathen,” the Hartford Friends responded by demanding that Haworth cite passages from Friends’ books to document his claims.

Secondly, there was the question of representation and denominational identity. Evading his charges, they declared “we value not all his Cavils and Scribling, &c. especially unless some of his eminent Teaching Brethren appear in print to own this his last Book, . . . and therefore we challenge him to produce his Deputation for this his undertaking against us under the Hands of some of the chief Pastors of the Independent-Congregation, or otherwise we shall absolutely look upon his Work as the fruit of his own silly Presumption and Usurpation.” Haworth had earlier claimed that “one learned in Christ’s School” had read his tract in manuscript and so the Quakers were not disputing with Haworth alone, but “with all the Independent Party in England.” In his ensuing response to the Quakers, however, Haworth declared “My Deputation for this Work is from the Word of Christ, Jud. 3. I need no other Deputation.” Henry Stout, one of the

153 John Menzies, *Roma Mendax* (1675), from their beginnings, the Quakers were often identified as covert Jesuits by their opponents. George Keith, *A True and Faithful Accomp’t*, p. 60, 16-17, 63.
Hartford Friends, wondered at the discrepancy, and declared Haworth “but a Counterfeit Agent,” whose co-religionists no doubt view as “a presumptuous Busie-Body.” Stout also rejected Haworth’s appeal to the Savoy Confession, because his attacks contained falsehoods “which are not in that Confession.” The rest of the Friends’ response consisted of the publication of certificates by witnesses, who could refute the remarks by Friends that Haworth had used to document his accusations. Stout disputed the claims themselves, but declared: “if we could find, that [a Friend, who had been accused of declaring that the Devil not God had died outside Jerusalem] did but unawares speak any such words . . . we should severely admonish him about it.” Stout also complained that a person’s “unadvised” slips of the tongue should not be printed so that the person should “be knockt in the Head in the Streets or High-way for a Blasphemer,” without the person having been first questioned as to his intent. This dispute, therefore, while begun over serious fears of heterodoxy among Friends in their Christology, was handled by Friends primarily as a matter of authorizing speakers in order to control their message.154

Representation was not just a problem of policing expressions of the Inner Light, but of defending the Inner Light as doctrine. Haworth declared that “'Tis enough for me to call those things of a Religious Concern which any Quaker writes or asserts in discourse Doctrines, while they all pretend always to be guided by one Infallible Teacher, the Light Within.” Stout rejected the premise that every statement by one pretending to be guided by the Light Within, or distinguish’t by the Name [Quaker]”

154 Haworth’s tracts in this encounter do not appear to have survived, all citations from him are taken from Friends’ responses. Richard Thomas, The Independent Agent, Or, William Haworth’s Malice ([London]: s.n., 1677), p. 2, 6; Henry Stout, The Malice of the Independent Agent Again Rebuked (n.p. [1678?]), p. 2, 3, 6, 7. A year later, Stout and others became involved in the Wilkinson-Story conflict, after attending a wedding in which unguarded statements were made. Ingle p. 262 Keith’s own position in this schism is a mystery.
was truly and always guided by the Light “or so to be owned by the said People.” He further asked if the Independents should be judged by every position held by an Independent? Haworth again replied, and declared that Independents made no claim to an infallible source of religious truth within the individual. Thus the representational was intertwined with the doctrinal, and presented a problem for Friends.\textsuperscript{155}

Here George Keith entered into the debate. His work \textit{The Way Cast Up} had previously been cited by the Hartford Friends as proof of their belief in Christ’s manhood. An unnamed author, possibly Haworth, replied with \textit{The Quakers Creed Concerning the Man Christ Jesus}, which addressed Keith’s book point by point. Keith then responded both to this short pamphlet and, in an appendix, to Haworth’s writing against the Hartford Friends. For all of the localism of this, and the other encounters between Friend and non-Friend cited in this dissertation, the ability of the Society of Friends to operate in a national fashion is demonstrated by the quick insertion of a non-local Friend into this debate.\textsuperscript{156}

The public sphere was a dangerous place in the post-Restoration period. Yet it was simultaneously a fixture of that society. Political necessity required appeals to public opinion, raising various questions about the nature of representation and how to discipline the sphere in order to reign in its dangerous potential. Much of the literature on this subject has been in the realm of political history, but the Barbican and Aberdeen debates reveal similar concerns. The public square brought together Friends who understood their own identity in a fundamentally corporate manner and saw others in the

\textsuperscript{155} Stout, \textit{The Malice of the Independent Agent}, p.12, 13.

same way. People did not enter public debate as individuals, but as representatives of their denominations. At the same time, Early Modern England was an honor culture, and the challenges made in the cut and thrust of debate easily became insults that requiring a different procedure for resolving than that of the depersonalized (because it concerned collective groups) public sphere.

**Elite Allies**

While Keith’s intellectual attraction to Henry More originated in his college days, the relationship that he and other Friends later struck up with the Cambridge philosopher appears to have the pragmatic motive of protecting the Society against renewed persecution. Dr. Henry More’s first recorded reference to Keith was in September 1670. While still hostile to Quakerism generally, Dr. More referred to Keith as “absolutely the best Quaker of them all,” and to *Immediate Revelation* “as the best book, I had mett wth amongst the writings of the Quakers.” The two do not appear to have met until August of 1674, when they talked at length over dinner and exchanged books: More’s critique of Cartesianism, *Enchiridion Metaphysicum*, for Keith’s *Account of the Oriental Philosophy*. More also reported to William Penn that after a visit by Keith at Cambridge “I had a strong instigation to read over againe his Immediate Revelation and made some Remarks upon the first part of it,” which he sent to Keith through Penn. Keith wrote a response to what he felt to be the five most important of More’s objections and appended them to a 1675 second edition of *Immediate Revelation* (without naming More). First, he disputed More’s claim that Quakers, like familists, denied the existence
of the outward, historical Christ (an accusation which Keith would later make against Friends), and Keith responded (much as Friends later would to Keith) by flatly reasserting their belief in the historical Christ. Furthermore, More suggested that Quakers denied the necessity of faith in the outward Christ. Keith distinguished among elements of faith, between those that are required, “without which, Religion cannot subsist, they belonging unto the very Being and Life of it” and those parts “which belong unto the Intireness, or fullness” of religion, but without which Christian religion might exist. Such unnecessary components included knowledge of the “History of Christ” and other events from scripture. This was a more radical position than he had articulated earlier, yet again his position was not intentionally attempting to create a de-Christianized world religion, but to defend the necessity of revelation to authenticate religious experience. Keith, like all Friends, was working within a parochially Christian context; and they simply chose not to push their doctrines toward radical conclusions. Keith was not seeking to create a worldview from first principles; he rather sought to assemble one from a series of pre-conceived beliefs, in order to defend the Inner Light. Henry More appears to have called Keith on the potential dangers of libertinism this presented. More had probably wanted Keith to set limits to the intellectual content deliverable by revelation. Keith, however, could only reply experientially, arguing that revelation came after a process of conversion and purification and “cannot be enjoyed until the Wrath and the Judgment be passed through.” Not surprisingly, therefore, Keith released a discursive flood typical of much Quaker writing, revolving around experiencing God as “Light and Love.” Friends’ divorcing of the Inner Light from any strict dependence on reason or written dogma
transformed it into an ineffable experience ill suited to scholastic discussion (and at times to language itself).  

Penn’s and Keith’s attempts to obtain a statement of Friends’ peacefulness and good behavior from Henry More was part of the larger campaign by the Society to obtain toleration for their sect. In a December 1675 letter to Anne Conway, More mentioned that “W[illiam] P[enn] and others were very desirous that I should give the Quakers a better testimonie then ...” While he conceded that “for my part I have found some Quakers better, then I have represented them,” he declared he found others that confirmed his original accusations of familism. He suggested that the Quakers should “publish authentickly the articles of their sect, as of their Sect,” which would help them more than a statement from himself. By this point, van Helmont was attending Friends’ meetings in London, and More was worried that Anne was “listing” towards the Society. Friends were clearly pressing him for a public declaration defending them, which they felt had been promised. Dr. More -- who had spent much of the 1670s translating his collected works into a single Latin edition -- assured Lady Conway, in January of 1676, that he had only told Keith he would include some remarks in the Scholia (added commentary) of the Latin edition of his works.

At roughly this time, in addition, the Aberdeen students published *Quakerism Canvassed*, in which they referenced Henry More, “as being both eminent and credible, and likewise esteemed so by our Antagonists, who have, as we conceive, without any just

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ground, often reported through the City of Aberdene, that H. Moir is a Quaker, and owns their chiefest principles in a Letter lately written to G.K.” The students then quoted a passage from the Grand Mystery of Godliness attacking Quakers. This put Keith and Barclay in an odd position, having to simultaneously defend themselves against More’s charges and the accusation of having misrepresented More’s beliefs, without attacking More himself. In their printed reply, they declared that More did support several opinions of Friends in a letter to Keith (in particular, strangely, “objective immediate revelation” which Keith had been discussing with More privately). They conceded that More had attacked Friends for the extremes of behavior exemplified by James Naylor, but that “he wrot[e] [his attack] upon trust, and was not an eye-witness of these things, and it recurrs upon him and them to prove the things true.” Friends, moreover, had denounced and disowned Naylor, meaning his behavior (and thus More’s critiques of it) did not redound to them. Keith wrote a letter to More privately, declaring that the students’ story “troubled me more, then any thing else in it, for thy cause, or least thou should seeme to have any occasion to repent of thy love and friendship towards me. I can assure thee nether I nor any Quaker, that I know of ever said such a thing of thee.” As Keith’s felt need to withhold his beliefs in reincarnation reveals, the betraying of such private confidences into the public sphere meant that More suffered an embarrassing loss of control over the way he was represented. Keith was, therefore, obligated to explain how their private correspondence had entered the public domain:

but after that I received thy papers the last summer, befor I saw thee at london, I did but lett one man, called doctor Keith [no relation], who was a sober man & hade a kindnes for thee, see thy papers, and by him it seems the report passed, not that thou was a Quaker, but that thou aggreed with the Quakers in owning imediat objective revelation, and that regeneration
is substantially (the said doctor Keith so called is now out of this life) and to some friends in this place I did show thy papers, who were discreet persons, and it is like they did say to some, that in some principles thou did agree with the Quakers.

Personal manuscripts such as these thus easily passed into other hands, but this did not absolve Keith from suspicion.

Keith was therefore required to undo the damage as publicly as he had inflicted it. Stating that while “gladly should I be that thou wert indeed a Quaker” Keith nonetheless informed More that he was notifying “diverse of the preachers, and Universily telling them, the report was a lye, raised only by the students (no doubt to offend thee and irritate thee if they could) without any ground given by the Quakers themselves.” Dr. More expressed less concern, and in a letter to Lady Conway mentioned Keith’s letter, and felt sure that nobody could mistake him for a Quaker. Friends’ campaign to obtain a public statement from Dr. More defending the Society’s good behavior failed, but reveals the pains the Society took to cultivate elite relationships in order to defend itself against persecution. The Society had established the Meeting for Sufferings in 1675, to collect information on the abuses Friends had suffered throughout Britain, and distribute aid to the victims, but the Meeting also aided the Society in its lobbying efforts before Parliament to obtain toleration for their sect. The Meeting was formed too late to effectively lobby Parliament, which was prorogued in November 1675 and met only in a brief session in the spring of 1677.158

158 Conway Letters, 416, 418-419, Quakerism Canvassed p. 66, Quakerism Confirmed, p. 18, George Keith to Dr. Henry More; American Colonial Clergy Case 8, Box 23, in HSP. Craig Horle has argued that persecution in this period almost destroyed the Society. Craig W. Horle, *The Quakers and the English Legal System 1660-1688* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988). When, several years later, Francis van Helmont began converting to Quakerism, the focus was upon his behavior, rather than his doctrine, Barclay reporting that “about 2 or 3 weeks ago found himself under a necessity so as he could not forbear with peace of Conscience & without disobeying of God to come under the contemptible appearance
Nor were these efforts limited to Britain. Louis XIV had launched an assault upon Flanders the previous February, instigating predictable fears of popery and French tyranny. By July, Charles II had adjourned his belligerent Parliament and begun negotiations with both the Dutch and the French to end the war. That same month a party of Friends, including George Fox, William Penn, George Keith, Keith’s wife Elizabeth, and Robert Barclay, set sail for the Netherlands, eventually finding their way to the court of Princess Elizabeth, an abbess of a Protestant community at Herwerden. Like Lady Conway, Elizabeth enjoyed access to elite intellectual circles, in particular a friendship with Descartes. Friends’ contacts with the Princess dated at least as far back as the summer of 1676, when Robert Barclay began providing religious guidance to her and her friend the Countess of Horne in the hope of converting them. Van Helmont probably made the initial introductions. By the next spring, both Keith and his wife Elizabeth had written manuscript tracts and sent them to the Princess.159

Friends’ cultivation of this relationship with Elizabeth was also similar to their interest in Anne Conway. She appears to have sought guidance in mysticism from numerous sources. She had earlier granted protection to Jean de Labadie and his followers, a radical pietist sect known as Labadists. They broke with the Dutch Reformed synods, rejecting both ecclesiastical authority and formal ceremonial worship. These positions gave them a certain kinship with Friends; both they and other pietists were a...
major target of Friends’ missionary efforts in the Netherlands and German states. Penn had six years earlier met Labadie, but was disturbed by “the Aireness & unstableness of the mans spirit; & that a sect master was his name.” Penn was uncertain what to make of both him and his followers. In a certain respect, Friends believed the Inner Light to be a universal experience, and thus should not have been surprised to find *sui generis* manifestations of it. At the same time, denominational pride, increasing organizational coherence, and the dangers of unguarded professions of the Spirit, which made that organization necessary, produced a distrust of the articulation of quasi-Inner Light doctrines by non-Friends, whom they could not control. Thus, while Penn conceded that “though they had rec’d some Divine Touches, there was a danger they would run out with them, & spend them like prodigals,” because they “were filled with gross mixtures, & thereby brought forth mixed births, that is to say things not natural, but monstrous.” Penn, nonetheless, “believed well of some of the people. for a good thing was stiring in them.” This ambiguity was clearly part of the attraction of these Friends to Princess Elizabeth. “God had reached her” Penn reported, “about nine years ago.” She early confessed to Barclay that she was “still spiritually very poor & naked all my happiness is that I doe know that I am so, & that whatsoever I have studied & learned heretofore is but dirt in comparison to the true knowledge of Christ.” Her sheltering of the Labadists was clearly part of this religious awakening, and Penn lamented that “persons of [Elizabeth’s] quality in the world should so willingly expose themselves for the false Quaker,” and so be unaware of the “life & testimony of the true Quaker.”

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160 William Penn, “An Account of my Journey into Holland & Germany,” *PWP* I, p. 440-441. I have removed the Dunns’ various editorial brackets and crossings-out for the sake of clarity. “Princess Elizabeth to Robert Barclay,” July 21/31 1676, printed in *Reliquiae Barclaianae*, p. 3. See also the copy of this letter by Princess Elizabeth and another by the Countess of Horne included in Robert Barclay’s letter to the Fell
Himself related to Scottish nobility, Robert Barclay assumed the lead position in counseling Princess Elizabeth. Like Keith in many of his early works, Barclay’s guidance focused upon achieving an inward silence by beating down the self in order to reach “faith and obedience” to the Light. At times this took on a class dimension, though it is surprising how hesitant Barclay was in articulating this. Barclay declared that, in her pursuit of the Light, she should not be “startled if thou should find the Lord drawing thee either to the forebearance of or practising of anything not only unusuall unto, but in some respect almost Inconsistent with thy station & dignity in the world.” At the same time that Barclay enjoined her against worldly pretensions, however, he assured her “I would not be understood to suppose that these kind of dignities materially considered are utterly inconsistent with Christianity” because the powerful “shall be nursing Fathers & Mothers in the Church.” The distinction seems to be avoiding a love of public reputation that would take one away from Christian duty.161

But her conversion had more than intrinsic importance for the missionaries. She was the granddaughter of James I of England, and thus a cousin of both King Charles II and his brother James, Duke of York, later King James II. At the same time that Barclay sought to direct her spiritually, he pressed her to use her connections, particularly her brother Prince Rupert, to arrange the release of numerous Friends (including, by the end of October, George Keith who had returned to Scotland at some point) imprisoned in the Tollbooth at Aberdeen. Later, he asked her to appeal to Lady Lauderdale, wife of the

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161 “Robert Barclay to Princess, December 24, 1676,” Robert Barclay to Princess, March 5, 1677 in Reliquiae Barclaianae, p. 12-13, 15, 17.
Duke of Lauderdale, John Maitland. While willing, she reported she did not know the Duke, and that van Helmont reported that Lauderdale hated her brother. Finally, Barclay asked for her intercession with James to apply pressure on Lauderdale. At the same time he wrote to Elizabeth, Barclay met with James personally, who then wrote to Lauderdale. At the same time that he sought his co-religionists’ release, however, he also explained the salutary effects of suffering, and claimed that God would allow those who followed the Light to suffer only in so far as it would benefit them. Barclay, moreover, declared his intention to visit the imprisoned Friends “not doubting but I shall be taken & shut up with them & with all cheerfulness of spirit am prepared to partake with them of their bonds not doubting but I shall also share of their Joys.” A year later, he again reported his intention to travel to Scotland and his expectation of being arrested.162

Ultimately, the Friends were released through the intervention of the Duke of York, who was surprised to find he was distantly related to Barclay. The attempt to convert Princess Elizabeth was less successful. She was willing to receive guidance from Friends but not to join the Society itself. Remarking upon Lady Anne Conway’s recent conversion to Quakerism in March of 1677, she declared “I should not do well to follow her, unless I had some conviction, neither did it ever enter into my thoughts so to do, ... I am not apt to believe anybody Infallible though he be a true Regenerated Child of God.” She insisted her refusal of Friends’ conception of the Inner Light was based on her

understanding of Matthew 24. Barclay argued that one could only understand the Inner Light by experiencing it, rather than merely speaking of it. “There [in speaking]” he argued, “the thing is quickly comprehended but not so readily enjoyed & thus the truth is held in unrighteousness.” He pointed to the example of Lady Conway, who only when she sought to live according to the Light “saw there was a great deal more difficulty than she apprehended & could not have believed to have found in her self so strong wrestlings before she could give up to obey.” Only one more letter between the two is extant, in which Barclay seems apologetic to Elizabeth for the comparison, and declares it to have been only exemplary.163

Like the Friends’ efforts with Henry More and Anne Conway, their relationship with Princess Elizabeth was a mixture of the principled and the practical. Far from the hostility toward worldly honors expressed by some Friends during the Civil War, the Society now sought to cultivate connections with elites as part of the broader goal of ending persecution. Yet, as Barclay’s actions demonstrate, this project stood alongside the continued valorization of suffering and criticism of worldliness. Ultimately, however, Friends’ choice in targets for this campaign centered upon individuals engaged in the philosophical currents discussed in the previous chapter, including an illuminist epistemology. The structuring of Friends’ concept of the Inner Light according to the Ancient Theology by Keith, Penn and others, therefore, made their theology a form of social capital in these relationships, as is seen in the previous chapter, where Keith and More exchanged manuscripts and books. Friends were genuinely concerned for these

163 Elizabeth is probably referring to verse 36: “But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.” “Robert Barclay to Princess Elizabeth,” September 6, 1676; for Lauderdale’s dislike of Rupert, see “Princess Elizabeth to Robert Barclay,” February 9/19, 1676, printed in Reliquiae Barclaianae, p. 6, 31-32.
elite women’s conversion, and found them at least partially amenable, creating the necessary inroad for their more practical concerns. Thus we cannot separate the philosophical issues of the previous chapter from the political ones of this chapter. Seeking to translate and elaborate Quaker doctrine was not merely a defensive act directed towards warding off enemies; it also offered access to new circles of influence and new avenues for conversion.164

Parliament

Political work by the Society was not easy; their refusal to attend Church of England services meant that they could not themselves stand for office. Voters, moreover, could be required to take an oath stating their qualification to vote, furthering disenfranchising Friends. Thus Friends could only rely on their electoral strength in narrow circumstances, and were forced to more indirect efforts through the Meeting for Sufferings in order to achieve their aims.165

Parliament met again in January 1678, with Louis’s war against the Netherlands having again heated up (despite peace negotiations) and Parliament torn between their desire to support fellow Protestants and the fears that Charles intended to use a standing army to create absolutism and promote popery at home. In this context, the Society of

164 This discussion of ideas as a form of social capital is influenced by Justin Champion’s work on the role of clandestine books and radical ideas in the formation of intellectual circles involving John Locke and John Toland. Champion, Republican Learning: John Toland and the Crisis of Christian Culture, 1696-1722 (New York: Manchester University Press). It is obviously notable that Friends sought access to elite circles through women. The importance of this fact is unclear. Both were unusual women, in their education and access to learned circles (Conway to Henry More, and Elizabeth to the late Descartes), which their status permitted them and to which Quakerism could add little in the way of intellectual agency. In Princess Elizabeth’s case, moreover, Barclay’s attempt to use her influence in high circles seems to have been a nuisance (despite her graciousness). Anne Conway, certainly, seems to have been drawn to Quakerism as a result of her physical ailments, to which Quakerism provided meaning and profundity.
Friends lobbied for a bill that would have distinguished “Popish Recusants” from Protestant Dissenters. This bill, ultimately defeated, was a response to the use by magistrates of the Recusancy Oaths (which required one to abjure Roman Catholicism) on Friends, as an easy method of persecution. When the bill was defeated in June and the Parliament was prorogued the following month, the Meeting for Sufferings issued a letter to their local meetings instructing them to inform their MPs of their experiences of persecution. The following year they increased their efforts, joining these bottom up lobbying efforts with pamphleteering. While resulting in greater levels of parliamentary support, this campaign still fell short of passing legislation 166

Robert Barclay, struck by the effects of the war he had seen while on the continent, published a tract calling for peace and delivered Latin copies of it to the principals and ambassadors at the peace negotiations at Nijmegen in February. The work is fairly typical of Friends’ writings, attacking worldliness and clericalism and declaring the origin of all wars to lie in the failure to follow the Light Within. Intruding himself into the proceedings, however, also served another function: he included his Apology for the True Christian Divinity with each copy. He did so “because many are the Calumnies, that [Friends] are Reproached withal, as holding forth strange and pernicious Doctrines.” In contrast, the Apology would reveal how true Christian principles had been lost, but “That the Day of the Lord is Dawned” and that learning to “Walk in the Light” would lead to peace. This commentary on high politics allowed Friends to bring their pastoral

and apologetic concerns to the fore as a complement to their lobbying. Assuming this role also allowed Friends to step out of their increasingly isolated sectarian role and reclaim something akin to the transcendent voice they had assumed during the Civil War.  

By the Fall of 1678, however, England was beginning its slide into anti-Catholic paranoia as rumors of a “Popish Plot” to assassinate Charles and destroy Protestantism in England by placing his Catholic brother on the throne produced hysteria at every level of English society and produced attempts by Parliament to exclude James from the succession. Because anti-Quaker polemic often connected Quakerism and Catholicism, usually claiming their missionaries to be covert Jesuits, Penn found himself forced to explain before a committee that he was in fact a Protestant. As Norman Crowther-Hunt has also noted, Charles’s frequent prorogations of Parliament over exclusion undermined the ability of the Society to maintain a sustained lobbying effort. When Parliament was finally dissolved in the spring of 1681, it was the last one to meet (aside from a short one during the ascension of James II to the throne in 1685) until the Glorious Revolution.  

The Society, as a result, faced a dramatically new situation after 1681. First, the Wilkinson-Story Schism had settled into permanent separation, creating the greatest internal threat ever faced by the Society. The split produced a collection of disaffected Quakers at the edges of the Society attacking it in the press throughout the 1680s. The lack of a Parliament and an upsurge in persecution also meant that the leadership of the

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Society increasingly turned toward alliances with the Duke of York (King of England after 1685). George Fox’s declining health further magnified Penn and Barclay’s influence (along with that of George Whitehead), and thus the role of their connections to James Stuart.

The Society of Friends made use of the major aspects of the public sphere: the mechanics of public disputation, print culture, and parliamentary lobbying. In addition, they pursued protection through alliances with educational and social elites, alliances in which philosophical and theological knowledge served both to assure others of Friends’ orthodoxy and as a form of social currency in those relationships. While it is a standard interpretation of Quaker historiography that the Society turned increasingly toward doctrinal specificity and Meeting discipline, there has been less of an attempt to integrate the various ways in which this occurred and include these changes within a larger historical framework. The Society’s use of the public sphere, as demonstrated by the Aberdeen and Barbican debates, was a hybrid of the Habermasian conception, denominational identities and honor culture. It demonstrates the essential paradox of the public sphere: on the one hand it was difficult to control and utilizing it created dangers related to message control and the public construction of identity. But the very uncontrolled nature of the public sphere pulled participants into it, as only through their participation could they hope to at least shape the public discussion of themselves. In this context, the Society acted as a movement, which allowed them to at least limit the potential dangers. But the very personal nature of public disputation threatened to break the bounds of this corporate identity, and to descend into issues of personal slander and insult.
At the same time that the Society was channeling its energies toward legal toleration, Penn was pursuing an additional solution: settling a colonial Quaker haven in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. He, with the assistance of Barclay and Keith, had been negotiating charters over the previous five years. His Scottish brethren were especially important in securing the “lower counties” (modern day Delaware) in order to guarantee control of the navigation of the Delaware River. By this point, Keith’s intellectual circle had scattered. Anne Conway had died in 1679, dissolving the glue that had bound Keith to van Helmont and Dr. More. No records exist of subsequent contact between Keith and either of the two men. In 1684, van Helmont was disowned by the Society, and though the reason is unclear it probably had to do with a variety of his beliefs, such as the Revolution of Souls, and his refusal to have his books approved by the Society prior to publication. Even before this, Keith had begun working with Penn and Barclay to arrange the immigration of Scottish Friends to East New Jersey, a migration the now forty five year old Keith was about to join.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁹ According to Larry Ingle, Fox in this period was suffering from congestive heart failure, and engaged in few activities beyond letter-writing. Reviewers of his book, however, have criticized Ingle’s telescoped depiction of this final decade in comparison to Fox’s early years. Ingle, *First Among Friends*, p. 266; Allison Coudert, "A Quaker Kabbalist Controversy: George Fox's Reaction to Francis Mercurius van Helmont" *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* XXXIX (1976): p. 171-189, *idem, The Impact of the Kabbalah in the Seventeenth Century*. For Keith and Barclay’s colonization work, see PWP and Barclay MSS in Library of the Society of Friends, London.
Part II

The 1683 epistle of the West River Yearly Meeting in Maryland to Friends in London brought word of schism:

The old Adversary of the Truth [Satan] by his Wicked Instruments is not wanting to disturb the peace and prosperity of our Israel, of which John Lynam and his Wife, and Ed: Serson and some other bad and disorderly spirits, that Joyned with them, are Cheef disturbers of Truth’s prosperity amongst us, by their ungodly Carrage a mongst us, Especially of late time, goinge more Violent in their Rending Dividing, separate spirit, doe keep amongst them at Lynams House a separate Meeting, in opposition to the Body of Friends, to the great greife of the honest harted.170

The reasons for their separation were not specified in the epistle, but a letter to Margaret Fox suggests that the Lynams were pushing the Maryland Friends to institute the system of men and women’s meetings that had been adopted in England.

In their epistle, the Maryland Friends described their attempts to reconcile Lynam and his followers, who nonetheless remained obdurate. While Friends “have Travailed much for them, and in great love and Tenderness dealt with them, … it hath not taken Effect with them.” Instead, “they have gone on farther, to Abuse the Meetings Messengers sent to them.” In language reminiscent of later descriptions of George Keith, the Maryland Friends focused upon the Lynam sect’s behavior. John Lynam himself, “in open and Reproachfull manner, … stands up about the Midle time of a Publique half Years Meeting, and day of Worship, and Reads a wicked ungodly paper over the heads of Friends, and in the face of the Worlds People, then present in that Assembly.” Lynam's

actions were a matter of identity: his status as a Christian in affective communion with other Friends, who asserted their own Christian identity by treating him in a loving fashion and suffering for it. But the schism was also a public event, carried out before the eyes of an ungodly world that presented at once the material for future converts and potential persecutors.\textsuperscript{171}

From the beginning, it was understood that an event such as this was not merely a local matter, but a rent in an intra-Atlantic community extending from the hub of the London Yearly Meeting to the subordinate colonial, European, and British meetings. In addition, ministering Friends traveling up and down the colonies (including many involved in the Keithian Schism) quickly brought Delaware Valley Friends into contact with the events in Maryland. The Burlington merchant (and later close ally of Keith), Thomas Budd, visited West River and met with Lynam unaware (he later claimed) of the separation. A second Keithian, George Hutcheson, visited with Maryland friends without incident. Lynam himself would later first support Keith and then sign the most important statement condemning him. William Penn, however, perhaps overwhelmed with business

\textsuperscript{171} \textit{Ibid.} The historiography on this dispute is limited. It is mentioned in Barbara C. Mallonee, Jane Karkalits Bonny, Nicholas B. Fessenden, \textit{Minute by Minute, A History of the Baltimore Monthly Meetings of Friends, Homewood and Stony River} (Baltimore: Baltimore Monthly Meeting of Friends Stony River and Homewood, 1992), p. 4, who suggest that Lynam had accused William Richardson (a prominent West River Friend and minister) of slandering him to Friends in England. Kenneth Carroll has written the best treatment, “The Anatomy of a Separation: The Lynam Controversy” \textit{QH} 55 (1966): p. 67-78. This schism may have been part of a movement in the colonies orchestrated by George Fox to institute the meeting system, described by Carla Gardana Pestana in \textit{Quakers and Baptists in Colonial Massachusetts} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 91-92. It has remained otherwise unnoticed by historians. It does not appear in Rufus Jones’ compendious history of American Quakerism or John Lynam’s entry in \textit{DQB}. Rufus Jones, \textit{The Quakers in the American Colonies} (London: Macmillan and co., limited, 1911). The connections to the Keithian schism have also not been previously described. In part this reflects the comparative lack of scholarship on colonial Quakerism outside of the Delaware Valley and New England, the work of Carroll and Rufus Jones being among the few exceptions.
in his new colonial capital of Philadelphia, is unmentioned anywhere in the documents.172

Most importantly, the elderly Pennsylvania minister William Stockdale (whose denunciation of Keith would help trigger the schism) attempted to personally heal the breach between Lynam and the Maryland meeting. But he did so within the context of the Atlantic Quaker community. In the above and in later epistles, Maryland sought guidance from London, and George Fox responded personally, imploring them to heal and bury their differences. Lynam also turned his sights across the Atlantic, writing to Margaret Fell. Stockdale met with Lynam, and followed up with a letter. Avoiding Lynam’s specific accusations, Stockdale instead instructed him to return to the common unity of Christ within all believers. “I hope you Cannot but see” Stockdale declared, “that all differences arise & spring from the Enimie who abode not in the truth.” A Friend’s status as a member of the community was central to defining his or her spiritual state. The separated Friends, Stockdale continued, “Cannot have true peace with ye lord nor Injoy your selves in your Divided estate as you ought neither in this Estate Can you gather any to god but into Contention & strife.” A similar attempt to bury differences (doctrinal or otherwise) and reassert the communal identity and affections of the meeting became the primary tactic in handling the coming schism in the Delaware Valley.173

The Lynam schism was eventually contained. After rejecting an initial written statement of self-condemnation from Lynam in 1689, the West River Yearly Meeting

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172 Thomas Budd, *A Brief Answer to Two Papers Procured From Friends in Maryland* ([Philadelphia: William Bradford], 169?).
accepted a second one in 1690, returning him to the fold. In addition to in its conclusion, the Keithian Schism would differ from the Lynam Schism in the transference of the fight from the meeting into print and in its incorporation into the colonies’ political systems. To understand why, we must overcome the dichotomy too often adopted between the schism as intellectual dispute and the schism as a lived reflection of underlying sociological relations (class or ethnicity). As will be seen in chapter four, theology and identity were inseparable in the schism, as both were from the maintenance of the unity and coherence of the Atlantic Society of Friends. As will be seen in chapter five, the weaknesses and interconnectedness of all these elements was also vital to the unraveling and reconstitution of the Delaware Valley community. Having set out these various thematic components – of ideas, communicative strategies and identity formation – in chapter Four, the following chapter will eschew the subheadings of the preceding ones in favor of a straight narrative. At its core, the Schism was not a single “event” produced by a single “cause” but a continuous flow of contingent causes and effects and short-term strategies. The structure of this dispute delimited the possibilities rather than being strictly causal, and the ideas occurred within a conversation between actual actors with real religious and ideological commitments rather than being principles or ideas abstractly considered. Such an interpretation is impossible to set forth except as storytelling.174

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174 Epistles Received, Vol. I, p. 103-105. My thinking on this point is primarily influenced by the Revisionist School of English history, which was especially developed for political history, focusing on patronage and interest over long term political and social change. As a result, my interpretation places a greater emphasis on the role of ideology than they did. Michael Winship has similarly applied this model the Antinomian Crisis in Boston. Winship, Making Heretics : Militant Protestantism and Free Grace in Massachusetts, 1636-1641 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).
Chapter IV
“Quakerism is Pure Paganism”¹⁷⁵
The Atlantic Limits of Quaker Reforms and Apologetics

The same movement toward greater outward orthodoxy that operated in the Society’s political efforts in the late 1670s likewise moved through the meetings’ communication channels across the Atlantic and Keith attached himself to the project. Yet intellectual differences do not a schism make. Quaker theology was flexible, able to oscillate between various concerns and dangers, but it was always secondary to the community it sought to articulate and defend. Why that community temporarily failed in the Delaware Valley, or rather why the commitment to it ceased to be worthwhile, is not distinct from the theological issues but it is not explained by them. At the same time, the energy of the schism cannot be understood apart from the dangers of heterodoxy and the directions from London for the Society to project a single public face within the British Empire.

From Missionaries to Settlers

Individual Friends had begun traveling to the colonies soon after the Society came into being, as part of a millennially driven missionary project that also sent a few Friends eastward into the Ottoman Empire. George Fox’s sojourn in the colonies from 1671 to 1673, as Kenneth Carroll has argued, was designed to organize the local colonial meetings and tamp down the influence of Perrotian schismatics, and it resulted in a greater focus on America by the Society. The various communities of Friends that had

¹⁷⁵ Cotton Mather, *Little Flocks Guarded against Grievous Wolves* (Boston: Benjamin Harris & John Allen, 1691), unpaginated To the Reader.
sprung up were encouraged to adopt the system of meetings, thereby incorporating themselves into the broader Society.176

For all of this longstanding interest, William Penn’s entrée into colonialism was largely accidental. Charles II granted the lands east of the Delaware River to two courtiers, John, Lord Berkeley and Sir George Carteret, soon after the final conquest of New Amsterdam. The grant was divided between the two men and the former then sold his interest to a nearly bankrupt Friend named Edward Byllynge, through another Quaker, John Fenwick. This complicated financial relationship (ultimately pitting Byllynge, his creditors, and Fenwick against one another) was taken up by the Society – which believed Friends should be able to mediate disputes without recourse to the publicity of worldly courts. The result was the appointment in February 1675 of William Penn and two others to the head of a trust handling the new colony of West New Jersey.177


177 For the foundation of New Jersey, see Catherine Owens Peare, William Penn, a Biography (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1957), p. 170-172; John E. Pomfret, New Jersey, A History (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1973); and idem “West New Jersey: a Quaker Society 1675-1775” WMQ 8 (1951): p. 493-519. Peare sees Penn as having had a long interest in colonization preceding his adoption of the trusteeship, at least as far back as Fox’s departure for America and perhaps before, William Penn, p. 137. Richard Dunn puts forward the happenstance claim in PWP I, p. 383. There also remains a long-standing historiographical debate over Charles’s motivations in granting Penn the charter for Pennsylvania. The most famous interpretation is that it was a combination of settling a debt owed to Penn’s father and a desire to rid England of as many Dissenters as possible. Catherine Peare interprets the granting of the charter as an act of personal favor by the Stuarts, with debt and Dissent being merely defensive pretexts for making such a gift to a Whig, William Penn, p. 209-210. Joseph Illick has repeated Peare’s point, and also pointed to the strategic importance and economic value of a colony between New York and Maryland, Joseph E. Illick, William Penn the Politician, His Relations with the English Government (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1965), p. 21-40. Mary Geiter has attributed more cynical motives, claiming Charles feared a rebellion over Exclusion, and therefore sought to shave off London’s merchants from the Exclusionists by offering them a new trading opportunity. Geiter also suggests that Penn agreed to withdraw his electoral support from the republican Algernon Sidney in the Parliamentary elections in return for his colonial charter. Mary K. Geiter, William Penn (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2000).
It was not until the end of the decade that Penn turned his attention to the other side of the Delaware, and his pursuit of a colonial charter is often interpreted as reflecting Penn’s disillusionment with England after the failure to achieve toleration. It certainly provoked hostility from certain members of the Society similar to that produced by his use of the law, with many older Friends believing any avoidance of suffering for the truth to be a betrayal of the Lamb’s War. Other Friends attached themselves to the colonial project, including both Robert Barclay and George Keith, who served as lobbyists to the Duke of York on Penn’s behalf. In addition, Keith was hired as Surveyor General of East New Jersey and came to the colony in the early 1680s. Keith was also an investor, obtaining five hundred acres of land for the price of ten pounds. He early assumed a prominent role in the West New Jersey Meeting, drawing up (along with another Friend) the 1685 epistle to the London Yearly Meeting. In 1689, he moved to Philadelphia to accept a position as schoolteacher.178

By this time, Pennsylvania was already embroiled in a long political fight between settlers and the absent Penn (who had returned to England in August 1684 in order to lobby on behalf of the colony in a boundary dispute with Maryland and Lord Baltimore). Several political arrangements in the colony had come and gone, as the General Assembly’s desire for initiating powers ran up against Penn’s conception of

178 For the drawing of this line, see Pomfret, *Colonial New Jersey*, p. 62-63. In 1693, Hugh Roberts wrote to Penn “it is well known unto thee that many of our Friends in England, had hard thoughts both of thee & we, because of our removal from them to this country,” and he conceded some had not left for the right reasons, but “som for fere of persecution[,] some that were discontented with their brethren where they were,” and others to obtain wealth. “Hugh Roberts to William Penn,” n.d., *PWP* III, p. 360. Barclay and Keith’s lobbying efforts appear in several letters, “Sir John Werden to William Penn,” July 16, 1681, *PWP* II, p. 90-92. See also Illick, *William Penn the Politician*, p. 56-58. Crucial to the success of the colony, it was believed, was complete control of the navigation of the Delaware River, including the “lower counties” (later the colony of Delaware). Keith’s occupation is described in the list of first purchasers as “gentleman.” *PWP* II, 646.
mixed government. The quasi-feudal landholding system of the charter, moreover, granted Penn quitrents from the colony’s landholders. After a moratorium (to allow the establishment of the colony), Penn began attempting to collect these rents in 1684, but the colonists refused to pay. Entire meetings of the Assembly took place without the passage of any legislation. Keith’s future enemies, the Welsh doctor and Friend Thomas Lloyd and the English Friend Arthur Cook, both assumed important leadership positions in the anti-proprietary party. In 1688, the frustrated Penn appointed as deputy governor a former Cromwellian officer who had lived for a time in Massachusetts, named John Blackwell. Much of the local Friends’ leadership (with the exception of Penn’s ally Robert Turner) made no secret of their distaste for the Puritan warrior, and he only served for slightly over a year. Leaving in April of 1688, Blackwell was replaced first by the Provincial Council, and then, in April 1691 by the new deputy governor, Thomas Lloyd. While it would be a mistake to reduce the causes of the future schism to this conflict, the meetinghouse was not quarantined from the network of patron-client relationships and the animosities that the political sphere produced.179

179 See Edwin Bronner, William Penn’s “Holy Experiment” The Founding of Pennsylvania 1681-1701 (New York: Temple University Publications, 1962); Gary B. Nash. Quakers and Politics, Pennsylvania, 1681-1726 (New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1968); and J. M. Sosin, English America and the Revolution of 1688: Royal Administration and the Structure of Provincial Government (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982). John Smolenski has argued that Penn and his opponents in Pennsylvania, despite their contentiousness, shared a common political ideology founded less in republicanism or commonwealth ideology than in the Quaker meeting system. The meeting, according to Smolenski, sought to “create Quakers” and to further piety through the moral disciplining of its members, a practice which could similarly be found in Penn’s emphasis upon “good men” over “good laws” and in the attempt by Pennsylvania court’s to make people “embody certain forms of citizenship” (in particular through controlling speech). While convincing in the broad strokes, placing the origins of this system in the meeting ignores the fact that Friends were making similar demands for a godly magistracy in England long before the meeting system was established, as had puritans before them. “Friends and Strangers: Religion, Diversity, and the Ordering of Public Life in Colonial Pennsylvania, 1681-1764” (unpublished PhD. Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 2001), p. 142. For disputes between Friends and non-Friends involving the lower counties, see Sally Schwartz, “A Mixed Multitude” The Struggle for Toleration in Colonial Pennsylvania (New York: New York University Press, 1987). For Penn’s political ideas and the influence of the theories of James Harrington and Algernon Sidney, see Mary Maples Dunn, William Penn,
New Jersey was in little better shape, having its own fight over the payment of quitrents. After various difficulties with their investors in the Society and with Governor Edmund Andros in New York, Penn bought both Lord Berkeley and Sir George Carteret’s interests, appointing Robert Barclay governor for life of East New Jersey in 1683 (though he died in 1690 before taking office). Edward Byllynge, however, then declared himself governor, with fellow Friend Samuel Jennings as his deputy. Penn’s arrival in the colonies ended this government, and Jennings was declared governor in 1683. Jennings and Thomas Budd were then sent to England to negotiate with Byllynge, which proved unsuccessful even with the arbitration of the Society, and Budd eventually entered the press, printing tracts against Byllynge. Not until 1687 were these problems eventually resolved with Byllynge’s widow.180

The Colonial Minister

In the fall of 1687 a serious epidemic passed through the Delaware Valley and nearly killed the fifty-year-old Keith. In a letter written the following May, he declared: “I hope in his great Mercy to do some Service yet more to his blessed Name and Truth,” suggesting a renewal of purpose related to his reprieve. Illness is a common trope in conversion narratives throughout the Christian tradition. “My great Work and Care hath been chiefly and mainly,” Keith explained, “to declare and hold forth the alone Foundation, than which none other is to be laid, even the Lord Jesus Christ.” Along with a catechism published two years later, the letter reveals the same trends in Keith’s

180 This description of the Jerseys relies primarily on Pomfret, New Jersey.
thought as in his earlier English works, but rather than signs of incipient schism, both
documents were part of a greater concern with meeting and family discipline directed
from London.181

In this letter, Keith also expressed the greater reliance upon scripture found in his
more recent printed works. In particular, he recommended Friends, in giving voice to the
Light within, “not to mix the Doctrine of Truth with Words of Man’s Wisdom, or
contrary Doctrine whatever but to hold fast in all things to the express Testimony of
Scripture, and the Inward Evidence of the Holy Spirit that gave it forth.” Keith here drew
upon the anti-clerical language (“Man’s Wisdom”) of his previous writing; and the focus
upon scripture echoed Friends’ denunciation of Trinitarian language as non-scriptural. In
his Catechism, Keith explained that the events detailed in the Gospels were “worthy and
needful Subjects of every true Christians frequent Meditation and Remembrance, to
encrease their Faith, Love Devotion and sincere Obedience.” Yet he then reaffirmed the
principle of being guided by the spirit in all actions, and stated that a preacher must “wait
in silence” for an inward spiritual motion before preaching. Keith also declared his
intention to recommend to fellow Friends, especially their children, the reading of
scripture, “for I have found a great Want and Defect in many, that they are but too little

181 George Keith to George Whitehead and George Fox, dated May 22, 1688, published in George
231. Ethyn Kirby, Butler, Clare Martin and John Smolenski see this letter as an early sign of Keith’s belief
that many Friends in the colonies were expressing heterodox views. Care should be taken, however, not to
read the schism back into every document and into this letter especially. Ethyn Williams Kirby. George
Keith (1638-1716) (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1942); Jon Butler, “‘Gospel Order
Improved:’ The Keithian Schism and the Exercise of Quaker Ministerial Authority in Pennsylvania,” WMQ
XXXI (1974): p. 431-452; Clare Martin, “Controversy and Division in Post-Restoration Quakerism: the
Hat, Wilkinson-Story and Keithian Controversies and Comparisons with the Internal Divisions of Other
Seventeenth-Century Nonconformist Groups” (PhD. Dissertation: Open University, 2004), p. 198-199;
Smolenski, “Friends and Strangers,” p. 177-178. Kirby also suggests a possible renewal of purpose
resulting from Keith’s illness. The epidemic is mentioned in the Rhode Island Yearly Meetings Epistle
November 26, 1687 in Epistles Received I, p. 59, Library of the Society of Friends, London.
acquainted and known in the Words of Holy Scriptures, and a Shame it is” if Friends should “be less skilled” in the Scriptures “than Jews, or other professed Christians.” As seen in the previous chapters, Keith was placing increasing emphasis upon scripture as a pastoral tool, and on scriptural language as an apologetic device.\(^{182}\)

Without question, by 1690 Keith’s theology emphasized the importance of scripture and of specific knowledge of the Gospel story, butting against Quaker universalism. He claimed in his letter “as in all Ages the Lord Jesus Christ hath enlight’ned all Men sufficiently to their present State and Age, so more abundantly he hath enlight’ned Men (since he came and suffered Death in the Flesh, and rose again and ascended) to whom the Gospel is preach’d in Power and Purity of Life and Doctrine.” Despite this statement of the efficacy of historical Gospel knowledge, he explained that: “no true Knowledge, nor Faith nor Worship can be, … but through the Revelation of Christ the Son of God in the Hearts of Men.” The Inner Light remained his central epistemological principle, though he was becoming more vague on its potential to reveal actual information; therefore for one to “truly knoweth and believeth in the Lord Jesus Christ for Eternal Salvation” required belief both in Christ’s inward and outward coming. His Catechism declared that “Knowledge and Faith of this great Mystery” was “absolutely necessary” to a “perfect Christian.” Those who lacked this knowledge, but lived “uprightly to what is made known of God to them” were not “Sons” but either “Servants or Sons of the first Covenant,” i.e. the covenant that had been supplanted at Christ’s incarnation. Yet, having made this point, Keith then denied that those who had not had “Christ outwardly preached unto them” would perish in that state. Keith further

elaborated, explaining that the second covenant “giveth greater Illumination and Grace, and raiseth up the Children of it to a higher degree of Perfection.” Yet Keith also said that the “Seed or Principle” of the covenant was “after some manner, in all men,” and, earlier, that Christ came “inwardly in mens hearts” for salvation “in some measure and degree immediately after the fall.” This universal revelation stopped short, however, of the “great Mystery” of the Gospel story, which was revealed only after Christ’s coming. Keith’s emphasis upon scripture as a pietistic and epistemic tool had begun earlier in the decade, and here it combined with a new intent. Keith’s catechism is almost unique among his writings in not being a polemic defending the principle of the Inner Light, and therefore requiring the adoption of skeptical attitudes toward scripture, but a more neutral setting forth of Christian doctrine within a formally Christian community. Context alone, however, does not explain Keith’s position, and its incoherence would present future problems for him. While the realm in which Keith had most clearly changed his thinking over the years, the use of scripture was not the issue along which the schism opened (nor was the initial breach an attack by Keith), although it was related.183

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183 Whitehead, *The Power of Christ Vindicated*, p. 227, 228; Keith, *A Plain Short Christian Catechism*, p. 4, 8, & 9. Barry Levy interprets the Schism as the result of a backlash against Keith’s emphasis upon doctrinal orthodoxy, specifically its consequences for children, and has argued that the Catechism “contained material obliquely hostile to the doctrine of the innocence of children.” While certainly true, he is unable to cite specific evidence of such a concern. He also states that the sons of the first covenant “referred explicitly ... to pre-Christian Jews.” As is clear from Keith’s earlier writing, however, this is not explicit, since Keith frequently used the Biblical covenants to refer to the stages of conversion p. 161. Nothing in the Catechism appears to directly refer to pre-Christian Jews. In addition, in *The Presbyterian and Independent Visible Churches* (Philadelphia: William Bradford, 1689) Keith deals with a similar problem, but specifically refers to those “living in such remote Places and Ages of the world, where the outward Preaching never came within their reach,” and compared their situation to the Congregationalist notion of the federal holiness of children, p. 105. Levy’s discussion of the Revolution of Souls in this context is equally problematic. He describes the idea as “authored” by van Helmont (Levy is unaware of the idea’s Kabbalistic and Platonic origins). Also, since the doctrine rejected both original sin and eternal damnation, Levy is at pains to explain why it clashed with his conception of Quaker child-rearing. His claim that the *Two Hundred Queries* “contained much surmise about the spiritual state of infants which Chester County farmers thought alarming” is itself a surmise unsupported by evidence (beyond that certain Friends were bothered by reincarnation); and his declaration that “Naturally, Chester County farmers and
The same year that Keith introduced his catechism, the London Yearly Meeting recommended the establishment of schools for Quaker children. The Act of Toleration was only a year old, and the Jacobite threat to the monarch who had brought it into being was still very real. James’s Declarations of Indulgence had all been short-lived, brought down by opposition from the same forces that eventually brought him down. All this meant that the Society could hardly rest assured that the present state of affairs would be permanent. Toleration itself presented new challenges to a society that had constructed much of its identity around being humble sufferers for the Truth.

Epistles sent to the colonies contained concerns similar to Keith’s. On September 28, 1689, George Whitehead wrote an epistle “to Friends in General,” which he subsequently published. The previous spring had seen the passage of the Act of Toleration, yet Whitehead was concerned by the new prospect. “God has been good to us,” Whitehead asserted, and been “a tender Father through all our Tryals, Sufferings and Exercises.” The “present Liberty,” was only the latest of these mercies, but they had to fear misusing it, “as that none grow careless, or negligent, indifferent or luke-warm because thereof, nor any to sit down at ease in the Flesh, or in the Earth, and therein promise themselves security from further sufferings or Tryals.” Whitehead assured Friends that God had more ways to afflict a sinful nation, and wondered at the lack of

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their wives did not like being told by public Friends that their children were reincarnated strangers from another time, place, or race; they did not like speculating during their infant’s funerals that their infants’ souls might be enroute to Boston” is creative but purely speculative. The only documentable complaint against the Revolutions was that it promoted immorality, since a person could assume they would have future lives in which to be saved. In 1694, Keith did speak about original sin in relation to children and said that it was unclear how children would be saved without Gospel knowledge, but felt confident that a merciful God would in fact save them. Much of Levy’s interpretation of the schism suffers from this lack of direct evidence that Friends’ are making the connections to family life he postulates. Barry Levy, *Quakers and the American Family, British Settlement in the Delaware Valley* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 164.
new “clear Gospel ministers” to arise in recent years. After conceding that few were called to the work, Whitehead came to focus upon the youth. He suggested that a generation gap had arisen, with the children rejecting the true faith held by their parents and with the parents themselves insufficiently attuned to their children's religious instruction. Too many Friends had become prideful and haughty, and overly concerned with material vanities, providing hidden support for past and future divisions within the Society. Ironically, the desire for toleration had motivated a move toward orthodoxy; but now its achievement had produced fears of losing the distinctive identity of Friends as a godly people separated from the world. In 1692, two traveling Friends, James Dickinson and Thomas Wilson who would find themselves in the center of the schism similarly wrote to Barbadian Friends warning them of the worldliness of children within the Society. The 1685 London Yearly Meeting’s epistle to the Delaware Valley called on Friends there to maintain the meeting system and strengthen ties with the Virginia, Maryland and New England meetings. In their 1690 epistle, in contrast, the meeting told Friends to “continue to Labour in [the Lord’s] work and service by soundness of Doctrine both to Exhort and convince gainsayers” and through their actions “to adorn the Gospell and be patterns of good works in Doctrine.” As always, too much should not be made of single shifts in the often stylized language of Friends’ letters (the toll taken by French privateers during King’s William’s War also makes more detailed comparison difficult), but there is clear evidence for an emphasis upon religious instruction emanating from London.184

The Philadelphia Yearly Meeting printed its 1689 epistle to the surrounding meetings encouraging the enforcement of moral discipline among their members and the education of their children “in the form of Sound Words, and sound Learning, according to the Holy Scriptures, and that they frequently read in the holy Scriptures,” language very close to Keith’s. The subsequent publication of the catechism (presumably with meeting approval) and Keith’s hiring as the first schoolteacher in Philadelphia also shows the meeting was following London’s lead on Christian education. By 1690, Keith intended to return to Britain and produced a certificate for his school’s usher, recommending him to anyone wishing to educate their children “either in writing, or reading english, or ciphering, or latine.” Keith’s future ally, the printer William Bradford, also circulated a proposal in early 1688 to publish “a large Bible in folio” on subscription. The large undertaking (considerably greater than the short tracts Bradford had produced up to that point) appears to have attracted more good intentions than hard currency, and nothing came of it. All of these efforts, however, reveal a broad movement for religious instruction in the colony.185


To Friends From the Yearly Meeting Held at Philadelphia, the 4th of the 7th Month, 1689 (Philadelphia: William Bradford, 1689); George Keith to William Yardly, Thomas Jony, and Phineas Pemberton, 11 2d mo 1690, Etting Papers, Pemberton vol. 1, p. 41, HSP; William Bradford to the Half Years Meeting, 1mo 1, 1687/8 Misc MSS, Friends House Library, Swarthmore College. Bradford confessed to also having self-
Keith’s formulation in his letter to London of the initial issue of the schism -- the relationship between Christ’s spirit and manhood -- was also typical of the doctrinal position he had published in England. Keith denounced those who would separate Christ’s outward/historical and inward/spiritual coming. This was the very charge that would be leveled at Keith at the beginning of the schism. Importantly, Keith did not direct this accusation explicitly or implicitly against fellow Friends. Instead, he singled out “the World’s Teachers and Professors” (by which the Society meant the educated, ordained clergy of other denominations, usually dissenters such as Presbyterians and Congregationalists, Anglicans generally being called Priests) for preaching only the outward Christ. He similarly identified those who professed the inward, but denied the outward Christ as “not Friends (God forbid) but Ranters, and airy Notionists.” This passage can be understood at two levels. First it is a formulaic statement of Christology, not uncommon to Friend’s epistles, expressing the distinctions Keith had worked out in various of his polemical works. The opponents Keith pointed to were generic rather than particular persons, used to rhetorically situate Friends’ doctrine between the extremes of Ranterism and more formalized denominations (usually identified with popery).186

interested motives for the project: the lack of business in the colonies for his press. He had even planned a return to England before happening upon the Bible scheme. Bradford’s search for business may have even led him to publish a tract defending the Andros regime in New England, a work which would not have been possible to produce in New England. William Bradford also advertised his Bible proposal in a broadsheet - one that suggests hope of a broader non-Quaker market, since he offered to append copies of the Book of Common Prayer upon demand. Proposals for the Printing of a Large Bible (Philadelphia: [William Bradford], 1688). Bradford named Phineas Pemberton as a distributor of the Bible in Bucks County and Samuel Richardson as a manager of subscriptions. Both were opponents of Keith. Another manager, Samuel Carpenter, may be related to Joshua and Abraham Carpenter, both of whom signed a statement to Governor Fletcher attacking the Lloydian political faction. An important Keith ally, Thomas Budd, was named for Burlington.

186 Whitehead, The Power of Christ Vindicated, p. 228. I use the word “initial” rather than major or central to describe this theological issue because, as I hope to make clear, there was not a single defining theological issue to the schism, many of the seemingly disparate issues actually interconnected and developed over time. Among those historians seeking a single source of the schism is J. William Frost, who
In addition to its intellectual content, the London letter must also be understood as a part of the communication network maintained by the Society. Most scholarship on the Schism has not addressed the early entry of the London leadership into the brewing crisis, but this factor is central to understanding the community in which the schism occurred. Unlike New England, which early developed a sense of regional identity through the creation of a dissenting religious establishment and the defense of it against Presbyterian attacks during the Civil War, the Society of Friends conceived of itself in global terms. Their self-identification as a peculiar people drawn out of the world inhibited any local or regional identities. Maintaining that community required a network of regularly exchanged epistles. The London Yearly Meeting delivered an annual general epistle to all Friends meetings worldwide, and George Fox wrote a separate one, both of which were printed. London also sent out annual manuscript epistles to each of the regional meetings (usually yearly meetings, but sometimes monthly or quarterly meetings if one had not formed yet), and those meetings sent their own epistles to London. Finally, the London leadership quickly intervened in local problems, producing yet further correspondence. Thus a Friend dwelling anywhere in Britain, the colonies, or continental Europe where there was a meeting lived with a very conscious sense of being a part of a global

argued that the only realm of disagreement consisted in the question of Christ’s physical resurrection and the presence of bodies of saints in heaven. “Unlikely Controversialists: Caleb Pusey and George Keith” QH 64 (1975-1976): p. 16-36. Clare Martin disputes this, focusing on the “the main point of doctrinal contention did concern the relationship between the physical Christ and the Inner Light.” Martin, “Controversy and Division in Post-Restoration Quakerism”, p. 196. Both of these interpretations reveal important elements of the schism, but suffer first from a positivist approach to theological dispute (though both concede an element of theological confusion), and a lack of context in Keith’s intellectual influences (though both are aware of van Helmont and More). Building off of Martin Endy, Frost has also pointed to the Nestorian tendencies within Quaker theology. Nestorianism was an early church heresy that separated the divine and human in Christ, the danger of which Keith himself was deeply aware, distinguishing Quaker and Nestorian theology in The Way Cast Up (s.n. [1677?]), p. 84 and The True Christ Owned, as he is True and Perfect God Man (n.p. 1679), p. 101-103.
community. Keith’s letter, therefore, was not a private communication, but one he would have expected to be shared among Friends in England, if not publicly read. The writing and reading of these epistles thereby provided a concrete ceremony for imagining the Atlantic Society. They created a time and place outside of the particularity of the mundane world, in which an individual and the meeting contemplated themselves within a larger affective communion. The elaboration of this community through these texts often (given Friends self-conception as a suffering people) included articulating the Society’s identity vis-à-vis their opponents; Keith took this tendency a step farther by reciting the full structure of a Quaker apologetic. That this may also have been directed against opinions within the colony he found heterodox does not take away from the fact that his initial instincts were to turn to the authority of the broader community, one that had defended and supported him in the past.187

In addition to a rhetorical device, Keith’s description of Ranters may have been inspired by the “singing Quakers” under the leadership of Thomas Case in Oyster Bay, Long Island. Purported to practice nudism (a practice similar to that of early Friends going “naked as a sign”) and communal marriage (a common charge going back to the Munster uprising), “Case’s Crew” was unaffiliated with the Society. Keith’s concern with them was motivated by the republication in 1687 of An Essay For the Recording of Illustrious Providences by the Boston minister Increase Mather, in which he lumped the Quakers together with Thomas Case. “That the Quakers are some of them undoubtedly

187 Frederick Tolles has described the collective component to the Inner Light as a “one-anotherness” that “was early embodied in a distinct and coherent group life.” At the same time, Tolles has argued that the Quakers’ epistles and books “stereotype the thought and practice (and even the language) of that community.” Frederick B. Tolles, Quakers and the Atlantic Culture (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1960), p. 22, 33. As quoted earlier, Christopher Hill applied this description to Quaker writings as a whole.
possessed with Evil and Infernal Spirits,” Mather declared, “and acted in a more than ordinary manner by the inmates of Hell, is evident, not only from the related Instances, but by the other awful Examples which might be mentioned.” New England assumed a particularly lurid place in the Quaker mental universe, in particular because of the memory of the martyrs executed years before. The 1693 London Yearly Meeting epistle had remarked that “the cry of the blood of Friends, formerly put to death there, is much revived by the late judgment and confusion fallen upon the professors there, about witchcraft,” resulting in the execution of several people “under pretence of being witches, which they wickedly accused Friends formerly with.” The epistle concluded that the Salem witch trials were the fulfillment of prophecies made during the Quaker executions.

The identification of Case as a Friend, therefore, was deeply implicated with Friends’ sense of history and the dangers of accusations of enthusiasm and the diabolical. The resulting need to disassociate Thomas Case from the Society of Friends motivated Keith to enter the lists and pamphleteer against the Mathers (Increase’s son Cotton taking up the cause while his father was in England lobbying for a new charter).  

188 Increase Mather, An Essay For The Recording of Illustrious Providences (Boston: Thomas Parkhurst, 1687, orig. Samuel Green, 1684), p. 347; Epistles From the Yearly Meeting of Friends Held in London to the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings in Great Britain, Ireland and Elsewhere From 1681 to 1857, Inclusive (London: Friend’s Book and Tract Depository, 1858), vol. I p. 73. John Smolenski, apparently repeating an error by Ethyn Kirby, has mistakenly named Speedy Repentance (Boston: Samuel Green, 1690), an execution sermon, as Cotton Mather’s response. “Friends and Strangers”, p. 176 n. 19. Both Increase’s book and his son Cotton Mather’s Memorable Providences, Relating to Witchcrafts and Possessions (Boston: R. P., 1689), in which Cotton also replied to Keith, were more generally concerned with witchcraft and demonic possession. Christine Leigh Heyrman has pursued the connections between fears of Quakerism and the Essex County witch trials in Commerce and Culture, the Maritime Communities of Colonial Massachusetts, 1690-1750 (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1984) and recounts Keith’s fight with the Mathers. Mary Beth Norton discusses these two works in her study of the Salem Witch Trials, without mentioning Case, Quakers or Keith, In the Devil’s Snare: The Salem Witchcraft Crisis of 1692 (New York: Vintage Books, 2002), p. 36-40. Arthur Worrall has also remarked on the role of Case in instigating Keith’s fight with the Mathers. Quakers in the Colonial Northeast, (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1980), p. 46-49. The Flushing, Long Island Meeting complained about Ranters, probably Case, in their November 9, 1687 Epistle to London, in particular because they distracted people with their seeming “Relish” for the Light Within. Epistles Received, V. I p. 56. For Case’s Crew see Paul S. Lovejoy
Despite the fact that many of the issues that would later dominate the schism appear in the letter, Keith described himself in his letter to London as “in dear Unity and Love with all faithful Friends and Brethren, both here, and every where in all the World, according to my Measure.” This language would be employed by Keith throughout much of the schism, and well into his disownment, to express his communal understanding of his own orthodoxy. Yet this conception, as will be seen later, morphed easily into defining the boundaries of that community in terms of orthodoxy. At the moment, however, Keith seemed concerned to clear himself of any suggestion of unorthodox beliefs, writing “I only mention these things unto you, that ye may have occasion to Try, Feel, Taste and Savour my Spirit, and the Frame and Bent of my Heart towards the Lord and Prosperity of his Work, and Salvation of Souls; and that I am for Soundness of Doctrine and Spirit and Life, and sound Words of Truth, well warranted by Scripture, that none can or dare condemn.” He, moreover, assured the London leadership in his letter that “for my part, I hope I shall never be found to Preach, Write or Print any Doctrine or Doctrines of Christian Faith and Religion that are not agreeable with the plain and express Testimonies of Holy Scripture.” Keith was hardly on the attack. Why exactly he had to defend himself is unclear, but may have been a response to having discussed the concept of the Revolution of Souls among colonial Friends (after having been forced into silence on the issue by van Helmont’s disownment and the suppression of his own

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manuscript). It is equally important to remember that Keith wrote this letter three years before the first signs of religious division.  

Keith’s first major action after composing this letter was a challenge directed at the New England Congregational ministry. Almost a month to the day after his letter to Fox and Whitehead, Keith appeared in Boston and posted about the town a paper titled *A Call and Warning from the Lord to the People of the Lord*. It charged New Englanders with being hypocrites for calling themselves Christians while denying Christ within and denounced their persecution of Friends. An exchange of challenges ensued, but the Boston ministry demanded that Keith address them in print rather than in verbal debate. Keith obliged them in 1689, publishing *The Presbyterian and Independent Visible Churches in New-England and Else-where, Brought to the Test*, a point by point refutation of the Westminster Confession, to which he appended a rejection of Increase Mather’s attempt to affiliate Thomas Case with the Society of Friends. The dispute with Boston continued into the opening months of the schism and were read and approved by the meeting prior to publication. While Keith was at pains in the dispute to prove the Society of Friends orthodox on all major elements of Christian doctrine, the debate also reflected the tensions created by the Society’s attempts to define their relationship towards other denominations in the post-Act of Toleration Atlantic.

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189 Whitehead, *The Power of Christ Vindicated*, p. 229, 230, & 231. Caleb Pusey later charged Keith with speaking frequently about the Revolution of Souls, attributing several statements to him such as “That it was God’s great Mercy to the Jebusites, Amorites and Hittites of old, in that he destroyed them so much at once by the Israelites, for by so doing, their Souls might be sooner come into the Bodies of the Jews Children, and so consequently become the sooner to be Members of the Visible Church.” *A Modest Account From Pensylvania* (London: Tace Sowle, 1696), p. 27-28.

190 These papers and letters were printed in Keith *The Presbyterian and Independent Visible Churches in New-England and Else-Where*, p. 197-232. Boston judge Samuel Sewall recorded in his diary for July 12th: “George Keith doth this day send a Challenge to the 4 Ministers of Boston, in an open letter by Edward Shippen, to dispute with them about the false doctrine they delivered.” *The Diary of Samuel Sewall*, M.H.S. Coll. vol. V, 5th series (Boston: MHS, 1878), p. 219-220.
In his Catechism, Keith had professed the work only taught “the common grounds of the Christian Religion,” and that “if these things, both of Doctrine and Practice, that are generally assented unto by all or most sorts,” were taken more seriously, “there would be more love and good Neighbourhood, and Peace among professed Christians.” Later, Keith pointed to the new toleration of Baptists by Congregationalists, and asked “why then may ye not allow the same Charity to us, that ye, viz. the more sober part of Presbyterians and Baptists, so called (tho’ the more Rigid sort call one another Hereticks) allow one to another,” based upon their common “Foundation” in Christ. Traditionally, the boundaries of the Christian world had been constructed according to the concepts of the visible and invisible churches. The invisible church consisted of all Christians (living and dead) who were or would be saved. The visible church attempted to translate this idea into the temporal realm. It consisted of all people, in their various churches, who it could charitably be believed were among the saved. The separation of Christ’s community from direct identification with particular man-made institutions (though Puritans sought to close that gap as much as possible) was important in avoiding rigid sectarianism among Protestants and the disintegrating effects within congregations of factions seeking to separate from those whose godliness they distrusted. The visible church was ultimately much better suited to Roman Catholicism, while the Protestant commitment to national churches presented certain problems. How the visible church was defined, moreover, had direct implications for the construction of identity, especially for Quakers.\footnote{Keith, \textit{A Plain Short Christian Catechism}, unpaginated epistle; This problem of maintaining the purity of church membership without falling into endless divisions (exemplified by Roger Williams) has been best explored by Edmund Morgan, first in \textit{The Puritan Dilemma: The Story of John Winthrop} (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1958) and subsequently in \textit{Visible Saints, The History of a Puritan Idea} (Ithaca:}
Keith and Mather held two different concepts of what constituted a church. According to Congregational ecclesiology, churches were associations of believers who gathered themselves out of the world and covenanted with God and one another to perform the duties of a church: maintaining discipline, providing Gospel preaching (or “right doctrine”) and administering the sacraments. These were insufficient criteria for Keith. The Society of Friends had stripped religious gatherings of much of their formal apparatus, such as covenants and ordained clergy, and transformed the sacraments from outward practices into metaphors for inward spiritual experiences. All these outward ordinances “are but mens inventions as they are now used,” and therefore idolatrous. Ministers were not paid, university trained professionals, but those who showed a particular aptitude for expounding the inner persuasions of the Light and who had received a specific calling from the Spirit to preach.192

But Keith’s critique of Congregational church polity extended beyond liturgy and ministry. Keith attacked Mather for limiting the definition of a true church to right doctrine, “So that nothing of true Piety or Holiness, nothing of the Spirit of God, nothing of an inward Profession of Christ, or his Life, and Power, or Grace, or heavenly Presence

and Appearance, is any requisit to constitute any Members of their visible Church.” Indeed they would be sufficient as church members even if they “were gross and notorious Hypocrites and mere empty Formalists ... Yea notoriously slanderous Persons, notoriously Lyars, Deceivers, Drunkards, Adulterers, Thieves, Murderers.” If the mere profession of right doctrine made a church, moreover, how could any Dissenter justify the break from the Church of England? For New England Congregationalists, separatism had been a difficulty since the first formulation of their ecclesiology in the 1630s. All Puritans were forced to defend their dissent from the national church, at once making it a sufficiently important matter of conscience to justify the action but not so central to Christianity that it pronounced the Church of England a false Church. Drawing its inspiration from Brownists (open separatists, the most famous being the “Pilgrims” of Plymouth Colony), Congregationalism’s definition of true churches as covenanted communities drawn out of the world especially pressured its proponents to reject the legitimacy of the Church of England. That was a step too far for many, however, because it required not merely pronouncing the English king a heretic and the head of a false church (challenging his claim to secular rule as well), but it also undermined their global, historical and national worldviews, which saw England as a bulwark of the Reformation against the forces of the Roman AntiChrist. The solution to this problem was to stress the Calvinist predestinarian consensus within the English Protestant community, meaning that salvation could still be attained within the Church of England, while emphasizing differences in ecclesiology and liturgy and without undermining the break with Roman Catholicism (because it preached salvation through works, and conducted an “idolatrous” Mass). The establishment of the New England colonies resolved the difficulty for others.
By removing themselves from the territorial confines of England into the ecclesiastically ambiguous colonies, Mather’s ancestors could claim to be creating their own establishment. Making sense of their relationship to the Church of England became especially important for New England as the monarchy turned its eyes toward reforming colonial management.193

In contrast to this rhetorical dance, Friends were explicitly separatist, finding it difficult to grant any legitimacy to a community not founded on the Inner Light. For Keith, the immediacy of the Inner Light meant that the visible and invisible churches were essentially one and the same. They “do not differ in Substance or Nature, but in some circumstances of Time, Places, and outward Actions.” Keith granted “that a Company, or Assembly of truly holy Men and Women, meeting together at certain Times and Places, … And teaching, and instructing, and edifying one another, every one using his spiritual gifts of Ministration, … To the Edification of the whole, may be called a visible Church,” but this description stood in contrast to an institution having specific divine ordination and continuity (such as through episcopal, papal or apostolic succession). The essential nature of the church was the indwelling presence of the Spirit, because “a Church or assembly of People, only professing the true Religion” without the Spirit of Christ “cannot be truly and justly accounted a true Church of Christ.” As during the Aberdeen debate, Keith used the metaphor of the Church as Christ’s body, drawing

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193 Keith, *The Presbyterian and Independent Visible Churches*, p. 165. The Congregationalist concern with regenerate membership (those who could make a convincing statement of their elect state) created further problems. Cotton Mather, in his defense of the migrating generation, explained that they were merely fleeing the persecutions of Archbishop Laud. This interpretation ignored the development of Congregational ecclesiology previous to his elevation, but Mather could draw upon the biographies of ministers such as John Cotton, Thomas Shepard and Jon Davenport, who managed to remain in the Church of England until silenced by Laud. See Robert Middlekauff, *The Mathers: Three Generations of Puritan Intellectuals 1596-1728* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 211-212.
the specifically Quaker conclusions: “that which maketh both the whole Body, and every Member thereof living, is Christ Jesus the Life, living and indwelling in every Member of the true Church.” This common experience of the indwelling presence of Christ was the glue of the meeting, directing all the activities of its participants, unmediated by sermon, sacraments or covenant. For Keith therefore, while the church was defined according to the spiritual state of its members, that spiritual state was itself a function of their incorporation within the mystical body of Christ and their immediate experience of Christ within. Even at its most “individualist” Quaker identity was essentially corporate. As Hugh Barbour argues, the communal experience of the Light “underlay the deepest of all Quaker experiences, the unspoken awareness of the unification of the group by the Spirit in the silent Meeting, where the whole body, and not primarily its individuals, received power, wisdom, and joy from the Light.” This affective spiritual bond was the basis of a powerful group identity that protected the unity of the Society through trying times of internal division and outward persecution, but, as will be seen, the claim to being the legitimate voice of that group could easily promote and harden factionalism once a breach in community etiquette occurred.194

James II’s Declarations of Indulgence and especially the 1689 Act of Toleration, presented new concerns for Dissenters, including Keith. His remarks reveal how interdenominational relations and the catholic church of all Christian believers presented

194 Keith, The Presbyterian and Independent Visible Churches, p. 166-167; Hugh Barbour, The Quakers in Puritan England, p.123. It is on this point that I would level my greatest disagreement with John Smolenski. His conception of the Inner Light as unmediated contact with God or “direct revelation” misunderstands its nature as a literal presence of Christ within believers. The result is that Smolenski sees a meeting that served as a purely disciplinary agent, producing a self-regulating “interior self.” “Meeting discipline simultaneously constructed personhood through its evocation of particular performances and presentations of self and, through ritual reincorporations of penitent Friends into the collective whole, constructed the Quaker community itself.” Smolenski’s disciplined individualism ignores the self-annihilating quality of the Inner Light. Smolenski, “Friends and Strangers”, p. 31-49, quotation on p. 48.
a special problem for the Society of Friends. According to Keith, if true doctrine defined a church, then that necessarily unchurched Presbyterians and Congregationalists since (according to Keith) he had already proven them to hold false doctrine. Anglicans and Calvinist Dissenters could each assert the scriptural accuracy of their own ecclesiology and liturgy, and then blame innate human sinfulness for the fact that members of other denominations did not agree without impugning the latter’s spiritual integrity. Because the Society of Friends preached perfectionism, it had trouble explaining how genuine Christians could exist within churches whose practices Friends abhorred. Added to this was their strident anti-clericalism, which drew their public Friends out of any sort of common ministerial community. Although the Society of Friends, at its core, still held other denominations to be false churches, the need to achieve and then preserve toleration of their own sect created a reverse pressure to be more accommodating in their rhetoric. Keith, therefore, continuously reiterated that while “I have affirmed and sufficiently demonstrated, that your Visible Churches are no true Churches of Christ, yet I do not say nor conclude, that none of you belong to Christs true Church in any true regard.” Instead, he granted in charity that there was a “Remnant” in their churches that “have the least measure true Hungerings and Thirstings after Righteousness, and a great inward longing and panting of Heart and Soul after the Lord Jesus Christ.” In an inversion of his earlier focus on right speech, he explained some may have “a right sence [sic] and feeling of things, whereof they have not a right Elocution, Utterance and form of Speech,” just as sensory experience remained constant despite different names for the objects producing the sensation. Keith denied that he believed that Congregational and Presbyterian churches were more corrupt than the Church of Rome. “I have always judged, and do still
judge,” he claimed, “that all these Churches called Protestant Churches, whether Episcopal, Presbyterian, Independent or Baptists, in many, yea very many things, hold better Doctrine than the Church of Rome, … And I have Charity, that some may belong to Christ, as his Members, among them all, even the Church of Rome not excepted.” “Yet all this,” Keith reaffirmed, “will not prove that any of them all is the true visible Church” restored to its original Apostolic state.\footnote{Keith, \textit{The Presbyterian and Independent Visible Churches}, unpaginated epistle; \textit{idem}, \textit{The Pretended Antidote Proved Poyson}, p. 200. See also George Keith, \textit{A Serious Appeal to All the More Sober, Impartial \& Judicious People in New-England to Whose Hands This May Come} (Philadelphia: William Bradford, 1692), p. 2. Rosemary Moore discusses this problem, and points to an attempt by Society apologists to move away from this extreme position after the Restoration. It remained, however, a problem. Jonathan Chu has argued that New England developed a grudging toleration towards “domestic” Quakers (as opposed to missionaries from outside the colony) as a result of the Puritan rejection of church courts and the resulting need to prosecute Quakers for civil crimes, Carla Pestana is skeptical about an acceptance of Quakers, and argues anti-Quakerism was popular, as well as elite driven. Rosemary Moore, \textit{The Light in Their Consciences, Early Quakers in Britain 1646-1666} (University Park: Pennsylvania University Press, 2000), p. 217-221; Jonathan M. Chu, \textit{Neighbors, Friends, or Madmen, the Puritan Adjustment to Quakerism in Seventeenth-Century Massachusetts Bay} (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1985); Carla Gardana Pestana, \textit{Quakers and Baptists in Colonial Massachusetts} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).}

Mather claimed that Quakerism’s conflation of the visible and invisible churches “gives the encomiums proper to the one, unadvisedly to the other,” [i.e. that the Quaker meetings, like the invisible church, consisted of all saved Christians], and, in the process, pronounced New England’s churches to be false. Keith, in response, attacked Mather for claiming that because Keith disapproved of certain of his opponents’ doctrines, “that therefore we unchurch or oppose all Christendom; for we do no more unchurch them than your selves do, who think, Ye, (viz. the Presbyterians and Independents) are the only true visible Church.” Mather had abused Keith “as if I were not only Apostate and Heretick, but grown beyond Admonition,” but how (Keith asked) could Mather give such a judgment, “seeing ye pretend not to a spirit of discerning or a divine Revelation in the case?” Keith’s defense appealed, in a muddled form, to traditional arguments for a
catholic church: if Mather could not discern inner spiritual states, as he claimed, then he must rely on charitable assessments of others’ outward Christian-ness. Even if Keith were in error, it was not in “the fundamentals of the Christian Religion” and therefore it was uncharitable for Mather to deny Friends were “true Christians.” The “more sober of Presbyterians” grant the Christianity “of many, not only of Baptists, and the Episcopals, but of Arminians and Lutherans, yea, and of many in the Church of Rome also.” Yet Mather was trying to carve out a special category for Quakers, “as if the Quakers were not Protestants.” This entirely sincere, if not entirely coherent, attempt to maintain the radical truth claims of Quakerism within the rubric of English Protestant history (which sought to promote a rough religious unity) both harkened back to Keith’s earliest tracts and foreshadowed the argument by both Keith and his opponents during the schism over the Christianity of Quakerism.  

This question of true churches remained within a specifically Christian framework, but easily bled over into that of the universality of the Inner Light. Mather, in one of his final responses to Keith proclaimed “it hath been fully proved that Quakerism is Paganism.” Cotton Mather earlier asked: “how any could be saved by Christ, who never heard of him? and how shall they hear without the Gospel?” He rejected Keith’s comparison to the federal holiness granted to children baptized into the covenant, because

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the former possessed a scriptural basis. “That there are any Elect among Pagans,” however, Mather explained, “who never had the gospel offered them, is not only without Scripture-Warrant, but against its Testimony, as hath been agen and agen made evident.” Later he was even more fulsome on the point:

So then the Quaker holds, that the Indians and Negroes, and the Pagans beyond China, have Sufficiency of Grace and means of Salvation. He therefore holds according to what Keith adds upon it, That the Light that is in every man, is sufficient to enable him to do any work acceptable to God. He must hold that there is not in the darkest corner of the Indies, a man that is Unto every Good work reprobate.

Mather’s vision of non-Christian peoples is strikingly provincial (“Indians and Negroes”), with only a nod to some place “beyond China.” The concern with stripping true religion of the necessity of Gospel knowledge remained.197

Keith remained largely uninterested in Indians. On one of the rare occasions he referred to native people, Keith denounced New England Congregationalists for their lack of success in converting native peoples, despite their belief in their obligation to preach throughout the earth. “And though some of you in New-England,” he declared, “have made some show of Preaching to the Indians, … and got great sums of Money out of Old England on that account, Alas! to what have ye converted them?” Because Calvinists rejected the Inner Light, “they are generally nothing better than when they were called Heathens, but are for most part rather worse.” In this passage, missionizing to Indians served purely as a vehicle for Keith’s anticlericalism, with no effort made here or

197 Mather, Little Flocks Guarded against Grievous Wolves, unpaginated introduction & p. 19; idem, Principles of the Protestant Religion p. 91-93. Francis Makemie raised the same issue. An Answer to George Keith’s Libel. Against a Catechism Published, by Francis Makemie (Boston: Benjamin Harris, 1694), p. 32.
elsewhere to incorporate them into his understanding of the Inner Light. Exploiting the connection between civilization and Christianity may have been Mather’s intention all along (how could the Inner Light be sufficient to true religion and yet these people remain savage?).

Keith sought to deflect these charges by accusing his opponents of socinianism because they denied the spiritual presence of Christ (and thus Christ’s divinity). But he did not stop there. Keith himself brought up the issue of universalism in his first tract. “The honest and faithful Gentiles,” who could not have heard God’s word, he argued, could still turn inward to Christ within. This was possible through immediate revelation, “for without all outward preaching of men, the mystery of Christ crucified can be revealed, and preached inwardly to men by the Spirit of God, and by the same Spirit, Faith can be wrought in them by that inward hearing, as these men confess.” One came to God in stages. While knowledge of death and resurrection was necessary to the perfection of salvation, it was not necessary to its initial stages. Keith marshaled More’s Cabbalistic interpretation of the seven days of creation on this point, using More’s eminence to

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198 Keith, The Presbyterian and Independent Visible Churches, p. 178. Keith’s anticlericalism remained strong throughout his attack on Mather and other New England ministers, even leading him at one point, in responding to Mather’s suggestion that he had committed the “unpardonable sin” by attacking the ministers, Keith even cited “the English Hobbs, who is no good Philosopher, and a worse Divine,” yet who had a similarly dim view of clergy. George Keith, A Serious Appeal to All the More Sober, Impartial & Judicious People in New-England to Whose Hands This May Come, p. 20. John Smolenski discusses Quaker attitudes toward Indians and argues, in contrast, that “These Quaker authors saw Indian humility, simplicity, frugality, and pacifism as not merely analogous but homologous to these same behaviors in Friends,” and that “Rather than appearing as a savage antecedent to European civility, then, Pennsylvania’s natives seemed to their ethnographers the embodiment of the primitive state these Quakers hoped to achieve.” While the Friends he cites, Daniel Francis Pastorius, Thomas Budd and William Penn, clearly demonstrated greater interest in Indians than Keith (not surprising, since they were writing promotional literature), and the Inner Light is implicit in their descriptions of Indians, one is still struck by how short they stop from referencing the more radical claims of the Inner Light (although, again, these were not apologetics). Penn’s description of Indians as “under a dark Night in things relating to Religion” beyond believing in god and immortality “without the help of Metaphysics” itself draws more from ideas of a natural religion and anti-clericalism. Penn, Letter to the Free Society of Traders, quoted in Smolenski, “Friends and Strangers”, p. 153-154.
challenge Mather’s learning. Honest Gentiles, who acted according to the Inner Light but never knew of Christ outwardly crucified, might, nonetheless, become perfect upon death. The preparatory stage “is called by some, not so unfitly perhaps, Deism, or Theism, i.e. a Religious Worship and Service to God, as Creator.” Backing away from the radicalism of this claim, however, Keith explained that at “one time or another, within the day of Visitation, the Gospel is preached unto them, and the Gospel of Grace,” (discovering in some measure, Jesus Christ, &c.) is extended unto them.” Such an offer was necessary if any person was to be finally condemned to perdition. This suggests the Revolution of Souls, as Keith was reciting the argument from Two Hundred Queries, without finally stating the conclusion. Keith’s statement also repeated a central concern of the book: that it was unjust for God to damn eternally those who had not had a fair chance of converting. At other points, Keith asked concerning “honest Gentiles,” why “what was lacking of their knowledge of Christ here,” might not “be given them perfectly in the World to come, after Death, they having received some beginning of the knowledge of Christ here, though but obscurely and weakly,” as the Jews received through the veil of Mosaic ceremonies. While reiterating the same position as the Catechism, because these works were apologetics Keith dwelt on the issue of those without access to scripture or preaching at greater length. To fellow Friends Keith emphasized the specificities of Christian belief, yet while defending the Inner Light he was still willing to take a more radical position. As will be seen it would be the problem rather than the solution that would have a lasting influence.199

199 Keith, The Presbyterian and Independent Visible Churches, p. 105, 110, 113-114; idem, A Serious Appeal, p. 39-40; idem, The Pretended Antidote Proved Poyson, p. 107, 116; see also idem, A Refutation of Three Opposers of the Truth (Philadelphia: William Bradford, 1690), p. 40, 44. Keith referred to the Rhode Island Baptist elder Pardon Tillinghast, and the English Particular Baptist Benjamin Keach as socinians in
On another occasion, Keith dismissed the question of how Gentiles could receive precise knowledge of Christ, probably because it would have meant discussing the Revolution of Souls. He simply stated the question “is not my present business to determine,” while affirming that God would not abandon those in whom he had begun the work of salvation. Underlying part of Keith’s and Mather’s disagreement were competing notions of assurance that reveal an important difference between Calvinist covenantal theology and Quakerism. Mather, for much of his life, was desperate for proof of his own personal saved state, seeking comfort in the assurance that God would not abandon his elect, despite their failings. Keith, due to his perfectionist beliefs, attacked the whole notion that one could not fall from Grace once received, yet at the same time he proposed a universalist notion of assurance in God’s refusal to abandon anyone without at least the possibility of salvation.200

Yet Keith was also still willing to turn to an expanded concept of natural religion mixed with typology similar to the *prisca theologia*. In attacking the English Baptist Benjamin Keach, he explained “the Light that is generally in men, the Heathens not excepted, hath in it some small degree of a discovery or revelation of the New Testament or Covenant.” This took the form, first, of recognizing that God was merciful. Secondly, “it seemeth to have been a divine Instinct put into men generally, before Christ that great Sacrifice came, to sacrifice unto God.” That such people were often sacrificing to “Devils” did not matter, “for the Jews too oft did also sacrifice unto Devils.” Even beyond this, “the whole outward Creation had the like use, in some sort, to the Gentiles,

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to be Vails and Types, to preach Christ unto them, though not so fully and distinctly, as these delivered by God to the Prophet of Israel.” Keith went further at one point suggesting that the whole creation may be a type (an Old Testament analogue to events and people in the Gospels, such as Noah’s salvation of humanity and Christ’s), through which Christ was preached. As scriptural types were sufficient to the Hebrews, so “the same may be said as concerning the Gentiles, that in some sort, sufficient (as in respect of outward helps and means) for that day and time, until more knowledge should come into the World, was the Book of the outward Creation, together with that knowledge they had, that they were to sacrifice unto God, as is above said.” God granted a light to Gentiles whereby they could read creation for these types. Studying Creation for signs of the Creator had a long tradition, but Sir Robert Boyle (whom Keith read) in particular had connected it to the New Science. Despite these attempts to address the question of universality, Keith was unquestionably coming to focus ever more on doctrinal knowledge as the mark of Christian identity. This concern with the Christianity of Quakerism, and its resulting potential for unchurching its opponents given the close fusion of the various forms of identity, were to be the dominant themes in the schism. 201

Cotton Mather was less impressed with the possibilities of Keith’s natural religion. Also influenced by Boyle, he did believe that nature could reveal marks of the

201 Keith, _A Refutation of Three Opposers of the Truth_, p. 33 & 34; idem, _The Pretended Antidote Proved Poyson_, p. 117-118, & 121. George Keith referred to Boyle (along with Jean D’Espagnet) as among “some late Writers ... greatly to be commended, who have attempted to correct and reform the vulgar errors in that called Philosophy” in _The Arraignment of Worldly Philosophy, or, the False Wisdom_: (London: R. Levis, 1694), p. 24. Boyle, at the same time, sought to avoid the possible de-Christianizing effects of natural religion, through a skeptical epistemology that limited the scope and power of human reason. See R. Hooykaas, _Robert Boyle, A Study of Science and Christian Belief_ (New York: University Press of America, Inc., 1997); Jan W. Wojcik, _Robert Boyle and the Limits of Reason_ (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997). Hooykaas argues that Boyle’s theology, with its limited role for grace, naturally slides toward deism, while Wojcik argues that such interpretations blur divine and human intelligibility and ignore Boyle’s unoriginality.
Creator, but this stopped considerably short of revealing anything of the mysteries of the Christian faith (as Boyle himself believed). Mather also agreed that there was a light within all people that was the remnant of the law of nature written into the human heart, but it was not Christ and was insufficient to effect salvation since it could not teach of Christ. Later in the 1690s, while pushing his own universal Christian piety, Mather pointed to the veiled Christology of both Plato and Muhammed. Keith’s conception of Gospel knowledge arriving with death, however, seemed to Mather to suggest the Roman Catholic doctrine of Purgatory. It is in contrast to Mather, therefore, that Keith’s attempt to maintain the essential principle of the Inner Light, while defending the necessity of Christian belief becomes clear.\(^{202}\)

Finally, Keith again articulated his belief in the inseparability of the inward and outward manifestations of Christ, and he did so in terms of a middle path between most other Christian denominations and the Ranters. As in his letter to Fox and Whitehead, Keith again assumed it was non-Quakers who would accuse him of preaching “two Christs,” not fellow Friends. Mather briefly responded, declaring “We understand not the meaning of his Rant … about a Christ divided; … we believe that there is but One Christ.” Keith accused Mather of “perverting” his words, “as if I did divide Christ, or hold two Christs.” Friends in Pennsylvania (especially the leadership, who would have read these books in order to approve them) would accuse Keith of this heresy a year later. The charge may have been an obvious one, and reached by both parties independently.

since it seems unlikely Keith’s Philadelphia opponents would pilfer lines of attack from a New England Congregationalist. 203

Internal Reforms

As in the case of the British debates of the 1670s, Keith’s exchange with Mather often was as contentious in form as content. Mather repeatedly accused Keith of dishonesty, suggesting at one point that Keith “seldome spake Truth without a design.” On other occasions, Cotton Mather suggested that Keith was either misrepresenting Quaker doctrine, or was himself unrepresentative of it. The apostate Friend Christian Lodowick pushed this argument even further, declaring from Rhode Island while the schism was in progress that the Society was divided between Foxian and semi-Foxian Quakers, along lines of education, ethnicity and Christian orthodoxy. William Penn, he declared, had concealed the fact of his own movement from the one party to the other. Francis Makemie, a Presbyterian living in Maryland whom Keith debated during a missionary tour, raised a similar complaint, and demanded, like Mather, that Keith commit his arguments to writing rather than meeting publicly. Makemie complained that the Quakers’ “Principles were unknown, because never unanimously agreed upon, nor fairly Published to the World.” He also claimed that a verbal debate would become too

203 Keith, Presbyterian and Independent Visible Churches, p. 132-133; Mather, Principles of the Protestant Religion Maintained, p. 108; Keith, Pretended Antidote Proved Poyson, p. 155. Melvin Endy has argued that the body/spirit dualism (with the attendant need to go beyond outward symbols to the inner spirit) of the first generation of Friends led them to “demythologize and dehistoricize the gospel of Jesus Christ,” with early writers rarely mentioning him. They did not in fact reject the existence of an historical Christ, but they never managed to assimilate these two strains in a coherent fashion. Melvin B. Endy, Jr. William Penn and Early Quakerism (?: Princeton University Press, 1973), p. 81, 185.
technical to edify a crowd. A written debate would avoid heated language, spread the content more widely, and make it impossible for either side to later deny their statements. Makemie was interested in debating Quakerism, not Keith, which required the latter to be an authorized voice and maintain the stability of a written confession.204

Keith’s need to assert his authority as a mouthpiece of the Society intertwined with the reforms Keith began introducing in a desire to draw clear denominational boundaries. The Philadelphia Yearly Meeting ordered its 1686 general epistle published by Bradford, explaining in its title that it was put forth “That all may know, we own none to be of our Fellowship, or to be reckoned or numbred with us” except those who maintained a “holy Conversation.” This statement referred to moral behavior, for which (as Clare Martin argues) there was much greater precedence of the meeting regulating than doctrine. While traveling in Rhode Island during the summer of 1691, however, Lodowick amplified Mather’s criticisms of Keith and the Society and likewise refused to meet Keith in open debate. Keith and several New England Friends then issued a statement, subsequently known as the “Rhode Island Sheet,” that sought, through citations from Friends’ books, to clear them of rejecting basic Christian doctrines. While still giving the benefit of the doubt to his coreligionists, Keith was beginning to feel the importance of the Society publicly declaring its own doctrinal orthodoxy and thereby distancing itself from the chaos of the de-institutionalized American wilderness. 205

204 Mather, The Principles of the Protestant Religion Maintained, p. 91; Christian Lodowick, A Letter from the Most Ingenious Mr. Lodowick Rhode Island Feb 1, 1691 (Boston: n.p., 1692); Francis Makemie, An Answer to George Keith's Libel. Against a Catechism Published, by Francis Makemie (Boston: Benjamin Harris, 1694), unpag. epistle. John Smolenski has discussed the belief that text would spread further than oral communication. As will be seen, however, particularly in the London component of the schism, the relationship between text and oral performance would become a major source of debate. Smolenski, “Friends and Strangers”, p. 169-171.
205 A General Epistle Given Forth by the People of God, Called, Quakers (Philadelphia: William Bradford, 1686); Christian Lodowick, A Letter From the Most Ingenious Mr. Lodowick. The Rhode Island Sheet’s
It was in keeping with this project that, in March of 1690, Keith presented a reform proposal to the Philadelphia Meeting of Ministers, entitled “the Gospel Order Improved.” No copies survive, but it appears to have been roughly similar to proposals later issued by Keith in his separate congregation. At heart it was a sectarian document, designed to enforce greater self-definition within the Society of Friends. What is remarkable is its general avoidance of doctrinal specificities. Instead, it blandly required of all new members of the meeting “some open declaration of their faith in the most necessary and weighty Doctrines of Christian Religion, accompanied with a Godly sober and righteous Conversation and practice.” Keith appears to have taken these doctrines for granted, as “the most comon and generally received principles of Christian doctrine by friends.” The approval of his catechism and his tracts against Mather gave him little reason to doubt their acceptance among leading Friends. The practice also was in keeping with the centralizing tendencies of the Society in England. While requiring a profession of faith from members at first seems to run against the individual profession of the Spirit, the meeting system of the Friends had already done much to tame its potentially anarchic quality.206

Indeed the greater danger to Keith’s eyes was of Friends identifying themselves mainly through their peculiarities of speech and social behavior rather than living and walking in the Light. Hugh Barbour has noted that Quaker behavior was increasingly

206 Copies of this proposal exist in the Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College, and in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. A transcription is published in KC p. 72-73. It might be argued that the document’s sectarianism was the product of later revision for Keith’s separate congregation. While the schism seems to have affected some of the language, Keith had no apparent desire to separate in any permanent fashion until he was disowned in London. Once the breach in Philadelphia opened up, moreover, Keith had little need to test his members, their willingness to follow him provided that.

published title was Christian Faith of the People of God, Called in Scorn, Quakers in Rhode Island ... Vindicated (Philadelphia: Bradford, 1692), both it and the Gospel Order and Discipline are printed in J. William Frost’s document collection KC.
losing its polemical edge, and becoming an outward badge of Quaker identity. “Thee” and “thou,” for example, had simply become anachronisms, unused except by Friends. Keith sought to reassert a more fundamental divide between Friends and the world, and his assumption that Friends were orthodox underlay this conception of the Quaker community as a “separate people.” Although the Reformation and the creation of national churches had weakened the concept of a catholic church, Protestants of all stripes retained the idea that schism (separation from a true church) constituted a grave sin. Quakers were protected, in their own eyes, from the charge of schism not only because of the doctrinal errors of non-Quakers, but because of the latter’s admittance of people of “vicious life and evil conversation,” into church membership. So while Keith, as in his debate with Cotton Mather, conceded that non-Quaker churches might contain genuine Christians, they were nonetheless a “mixed multitude,” with which Friends could not join. “Ought we not therefore” Keith asked, “do our utmost diligence to be a separate people still, … And should not the Church of Christ be as a Garden enclosed where no weeds nor tares should grow.” Just as there should be an outwardly visible distinction between the church and the world, there should be a similar distinction “inwardly in the sight of God, and the sight of those who see with an inward and Spirituall Eye and Discerning.” As much as Keith was concerned to keep out the vicious and the heterodox, however, his proposals also sought to keep Friends in. Keith complained that “some having professed Truth in part & departed … have said they were never in the same profession with Friends.” The children of some Friends likewise “have gone to the priests and to the vain customs and ways of the World denied by Friends,” claiming “they were never convinced of the Truth of Friends religion but did only some outward things or
come to Meeting to please their parents.” The solution, according to Keith was for the monthly meetings to record Friends’ conversions, as “witness and evidence of the faithfulness” of those who remained in the Society and the “unfaithfulness” of those who left “which will be the greater aggravation and lay the greater load upon them” and thus aid in reclaiming them.207

As this last point suggests, the Light within only took on its full meaning within a communal context. While Keith refused to concede infallibility to any person’s experience of the spirit, or even to the meeting in all matters, when “faithfull Friends assembled together in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and feeling his presence in the midst of them” they may “expect his infallible guiding & direction & an infallible discerning in such particular things and cases which are altogether needful for the good and preservation of the Church and for the keeping and establishing good order among them.” While Calvinists sought to reign in doctrinal peculiarities by means of Biblicism and an authoritative ministry, the Quakers achieved this end through their meeting system. But maintaining the cohesion of a meeting based upon the communal expression of a subjective experience required a careful tension between orthodoxy and charity. While the Quaker belief in immediate revelation in theory proscribed dogma, in practice their ability to survive (both internal atomization and external persecution) lay precisely in their adoption of methods to police and control the individual profession of the Spirit.

207 KC, p. 26-27, 29; Hugh Barbour, *Quakers in Puritan England*. See also Ezra Kempton Maxfield, “Quaker ‘thee’ and Its History” *American Speech* 1 (1926): p. 638-644. Clare Martin has pointed to the perceived danger of people becoming Friends in order to gain access to the economic and political power the Society enjoyed in the colony. Keith himself complained of those “who are not realy [sic] friends of Truth” but have professed it for “some worldly interest or advantage.” KC, p. 25. While this may have been the case, it is equally possible that this statement reflected Keith’s later attack upon Quaker magistrates for failing to abide by the peace testimony. “Controversy and Division in Post-Restoration Quakerism”, p. 201. John Smolenski has emphasized the role of disciplining behavior and the “ritual reincorporations of penitent Friends” in the process of “constructing Quaker personhood. “Friends and Strangers”, p. 48-49.
Because God's Truth was singular, the meeting, by bringing together multiple inward testimonies, could judge an individual's testimony to be “out of the light,” manifested in the practice of unanimous decision-making. This could either successfully bring to bear enough communal pressure to produce a recantation, or allow the Society to disown the offending views and their professor. Keith sought to expand this in the *Gospel Order and Discipline* by encouraging everyone to attend business meetings.²⁰⁸

This focus upon meeting structure, which took practical form in Keith’s call for a profession of faith and a testimony of good behavior for membership, along with the election of deacons and elders, was not new. In response to the Wilkinson-Story conflict Robert Barclay had published the *Anarchy of the Ranters*, in which he argued for the necessity of church organization and officers (though not a salaried ministry). Barclay defined a church as “no other than a Meeting or Gathering of certain People. . . together in the Belief of the same Principles, Doctrines and Points of Faith, whereby as a Body they become distinguished from others, and have a certain Relation among themselves.” This included the need to maintain oversight over the church’s members, “to prevent and remove all Occasions that may tend to break this their conjunct Interest, hinder Propagation of it, or bring Infamy, Contempt, or Contumely upon it,” giving their enemies “just Occasion against them, to decry and defame them.” His definition, therefore, gave organizational identity to the Society, whereby “Escapes, Faults and Errors may by our Adversaries justly be imputed to us” and also corrected. Nor was this principle limited to behavior, “if any one or more so engaged with us should arise to teach any other Doctrine or Doctrines contrary to these which were the Ground of our

²⁰⁸ *KC*, p. 31.
being One, who can deny but the Body hath Power in such Case to declare, this is not according to the Truth we profess, and therefore we pronounce such and such Doctrines to be wrong, with which we cannot have Unity.” As always, the context is important. Barclay was defending the meeting system against internal opponents during a schism, and thus defended a narrower notion of unity that included doctrine, while Keith was attempting to wall off the American Society from other communities and to attack the spiritual success of congregational churches by focusing on behavior. But neither were Keith’s proposals an entirely alien suggestion, or their rejection a foregone conclusion.209

The Meeting of Ministers deferred Keith’s proposal to the next meeting that November, and then deferred it again to the Yearly Meeting in September with Keith's consent. Yet the meeting was not necessarily avoiding the question, as is often assumed. The first deferral was to provide copies to the other ministers and the time to read them. Keith then agreed to defer it to the Yearly Meeting as he left on a missionary tour to Maryland and Virginia, not returning until January of 1691, when the Yearly Meeting met and the issue disappeared. The first intimation of dissension within the Society occurred in an epistle sent to London in May.210 London’s response made no reference to the Gospel Order, but instead expressed concern that “some differences and dissatisfactions among some of you in those parts about matters of faith and doctrine.”

Keith's proposal appeared little in his later complaints (or the accusations of his enemies),

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210 This letter has not survived, it is mentioned in an epistle from London, London Yearly Meeting to Thomas Lloyd et al. September 28, 1691, A Collection of Epistles from George Fox and Others, C5.1, a misdated nineteenth century transcription is in Epistles, PKC.
but the community it prescribed and the unspecific nature of the orthodoxy it suggested are the starting point in the evolution of issues over the course of the schism.  

**The Opening Theological Salvos**

The actual beginning of the schism is somewhat muddy. Two sets of accusations were in the air: Keith’s belief in reincarnation and his preaching two (an inward spiritual and an outward physical/historical) Christs, with a corollary in the resurrection of physical bodies. Keith himself wrote: “the Belief of Christ’s being in Heaven now in his glorified Nature of Man, both of Soul & Body, hath such a necessary connexion with the Belief of his Coming and Appearance without us to judge the Quick and the Dead” that rejection of either necessitates that of both. The issues, in fact, formed the parts of a whole. Roughly around the summer of 1691, a friend of Keith named John Delaval revealed private conversations with him concerning the Revolution of Souls. Keith published a tract defending himself against both advocating the concept in any more than a speculative sense and authoring *Two Hundred Queries*. Keith explained that, while he

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211 For Clare Martin, the failure to adopt the Gospel Order Improved “determined the route which events would follow” by prompting Keith to interrogate the orthodoxy of individual Friends. Martin, “Controversy and Division in Post-Restoration Quakerism”, p. 201. She makes this argument on the basis of an epistle sent from the Lloydian Yearly Meeting to London in June, 1692; yet, as we shall see, by this point the Lloydian faction was extremely concerned to defend its actions against Keith to the London leadership. Samuel Jennings pointed to a similar change in Keith as a result of his encounter with Lodowick. Two years later, in the midst of the schism, Keith’s opponents claimed that Keith had long been opposed to the Society in Pennsylvania, and as proof cited the *Gospel Order Improved*, the rejection of which had led him to break with the Society. Keith responded by saying that many Friends had supported tightening the discipline of the meeting, and that he had not "pressed" his proposal upon anyone. Samuel Jennings, *The State of the Case, Briefly But Impartially Given Betwixt the People Called Quakers, Pensilvania, &c. in America, Who Remain in Unity; and George Keith* (London: Tace Sowle, 1694), p. 13; George Keith, *The Plea of the Innocent Against the False Judgment of the Guilty* ([Philadelphia: William Bradford, 1692]), p. 15.
had edited the work and contemplated the idea of reincarnation, he did not hold it as a
matter of faith. “Nor have I ever,” he declared, “had any Controversie, Strife or
Contention with any man about the Revolutions, so called, and I have been very shy and
backward, either to lend or recommend the said Book.” However shy he actually was in
expressing those opinions, Keith was clearly embarrassed and attempted to bury the issue
(as he had suppressed his manuscript earlier) while defending himself against all the
public components of the accusation. Keith condemned the “Breach of all common
Civility or Morality among men, to make Publick a thing secretly spoken (if the thing had
been spoken by me, as he affirmeth) that he thought might tend to my Prejudice.” Keith’s
suppression of his tract on the Revolutions at Fox’s and Whitehead’s request while in
England did not bar him, to his eyes, from discussing it privately. Delaval’s breach of
etiquette itself seems to have been similarly motivated by fears of Keith making his views
known, as Delaval claimed that Keith had said “I believed I should be moved of God to
preach the Doctrine of the Revolutions.” This clash of public and private, of the
reputation of the Society and personal defamation, thus intermingled the dangers of
religious heterodoxy with the honor of the participants.212

212 George Keith, A Testimony Against That False & Absurd Opinion Which Some Hold. ([Philadelphia:
William Bradford, 1692?]), p. 11; idem, Truth and Innocency Defended Against Calumny and Defamation
([Philadelphia: William Bradford, 1691?]), p. 2, 3. John Smolenski interprets this tract as far more
belligerent in tone, focusing on Keith’s complaint about having his private conversations revealed, and
seeing it as evidence that “Keith was an experienced controversialist who showed little hesitation in print to
assail and discredit his opponents on theological and even personal grounds.” Smolenski, “Friends and
Strangers”, p. 176-177. Yet this tract is unmentioned in later complaints about Keith’s publications,
probably because of his refusal to name names or to discuss the Society as a whole in the work. That others
shared Keith’s interest in the Revolutions is suggested by an unsigned, undated paper written some time
after October 30, 1692 describing the Keithian yearly meeting, in which some “talked how many times
peoples soules should come into this world in others bodys and that the worst of men should not suffer to
all eternity but for ages of ages.” “A Letter” Chesterfield Monthly Meeting of Friends (Hicksite: 1827-
Doctrinally, what bothered Keith was not his fellow Friends’ refusal to accept reincarnation, but the charge being leveled at him that his requiring faith in the historical Christ necessitated a belief in reincarnation, “that all pious Gentiles, dying without all hearing Christ crucified and raised again preached to them, must of necessity live again in a mortal Body, in order to hear that Doctrine outwardly preached to them, or then be damned.” In reply, Keith insisted that the Quaker belief in the offer of saving Grace to all people did not eliminate the necessity of faith in an historical Christ. “If men may be compleat and perfect Christians without this Faith,” Keith argued, “. . . Then doth not this wholly render Pious Paganism or Gentilism to be perfect Christianity, and perfect Christianity to be nothing else than pious Gentilism?” Keith further asked whether “ever any had the true Knowledge and Faith of Christ within them, but who had the true Knowledge or Faith of Christ without them?” Thus the accusation that Keith was preaching two Christs came directly out of the accusations relating to reincarnation. The connection between the Revolutions and his Christology, however, does not mean he was preaching the doctrine openly. The Revolutions were an epistemological not a pastoral tool; it was irrelevant to one’s personal salvation whether he or she thought they would be reincarnated. That did not make Keith’s use of the conclusions as to the necessity of Gospel knowledge he had reached as a result of this doctrine, while concealing the doctrine itself, unproblematic. He was preaching, however, to those with access to Christian knowledge, their rejection of its necessity made him suspicious of their orthodoxy.213

213 Keith, Truth and Innocency Defended, p. 7. Levy claims that Keith really believed that his Christology required the Revolution of Souls, but to prove this Levy misquotes Keith as endorsing a position he was ascribing to his opponents. The furthest Keith was willing to go was to say that (if it came to a choice) it would be better to believe in reincarnation than to reject (as his opponents did) the necessity of faith in an
Yet having pulled himself this far towards a traditional notion of Christian doctrine, Keith then included another section in this tract, in which he defined exactly what he meant by the necessary belief in an outward Christ. He first stripped the doctrine of all the specifics of the Gospel story (ex. geographical details such as Christ’s places of birth and death) and focused upon the image from Genesis of Christ as “the Seed of the Woman that should bruise the Head of the Serpent.” The choice was not arbitrary.

Focusing upon the promise of Christ offered to the first man, Adam, returned Keith to the familiar territory of the *prisca theologia*, since “though this Promise was not committed to writing (so far as we know) until Moses, who was the first Pen-man of holy scripture, yet it was, without all doubt, faithfully delivered and preached by Adam to his Children, and by the faithful of their Children, ... even unto Noah.” Nor was this promise from thenceforward limited to the Israelites, since “before Christ came in the flesh, not only the People of Israel offered Sacrifices, and practiced Circumcision, all which were Typical of Christ in the Flesh, but many other Nations that learned it of them.” As a result, “it may be very probably defended by a rational Hypothesis, ... that no Nation under Heaven was so left destitute of all outward means,” but that through a combination of cultural transfusion, universal typology, and observation of Creation, Christ as God

As I have argued, while I agree with Levy that Keith personally held this doctrine, I am not convinced he believed *believing* in the Revolutions was necessary. Barry Levy, *Quakers and the American Family* p. 164-165. In 1695, Keith argued against the notion that the necessity of faith in the historical Christ required the doctrine of the Revolutions by declaring “on the Hypothesis, that if such a sequel of the Major, or first Proposition, were admitted, it were better to admit, or allow that Hypothesis concerning the Revolution of the Souls of some Gentiles dying in pure Gentilisme [or Deism] who have, in any manner, lived Piously towards God and Soberly towards Men; suppose it be not true, then to assert that such Dying in a pure Gentilisme, are [wholly and finally] deprived of Eternal Life.” George Keith to Gerard Croese, printed in Gerard Croese, *The General History of the Quakers* (London: John Dunton, 1696), p. 12. Brackets are in original. Barry Levy makes a convincing circumstantial case that John Delaval was Keith’s accuser. Keith himself described Delaval as “one of the first that charged me with the same.” *Anti-Christs and Sadduces Detected Among a Sort of Quakers* (London: n.p. 1696), p. 31.
and man, mediator, and reincarnated sacrifice would be to some degree revealed. At the extreme, Keith conceded “inward divine revelation” could make up the difference. The two halves of the tract clearly do not agree with one another, suggesting the second may have been an earlier manuscript. The failure to reconcile the two pieces reveals that context was becoming inadequate to explain the discrepancies in the various components of Keith’s thought.\(^\text{214}\)

That Keith preached two Christs was to be the more lasting charge. While the London leadership refused to take sides in the schism, they did deliver a statement of doctrine on the issues in contention, but as an assertion of existing community, not a drawing up of new boundaries. The possibility that anyone in the colonies might in fact disagree was not considered. As J. William Frost has argued, the question of two Christs related not simply to the “historical” and inner Christs, but to the physical presence of a bodily Christ in Heaven. Many of Keith’s apologetic works discussed in previous chapters attempted to demonstrate the simultaneous presences of Christ’s divinity and manhood in both heaven and the individual. Because the bodily resurrection of Christ was traditionally believed to proclaim the similar resurrection of believers’ bodies, moreover, the latter issue likewise appeared in the colony. London’s epistle therefore addressed all three issues: the heavenly status of the bodies of Christ and believers after death and whether George Keith preached two Christs, by stating that the first two were unimportant and obscure and that there were no real disagreements on the third. They declared it “below you as antient friends of truth who have felt and known the power and spirit of Christ Jesus ... to dispute and raise controversies about him or his body that was

prepared for him.” Frost has argued that this was the central issue of the schism, mainly because it was the only one where Keith and his opponents clearly disagreed.215

Keith’s understanding of the resurrected body was drawn largely from Origen. The heterodox patristic believed in preexistent souls that experienced a series of incarnations as a result of the Fall. According to Origen, the soul possesses an eternal ethereal body, distinct from the gross material body but which contains the Platonic form of that body. Thus the physical and spiritual identity of the soul is retained through various incarnations. In this context, it meant that Keith could argue for a resurrected body that was the same as that possessed on earth, without the same carnal corruption. This concern with how a body could be resurrected while maintaining its identity (as opposed to being so changed as to negate the principle of resurrection) was not limited either to the early church or to Keith, Robert Boyle contributing a tract to the conversation and Henry More disputing the resurrection of the same physical matter. Keith borrowed Origen’s scriptural reference to the body as like a seed of grain, able to shed its husk and sprout, while remaining the same plant.216

This argument, though, was intimately related to the Revolution of Souls. First, the concept of physical resurrection was important to Kabbalah, especially the idea of tikkunei. Secondly, the Revolution of Souls raised the question of Judgment Day, since a cycle of incarnations eventually leading to Judgment Day would have been incoherent to

215 A Collection of Epistles from George Fox and Others, C5.1, Haverford College Library, Quaker Collection.
216 Antonia Tripolitis, Origen: A Critical Reading (New York: Peter Lang, 1985), p. 27. Robert Boyle, Some Physico-Theological Considerations About the Possibility of the Resurrection (London: T. N. 1675). In particular, the dialogue over this issue, as far back as Origen, revolved around the potential contradictions created by the continuous recycling of matter. The classic paradox asked, if a person is eaten by a cannibal and the former’s flesh is thereby incorporated with that of the latter, into whose body will that matter be resurrected on Judgment Day? See Henry Chadwick, “Origen, Celsus, and the Resurrection of the Body” The Harvard Theological Review 41 (1948): p. 83-102.
someone who held that salvation was achieved immediately after death. Keith wrote a tract attacking the second notion as heresy. Finally, the Revolution of Souls also included a Revolution of Bodies, in order for the person to retain his/her identity (humanity being defined as the union of body and soul). Because the idea that the body drew exactly the same matter to itself was clearly absurd (as Henry More had also argued) since a person over the course of their life lost and gained matter and because that matter would have assumed other beings and objects in the mean time, the resurrected body was closer to a physical Platonic form. Christian Lodowick reported that Keith explained to him “that this our Flesh which goes into the grave shall not rise again, but there is an Invisible Bone dispersed thro’ the Body, called by the Cabbalists Luz,” to which God gave a “Spiritual Body.” The issue soon expanded to include the whole question of the relation of the physical sufferings of the historical Christ to one's salvation - given that Friends’ believed that the Light of Christ within all believers was in itself sufficient.217

217 Lodowick, *A Letter From the Most Ingenious Mr. Lodowick* p. 6-7. Similar connections between resurrection and bodies can be found in an English exchange over the doctrine, discussed in the intro to Part III. Lodowick also reported that Keith had discussed the idea with Rhode Island Jews, who were unaware of Kabbalah and mistranslated Luz as light, which appealed to Keith. John Smolenski interprets this theological issue as part of a dispute between high and low religious cultures, and connects it to Carlo Ginzburg’s study of the miller Mennochio, who believed in a physical God. “The debate over the nature of Christ’s body in heaven, and the insistence of Keith’s opponents that physical, not spiritual bodies, were resurrected in the afterlife, had roots in European and English popular religion.” Smolenski, in fact, is inverting the two sides’ positions. Using the language of substance and accidents, Keith did concede that the resurrected body was not a carnal one “of flesh and bones,” but did so in order to defend bodily resurrection against the purely spiritual resurrection held by his opponents. Keith attacked those who argued that “Christ hath a spiritual Body in Heaven, but will not acknowledge that it is the same substance, essence or being of that Body which was crucified, but say, It was that which was glorified with the Father before the World was.” Even more problematic, while Smolenski’s argument might work in reverse, given that he argues Keith was “most popular among Pennsylvania’s poorer and middling residents,” his basis for this statement is Gary Nash, who describes Keith’s supporters as “a whole stratum of lesser merchants, shopkeepers, and master artisans – upward moving individuals, not a few of whom would enter the circle of mercantile leadership in the next decade.” The Keithians, according to Nash, were not the poor but those immediately below the wealthiest first generation of merchants, who felt excluded from power. Smolenski’s work, borrowing from Levy, similarly inverts the issues surrounding the universality of the Light and the Revolution of Souls, arguing at one point that, Keith’s “spiritual leveling, which placed Friends on the same religious plane as honest Indians, was clearly unacceptable.” This claim misinterprets
These issues also brought up the question of the possibility of the Light saving non-Christian peoples. London equivocated. While iterating the necessity of Christ's death and resurrection, they asserted that it was efficacious “for us and for all men,” that Christ died “for all men both jews and gentiles, indians, heathens, turks and pagans without respect of persons or peoples &c.” This was in part a statement of the traditional concept of the mission to the Gentiles: the transformation of Christianity from the parochialism of Judaism. But the letter clarified its broader intention by arguing that Christ died even for those “who never had nor may have the outward knowledge or history of him (if they sincerely obey and live up to his light) for his light and salvation reach to the ends of the earth.” Yet, reversing course, the letter then asserted the great blessing granted to those who had knowledge of Scripture. London, therefore, sought to have it both ways, extending the full power of the Inner Light to all people, while trying to retain the exclusivity of the Christian Gospel. Keith, certainly, attempted to do the same thing in his fight with Cotton Mather, but the course of the schism would make this position increasingly unsatisfying.

Keith’s theology had undergone considerable change before he arrived in the colonies, but his emphasis on orthodoxy in the colonies was not the high road to schism. As the next chapter will make clear, the interconnection of theology and personal disputes was far more complicated. Keith’s position within the Society is important, he was perhaps the most prominent Friend in the colonies, but hardly of the stature of

Whitehead or Penn, meaning he had just enough social power to make trouble but not enough to resolve it.
Chapter V
“How Shall It Be Told in Gath and Published in the Streets of Askelon”
The Keithian Schism in Philadelphia

While it is clear that theological differences existed among Delaware Valley Friends, the schism opened with a personal encounter. Roughly around March of 1691, the same time that Keith may have been defending himself over the question of reincarnation, William Stockdale accused him of “preaching two Christs.” Keith responded by presenting the question to a meeting of twelve ministers, who refused to decide (with the exceptions of John Hart and John Delavall, who both supported Keith). The issue then proceeded to the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting in September, which devoted six days to reconciling the two parties. A litany of heretical statements were made by various Friends, including John Simcock who had asked Keith “did Christs Bones rise?” referring to the disposition of Christ’s body in heaven. Thomas Fitzwater is reported to have prayed “O God, that dyed in us, and laid down thy Life in us, and took it up again.” Thomas Lloyd, whom Keith described as Stockdale’s “Attorney” and his opponents’ “mouth,” charged Keith with imposing an “Unscriptural Faith on his Brethren.” Samuel Jennings suggested “If thou preached Christ without less, others might preach him more,” which struck Keith as preaching according to man’s will, rather than the Spirit. All of the issues that would later appear in the schism, therefore, were already present by at least September of 1691. In the end, the Meeting admonished both Stockdale (for unguarded statements concerning doctrine) and Keith (for harsh words).
The Yearly Meeting, moreover, refused to adopt the Rhode Island Sheet as a statement of doctrine.\(^{218}\)

Keith, however, remained within the meeting, and more importantly, he kept his disagreements within the meeting. Instead, complaints were sent privately to London. On September 21, the Morning Meeting in London was reading letters (none of which survive) from Keith, Lloyd and Arthur Cook written the previous May. The result was the epistle described in the previous chapter. While not avoiding the theological issues, it was centrally concerned to preserve the bonds of community and avoid public scandal, revealing the Society operating at several levels of public and private. The first was the world external to the meeting, open to the eyes of non-Friends, within which the meeting sought as far as possible to regulate Quaker expression. Thus Keith complained that “you have gon Contrary to the Intention of Friends letter to us from London to read it or Cause it to be read twice at the publique Meeting against our minds,” who wished to have it read privately in a meeting where “none be present but such as are reputed Friends[,] But let as many Friends be present as desire[,] both men and women.” Keith’s desire for a more regulated meeting membership demonstrated a similar complaint as to the effect of

218 George Keith and Thomas Budd, *The Plea of the Innocent Against the False Judgment of the Guilty* ([Philadelphia: William Bradford, 1692]), p. 4-5. William Stockdale was a minister who engaged in considerable ministerial work in Scotland and Ireland, suffering several beatings in the process. He traveled to Pennsylvania in 1687 and died in 1693. from *Quaker Biographical Sketches, of Ministers and Elders, and Other Concerned Members of the Yearly Meeting of Philadelphia [1682-1800]*, ed. William Heis (Indianapolis, 1972), photocopy in HSP. The historiographical commonplace of focusing upon Keith’s personality retains such force that the fact that Stockdale’s and Fitzwater’s accusations of heresy, rather than Keith’s, instigated the fight has been produced some odd narrative constructions. Clare Martin’s interpretation of the schism as Keith’s attempt to force greater doctrinal specificity on the individualism of the Society has particular problems on this score. Clare Martin, “Controversy and Division in Post-Restoration Quakerism: the Hat, Wilkinson-Story and Keithian Controversies and Comparisons with the Internal Divisions of Other Seventeenth-Century Nonconformist Groups” (PhD. Dissertation: Open University, 2004). This view of Keith is all the more intriguing given that, in the political realm, historians have emphasized the contentious personalities of many of Keith’s enemies.
revealing private matters to the “world.” Eventually, he reached the point where he later defended printing tracts concerning the schism on the grounds that “too many come to [Quaker meetings, including the monthly, meetings] and sit in them, hearing all things there said, that are not qualified, either with Christian Knowledge or Prudence, or indeed with humane Discretion, as men, to conceal things that are not always seasonable to be published,” with the result that everything done in the meeting “is soon after publickly known.” By that point Keith was defending dissolving the boundary between public and private discourse temporarily, in order to address what he felt were more important issues. The essential principle, though, remained the same.219

The epistle comprised part of the public culture internal to the meeting, but (hopefully) kept away from the external world. In accordance with the desire to maintain unity, the guiding assumption of the epistle therefore was that the dispute was less a function of doctrinal disagreement than a lack of charity. It was through a return to loving relations that the

matter may be easily composed among you as a right understanding of each others sentiments, minds, and meanings comes to be obtained. All heats, and passions and severe treatments, and constructions being laid aside and watched against; and the language of the holy scriptures kept in and unto, in much and amiable discourses, privately held; which ought to be endeavoured and laboured for; and all uncharitableness, heats and animosities wholly laid aside, for where these prevail the Lord Jesus Christ is not in the midst, to counsel decide and determine differences.

Although clearly directing their statement at Keith's accusations, they did not so much criticize him (in fact, no one is mentioned by name) as suggest he had misunderstood his opponents’ statements. The London leadership discounted the possibility of genuine disagreement. For Quakers, doctrinal matters were not unimportant, but the experience of the Inner Light translated into a belief that lengthy group meditation, rather than contentious debate, would eventually provide the correct “sense of the meeting.” This procedure was also a convenient way to keep dissent private to the meeting and thus maintain the juggling act between *de facto* subjective experiences of the Light and the need to present a single orthodox face to the larger society. As London declared, quoting the Roman Emperor Constantine, “though you contend about words and disputes, subtilly, and sharply about curious questions, and though after such disputation you are not of one opinion, you ought to suppress your own fancies; or receive them in your own minds,” and not disrupt the unity of Christian society. In the place of disputation, the London leadership told the Philadelphia Friends to turn to the universal Spirit. “Pray keep down all heats,” they argued, “and passions and aggravations and hard constructions of one anothers words tending to rents or divisions. . . We question not but you all aim at one truth, one way and one good end.” At this level, the meeting utterly refused to separate identity and doctrine. If both sides would behave as Christians towards one another, they would return to the spirit and the doctrinal issues would work themselves out, as both sides realized they had misunderstood one another. Contrary to historian Clare Martin’s assertion, the problem was not the authority of scripture versus the freedom of the Inner Light, but about all sides surrendering themselves - their prideful, contentious, carnal selves - to the unity of the Light of Christ within. Keith did not in
principle disagree, but (unlike London) he was convinced that his opponents were in fact heterodox. Hot tempers were unfortunate, but they were not, Keith felt, his fault.220

Yet underneath this intermediary level between public and private, open to Friends in general, other discussions appear to have been occurring. The absence of much of Whitehead’s correspondence during the schism makes any conclusions speculative, but he clearly sent private letters to both Keith and Lloyd. An (irritatingly damaged) passage in a series of demands sent to Keith’s opponents by the separate meeting reads
“some say you have let us know it presently that an answering may be given to the [hole in manuscript] sent to Thomas Loyd by George Whitehead being as we Informed 12 in Number which George Whitehead [ ] George Keith’s letters to him, to take away all ground of Jealosie from us.” While key words are missing, it seems reasonably clear that, at the same time he was urging the Society as a whole to return to the unity of the Light, privately Whitehead was conducting an inquiry into some of the specific accusations being made. The London Morning Meeting minutes for September 28, 1691 also record the assignment of Friends to read over Keith’s catechism, though the motivation is not clear. References to these letters were left out of Keith’s first printed tract concerning the schism. The existence of this private level, also reflected in Keith’s earlier complaint of having his conversations about the Revolutions revealed, demonstrates what was at stake when Keith eventually brought accusations of heterodoxy into the press.221

220 A Collection of Epistles from George Fox and Others, C5.1, Haverford College Library, Quaker Collection. John Smolenski argues that the meeting discipline in general existed to produce “silence,” and that while “each side had judged the other side sinful for its inability to live up to the Quaker ideal of peaceful silence,” Keith’s opponents conflated the political and religious body within the colony, “branding public speech suspect.” “Friends and Strangers: Religion, Diversity, and the Ordering of Public Life in Colonial Pennsylvania, 1681-1764” (unpublished PhD. Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 2001), p. 187. As will be see in London’s response to Keith, the colonial leadership were not alone in treating public speech as unacceptable.
221 A Collection of Epistles from George Fox and Others, C5.1, Haverford College Library, Quaker Collection.
William Penn, in contrast, appealed to personalities over doctrine. In a letter from London to the Keithian Robert Turner expressed a similar opinion, though in support of Keith. Declaring the difference to be “more in Spirit then words or matter,” he went on to describe his own personal dealings with Keith’s enemies:

I have mett with so much partiality & most ungratefull and unworthy usage of some, that should I fend & prove, & not put up & silently commit it to the Lord, even praying for them, my life would be swallowed up of controversy. I am ready to beleive T[homas]. L[loyd].s height, has administred occasion for a difference in Spt. Between G.K. & him from the first. for as to Doctrines, they cannot but agree; tho Georges way of explaining Scripture phrases, may be a little to philosophical.

Lloyd headed the anti-proprietary party. Within the context of Quaker identity, political and religious discord proceeded from the same spirit, and it was natural for Penn to believe that a person prone to the former would probably be guilty of the latter. Later in the letter, he constructed a narrative of events in which Lloyd’s “interest” and Keith’s Collection; “Some propositions in order to heal the breach that is amongst us, directed to Thomas Lloyd and others concerned with him,” 1692 2mo. 18, PKC. printed in KC quotation on p. 161. I have taken my transcription from Frost, who appears to have viewed the manuscript in a less damaged condition. John Smolenski misdates it as June instead of April. “Friends and Strangers,” p. 183 n. 49. The London meeting was at this time taking considerable interest in Keith’s dispute with Cotton Mather. A fellow Scot, Patrick Livingston wrote a letter to the meeting in December 1690, mentioning his A Refutation of Three Opposers of the Truth (Philadelphia: William Bradford, 1690), which was duly read by the meeting. The following August, it asked Livingston and two others two write to Keith “for his consent,” presumably to publish the book in England. While this work did not appear in a London edition, The Presbyterian and Independent Visible Churches in New-England and Else-Where (London: Thomas Northcott, 1691) did. MMM, 1673-1692, p. 107, 118 & 120, Library of the Society of Friends, London. If Whitehead was in fact presenting twelve doctrinal questions to Lloyd, it and the absence of material about the doctrinal disagreements in the colonial meeting minutes suggests that Clare Martin’s claim that the meetings only enforced discipline not doctrine was more perceived than real. During the 1694 London Yearly Meeting statements by several American Friends clearing themselves from holding heretical doctrine were read. LYM, p. 28. Martin, “Controversy and Division in Post-Restoration Quakerism”, p. 187-189, 202-203.
“nice expressions” provoked a breakdown in charity, which was ultimately not far from the truth. On another occasion, Penn was even more effusive in his support for Keith:

I am sorry any shou’d Quarrel Honest and Learned George Keith: My Love to him. Let him live in his Principles. If I come there, that Controversie, with the rest, shall soon vanish; and he shall want no Encouragement from me; for I love his Spirit; and Honour his Gifts, and his Peculiar Learning, especially Tongues and Mathematicks, his Platonick Studies too: All being sanctify’d to the Truth’s Service, which is worthy to have Preheminence.

This was a purely private letter, and ultimately so embarrassing that Penn seems to have later suppressed it to the best of his ability.

At the same time, Penn, having reached the height of his political power in the court of James II, was now politically weakened. The interception of a courier to James II

222 “William Penn to Robert Turner,” 9mo 29, 1692, *PWP* II, p. 354, 355, 360. My point is not to divest Penn’s opinions of political self-interest, merely to suggest that they need not be seen as cynical. John Smolenski (whose work I read after writing the above) pursues this connection further in the context of Pennsylvania’s courts, arguing the magistrates established their authority by showing themselves “good men,” by means of disciplining their own speech and that of others. Fragmentary evidence suggests there might have been another dimension to the Keithian schism. Several later commentators have suggested that, in the wake of George Fox’s death in 1691, Penn and Whitehead engaged in a quiet battle over the leadership of the Society. It is possible that Keith was a supporter of Whitehead in this fight. Keith, despite his friendship with Penn, may not have wished someone so doctrinally suspect to lead the Society (let alone someone accused of Jacobitism). At various points, Keith mentioned personal letters received from Whitehead early in the schism, which he felt were reassurances that he was on the right side of the conflict in Philadelphia (the letters themselves have not survived). These letters, of course, may have been little different from the London epistle, reassuring the orthodoxy of both sides, but read by Keith as support for him personally, but perhaps they suggested more. In an undated paper, a Lloydian named Robert Owen claimed to have defended his opinions on the Resurrection by citing to Keith a book by Penn - the very one Penn wrote to obtain his release from prison in 1669. Keith responded by defaming the abilities of most of the English leadership, except Whitehead. Keith had left for America before Fox’s death, and may have been aligning himself in a dispute being conducted so quietly it was impossible for someone on the other side of the Atlantic to properly navigate it. Penn certainly still considered Keith a friend (in both senses of the word). Keith referred to the conflict, without admitting any role in it, in *An Account of the Quakers Politicks*, (London: Charles Brome, 1700); Henry Gouldney remarked that the schism “I hope will have one good effect, viz. the more uniteing W. P. and G. W.” in “Henry Gouldney to Sir John Rhodes” 2mo 27, 1694 *A Quaker Post-Bag, Letters to Sir John Rodes of Barbrough Hall, in the County of Derby, Baronet, and to John Gratton of Monyash 1693-1742* ed. Godfrey Locker Lampson (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1910), p. 58.

in France with letters appearing to be in Penn's hand led to charges of high treason in early 1691, requiring him to go into hiding for the next three years. In November of 1692, as Penn was writing Turner, Pennsylvania and the two New Jerseys were placed under the control of New York governor Benjamin Fletcher.224

Regulating doctrine and attempting to heal the schism, therefore, was outside of Penn’s concerns, and he focused on personal disputes. This fact demonstrates that no level of these discussions should be seen as “real” or window-dressing. All were concerned with producing and maintaining certain types of communities at certain times according to certain needs. The Quaker leadership in London and Philadelphia, as the schism progressed, denounced Keith not only for the content of his accusations, but for revealing them to outsiders through print. Even within the hegemonically Quaker colonies of Pennsylvania and East and West Jersey, the Society was afraid of internal disputes or accusations being discussed openly.

These distinctions became important as the disagreements within the colony moved toward schism. At the monthly meeting of January 26, 1692, Thomas Fitzwater

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accused Keith of denying the sufficiency for salvation of the Light, and promised to present proof at the next monthly meeting. Fitzwater was accompanied by Stockdale, who affirmed Fitzwater’s charge and proclaimed again that Keith was guilty of preaching “two Christs.” Keith responded by calling Stockdale an “ignorant heathen.” According to Keith, at that point the meeting was adjourned to the next day, but his opponents either refused to attend or walked out. Keith and the remainder of the meeting then passed a rebuke of Fitzwater and Stockdale. The monthly meeting had, previous to this, alternated their place between two locations from morning to afternoon, and then changed again from winter and summer. When the anti-Keithians made this decision by plurality instead of unanimity, the Keithains objected and continued meeting in the original “bank” meetinghouse until they were locked out.225

The meeting also ordered that the statement of doctrine produced by Keith and the New England leadership, the Rhode Island Paper, be printed. Obviously expecting opposition, however, and seeking added legitimacy for the tenuous authority of their meeting, Keith contrived for the Newport, Rhode Island Monthly Meeting to produce a letter asking Bradford to publish the statement. His assumption proved correct when the Quarterly Meeting (which still contained Keith’s opponents), however, refused to consent to any of the separate monthly meeting’s actions. According to Keith, the members of the Quarterly Meeting felt that because Stockdale and Fitzwater were ministers, only ministers should determine the matter of their guilt. Keith declared this to be popish.

225 Keith's account is in Some Reasons and Causes of the Late Separation. Thomas Fitzwater was an early emigrant to Philadelphia, arriving in 1682, and was a minor political figure in Chester County, see his entry in the DQB. Surreally, in February the monthly meeting approved for publication a book written by Keith against Cotton Mather. The Salem Monthly Meeting inquired on September 20, 1692 “whether the 15 bookes called the Serious Apeale came out by order of this monthly meeting of Friends or noe.” Salem Monthly Meeting Minutes 1676-1744, Friends House Library, Swarthmore College, f. 97.
clericalism and the separate meeting issued a statement to the surrounding monthly and quarterly meetings, declaring that the New England Yearly Meeting had put forth the paper because the meeting had been “so publickly charged with denying the foundamentall Principles of Christian doctrine,” by the Boston Congregational Ministry.

The Keithians warned that Philadelphia’s opposition might be misconstrued, because whatever be the pretence; it is and will be Judged by many that it is the matter in the said Book which is offensive; and will do much hurt when it shall be reported That it was opposed by ffriends in Pensilvania. The noise of its being call'd in question is too far spread abroad allready, And what the consequence will be when it comes to the ears of Christian Lodowick Cotton Mather & others of truth & friends adversaries, we earnestly desire you will in coolness weightly consider.226

After having endeavored for years to construct a proper and authoritative public face for the colonial meeting, Keith and his allies had now attempted a fait accompli and used the threat of public scandal and the support of the New England arm of the Society to legitimate their actions and their separate meeting.

Although Keithians claimed that theirs was the original meeting, and that Fitzwater, Stockdale and his opponents had separated, they also later defended the separation directly. “We are not divided from faithful Friends and Brethren,” Keith asserted, “that are sound in the Doctrine and Faith of Christ, and whose Godly Life and Practice seal to the sincerity of their Faith; but we are divided from hypocrites, Lyars, and false accusers, and gross Unbelievers, who deny the Lord that bought them, and faith in him.” Keith sought to de-legitimize his opponents’ meetings as not the true body of

Christian believers and to declare them to be merely a “faction.” He proclaimed that “it doth manifestly appear that the Monthly Meeting of the other side here at Philadelphia, who meet apart from us, is gone from the Light into Imaginations,” in refusing to discipline Thomas Fitzwater. With Friends’ identity structured according to corporate identities, the fight between Keith and his opponents came to be over whose was the legitimate corporation. Keith attacked the Yearly Meeting for its “partiality” and “ignorance,” and yet denied that he was seeking to impugn all Friends. In language that echoed his complaint against Cotton Mather for denying the Christianity and Protestantism of Friends, Keith continually declared that “notwithstanding of their accusations against G.K. as if he were not in unity with Truth and faithful Friends,” that he was broadly supported “Not only in Old-England, but in all places where they are, ... And [that they] have had the true Christian Faith from the beginning, and that they still continue in it.” Keith’s inconsistency, owning separating at certain times and denying it at others (even within the same tract) was a complicated attempt both to address the changing nature of the division and to protect against charges of having effected it. The original Keithian move was a power play, daring their opponents’ contradiction (thus the printing of the Rhode Island Sheet); but, when the quarterly meeting answered them by denying the authority of their monthly meeting and denouncing its actions, the Keithians had few better options than to pronounce those who walked out as schismatics. At the same time, the Keithians were not interested in simply having the “separates” return. They wanted their agreement to organizational changes and to the pronouncement of certain doctrinal positions, which forced the Keithians to defend the dissection of the meeting. The separation as an act (described in the Keithians’ first printed tract) was
performed by their opponents, but the separation as a fact to be resolved (both in that tract and in the proposals presented by the Keithians) was a passive act of maintaining meeting purity.\(^{227}\)

Keith drew support for this interpretation from English Friends. When the separate meeting sent “Some Propositions in Order to Heal the Breach That is Amongst Us,” a series of proposals written in April of 1692, almost every doctrinal point was defended as in accordance with the epistle sent from London, as well as a letter sent to Keith privately by Whitehead. “We hop [sic] this will have the more weight with you Because in Friends Epistles to us from London (that came since the Separation began) its expressly desired by them to suffer no slight Ireverent Or undervaluing Expressions to be Spok Concerning Christ come, Nor of the holly Scriptures or reading them.” What had been intended by London as a common statement of belief and identity was, in Keith's hands, a standard of orthodoxy by which to test his enemies. Similarly, Keith cited numerous books by Whitehead, and *The Anarchy of the Ranters* to support his position. George Keith may have been arrogant, as is often claimed, but it was an arrogance born of his sense that he could mobilize considerable social power (both textual and personal) within the Atlantic Society to support his position.\(^{228}\)

Before the issuance of this proposal, the Meeting of Ministers made their own attempt to heal the breach in March by assigning Samuel Jennings, John Simcock and Griffith Owen to talk with Keith about describing the Ministers’ Meeting as “Come here to Cloak Error and Herisie” and “that there was not more Damnable Errors, and

\(^{227}\) Keith and Budd, *The Plea of the Innocent*, p. 10. Clare Martin has also points to this contradiction in assigning blame for the separation, but the interpretation is mine.

\(^{228}\) “Some propositions in order to heal the breach,” p. 156, 162-163. The bracketed commas are my interpolations for clarity.
Doctrines of Divels amongst any of the Protestant Professions, than was amongst the Quakers.” The choice of two people whom Keith had found heretical during the 1691 Yearly Meeting hardly bode well for the conference; and the meeting of Samuel Jennings et al. with Keith marked the beginning of a focus by both sides on extremes of vituperation. The constant repetition in print, with little variation, of the insults used has preserved most of these accusations (though their context and intent was debated). As Jane Kamensky and others have remarked, abusive language and slander in the early modern period possessed a particular importance and power. In the context of slander trials, the almost material quality of such language, once used, created a need to “unsay” what had been said, rather than merely express remorse or repay damages. It was hardly surprising, therefore, that the specific accusations were preserved by both sides, and that Keith's defense of uttering them focused on their accuracy. Given the standard narrative’s emphasis on Keith’s belligerency, the hostility of the other side is often left out, or downplayed. While Keith accused his opponents of being ; Keith was himself called variously “Brat of Babylon,” “Pope,” “Primate of Pennsylvania,” “Father Confessor,” to name a few. He likewise complained of people “most uncivilly and unchristianly, yea, inhumanely otherwise treating him in these Meetings, often six or ten all at once speaking to him, and pulling him by one sleeve, and others by the skirts of his Coat, more like Mad-men than Sober; and some bidding him go out, and when he essayed to go out, and prayed them to let him go, others pulling him back, and detaining him.” What is remarkable here is not how any one side treated the other, but the remarkable consistency in the way both sides abused each other, while condemning the same behavior.229

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229 Meeting of Ministers Minutes, March 5, 1692, in KC, p. 138-139; Keith, Some Reasons and Causes of the Late Separation, p. 6; Jane Kamensky, Governing the Tongue (New York: Oxford University Press,
Samuel Jennings and Griffith Owen reported back to the meeting that Keith responded to them by declaring “that he denied our Authority, he denied our judgment, he did not value it a pin, he would trample it as dirt under his feet,” and further accused them of popery. Although it is not clear, the latter charge probably referred to his opponent’s insistence that only ministers judge the affair. Even more explicitly, he accused them of not preaching Christ’s outward coming. Owen denied this, claiming they did “have a Reverend Esteem” for it, but that “we preach what God doth put into our hearts, and into our mouths.” At heart, Owen was defending his doctrinal claims by means of his identity. A Christian was one who listened to, and was guided in his actions by, the presence of Christ within. Doctrinal omissions were not errors. His ontological state provided him an authoritative voice, or at least a presumption of innocence.

Keith argued in turn that the true Light would have spoken with more clarity and fullness. Keith's response, therefore, was an equal mixture of the doctrinal and the personal. “See what Excessive passion thou art in,” Keith is reported to have said, “look thy face in a glass see what a face thou hast.” Keith was arguing along lines familiar to anti-enthusiast polemic, which held that the movements of the Spirit which Quakers claimed to feel were a result of insanity or overly great emotion. Owen, therefore, reasserted his claims to a godly voice: proclaiming “I speak in the fear and dread of the Lord and I can appeal unto him, how I am here before him.” It is in the context of this fight over a godly voice, versus a passionate “enthusiasm” that the frequent complaints of

abusive behavior by both sides must be understood. Depictions of personal deportment were strategies for claiming an authoritative voice, as one who “walked in the Light.”

That the fight interwove the personal with the doctrinal is further illustrated by a proposal the Keithians sent to “heal the breach” in April. Even the doctrinal complaints focused upon the speech act, and the remedy was in the model of a slander trial. The first demand, called on Fitzwater and Stockdale to “Condem openly, by A publique Declar[tion] in writting to be recevd in ye Monthly Meet[ing] Book) their false Accusa[tion of] G:K” that Keith preached two Christs and denied the sufficiency of the Light within. It was not enough to demand Fitzwater “condemn” his errors; Keith specified he repudiate “his Arguing before divers witnesses at Burlington yearly Meet[ing]” that Christ's body did not reside in heaven. The need to document time and place shows that Fitzwater was not simply in intellectual error. The act of expression itself had to be rebuked, and the thing “unsaid,” in order to return him to the religious community conceived by Keith.

But Keith's demands were not limited to doctrine. Personal abuse and private scandal blurred together. William Brought was to condemn “his false accusing G:K: saying at ye Last Meet of Frds of ye Ministry at Burlington” that Keith “had always End[eavored] to keep down ye pow[er] of truth,” and his calling Keith “Bratt of Babylon.” But Brought was also to be disciplined for drunkenness, and was not to be

230 A manuscript copy of Jennings et al.'s report is in Haverford College Library, Quaker Collection, it is reprinted in KC, p. 138-139. For “enthusiasm” in the early modern period, see David S. Lovejoy, Religious Enthusiasm in the New World, Heresy to Revolution (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985); for its use by Anglicans against Dissenters, see John Spurr, The Restoration Church of England, 1646-1689. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991).

231 I have borrowed the concept of “unsaying” things from Jane Kamensky’s work on slander trials in Governing the Tongue.
permitted to speak or pray at public meetings until he repented all these things. What at first seems a grab bag of personal attacks is tied together by the unitary goal: to undermine Brought’s status as a legitimate mouthpiece for the Light. Keith similarly insisted that Arthur Cook and Samuel Jennings be silenced in the meeting for blaming Keith for causing the schism. The Quakers were hardly the only group to use the moral failings of their opponents to discredit them. Friends, however, amplified this practice to a much greater degree, as can be seen in Keith’s debates with Cotton Mather over church order.232

By the end of April, the Philadelphia Monthly Meeting asked “if any freinds have it in their Minds to visit Such freinds as frequent the seperate Meetting” that they would “bring them to a Sense of their Condition and Make Report thereof” to the meeting. In mid May, Keith and his supporters in the company of two traveling English Friends, Thomas Wilson and James Dickinson, were approached by representatives of the Burlington, New Jersey meeting who offered “That let us but agree in Principles of Doctrine, and all other Personal Reflections and Differences should be buried.” Terms were agreed to, wherein each side would “draw up into writing an account of their sincere Faith and Belief in the Principles of the Christian Doctrine,” and then they would meet together “to read weigh and consider the said Principles, and see if we could agree theirin.” Once the agreement was reached, “all Personal Reflections should be passed by and forgiven” but that “all such as have given offence, and hurt the Truth by their unsound Expressions, be brought to a Conviction of their Error.” The Lloydians (as the opposition to Keith had now coalesced around Thomas Lloyd) agreed to the terms, except

232 George Keith et al. to Thomas Lloyd et al. 1692 2 mo. 18, PKC folder #1. A leading opponent of Keith, Arthur Cook (d. 1698) was a one-time speaker of the Philadelphia Assembly.
they asked that a meeting consisting only of ministers be held privately first “to put things into a method for a more publick conclusive Meeting.” The meeting occurred, but proved inconclusive; and the Keithians proposed a second. Yet at the very moment when emotions appeared to have cooled, Keith received word that some of their opponents “had announced great Woes against us,” blaming them for the separation and “prophecyed of our down-fall, as other Separatists have withered and come to nothing.” This use of cursing and prophecy against the Keithians ratcheted up the level of linguistic harm, producing not just a challenge to their claims of following the Light but threatening them with potential harm. Keith, as a result, “found great freedom” to appear with his supporters at a May 22nd meeting and “bore a faithful Testimony in the Power of the Lord,” a phrase that emphasized his own spiritual power against the cursing of his opponents. Keith reiterated the desire to heal the breach, but explicitly stated that they could not join with those who refused to own their errors.233

It was roughly at this point that the Keithians printed their first tract. Conscious of how this action would be perceived, Keith's reasons for turning to publication are clearer. Keith’s opponents, as the recognized leadership, could draw support from the system of meetings, both in Pennsylvania and other colonies. The Keithians, however, controlled the press. One of Keith's confederates, William Bradford, was the official printer for all publications of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, and the only printer in Pennsylvania.

233 Philadelphia Monthly Meeting Minutes, 29/2/1692 & 26/3/1692, printed in KC, p. 133-134. The account of the meeting with Wilson and Dickinson is recorded in Keith, Some Reasons and Causes of the Late Separation, p. 26-36. Keith refused to name names in this tract, and so it is unclear exactly with whom he sought a meeting. He referred to “T.- & A.- &c.,” whom, it can be assumed. were Thomas Lloyd and Arthur Cook. It reflected the deepening of the schism that when this tract was reprinted in London, the entire section describing this attempt at reconciliation was excised.
Keith used this tool to publicly air his disagreements with his opponents and to defame them on a whole series of issues.234

On May 26, the Philadelphia Monthly Meeting ordered several Friends to consider whether Stockdale and Fitzwater had abused Keith, and they concluded that Keith had in fact denied the sufficiency of the Light. It signaled the Lloydi ans’ abandonment of reconciliation in favor of the expulsion of Keith and his supporters. A second group of Friends were therefore sent to Keith (in keeping with the principle of “Gospel Order” that one attempt to resolve disputes privately before revealing them publicly in the church) to present him with his errors, which now included opposing the two traveling ministers James Dickinson and Thomas Wilsford by keeping his hat on during their prayer and then walking out of the meeting with several of his followers. The second delegation met with similar failure, Keith rejecting the authority of the Meeting of Ministers and calling it “rank Popery” for him to “referr his Cause” to it. The Meeting of Ministers, therefore, determined that Keith was to be condemned and ordered to “forbear to offer his Gift amongst friends till he be reconciled to this Meeting.” While not yet an official disownment, this statement makes clear how fluid the separation had been before this point, with both sides still attending meetings and at times even worshiping together (or at least attempting to). Unable to heal the breach within the Delaware Valley, and annoyed that Keith continued to represent himself elsewhere as in unity with the Society,

234 Here I agree with Ethyn Kirby and John Smolenski in dating this tract before the June 1692 condemnation of Keith. In addition to the reasons mentioned by Smolenski (that the tract makes no mention of the June 20th statement by the twenty-eight ministers, which enraged Keith and dominated all subsequent Keithian tracts in Pennsylvania), Keith's second narrative of the schism, *Plea For the Innocent*, was clearly motivated by the June statement. This second tract is referred to in a July 3, 1692 statement printed in *A True Copy of Three Judgments Given Forth by a Party of Men, Called Quakers at Philadelphia, Against George Keith and His Friends. With Two Answers to the said Judgments. ([Philadelphia: William Bradford, 1692]). The last event mentioned in *Some Reasons* occurred on May 22, giving a fairly short window of roughly a month in which it could have been produced. Smolenski, “Friends and Strangers,” p. 183 n. 49.
the Philadelphia leadership issued two epistles. Since the individual meeting was based on the premise that one could better discern the Truth through consensus, drawing on the voices of inter-Atlantic Quakerism fortified their condemnation of Keith and his supporters. The first epistle was addressed to the leadership in England. The second, dated the 20th of June, was issued to the meetings in Pennsylvania and East and West Jersey and “Elsewhere as there may be occasion,” and was signed by ministers from England and Maryland as well.235

In the epistle to London, the leadership laid the entire blame for the schism on Keith, convinced that without him no one else would have considered separation. The statement of the twenty-eight judges read Keith out of the fellowship of the meeting, comparing his status to death. They constructed the opening of their discussion of Keith around King David's lamentations on the deaths of his father Saul and brother Jonathan, marvelling how this “Mighty man [is] fallen how is his shield vile Cast away, as tho he had not known ye Oyle of ye holly Oyntment.” Using martial imagery, they recalled how effectively he had fought on God’s behalf, “Whilst you keept in gods Councill, & wast litle in thy own Eyes thy Bow Aboad in strength thy sword returned not Empty from ye fall of gods enemys & thy Bow returned not backe.” Recognizing Keith's reputation within the Society, they recalled when “this once Eminent man & Instrumt of renown in the hand of god, whilst he keep his first habitation & knew the Government of truth over

his own spirit & witnessed the same to be A Bridle to his tongue, He was then servisable by pen & speech to the Churches of xt.” In a paraphrase that at once used Keith’s reputation against him, while suggesting the danger the public scandal he had instigated presented to the Society, the Friends’ leadership asked:

how shall it be told in Gath & published in the streets of Askelon, will not the daughters of the Philistins rejoice, & the Daughters of the uncircumsised triumph when they heare that he is fallen upon the soaring Mountains from the high places of Israell Oh how are we Distressed for thee, thou as A man slaine upon thy high place?236

Keith's enemies shared his assumption that he had considerable social capital in England. Writing to London, they attempted to neutralize this, explaining “he is not the man that many tender hearted among you takes him to be, what soever his pretences.” 237

According to the leadership, Keith's actions proceeded primarily from pride. Abandoning the terms they had offered to the Keithians and adopting the language of the London epistle, they gave short shrift to doctrinal complaints, declaring them “too numerous and frivolous to trouble you with.” Instead they focused upon Keith's claim that they did not properly preach the outward existence of Christ and used it to construct a narrative of the previous years that placed Keith at odds with the colonial Society from

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236 The epistle to London is in the Pennsylvania Meeting for Ministers Minutes, 4th Month, 17th Day, 1692, Friends House Library, Swarthmore College, and is printed in KC, p. 140-147. The June 20, 1692 declaration is “Address of Meeting of Public Friends to Monthly Meetings,” MSS 1692, 4 mo. 20, folder #3, PKC. It is also printed in Keith, A True Copy of three Judgments, p. 2-4. 2 Samuel 1. 20: “Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.” 2 Samuel 1. 25: “How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thine high places.” The reference to Askelon and Gath would reappear frequently in descriptions of Keith.

237 “As to the exact separation made by George Keith”, n.d. PKC. This statement is also printed in A True Copy of Three Judgments Given Forth by a Party of Men, Called Quakers at Philadelphia, Against George Keith and His Friends. With Two Answers to the said Judgments. (Philadelphia: William Bradford, 1692), p. 2-9.
the beginning. In their June 20th epistle, they professed that they had offered to give a confession of Faith “in the words of our lord & savior Christ Jesus the Author of the Christian faith, & in the words of the Apostles, & Disciples his faithful followers.” The Lloydians were not objecting, at least officially, to a statement of doctrine, nor did they complain that Keith’s earlier offer of the Gospel Order Improved was an improper imposition on the liberty of the spirit. Indeed, at some point they issued a statement in manuscript in which they condemned Keith and then gave a statement of orthodoxy on all the relevant issues - the inward and outward manifestations of Christ, his role as mediator, the resurrection of bodies, Judgment Day, the use of scripture - through a series of scriptural quotations. Instead, Keith’s actions revealed his “bitterness of spirit” and resulting disunity from the colonial Society. “he hath long Objected against Our Disciplin Even soon after his Coming amongst us,” they explained, and his reforms “not finding the Expected Acceptation, he seemed Disgusted since,” and not only towards colonial Friends but “Declaring that he knew none given forth by the Body of friends to his satisfaction.” In contrast, their offer of a confession was motivated by their desire to meet “his satisfaction & to prvent striff amongst us & for preserving ye peace of ye Church” Just as the Keithians explained their publication to London narratively, so the Lloydian need to produce a story, a pattern of action and behavior, that justified their abandonment of attempts to reclaim Keith and their acceptance of the fact of schism.

Yet, while they were constructing a storyline that would defend their actions, the Lloydians were also substantively concerned that they not produce anything that might be perceived as new. For a society “that had been so long a People, and had given forth so many declarations of our Faith” to “be put upon doing it [i.e. making a declaration of
Faith] anew,” would scandalize the meeting and impeach “all that had done before.” This danger was even greater, given the fact that a man of Keith's status in the meeting was making the demand. It was, therefore, “both Safer and Modester to own as we had always done what was already publique.” Preserving the unity of the Light was not simply a concern within the Society, it was also necessary to maintaining the Society’s public reputation. Discrepancies between statements could undermine the Light’s claim of divine veracity, while the issuance of the statement itself might reflect badly on the failure of the rest of the Society to have done so already.238

The issue here also concerned geographic authority. Although there had been an intention, in the early years of Pennsylvania’s settlement, that the Philadelphia/Burlington Yearly Meeting would serve a leadership role throughout the colonies, such as the London Yearly Meeting did in Britain, this had not come to pass. Philadelphia’s refusal to accept the Rhode Island sheet, despite its having been approved by the New England Yearly Meeting, proceeded not from a desire to aggregate power to themselves, but to deny such authority to any but the London Yearly Meeting. The Philadelphia leadership’s willingness to either reaffirm a previous statement (even one drawn from a book by Keith, probably published in England with the approval of the London Second Day Morning Meeting) or to present the matter to London directly reveals the lines of authority within the society. Communal coherency needed to be preserved at all costs,

238 Ibid. The Lloydiams’ statement of orthodoxy exists in manuscript form in A Collection of Epistles from George Fox and Others, C5.1, f. 49-50, Haverford College Library, Quaker Collection, it is reprinted as an appendix in Gerard Croese, The General History of the Quakers (London: John Dunton, 1696). Undated, it appears to have been written sometime after the June 20th statement, but does not refer to Keith’s disownment. Clare Martin also points to the difficulty of change and contradiction for a community premised upon continuous revelation of universal truth. “Controversy and Division in Post-Restoration Quakerism”, p. 175.
and on such a fundamental issue the Philadelphia leadership would only accept the
legitimacy of the voice of the London Yearly Meeting. Not to do so would have been to
give in to the centrifugal tendencies inherent in the concept of the Inner Light, with the
attendant scandal to the Society.

Keith was less willing to accept the primacy of the London or Philadelphia
meetings. He called the Philadelphia meeting’s opposition to the Rhode Island Sheet in
appropriate “unless they here will say, that Philadelphia is the Church of Rome in
America as Samuel Jenings called it the Metropolitan, little considering that the Apostacy
came in by such means.” In October 1693, Charles Read and Frances Rawles claimed
Keith had called an epistle from London “a nonsensical babble,” and announced he
refused to submit the dispute to the London Yearly Meeting. Within a year, however,
Keith was in London doing precisely that. In part, this may have reflected Keith’s refusal
to recognize his opponents as anything except a heretical faction. But Keith was also
captured between his anti-clericalism and his belief in the Light as a real presence of the
divine tying together the Atlantic community. As the Light began to be drained of its
objective content, its communal reality also disappeared for him.239

After informing Keith of the Judgment, and having it read in the Philadelphia
Monthly Meeting, the statement was distributed throughout the colonial meetings. The
Bucks County Quarterly Meeting “declare[d] their unity & satisfaction with the same
paper by giving forth a Testimony in writing Concerning the same to the Condemning
the same.” Keith, they elaborated, “doth publish to the world that he is in unity with the
faithfull brethren every where;” therefore, “lest the simple harted (who are remote &

239 George Keith, The Plea of the Innocent, p. 21-22; An Answer to Certain Proposals Presented to Several
of Us thes 8 4/mo 1693 by Charles Read & Frances Rawles, folder #3½, PKC.
know not of the present state and Condition of the said George Keith) shold be deceived by his fained words & faire speeches,” they issued their statement. This quote is also noteworthy for the way its depiction of Keith is at odds with the wrathful and arrogant personality depicted by Friends elsewhere. In addition to informing and warning Friends, however, the epistle also served to reinforce the authority of the Lloydiants and their meeting. On June 27, a Monthly Meeting in Frankford turned ugly. Thomas Lloyd, John Delaval, Samuel Richardson, and Samuel Jennings were present for the reading of the Judgment. Even before entering, Lloyd reportedly accused Keith of trying to impose unscriptural doctrine, and they argued over the necessity of faith in Christ. Accounts differ on what then transpired. Keith claimed the majority opposed the reading and that the deputy governor and magistrates imposed the reading by means of their civil power. Samuel Jennings later claimed that there was already a “Party ... Ripe for the Separation” [i.e. pro-Keith] within the meeting, and that his own party had merely handed the paper over to the clerk to read. Why, Jennings asked, was it disorderly for the clerk to read a paper “sent to him from a Meeting in Unity?” Keith’s supporters attempted to seize the paper (or, in Keith’s account “did civily and Neighbourly lay their Hand on the man's Arm, desiring him not to read it.”) While Keith preached, Derrick op de Grave replied to Keith’s remark “That God was present in all his creatures” by asking “What George? Doth the Spirit of God Speak in Trees?” Keith replied by saying “Thou Impudent Rascal, Who saith the Spirit of God speaks in Trees, as it doth in Men?” With matters increasingly out of control, Samuel Jennings called for a constable. There is no record of how the meeting ended, but no arrests occurred. This was the first time that the religious dispute crossed into the political realm. Both Keith’s complaint that his opponents were
using their civil offices in religious affairs, and the fact that Keith did abuse those officers, foreshadowed ensuing events.240

The June 20 epistle enraged Keith and provoked a spate of short publications by Keith and others. There were two important differences between these tracts and the previous one. First, where the first had only referred to his opponents by the first initial, the new series of tracts used full names. Writing the epistle and distributing it to the meetings, in the eyes of the Keithians, had made the dispute public and thereby legitimated naming names. The Lloydians would not agree, seeing the epistle as part of the internal world of the meeting, while Keith’s publications opened matters to the view of the “world.” The second difference was in the narrative of the schism. Some Reasons and Causes of the Late Separation began the schism with the January 1692 accusation by Fitzwater, referring to Stockdale as someone “prejudiced” against him, who had “renewed” his accusation against Keith. The previous disagreement with Stockdale was introduced later in the tract, and only to assert that the ministers had supported Keith’s doctrine but nonetheless had failed to discipline his accuser. In The Plea of the Innocent, however, the story of the schism began with Stockdale’s accusation and the heretical

statements made by Lloyd and others at the Yearly Meeting. Ironically, while performing
the fatally disruptive act of translating the dispute from the privacy of the meeting to the
publicity of the press, the Keithians had previously remained concerned to minimize the
depth of the dispute and protect the identities of those who opposed them. The separation
had been private, fluid and temporary; but now both sides recognized it had become open
and fixed, it had become a schism.

This is further reflected in the Keithians reasons for refusing a statement of
doctrine from the Lloydians. Rejecting the previous interpretation that it was only
Fitzwater and Stockdale who were heterodox, and the other ministers had merely refused
to discipline them, Keith now demanded, since they conceded a difference on doctrine,
“Let them show what that main Matter of Controversie is, and wherein [Keith’s] present
Doctrine doth contradict any of his former Books.” A statement of doctrine was
unsatisfactory because his opponents had already revealed “a sence contrary to
Scripture,” and compared the offer to “Papists, Socinians, Muggletonians, &c.” who “say
they will give us a Confession of their Faith in Scripture words.” J. William Frost has
articulated this problem well in a slightly different context: “Keith could have agreed
with everything [Quaker “founder” George] Fox stated in a treatise [which consisted
largely of a string of scripture passages] ... but whether Fox would have accepted Keith’s
formulation is more problematic.” Keith also argued that sending the matter to London
would have required him to stop preaching on the disputed subjects until a decision came,
and, in the second, he deflected the suggestion by claiming that nothing in his earlier
books would defend his opponents’ heretical doctrine. Keith now rejected the method of
reconciliation being proposed by London. He would no longer accept a common
profession of orthodoxy from all parties, which would paper over any previously asserted heretical opinions, but demanded a specific recantation of those heresies by his opponents.\textsuperscript{241}

The Keithian response in print, however, also adopted a political strain. These tracts and accompanying public statements accused Samuel Jennings of drunkenness and of gambling on horses, and Thomas Lloyd of incompetence as a deputy governor.\textsuperscript{242}

While the simple reality was that many of the participants on both sides held political office in the colony, the Keithians crystallized matters by also arguing that the duties of public office were inimical to Quaker beliefs, and that Quaker ministers were illegitimately assuming magisterial powers. These two strains of the personal and principled appeared in the Keithian \textit{Appeal from the Twenty Eight Judges}, copies of which were posted around Philadelphia shortly before the Yearly Meeting in September. In it, the Keithians denounced the local Quaker ministry for assuming the authority to judge fellow Friends in a manner “too like the \textit{Roman-Hierarchy}.” Keith similarly charged the Quaker magistrates with violating the peace testimony by commissioning a privateer to capture the pirate Babbit specifically, and for handing down death sentences generally. Keith denied that he was traducing the government, “because it was never intended to deny them to be magistrates, for as Magistrates they were obliged to do what


\textsuperscript{242} Keith did not argue against fighting Indians as such, but rather that, because war was an inevitable function of the state, Friends could not serve in office without violating either their civil duties or religious consciences. A \textit{Testimony and Caution, to Such as Do Make a Profession of Truth, Who are in Scorn Called Quakers} ([Philadelphia: William Bradford, 1693]). This pragmatic approach to pacifism was not uncommon among Friends, as Meredith Baldwin Weddle has shown, \textit{Walking in the Way of Peace. Quaker Pacifism in the Seventeenth Century} (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).
they did.” Yet these actions, however appropriate to a civil officer, necessarily damaged their testimony as Quakers. Keith pointed specifically to Quakers in Maryland and Barbados who refused to serve in the militia as a matter of conscience, but now defended Quakers in Pennsylvania who violated that same principle. This attack was compounded by imperial realities: the major voices for stripping Pennsylvania of its charter came from those who argued that Quakers would not provide the necessary military support in the war with the French. In August 1691, the government had refused to supply troops to New York, and Thomas Lloyd would renewed this position in April 1693, leading Fletcher to purge the Lloydians from the council and replace them with a mixture of non-Quakers and Keithians (including Robert Turner and Andrew Robeson, who had co-authored a tract with Keith in Scotland). Until that point, the Keithians used the weakness of the Lloydians’ political fortunes to push an even harder line, one which essentially agreed with Whitehall’s opinion. Far from being in gross violation of the peace testimony, Lloyd and the other members of the political leadership were endangering the Quaker controlled government and their own offices within it.243

The Keithians were also critiquing ministerial authority, a challenge that Jon Butler has argued was the essence of the dispute. As we have seen, anti-clericalism formed a major component of Friends’ thought generally and Keith’s particularly. There

243 George Keith, An Appeal From the Twenty Eight, p. 1, 8; Illick, William Penn the Politician, p. 114-119; Gary B. Nash, Quakers and Politics, Pennsylvania, 1681-1726 (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1968), p. 182-187; J. M. Sosin, English America and the Revolution of 1688, p. 188-189. The Keithian argument presented a difficulty: it delegitimated any form of government. In response, they returned to the formulation of covenants Keith had earlier used to explain how people without access to scripture could approach salvation. “As there are higher and lower degrees in Christianity, so it may be more tolerable or excusable to one in his lower degree.” A Testimony and Caution, p. 10. This tract was issued in February 28, 1693, before Fletcher (who arrived in Philadelphia in April, 1693) removed the Lloydians, making it the most obviously politically cynical act of the Keithians, and the one most in accord with Gary Nash’s interpretation of the schism as a whole.
is little evidence that hostility to the pretensions of Delaware Valley public Friends instigated the schism, but like many issues it was quickly incorporated into the complaints of the Keithians. Keith's assault on ministerial authority was also uneven. Illegitimate ministerial authority was inseparably tied to the defense of false doctrine. In keeping with this totalizing approach to identity, ideology and authority (the harsh words used, the doctrinal differences, and the concern over the general exercise of martial and juridical powers by his opponents), Keith denounced the ministry both for promoting heterodoxy and for immorality. Keith and his followers complained that the June 20th judgment had denied them Gospel Order. Referencing the dispute with Thomas Hicks and the Baptists twenty years before, Keith compared the latter favorably to his coreligionists, since they agreed to a public meeting, while the Lloydiands denounced him without first conferencing with them.244

The publication of the Appeal and the political insults it and the Plea contained meant that the ensuing several months of the schism occurred simultaneously in two forums: the meetinghouse and the courthouse. According to the Lloydiands, the Appeal precipitated a “great Rumor ... of Sedition, Disturbance of the Peace and Subversion of the Government, &c.” On August 24th, a writ was issued by the Pennsylvania magistracy (who included several of Keith’s enemies: Samuel Jennings, Arthur Cook, and Samuel Richardson), to seize all copies of the tract. The constables also impounded part of Bradford's type, and arrested him along with John McComb (a tavern keeper). While apparently not arrested, Keith was charged with calling Thomas Lloyd an “impudent

man,” whose “name would stink” and for declaring Lloyd unfit to be deputy governor. William Bradford was charged with publishing the *Appeal*, which attacked the magistrates for exercising their proper functions, and “so Prostitut[ing] the Validity of every act of Government, more especially in the Executive part thereof, to the Courtesie and Censure of all factious Spirits, and Malecontents under the same.” He had printed the tract, moreover, without his name on it, contrary to the law in England (though nobody was sure whether that law was still in effect). John McComb was charged with distributing the *Appeal* in his tavern.245

After committing Bradford and McComb to the gaol, the magistrates brought two more judges, a Lutheran named Lacy Cock (or Cox) and a Baptist named John Holmes onto the bench. According to Keith, this was done in an attempt to prevent the charges from seeming like an attack against Jennings's religious enemies. It was a problem that overhung the trials: the transparent fact that the prosecutions were an extension of the dispute within the Society of Friends; thus, during the trial, Keith's opponents’ roles as Friends and magistrates collided. After the arrest of Bradford and McComb, the judges issued a paper clarifying that they had charged the Keithians only for those portions of the Appeal “which appears to have a Tendency aforesaid [sedition] and not any part relating to differences in Religion.” If alleviating this difficulty was Jennings’s plan, it backfired. When the magistrates sought to try Keith (who was apparently temporarily residing across the river in Burlington in order to avoid arrest before the Yearly Meeting met) *in absentia*, Cock and Holmes demanded that it be proved that the charges were of a civil nature, rather than “a Religious Difference among themselves.” With the Jennings’

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245 The *mittimus* is reprinted in Keith, *An Appeal From the Twenty Eight Judges*, p. 8.
faction unable to meet this standard, it appears that the charges against Keith were temporarily dropped. Peter Boss, an ally of Keith, in the meantime, wrote a letter to Jennings attacking the June 20th judgment as popish and accusing Jennings of drunkenness and of abusing his servants. In response, Boss was arrested. 246

That same day, both McComb and Bradford were arraigned. The events of the trials, which occurred over several months, were collected and printed in the unsubtly titled tract, *New England's Spirit of Persecution Transmitted to Pennsilvania, and the Pretended Quaker Found Persecuting the True Christian-Quaker*. The trials, therefore, like most of the schism, occurred as two “events,” action and text, the latter having the more lasting effect. The trials also reveal a series of competing and concurrent discourses, of English liberties, of Quaker historical memory, and state power, by which the various individuals sought to use the trial to promote their own interpretation of the schism (and for the defendants, to achieve the practical end of avoiding the full civil penalties). Bradford challenged the court on legal grounds, and (having been imprisoned for two months) demanded a speedy trial in accordance with his liberties as a “free born Englishman.” A judge reportedly replied that Bradford would have “had thy Back slasht before now” had they been in England. Probably meant as a reality check on the defendants’ dramatics, in the hands of the tract’s author the statement read as further confirmation of the judges’ unchristian temperament. In contrast to Bradford, McComb

played the role of Quaker martyr. Accused by the magistrates of being impudent, he told them they could remove his hat. Few in the courtroom could have missed McComb’s reference to the Quaker refusal to show “hat honor.” In a similar fashion, the author of the tract attacked the seizure of William Bradford’s type and other property, in a manner reminiscent of the distrain of Quaker property in England for non-payment of tithes. “Whether these Actions are most like to the poor despised and persecuted Quakers,” he argued, “or their Persecutors, is left to all impartial People to judge.” The court, however, decided not to try them until the next Quarter Session met in October. Unable to do much more than fine them, the court clearly hoped to keep Keith's printer imprisoned and inactive during the coming Yearly Meeting.247

Two 1692 yearly meetings assembled in Burlington during the first week in September, the Lloydiens in the meetinghouse and the Keithians in the courthouse. The latter then issued a “challenge” (as Jennings would later describe it) to the former by having a Keithian read it while standing “with his hat on” in a window of the meetinghouse. They demanded a hearing on the June 20th declaration. According to Jennings, the Lloydiens offered to hear Keith, if he would wait for the appropriate part of the Yearly Meeting. Keith later called this an evasion, claiming that they sought to push his appearance to the last day of the meeting when there would be little time left and most of the attendees would have gone home. So Keith declared he would be at the

247 Keith, *New England's Spirit of Persecution*, p. 4, 10-11. Documents containing the charges against Keith are printed in Samuel Jennings. *The State of the Case*, p. 47-58. John Smolenski provides a valuable interpretation of the “Keithian Five’s” legal strategy during the trial, as well as analyzing the Quaker origins of the dramatics they employed. Bradford’s and McComb’s imprisonment appears to have been mainly symbolic. McComb was allowed to leave a few hours every day to visit his sick wife. Comically, at one point, both were locked out of the jail at the same time that they wanted to issue a statement from the prison. Instead, they were forced to write and sign it inside the doorway of the house to which the jail was attached.
meetinghouse the following day, and invited his opponents to attend, but instead they
sent messengers to Keith’s meeting inviting him again to work out matters on the
appropriate day of the Yearly Meeting. Keith and Jennings characterized the reception of
the messengers differently, each accusing the other of disruptive and abusive behavior.
The Keithians went back to the courthouse and issued a printed declaration in the voice
of the Yearly Meeting condemning Lloyd and the other ministers who signed the June
20th declaration, insisting that all Friends charged with “Misdemeanours, and Ill
Behaviour in their Lives and Conversations” no longer be allowed to speak in meetings,
and calling on both sides to stop verbally abusing one another. Meanwhile, the Meeting
of Ministers, led by Samuel Jennings, brought forth a public statement defending their
issuance of the June 20th declaration and the Lloydian yearly meeting concluded by
drawing up a statement disowning Keith and his followers.248

Thus the schism had become a contest over corporate and individual identity. For
Keith to have assented to presenting his demands before the Yearly Meeting would have
given the lie to his main defense: that he was not a schismatic but rather the victim of a
heretical faction. To go would have been to agree that his opponents' meeting was the

248 Jennings, The State of the Case, p. 22; George Keith, A Further Discovery of the Spirit of Falsehood &
Persecution in Sam. Jennings, p. 24; The printed declaration From the Yearly Meeting at Burlington ... '7th
Month anno 1692 (Philadelphia: William Bradford, 1692) is also printed in Robert Hannay, A True Account
Robert Turner, prominent merchant and Penn ally, was investigated by the Lloydian meeting for signing
this petition and eventually disowned. Philadelphia Monthly Meeting Minutes, September 29, 1692 printed
in KC, p. 134. Copies of the statement of the Meeting of Ministers are in “Epistles,” p. 18-20 PKC; in A
Collection of Epistles from George Fox and Others, C5.1, Haverford College Library, Quaker Collection;
and in Jennings, State of the Case, p. 17-21. A badly damaged letter to Keith signed by Lloyd, Jennings,
Cook and Delaval rather furiously denounced Keith for falling from the community of the meeting and
asked “Who under the Circumstances but thy self would so peremptorily give forth [hole] such Citations
agst: us in his own voice (& not so much as the order of any meeting mentioned) & so insolently prescribe
us a day hose & place for our appearance” especially since they claimed to have separated from the
meeting. T. Loyd to G.K., n.d. PKC.
true meeting honestly trying to adjudicate Keith’s break from itself. In a similar fashion, by refusing to meet Keith on his own terms, his opponents insisted upon the regular functioning of the meeting, and thus their own unity with the larger Quaker fellowship.

By now, epistles were also coming in from elsewhere in the Atlantic Society. Bridgetown, Barbados, responded to the Keithian yearly meeting’s printed statement shortly after it was issued. The epistle buried all doctrinal issues and focused strictly upon the act of separation and the revelation of it in print. The Caribbean Friends were unimpressed by the Keithians attempting to “lay the Blame upon others” for “that seperate meeting yu have setup and Trumpeted to the world in Print,” with the result that word of the schism went “abroad to places that were very much If not altogether Ignorant of your strife.” Barbados queried, given Fitzwater’s and Stockdale’s seniority, whether “all you fourty six, that has sett your names to the said Judgment, know your selves to be quallifyed to give Judgment against two antient ministers.” They also pointed to the Wilkinson-Story controversy of fifteen years before to show that there was no need for Keith and his supporters to have published their disagreements or to separate, even if their complaints were valid. The Third Haven, Maryland meeting, in an epistle to Keith, complained of the ill effect Keith's books were having there, and the embarrassment the scandal was in the face of their enemies. “Oh that ever Geo: keith shold do these things,” they exclaimed, suggesting again that the depiction of Keith as someone long in precarious union with Friends is misguided. If he had discovered errors among Friends, they continued, he should have dealt with them privately, and “if thou Cold not prevaile” and “friends in pensilvania were not fit to Judge in those diferences then thou might have Caled for the assistance of other friends in these american parts.” If that failed, he should
have appealed to London. The ability of the Philadelphia leadership to marshal inter-colonial support through the meeting structure was central to their isolation of Keith's followers and the retention of their own authority. The Keithians replied to the Maryland epistle in print, arguing that his opponents had long since publicized the dispute by distributing the June 20 epistle.249

Communication also continued with London. An epistle from the imperial capital, written in September (its authors probably only recently aware of the June statement) differed little in approach from the previous year. They explained themselves to be “Greatly Concerned to hear that those differences have hapned among you, & have bin Carried on & heightned to that degree as they are,” which would result “not only to the Lessoning of yor Love & Christian tenderness & Charrity to Each other but to ye reproach of Truth & our holy profession & Obstruction to ye Growth & Prospeerrity of it by yor feirce Oposition to Each other.” London still either refused to believe or at least admit that there might exist actual doctrinal disagreements, through meeting with one another “it will apear thatt there is not such materiall Differance as doth seem to some of you,” since both sides believed in the Trinity and historical Christ. Yet London was

249 Epistle to George Keith and the rest of the separate company in Pennsylvania ... from the six weeks meeting at Bridge Towne in Barbados, PKC, folder #4; Address to George Keith from Yearly Meeting at Treadhaven [Third Haven] in Maryland 4th of 8th mo. 1692, PKC, folder #2, Friends House Library, Swarthmore College; The Third Haven Monthly Meeting Minutes for March 27, 1693 recorded reading the Barbados and London epistles to Pennsylvania “with A reproofe to George Keith for his seperating from and writing against friends.” Third Haven Monthly Meeting Minutes 1676-1746, p. 125. The Chester Monthly Meeting likewise ordered on May 2, 1693 that copies of the Barbados and Maryland letters be acquired, along with a statement by James Biles that does not survive. Chester Monthly Meeting Minutes 1681-1707, p. 46. The Barbadian epistle declared that the "Expressions you [Keith] have Printed and Published to the world in Gath and Askelon" had undermined preaching “that is like to be a means to Preserve Friends Children from becoming heathens and Indians.” One of the few references to a relationship between the schism and child rearing referred not, as Barry Levy argues, concerned with the potential damnation of Friends children, but a fear of de-Christianization similar to Keith’s but connected to fears of undermining the Friends’ ministry as a bulwark against the wilderness.
beginning to reconsider its support of Keith, as it explained “be tender and Carefull of
Imposing of Creeds, or a Confession of ffaith upon Each other for that may hurt &
stumble some that are sincere & upright harted. and you know it hath not bin our manner
never since we were a people nor the termes of our Comunion.” Even its somewhat
frantic postscript, recording “We now to our Griefe and sorrow find your Differences are
Exposed in print with much heat and great aggravations to your Denying each other,” did
not single out the Keithians. By the end of November, however, London’s tone had
noticeably changed. By this point they had probably received word of the events
surrounding the yearly meetings and were not pleased with the course of events. In
addition, a reference to a collection of Keithians tracts appearing in London may have
been a reference to the first of the London reprints of these works. In a letter directed to
both sides, they reported receiving accounts of events from both sides and “also divers
printed Books of G: Keiths &c. which we are very sorry to see,” while conceding they
had “not oppertunity at present to give or sence upon the diverse particular matters
represented as points in difference.” They nonetheless “tenderly and Impartially”
declared “that we are very much dissatisfied that the breach apear so wide.” The London
leadership judged all parties, Keith and his followers for separating and publishing tracts,
and their opponents for being “so slow and Hesitating in a due & timely Censure upon
those weak & unsound Expressions of some ffriends among you, And feare some have
bin too Quick in a publique Denial of him.” London’s intra-meeting approach was still
community based, not only did they send the same letter to both sides, but they made no
attempt to blame one side over the other, simply disciplining ill behavior on all sides.250

250 London to Thomas Lloyd, Samuel Jennings, George Keith, George Hutchinson, &c. 29th 7mo 1692;
London to Thomas Lloyd, Samuel Jennings, George Hutchinson, and George Keith, 29th 9mo 1692 both in
At the same time, colonial Friends were sending London assurances that no doctrinal differences existed in the colonies and that the schism was a purely malicious act perpetrated by Keith. A women’s meeting in the colony sent the Women’s Yearly Meeting in London an epistle, in which they explained that “some are not ashamed through the suggestions and subtil Devices of the Enemy of Mankind by a spirit of Prejudice which hath prevailed with some to give forth reports both by words & writing” that some Friends denied the outward coming of Christ, Judgment Day, and the resurrection of physical bodies. Yet, much like London, the women’s meeting then complained vaguely about some who “are led aside from the stability of the Truth making Profession & a sort of Confession of that which many if not all are we doubt strangers to.” This strategy of asserting orthodoxy while accusing the Keithians of imposing it fit with the Lloydians developing narrative, and with Keith’s actions in printing and separating, to define the separation as purely an act of arrogant uncharitableness on Keith’s part.251

While the Keithians had been isolated and the schism settled into stalemate within the religious sphere, the issue of criminal charges against the leading Keithians in the political sphere remained. On October 5, the grand jury presented Peter Boss for abusing Samuel Jennings in his civil capacity, George Keith and Thomas Budd for publishing various abuses of Jennings in their tract The Plea of the Innocent, and William Bradford for publishing those sections of the Appeal that related to civil government (the violations

“Epistles,” p. 21-24 & 24-25, PKC; another copy of latter exists in Haverford College Library, Quaker Collection. The reprinting in London of the Bradford Keithian tracts will be discussed later. Keith, An Account of the Great Divisions, Amongst the Quakers, in Pennsylvania, &c. (London: John Gwillim and Richard Baldwin, 1692) was the first to appear, and was a reprint of A Plea. Assuming roughly two months for travel, this would mean An Account could have appeared no earlier than September.  

of the peace testimony). John McComb represented a particular difficulty, because they
could only charge him with distributing the *Appeal*. McComb denied doing even this,
confessing only to giving two copies privately to individuals he knew. After the court
stripped him of the license for his tavern, and there is no further mention of his
prosecution (presumably he was released).  

In addition to the problems the court faced in clearly delineating the charges of
political slander from the dispute within the meeting, the court also had to operate within
the coarsened public climate produced by the schism, especially within religious
gatherings. As he and his followers would during the trial, Keith increasingly relied upon
the tradition of English Protestant martyrology and Quaker mysticism. After being
threatened with the constable at a meeting, Keith began “bidding them [his opponents]
cut him in Collops, fry him, and eat him,” and said, “His Back bad [sic] long itched to be
whipt.” Keith went further, according to later descriptions by Samuel Jennings, declaring
himself “like our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,” and “comparing himself to a Dove,” and
“a Lamb, while he thus appeared in a great Transport of Heat and Passion.” Keith
explained his behavior as a response to “their extreme threatening me with their
Magistratical Power, and saying, I deserved to be punished, thinking to put me in fear.”
Keith intended to show that he was not afraid, projecting his confidence that he walked in
the Light.  

253  Samuel Jennings, *The State of the Case*, p. 23; George Keith, *A Further Discovery of the Spirit of
Falshood & Persecution in Sam. Jennings*, p. 25. As for comparing himself to Christ, Keith asked “are not all
the Followers of the Lord Jesus like him, Whereof I am one?” Quickly shifting the issue to one of
identity, he compared his behavior to Jennings’s, proclaiming “let the Impartial judge, whether Sam.
Jennings, or I, be most unlike the true Christian.”
This martyrology had a strong resonance for Keith, as his frequent angry references (during his debate with Cotton Mather) to the Friends hung in New England attest. To justify his behavior, he also cited the response of George Fox to a beating received at the hands of a mob, “Strike again, here at my Arms, my Head and my Cheeks.” Beyond specifically Quaker examples, Keith also pointed to John Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs*. He explained that his asking to be roasted alive was a specific reference to the death of St. Lawrence. As he did with much of the distinguishing behavior of the Society of Friends - their rhetorical extremes, anti-clericalism, and embodiment of Biblical typology - Keith now used their self-identification through suffering against his opponents within the Society as a way of drawing boundaries between faction and the true body of Christian believers. Even the seemingly most individual act in the Christian tradition, martyrdom, in which Keith participated vicariously, was used to draw up the boundaries of the Christian community. The scandal of his behavior was not so much what he did, but that he did it against fellow Friends. At the same time, this extremity of rhetoric and performance made not only reconciliation all but impossible, but also most forms of communication between the two sides.254

In contrast to his role as suffering Friend, Keith attacked the spiritual legitimacy of his opponents through a variety of charges. When Thomas Wilsford and James Dickinson took the Lloydian side, Keith proclaimed “these two men have sufficiently

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254 St. Lawrence was an archdeacon in Rome in the third century A.D. who was arrested by the Governor of Rome in order to loot Lawrence’s church. Refusing to surrender the church’s gold and silver, Lawrence was burnt alive on a gridiron placed over a bonfire. John Smolenski has argued “The courtroom debate centered around the relationship between religious authority and legal authority in Pennsylvania, with each side cloaking itself in the mythology of early Quakerism to justify its own legitimacy.” The author, however, focuses almost exclusively on the legal challenges made by the Keithians; and, while referring to the “martyr roles” assumed by them, provides little detail. Smolenski, “Friends and Strangers,” p. 192.
discovered themselves by their late Fruits,” of lying and false accusation. Even more clearly, “for all the great bragging and boasting of these our Opposers, of their inward discerning, God by his wonderful Providence hath given some evident Examples of it [their presumptions to godliness] on the face of the World.” Keith declared one man (perhaps Derrick op de Grave), whom Keith’s opponents “cry[ed] up as no ordinary saint,” had impregnated a “Negro woman,” while another had attempted to commit sodomy. This also explains the seemingly disparate charges that the Keithians leveled at their opponents over the course of the schism: from violating the peace testimony by commissioning a privateer, to keeping slaves. Issues of doctrine were easily incorporated into issues of morality, because both were essentially reflections of identity, of obedience to the Inner Light.255

The hostility between the two factions within the Society, however, increased beyond even these bounds. At a first days meeting (the regular worship meeting) on November 13th, Arthur Cook thrust his face into Keith’s and shouted “Deceit, Deceit, and who can bare this?” Another time he shouted: “Ranter, Wicked Man, Ungodly,” and “Thou pray thou oughtest not to pray, thou art a Wicked Man.” A week later, when Cook did the same thing to Keith, Budd intruded himself between the two “staring him in the face, but Arthur pressing to get close to G.K. . . said, Wilt thou push me?” “No,” Budd replied, “but I think to stand in the way, and not let thee come close to him.” Budd then “in a familiar way ... did gently stroke his face, as a Nurse would do a suching [sic]

255 George Keith, A Discovery of the Mystery of Iniquity & Hypocrisie Acting and Ruling in Hugh Derborough ([Philadelphia?: William Bradford, 1693]), p. 7-8. This undated tract is usually listed as printed in 1692, but internal evidence suggests 1693. In the tract, Keith refers to events that occurred in December 1692, but also states that the last Quarterly Meeting had met in March. Unless there had not been another Quarterly Meeting for close to a year, this suggests Keith was referring to March 1693.
child.” Budd’s feeble attempt to excuse slapping Cook reveals the breakdown in the structures of the Friends’ meeting. The two sides may have angered each other before by the way they treated fellow Friends in the same manner as Friends treated their enemies, but now both sides were behaving outrageously regardless of the context.256

The actual trials of Keith and his allies did not begin until December 6th and continued till the 12th. The judiciary was stacked with anti-Keithians: Jennings, Cook, Samuel Richardson, Griffith Owen, and Robert Ewer. Only Robert Turner can be identified with Keith’s side. Cock and Holmes also served, while one Henry Waddy, identified as a Quaker, cannot be connected to either side. Boss went to trial first, and sought to exclude all Quaker jurors, but was overridden. He then argued that he had insulted Jennings privately and not in a civil capacity. He thereby began the debate that would run through the trial: when and how to distinguish between insulting a person as a magistrate as opposed to as a Friend within the meeting.257

When Peter Boss repeated this distinction between civil and religious office, his opponents rejected his argument. The prosecutor, David Lloyd, argued: “what was spoke

256 Keith, A Discovery of the Mystery of Iniquity, p. 6; Thomas Budd, A Just Rebuke to Several Calumnies, Lyes & Slanders Reported against Thomas Budd ([Philadelphia: William Bradford, 1692]), p. 6.
257 For the demographics of jurors and magistrates in Pennsylvania in general, including the state of legal knowledge, see Brophy, “For the Preservation of the King’s Peace and Justice.” Keith had argued against a similar conflation of religious accusation and political sedition in his dispute with Cotton Mather. Intensely bitter over Boston’s execution years before of five Quaker ministers, Keith denounced New England’s persecuting spirit. When Mather responded that they were executed for sedition against the state, Keith retorted “it is known generally over almost the whole World where New-England and Boston is named, and what they did in that matter, that it was simply for their Conscience, and for no crime in matter of fact at all, but transgressing that unrighteous Law of not returning on pain of Death.” If this were accepted as subversion of government, Keith argued, any act of conscience must be subversion, even one by Christ himself. Keith, The Pretended Antidote Proved Poyson: or, The True Principles of the Christian & Protestant Religion Defended (Philadelphia: William Bradford, 1690), p. 11-13. Jonathan Chu has explored this distinction (necessary because of Massachusetts’ lack of church courts) between prosecuting Quakers for heresy and for behavioral crimes (such as sedition, blasphemy, etc.). Jonathan M. Chu, Neighbors, Friends, or Madmen, the Puritan Adjustment to Quakerism in Seventeenth-Century Massachusetts Bay (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1985).
against Samuell Jenings, must needs relate to him as a Magistrate, for take away Samuell Jenings, and where will the Magistrate be?” to which Samuel Jennings added: “Take away Sam. Jenings the Magistrate, and where will Sam. Jenings the Quaker be?” The author of the tract puzzled at this, “By this it seemeth to S. Jenings that it is as inherent to him to be a Magistrate as to be a Quaker, and therefore when his Magistracy ceaseth, his Quakerism (according to him) must cease, and like Hyppocrates Twins live and dye together,” even though Samuel Jennings would still be himself if he was neither of the other two. Cook responded, claiming that they would not countenance “matters of Religion [to be] discoursed there,” and complaining that “Religion should not be made a cover to revile and defame men.” The magistrates, in their attempt to demark the court as a purely political sphere, partook of the same dishonesty as that in which the Keithians engaged by limiting the effect of their abuse to the religious sphere.258

Further convoluting matters was Friends’ belief that magistrates should govern according to Christian virtue. When Boss complained he was unable to receive a fair trial, Arthur Cook replied that “as a Christian he [Arthur Cook] could bear anything, but not as a Magistrate.” Here the tract’s author wondered how the two could be sundered, “as if we were not to expect that when they act as Magistrates, they are indued with Christian Patience, Meekness, and Long-suffering, as if when they act the Magistrate, they put off the Christian.” Keith pointed to the extensive abuse of the Keithians in which the magistrates had engaged. “Ye will not say ye gave us these Names as Magistrates,” Keith argued, so why could not he criticize them as professed Friends, “not as ye are Magistrates.” David Lloyd argued that civil courts could try people for atheism, and

258 Keith, New England’s Spirit, p.15-16.
when Keith objected, pointed out that English law allowed the punishment of words spoken to a magistrate not punishable otherwise. Ralph Ward then asked if it was possible to criticize an immoral magistrate and was removed from the courthouse.

The godly magistrate was ultimately inseparable from the political Friend. Early modern hierarchies were often understood as relationships of mutual Christian duties of obedience and patriarchal obligations. The Society of Friends had long lobbied for religious tolerance on the basis of the belief that the experience of and growth within the Light, unmediated by coercion, was the only path to salvation; however Friends never sought a secular state. The Quakers believed as much as any sect in the magistrate who ruled in accordance with the Word. An anecdote inserted into New England's Spirit of Persecution exemplified the problem of correlating magistracy and ministry. After reciting numerous examples of Jennings’s abuse of his servants and office, the author pointed out “yet the next day he can put on his Canonical Robe, and imitate a Disciple of the Meek Jesus, and compare himself to poor Mordecai.” Referencing the Frankford meeting, the author then described Jennings during a worship meeting again putting “on his magisterial robes,” telling “the People, That now he speaks to them as a Magistrate,” and calling for a constable. The attempt to separate Christian admonishment of Friends from seditious attacks upon their office was untenable given the fusion of Quaker identities. The duty of constables to maintain public order, in the tense atmosphere now present, likewise blurred the line between secular law enforcement and religious persecution.259

259 Ibid, p. 15-16. William Offutt’s concept of legal adherence adds an additional dimension to this debate. Conceding that, in measuring legal authority, court records cannot reveal “the psychological attachment felt by members of a society to legal rules and institutions,” Offutt uses “legal adherence” to refer to a necessary precondition of such affective consensus, “an understanding of likely legal categories and rules
Peter Boss was ultimately found guilty of “speaking slightingly of a Magistrate” and fined six pounds. George Keith was presented to the court next. Before entering his plea he requested to make a statement, to which the court condescended:

I would have you to consider, that both ye and we are as Beacon [sic] set on a Hill, and the Eyes of God, Angels and Men are upon us, and if ye do any thing against us that is not fair and just; not only these parts hereaway will hear of it, but Europe also; for if we be wronged (if God permit) we think to make it known to the World.

Individuals warned him against menacing the court, or publishing anything that might impugn its authority. Keith drew upon the global pretensions of Quakerism. His statement was of a piece with the meeting’s fear of scandal: a common sense among Friends of acting on a world stage of millennial importance. More practically, Keith was pointing back to London, where he believed he still enjoyed significant support. After some wrangling, Keith finally entered a plea of not guilty, and then argued that the court

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governing behavior and an understanding of likely legal strategies and outcomes. High levels of adherence existed when the legal rule governing an issue in potential conflict was clearly recognized by the actors involved, when the facts in the underlying social transaction were not in dispute, and when the parties felt able to predict the likely application of rule to facts by a legal institution.” High levels of adherence, therefore, are marked by a large percentage of cases being resolved out of court and high levels of convictions in those cases making it to trial (revealing them as “tactical errors”), while low levels of adherence reveal the opposite. In his study of the Delaware Valley courts, Offutt has found high levels of adherence in cases involving attacks on civic authority and criminal defamation (79% handled out of court, 95% of trials producing convictions) and low levels in civil defamation and assault cases (45.9% handled out of court and 70% of trials producing convictions). Applying this model to the trial of Keith and his associates, we can see the debate was in good part over to which of category the trial truly belonged. By defining the crime as an attack on political authority, for which there were high levels of adherence, the Lloydians were making the course of the litigation a foregone conclusion. Keith’s strategy, in contrast, demonstrated the lack of legal adherence in civil defamation cases (i.e. the lack of consensus over what constituted it and how the law should operate) and was a conscious attempt to move the trial into that more contested ground, where Keith had more of a chance of acquittal. William M. Offutt, “The Limits of Authority: Courts, Ethnicity, and Gender in the Middle Colonies, 1670-1710” in The Many Legalities of Early America editors Christopher L. Tomlins and Bruce H. Mann (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), p. 357-387.
had no jurisdiction, since he had not impugned the “King, Governour, nor Country” but only private individuals, who could take the matter up civilly. The court answered that he should have raised this objection before pleading.260

Keith again argued that, contrary to the law prohibiting the defamation of magistrates, he had not called Jennings “High and Imperious” as a magistrate, but only as a minister. Here, however, he made the distinction clearer. “If I Had called him Ignorant in the Laws, and Unjust in the Execution,” Keith’s words would have been defamation of a magistrate, because these qualities were essential to a magistrate. Keith’s actual remarks were directed only to qualities essential to a minister. This argument received further elucidation in a note: while Jennings might be acting in a civil capacity, he was still a Christian, and being criticized for his lack of Christian behavior. The fact that he was also a judge and performing the duties of a judge when he engaged in the acts was irrelevant.

Unable to get any other plea from Keith, they listed him nihil dicit (that he had refused to plead) which meant that he was tried and found guilty by the bench. The court then sent in Thomas Budd for arraignment. After Budd plead not guilty “as presented” (i.e. that he did not challenge the fact of having written that Jennings was “Ignorant and Presumptuous,” but only the construction placed upon his words) Keith began speaking for him, ascribing both statements to specifically religious contexts. Budd, like Bradford, then sought to remove all Quakers from the jury. Being told this was too general a complaint, he named specific Friends who had opposed both himself and Keith, but this was also rejected by the court, and the jury found Budd guilty the next morning. Both Keith and Budd were fined five pounds.261

261 Ibid, p. 28-29.
William Bradford was presented on December 10th. Bradford focused upon the legal forms. He quickly found himself opposed both on having the specific laws he had broken read to him, and on his jury exceptions. Here the court argued that the jury was only to determine whether Bradford printed the paper, not whether its content was seditious. Bradford complained that the jury was supposed to determine questions of law as well as fact. Like the others, Bradford defined the contents of the *Appeal* as only a religious matter directed to fellow Friends. When asked, why, therefore, had he printed it, he replied that it was to promulgate it to Friends before the Yearly Meeting. The author of the tract here complained that Cook and the jury sought to “overawe” the prisoners. With few other options, Bradford, while not directly denying he had printed the *Appeal*, now demanded that they prove he did, causing the court to bring the frame (the set type) into the court. In the end, there was a hung jury (three non-Quakers sat on it) and the attempt to retry him failed. Bradford then asked the court for his type back.

The Quaker leadership lost their gamble that a trial would silence Keith. Instead, within a year, William Penn was complaining that “the Tryal of G. Keith [probably the London reprint of the account of the trial] has been Industriously spread all about the nation Especially in Lond: at the Court, Westminster hall & the parliament house.” The result, according to Penn, was that the “odium it has contracted in some stirred up in others; the advantage the disaffected among us make by it against unity, against Frds haveing power, against me, & you in particular are great & Lamentable.” Penn’s fears may have been further exacerbated by accusations being made in England against the Society by Francis Bugg. While he will be discussed in greater detail later, here it is worth mentioning that he often referred ominously to how the Quakers would persecute
others if they ever came to power. The trial of George Keith and his confederates also reveals that Quaker anti-authoritarianism was more complicated than ingrained habits learned in England. This was in part because Quakers themselves were, while committed to religious liberty, aware of the difficulty of conceiving of a civil sphere entirely separate from the religious given the public character of both spheres. Magistrates such as Jennings could hardly accept having their honor publicly besmirched in print, even if the attacks were religiously and not politically motivated, while the Keithians never recognized the trial as anything but an extension of a dispute within the meeting. The behavior of the Keithians in court, while contentious, was hardly the same as the behavior of Keith in the meeting, though, and they were at pains to articulate a proper sphere of civil.262

As Samuel Jennings and the other magistrates left the courthouse, they were accosted by John McComb and Ralph Ward, who told Jennings they were glad he did not have the power to execute them and claimed he simply wanted to seize their goods. Refusing to reply, Jennings and the others continued on to dinner, but were followed.

262 “William Penn to Friends in Pennsylvania,” 11th 10mo 1693, PWP III p. 383; Francis Bugg, New Rome Unmankind’d and Her Foundation Shaken (London: John Gwillin, 1692), unpaginated introduction & p. 8; Bugg made the connection to Keith’s trial explicit in New Rome Arraigned, and Out of Her Own Mouth Condemned (London: J. Gwillim, 1694), unpaginated preface, as did Thomas Crispe on numerous occasions. On this point, I would suggest that Smolenski’s interpretation is problematic. Declaring that the magistrates had “now rendered the Keithians’ attempts to continue the dispute through other communicative channels not only un-Quakerly but illegal,” and that having “effectively attempted to empty Pennsylvania’s public sphere of all its unruly or disruptive elements,” they now used a town crier “to fill the public sphere they had just emptied” with “the performance of public authority through a single communication” in the place of the Keithians’ offer of public dialogue and persuasion.” It was the Keithians, however, who conflated political and religious bodies, using the failings of Friends’ in government to impugn their possession of the Spirit, their honesty in depicting Keith, and their theology. Lloyd and Jennings, on the other hand, were seeking to separate the meeting from the state. Obviously, as Keith complained, this prosecution was practically inextricable from the schism; but, while the Quaker government may have been more concerned with speech than other Englishmen, it is hard to imagine any English magistrate would have tolerated Keith’s abuse. Smolenski, “Friends and Strangers,” p. 190-191.
Angered, Jennings put his hand forward and declared, according to a printed account, “If I draw forth my hand, I will not pull it in again, until I have quelled you.” Jennings later denied the wording, and accepted he could have phrased his actual words better, explaining that he meant:

That if once I ingage, and make use of the power I have, in the station I stand, I will not desist, 'till I have reduced you to a better behaviour: And precarious is the Power and Condition of that Magistrate that cannot do it.263

As Keith pointed out many years later, McComb's and Ward's behavior referenced the persecution of Friends by magistrates in England. Having clearly lost the fight over the Delaware Valley Friends’ institutional apparatus, the Keithians turned to the long tradition of Quaker martyrdom. Jennings, on the other hand, felt the need to reaffirm his own civil power against a clear challenge. This encounter crystallized the chaotic state of the colonial Society, where the Quaker collided with the Friend, the gentleman, and the civil officer.

After the failure to humble the Keithians in court, the theater of legitimacy continued in the worship meetings throughout much of December. Thomas Everndon, a Friend from the Third Haven, Maryland Meeting, appeared at the Philadelphia worship meeting on December 27th with papers of condemnation against Keith both from Everndon’s meeting and one written by William Richardson of West River. Among the other charges leveled were that Thomas Budd had worshipped with the separate Lynam meeting years before. While John Lynam had supported Keith initially, ironically he

263 Jennings, State of the Case, p. 43-45.
subsequently switched sides and signed the June 20th statement. Keith, in printed response, complained that they had made their judgment without investigating the charges on both sides. When Everndon challenged Keith for not first writing to London before separating, the latter first responded that he had written to London, and that George Whitehead had supported his doctrine. Keith also claimed that, given the obvious nature of the doctrine, he did not have to present the issue “as having any uncertainty or doubt” on his part as to doctrine, or “by way of Absolute Submission, to any man or number of men.” He compared it to a case of adultery involving a Friend from Maryland, claiming that Friends needed guidance from London concerning the role of Christ in salvation as much as they required it concerning the immorality of adultery. Keith’s assumption that London supported him and his near contradictory sense that London’s opinion really did not matter were to play an important role in Keith’s relations with the London leadership when he returned to England.264

Samuel Jennings described Keith at several of these meetings as speaking from a raised position on the back stairs of the meetinghouse. As Jennings remarked, however, he appeared “here too much like what he was, viz. a Common Opposer.” As a result, the Keithians surreptitiously built a gallery at the back end of the meetinghouse, so that both sides could shout at each other from either end of the hall. What happened next is

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264 George Keith & Thomas Budd, *False Judgments Reprehended: and a Just Reproof to Tho. Everndon, and his Associates and Fellow-Travelers* ([Philadelphia?: William Bradford: 1693?]); William Richardson to George Keith, 20th 10mo 1692, “Epistles,” *PKC*, p. 12-13. Richardson’s epistle both challenged Keith on specific points of doctrine (denying the sufficiency of the Light) and suggested that Friends agreed to doctrine (inward and outward Christ) while asserting the primacy of the Inner Light over “the outward historical and traditional made and formed faiths that the Lord was never the author of.” Thomas Budd replied to accusations of associating with Lynam in *A Brief Answer to Two Papers Procured From Friends in Maryland, the One Concerning Thomas Budds Favouring John Lynam, &c. the Other Concerning His Owning George Keith's Principles and Doctrines* (Philadelphia: William Bradford, 1692); and Keith, *A Just Rebuke*. 
unclear. According to Jennings, the trustees of the meetinghouse complained to one of their fellows, Robert Turner, that the new gallery was a “Seat of Contention” established without authority. Turner then struck “only a transient stroke at the new one,” and then “fell severely upon Friends [i.e. the old, non Keithian] Gallery, and with a suitable Assistance, cut and tore down in an impetuous manner the Stairs, Seat, Floor, Posts, and Rails therof, leveling it to the Floor.” Keith, according to Jennings, “laught and expresst his satisfaction therewith.” Keith's depiction of the event is opaque, describing a group as having arrived with tools to tear down the new gallery, which one person described as Keith's “Idol.” Keith “replied with a smiling countenance, it was not my Idol.” In both cases, the focus is upon the speech act, upon turbulent speech in the first case (“seat of contention”) and upon Keith’s pride in his own opinions (the gallery, which aided acoustically in being heard, and was therefore, as a projection of Keith’s voice, his “idol”). Rath has argued that the Keithian schism was ultimately over ways of speaking, over sound, more than doctrine. As these statements reveal, by this late date, this was partly true. Yet this was a result of the schism, not a cause. It was combination of direction from London, and Keith’s decision to utilize the press that made admitting possible doctrinal differences dangerous. According to Jennings, Keith only attended one more meeting, before withdrawing to his separate assembly. Keith records a more violent exchange: with a mob having driven him from the gallery, he retreated back to the stairs, where an individual kicked him and the mob shouted “throw him down.” Keith, for his part, argued he withdrew for reasons of public peace.265

265 Jennings, The State of the Case, p. 25-26; Keith, A Further Discovery of the Spirit of Falshood & Persecution in Sam. Jennings, p. 27; Rath, How Early America Sounded, p. 140-144. Rath provides an invaluable description of Quaker meetinghouses, their galleries, and the acoustic properties of both. Despite modern accounts, neither Keith nor Jennings referred to the destruction of the new gallery, and the
By the Spring of 1693, the Philadelphia leadership conducted a concerted campaign to win the London leadership - especially Penn and Whitehead - over to their side. They had been frustrated by the London Yearly Meeting’s epistle. In April, Thomas Lloyd sent a letter to Philip Ford, asking for his intersession with Whitehead. “You may Suppose him,” Lloyd explained about Keith, “to be what we know he is not: the Spirit wherein [the Keithians] are is wrong. . . They have no more unity with you, than with us.” Lloyd complained about the ill effect London’s epistle had had, especially when it was read in the presence of non-Friends (“the baptists & rable“). Arthur Cook sent numerous letters to the London leadership, none of which survive. Hugh Roberts wrote to Penn, asserting that the schism had cast an ill light on Friends in Penn’s colony, thereby reducing his chances of reacquiring it, setting the schism in an Atlantic context for Penn as an event with inter-colonial consequences. But Roberts was particularly concerned to respond to the November epistle sent from London. Far from having judged Keith too peremptorily, he explained, they had given him Gospel Order,” but he proved “not oneley a tering devouring sprit but a cursed leing sbrit also.” Roberts pointed to the opposition to Keith voiced in Maryland and Barbados, while complaining that Keith made use of the fact “that G:W: and others calls him their Friend & brother“ causing his followers to believe that “G W & other Friends ar [sic] in unity with him.” He likewise complained of a letter sent by Penn which encouraged him “to goe one in his prinsiples & plattonic beysdydy [probably a nonsense word],” and to “bouldy report that thee art for him & against friends.” Finally, Roberts critiqued London’s assumption that “the difrence or

Philadelphia Monthly Meeting Minutes only make reference to "the pulling down of the gallery." Interestingly, they also quote Turner defending his actions by stating "he had allways a Testimony against gallereys, in meetings," KC, p. 135.
falling out was between the two scolars,” Lloyd and Keith, “& all the rest but parties of both sides.” Rather, Lloyd had sought to stay above the fray and “did endeavour to perswayd both friends ... and for a long time the difrence did not at all apear between Tho Ll and he.” The narrative of the schism bears this out to a certain degree, as the first printed narrative of the schism left Lloyd out until the summer. Turning London and the leadership of the London Society required the production of a narrative of events that would define the identities of Lloyd and Keith, as rending intolerant enemies or loyal patient Friends, just as Keith had done in his publications. Keith’s choice to print, however, added credibility to the new story.266

Penn received this letter amidst his own continuing difficulties. Until November 1693, he was still under suspicion for Jacobitism and treason, and in constant danger of arrest. In addition, he was financially ruined. Philip Ford, the steward of Penn’s Irish estates, was also a confidence man of breathtaking ambition, who cozened Penn into bankruptcy. By 1693, Penn was seeking to borrow 10,000 pounds from the Pennsylvania government to avoid personal collapse. Penn, therefore, had abundant reasons to reconsider his originally favorable position toward Keith. Yet as late as February 1694, when Keith was probably mid-Atlantic on his way back to England, Penn still wrote to Turner telling him to “entreat G. K. with my love, by the same motives in my name.”

266 “Letter of Thomas Lloyd to Philip Ford, 1693” Bulletin of the Friends Historical Society 2 (1908): p. 17-20; “Hugh Roberts to William Penn,” n.d., PWP III, p. 359-364. The identification of “beysdydy” is by the Dunns, Ibid, p. 363 n. 6. The reference appears to be not to a letter to Keith, as the Dunn’s argue, but to the letter to Turner that Charles Leslie cited. Roberts did not say that it was addressed to Keith, but that it gave encouragement to him, and Penn referred to Keith’s “principles” and “Platonism.” Roberts also claims in his letter that Keith “rund friends down at strainst rate becaus they refusd to subscribe his creed with many other things of his own [illegible word] which friends could not join withall.” This statement suggests, again in a private context, that colonial Friends were willing to admit doctrinal differences that they were not within intra-meeting epistles. The “creed,” however, refers probably not to the Gospel Order Improved, but to the specific statement of doctrine Keith was by then demanding his opponents make.
While hoping God would restore unity between the factions, Penn concede some thought he had “too much encouraged thee, G. K. &c: by my letters. I am for patience, forbearance, long suffering, & all true moderation, but I abhor contention, nicetys, doubtfull disputations, divisions &c.” It was not until Keith arrived in London, and Penn met him for the first time in a decade, that Penn turned against him.  

The summer of 1693 saw another attempt at reconciliation, as the Lloydians sought to comply with the Yearly Meeting’s recommendations. By now the Keithians were meeting with a local Baptist congregation, and the Lloydians complained that the dispute was even more open to enemy eyes. This fact sank an attempt to meet in Philadelphia, and when the Lloydians attempted to arrange a more private meeting, Keith declared he had already arranged one at Salem. The presumptuousness of this bothered the Lloydians, but they eventually agreed, with Jennings, Cook, Lloyd and Delaval gathering at Keith’s house beforehand to set terms. Here Keith’s intentions become somewhat clearer: he asked for moderators and opposed barring non-Friends. The most Keith would concede on the latter was that the Yearly Meeting Epistle would be read privately and then the doors would be opened to all comers. Keith was willing, after a fashion, to continue protecting the privacy of the London leadership, but he and his allies now so utterly rejected the legitimacy and unity of the colonial Society that they treated it with the same insistence on publicity that Keith had in the debates with the Baptists and the Aberdeen students. With meetings often descending into chaos, mediators and a “dangerous” audience offered greater security for his opponents’ behavior (not to mention his own). If this was the intention, it failed. When they began reading the

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267 Bronner, *William Penn’s Holy Experiment*, p. 75-76.
London epistle, Keith objected to the existence of interlinings in the manuscript, claiming either they had been inserted by his opponents making the letter “an adulterated nonsensicall bable” or George Whitehead “was not now what he had known him to be.” The Lloydians argued this brought any attempt to resolve the schism to a standstill, since Keith would not submit to the terms of the London leadership (i.e. he condemn his meeting and separation and they agree to discipline those who made unguarded statements). They asked how any religious controversy could ever be resolved if demanding “absolute submition to any man or men was Antiprodistant & AntiQuaker and ... Rank popery.” Keith insisted “he would leave [controversies] to the Judgment of the spirit in all.” Where once Keith sought to tighten meeting unity and discipline in accord with London, now he refused any absolute authority to the meeting whatsoever.268

That the issue of the meeting was irresolvable at this point seems to have been clear to both sides. The Lloydians sent a letter to London explaining that they had followed their instructions to restore unity, but Keith was impossible to reconcile. They insisted, at length, that they had not judged Keith too quickly the previous summer and pointed to the Wilkinson-Story dispute as evidence of the dangers of allowing someone at odds with the meeting to claim unity among Friends for too long. In addition to this hard line in their epistle, they seriously considered enter the press themselves. John Delaval had produced a tract, *The Present Case Truly Stated*, but refused to print it for lack of an “impartial printer.” The Philadelphia Yearly Meeting gave its approbation to a tract by Thomas Lloyd in 1693, though only a manuscript fragment of it, titled *Philadelphia Tears*, exists, suggesting it may not have been completed. While they balked at this final

268 Letter of ‘Public Frds’ to London Frds 1693, 4mo 9, *PKC*, Folder 1½.
step, the Lloydians had been passing about manuscript tracts against Keith for some time. In early June, the Germantown Friend and merchant Jacob Telner wrote an attack on Keith’s description of original sin in his *Catechism* as undermining the universalism of Christ’s salvation (since Adam passing it to his posterity meant that his sins had not been redeemed by the Light). By this point, Keith was complaining that papers were being read aloud in the meetings, of which he could not obtain copies, probably to avoid him printing them. Finally, Caleb Pusey and Samuel Jennings both later published tracts in London, which may have been written in the colonies, suggesting the lack of a colonial publisher may have been the inhibiting factor.269

Keith, for his part, sent a letter to the lieutenant governor, explaining his intent to travel to England and asking for a certificate of good behavior. In particular, he assured the executive that he had not defamed anyone in his capacity as a magistrate.270

All of this occurred in a vacuum of leadership from London. The Second Day’s Morning Meeting had issued its recommendations of November of 1692, meaning it reached the colony probably around January. This meant at least another two months of travel time would be expected before word of any application of their suggestions could arrive. In fact, the London Yearly Meeting sent a short response in August, explaining a

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fuller comment would proceed from the Morning Meeting, which arrived months later in response to the September Yearly Meeting epistle. Even at this late a date, the Morning Meeting - including Whitehead and Penn - sought to mediate between the two sides, although it clearly supported the Lloydians. The leaders declared themselves “very sensible of yor Exercises and troubles occasioned by the late Divisions separations and printing and exposing the same into adversaries hands,” to the harm of Friends everywhere. At the same time, the London leadership still did not believe there to be any genuine disagreement among Friends, except concerning the issue of the resurrection of bodies. Their advice, therefore, remained much the same: to “use all Christian Endeavours and Condescendions on yor [sic] parts for tender and friendly composure of the Differences in those parts and to forgive person [sic] Injuries and passions & forwardness.” They were certain the meeting could “clear Matters of yor Christian Doctrine & Principles and if any particular persons among you have mistaken therein to reform the same and not to suffer doubtfull Disputations nor receive ye weak in them.” Rather they should arrange another meeting between the two sides, and “patiently wait together to feel Gods power and Wisdom to Tender and open all hearts and understandings.” As for the matters of doctrine, they should rely upon “what God hath revealed and opened to instruction and Edification,” while “as to matters secret unrevealable or doubtfull there is no reason you should Differ about them but leave them to God.” Since God revealed what was necessary, it was not proper “to be intruding into things not seen much less to divide about uncertain suppositions and conjectures concerning them.” Yet the meeting also expressed their satisfaction with the Delaware Friends offer of a confession of faith “in scripture terms or according to what is declared
in ancient and faithful Friends Writings,” including Keith’s own. Finally, they were also satisfied with the “plain Confession” they had given in their epistle to London in June 1692. Although superficially, similar, London’s recommendations no longer sought to be even-handed, but supported the orthodoxy of the Lloydians. The London leadership, however, was unwilling to judge Keith until they met him personally, and could assess his “Spirit.”

The escalating attacks between the two Delaware Valley meetings took a final turn in October of 1693, when the Keithians approved and printed An Exhortation & Caution to Friends Concerning Buying or Keeping of Negroes. The tract’s authors began with the premise that the message of Christ’s having died for all men, “and given himself a Ransom for all to be testified in due time, and that his Gospel of Peace, Liberty and Redemption of Sin, Bondage and all Oppression,” should be preached universally. Then asserting “that Negroes, Blacks, and Taunies are a real part of Mankind, for whom Christ hath shed his precious Blood, and are capable of Salvation, as well as White Men,” he concluded Christ to have come “not to destroy mens Lives, but to save them, nor to bring any part of Mankind into outward Bondage, Slavery or Misery, nor yet to detain them or hold them therein, but to ease and deliver the Oppressed and Distressed, and to bring into Liberty both inward and outward.” This argument, combining the universality of the Inner Light, a focus on the physical sufferings of the historical Christ, and a concern with non-Christian peoples vis-a-vis the Light, fused the various theological concerns of the schism. Winthrop Jordan has argued that English perceived African “heathenism” less as a religious defect to be remedied by conversion than as another component of African

“savageness.” That this early attack on slavery begins with prospect of conversion, and the spiritual egalitarianism underlying the Quaker understanding of Christ’s mission, gives further credence to this interpretation.272

The tract also attacked the colonial slave system as especially harsh. Africans experienced “far worse usage than is practised by the Turks and Moors upon their Slaves.” This fact “tends to the Reproach of the Christian Profession” in the eyes of “Infidels” and “Heathens.” The depredations of corsairs from the Barbary Kingdoms of North Africa against Christian ship crews had long led Europeans to identify Muslims with (usually white) slavery. In the context of the schism, however, this concern with the reputation of the Christian faith was part of the project of de-Christianizing one’s opponents. Opposition to slavery, however, did not follow the lines of the schism. As Jean Soderlund has remarked, several Keithians owned slaves. An opponent of Keith’s, William Southby, would insist in 1696 that the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting oppose slavery, and was ultimately expelled for the action. Finally, in 1688, the Germantown meeting had issued a statement against slavery, signed by a future Keithian, Abraham op

de Grave, two enemies of Keith, Francis Daniel Pastorius and Derrick op de Grave, and one other. That statement, however, was far less religious (or at least Christocentric) focusing more upon the inherent unfairness and cruelty of the institution, and its ill effect upon Pennsylvania’s and the Society’s reputation. It was ultimately rejected by the 1688 Philadelphia Yearly Meeting as “having so General a Relation to many other Parts,” and therefore not in the purview of the local colonial meeting to decide.273

The schism split the colony at every level: religiously, politically, personally. While Thomas Lloyd and the Philadelphia leadership had managed to mobilize the colonial meetings against Keith, London stubbornly refused to condemn Keith, relying instead on the reaffirmation of an affective community that had ceased to exist. Yet the schism also reveals the dependence on the metropole of both sides in attempting to manage the disputes within the colony. While partly personal, as a function of the lack of senior leadership present in the colonies, this dependence was also a system of geographic deference and boundaries of publicity and privacy. All relied upon the belief in and construction within the meeting of an experience of an immediate Christ within.

While Keith’s theology had changed significantly before he even arrived in America, the experience of the schism translated these ideas into identity.

Keith and Thomas Budd sailed from Virginia for London on February 7, 1694. Samuel Jennings and a Quaker minister named Thomas Duckett left about the same time.

273 George Keith, An Exhortation & Caution, p. 5. The Germantown petition is printed The Journal of Negro History XVIII (1933), p. 92-101. The meeting’s decision is quoted in William I. Hull, William Penn and the Dutch Quaker Migration to Pennsylvania (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1970), p. 295-296. The statement, quoting the Golden Rule, refers to it only as a “saying.” There has been some debate over whether Pastorius was a Friend, and, if so, when he converted from Pietism. See Albert B. Faust, Francis Daniel Pastorius (Philadelphia: Carl Shurz Memorial Foundation, Inc, 1934) for an unscholarly, German ethic nationalist interpretation, which assumes he remained a Pietist, and Marion Baxter Learned, The Life of Francis Daniel Pastorius, the Founder of Germantown (Philadelphia: William J. Campbell, 1908) for a more heavily documented study, which argues he did in fact become a Friend.
The depth of the rent within the Society, however, meant that London would be equally unable to heal the breach. Keith had essentially created an anti-Society and was demanding that all Friends choose sides. This cut to the core of the corporate nature of Friends’ identity, since the Society’s only option was to demand a healing of the breach that Keith did not really recognize existed. This disjunction in perception and strategy would drive the failure of two Yearly Meetings in London to resolve the crisis.
In February 1694, Benjamin Furly was not a happy Quaker. The Amsterdam Friend found his own increasingly heterodox interests at odds with the narrow public campaign of the Society, as exemplified by the expulsion from the Society of his friend Francis van Helmont. He wrote to his more famous correspondent, John Locke, that, while he had not broken from the Friends completely, since “I know not yet, where to find [“consortship”] better, freer, and less overladen with superstition,” that, nonetheless, “that narrow spirit is growing upon them apace,” and “no where does that Ape at any time more shew it self than where it has power to domineer.” Word had reached him of the schism of Pennsylvania, as had the printed account of Keith’s trial. Declaring Friends in Pennsylvania “as stingy, as peevish, as persecuting, and as arbitrary in their proceedings against their own non-conformists, as the Thing (cald church) of England to hers,” he suggested that someone “that understands the English Laws, and liberties” would do well to “comment upon, and expose” their proceedings further in order that “they might be shamed out of it, ere they go to far in that way, and become hardened in it.” Furly’s distance from the Society is nowhere more reflected than in this desire to see it publicly embarrassed for its own good. The Keithian Schism is often interpreted as one of intellect versus spirit, or authority versus the individual. Furly’s impression (however guided by his own relationship with Keith) reveals that the schism could just as easily be interpreted by Friends as a rebellion against Quaker meeting authority.274

But an important confluence of ideas remained. Furly had known van Helmont from the 1670s. The summer after the continental alchemist’s disownment, Furly wrote William Penn to recommend *Two Hundred Queries* as going “further than any System yet publicly receivd by any sect of Christians to the clearing the Divine providence, Justice, mercy & wisdom of god.” Numerous historians have pointed to a discussion in European thought over how to correlate a post-Calvin God who loved his creation with the idea of eternal torment in hell for a large portion of the population, including those with no possibility of Gospel knowledge and salvation. Furly complained about unnamed people (probably Friends) that attacked van Helmont “as a Papist, a Jesuit, ye[a] a kind of Atheist.” Keith’s interests in esoteric knowledge were shared in the Society, as were the problems of reconciling theodicy with Christian orthodoxy.\(^{275}\)

The Revolution of Souls had made a greater impact in Britain than in America. A “Helmontian” Friend (actually an exile from the Wilkinson-Story conflict) named William Clarke wrote a series of queries to another Friend and was answered in print. Perhaps encouraged by Furly, he then wrote to Locke for support against his opponent. Clarke, in his eventual printed response, defended supporters of the Revolutions against the name “Helmontians” by pointing to Anglican Henry More’s support for the pre-existence of souls. In concluding, Hall declared the Act of Toleration had produced “Three unshapely Sons at Birth, the *New-Jerusalem-Man*, the *Barker* and *Revolver*.” While the first is obscure, the second referred to the need of Dissenting congregations to attract attendees by “selling” their brand of Christianity. In 1696, Clarke publicly challenged his local Quaker minister, Thomas Curtis, with the same heresies concerning

the manhood of Christ and the resurrection of bodies as Keith had accused his opponents.

The summer after his arrival in London, Keith himself met Locke, and Furly reported the encounter as less than agreeable. Keith concluded – based upon Locke’s suggestion that animals lacked “all sense and life” – that either he was “but a meer Cartesian” or that he was “not in earnest.” The discussion appears to be the last between the heterodox philosopher and the increasingly orthodox Friend, and marks the trend in Keith’s thought away from the intellectual engagement with radical ideas of the 1670s, toward the positions that would eventually convert him to Anglicanism.²⁷⁶

Furly and Locke were not the only people to notice the Schism. In 1696, Leibnitz wrote to Thomas Burnet (a philosopher whose attempt to provide a more convincing account of the Genesis story – based upon the notion that Moses’s account should be read esoterically – would be used by the Deist Charles Blount to more heterodox purposes) that he was entertaining van Helmont. Doubting that even Quakers could explain what they meant by the Inner Light, Leibnitz pointed “in particular [to] your Monsieur Penn, who is at present fighting one of his colleagues, Monsieur Keith who, Monsieur van Helmont says, is clever and has translated into English from the Latin of the late Monsieur Pococke the very excellent book of an Arab author, entituled Autodidactos, which I once read with unusual pleasure.” These various conversations reveal the wide

²⁷⁶ J[ohn] H[all], An Answer to Some Queries Propos’d by W.C. (Marlborough: Leon Litchfield, 1694), p. 36; W[illiam] C[larke], The Harmless Opinion of the Revolution of Humane Souls (London: Sarah Hawkins, 1694), p. 3; idem, One Blow More at the Saducees; and Gross Antichristian Errors (London: Joseph Bradford, 1697); idem, Some Observations on Thomas Curtis; with Three Queries to T.C. and the Other Quakers in Communion with Him (London: Joseph Bradford, 1697). In contrast to Keith and van Helmont, who were interested in questions of universalism and eternal damnation, Walter Clarke focused his defense on the need to explain how one could expiate the temporal guilt of one’s sins. In this, he reproduced a position similar to that for the Roman Catholic idea of Purgatory, claiming that Christ’s sacrifice amended one’s guilt towards God but that the harm done toward the human victim of one’s sin remained to be redeemed either in this life or in a future reincarnation.
awareness of the Keithian Schism, which had by this point far transcended being a purely internal skirmish and become an international and Atlantic event of interest and use to various groups, and therefore the problem that containing it became for the Society of Friends. This wide-ranging interest of individuals in the Keithian Schism would be only furthered by the lapsing of the licensing act in 1695, resulting in a startlingly massive profusion of print. The ultimate result would be not only private commentary on the Schism, but public intrusion into the issue by a variety of individuals seeking to use the multivalent nature of the issues involved to pursue their own agendas.²⁷⁷

The final four chapters of this dissertation explore these inter-related components of the final years of the Schism. The dispute itself did not so much end, as wear itself out, as Keith’s age made him a less effective controversialist, and the other participants moved on to other concerns. But the intervening years, 1695-1703, reveal a moment in time, in which the meaning of religious toleration, the public sphere and the nature of political and religious loyalty and identity were debated intensely by all sides. Chapter six narrates Keith’s return to England, the Anglican agenda promoted by the Bishop of London that was already in play, and Keith’s eventual disownment from the Society (including Keith’s shifting sense of identity). Chapter seven explores the results for the burgeoning public sphere of first the Act of Toleration and then the lapsing of the Licensing Act. Still drenched in an honor culture of public slander and public redress, few people were prepared for or comfortable with a world of anonymous and pseudonymous attacks that offered no avenues for the restoration of public credit. In this

²⁷⁷ Leibnitz to Thomas Burnet, March (7) 17, 1696, quoted in William Isaac Hull, Benjamin Furly and Quakerism in Rotterdam (Lancaster: Lancaster Press, Inc., 1941) p. 119. The first date is that on the letter, which conforms to the Gregorian calendar, which was in common use on the continent, while the one in parentheses is the Julian date, which conforms to the other dates in this dissertation.
chapter above all, the public sphere will be demonstrated to have been an (in contemporary eyes) unfortunate accident. It is with this recognition that chapter eight returns to the realm of ideas. The 1690s saw a series of disputes relating to the relationship between reason and mystery, which were themselves implicated in the nonjuring schism produced by the revolution of 1688. The interpretation of the event, moreover, produced a new movement, at times both ecumenical and sectarian, called the Reformation of Manners, which sought to utilize the new religious settlement towards the creation of a new English society (the puritan ethos domesticated). It is in this collection of ideas that Keith’s eventual conversion to Anglicanism must be understood. Finally, chapter nine pulls these themes -- the dangers of religious heterodoxy, the desire of the Society to withdraw from public dispute, and an Anglicanism forced to compete in a denominational marketplace -- together in the American context. These four chapters thus become a window into an Atlantic community attempting to deal with an “Enlightenment” world it neither understood, nor especially welcomed.
Chapter VI
“Among a Gang and Sort of Quakers”278
The Keithian Schism in the London Context

With the schism in Pennsylvania reaching a stalemate, in 1693 the leadership of the Society issued and printed a statement, *The Christian Doctrin [sic] and Society of the People Called Quakers*. This declaration was less an attempt to address the issues involved in the schism than an exercise in damage control. George Whitehead and the other signatories denounced the content of every major accusation made during the American schism. After an initial declaration of their belief in both the inward and outward historical Christ (including a very un-Quaker like assertion of the propitiatory role of the crucifixion), they continued on to deny preaching two Christs. They also declared that they believed in the Trinity, the resurrection of the physical bodies of Christ and men, (though stating that the manner in which this occurred was an obscure and unimportant matter), and Judgment Day. While valuing outward means such as scripture, moreover, the signatories pointed out that they themselves had had access to scripture long before they had turned to the Light, but it was only effectual afterwards (reversing the argument by their enemies that they could not complain to know specific Gospel facts through the Light *sans* scripture). Turning to universalism, they declared (as Keith had against Mather) that “such pious sincere Men or Women as have not the Scripture or knowledge of Christ, as outwardly crucified,” while “they are not perfect Christians in all Perfections,” were capable of some sort of salvation, but then the statement adopted a

more radical stance, describing them as “more Jews inward, and Christians inward than in outward Shew or Profession. There are Christians sincere and perfect in Kind or Nature, in Life and Substance, though not in Knowledg and Understanding.” Thus Keith and London Friends each meant something very different about the necessity of scripture knowledge to a “perfect” Christian: the for Keith it was the capstone to a process of conversion while for London it was a purely outward matter of faith.279

Finally, the statement denounced the idea of the Revolution of Souls and the book The Two Hundred Queries by name. In doing so, Friends made clear their intention:

Though this opinion of such Revolution appears not to be a point in present Controversy in the Book aforesaid (or in Pensilvania) nor maintained as any Divine opening, Revelation or necessary Article of Faith, but rather Evaded from being publickly controverted, yet in as much as there appears some Ground of suspicion in the Case, and as it seems to be favoured implicitly by some: Therefore that we as a People may not be suspected about it, we sincerely declare our Clearness from the said opinion, as really esteeming it not safe to propagate or maintain.

To stress the point they then reasserted that “we find not any known person or persons of credible Authority that will adventure to assert that opinion, either as divinely Revealed or opened, or as necessary to be believed or received as an Article of Faith,” nor did they know anyone who claimed to remember past lives. On this point, Keith and the Society were on the same page; both sought to bury the dispute over reincarnation. As in their letters to Pennsylvania Friends, the London leadership explained the schism as the result of “want of walking in the true Light, and want of Christian Charity.” They even pressed

279 George Whitehead, The Christian Doctrin and Society of the People Called Quakers; Cleared From the Reproach of the Late Division of a Few in Some Part of America, as Not Being Justly Chargeable Upon the Body of the Said People There or Elsewhere (London: Thomas Northcott, 1693), p. 4, 10.
this interpretation to the point of distorting Keith’s statements to suggest that he did not disagree with his opponents on doctrine.\(^{280}\)

When Keith returned to England on March 28, 1694, with Thomas Budd and a stack of papers and letters with which to establish his case, he expected the London Yearly Meeting to take his side. While some London Friends were angry at Jennings’s “Tirannicall & Wicked practices” in prosecuting Keith, however, the latter nonetheless quickly found himself at odds with many Friends in the local meetings, especially ministers. Keith, moreover, found Whitehead initially “Severe but afterwards upon further discourse & better Information, is more kind.” Whitehead had met Keith privately and “did own that he Beleived God had Called mee to this testimony I bear to the faith of Christ both within us and without us.” Keith also remarked that “mainy friends hope that we are like to agree in principles” despite the fact that Keith noticed differences between the Rhode Island Sheet and the statement issued by the London leadership, which his supporters chalked up to Whitehead’s “want of A Good Understanding, ... not Reaching the sence of what Is Contained in our printed Sheet.” He had not met Penn yet, but later that month, Penn wrote to the Lloydians “S Jennings feels the want of requisite tooles & especially about that troublesom Tryall which exceeds in mischeife, all G Ks books, both with state & all Churches here.” Penn’s correspondence at this point in the schism is sparse, and with Keith non-existent, and it is a mystery why Keith placed so much more hope in Whitehead at this point than in the notably more sympathetic Penn.\(^{281}\)


\(^{281}\) Thomas Budd to Friends, April 12, 1694; George Keith to George Hutcheson et al., n.d., both letters are in the Friends’ House Library at Swarthmore College, Jon Butler has published transcriptions in “The Records of the First ‘American Denomination: The Keithians of Pennsylvania, 1694-1700” *PMHB* CCXX (1996): p. 89-105; “William Penn to Thomas Lloyd’s Supporters,” 24 2mo 1694, *PWP* III, p. 390. In expressing his hope of reconciliation between Penn and Whitehead, Henry Gouldney described the latter as
Unclear whether there were any disagreements over doctrine between Keith and the Society (and uninclined to see them if there were), many English Friends interpreted the dispute as proceeding from Keith’s intransigence. Henry Gouldney described Keith as “not a man governed with that meekness that becomes his Doctrine” of stressing Christ’s outward coming. While meetings with Keith showed little promise “of his comeing more near us in spirit.” Gouldney felt “His doctrines, in generall, are I think owned by all sounds friends, but he seemes to lay downe about 7 points which he calls fundamentals, in any of whome, if we disagree in, he cannot hold fellowship, tho upon the whole, was not his spirit wrong, that would easily be accommodated.” Gouldney believed Keith would only submit to the Yearly Meeting’s judgment “so far as it agrees with his, and not otherwise.” In contrast, Keith’s American opponents were described as “in unity” with English Friends. Scottish Friends similarly wrote to Keith and his wife Elizabeth “that if that sweet, healing, meek, self-denying spirit of lowly Jesus had been kept and abode in,” the disagreements would not have led to schism or become “a sad occasion to amuse the world.” The Scots, however, “doubt not, but there have been provocations on both sides (and we own the errors of none)” though Keith’s spirit was still wrong.282

282 “Henry Gouldney to Sir John Rodes, April 27, 1694”, *A Quaker Post-Bag, Letters to Sir John Rodes of Barlbrough Hall, in the County of Derby, Baronet, and to John Gratton of Monyash 1693-1742* ed. Godfrey Locker Lampson (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1910), p. 58. During the London Yearly Meeting, Keith was a bit more circumspect concerning the Rhode Island Sheet, explaining “some things might be more fully Expresst but had Unity with the Main,” *LYM* 1694, p. 31. Keith later described how Penn, exasperated by the 1695 Yearly Meeting, complained “how much he had Laboured to qualify Friends towards me, in order to a Reconciliation, and how he had Writ in my Favour, to them in Pensilvania.” George Keith, *The True Copy of a Paper*, p. 14.

The fact that Keith had been preceded to London by the tracts he had published with William Bradford in America only increased these Friends’ sense that Keith’s “spirit” was to blame for the schism. Throughout the events in America, Keith’s tracts had been sent around the Atlantic to other meetings, who promptly complained to Keith. In addition to Barbados and Maryland, a group of Scottish Friends told Keith “as for our spreading the books, or accounts thereof, we are in no Wise free thereunto,” suggesting Keith had attempted to enlist allies in the endeavor. Someone had sent a parcel of the American tracts to London for public distribution; but, according to Keith, Friends in London tried to suppress them by buying them up. These collected tracts began appearing in new editions and under different titles revealing one of the further mysteries of the schism: the relationship of Keith to the Wilkinson-Story dispute. The works were published under several imprints, but all except one of the printers and booksellers involved were also employed in the 1690s by the former Friend Francis Bugg. One tract also included an “observation” written by an “F.B.” In addition, in early 1693 Hugh Roberts explained to William Penn that Keith’s supporters were “those people that I hinted before that were never right neither in England nor here.” Soon after his arrival in London, Keith began associating with the Harp Lane Meeting, which had been founded during the previous schism and served as a center for various separated Friends. But, while he had been invited to attend the meeting, others recommended Keith avoid doing so “lest [the Keithians] Give occasion to the Other Side to Object against” themselves, and instead members of the separate church accompanied Keith to the regular meetings. Keith’s choice of words revealed the rapid development of pro and anti-Keithian parties in London, despite his claims to enjoying the support of most of the Society. When Keith
asked for a special meeting to address the issues between himself and Jennings, he insisted that those “who have prejudged the Case already by their Epistles Sent over” be excluded from judging the case, but excepted Whitehead as “being more moderate than the Rest.”

One tract complicates this pattern of publication. The Christian Quaker, or George Keith’s Eyes Opened, a reprint of Keith’s defense of the doctrine of Judgment Day, lists Benjamin Keach -- a leading Baptist and the father of Elias, the minister of the Baptist congregation at Pennepek, Pennsylvania, with which many Keithians were communing -- as its publisher. The tract also contains an advertisement for a future reprint concerning the separation, suggesting the two sets of publishers were not completely disconnected. The Keithians’ attendance at a Pennsylvania Baptist church offers two possibilities: either the Baptists were exploiting their relationship with the separated Friends to embarrass their old enemies or Keith was using the Baptists as cover.

283 Ibid, p. 549-551; George Keith to George Hutcheson et al., n.d.; A Farther Account of the Great Divisions Among the Quakers in Pensilvania. &c. (London: J. Dunton, 1693), p. 23; More Divisions Among the Quakers: As Appears by the Following Books of Their Own Writing (London: Richard Baldwin, 1693), p. 22; The other London reprints probably produced by Bugg are An Account of the Great Divisions, Amongst the Quakers, in Pennsylvania, &c. (London: John Gwillim and Richard Baldwin, 1692); The Judgement Given Forth by Twenty-Eight Quakers Against George Keith, And his Friends, With Answers to the Said Judgment, Declaring Those Twenty Eight Quakers to Be No Christians (London: Richard Baldwin, 1694); The Tryals of Peter Boss, George Keith, Thomas Budd and William Bradford, Quakers, For Several Great Misdemeanors (London: Richard Baldwin, 1693). Clare Martin discusses the purchase of these tracts by “an entrepreneurial publisher” named Thomas Tryon, who took possession of the works at the customs house “by order of the Bishop of London.” According to Martin, Tryon sold the bulk to the Society but passed the remainder on to other publishers, who reprinted them for purely commercial reasons. The connection to Bugg is unexplored. Clare Martin, “Controversy and Division in Post-Restoration Quakerism: the Hat, Wilkinson-Story and Keithian Controversies and Comparisons with the Internal Divisions of Other Seventeenth-Century Nonconformist Groups” (Diss. D.Phil, Open University, 2004), p. 225. After the Yearly Meeting, Keith condemned the London reprinting of his works, though he followed the statement with the patently dishonest clause “with other Titles than the Titles first given them.” He singled out, in particular, The Christian Quaker, or George Keith’s Eyes Opened (London: Benjamin Keach, 1693), explaining the title assumed the name “were peculiar to me.” The longer title undermined his claim to representing the true voice of the Society and assumed Keith had changed his theology, which he would refuse to admit for years. George Keith, The Causeless Ground of Surmises, Jealousies and Unjust Offences removed (London, 1694), p. 1.
to present his arguments in London, thereby getting around English meeting approval and avoiding direct responsibility for spreading word of the schism in print. The original tract was polemical but not “controversial,” by which is meant it simply attacked a doctrine without naming names or specifically referencing the Society (much like Keith’s tract defending himself against promoting the Revolution of Souls). The reprint, over which Keith may have had no editorial control, adopted a less friendly title but the text remained the same. It is not impossible, therefore, that Keith saw this as the most politic way to make his argument in London, where personal attacks had not yet become part of the debate. As seen, print accusations were a continuation of the face-to-face disputes and oral slander of the colonial hothouse, the extension of the fight into London, where those components did not yet exist, temporarily contracted the rhetoric of the schism.284

This relationship to the London meeting was certainly evident in Keith’s last colonial tract (until his return as an S.P.G. minister). *Truth Advanced in the Correction of Many Gross & Hurtful Errors* contained a series of “errors” related to the schism and Keith’s responses to them. His introduction, though, carefully delineated his target: “I neither have charged, nor do charge [the errors] upon any present People any where called Christians, in any place of the World, except only these called Ranters,” whose

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284 Keith, *The Christian Quaker*. In the Bodleian’s copy of this tract, Benjamin is crossed out with a pen and Elias is inserted. The tract is further described as having been brought to London from America by the printer, suggesting Elias may have been the actual publisher. Benjamin Keach had been an anti-Quaker controversialist for decades (which did not prevent his daughter Hannah from converting to the hated sect). David A. Copeland, *Benjamin Keach and the Development of Baptist Traditions in Seventeenth-Century England* (Lewiston: The Edward Mellon Press, 2001), p. 63-69. There is no direct evidence that the Baptist meeting the Keithians were attending was Keach’s. Circumstantially, however, the Pennepek church also delivered the sacraments in the surrounding towns - including Philadelphia - on a quarterly basis. Elias returned to England in 1692, the year the first London reprint appeared. Finally, after 1697, many Keithians became Baptists and most eventually gravitated to the Pennepek church. Morgan Edwards, *Materials Towards a History of the American Baptists* (Philadelphia: Joseph Cruckshanks and Isaac Collins, 1770), p. 6-11.
irreligion “deserve not to be called or esteemed Men, far less to be classed among the lowest sort of these called Christians.” Refusing to explicitly reference the Society, he explained that to avoid “giving Offence to any who have the least Tenderness and Sincerity towards God, Truth & Righteousness, I have named none by Name, belonging to any Society of People.” As Keith had earlier used the charge of Ranterism to wall off the society from the likes of Thomas Case, now he used it to attack individual Quakers while denying he was attacking the Society. Further, and probably also as a defense of his use of Kabbalist concepts in the work, Keith absolved the Society of any connection to the work, asking any reader that found errors in the book “That they charge it not upon any Society of People whatsoever in any place of the World; for what I have here delivered, I do not deliver as Personating or representing any Society of People whatsoever.” This small disclaimer made the work unlike any of the previous tracts related to the schism, which he could plausibly claim to have been authorized in America by his separate meeting and reprinted in London through others. This tract demonstrated Keith’s distance from the Society. It suggested either Keith believed there to be legitimate spheres of action outside of the Light, or that the meeting (and especially its control over publication) no longer gave expression to the Light.285

The London Yearly Meeting 1694

285 George Keith, Truth Advanced in the Correction of Many Gross & Hurtful Errors ([New York?: William Bradford,] 1694), unpaginated preface. This book had not been published before Keith left for England, and upon arrival he wrote asking for copies to be sent to him.
The distribution of these tracts contributed to the increasingly adversarial climate among Friends in London. Keith had begun to doubt that the Yearly Meeting could function as an unbiased arbiter, extending the representational conflict begun in the Delaware Valley. At the May 28th session, Keith presented a paper in defense of his actions in Pennsylvania, which was ordered read before moving onto other business. The next morning, the Six Weeks Meeting gave its responses to the first two of Keith’s eight articles. He had complained of the “Straightness” towards him of some London Friends and asked the meeting to interrogate those Friends as to the reasons, but the Six Weeks meeting determined these differences derived from the problems in America rather than being a separate prejudice, and so deferred the subject to the Yearly Meeting. The fact that Keith did not see the issue of personal “straightness” as the same as the American dispute reveals his own misinterpretation while in the colonies of London’s changing opinion of the Schism.

This fact was further demonstrated when Keith, in his second article, asked that if any English Friend had “any matter of Offence or Objection against G.K: either Relating to the printed books or separation it may be brot forth,” to which “some Friends having Expressed their sense of disservice in printing his books, a particular Passage ... being Instanced wherein a severe charge is menconed, and the Word Quakers used.” This charge is complicated, but important. The remarks with which Keith was charged -- using the word Quaker and declaring that he “charged their [Pennsylvania] Meeting with being come to cloak Heresies and Deceit and that there were more Doctrine of Devils, and Damnable Heresies among the Quakers, than among any Professions of the Protestants” -- were not made in the book, but in an American meeting and then explained by Keith in
his book. According to Keith, he could not have used the word Quaker, because his criticism was not of the whole Meeting, but only “a Party or Faction of them, that sway’d and influenced others.” He himself, Keith claimed, had his own supporters, which made him no less a Friend. Keith also argued his accusation was accurate, and that he and his supporters, as the proponents of true doctrine, were the more legitimate voice of the Society of Friends. Keith defined the meeting according to right doctrine, and all who preached falsely were unable to claim any institutional authority or to be the “sense of the meeting.” At the same time, this debate over the interpretation of Keith’s book demonstrates the role of writing in constructing the imagined community of the meeting. Those who made this accusation had already judged Keith as outside of the spirit of that community (in good part because of his publications) by their act of transforming his description of a use of the pejorative into a polemical use by the author (thus imagining the tract as written by an archetypal enemy of the Society).286

As seen in the confused minute, Keith’s real crime was not the content of the accusation, but the publication of it. Putting aside the question of whether “Quaker” was used, the leadership asked its constituents “whether G[eorge] K[eith] in printing or publishing that book hath not done great disservice to Truth which is less to the Judgement of the Meeting.” They then arranged to have several of the books read in the Meeting over the course of several days, along with numerous letters and other manuscripts.

286 LYM, 1694, p. 23-24; George Keith, The Plea of the Innocent Against the false Judgment of the Guilty (Philadelphia, 1692), p. 11. Jennings argued the use of the word Quaker was proved by witnesses and by the fact that the “Clarke at the time to the meeting where it was spoken, took it Immedeately in Writing from his Mouth.” The Ministers Meeting Minutes, March 5, 1692, record the word “Quaker,” but also conceded “these were his words as near as we Can remember, but if in anything we vary the terms we are Confident they were to the same purport,” suggesting an after the fact report. KC, p. 138.
By June 7, the task of accumulating evidence was complete, but not before Keith found himself cornered doctrinally. The previous day he had stated “his objections agst the little printed Treatise Intitul'd the Xtian Doctrine etc. [the tract that opened this chapter]” but the meeting “Agree[d] to pass that by and G.K. saith he is willing to bury it.” In the interval before the meeting re-adjourned, some private consultations appear to have occurred, because Keith now “spooke much in ffavour of the Doctrinall parts of the Book but said some things might be more fully Exprest but had Unity with the Main.” He then uttered a defense of his own orthodoxy: “I know no Man upon the fface of the Earth, that professeth a Beliefe of the sufficiency of the Light within to salvation more than I profess or hold and have alwaies professed since I came among ffrids viz: that the Light within being God, the Word, and the Spirit in every Man, is sufficient to Reveal to every Man, all that is needfull to his Eternall salvation.” Keith recognized that his own spiritual state was on trial, and he retreated on the point of doctrine – his last such retreat. After the conclusion of the Yearly Meeting, Thomas Ellwood would use this statement to claim that Keith agreed with his opponents on doctrine, and therefore was at fault for opening the schism; and indeed, Keith’s statement was a direct contradiction to many of his writings. In addition, while he was outwardly conciliatory, the statement was iconoclastic at heart, using the superlative to profess his illuminated state and doctrine implicitly in contrast to the Society and meeting.287

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287 LYM, 1694, p. 31. Keith’s own actions during the meeting is unclear. The minutes of the meeting do not record any ill behavior, but two days later a public Friend and former schoolteacher named John Banks who attended the meeting described him as “a very Turbulent, and Troubling Spirit, vexatious to Church of Christ,” who had “not only gone into and entertained the Spirit of Division, and Separation, but of Envy, and deep Deceit,” by attempting to prove Public Friends were heterodox. Despite this, he “hath so manifested himself, that all his whining enticing words could take no place with us.” “John Banks to John and Mary Banks,” 8th 4mo 1694, printed in John Banks, A Journal of the Life, Labours, Travels, and Sufferings (In For the Gospel) of That Ancient Servant, and Faithful Minister of Jesus Christ, John Banks (London: J. Sowle, 1712), p. 132-133.
When the representatives to the Meeting then delivered their respective “senses” it was on two narrow questions: the appropriateness of Keith’s publication of his complaints and of his separation from the meeting. Almost unanimously, the voices of the British Friends said no to both. They did not simply condemn the act, but declared Keith’s actions were “not in & from the spirit of the Lord.” The judgment itself drew up boundaries of identity between the Society and Keith. “The spirit of God” according to the representative from Lancashire “did not move G.K. to publish these things to the World in Print,” and he further explained that he made this judgment in what he believed to be “the spirit of God.” Richard Vikris’s condemnation of Keith declared "both the printing the Books and Publishing of them, and the first Motion to Write them was wrong and the separacon Wrong, and this sence I deliver in a sense of the love of God." Richard Baker stated, “The Judgements of the Lord through his People are according to Truth and Righteousness in Relation to the Books printed by G.K: &c. they have been of great hurt, and I believe that the spirit that led him to print Led him to separate.” Ireland’s representative alone specifically claimed that Keith’s preaching in “Unusuall Words and some kind of Doctrine we have not Rec[eive]d nor I believe never can,” had produced the schism, and that “therefore the Ground of the matter is his Spirit.” Many Christian denominations might have similarly condemned Keith’s behavior, but few would have felt the need to cite their own spiritual state, translating piety into authority, in defense of the judgment.288

Just as Keith, while in the colonies, had come to insist on right doctrine as the defining characteristic of the true church, the English Friends constructed their sense of

288 LYM, p. 32, 33, 41-42, & 33.
community around the unity of believers in the Spirit, to the exclusion of Keith. Although Keith remained a member of the Society (he had not been disowned), while he behaved in a fractious fashion he was outside of the Spirit. Keith’s actions were not simply sin, but marked him as no longer led by the Light, and therefore outside of the community of the meeting. Cumberland's representative proclaimed that “It’s too Evident for some time that G.K. hath been at some Distance from Friends, and our Unity,” and therefore “the Travail now on friends spirits I am sensible of is, that he may be brot nearer to Friends.” Similarly, Gilbert Laity argued there had occurred “a wrong & a suffering to the Church of Christ yet there is a Travell that G.K. may be Gathered & restored and brot near.” The judgment of Keith’s spiritual state set the corporate, ordered and godly against the individual, chaotic and ungodly (not that Keith wished to embody any of those principles).289

The leadership used their understanding of the meeting against those few Friends willing to defend Keith. When Clement Plumstead claimed that several in Philadelphia were heterodox, and had led Keith to his extreme actions, Whitehead interposed, telling his fellow Friends to “keep to the Currant of Life.” Similarly, when William Mead claimed to possess notes that proved the dispute “lay partly on Tho[mas] Lloyds part,” William Edmondson replied “as we began let us proceed and let the holy Ghost decide and let us sit in the sense of the love of God, and we can Judge of Testimonys.” The decision regarding Keith having been made, the meeting went about producing a unanimous consensus through the spiritual bullying of the recalcitrant.290

290 Ibid, p. 34, 42.
Thus, to the Meeting's mind (an unusually apt term in this case) the issue was the airing to the world of problems best kept within the Society and the translation of those differences into separation from the Philadelphia meeting. Keith had, in the most common phrasing, brought “Reproach on Truth, opening the Mouths of our Adversaries.” His “discovering the Weakness of some and the whole thereby struck at, is contrary to Truth” and was a far greater problem than the weaknesses themselves. Indeed, the Hartfordshire representative was willing to grant “G.K. had a Cause;” but he, nevertheless made clear that “his printing I dislike, and think a Check should have been put to it.” The public Friend from Darbyshire summed up all these themes, stating that:

Some[,] having Run into Unsound Words [that] have given occasion to our ffriend G. Keith by uttering such things that cannot be stood by[,] are to be Judged. - But that there could not be another way found, but printing I am not satisfyed, and printing [has] been out of the Councell of God. and hath opened the Mouths of our Adversaries and Judgement must needs pass upon the publishing in print the weaknesses of some yet in the love of God to use all Christian Endeavours to seek to bring in him and others.

The Meeting was not yet to the point of disowning Keith, and was still convinced he could be recovered. They neglected to consider the terms that Keith would accept.291

The meeting adjourned to three o’clock, at which time the meeting assembled a committee to draw up the “sense” of the meeting. This declaration constituted a complete, though politely phrased, condemnation of Keith. They found his heated language to be the root of the schism, and recommended that he be more circumspect in the future. They further declared that Keith’s publications were “of great disservice to the Truth,” and told him to call in all copies and denounce their contents. Finally, they

291 Ibid, p. 36-37.
advised Keith to use his best efforts to end the separation in Pennsylvania and return his supporters to the main Quaker meeting. Although acknowledging the possibility of heterodox opinions among some, they recommended Keith admonish them privately. Despite this rout, Keith appeared not to have protested the decision itself. The epistle to the Lloydi ans, explained “Friends and Brethren here of this Yearly Meeting have not cut him off but truly Endeavoured to save him” and they prayed they would prove successful. They likewise criticized the Pennsylvania Friends for Keith’s trial and reiterated that they “hope that God has given you so much Wisdom as not to excuse or vindicate any mistakes or Erronious Doctrine.” They pointed out hopefully he “at last declared how he dearly owned friends Love.” A Separate epistle to the Keithians in America expressed similar points - their hope to return Keith, the need to return to effective communion - and then backed up these hopes by stating the other side “are willing to be Conformable to the Language and Testimony of holy Scriptures and the simplicity and plainness of Faithfull Friends Ancient Testimonys” both relating to the resurrected Christ and “sufficiency of his Light & Grace within.” After two years, therefore, the London Yearly Meeting was offering essentially the same advice as it had originally. At this level of intra-Society communication and community formation, this system of etiquette was the advice. Beyond simple fears of contradictory testimonies and doctrines in the present, past and future, for Friends the formulaic language and style of their communications provided temporal form to the eternity of Truth. This moment of relative equanimity, however, was not to last, in good part because Keith interpreted the decision’s allowance
of private admonition to justify his continued opposition to heterodoxy among his enemies. 292

**Between the Yearly Meetings, or Back to the Press**

With the Yearly Meeting concluded, and Keith acceding (in principle) to its recommendations, the issue was assumed to be finished. Keith, however, was convinced that his opponents were conducting a whispering campaign against him and was angry that the meeting had not condemned them directly and specifically. This set in motion a train of accusation and counter accusation in the press, the results of which can be seen in a dream recorded by Ambrose Rigge in November, in which “Georg Keith [sic] was sett before mee, as a man whose head was filled with a flowing torrent of the Sea; which had hid the Rock from him; In which hee was in great danger to suffer Shipwrack.” Ambrose explained that the rock was the “true & tender simplicity of Jesus,” and then went on to give a statement on his belief in Christ’s outward coming and his eventual return “as Judge both of Quick & dead” to give “to all his followers bodyes as it pleaseth him.”

Thus rejecting any doctrinal disagreements with Keith, Rigge stated that he did not write down this dream to sow discord, “but as a necessity is laid upon mee.” At the yearly meeting he had seen “the height and depth of that spirit which ruled G:K with sorrow and greefe that said little.” In contrast “The true Seers now look not at things which (with mortall eyes) are seen, but at things which are not seen which are Eternall.” Rigge,

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therefore summed up the Society’s continued illuminist and ontological understanding of the schism. While these impressions of Keith appeared soon after his arrival, Rigge’s vituperative dream came at the end of a summer and fall in which the attempt at mediation had collapsed and all semblance of containing of the schism within the institutions of the Society had disappeared.293 Ostensibly

The rapid disintegration of all semblance of an intra-organization handling of the schism began with Keith’s fashioning of a new identity distinct from the organization of the meeting. Soon after the Yearly Meeting adjourned, Keith produced a tract, ostensibly in accord with the Yearly Meeting’s order to print a statement condemning his publications and his separation. Keith thus expressed his “Weighty Concern” to print his tract in order “to silence and remove these evil Surmises, Jealousies and unjust Offences taken both against many faithful Friends in general, and Me in particular,” through “Misconstructions” and “Misapplications” applied to his books. As his language suggests, Keith was in fact excusing his actions. He argued that he had not accused all Friends, but only those few who opposed right doctrine and that his publications did not abuse the Society because they cleared the majority. As he had explained in regard to the Rhode Island Sheet, it was more defamatory to the Society “to pass by in silence, without any censure or publick Testimony, gross and vile Errours.” He then repeated his earlier argument that his American meeting had not constituted the separate one. He also denied that he had sought to impose a specific statement of doctrine in the Gospel Order Improved. At the same time, he argued that he could prove the doctrines he declared fundamental to be such from Friends’ own books and that the adoption of a specific

confession would be of value in silencing their enemies and in passing their faith down to future generations in a form consistent with scripture, with “sound Christians in all Ages, and with one another.” Unlike the meeting’s, Keith’s conception of the Society was linear and historical, rather than continuously present and trans-historical. Rather than appealing solely to an inner Christ that was universal in respect to both time and place, Keith was turning in part to the Protestant historiography (and Friends place within it) discussed in the first chapter. Yet for Keith, this history was also biography, since he had “so long laboured for 30 years past in the work of the Ministry” as a Friend. Keith was, therefore, unwilling to accept the final component of the meeting statement. First, he refused to retract any hard words on his part unless his opponents did the same, and he particularly demanded that the Society denounce Samuel Jennings’s misbehavior in prosecuting Keith. To this end he deployed Friends’ history (as he had during the trial) pointing out that, while he had defamed a magistrate, that this act was consistent with Friends’ previous behavior in England and that New England had similarly used claims of civil offences when persecuting Friends. Thus Keith’s identity remained corporate rather than individual, but the larger entities into which he inserted himself were metaphysical (the invisible church) and historical (the Society of Friends as an abstract organizational body) in nature. Quakerism could thus be separated from individual Friends and meetings. This process, however, did not yet free him from behaving in rough accordance with the meeting’s disciplining of the public sphere. The nature of that sphere, and the instability of identity formation within it would do that.²⁹⁴

²⁹⁴ George Keith, *The Causeless Ground of Surmises, Jealousies and Unjust Offences Removed, in a Full Clearing of Faithful Friends, and a Sober Vindication of My Innocency, and the Friends Concerned With Me*, (London: R. Levis, 1694), p. 1, 5, 10. John Smolenski has discussed Quaker notions of history. Clare Martin has also pointed up the problem of Friends admitting to any change in doctrine, given their claims to
Roughly contemporaneously, a Keithian named Robert Hannay published a copy of the Yearly Meeting’s decision, contrasting it to the 1692 epistle of the Keithian Yearly Meeting in Burlington and appending several queries to it. The work differed from Keith’s, however, in that Hannay directly challenged the meeting, while the former referred only to the specific accusations against himself, without using any names except Jennings’s. Contrast with Keith’s attempt at a more conciliatory tone, this probably explains why Keith denied being behind its publication and even claimed to have discouraged Hannay from printing it, though he refused to disown the book. The return to the press represented an important shift in the development of the schism. Keith had not published anything polemical against Friends since his return to England, and his last work in the colonies also avoided direct references to the society. The explicit comparison of the London and American statements by Hannay made plain the widening of the conflict.295

Keith and Hannay’s further differed in their approaches to meeting authority. As Keith had in Pennsylvania, Hannay directly challenged the authority of the meeting and its leadership in the common currency of anti-popery. Important to this discourse was the idea that Papal internationalism had usurped a universal religious authority over both monarchs and national churches. Because the English Reformation had not begun as a Protestant attack on Catholic doctrine, but as a monarchical attack on Roman jurisdiction over the English church, the language of English Protestantism eventually became

implicated in the political needs of the English government and in an English Protestant identity that identified popery as an attack both on true religion and English liberties. Among his many charges, Hannay declared that London’s presumption to contradict the judgment of the Keithian Burlington Yearly Meeting was to “say that the Meetings in America have a dependence on the Meeting here, as Samuel Jennings openly affirmed” in the London Yearly Meeting. As with the Rhode Island Sheet in the colonies, the complaint was not simply that the meeting behaved tyrannically. Hannay charged that Jennings and the London Yearly Meeting sought “to erect yourselves a new Rome, or Metropolitan Church in London.” Although conceding that William Penn had sought to clarify the relationship between the meetings as one of “relation” not “dependence,” Hannay then pointed out that a Quaker minister had previously called the London Yearly Meeting the “Mother of all Churches” without being rebuked. What tied together the charge of popery and the argument over legitimacy was the concern with defining the parameters of the Christian church in a way that fused individual, corporate and meta-corporate categories. The Quakers, by defining their society as coterminous with the invisible church, eliminated official bodies such as national churches. The meeting was simply an assembly of believers communing in their collective experience of the Inner Light and enforcing discipline, and so the fears of an international church were muted.

Fox’s leadership, however, only escaped violating this principle through his charismatic authority. At his death, a clique within the Meeting (pre-selected by Fox),

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296 Hannay, A True Account of the Proceedings, p. 10-11. During one of the failed attempts at reconciliation in Pennsylvania, Keith had defended arranging a meeting without first discussing it with his opponents by sarcastically “waving his hand over his head: mother Church had done it and sure a yearly meeting Canot Err.” Letter of ‘Public Frds’ to London Frds 1693, 4mo 9 PKC, Folder 1½. Jennings’s remarks do not appear in the official minutes of the London Yearly Meeting, yet neither did any Quakers subsequently deny the account.
had assumed the leadership of the Society of Friends, but was uncomfortable with the implications of this leadership. The Quaker meeting, as moments such as the schism reveal, was far closer to a hierarchical church than the Society liked to admit. The extension by the London Meeting of its authority over the Society as a whole, therefore, was effectively a claim to international authority. It was a claim, moreover, that had become routinized.297

Thomas Ellwood produced a manuscript reply to Keith and Hannay’s tracts in August and sought to print it with meeting approval. John Tomkins, in a letter to Sir John Rodes in September of 1694, explained that Keith “strove hard to obstruct its appearing abroad, and to effect there designe, gave the 2 days morning meeting, as well as the meeting for sufferings, severall contentious visits; but their attempts were vain.” That same month saw Thomas Ellwood warning the Morning Meeting against Keith’s “spirit.” Both sides in the schism, therefore, turned to the press and both sides complained about the other’s having done so. Keith’s opposition, hypocritical on its face, was most likely motivated by the personal dynamics of the schism: Keith had not challenged Ellwood personally before the wider Society (as Jennings had Keith in the June 1692 judgment) and his “retraction” had been non-specific as to any other person (and requested by the Society, in theory), so publication against himself constituted an unjustified public attack. Even after all of the abuse that had been exchanged in America, the public sphere remained a dangerous place. If Keith were to engage in direct attacks, at this point, it would be through proxies such as Hannay who allowed him a certain plausible deniability. Ellwood and Keith soon entered a cycle of reply and counter-reply, and

Samuel Jennings (fortified by a number of certificates collected by his wife in America that defended him from accusations against his personal behavior) took the opportunity to publish a manuscript he had submitted to the previous yearly meeting. The result was a dispensing with the minimal restraints that held Keith’s hand previously.²⁹⁸

Keith’s enemies were noticeably silent on the issue of the meeting’s authority. Thomas Ellwood came the closest, ridiculing Keith’s notion (in his first reply to Ellwood) that his disownment in Pennsylvania was not transferable to London: “By this it seems as if he had expected to be as oft denied as he removes his seat. What if a Meeting in London had denied him, and he should thereupon remove to Bristol and from thence to York? Would not his having been denied in London serve his Turn, unless he were in like manner denied again in each of the other Places also?” Besides, Ellwood argued, there was no need to deny someone who had already separated themselves from the body of Friends. Keith had “set up his Standard, Proclaimed War, begun it in America, transfer’d it hither, and, is eagerly carrying it on here.” Both the conception of the church, as the community of those within the Light, and the meeting’s ability to authoritatively disown

²⁹⁸ “John Tomkins to Sir John Rodes” September 27, 1694, in Quaker Post-Bag, p. 115-116. Keith’s denial appears on June 25,1694, Ellwood’s denunciation, on September 5, MMM, p. 37, 43. Jennings’s tract, “The State of the Case” is referred to in LYM 1694, p. 25. It was printed, as The State of the Case, Briefly But Impartially Given Betwixt the People Called Quakers, Pensilvania, &c. in America, Who Remain in Unity; and George Keith (London: T. Sowle, 1694), shortly before Keith sent his reply to Ellwood, A Seasonable Information and Caveat Against a Scandalous Book of Thomas Elwood, Called An Epistle to Friends. (London: R. Levis, 1694), to the press, which was some time before October 3, when it is mentioned in “Second Day’s Morning Meeting to Arthur Cook and Thomas Lloyd,” October 3, 1694, copies in Epistles Sent, p. 168 and in A Collection of Epistles from George Fox and Others, C5.1, f. 46-47, Haverford College Library, Quaker Collection. Keith’s reply to Jennings, A Further Discovery of the Spirit of Falshood & Persecution in Sam. Jennings (London: R. Levis, 1694), presumably followed shortly after. Ellwood’s response to Keith, A Further Discovery of that Spirit of Contention & Division Which Hath Appeared of Late in George Keith (London, 1694), which was dated Nov. 22, 1694. The certificates defending Jennings were published sometime the following January at the earliest (the date of the last London certificate), by John Penington as Certain Certificates Received From America, on Behalf of Samuel Jennings, Tending to Clear Him From Scandals, Cast on Him by George Keith, and Others of His Opposers (London: Tace Sowle, 1695).
those who would bring scandal on the meeting required the central hierarchy of the London Yearly Meeting to function. For Keith, who was increasingly identifying the true voice of Quakerism with the profession of right doctrine, the claim of authority was usurpation. 299

Tied to the questions of authenticity and legitimacy in these exchanges were the competing narratives of the American schism, and the question of who had separated from whom and why. The question of separation had already offered a means to isolate Keith in accordance with his behavior, and now it allowed the Society to avoid the thorny question of its authority over other meetings and believers. If Keith had, through his behavior, already excluded himself from the Society, then Friends were hardly behaving tyrannically merely for recognizing that fact. Ellwood was at pains to show that the Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting had condemned the doctrines that Keith attributed to his enemies, and had only questioned whether in fact his opponents had articulated such opinions. So what ground, Ellwood asked, had Keith “from hence to Unchristian that Meeting, write and print against those Friends, as Heathens, and charge them with covering and cloaking gross and vile Errors, tolerating damnable Heresies and Doctrines of Devils,” to the dishonor of God and the breaking of the peace of the Church? Keith retorted that the Quarterly Meeting had shielded heterodox Friends, and had equivocated in declaring those Friends’ views were only offensive to "some Friends,"

299 Thomas Ellwood, A Further Discovery of that Spirit of Contention & Division Which Hath Appeared of Late in George Keith (London, 1694), p. 39-40. Clare Martin has argued that it was a mark of the authority of the London Meeting that Keith’s disownment in the colonies was not transferable. I hope my own account reveals that this was both true and more problematic than Martin suggests. Martin, “Controversy and Division in Post-Restoration Quakerism,” p. 223. London did hope to supercede Pennsylvania’s disownment, but this reflected Keith’s position within the Society and London’s hopes of reclaiming him.
rather than to God. Thus While Ellwood sought to isolate Keith as self-separating, Keith now condemned the Society to be heterodox.300

In London, as in the colonies, the questions related to belonging were tied to epistemology. Thomas Ellwood suggested that Keith would only grant the Christianity of those to whom he had personally spoken concerning doctrine. This was in response to Keith's repeated insistence that he knew there were many sincere Christians among the Quakers, a claim he used to give some concreteness to his conception of Quakerism. Ellwood thereby transformed Keith's attempt to avoid dischurching the Society of Friends into proof of the unreasonableness of his demand for a statement of orthodoxy from various Friends. Ultimately, he argued, the only people Keith would accept as Christians were those who joined him in separation. Thus Ellwood continued to express the problem as not one of doctrine but of organization.

The change in attitudes effected by printing was reflected in efforts operating below the epistle network, which helped the London leadership to isolate Keith within the British meetings, even while the official epistles sent out of the Yearly Meeting remained similar to those previously issued. There was some question among his opponents over the nature of Keith’s separation. In October, Tomkins declared Keith had separated from Friends, withdrawing to the Harp Lane Meeting in November, and become “a master in faction,” who “knows what will take with the mob.” He felt Keith would be happy to provoke a scandal by gathering “a thousand or two together openly to dispute about differences among themselves.” Such a conference must inevitably end up in the press,

since only a few people could actually attend. “Perhaps there will be as much difference,” Tomkins declared, “about the Impartial relation thereof and the controversie it self.” George Whitehead, in contrast, reported to Benjamin Lindley two months later that Keith “has not set up a separate Meeting here, as I know, but is mostly joined or conversant with the separate Meeting in Harpe-lane, that was set up before he came over.” The official epistle network was comparatively silent. With the Delaware Valley alone, presumably given their personal involvement, was a similar level of hostility to Keith himself expressed. In an October epistle to Arthur Cook and Thomas Lloyd (who had in fact died three weeks before), the Second Day Meeting narrated the appearance of Hannay’s tract and explained that Keith, “instead of printing somthing Innocently & Effectually to Clear Friends (As Advised by the Yearly Meeting) Published a sheet in Print, ... Contrary to the Advice of Friends And Reflecting Upon them much of the Tendancy of Robt Hannays.” They concluded that “tho many have bin very kind to him to have regained him into Unity,” nonetheless, that Keith’s overt act of separation and joining with Bugg, Crisp, and Pennyman at Harp Lane would affect the colonial Keithians such that “no peaceably intended person will Continue any longer in the seperation made by him and his pty there or give way to that evill spt that leads them therinto.” This change reflected the shift in attitude toward Keith produced by his publications, but it also again demonstrates the way in which different levels of communication operated within the meeting system.\(^{301}\)

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There was a clear anxiety among Friends, not only over the perceptions of outsiders but also the allegiances of fellow Friends. Whitehead pointed out a Friend who had invited Keith to visit him. The Quaker leader suggested that, until Keith was reconciled to the meeting, the offer should be rescinded “otherwise the said Friend may have cause to rue his Invitation.” Henry Gouldney, in a letter to the late Robert Barclay’s son (also named Robert), felt the need to defend Friends’ Christology against Keith’s accusations, despite the fact that Barclay presumably was knowledgeable of Friends’ affairs. Ambrose Rigge’s dream, taking the form of a manuscript, circulated within the Society and used spiritual authority to a similar end of preventing Keith from finding support among English Friends.302

The perception of Keith as enemy in print and private manuscript reached open confrontation when, at a February of 1695 meeting in Ratcliffe, London, William Penn, (in a self-described moment of inspiration) stood up and declared his intention “to sound the Truth over the head of this Apostate & common opposer [Keith].” Keith had been attacking John Vaughton for allegorizing Christ in a public prayer, and other Friends for denying the value of Christ’s physical sufferings. After Penn defended their belief in the outward Christ, while reciting the familiar argument that preaching about it was less important in a Christian society, Keith attempted to respond but the other Friends exited the meetinghouse leaving Keith alone. This moment seems to have finally set Keith against the Quaker leadership as a whole. The label of apostate differed from the simple

charge of separation because it constituted separation from the invisible church, not merely the visible, and constituted rebellion against God. Keith dwelt on the charge for years to come, as he had the Judgment of the 28, revealing that his response was as much about personal defamation as the actual content of the accusation. This charge, therefore, once again fused inextricably the personal components of honor culture with corporate identity and charges of heterodoxy into the same form seen in the colonies.303

Disownment

The Yearly Meeting met again in May 1695, with most of its members ready for a final reckoning with Keith. Two accounts of this meeting exist, the official minutes, and an account subsequently published by Keith, but both reveal the interplay between the various issues that had developed during the print exchanges. The minutes record the leadership’s anger that Keith had ignored their advice both through challenges to Friends in meetings, and in his publications. While Keith directed his hostility at the controversial works published against him by Thomas Ellwood and Samuel Jennings, the leadership was almost solely concerned with Hannay and Keith’s tracts, because they reflected on the meeting. Keith was initially barred entry to the Gracechurch Street Meetinghouse with the explanation that he “was not in Unity with Friends.” Keith replied “I know no Meeting, as yet in England, that had disowned me.” One of those holding the door offered to ask the meeting about the matter, and returned saying Keith was not to be

admitted, but that they would accept a paper from him to read in the meeting. While Keith had such a paper, he lacked a copy and also refused to have it read outside of his presence. Keith returned home, where in the evening two Friends visited to explain that the meeting would allow him to read his paper the next day, as long as he agreed to leave when asked. Keith accepted.304

After the meeting reconvened, Keith asked permission to read his paper. George Whitehead demanded of Keith whether he intended to give satisfaction for defying the advice of the previous yearly meeting. Only if he were willing to “hearken to the Advice of the Last Yearly Meeting, and disown what thou Printed in that called The Causeless Ground, Reflecting on Friends,” would they permit him to read his paper. Keith gave a sarcastic reply: he could not know whether the paper would give satisfaction, only that it should. In fact, he read a series of demands. Unlike in the Yearly Meeting of 1694, during this assembly Keith focused almost exclusively on behavior and community instead of doctrine. First, he declared, the meeting should condemn Ellwood and Penington’s publications and the statements by Penn and others in various meetings. He also accused Friends of maintaining a purposeful, constant barrage of verbiage in meetings (signaling to each other by tugging on sleeves), which prevented him from speaking and contradicted Friends’ belief that the Spirit prompted all legitimate speech. Next, John Vaughton and John Field were condemned for saying that it was unnecessary to disown Keith, since the Pennsylvania meeting had already done so. That these demands were perfunctory exercises, which he did not expect to be met, was revealed by his final two articles. Claiming that many Friends “do still own me, as a Friend of Truth,” Keith

insisted that any condemnation of himself be signed by all those involved, not merely the clerk, and that he receive a copy of the statement, including the specific beliefs and actions on his part that motivated it. In the same way that the epistle network served to produce a textual space in which the Atlantic community of the Society could be imagined, Keith now wanted a signed statement that would enable him to construct his opponents as a faction in contrast to that Society. Keith was asked to withdraw, whereupon the meeting concluded that he had in fact failed both to follow their advice from the year before and had performed “Evill Works of strife and Division as such that tends not only to Divide but to Unpeople us.” The next day they sent messengers to Keith’s home to seek his attendance at the meeting, to which he replied “he did not know whether he should or should not come[,] he would consider on it.” Finally appearing, Keith was read the meeting’s judgment by Whitehead and given a chance to respond.305

Rejecting the meeting’s power to demand submission from its members, Keith relied on the anti-clericalism that had been implicit in his and Hannay’s earlier jurisdictional attack on the meeting. Keith argued the previous yearly meeting had only given him advice, not a command, and not even “the Church of Rome ever putt off any for not answering Advice,” as opposed to a command. He also made a procedural argument: since the 1694 yearly meeting had determined the matters previous to it, and given its advice, “you must not proceed against me upon old matter but upon New.” Regardless, Keith could see the writing on the wall: “you have denied me in practice, if not otherwise, and I expect you to doe the latter having done the former.” After the meeting, Keith wrote not only that “a prevailing Faction, or Party of corrupt Men, ruleth

in that called the Yearly Meeting,” but referenced the Wilkinson-Story conflict to claim that, even if a greatly expanded yearly meeting had approved his disownment, “yet this doth not prove that they are not a Faction or Party, seeing it is sufficiently known, that for many Years past, there hath been a Breach amongst the People called Quakers, in relation to the Church Government of Women, and other Circumstantial Things, imposed by a Party among them.” There are no surviving statements by Keith concerning the previous schism contemporaneous with it, and there is no evidence before this that he had opposed women’s meetings, but his close friendship with Robert Barclay and use of Barclay’s defense of the meeting system, *The Anarchy of the Ranters*, suggests he sided with Fox against the separatists. His present statement expressed an indifference to the substance of the issue, women’s meetings, but allowed him to further undermine the authority of the meeting for imposing them, much as Bugg and other Wilkinson-Story exiles would use the Keithian Schism in their own ongoing dispute. Just as in the “Gospel Order Improved” Keith had sought to widen attendance to the business meetings to all Friends and had opposed leaving the judgment of his case in America to ministers, so during the 1695 Yearly Meeting he declared that the meeting could not “be reckoned a duely Constitute Meeting, if any owned by you to be Friends, be kept out, and Excluded from hearing and seeing, and giving Judgment in the case, and the Meeting confined to a select number of Ministers.”

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In addition to these attacks on jurisdiction and authority, Keith also challenged the affective communion connecting the Society and its relationship to the authority of the meeting. Keith stated that he could not print a statement clearing Friends from the charges of heresy he had previously leveled, both because he knew some who were heterodox and because he could not possibly claim to have met every single Friend (as Ellwood had argued). Keith further asked Whitehead “what Friends mean by the Body of the people called Quakers?” Pointing out that Keith himself had used the term in his defenses of the Society, Whitehead then explained the term largely negatively: “By the body we cannot mean any that makes Divisions Discord or Rents in the Church of Christ, but by the Body such that were in Unity & walk in love peace and concord.” 307 Keith argued “I have been a Preacher and Writer among that People, and a Labourer among them, these thirty years past, and I never understood, that all deserved to be called the Body, that did but outwardly profess Unity with Friends.” Rather, he had always understood “that many Professed Truth with us, and made a Profession of Unity, that were not in it, and were not in the Possession of the Life and Power of Truth, whereof they made an outward Profession.” As seen, epistemology, authority and community formed a three-legged stool upon which the meeting sat, and the removal of any one leg necessarily toppled the whole. Besides arguing that their unfounded accusations disproved their spiritual state, Keith also declared that their reference in the text of his disownment to “that Divine Sense, which in the openings of the heavenly Life, ran as a mighty stream through the meeting, and was confirmed and sealed by many living Testimonies,” was written “nonsensically, confounding the Life, with the sense that the

Life gives.” Keith widened the epistemological gap between the Light and the human experience of the Light, explicitly in the context of the meeting, which was supposed to close that distance. Where George Whitehead wished to hold the movement together on a basis of interpersonal etiquette and broad doctrinal orthodoxy, Keith stressed the specific doctrinal elements, and an inner spiritual orthodoxy, which could only be enforced in the breach.  

Pointing to the articles Keith had delivered to the meeting days before, Whitehead charged him with indifference to being disowned. Yet even at this point, Keith could not admit to such an attitude and replied that he was not indifferent, “and had rather been in my grave than give a Just cause to be disowned by the Churches of Christ[,] I should be sorry you should be so disserted of God to deny me for his Names sake,” but that he would gladly be disowned in defense of Truth. With Keith having exploited the Quaker collapsing of visible and invisible churches, Penn intruded with his own historical interpretation, calling him a disorderly spirit, who presumably accused George Fox, along with the rest of the Society, of heresy. Keith replied that he had never charged Fox, “nor had I him at present in my Remotest Thoughts, I only mentioned some here present; but George Fox is not here, at least, visibly present.” The Society’s leadership, Keith continued, also should not have judged him by their inward leanings, but by evidences of his doctrine and life. Penn, especially, should not have charged Keith with apostasy, “I am thy Elder Brother, and was a Preacher among the Quakers before thou was a Quaker; though thou, and some others, of latter years, have lifted up thy Heel against me.”  

These appeals to the history of the movement, the memory of George Fox and their own

308 Keith, The Pretended Yearly Meeting of the Quakers, p. 2, 7; idem, The True Copy of a Paper, p. 12.
biographies, were revealing. Fox’s personal authority had been important to the creation and legitimacy of the meeting system, and his death left behind a cadre of individuals bickering over their own status. Attempting to use Fox’s ghost reveals exactly how flimsy the meeting’s spiritual authority at that point seemed to be. In rejecting the sense of the meeting and the communal identity it involved, Keith turned to personal biography and demanded that they prove he had altered either his beliefs or behavior.310

Ultimately, the meeting leadership was forced into an exercise of naked authority. While Whitehead and Keith were engaged in open-ended sparring, Penn endeavored to return the meeting to the narrow question at hand: did Keith still “own” his printed tract and the paper he had delivered the day before, and “hath G.K. taken Friends Advice and Answered their sense which was that the separacon lay at his Door?” As, thirty years before, they had sought to neutralize the danger of Thomas Hicks’s actions by having the Baptists disavow him, the Friends, now conversely, sought to divorce themselves from responsibility for disowning Keith by forcing him to take the active role. Again, Keith rejected the advice of the meeting as proceeding from a mere faction. With their opponent being unaccommodating, the leadership instead turned to the attendees and asked if any objected to the previous meeting’s advice. When no one responded, Keith specified a Friend who had claimed “before he would signe a paper to disown [Keith], he would have his Right Hand Cutt off,” as proof the meeting was not unanimous. Neither Keith’s account nor the minutes clearly explain how the meeting ended, but Keith appears to have stormed out. After he left, the meeting went through the roll of Friends to determine who had made the remark cited by Keith, until William Harvey confessed and

310 LYM 1695, p. 89.
explained that he had only meant that he would not sign a statement against Keith without having read it, and was deputed to visit Keith and present this fact to him. Harvey reported Keith’s anger at these events, and his own sense that Keith “is out of the way.” Keith later reported, however, that Harvey privately disowned his statements. The events proved to Keith the tyranny of the meeting (Penn and Whitehead in particular) in “over-awing” its members. The event also revealed, however, the dangers of opening up to scrutiny the power of the meeting, especially in the context of the de-spiritualization of its community and the ongoing scandal of Keith’s trial in Pennsylvania.311

His disownment followed the next day. According to the official language, “Geo: Keith hath of late been and yet is, acted by an Unchristian spirit, which hath moved and lead him to stirr up Contention and strife in the Church of Christ, and to cause Divisions Separations and Breaches amongst them that profess the Truth,” and that he had through his writing and preaching brought reproach upon the Society of Friends. By these means, Keith “is Gone from the blessed Unity of the peaceable spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ and hath thereby separated him self from the holy Fellowship of the Church of Christ.” It would take several years, however, for Keith to renounce his belief that he and his followers professed the true faith of the Society, against its perversion by Quaker leaders such as Penn and Whitehead. Doing so would require him to adopt a completely new identity. Contrary to the assumption of much historiography concerning Keith, religious iconoclasm was difficult if not possible. Even while in a separate meeting, he had to identify himself with Quakerism, until his final conversion to Anglicanism.

311 LYM 1695, p. 89; An Exact Narrative of the Proceedings at Turners-Hall, the 11th of the Month Called June, 1696 (London: B. Aylmer and J. Dunton, 1696), p. 37; idem, The Pretended Yearly Meeting of the Quakers, p. 5-6.
As seen, the epistle system worked in different ways at different levels and the Yearly Meeting sent different messages to different meetings. But at all stages, the goal was to reintegrate and re-express the Atlantic community. Flushing, Long Island was assured that London was “comforted to hear of the peace and unity that is among you and that the dividing separateing Lofty spirit that hath appeared in some hath no place among you.” Similarly, in a letter to a Barbadian Friend, Whitehead announced the disowning of Keith and attacked the other “envious apostates that abet him and encourage him in his Works of Envy,” while assuring his correspondent that no one of spiritual merit supported Keith. Whitehead also sought the West Indian Quaker’s aid in stifling the distribution of Keith’s books on the island. The Philadelphia Yearly Meeting’s epistle to London, in a similar form, assured the leadership that the Keithians were “withering,” leaving their separate congregation to become Baptists, Anglicans and Pietists. That this was a positive development, rather than a mark of failure, further demonstrates the state the schism had reached for colonial Friends. It was enough to be rid of them. The colonial meeting also named replacements for the meeting’s official correspondents for Pennsylvania and East and West Jersey - one had died and the other two were Keithians. Finally, Philadelphia asked the London Meeting to send along printed answers to Keith’s books, “for our Adversary Geo: Keith is very early in sending his here.” The spread of Keith’s influence required the imagined Atlantic community of the Society, embodied in these epistles and in the standardization of response through Friends’ books, to counter it.
The Lloydiens, by this point, had already sent a copy of their statement of orthodoxy to London, where it was read by the Morning Meeting and “a little Corrected,” with Whitehead assigned the task “to mend some places Markt.”312

At the more individual level, by contrast, London sought to reclaim American Keithians, including George Hutcheson, by giving a full statement of orthodoxy on the relevant issues and assuring them that “We sincerely say if any have opposed or denied these apostolical Doctrines, we therein disown them yet pitty them and say they should rather be better truly and charitably in meekness informed according to holy scripture” than attacked in print. Yet in a striking change in language, the leadership then complained of the Keithians’ “tedious Letter” and “harsh sowr and contentious passages,” which marked them as “too much a Disciple of GK too much dipt into his Morose Sower contentious Spirit and Language whose unruly disorderly Passions and Untoward behaviour,” which Keith was too willing to explain as a defence of Christianity. Contradicting their earlier statement, they explained “there must be no sect master among us nor any such allowed to Exercise dominion over our Faith, which is in Christ nor can man or men form that living and Christian Ministry faith or Gifts which we have received from Christ Jesus.” The London meeting produced for disaffected Friends statements of orthodoxy it never intended to enforce while shoring up the support of others who never required such statements. They concluded by reminding Hutcheson that this was a “private letter for thy private information howe [sic] it be accepted or

312 London Yearly Meeting to Flushing, Long Island, 4 4mo 1695; George Whitehead to Richard Hoskins, 17 4mo 1695, both in Epistles Sent, p. 202-203, 205; The Philadelphia Yearly Meeting to the London Yearly Meeting, 15th-19th 7mo 1695, in A Collection of Epistles from George Fox and Others, C5.1, f. 53, Haverford College Library, Quaker Collection; MMM, 1692-1700, p. 98. Reflecting the Quaker distinction between the true corporate body held together by the spirit of Christ and the false church of outward ceremonies, the Friends described the conversions in terms of receiving baptism.
Improved we are and shall be the more clear,” and by telling him that if he wished to reply that he “send it directly to some of us & not through GK:s or any other adversaries hands,” which would have been “unfair.” William Penn, for his part, wrote Robert Turner and Thomas Holme to inform them of Keith’s disownment “man by man” and that Keith “Licks up the very vomit of T. Hicks & J. Faldo.” In order to further isolate Keith, he assured both men that “never did one goe from us that carried fewer with him” and told them “touch not with that Spirit. Nor countenance thos hurt by it there, for bow they must or be lost.” The disembodied language of this passage is significant: it reduced Keith entirely to his spiritual status both with God and, therefore, with the meeting. Thus, again, the meeting system stressed spiritual unity at the level of intra-community epistolary networks, and reserved doctrinal discussion and criticism of Friends (as opposed to the apologetics of their printed works) to strictly private and personal communications.313

Fashioning Apostasy

Keith hardly intended to remain silent. Within two weeks of the judgment, Keith produced three new publications. The first was his account of the meeting, including a list of “errors” held by leading Friends and a challenge to Penn to prove his accusation of apostasy at the Ratcliffe meeting. The second tract was an attack on the meeting’s judgment, comparing it to a Papal Bull and criticizing its authors for not putting their names to it. “Tho I do not in the least pretend ignorance, so as not to know some

particular persons who have had a main hand in it,” yet, having admitted this fact, Keith repeated his question to Whitehead, he demanded to know “whom they mean by what they call the Yearly Meeting.” Was it merely the representatives sent from the local English and Welsh meetings, or the Quarterly Meetings “who assume a Power to make Laws, and give forth Edicts or Decrees” that would “bind and oblige the Consciences of all these many thousands in the three Nations, and other places of the World,” who “go under the outward profession and denomination of Quakers, and profess to be one Body of People with them?” Keith’s rhetorical strategy utilized anti-clericalism to support his own identification with Quakerism, Protestantism and true religion against the identity of the Society based upon crypto-papist claims to global jurisdiction.314

Keith, in the third tract he published immediately after his disownment, *Gross Error and Hypocrisie Detected in George Whitehead, and Some of His Brethren*, charged Penn and Whitehead with masking their heretical opinions. The context was a series of queries concerning Friends’ doctrine that the Bishop of London’s chaplain, William Lancaster, had sent to the London Yearly Meeting. Friends answered, and Keith acquired copies of both manuscripts and printed them along with quotations from Penn and Whitehead’s previous writings that contradicted their new statement of orthodoxy. Keith’s attack, therefore, combined his argument that his opponents were a tyrannical faction with an attack on the legitimacy of the project to reform Quaker theology in which he had participated for much of his life. Keith fully conceded it would be a positive development for them to have abandoned their heretical positions, but he

doubted their sincerity, since they did not retract their previous writings. Continuing in his anticlerical vein, he declared that leading Friends were too enamored of power and the respect of their followers: “they will rather seek to uphold their Honour and Repute among their Followers, than Honour God, or rescue Souls out of the Snare they have brought them into, by a free Acknowledgment and Retraction.” Until they did so, “they can never have any true Character among sincere intelligent Persons, who are acquainted with their Books, but that they are great Hypocrites.” This likewise was language borrowed from Francis Bugg, though at this point the influences may have been working the other way.315

Keith’s tracts provoked responses from the sons (Edward and John) of the late great Friend Isaac Penington, who issued forth a series of tracts in which they set quotations by Keith from his early works opposite his more recent remarks. Caleb Pusey, the Pennsylvania miller, also contributed a work along the same model. Charging Keith with inconsistency was a convenient tactic, it defended their notion that Keith was “out of the Spirit” and acting purely from malice, while at the same time allowing them to discard questions relating to the resurrection of physical bodies (on which they were unquestionably confused). “For my part,” Pusey declared “I really think it had been better he had kept himself more close to Scripture in it, as well as more consistent with himself about it,” before accusing Friends. While scripture proved the resurrection of the dead,

315 John Penington suggested Keith was behind the queries in An Apostate Exposed: or, George Keith Contradicting Himself and His Brother Bradford (London: Tace Sowle, 1695). These queries raise a perplexing question: given the role of the Bishop of London in seizing and then releasing the Keithian tracts from the customs house the year before, his chaplain’s issuance of these queries seems more than coincidental. John Tomkins referred to these queries without further comment, “John Tomkins to Sir John Rodes,” October 22, 1695, in A Quaker Post-Bag, Letters to Sir John Rodes of Barlbrough Hall, in the County of Derby, Baronet, and to John Gratton of Monyash 1693-1742 ed. Godfrey Locker Lampson (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1910), p. 127-128.
“we do not think it a necessary business to be curiously prying into the manner of it,” and
neither had the “primitive Christians.”316

Because they were now arguing that Keith had altered his position, they could no
longer claim that there were no differences between them. Pusey and the Peningtons
were, therefore, keen to tar Keith with the blatantly heterodox opinion of the Revolution
of Souls, and Keith was just as concerned to prevent them. Pusey drew upon the same
argument from implication that had been directed against Keith in Pennsylvania: that
Keith’s simultaneous belief in the necessity of Gospel knowledge and that some had been
saved without such knowledge could only mean a belief in reincarnation. John Penington
sought to read the doctrine into several of Keith’s statements and claimed he was
concealing his belief in the doctrine. Keith, in response, refused to denounce the doctrine
entirely:

But in very deed, they said well, that I dare not defend it, as I never did;
but this not daring to defend it, did not proceed in me, nor doth from fear
of being defamed; for if I were persuaded and assured of it, as I am of the
great Truths of the Christian Faith, I should not fear to avouch it. But
seeing I pretend to no such assurance in the case, as I never did, nor ever
was positive to conclude it so much as in my secret thoughts, therefore I
let it alone, neither justifying nor condemning what I have no certain
knowledge of.

As he had in Pennsylvania, Keith declared here that he did not hold the Revolutions to be
a matter of Faith, though he would not “positively condemn it universally, until I see
better and stronger Arguments than they have as yet brought against it.” For the most
part, Keith wanted to be done with the issue, and he bristled at those who continued to

bring it up, and the idea seems to have remained for Keith what it had always been: a useful hypothesis. For his enemies, however, the peculiarity of the doctrine allowed an easy explanation for Keith’s differences with the Society.\(^{317}\)

The accusation of heterodoxy also gave the Society cover when dealing with some of the trickier differences between the two sides. Keith’s opponents continued to charge him with denying the sufficiency of the Light Within and of preaching two Christs. Keith adamantly stated that a person could not be saved without any faith in the historical Christ. This seemingly clear statement, however, was qualified. Keith still felt that an individual could be saved without “explicit” knowledge, but not without “implicit” Faith. He asserted that a person without access to scripture could be saved without express knowledge of both the inward and outward coming of Christ. In other words, Keith held that a person could experience profitably Christ’s inward coming without fully understanding what it was: “shall we say they must all perish, who though they own the Grace and Spirit of Christ, and its operation in them, yet are shy and fearful to call it Christ in them,” a statement that might as easily apply to those who rejected Quakerism. “To be sure,” he continued, “as few of the Gentiles knew this inward

Principle of Truth in them, by the express Knowledge and Names of Jesus and Christ, as knew him to be Man in the outward by these Names.” Keith’s position was similar to that he had taken in the New England debate: conversion usually occurred through ordinary means illuminated by the Inner Light, making those means necessary, and a separate provision would be somehow made for those without access to those means.318

This issue brought up the Ancient Theology on several occasions and whether or not “Gentile” philosophers such as Plato, Socrates, and Pythagoras were Christians. Keith claimed, in 1694, that he would “not positively contradict it,” however, “if they were real Christians, and worthy of that honourable Name, they had some Faith and Knowledge of Christ, the Messiah of and saviour of the World, as he was to come in the Flesh,” which they might have received from encounters with “some of the Jewish Nation” or with individuals who had read the prophets with the aid of “some measure of special Illumination and Revelation.” Even his interpretation of this idea, therefore, ceased to make a claim that the Inner Light alone might transmit knowledge sufficient for salvation and instead argued for the historical transmission of those ideas. Pusey, at one point, accused Keith of “altering the state of the Controversie,” from “What God or Christ hath done for us,” or how God did it, to “what God was capable of doing. Thus Pusey shifted the issue entirely toward an abstract question of divine omnipotence. John Penington attacked Keith for demanding a particular knowledge of Christ’s sufferings by reprinting statements by Keith asserting a universal Gospel: “But I put it to him to prove, that the History of Christ his Conception, Birth Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension, hath ever been Preached to all, either Explicitely orImplicitely, seeing he saith, the very

Gospel hath been.” Ironically, after his conversion to Anglicanism, Keith would use precisely this argument against Quakers. On this point of doctrine, Friends’ theology hovered dangerously close to pantheism.319

The result was a bifurcated understanding of salvation. Keith attacked John Penington for attempting to shift the debate over the need for faith in the outward Christ entirely onto the case of “Gentiles,” those who had never had access to Christian doctrine. His opponents were then able to marshal a host of statements by a younger Keith defending the Inner Light against exactly this conundrum. Keith’s earlier works, John Penington argued, made it “quite out of Doors” for Keith to attack Friends for not emphasizing the outward Christ within in their preaching. “For if they, who lived before and in the age in which [the Gospel story] was accomplisht, and where that belief was opposed,” nevertheless mainly preached Christ within, “why is [Keith] so offended with us, for doing so where the outward is so universally received and believed, except that he lists to be Contentious?” Keith now complained that they should instead focus on the context at hand, Christian Anglo-America. Keith was adamant that those with access to Christian doctrine and scripture required faith. He insisted that the main issue in dispute was not whether express knowledge of and faith in Christ’s sufferings and death was “universally necessary,” but rather

the true state of the Question betwixt them and me, was and is, Whether the express Knowledge and Faith of Christ’s Death and Sufferings, &c. be not necessary to Salvation, to all Professing Christianity, and who have the opportunity and help of the Holy Scriptures. . . and whether the Doctrine of Christ should not be Preached, as he Died for our Sins, and rose again,

319 Keith, Truth Advanced, p. 46; Pusey, A Modest Account, p. 14, 17, 18; Penington, The People Called Quakers Cleared, p.28.
&c. as a main Doctrine of the Christian Religion in order to Salvation! For I have always distinguished betwixt simple Heathens or Gentiles, who have not the occasion to have the Faith outwardly Preached, and those in Christendom under a Christian Profession, who have the occasion to hear it Preached; to the former I have said, the express Knowledg and Faith of that Doctrine that is not necessary, tho the implicit in some degree is, but how much, or what measure or degree of it is universally necessary I have never affirmed?

Keith’s argument was similar in substance but not emphasis to that articulated by many Socinian writers. In contrast, his opponents asserted that because England was Christian, and historical knowledge of Christ’s life was widely available, that a focus upon the outward Christ was unnecessary in preaching. The difference between Keith and his opponents was as much about emphasis as positive disagreements, and in a more “charitable” atmosphere they might have been ignored. The personal animosities and breakdown of community therefore shaped the perception of doctrinal difference.  

Of course, this still did not solve the problem of those without access to Christian doctrine. Keith’s interest in this problem seems to have waned as his concern with Friends’ doctrine in a Christian context increased. Thus, at one point, he suggested that godly “Gentiles” received perfect holiness and knowledge upon death. Keith’s explanation of this solution was less than confident:

how the most Pious and Upright among the Gentiles were saved by Faith in Christ Crucified, who had not Faith outwardly Preached, is neither the great or chief Question, nor so proper for us to determine, seeing God hath ways to have done it, unknown to us, whose Ways are above our Ways, as the Heavens are above the Earth; and it may be one of these Secret things that belong to God, and not to us, till he pleases to reveal it.

320 Ibid., p. 16-17; Keith, Anti-Christs and Sadduces, p. 8-9.
Instead of dwelling on this issue, he bifurcated religion into stages: general and Christian. The general religion, identified with the Inner Light (which nonetheless “in a true sense is God and Christ the Eternal and Essential Word”), belonged to all men and involved knowledge of the existence of God, those who lacked such knowledge “are rather Bruits than Man.” This level was to be taught first, “to Heathens and Gentiles, or any called Christians, who have not any true knowledge of God, or fear and reverence of him,” as well as to “bold and presumptuous Sinners.” The Light in this context served to bring such persons to an understanding of their sinful state. This knowledge is “in good order previous or prior to the true Christian Faith, . . and therefore may be Preached before that Faith.” Although Keith compared this process to academic learning, in which mathematics were taught before astronomy, and “heathen” ethics (Aristotle, Plato) before Christian theology, this formulation also closely resembles elements of the Puritan “conversion narrative,” in which a sense of one’s sinfulness (leading to despair) necessarily preceded faith in Christ’s saving mercy.321

In December of 1695, John Toland published his first, anonymous edition of *Christianity Not Mysterious*, followed by a signed edition the following summer. As Jason Champion has noted, Toland probably meant very little of what he actually said. He also had tangential connections with the Society of Friends. For a time, he cultivated a political relationship with William Penn in the latter’s lobbying efforts, and he also knew the Amsterdam Friend Benjamin Furly, who was connected to John Locke and Francis

van Helmont, and whose library contained a wealth of heterodox texts and may have been used by Toland and others in the writing of the infamous atheistic manuscript, *The Treatise of the Three Imposters*. In 1696, however, his tract became the beginning of new controversy over the nature of religious truth in regard to reason and mystery and their implications for scripture and the Trinity. The response to this controversy quickly came to interconnect intellectually with the deepening crisis in the Society of Friends and its implications for scripture and the Trinity.
Chapter VII
“He Was a Little Troublesome Petulant Man”
The Turners Hall Debates and the Apostate Quaker Fringe

In the year after George Keith’s disownment, the schism became a self-consciously “public” event. Obviously, this was partly a matter of perception, since publicity and the fears it produced had been central to the schism from the start. After Keith’s disownment, however, the dispute was consciously directed toward an audience beyond the Society, and non-Friends responded by involving themselves in the controversy. In addition, the use of clandestine printing evolved from its previous role of protecting authors from official censorship to allowing disputants to avoid personal responsibility for accusations. This development was enabled by the expiration in May 3, 1695, of the Licensing Act, which freed the English press from pre-publication censorship. Whereas the Aberdeen and Barbican debates of the 1670s were semi-illegal events, and their entry into print a defensive act, the new public sphere gave the Scism a different cast, which combined high theology with personal animosity and accusation.

The result, however, was hardly the coffeehouse culture mediating between public and state that Habermas has described. Debate was still unseemly and potentially dangerous, as insults and charges of heterodoxy were exchanged back and forth. Ironically, the coffeehouse was frequently mentioned during the dispute, but always in derision. Charles Leslie described it as the place where the “Presbyterian Faction” distributed their tracts. An anonymous writer complained that the debate was “not only the discourse of Porters and Carmen over a Pot of Ale, and Sparks and Beau’s over a

322 George Keith, An Exact Narrative of the Proceedings at Turners-Hall, the 11th of the Month Called June, 1696 (London: B. Aylmer and J. Dunton, 1696), p. 36.
Glass of Wine” but additionally that of “the Grave Cit over a Dish of Coffee,” who had
“mixt his Observations upon State Affairs, with his Reflections upon the Quakers
Differences.” Much as the coffeehouse facilitated discussion of matters among those
unsuited to and uninvolved in the matter at hand, so the Keithian Schism was remarkably
open to interlopers, seeking to press their own agendas, often in ways threatening to those
already participating. The result was a debate about the debate, as Keith and his
opponents argued over identity, representation, and media.\(^3\)

Despite this new media environment, the same issues of representation and
identity as had appeared in the earlier debates remained central. If anything, the nature of
the Act of Toleration -- requiring one to be Protestant, to hold a specific Christology, and
to license meetinghouses -- could only strengthen the corporate nature of religious
identity. “Individualism” was essentially impossible. The view of Dissenters as
“enthusiastic” and mentally ill, rather than merely heretical, made this disciplining only
further necessary. Lawrence E. Klein has shown that the dangers of a political public
sphere were those of social leveling and vulgarization. In the political sphere, Mark
Knights has argued that both Whigs and Tories saw printed polemic as producing an
“endless dialogue” that was central to partisan politics. The public sphere was both useful
in presenting truth and dangerous in producing falsehood and libel. But libel, according
to Knights, was seen as better dealt with through more print and an appeal to public
opinion. This differed significantly from the demand for face-to-face retractions of
libelous words seen in the earlier debate with Hicks, and reflected the greater quantity of

\(^{323}\) Charles Leslie, \textit{Querela Temporum: or, the Danger of the Church of England} (no imprimatur), p. 6;
Moderate Churchman, \textit{Mr George Keith at Turners-Hall in Philpot-Lane, London, in 1696 Contradicting Mr. Geo. Keith, at the Tolbooth of Aberdeen, in 1668 in Fundamental Points of the Christian Faith}
print. For the Society, there were additional concerns that differed from Knights’s
analysis. First, partisan Whig-Tory debate could be open-ended since the political system
that engendered it was. Theological debate, on the other hand, was for post-Restoration
Friends tied to specific apologetic and legal goals. Knights’s suggestion, derived from the
work of Kate Peters, is that the Quakers “were in part created through print” is better
applied to the Civil War (Peters focus). As will be discussed, this practice would return,
ironically, after the Schism, in the form of biography. At the same time, Peters has argued
that “Quaker authors regarded printed exchanges between themselves and their critics as
primarily instrumental for spreading the truth and increasing the following of the Quaker
movement: they did not debate with puritan adversaries as a matter of principle or for the
sake of it.” In contrast, the period after the Restoration saw a shift for Friends toward
printing as an active policy of defense. This approach only accelerated in the 1690s. As
previous chapters demonstrate, for Friends print and political activity were concentrated
in specific periods and outwardly directed. Community formation was largely subsumed
into manuscript networks and oral performances within the meeting.324

324 Mark Knights, *Representation and Misrepresentation in Later Stuart Britain: Partisanship and
Political Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 236, 175; Kate Peters, *Print Culture and
the Early Quakers* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p.175. Lawrence E. Klein discusses the
Whig need to discipline the personality, particularly religious and political expression as part of defending
the post 1688 status quo, “Coffeehouse Civility, 1660-1714: An Aspect of Post-Courtly Culture in
England” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 59 (1996): p. 30-51. For the construction of Dissenters as mentally
ill, see John Spurr, *The Restoration Church of England, 1646-1689* (New Haven: Yale University Press,
1991) especially Chapter 5, where Spurr argues that Anglicans saw immorality as underlying Dissenters
enthusiastic refusal to agree with Anglicanism; and Michael P. Winship, *Seers of God: Puritan
Providentialism in the Restoration and Early Enlightenment* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University
Press, 1996). Winship argues that Anglicans attacked the “older Providence,” which interpreted celestial
events as wonders (which remained important to Calvinism), in favor of “the new and increasingly
influential providentialism,” which “glorified God by utilizing the gifts of a beneficent providential order,
rather than by anxiously scrutinizing the world for His messages,” p. 51. Winship connects this to the rise
of the Habermasian public sphere, where people are no longer sacralized but instead rational individuals.
His argument derives in good part from the work of Margaret and James R. Jacobs, which argues that the
Revolutionary settlement empowered a collection of Anglican “moderate Newtonians” who used the New
Science to set forth an ordered, hierarchical, capitalist settlement in response to the dangers of Civil War
For all of the opportunities the Glorious Revolution created, by the 1690s the Society’s history was catching up with itself. The close connection of members of the Society, especially Penn, to the old regime led several anti-Quaker writers to brand the Society as blatantly hypocritical and politically disloyal. This problem was enhanced by the common identification of Quakerism with Roman Catholicism. The exposure on February 24, 1696, of a Jacobite plot to kill King William III only exacerbated these problems. Difficult at any time, these accusations were made at precisely the moment when the Society was close to achieving its final legal victories. The Act of Toleration removed penalties for worshipping in a Dissenting church, but it maintained the rules prohibiting officeholding by those who did not take Anglican Communion. The act also did nothing to solve the peculiarly Quaker problem of oaths, nor did it recognize Quaker marriages. These issues provided an important impetus for the Friends to retain a public face in print, even while they defined religious toleration as the liberty to be left alone. Thus the continuing need to control the public sphere led to a series of disputes over representation and identity, as well as appeals both to concrete legal institutions and languages of political loyalty and rights.

Finally, the language of debate was itself an integral part of debate. The corporatist and hierarchical nature of the Society both made it fear the individual disconnected from that order and allowed it to dismiss lone voices in the public sphere (as they had done during the debate with Hicks. At the same time, the collapse of licensing gave those very people a public voice unguarded by denominational identity or even (in the case of pseudonymous printing) their own reputation. The language of honor radicalism, republicanism and Freethought. Margaret C. Jacobs. *The Newtonians and the English Revolution 1689-1720* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976).
culture, moreover, remained, easily moving denominational and ideological disputes into the realm of personal insult and confrontation.

**The Quaker Apostate Fringe**

It is a testimony to the intensity of corporate identity in the Society of Friends that even those who broke from it felt compelled to stalk its boundaries for years to come. John Pennyman’s dispute with it went back to the 1660s, and both Francis Bugg and Thomas Crisp separated during the Wilkinson-Story conflict. Despite this, all three were deeply concerned to carry on the fight in the ensuing decades, reappearing in the press after 1688. The opposition to the new toleration in certain Anglican circles provided these ex-Friends with a justification for renewing their fight with the Society and with potential patrons for their publications.

Central to their attack on the Society was the charge that Quakers were politically hypocritical. John Pennyman, soon after 1688, issued a generic statement of loyalty to William III as the king left for Ireland to fight James. A tract by a Joseph Pennyman, which reproduced contradictory quotations from Friends’ books concerning the Society’s doctrines and political loyalties, followed. This tract then became a reference source for both Bugg and Crisp, and (through them) for a nonjuring Anglican named Charles Leslie. Francis Bugg argued that the Quakers had spent the Civil War as supporters of Cromwell, anti-papery, and the “Good Old Cause,” and then reversed tack after the Restoration, both by adopting the peace testimony and by attaching themselves to the House of Stuart and its plans for a religious toleration extended to both Dissenters and Roman Catholics. The
two accusations seem, at first glance, to be contradictory, but they shared the charge of seeking to overthrow the civil government. The Presbyterian regicide was effectively the same as the Catholic monarchomach. That Quaker motives were cynical and self-serving, likewise, matched the Protestant belief that Roman Catholicism was more a government than a religion (which Penn himself had used in excluding Catholics from toleration in a draft of Pennsylvania’s laws). Bugg’s construction, therefore, was ideally suited to the Glorious Revolution with its fears of popery, tyranny and Civil War radicalism; and it demonstrated the tendency of religious rhetoric to collapse all of one’s enemies together into a single root cause. Finally, this argument served as a weapon with which to oppose not only Quakers, but also religious toleration in general as dangerous to the state. Penn himself, in 1685, had written that the “Clamorous pretence” that toleration represented a “Danger to Government, through an Indulgence of Rebellious and Antimonarchical Principles,” was the most important argument presented against toleration. Almost a decade later, the uncertainty about whether a single divine right king could survive as the head of a society of many churches remained. Francis Bugg thus furthered his accusations of Jacobitism by suggesting that the Quakers, in contrast to their effusive praise of James II before the Revolution, had been almost silent concerning William and Mary.325

325 John Pennyman, To the King, the Humble Address of John Pennyman (n.p. 1690); Joseph Pennyman, A Looking Glass for the Quakers (London: n.p. 1689); [William Penn], Considerations Moving to a Toleration, and Liberty of Conscience (London: n.p. 1685), unpaginated epistle. Bugg’s charges remained consistent (or rather hopelessly repetitive), throughout most of his tracts. See Francis Bugg, Battering Rams Against New Rome (London: John Gwillim, 1691); idem, One More Blow at New Rome. Being an Appendix to Battering Rams &c. (London: John Gwillim, 1691); idem, New Rome Unmask’d and Her Foundation Shaken (London: John Gwillim, 1692); idem, Some of the Quakers Principles and Doctrines, Laws & Orders, &c. (London: John Gwillim & Richard Baldwin, 1693). Daniel Leeds, a Pennsylvania almanac writer and Keithian, later repeated Jennings’s reference to the London Yearly Meeting as the chief meeting, declaring “This indeed is the Foundation Principle of Old Rome,” making the London Yearly Meeting “New-Rome.” Leeds then immediately shifted to repeating the accusation that while Quakers had
Bugg, Pennyman, and Crisp were part of a different generation of ex-Quakers than Keith, and their major complaint continued to be the arrogant tyranny of the Society’s leadership (even after Fox’s death) both in their imposition of doctrine (especially the institution of women’s meetings) and their creation of a clerical hierarchy. Yet the three ex-Friends combined these accusations that the Society had abandoned its first principles of equality with charges of heterodoxy. Friends, in reply, used Bugg’s “apostasy” to construct Bugg as a masterless man whose opinions were unworthy of consideration (at least in theory, given the volume of actual print he provoked). Bugg’s response, even while pre-dating the Keithian Schism, used issues of biography and identity similar to those employed by Keith to suggest that he had believed correctly while a Quaker, while misunderstanding the Society’s heterodoxy. Neither the increasing absurdity of the argument, given Bugg’s conversion to Anglicanism (which Whitehead pointed out was even more hierarchical) nor Bugg’s wavering explanation of exactly when he had converted from Quakerism to Anglicanism deterred him from rejecting the construction of himself as a schismatic.326

To simplify matters and avoid the issue of identity, Bugg attempted to use legal institutions to aid him in receiving a hearing. After having been shoved out of numerous Friends’ meetings, according to Bugg, he obtained a warrant from a local justice before appearing at a meeting in Mildenhall, Suffolk, in April of 1691 and came attended by two

“presented six Publick Addresses” to James II, in the “five years that King WILLIAM had reigned, they had not presented one to him.” News of a Trumpet Sounding in the Wilderness ([New York: William Bradford], 1701), p. 65-66.

326 Whitehead’s responses were The Contentious Apostate and His Blow Repelled (London: Thomas Northcott, 1691); The Contentious Apostate Recharged (n.p. [1691?]); Charitable Essay (no imprint, [1693?]); A Just Enquiry Into the Libeller’s Abuse of the People Called Quakers (London: Tace Sowle, 1693); Innocency Triumphant Over Insolency and Outrage of a Self-Condemned Apostate (London: Thomas Northcott, 1693); The Quakers Vindication Against Francis Buggs Calumnies (n.p., 1693).
Anglican clergymen. Whitehead claimed Bugg’s goal was to provoke a disturbance. As if seeking to confirm Whitehead’s suspicions, Bugg demanded the constable “do your Office” and arrest Whitehead “or I’ll Complain of you.” Bugg demanded that Whitehead answer charges of being a “deceiver,” of abusing “the blessed Martyrs,” and of holding heterodox opinions. Whitehead asked for a separate meeting in which they could debate, so that the assembled Friends could worship in peace, at which point the clergymen challenged him for not licensing the meetinghouse. Whitehead called them persecutors attempting to abuse them on a technicality, which one of the clergymen seems to have been willing to concede and he withdrew. Bugg was less amenable, calling Quakers “Disaffected to the Government” and demanded repeatedly that Whitehead “own” two books as authored by him. Whitehead attempted to ignore the interlopers and began praying, whereupon one of the clergymen, probably Isaac Archer, called on “All you that are in Communion with me, with-draw, do not joyn with him in Prayer, for he doth not Pray in the Name of Christ.” Whether the people in question had arrived with Archer to provide support or were curious attendees of a sort similar to the two Presbyterian women of decades before, calling them to withdraw is significant. It reveals a dual concern with the danger of Quaker speech and the representative importance of joining in worship with Quakers as (at some level) joining in their “communion” and thus recognizing them as Christians and Protestants.327

Despite this attempt to utilize both legal and clerical authority, Bugg’s inability to claim a clear denominational voice remained. Proclaiming him an apostate with shifting positions was a useful tool in responding to Bugg but did not change the fact of his

challenges within their meetinghouses. Thus Whitehead made his own pleas to institutional authorities to impose some discipline on the unruly public sphere. He chided Isaac Archer on several occasions for condoning Bugg’s behavior, saying at one point “thou art [Bugg’s] Teacher or Minister, I pray thee speak to him, and teach him to keep within the bounds of common Civility.” On another he said “See what a Convert thou hast got of F. B. that thus contradicts his Teacher,” by refusing to withdraw as Archer had suggested. Bugg’s blurred denominational state was further exhibited when his wife (who was in unity with the meeting) “stood up to clear her Conscience, being under a great Burthen and Constraint” to testify against her husband, as having cynical reasons for “writing Books against Friends.” Bugg seemed to have been unable to respond; but Archer replied, saying she “should not Discover your Husbands Nakedness,” and then said to Bugg, “you should not Reveal your Secrets to the Wife of your Bosom; but you may see the Enemies of a Man are those of his own House.” In recording this instance, Friends were joining Bugg’s disorderly public behavior and confused denominational identity with usurped patriarchal authority. Since they were unable to use the Anglican clergymen to rein him in at the time, they were able to use the minister’s proscriptions against him in narrating the event.328

This accusation particularly came out in the printed disputes, when Bugg repeatedly called on Whitehead to meet him publicly, first by proposing an independent

328 Ibid, p. 5-6, 4. Thomas Crisp appears to have had his own difficulties relating to his marriage, complaining that the Society had convinced his wife to present a paper to the meeting “condemning her Marriage before a Minister of the Church of England” twelve years after the nuptials. Animadversions on George Whitehead’s Book, Falsly Stiled Innocency Triumphant (London: John Dunton, 1694), p. 12. The role of family in the Keithian and other religious schisms is highly unexplored, and would shed important light on both the nature of family life and sectarian identities. This dissertation will reference the few scraps that have turned up in my research but cannot make anything but anecdotal conjectures. Clearly, Bugg’s references to these events and Whitehead’s silence suggests that the challenge to the former’s patriarchal authority was considered inappropriate.
jury of ministers and then that each side bring six of their own as judges of the dispute. Bugg sought to strengthen his demand by citing a standing offer to public debate issued by the late Friend Edward Burroughs. Whitehead called the charge presumptuous and suggested Bugg was a man of low reputation who was unqualified to engage in such a debate, both in personal attainments and because he could not “produce any Deputation from the Church, Bishops or Clergy of England.” Without such, the Society could not be certain that the meeting would accomplish anything, since the Anglicans could repudiate Bugg if the meeting went poorly for them. Whitehead was thus making clear that they saw the dispute with Bugg as a proxy fight with recalcitrant Anglicans who rejected the new policy of toleration. Whitehead’s failure to force the Anglicans to take responsibility for Bugg required him to argue that the ex-Quaker was contradicting his previous writings. Whitehead simply declared that Bugg either was mistaken when he praised the Society’s first principles or was willfully or unintentionally wrong now. All Whitehead’s responses to Bugg’s tracts, therefore, accused Bugg of apostasy in their titles. Mimicking him, Bugg retorted that the Society had changed their doctrinal and political positions, a charge that would be picked up by other anti-Quaker writers. By 1694, Bugg included certificates of good standing from numerous Anglican ministers in the second edition of New Rome Arraigned, through which he sought to evade the accusations of being of no denomination or reputation. In addition, by 1696, he was distributing his publications to members of Parliament in hopes of killing the Quaker effort to be allowed to use an affirmation in the place of oaths.\footnote{George Whitehead, A Charitable Essay (no imprint), p. 7; for the lobbying effort related to the Affirmation Act, see Richard Clark, “‘The Gangreen of Quakerism’: An Anti-Quaker Anglican Offensive in England after the Glorious Revolution” JRH 11 (1980-1981): p. 404-429.}
When the Keithian Schism broke out in London, therefore, it was a godsend for anti-Quaker polemicists. Better educated, and possessing an undeniable standing in the Society, Keith stood in sharp contrast to Bugg, with his repetitious writings and questionable motivations, and Thomas Crisp with his poor prose. Bugg’s Anglican supporters were rarely willing to fully endorse him, in contrast to their open embracing of Keith. William Adams, writing to Thomas Tanner, in concluding a letter, explained “in comes in [sic] Francis Bugg desiring me to buy one of his books calld the Pilgrims progress to Christianity (meaning that he was no Christian when he was a Quaker) but I’d be no more to read it, than I would all the Pamphlets with Richard Chiswel at the bottom.” Chiswell was a book wholesaler and marketing innovator, and Tanner as a result appears to have been calling Bugg a hack writer. But the less mercenary personality of Keith also made his final divorcement from the Society prolonged and difficult. As we shall see, however, the public response of the Society would remain effectively the same as that towards Bugg.330

**Turners Hall**

Turners Hall stood at the corner of Fenchurch Street and Philpot Lane, near the Friends’ Gracechurch Street meetinghouse. After leaving the Harp Lane separate meeting, Keith set up his own congregation here and issued a printed challenge to the Society for the first of what would prove four annual “debates,” none of which the Society officially attended. Keith’s broadside had its origins in the personal components of the schism. Directed to the Second Days Morning Meeting, it contained - not a list of

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330 William Adams to Thomas Tanner, 1699, Bodl. MS Tanner xxi, f. 39.
doctrinal errors - but of injustices Keith felt leading Friends had committed against him. Penn was charged with insulting Keith during the Ratcliffe Meeting, Thomas Ellwood and John Penington with “defaming” Keith in their books, George Whitehead with orchestrating the excommunication of Keith, and the entire Second Days Meeting with approving a book by Caleb Pusey against Keith. Only after delivering these charges did Keith promise to prove the individuals guilty of general “Erroneous and Hurtful Principles, contrary to the Fundamental Doctrine of the Christian Faith and Religion.” Thomas Ellwood later cited the lack of specific charges as a reason for refusing to attend. This decision, however, changed the nature of the debate, and therefore of the publications that appeared in its wake. Whereas in the Delaware Valley theological debate had increasingly been hardened by personal acrimony and abuse, in London the failure to reconcile those personal and communal disputes began to transform the schism back into a fight over doctrine. Because Keith needed to avoid falling prey to the Society’s tactic (used against Bugg) of presenting him as a disorderly man who changed beliefs at will, he proceeded to sketch out a clearer religious identity than merely a Quaker wronged by Penn and Whitehead. While these doctrinal issues could not be separated strictly from the personal, the emphasis had changed to one of debating the contents of previous Friends’ books, which required Quaker apologists to continue the reform of doctrine in which Keith himself had been involved. At the same time, it was in the interest of the society to keep the rhetoric of the debate precisely where it was.331

331 Keith, *An Exact Narrative of the Proceedings at Turners-Hall*, p. 9-10; Thomas Ellwood, *An Answer to George Keith’s Narrative of his Proceedings at Turner’s-Hall, On the 11th of the Month Called June, 1696* (London: Tace Sowle, 1696). That personal dislikes were not absent from the exchange is revealed in Keith’s distrustful concern for procedure. While Penn and Whitehead had refused to attend, Henry Gouldney and several others did, presenting a written explanation for the others’ absence. Here, as elsewhere during the debate, Keith asked the audience whether another person than he should read the
After his disownment Keith repeatedly articulated his identity alternately as a generic Christian and as an “honest Friend.” This identity was distinct from the pan-Christianism Keith had earlier adopted in defending the Society from accusations of de-Christianizing all non-Friends, or the attempt to solve an epistemic crisis through the Ancient Theology. Instead, Keith was trying to carve out a new and distinct religious identity, at a time when denominations were central to such identities. The Act of Toleration had not created a “religious marketplace;” instead it had produced an oligopoly of established sects. Keith, therefore, increasingly defended the targets of Quaker polemics, asking “Is there any thing here offensive [in the doctrinal position under Quaker attack]? Nothing but what is the declared Opinion of the Church of Rome, the Church of England, the Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists, and mine, all along, tho I have been a Quaker near about 35 Years.” Keith elsewhere declared “I value not what he understands in the case; I was then, and now am a Member of Christs body, which is his Church, that is not limited to this or that particular Society.” He never, moreover, was “so strait in my Charity” as to count only Friends to be Christians. This position made him ever more critical of the writings, not only of his opponents in the Society, but deceased Friends such as Fox. The only Friends whom Keith defended by name were his statement (i.e. whether they trusted him to do so accurately). Later, however, the two Friends demanded that someone else be assigned to read the sections from Friends’ books that Keith argued were unchristian, because he was isolating passages, whereas “many things are explanatory of one another.” Gouldney “also blamed [Keith’s] reading, that what exculpated them him he read low, but what he thought made for him he read high.” In addition to the issue of trust, this exchange also may have reflected a personal quirk. Keith apparently used to preach in an affected, “sing-songy” voice that made him difficult to understand. Whitehead similarly complained about Keith not giving the Society a list of specific charges in a letter printed in John Penington, *The People Called Quakers Cleared* (London: Tace Sowle, 1696) p. 49. The London Yearly Meeting informed Pennsylvania of Keith’s movement from Harp Lane “with about 8 or 10 of them” to Turners Hall. They further reported that “he boasts as if a People now owned him,” and then assured their American brethren that his meeting came to naught. Epistles Sent I, p. 224-226, Library of the Society of Friends, London.
friend Robert Barclay and Isaac Penington, who were both dead. “R. Barclay is my Country-man, I will not be partial to him on that account,” Keith stated, “but I do not now blame any thing in his Book, I know he is the soundest Writer among them.” Instead, Keith attacked William Penn’s preface to Barclay’s work: “If there be any Reflection on him, it is chiefly this, that such an unsound Preface should be put to his Book, for I can sufficiently prove, that R. Barclay’s Doctrine is plainly Antipodes to this Doctrine.” Thus Keith sought to legitimate his own Christian identity by appealing to the consensus of other denominations, rather than to scriptural first principles. This distinction should not be pushed too far, obviously all Protestants believed their theology to be scripture-based, and Keith was relying on that assumption here. But he nonetheless could not allow his interpretation of scripture to rely on iconoclastic personality, but on established hermeneutics. 332

This identity appeared not merely in print, but in the personal relationships Keith was attempting to build. In particular, he had begun corresponding with Humphry Wanley, the Librarian at the Bodleian Library. In May, 1696, Keith sent him copies of most of his publications brought forth “since our differences began in pensilvania.” He also sent along a copy of the Snake in the Grass, an important anti-Quaker tract that will be discussed later, which he described as containing “many things in it I approve, and know to be true, but some things I doe not.” Despite his strategic alliance with anti-Quaker Anglicans, however, Keith declared that “I have not left or Cast off the profession of a Quaker.” He specifically carved out a role for himself as “an Instrument to many of

332 Keith, An Exact Narrative of the Proceedings at Turners-Hall, p. 12, 17, 21. Keith explained away a statement by Penington saying that “I charitably think this Passage dropt from him unawares: I wish I could have that ground of Charity to others of them.” Ibid, p. 33.
that people [Friends], both beyond sea in America, & here also in England, to reclaime
them from their errors” and restore them to Christian orthodoxy. But his profession of
religious identity also assumed a more forcefully nebulous quality. He only “valued,”
therefore, the name “of a Christian, & follower of the Crucified Jesus.” This focus upon
doctrinal orthodoxy placed him outside of the clear institutional identity of membership
in the Society; and it therefore forced him to create for himself an identity based upon the
metaphysical entity of Christ’s universal church. Therefore, “however in some lesser
matters I remain to differ with others, yet in true faith & love I am one with all that
sincerely believe in & love the lord Jesus Christ.”

This identity stood in contrast for Keith to that of the anti-Christian Friends’
leadership. Penn, according to Keith, defined a Christian by moral virtues, without “one
word of the Man Christ” as the object of Christian faith and love. Penn, therefore, would
“heathenise all Christendom through” and “christianize Heathens.” Reducing religion
down to morality meant that “here the Jew is the Christian, the Mahometan is the
Christian, the Pagan is the Christian, and the professed Pelagian is the Christian, tho they
deny any inward supernatural Principle, and call the Light within only natural, as many
sober and moral Men do.” This choice of examples had greater significance than is
immediately apparent. First, because it was understood that Muslims assigned Christ a
special prophetic role, while believing him entirely human, Islam was an important
symbol in religious discourse. For orthodox Trinitarians, it was a convenient term of
abuse against Socinians, while for Freethinkers, Islam could represent a strain of
uncorrupted monotheism. Secondly, as was seen in the thought of the Ragely House

333 George Keith to Humphrey Wanley, May 12, 1696, BL Harley MSS 3780, f. 18.
Circle, unorthodox approaches to the Trinity were related to the question of converting non-Christians, especially Jews. Keith now reversed the argument that the Trinity was a stumbling block to conversion. Returning to his earlier studies of Kabbalah, he declared that Jews believe in the Light Within: “their Rabbies speak highly of it, yea, they call it a Ray or Beam of the Heavenly Adam.” Christ’s presence as a universal light, therefore, meant that the Messiah had not yet come, “And so [the Quakers] throw away our Arguments against the Jews; the Jews may plead the Messiah is not yet come. . . how shall we convince them that the Messiah is come?” Keith’s pursuit of non-Christian learning in the 1670s was now coming to fruition in arguing for a more specifically Christian identity. Such an identity, however, was to prove insufficient to Keith’s polemical needs.334

While constructing this Christian identity, nonetheless, Keith continued professing that he had not changed in doctrine, and that he remained a Friend persecuted by a Penn and Whitehead faction within the meeting. He proclaimed his travels outside of London had proved that many in meetings there “do own me more than they own him.”He further charged that his enemies made “G. Whitehead the Representative and Metropolitan of the Quakers, saying, what G.W. writes, affects them as a People. I am a Quaker still, though I glory not in any Name, but that I may be accounted a true Christian.” The contradiction in his position was even further illustrated by his ability to say “I Reverence Divine Providence that I became a Quaker,” but that the reality of his situation forced him to concede “if I had known they had had such Errors among them, I would as soon have put my Head in the fire, as have owned such among them.” For the

334 Keith, An Exact Narrative of the Proceedings at Turners-Hall, p. 21, 24.
present, Keith used his pan-Christian identity to divide the Society into true and false Friends. This stance was clear even before the Turners Hall debate, when in April of 1696 Keith delivered and then printed a thanksgiving sermon after the failure of the assassination plot against William III. Quaker in structure, it wandered, utilizing images of political rebellion as metaphors for the presence of sin in the soul, arguing that Christians had a duty to be “eminently exemplary” in their obedience to political authority, and mingling the whole with the language of eschatological anti-popery. But Keith, far from engaging in the accusations of Jacobitism that came so easily to Bugg and Pennyman, closed the sermon with a profession of allegiance from the Turners Hall congregation “in behalf of our selves, and other Christian People of the same Faith and Perswasion with us, commonly called Quakers,” even while conceding that they differed from some “that go under that Name in diverse weighty Things.” Such a profession returned Keith back to the issue that had motivated the Gospel Order Improved: how exactly to draw up those boundaries between Friends and those who merely made a public profession (i.e. acceded to meeting authority), only this time in relation to himself. It was not until the third Turners Hall debate that Keith would finally resolve this contradiction, stating that he was happy to no longer be communicating with the Society. Yet he would not convert to Anglicanism for another two years, remaining in a pan-Christian limbo.335

With Keith making accusations of serious heterodoxy against the leadership of the Society, the Friends who responded to him (probably having been assigned to, though evidence is lacking) had to avoid facilitating Keith’s campaign against them. They, as a

result, constructed Keith as a disorderly man and therefore an improper participant in the public sphere. First, Keith was a man controlled by his passions, not reason. Whitehead charged Keith with imposing his meeting on Friends “to gratifie his Ambitious, Contentious, Spirit.” The far-traveling Quaker minister Thomas Story signed and printed a list of reasons why the Friends were boycotting the debate at Turners Hall. Among them was Keith’s “very passionate and abusive Behaviour” as demonstrated in their encounters with him. Such meetings were bound, according to Story, to lead to “Heats, Levity, and Confusion, and Answer not the End desired by sober and enquiring Men.” Such disorderly meetings might also result in action by the civil authorities. Ellwood explained afterwards that the meeting had been an unseemly gathering - Keith’s “court” attended by a “mob” – where Friends could not receive a fair hearing. Those few Friends who attended the meeting concurred, “Friends have excommunicated him, not for his Principles, but for going from the Spirit of Meekness, Charity, &c.” The way disorder was depicted was therefore a mixture of the older language of manly reputation and honor mixed with new dangers of the public sphere. The Society was not itself terribly concerned with disciplining the public sphere per se, such as Whig politicians were, but they nonetheless were forced into doing so.336

Instead of meeting with Keith, Ellwood declared it to be more seemly for Friends to answer Keith in print and criticized the fact that Keith had not answered several Friends’ publications. When Keith questioned why a printed dispute was less offensive

than one conducted “viva voce,” Ellwood replied “He might as well ask, Why should the gathering together of many Hundreds, or thousands, of Men, in a time of Faction and great Discontents, be more offensive to civil Peace, than People’s Reading Books, privately in their Houses or Closets?” Friends sought to push the dispute out of the chaos and danger of face-to-face encounters and into the controlled space of print. The Society had also developed, as has been seen, a well-funded system for producing and distributing texts defending the Society. If they could not silence Keith, or ignore him, they could bury him under an avalanche of print tumbling out of London and throughout the Atlantic community.337

The way in which Friends described their avoidance of public dispute also began to explicitly adopt the language of an affair of honor. When Ellwood explained that the Society could refuse to debate because no specific theological accusations had been made by Keith, he elaborated that “Even in Duelling, he that gives the Challenge, doth withal give notice what Weapon he intends to use, and of what length.” Later, he rejected Keith’s accusation of cowardice, “Since as it is no sign of want of Courage ... to refuse Scuffling with his Antagonist in a Chamber, while he boldly offers to meet him in the open Field.” In the same way, Ellwood argued, it was not cowardice for Friends to refuse to meet “a Brawling Adversary in a By-place” when they were willing to meet him “in the most open free and clear way of deciding Religious Controversies, the Press.” Both Friends sought the same regularity to dispute as existed for affairs of honor, which they felt could be acquired textually. But comparing a public encounter with Keith to a “brawl” also further constructed him as disorderly. The dangers of print expressed during

337 Ellwood, An Answer to George Keith’s Narrative, 16.
the American Schism had not become irrelevant, but took on a different significance once
the split had been finalized; now the Society expressed the same desire for the fixity of
text expressed by Keith’s former opponents such as Cotton Mather and Francis
Makemie.338

As Whitehead had attempted to deal with Bugg by having Anglican ministers
discipline his behavior, so Thomas Story’s final reason for non-attendance attacked
Keith’s non-denominational identity. Friends “know not what Religion or Perswasion this
Wavering Man is of, or what Church or People he adheres to, or will receive him, with
his vain Speculations, that have led him to desert us.” Just as importantly, Friends did not
know “who are accountable to us for him and his Irregularities and Abuses.” But this
tactic for regulating public discourse produced confusion when laid alongside the
language of honor culture. Keith had earlier brought up the example of the Barbican
debates as proof that Friends should give him a similar hearing in response to Penn’s
public insult of calling Keith an “apostate;” but Thomas Ellwood distinguished between
Thomas Hicks who “had assaulted and slandered the whole People called Quakers, and
was himself both of a People, and backed by a People,” and Penn’s accusation against
Keith, which “affects no Body, that I know of, but himself but justly [sic].” Keith,
moreover, was not “of any People now, ... though he hovers over a sort of scattered
Company, for a while, till he can find where to settle more to his Advantage.” He also
declared that the Society would have been willing to meet with Keith at the first Turners
Hall debate had he renounced his affiliation with the Society. Because Keith continued to
identify himself as a Friend, however, their appearance could only have brought reproach

338 Ellwood, An Answer to George Keith’s Narrative, p. 20, 22.
upon the Society. Keith puzzled at Ellwood’s reasoning, wondering why it was permitted for the Society to wrong individuals and to “ruin” his family. In 1698, Keith repeated his desire to “use such Christian Methods, as my Christian Name may be preserved against your Defamations,” and his sense that “Next to the Honour of God, and the good of my Soul, I am concerned, as a Christian Man, to regard the condition of my Family,” which they had “sought to ruin and destroy.” Where the Friends used the language of honor in a metaphorical fashion to distinguish between seemly and unseemly modes of communication, Keith was more direct, demanding public satisfaction for public abuse.\(^\text{339}\)

Like many of the arguments deployed by both sides, all of these were partly tactical, but they also revealed the essential difficulties of a society suddenly thrust into a public square it had little conception of or belief in. The underlying corporate structure to identity, therefore, became a way of choosing fights and controlling combatants in the discursive context. At the same time, personal reputation pulled matters in precisely the opposite direction. The theological rose again to importance as the Society sought to place Keith fully outside of the meeting, but it could only do so if he could be affiliated with another denomination. Keith, in contrast, had to find a clear identity that would give his demands for satisfaction greater weight. While these exchanges reveal the fundamental incomprehensibility of the whole notion of a public sphere in the

\(^{339}\) Thomas Ellwood, *Truth Defended, and the Friends Thereof Cleared From the False Charges, Foul Reprehoses, and Envious Cavils, Cast Upon it and Them*, by George Keith (London: Tace Sowle, 1695), p. 158-159; *idem*, Ellwood, *An Answer to George Keith’s Narrative*, p. 10-11; Keith, *An Exact Narrative of the Proceedings at Turners-Hall*, p. 11. Joseph Wyeth wrote the Society’s printed refusal to attend the Turners Hall Meeting in 1699, and repeated precisely the same points. *To All Who Are Advertised by G. Keith of a Meeting Intended to be Held by Him, at Turners-Hall, the 11\textsuperscript{th} of the 11\textsuperscript{th} Month, Call’d January, 1699* (London: Tace Sowle, 1699); George Keith, *Third Narrative of the Proceedings at Turners-Hall* (London: Charles Brome, 1698), p. 49.
deployment of both corporate and personal strategies according to need, there was something of (if not an ideology of free speech) a clear etiquette of the public square beginning to coalesce. The entry into the dispute of various, not directly involved individuals, would further demonstrate to Friends the dangers they had long perceived in public debate and the complete impossibility of containing it.

**Journalism**

The death of licensing in England also set off an explosion in newsbooks. The three most influential publications: *The Post Boy, Post Man* (both produced at one point by Richard Baldwin, another publisher of Bugg’s and Keith’s works) and *Flying Post* appeared quickly afterwards. All three focused upon foreign news over domestic, with limited editorial comment, which makes these papers interests in a local London event like the Schism all the more remarkable. Journalism, however, was usually an appendage to larger printing businesses. Thus, John Dunton, who had joined John Guillam in published many of Bugg’s books and would also produce Keith’s first Turners Hall narrative, was a leading London printer and bookseller. Dunton was, in addition, the publisher of the *Athenian Mercury*, an innovative journal that accepted queries from its readers and published answers by a circle of friends that included Samuel Wesley (father of the Methodist founders) and more occasionally the Platonist, High Anglican, anti-Quaker, and anti-Deist writer John Norris (an acolyte of Henry More). Dunton himself, while a life-long Anglican, maintained relationships with numerous Dissenters, and
believed in promoting the general reform of society, using both *The Athenian Mercury* and later the *Post-Angel* to promote moral and scientific understanding.\(^{340}\)

While not primarily concerned with Quakers, the *Mercury* published a series of comments on the Society throughout 1692, accusing the Society of heterodoxy and suggesting John Whitehead (no relation of George) had boasted of becoming massively obese while in prison. At another point, they judged the Society to be “the firmest and most politick Body of Men that Dissent from our Communion; we know not whether we are to except the Jesuits themselves.” Their attacks on the Society provoked two responses. The first was issued by the Society, in a broadside claiming that the book from which the “Athenians” drew their queries was “none of our’s; ... either in *Title* or *Style*.” Concluding, the authors called on “our obscure Adversaries” to publish their names “if you dare own and stand by all you write against us, or intend to be of any credit,” before signing their own names. In December, Joseph Wyeth produced a defense of John Whitehead and of the Society’s claim to being Christians (citing, ironically, Keith’s *Immediate Revelation*). In the process, he also attacked the *Mercury* both for abandoning its policy of not defaming people by name or trading in scandal and for violating the Act of Toleration. “You are Men, who at your appearance by this Name, promis’d to use in your ensuing Design, much Christian Candor and Modesty,” Wyeth declared, “and not to widen the Breaches, but to avoid either Practices or Disputes that might tend thereto.”

\(^{340}\) C. John Sommerville, *The News Revolution in England: Cultural Dynamics of Daily Information* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), Sommerville’s book specifically addresses the question of how “facts” are extracted from a broader conceptual network and transformed into commodities that become immediately obsolete within twenty-four hours, regardless of their comparative value. This interpretation assumes a particular importance in religion, which the press transformed from a mythology to which individual facts were assimilated to a collection of providentially interpreted facts and natural theology (robbing “religion of its more natural language.”), and which replaced scripture with itself as the “master text of English culture.”, see pages 143, 144. There is a degree of teleology in this view, as well as romanticism in his view of a lost coherence to knowledge displaced by commodified pieces of information.
Instead, the Athenians had “merited the Title of Incendiaries” and become “Disturbers of the Publick Peace.” All of this occurred in the year preceding the appearance of the London reprints of the Keithian tracts, suggesting an early interest in anti-Quakerism on Dunton’s part that made him amenable to using the Schism to his own ends.341

In 1696, Dunton published a short-lived paper titled the Pegasus, which commented on the Keithian Schism in the wake of the first debate in Turners Hall. While the Post Man and Flying Post had already given a general account, the Pegasus added editorial comments: that the audience was “judicious and moderate,” that most people found Whitehead and Penn’s reasons for not attending “to be very frivolous and insufficient,” and that Keith proved the Society guilty of heresy. The piece provoked a response from the Society. Pointing to the paper’s stated purpose to inform its readers about public events, the Quaker statement declared “Consequently their Flying Horse has nothing to do with Disputes in Religion,” a topic “too high for them.” With regards to the Turners Hall debate, since the Society did not attend “it might more properly be termed a Dispute between George and Keith, then between G.K. and the Quakers.” Yet,

revealing again Friends’ desire to control the debate through print, they attacked the *Pegasus* for quoting Keith’s account but not waiting for the Society’s official response. Finally, they rejected the idea that Keith was opposing Penn and Whitehead personally, but instead stated the problem was Keith’s abandonment of his former doctrines.\textsuperscript{342}

Throughout 1698, *The Post Boy* advertised books by Keith. Later, they gave an account of three men arrested in Edinburgh for concealing Catholic priests, a Catholic, a “Protestant” and a Quaker. In November, however, it published a petition by the Society to the House of Commons that sought to stifle rumors “That they lent the late King James money, and raised and Cloathed a Regiment for him.” and argued that their refusal to take the Declaration of Loyalty to William was merely motivated by their testimony against oaths. In later disputes, the Society would likewise turn to the *Post Boy* as its preferred vehicle for response.\textsuperscript{343}

Keith himself was not immune to the dangers of misrepresentation. In 1700 a purported sermon by Keith appeared in *The Post Boy*, after which a similarly forged collection of printed sermons appeared. Keith quickly purchased space in *The Post Man* to declare that the account was inaccurate and to expose the tract as “a sham Account.” Apparently the editor saw an opportunity in Keith’s announcement, since a statement from the Society immediately followed it denying responsibility for the tract.\textsuperscript{344}

Newspapers reveal even more clearly the Society’s understanding of the new media as both dangerous and unavoidable. Their immediacy, wide distribution and (at

\textsuperscript{342} Vol. 114a *Pegasus* Vol. 1 #1; *A Curb For Pegasus. Or Observations on the Observator* (London: Tace Sowle, 1696).

\textsuperscript{343} Vol., 117a *Post Boy*, #465 Apr. 26-28, 1698, #481 June 2-4, 1698, #506 July 30-Aug 2, 1698; Vol., 117a *Post Boy*, #567 Nov. 29-Dec. 1, 1698.

\textsuperscript{344} Vol. 122a *The Post Man* # 752 May 16-18, 1700.
times) mercenary character allowed them to be made use of by all parties with few if any limits. Their trade in “events,” moreover, gave them an interest in exposing doings precisely opposite to the Society’s wish to control their own publicity. The only solution for the Society, therefore, was to use this media themselves in hopes of limiting the damage.

**Anonymity**

Amidst the concerns over pinning down Bugg’s and Keith’s denominational identities, new figures entered the press, using the celebrity of the Schism to advance their own agendas. What made them even more problematic for the Society was their use of aliases. Anonymity created the ability to make scurrilous and dishonest attacks on individuals without either the loss of public face or the possibility of recourse by the harmed. As Alexandra Shepard has argued, honesty was an important component of masculinity, interrelated to credit and the ability to provision one’s dependents. But the removal of comments from the discipline of such communities (much like named combatants without denominational affiliation) put the authors into a position similar to that of the “lone men” who had neither worth nor credit to risk.345

The most important of these was the non-juror Charles Leslie and his tract *The Snake in the Grass*. Educated first as a lawyer, before transferring to the ministry, Leslie began his clerical career in the 1680s. After refusing to take the oath to the new king, he

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345 Shepard argues, as part of her attempt to distinguish masculinity and patriarchy: that lone men, unable to construct their masculinity in hegemonic terms because economic growth did not keep up with demographic increase, instead did so through alternative models, such as “youthful misrule.” Alexandra Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 206.
continued to preach surreptitiously around London, before lodging with an ex-Quaker, perhaps Thomas Crisp. By the time of the Schism, he had already contributed a tract to the Socinian Controversy, and The Snake in the Grass followed in 1696. Leslie claimed the original text was completed as the Schism was unfolding in London. He then hastily wrote a long opening section dealing in part with Keith and incorporating more material (the third edition would address this problem by restructuring the text entirely). A wide-ranging attack on the Society of Quakers, the book demonstrated considerable knowledge of Friends’ printed works and a surprising acquaintance with internal Society manuscripts (presumably provided by Keith, Bugg, Crisp and others) as well. Leslie made use of many of the same quotations as Bugg and Crisp, but had the intellect to make better use of the material.\footnote{R. J. Leslie, Life and Writings of Charles Leslie, M.A. Nonjuring Divine (London: Rivington’s, 1885); the most recent scholarly treatment of Leslie, oddly, ignores his anti-Quaker writings even while professing its desire to study the theological underpinnings of Leslie’s thought.}

The question of the authorship of the Snake raised numerous difficulties for both sides. Disinclined to reveal his identity because of his nonjuroring status, the fame/infamy of Leslie’s work subsumed his personal identity; many subsequent works referred simply to “the Author of The Snake in the Grass.” Friends obliged him only in part, reversing the appellation “Snake” from the Society and the text onto Leslie himself. As early as December 1696, the Society knew of Leslie’s identity, and Leslie had even met with a group of Friends on two occasions. Some Friends at the time believed that Keith himself was sharing material with the Jacobite author. Others suggested that Keith was using Leslie as a foil. Thomas Ellwood proposed that Keith was trapped by the fact that the doctrines he condemned Friends for holding “have been either so clearly cast off
by us, as Slanders, or so Rivetted on himself by undeniable Instances and Proofs taken out of his own Books,” that he was left with no option but “(as his last shift) to shift the Cause into anothers Hand; to carry it on under the disguise of another Person.” In many respects, the opposite was true: assimilating Leslie into the persona of Keith stabilized his identity, while claiming Keith was the author enhanced the Society’s construction of Keith as a disorderly spirit. Friends likewise used the fact of Leslie’s nonjuring status to attack Anglicans who defended the text. “Has the Church of England I wonder no fitter Fools among themselves,” John Kelsall asked “than they make use” of a “male-content” and “person likewise disaffected to that Church he pretends to be a member of.”

Like Bugg and Pennyman, Leslie exploited the Society’s shifting political loyalties. The extremes to which Quakers were willing to go to advance their ends were revealed by their actions during the Civil War (or, in Leslie’s words, the “Rebellion”) when they had first supported Parliament against the King, and then aligned with the Committee of Safety (a failed attempt in 1659 to work out a political compromise between the vying factions in the army and government), “And in the year 1660, then round about again, Hey for monarchy! they wou’d make you believe that they were always for Monarchy!” The Quaker war against the Church of England (elaborated in the next chapter) meant they stood against any government that failed to support them, and revealed the manner in which the Quakers held themselves above the law. In contrast to

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his own anonymous voice, Leslie argued the public voice of the Society was dishonest and held secret intentions against both state and church.\textsuperscript{348}

Thus, Leslie sought to demonstrate how Quakers had tacked to the political winds. He pointed to the Peace Testimony, arguing they adopted it for purely cynical purposes, and were violating it in Pennsylvania (adopting Keith’s critique). In England, in contrast, Quakers concealed their intentions, excising pro-Cromwell prophecies from the republished works of the late Friends Edward Burroughs and Francis Howgill. Quakers’ true beliefs, Leslie sought to show, allowed them “to take \textit{Arms}, and to \textit{Fight}, to set up their \textit{Heirship} to any \textit{Kingdom} they please” when Christ commands. Since Quakers believed that Christ dwelled within them, it meant “that they are free to take Arms, whenever they say it is time.” Obviously unwilling to describe them as Jacobites, Leslie characterized Quakerism as a radical Civil War sect, now concealing its true intentions.\textsuperscript{349}

Leslie’s epistemic attack on the Inner Light focused upon Friends’ claim to infallibility. Leslie at times analyzed Quakerism as a combination of madness and demonism. Elsewhere, however, he merely declared Quakers to be frauds, pointing to numerous scandals in the Society. According to Leslie, claims to divine inspiration could only be authenticated by the existence of miracles, “which God always sent to attest to his \textit{Extraordinary Commissions}.” For Leslie, Quaker prophecy was a clear example of their fraudulency: “there is not a \textit{Year}, hardly a \textit{Month} wherein some \textit{Quaker} or other is not going about our streets here In \textit{London} either \textit{Naked}, or in some \textit{Exotick} Figure,

\textsuperscript{349} \textit{Ibid}, cv-cvi, cxxv, cxii.
Denouncing Woes Judgments, Plagues, Fire, Sword and Famine.” Given this, they were bound to be correct occasionally. Many of these successes, Leslie further claimed, were the result of the prophecy having been manufactured after the event. He cited the example of the Great Fire of London, which a number of Friends had claimed to predict. If they had indeed, Leslie asked, “how came it to pass, that they were not better provided against it?” The cynicism of their spiritual claims therefore matched their hidden political agenda.350

Leslie’s skeptical dissection of enthusiasm incorporated a comparison of Quakerism with Muggletonianism, and of their respective founders. In both cases, according to Leslie “the ground and occasion of their Enthusiasm was the same. That is, Despair.” After reading Fox’s Journal, Leslie concluded “it seem’d a very Repetition of Muggleton’s Story.” As a result, both men first withdrew from society and then sought help from doctors and ministers. “In this Lamentable State, the least glimpse of Comfort, the smallest Respite from these Intolerable Pangs seem’d Heaven, and Paradise to him.” Fox “being Prodigiously Ignorant, took every new Thought that came into his mind ... to be no less than Immediate Divine Inspiration.” Fox’s “revelation,” therefore, derived from a separation both from the dependency of hierarchical social relationships and the manly independence of reason.351

For Leslie, therefore, Quakers could be simultaneously a conspiracy and simple witchcraft. Fox was a madman driven by cynical intentions. Whitehead’s “curse” against Keith likewise made him a “Conjurier.” Quakers’ eponymous habit of shaking during worship (largely abandoned at this point) was “like the Heathen Priests of old,” and

350 Ibid, 114, lxxii, lxxiii.
351 Ibid, lxxvii, lxxviii, lxxx, lxxi.
“nothing else but *Witchcraft* and *Conjuration.*” But Leslie then equivocated on the question of demonism (as did many in this period), suggesting that the extraordinary powers ascribed to witches “were transacted only in their *Brain*” as a result of *Enthusiastical Madness.*” According to Leslie, more Quakers had gone mad than any other group, “*For their Principle is little short of Madness.*” The Quaker abandonment of quaking, in this context, presented a difficulty for Leslie; he wished to use it as an example of hypocrisy, but that required him to abandon his other tactic of accusing them of demonic possession.352

In keeping with Leslie’s tendency toward inconsistency, he shifted targets, arguing at another point that religious enthusiasm was a Catholic plot. He pointed to, as evidence, not only to prominent Quakers such as Robert Barclay and John Vaughan (who had once been Roman Catholics) but to the Dutch Pietist sect known as the Labadists, many of whom had immigrated to Pennsylvania. According to this line of argument, Jesuits established the Quaker claim of infallibility “on purpose to bring *Men* back to the *Infallibility of the Church of Rome.*” Placing infallibility within each Quaker, however, “cou’d not long be Tenable” so infallibility was then placed within the Quaker meeting. This act, according to Leslie, would produce the inevitable consequence that as Quakers compared their church with Rome, they would conclude the latter to be the true church. What gave this seemingly cynical mingling of accusations its coherence was Leslie’s High Church theology (elaborated in the next chapter), which perceived the Church of England as under existential threat from a myriad of directions. In the process of defining Quakerism, therefore, he came to see it as an anti-church.353

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353 *Ibid*, p. 20-21, see also 67-69.
While Leslie had used an attack on the Society and a defense of Keith to write a High Church screed, he soon found an ally in Samuel Young, a Presbyterian of less than impeccable reputation, who wrote a series of sarcastic and eccentric tracts under two pseudonyms: Calvin Philanax (“Lord-loving Calvin”) and Trepidantium Malleus (“the Trepidatious Hammer”). While referencing the Snake for more theologically weighty accusations, Young was a Dissenter and defender of the new regime and so brought a different series of concerns to his works. Charles II was described as “that Papist in Masquerade.” Penn was impugned with Jacobitism for refusing to denounce the wars of James II while professing the peace testimony. Young likewise attackeded Quakers for abandoning their oppositional stance when “not Conscience, but King James’s illegal, deceitful Toleration, brought them to those Places [public worship meetings] again.” He recited Keith’s claim that those who opposed him were only a faction led by Penn and Whitehead, and particularly emphasized Penn’s connections with King James II. He also denounced a pro-Quaker apologist “W.C.” as a Deist and Socinian seeking to mask the Society’s errors. Turning to Penn’s accusation of Keith as an apostate, Malleus transformed this into an excuse to attack those Presbyterians who had temporized and accepted the restoration of Charles II to the throne. Malleus argued that only nonjurors rejected the “apostasy” of opposing James. Clearly unaware of its author, Malleus also praised “The Snake,” and claimed that the Quakers hated Keith because of his recent sermon celebrating King William. Yet turning to the charge of hypocrisy, as Leslie had, the author then declared that the Quakers only supported James because “many of them expect all the Power in England shall come into their hands,” and had hoped “K. James should do the work for them.” The Keithian Schism was therefore not reducible down to
a single political stance, any more than it was to a single theological doctrine, but could be manipulated to meet the needs of either side of larger political disputes.\textsuperscript{354}

In Young’s case, the difficulty created by anonymity (though again the Society knew fairly quickly his real identity) resolved itself in a reliance on denominational stereotypes, a tactic that borrowed both from the emphasis on corporate identity and biography seen in the previous chapter. In his response to Young, the Friend Benjamin Coole repeatedly turned to such accusations. Responding to Young’s attempt to connect the Society to the Popish Plot, Coole claimed the charge was “as false and sly an Insinuation, as if it came directly out of Scotland from the Reformation there, or with the last Ship from Boston.” As Keith had earlier, Coole made no distinction between Presbyterians and Congregationalists. Implying that Whitbread (a central figure in the plot) was a Friend was “Cameronian Cant,” Coole made the references clearer when, in a statement that reveals how multivalent all these historical memories were, he simultaneously referenced the execution of Charles I, the Rye House Plot, and the persecution of Friends in New England. The memory of Calvinist persecution of Friends was further developed when Coole referred in passing to Cotton Mather and the witchcraft trials.\textsuperscript{355}

Coole explained that it was the wide distribution of Young’s book that had prompted his response, which otherwise would have been beneath him given the author’s dishonesty. Young’s failure to name himself only increased the dangers of an

\textsuperscript{355} B[enjamin] C[oole], The Quakers Cleared From Being Apostates: or the Hammerer Defeated and Proved an Imposter (London: Tace Sowle, 1696), unpaginated introduction, p. 33.
undisciplinable voice. Coole’s reply, therefore, revealed a clash between the culture of reputation and the new dangers of an uncontrolled public sphere. At other points, Coole claimed Young was more interested in humor than in religious truth. In addition, he complained that Young’s insistence on exposing scandals demonstrated that “when he is in his *Tantrums*, I suppose, publick and private, open and secret are all one with him.” At another point, Coole denounced Young for identifying as a Friend someone who was not, and insisted that he give names and locations along with his charges “that we might know ... whether they were Quakers or not,” since “any Man shall straight have the Title of a Quaker thrown on him, that acts ridiculously, if from thence any Scandal arise,” which would demean the Society. Finally, Coole asked Young to prove the individuals had not been disowned. Thus the inherent contradiction: the denominational debate that the Society sought as less dangerous and more controlled than a free-for-all of individual encounters in person required identifying individuals publicly. But doing so likewise meant revealing matters the Society ultimately preferred to keep private.356

For all of its protestations, however, the Society was willing to employ the tactics it deplored in others. Several anonymous and pseudonymous tracts appeared in the wake of the Turners Hall debate. One was a dialogue between two individuals concerning the meeting. The intention of work is clear, as one of the two men stated they were “byassed to neither Party,” and could thus “talk freely.” The other then conceded that “there are Errors in both Parties” (something he was forced to concede, as men “of different Perswasions” – effectively neutering the remark by making it subjective) but nonetheless, Keith was “more Blame-worthy” as a “Revolter and prejudic’d Person,” than were the

Quakers for refusing to attend. The divisions between the two sides “are about Shadows and not Substances” and such infighting among Protestants only aided Roman Catholicism. All these arguments would appear in Friends’ attacks on Keith. Another series of anonymous tracts can be identified by their suspicious similarity to the anti-Keith tracts by Friends. One attacked Keith’s use of abusive language, his “Folly, Pride and Conceitedness,” his use of accusations as evidence, and his peremptory naming of a time and place without previous discussion. It also repeated Friends’ arguments of the more appropriate nature of print and the need to avoid civil discord. A later tract asserted the need for Protestant unity, the relative harmlessness of Quakerism and the recognition of Friends as within the Act of Toleration. The author identified himself as an Anglican, and argued that their church should have little to do with such a man as Keith, who still rejected sacraments and tithes. Finally, the author also explained that Keith rejected paying fees for services such as churching and burials and that as a Quaker he did not “like our Fonts, Bells, Surplices, and Cushions, Communion-Tables, nor Carpitts; but rather Esteem them Popish Institutions,” an inversion of Quaker anti-Anglican boilerplate. This tract was printed by Tace Sowle, the main Friends’ printer, along with a statement from the author that he delivered it to Sowle because he “Print[s] for the Quakers, and some others, who are Persons of Moderation.” These publications seem likely to have been a covert endeavor by the Society to produce attacks on Keith that, like the dialogue, did not appear explicitly partisan.\footnote{The Proceedings at Turners-Hall, In Relation to the Great Debate between George Keith and the Quakers ([London]: E. Whitlock, [1697]), p. 2; Remarks Upon an Advertisement, of a Meeting at Turners Hall ([London: n.p. 1696]); W.K., A Letter on George Keith’s Advertisement of an Intended Meeting at Turners-Hall, the 29th of April, 1697 (London: Tace Sowle, 1697), p. 6. Clare Martin argues that these tracts were probably written by an Anglican. She also describes their author as “Vale,” based upon the word appearing at the end of sections of both tracts. Vale, however, is merely Latin for “farewell,” not a}
Another series of tracts written under a single identity but adopting two pseudonyms, W. C. and a “Moderate Churchman” (which was perhaps intended as a dig at Charles Leslie, whose identity and High Church theology and politics were becoming known) more specifically allowed the Society to open a hidden line of attack on Keith. After the first of these works, comparing Keith’s early and more recent works, George responded by daring the author to appear at Turners Hall, and if he failed to do so “it will be manifest he is a Cowardly Spirit, and smiter in the dark, and as well Unmanly and Unchristian.” The two accusations demonstrate what Richard Cust has argued concerning the dueling notions of honor, between the martial culture of the medieval era and the new language of Protestant virtue. Keith, moreover, contrasted the concealed authorship (though he was certain the writer was a Quaker) to “my open and professed Adversaries, G.W. and W.P.” whereby no one “will think me obliged to Print Answers to such Clandestine Enemies, ... or to regard their Nameless Libels.” The “Churchman” responded with a tract that defended Penn’s calling Keith an apostate, and re-asserting that he was an Anglican, though unable to make his identity public. Samuel Young intruded into the debate here to argue that moving from bad principles to good was reform, not apostasy, and to add his own speculations that the author was either an Anglican in the pay of the Society or motivated by “Popish Jacobitish” principles “and so love[d] William Pen and other Friends (Male-contents, to speak softly).” The Churchman’s response was mixed with several innovations the Society was introducing to its critiques (discussed below): attacks on Keith’s ethnicity and Leslie’s politics. Thus he warned the Church of England and other Dissenters from “embracing Keith”
explaining that “our Church [i.e. Anglican] may have better Assurance of Scotch Fidelity, before they trust such an Adversary.” Again, he referred to Keith as Malleus’s “Scotch Friend.” The author also asked “why I must be a Jacobite for loving William Penn, and other Friends, as you insinuate, any more than your self for admiring the ingenious Author of The Snake in the Grass.” Thus the entire thrust of the argument suggests that this was in fact a Friend’s writing (though perhaps without the meeting’s approbation). Of course, to a degree this was nothing new; legal realities had forced the Society to print many of its tracts clandestinely. Those works, however, were written in such a way that it was not clear that they had issued forth from the Society. Indeed, as has been seen, the Friends had a much greater difficulty with non-Friends’ works being attributed to them. The works being considered here were different; they professed not merely a concealed but a false identity. While I believe they can be reasonably attributed to the Society, this was by no means certain nor obvious.358

Another Year, Another Turners Hall

With printed polemics and counter-polemics having reached a cacophony, Keith published a broadside advertisement announcing a second meeting at Turners Hall to be held on the 29th of April, 1697. It was followed annually by three more meetings, before Keith left Turners Hall to take Anglican orders. Yet they all exhibited similar patterns with the first meeting in that leading Friends refused to attend and published their reasons. Keith, in 1697, again called on Penn, Ellwood and Penington to make good their accusations against him, and on George Whitehead to appear for comment on his reply to The Snake in the Grass and Leslie’s sequel, Satan Dis-rob’d From His Disguise of Light (which was itself a reply to Whitehead’s work before it had even left the printing office, suggesting that individuals within the Society who were not willing to join Keith in Schism nonetheless held some sympathy for him). Keith, therefore, now implicitly acknowledged his involvement in the line of argument coming from Leslie. Keith listed the standard accusations in the advertisement, and declared that Friends’ disavowal of these heresies would only be accepted if they first acknowledged having held them.

While masking their true beliefs, Keith argued, his opponents actually “do what in them lyeth to throw down the Christian Faith and Religion and set up Deisme and Gentilisme in its place.” Keith, in addition, invited other denominations to attend the meeting and witness the proceedings. This would remain the essential pattern; but in their printed responses the Society introduced several rhetorical innovations.359

First, the Society adopted the civic rhetoric that had been coalescing in their books against Keith and Bugg. The Society described themselves as “Free-Born English-Men and Christians” who rejected the “Usurpation, Arbitrary and Irregular Proceedings”

359 George Keith, An Advertisement of an Intended Meeting to be Held by George Keith and His Friends ([London]: s.n. 1697).
by Keith. They charged him with establishing an illegal “court” at Turners Hall with the intent to “Stage, Brand, and Condemn Peaceable Protestant Subjects” before an audience unsuited to judge of religious matters. Keith could “Produce no Legal Commission from the Civil Authority” for this court, or its condemnation of Friends, “who are Contrarywise Legally Recognized.” These terms, “Free-Born Englishmen” and “Peaceable Protestant Subjects,” were repeated throughout the declaration and reflected a political identity made both possible and necessary by the Act of Toleration. Linda Colley and others have argued for the creation of a new British political identity rooted in Protestantism, war and notions of English/British liberties. It also reveals the unease on the Society’s part at the frequent charges of Jacobitism and the need to retain the face of political loyalty.360

The flipside of this argument consisted of ethnic slurs against Keith. Thomas Ellwood had earlier responded to Keith’s suggestion that if Penn had not denied the outward Christ in a particular passage “I know no English,” by stating “For a Scotchman not to know English, is not so great a wonder, as it would have been, if he had said he knew not Scottish.” More often, Friends simply pointed gratuitously to Keith’s ethnicity. Ellwood’s reply to the first Turners Hall debate first referred to George Keith as “George Keith, A Scotchman.” Later in the same work, Ellwood described a remark by Keith as “Scotch dialect.” In the first line of their 1697 declaration, the Society denounced: “the said G.K. a Scotchman, [who] has assumed to himself a Power and Authority to Erect several Meetings of the Nature of some strange and new Court of Judicature ...” Its authors thereby combined a reference to Keith’s ethnicity with an accusation of false

360 Anon, A Solemn Protestation against George Keith’s Advertisement, Arbitrary Summons and Proceedings Against Certain Persons, and a Meeting of the People called Quakers (n.p. 1697), p. 1, 2.
political authority in the context of their assertion of their own English liberties. Similarly, they accused Keith’s actions of “so much Resembling the Practice of some of his Country-men of the Presbytery, to incense the Rabble or Mob against our Friends in Scotland.” In the exchanges between Samuel Young and the Society, denominational stereotyping of Presbyterians and Congregationalists as persecutory was a useful tool for fixing Malleus’s identity and for dismissing his arguments. Here, the Society was able to fuse denominational and ethnic identity, to provide a new construction of Keith, not merely as disorderly man but as disloyal, crypto-Presbyterian persecutor and disruptive foreigner. As seen in Leslie’s attacks on the Society, such Frankenstein cobblings of imagery from recent English history was not as absurd to contemporary ears as to modern. Characterizing themselves as Protestants, the Society contrasted their loyalty to the discord among Protestants, which Keith sought to engender and which would play into the hands of Roman Catholics, who “Glory in such Divisions and Disorders.” Thus Keith was the proxy, they argued, of “some Officious and Envious Agents, ... who, altho’ they may pretend to be Reformed Protestants, yet savour too much of a Popish Persecuting Spirit,” and through their actions “bring an Odium upon the Protestant Religion.” While this statement may have been generic, it may also have been intended to refer to Keith’s relationship with Leslie and Bishop Compton. While not as specific as their opponents, the Society was miming the same threats of popery in order to assert their own English Protestant patriotism as Leslie did from entirely different direction.361

361 Ellwood, Truth Defended, p. 113; idem, An Answer to George Keith’s Narrative, p. 5-188; Anon, A Solemn Protestation against George Keith’s Advertisement, Arbitrary Summons and Proceedings Against Certain Persons, and a Meeting of the People called Quakers, p. 1, 2-3.
Keith disputed this characterization of himself even before the meeting. He declared that his meeting could not be illegal, since he had the “permission” of the Lord Mayor of London, and a marshal was present to keep order. Keith then challenged their glorying “that the Parliament has Recognized them to be Protestants,” first by doubting it and then by saying that the Quakers had hardly repaid the compliment to the Church of England “whereof all [or at least most of] the Members of Parliament are Sons.” By third Turners Hall, he was even more explicit in his denunciation of the Society’s depictions. “Have I Staged you Guilty of Vile Heresies and Errors?” he asked in the lead up to the event, “Ye have Staged me again, and again, to be an Apostate.” Keith expanded this argument to the ethnic underpinnings of his opponents’ charges: “that which seems most of all to Nettle and Vex some of you, is, that George Keith, a Scotchmen ... Should assume this Power, ... which they think is a hainous and intolerable Usurpation upon them, being English Men, and their Liberties as such.” As the Society turned to the Act of Toleration, so Keith appealed to a naturalization act that granted Scots the ability to claim English legal rights. 362

Charles Leslie wrote his own anonymous response (eschewing the personality of the Snake for “an Impartial Hand”) to the Friends’ statement after the meeting. He recited many of the charges leveled in the Snake, such as the threat the Society posed to the monarchy and the Church of England. Like Keith, he also challenged the classification of the Society as Protestant. Far from Keith’s accusations being an opening to popery, “it is the only Method to preserve the Protestant Religion from the Scandal that must unavoidably fall upon it, if the Quakers are allow’d to come under that Denomination.”

362 Keith, A Second Narrative of the Proceedings at Turners-Hall the 29th of the Month Called April, 1697 (London: B. Aylmer, 1697) p. 6; idem, Third Narrative, p. 50.
Given the Quakers’ venomous attacks upon the clergy of the Church of England other Dissenters, Leslie asked “Can they and we both be Protestants? What a Notion will this beget of Protestancy!” Leslie extended this even further, declaring “Will not this Latitude bring Socinians and Deists; even Mahomet and the very Heathen within the Pale of the Protestant Communion!” Leslie also contrasted the closed business meetings of the Society with those of the Anglican Convocation and Scottish General Assemblies, which admitted royal agents. Leslie, in conclusion, demanded that the Quakers retract their previous testimonies, “And if they shall refuse to do this, then can they not, with any Justice, complain (tho’ complain they wou’d) if the Parliament did recall their including them within the Number of Protestants.” In language reminiscent of the fight in the colonies, Leslie declared “There is no Medium: He that has said vile and scandalous things of another, must either unsay, or stand by it, and justifie it.” Even more explicitly than Keith, Leslie was drawing the comparison from personal scandal to denominational conflict in establishing the boundaries of the English Protestant community.363

Throughout the Schism, conversations occurred at various levels, many of them now inaccessible. It is thus unsurprising that, while these very public print exchanges were occurring, letters were also being exchanged in private. Not that this conversation was any less fraught or tense. The best documented material exists in the lead up to the third Turners Hall debate, before which William Penn wrote to Keith offering a private debate. The statement was strikingly personal, rather than adopting the communal voice of the Society. Penn offered a meeting “at any private house, ... to hear what thou hast to say to me,” so long as he was granted the same hearing. Concluding, Penn wrote: “I

once hoped never to have seen this day and wish I could say I hoped ever to see a better in thy regard from whom I have received evill from good.” It is notable that Penn wrote only a single tract against Keith. While he was clearly absorbed with business related to his finances and his colony, it is nonetheless impossible not to sense that he was simultaneously conflicted towards and exasperated with Keith and (after so many personal betrayals) tried to exclude himself from the entire matter. Penn, in contrast, remained a major target for Keith, though by now the reasons are clearer. In addition to the incident at Radcliffe, Keith may have noticed a pattern to his London accusers. John and Edward Penington were stepbrothers of Penn’s first wife (now deceased) Gulielma Springett, and Thomas Ellwood was a close family friend of the Penington family. With Penn still tied up fighting off attacks against his colony from the newly instituted Board of Trade, Keith may have perceived these individuals as proxies or this may have been what he was referring to as the Penn/Whitehead faction. When this meeting failed to occur, Thomas Story - tasked with the printed response to Keith’s challenge – also printed parts of the correspondence.364

Therefore, by 1698, the Society was willing to concede Keith a private meeting, but not the public one he demanded. Keith stated he had rejected Penn’s offer because “Thou and thy Friends having publickly wronged me, in the face of the Nation” he felt “I ought to have a more publick Hearing and Tryal.” George Whitehead warned him “contempt is come upon thee already in the Eyes of many serious observers” by virtue of his Turners Hall debates. “If thy design be not only to expose us to reproach before the

364 For the family relationships see Catherine Owens Peare, William Penn, a Biography (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1957), p. 65, 91-94; and the DQB. Peare (as part of his general distaste for and avoidance of the Schism) does not make the connection. There is no clear evidence of Penn’s involvement (which seems to me unlikely) or Keith’s perception of it (which does).
“civill Authority” he elaborated “but to persecution” it would only produce an opportunity for God to further “frustrate thy designs of malice and mischief.” This was not long after Keith had published a book of his “retractions” of statements made in his previous works. Whitehead pointed up the increasing ambiguity of Keith’s position: “what People or Ministry particularly considered & really pertaining to the people called Quakers dost thou own or do own thee as being in a society with thee” and asked “how canst thou in conscience esteem thy self a Quaker ... and yet revile and reproach them as either under an Antichristian Heretical or Saducean Ministry.” Whitehead continued “where is thy stability or setled Judgement what is it and what known people Society or church art thou joined unto or in communion with?” But moving beyond these standard Quaker apologetics, Whitehead said “thou hast known better of me than to accuse me of denying Jesus Christ his Divinity Manhood and glorious body,” and regarding his body “doest thou remember how well thou approved of my Answer to Wm: Haworth ... as how well thou wast satisfied with it and what an help it was to thee.” Whitehead then made a more revealing comment: “that tho some of our Books (as well as thine) needed correcting or some emendations,” Keith had promised he “wouldest not correct any of them as an Enemy but as a Friend.” Occasionally, in private communication, Friends admitted what was obvious to everybody: that they were cleansing their history. Keith was expected to understand this, presumably, but instead denounced it as hypocrisy.365

The Atlantic Community

The Snake in the Grass, more than any other contemporary anti-Quaker tract, assumed great notoriety among Friends and popularity among the Society’s enemies. This book and the responses to it also illustrate the operation of the Atlantic Society during the crisis and the fact that, while London remained the center of publishing, the public sphere it produced was containable neither by geography or print. The meeting had already mobilized its printing and distribution resources against Keith. In November, 1695, the Morning Meeting ordered fifty copies each of Ellwood’s, Jennings’s and the Peningtons’ books against Keith to be sent to Barbados. A month later the same meeting proposed sending “some good opening books” to Virginia and Maryland. In December of 1696, the Meeting instructed Samuel Waldenfield and John Field “to see what Books are printed Relating to G. Keith of which none are yet sent to Pennsylvania Jarsey and those parts” and to include copies with the yearly epistle. In their 1699 epistle to the Bermuda meeting, they instructed local Friends that a copy of their answer to the Snake (it is unclear which one) “you may present to the Governour if you see need or do understand that by means of Priests or otherwise the said Envious book hath come to his hand.” The epistle to Antigua similarly promised copies of the book. In September of 1697, the Morning Meeting found that “the false scandalous book called the Snake in the Grass is largely spread and especially among divers great Men and many sober professing people,” but that the Antidote, Whitehead’s reply, “is not so fully spread.” Five pounds were then approved for more copies to be printed and distributed. As Richard Clark has remarked, more seems to have been occurring. Henry Gouldney, even given his relationship with Penn, seems to have been expressing a common opinion when he
explained that Whitehead was not up to the polemical tasks assigned him by the Society and that a new answer to Leslie’s book was felt to be necessary.366

The local meetings were no less concerned in their correspondence back toward the center. The Dublin Meeting’s 1698 Epistle referred to “a very malitious bok come among us called the snake in the grass ... which Book hath been Industriously spread to the great disservice of Truth and Exercise of friends.” The Irish meeting further remarked that, though they had received a hundred copies of George Whitehead’s printed response, the latter was only written against the first edition of the Snake, which had since come out in an expanded and reorganized form. They recommended that London assign somebody to write a more complete response and declared they would buy one hundred and fifty copies of it. The meeting in Spanish Town, Jamaica, likewise reported receiving copies of answers to the Snake, and the Chackatuck Meeting in Virginia complained they had not yet received the latest response.367

Ironically, therefore, this greatest recent challenge to the authority of the Society revealed its strength. They were able to produce convincing responses to the accusations of Keith and Leslie and distribute them in a way that held the unity of the meeting together. As seen through, this was accomplished, not through a “public sphere,” which remained in Society eyes as largely hostile and thus was entered into to deal with “outsiders,” but by contextualizing their works within a community based on manuscript and oral communication.

367 Ireland, 1/2x Years Meeting, Dublin, to the London Yearly Meeting, 8-11, 3 month [May] 1698; Spanish Town, Jamaica to London Yearly Meeting, 11-12, 2 month [April], 1700; Chuchatuck, Virginia to London Yearly Meeting, 25, 1 month [March], in Epistles Received, I, p. 279-280, 329.
Fallout

The *Snake* would prove a famous and infamous work, praised both by Dissenters and by Anglicans as diverse as nonjurors and latitudinarians such as Gilbert Burnet. Describing the Quakers as “the most ridiculous and yet the most dangerous sect we have among us,” Gilbert explained to his correspondent that anything he could write against them would “rob your Highness of the pleasure of reading” *The Snake*. The work, along with Keith’s and Bugg’s, also provided a supportive tool for local anti-Quaker Anglicans that they found lacking among latitudinarian bishops. A series of disputes occurring in Colchester and Norwich, involving both Bugg and Keith as aides to local churchmen (and in Keith’s case, with the support of the Anglican Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, discussed in the next chapter), would serve as a major though ultimately failed thrust to divest the Society of legal protection. Archbishop Thomas Tenison, writing to the Bishop of Norwich in the fall of 1698, described a letter by a Laurence Park of Stoke to another minister explaining he had received “lill challenges” from Quakers for a dispute “with a request to him [by the Quakers] to send down a Mr Lesley & George Keith to help them (as if the Clergy in their precinct were not able enough themselves).” The statement by local Friends was almost certainly mocking; but George Whitehead also recognized the connection of the dispute to the Schism, asking “How long hath F. Bugg and G. Keith been [his Anglican opponents’] Tutors, furnish’d them with Quotations, or their Authority been of value with them?” The role of the Quaker
apostate fringe had come to fruition, producing a master narrative to the otherwise
disparate work of anti-Quaker authors.368

The dispute in Norwich had begun with the activities of Francis Bugg, who had
managed to enlist to his aid Park and another minister named Henry Meriton. The local
Friends’ meeting then issued a “challenge” to Meriton, to his son, and to Park offering to
meet with them in order to dispel any charges of heresy, but they demanded Bugg be
excluded as someone whose accusations they had repeatedly answered. The ministers
agreed, but then problems arose. The Friends wished to know if they would be defending
themselves personally, or the Society as a whole. This was in response to Meriton’s
attempt to limit the debate to those who lived in the area. If they were defending the
Society as a whole, Friends asked, should not they be able to admit extra local Friends?
Drawing on a legal rather than honor metaphor, they accused the Anglicans of intending
to “Censure and pass Judgment on Persons unheard.” Meriton responded with an
elaborate legal argument concerning matters of fact and law. Then he insisted that
because the Society as a whole approved all its publications any member could be held
liable for any work; therefore, he continued, “we demand, that you would either justify,
or disown them publickly under your hands.” Finally, Meriton and his allies argued that
the Quakers had changed their views, so that their answers to Bugg’s accusations were
better than the books Bugg attacked. All of these arguments revolved around defining the
organizational identity of the Society, with Anglicans hoping to split off a section and

prove it heterodox (which would impugn the Society on its own terms, or prove those terms erroneous). 369

The Anglican Church hardly had such a strong position locally as Friends assumed, and this reveals the beginning of the end of the Schism. Put plainly, the Society of Friends had built a system of apologetic manufacturing and distribution that had no parallel in the Church of England. The only coordinating forces were (if available) a sympathetic bishop and organizations such as the S.P.C.K. and S.P.G., discussed in the next chapter. Henry Meriton described “a great chilness to the business” of disputing with the Quakers among his colleagues. Some claimed they were not well read in the dispute, while others “care not to meddle with so nasty a people, for fear of being pelted with more dirt, than argument.” This reluctance left the Anglican side with only “such neighbours of ours as may be naturally supposed to come to our help,” perhaps four, which might give “occasion to our adversaryes, to sneer at us, and say see the priests themselves have an apprehension of the badness of their cause.” One can sense from these replies that any of the individual parish priests felt intimidated by the Society, which could marshal considerable resources against them in a public sphere which was suspect and which could embarrass the minister in any of a number of ways. In addition, the very project itself (stripping Quakers of toleration) seemed unlikely to succeed and thus to constitute wasted effort. The importance of Bugg, Keith and Leslie, therefore, was in providing intellectual firepower (and through their contacts, financing for publication). Francis Bugg, Park and Meriton, in this case, challenged a Quaker to join them in “a Publique house & required him to Defend his Opinions, otherwise They would post him

for a Coward.” Again can be seen the essential similarity between public religious dispute and honor culture. At the same time, there was a need for communities to maintain their social relationships. When the Anglicans sought to have the tavern keeper post a written challenge by Bugg, he refused “as not willing to give offence to his neighbours.” The Bishop of Norwich also felt a private meeting would have been more appropriate. Meriton sought letters from the Bishop permitting the attendance of local Justices of the Peace.370

This tension continued as a meeting in fact occurred and the two religious cultures clashed. The Quakers refused to remove their hats and disturbed the reading of prayers from the Book of Common Prayer. They then disputed the suggestion that they had issued a “challenge” to the Anglicans, since they had been provoked. Although the Anglican ministers rejected the distinction, it was clear the Friends were avoiding any suggestion they were the aggressors. The ministers, for their part, also denied the Quakers’ insistence that they should have been provided with the passages from their books with which the Anglicans would attempt to prove their case. Had they complied, and told them “the very Places where We would Assault ‘em,” then “we had derserv’d rather to be laughed at as Fools, than looked on as Disputants.” This argument falling into stalemate, the Friends adopted the tactic they had often used against Keith: tandem speaking to drown out their opponents, “for as soon as one was wearied another stepped up in his place.” Edward Beckham, an unsympathetic reporter to be certain, recorded them replying to the Anglican desire to be heard: “as soon as we began to prosecute our Charge, one gets upon a Form and bawls aloud to the People, to stop their Ears, or

370 Meriton to Thomas Tenison, n.d., Bodl. MS Tanner xxi, fol. 39.
Deafen them, that they might not hear us.” Reportedly, their main topics were “the great sufferings they had Endured,” and demands that the Anglicans “prove our selves Christians” and “Ministers of Christ.” Thus the Friends sought to defend their behavior through what effectively amounted to accusations of priestcraft. The magistrates present offered to throw the Quakers out, but the Anglicans demurred. After several more exchanges, the Friends began dispersing copies of one of their books to the crowd. Beckham complained that the book was unsigned, did not address their previous writings, “nor is said [by its Quaker authors] to be written from the mouth of the Lord, and Sealed with the Eternal Spirit,” which means they could deny it later if need arrived. Ultimately, the magistrates broke up the meeting, at which point the Anglicans, “seeing they had Challenged us, we would not leave the matter thus,” demanded another meeting. They promised the Quakers, however, that should they be equally disruptive, “we will very Civilly (by some means or other) take them by the Hands and lead them out of Doors.” The attempt by the Friends to shut the meeting down, and to use publications as their response, reveals exactly the dangers and the nuisance that many of the parish ministers were seeking to avoid.371

Not surprisingly, the failure of the meeting led both sides to print, but in a fashion that expressed the new media environment. The Post Boy published an account of the dispute within a week. The Society then printed a complaint in the Post Man against the biased description of Friends refusing to debate and “flinging out great numbers of their

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371 Later, a Friend used this incident as proof that the Anglicans “were the Aggressors, and Challengers, not the Quakers,” in the dispute. John Feddeman, A Demonstration, That, Hen. Meriton, John Meriton and Lau. Park, Priests, of the County of Norfolk, in Confederacy with Francis Bugg, were the Challengers; and not the Quakers (no imprimatur); Beckham, The Quakers Challenge Made to the Norfolk Clergy, p. 3, 5, 6, 7, 8.
Pamphlets among the Crow’d,” which made them “Charitably” assume that it had not been written by the Anglican ministers involved. For the central London committees of the Society, a short statement in a newspaper might have been a preferable way to contain the fight. They were soon to be disabused, as the ministers published a similar narrative separately. John Meriton also printed An Antidote Against the Venom of Quakerism, which was largely a rehash of Bugg’s material, to which George Whitehead responded. Meanwhile, Edward Beckham introduced another work detailing Quaker heresies through quotations from early Friends’ works and including a postscript by Bugg. 372

This last publication, however, was directed toward King and Parliament, and followed a petition (probably written by Bugg) to the same effect. The petition had accused the Society of deceitfully presenting two doctrinal faces: one to the outside world and the second to their members. This accusation spoke to the Act of Toleration, with its demands for Trinitarian worship and that the doors of meetinghouses be kept open. An accompanying image in the printed edition of the petition depicts the London Yearly Meeting with Penn ordering “Cover over the List, Are none of Truths enemies here” and Whitehead asking “are the doors shut?” The petition retooled the themes of political hypocrisy Bugg had been leveling against the Society for years into an argument that the Society sought to create a shadow government, where “what is made Lawful to Day at Westminster, ... they Null and make Void to Morrow at Grace-Church-Street, as not only

Unlawful, but *Antichristian.*” The political disloyalty of the Meeting was revealed by its decision to prohibit Quaker captains from arming their ships in a time of war, leaving “the Protestant Interest ... so much weakened.” The peace testimony, however, was a sham and “whenever they shall Re-assume their Fighting Principles, (as in *Pensilvania* they have already done) they’ll be a dreadful People,” recalling the memory of the Civil War, “owning no King but Jesus, *i.e.* their Light within.” This threat was only enhanced by the Society’s ability to draw men and resources from overseas, both in the colonies and on the continent. 373

The debate and its entry into print provoked a barrage of replies by the Society, including several anonymous tracts. One of these consisted of standard anticlericalism: accusations of false ministry, greed, immorality. The second, however, claimed to be the voice of an impartial observer. He suggested that the ministers were being dishonest in picking a fight, because they had knowingly lived alongside Quakers for decades, and were thus confessing to having “been very Careless and Negligent in the discharge of their Office,” if the Quakers were “Blasphemers, and their *Principles* Dangerous.” He also cited a “Parson Archer of Millner” (presumably the same who had traveled with Bugg before) as saying “they did not Charge the *Quakers* of this Generation, for they were *Orthodox,*” and only wished the modern Friends to disown their forbears. Having articulated the official Quaker position, however, the author then similarly launched into a series of anticlerical attacks. A second work by the same author combined the two arguments, proffering another meeting where each side can show their “fruits.” The

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373 The petition was printed as [Francis Bugg], *Some Reasons Humbly Offered to the Honourable House of Commons, Why the Quakers Principles and Practices Should be Examined, and Censured or Suppressed* (London: Richard Janeway, jr., 1699). The voice clearly reveals its author as Bugg.
Anglican refusal, according to the anonymous author (who may in fact have been John Field), revealed their lack of spiritual successes to show. “Well, what did I say, what have you been Preaching for?” he concluded, “it is Mony I warrant you.” A subsequent letter included a similar, highly Quaker, call to Anglicans to “hear another Call that God giveth you.” Thus clandestine printing offered Friends an avenue to engage in typical attacks on the organized church, without attributing those beliefs to the Society.374

In contrast, the Society’s official publications (which included works by George Whitehead, Thomas Ellwood, Henry Gouldney, Richard Ashby and John Field), including imprimatur and author, adopted a more restrained tone. John Field turned to the language of Quaker sufferings to demonstrate Friends were “not such, but those that fear God, love their neighbour, and do good to all, and pray for their Enemies.”

Anticlericalism could never be entirely absent, but the attacks on Anglican clergy were more individual, consisting of accusations of personal enmity against a people who agreed with the Church of England in the fundamentals of the Christian faith. Field explained, “Charity obligeth me to hope,” that it was “Interest and Enmity” against the Quakers, and particularly the influence of Bugg, (“one who hath broke the Bond of Charity”) that had produced the dispute. Field further offered “their Patient Suffering and Peaceable Deportment, under all Revolutions of Government” as proof of their “Regard to Magistracy.” The society similarly printed a short statement condemning Bugg’s

374 A Letter to the Clergy of the Diocese of Norfolk and Suffolk (no imprimatur), p. 2, 7. For a similar line of attack, see the anonymous 1701 tract, which had its Anglican character explaining that he only really wanted Quakers to pay tithes, which were “the very Pillars of our Church; take away them, and the Sumptuous Fabrick quickly falls into a Heap of Rubbish.” [Richard Claridge,] A Letter From a Clergy-Man in the Country to a Clergy-Man in the City (London: Printed and Sold by the Bookseller of London and Westminster, 1701), p. 4.
petition and offering to prove their orthodoxy “in as Peaceable and Inoffensive a manner as may be.”

As they had in their arguments with Keith, Friends especially focused on their rights under the Act of Toleration. “Nor (with Submission to our Superiours) do we see,” Ellwood argued, how those Acts could be truly called Acts of Toleration to Dissenters, if they did not Tolerate each sort of Dissenters.” Later he declared that Friends sought no liberty they were unwilling to extend to others: “They desire they may enjoy the wisht for Happiness of a Peaceful Life. We envy it them not: But God forbid they should Swim into it through a Sea of Innocent Blood.”

The question of presenting a list of accusations to the Friends returned to the corporate nature of identity, though in a fashion of which the Anglicans were unaware. The Society had several years earlier assembled a list of quotations from Friends’ books on various doctrinal subjects. These could then be used to quickly and consistently answer anti-Quaker polemics. For their part, the Society was willing to return the demand to rebuke erroneous books onto the Church of England by pointing to the Socinian Crisis, which will be discussed in the subsequent chapter. When the Anglicans offered to do this, the Friends called it insincere, “considering the difference and contentions that have been and are amongst them upon several Points, as the Trinity, &c. that it would be very hard

375 John Field, An Apology for the People Called Quakers, and an Appeal to the Inhabitants of Norfolk and Suffolk, or Whom Else it May Concern (London: Tace Sowle, 1699), p. 4, 6, 7; [George Whitehead], The Three Norfolk Clergy-Mens Brief Discovery, &c. Presented by Them to the King and Parliament. Against the People Call’d Quakers, Modestly Observed to Our Superiours (London: Tace Sowle, 1699). [Henry Gouldney], A New Way of Reading the Bible, According to the Three Norfolk Clergy-Men, Those Champions Against the Quakers (no imprimatur). While some of these works are unsigned, their authors make no pretence to speaking for anyone except the Society, and thus are not the same as the disordered anonymous or pseudonymous voices discussed previously.

376 [Thomas Ellwood], A Sober Reply, on Behalf of the People Called Quakers, to Two Petitions Against Them (London: Tace Sowle, 1699) p. 15.
for Dr. Beckham, and the two other Rectors, … without the Authority of the Church, or Power Ecclesiastical, to disown either Dr. Sherlock, or Dr. South,” two important figures in the Socinian Crisis. Thus, as they had decades before against Thomas Hicks, the Society objected to Bugg’s latest book lampooning the Yearly Meeting, including several invented statements, as “a Ridiculous Romance.”

The final contribution to this exchange, however, revealed the new situation created by the Act of Toleration. The attempt to petition Parliament had met with a massive response from the Society, not only printed apologetics and anonymous polemics, but a coordinated petitioning campaign directed by the Meeting for Sufferings. Whitehead likewise met with Archbishop Tenison and found him amenable (hardly surprising, given his disinterest in the dispute from the start). As a result, the local ministers found themselves isolated and on the defensive, Edward Beckham, Henry Meriton and Lancaster Topcliffe opened their response to Whitehead with an epistle to the local representatives to Parliament, defending their accusations against the Quakers but also assuring them “God knows we wou’d not imitate St. Peter’s rashness (no more than his cowardice) draw a sword to cut off an Ear, no not so much as an hair of their Heads.” Then returning to the local concerns, they explained to the reader they had no personal qualms with the Quakers involved, “neither have we, to our knowledge, any Family of their Perswasion in all our Parishes.” Despite Quaker claims to the contrary, “had they not grown to such insolence, as even to dare all our Robe with a particular Challenge,” they would not “in any publick way have entred the Lists with them.” This

defensive approach reveals the equivocation of the established church towards the
Society of Friends. For Meriton and his colleagues, only limited support was to be found
among the hierarchy, stymieing their efforts at local anti-Quakerism. As we shall see in
the next chapter, the combination of High and Low Church disputes and the threat of
Deism combined to present a choice between either identifying Quakers as a central
threat to the Church and Christian faith or simply accepting them at their word that they
were (or had become) orthodox and move on to more pressing dangers.378

At Colchester and Bristol, Keith (who, as will be discussed in the next chapter,
was, while not yet an Anglican, receiving money from the S.P.C.K. for his anti-Quaker
work) was even less well received. Keith’s tactic at this point was to appear with several
supporters (including the parish minister) at a Friends’ worship meeting and challenge the
statements made by the participants. Friends’ construction of him as disorderly in their
apologetics seems to have had an effect, as had the Act of Toleration, because he sought
to avoid being disruptive to the service itself, waiting his turn to speak according to
Quaker practice. On July 2, 1699, Keith attended a meeting in Colchester, where the
Public Friend, Thomas Upsher, preached both in the morning and the afternoon. Keith
accused him of contradicting himself by declaring on the first occasion that “Faith in
Christ, both as he was born of a Virgin without us, and as he arose again without us, … is
absolutely necessary to Salvation,” and on the second that “the Light within [is] sufficient
to Salvation.” Keith and Upsher had had encounters with one another the previous
summer in Great Staten, Huntingtonshire, where Upsher had called Keith an apostate,
and said “God would confound, destroy, and dash to pieces both him” and his followers.

378 Edward Beckham, et al., The Principles of the Quakers Further Shewn to be Blasphemous and Seditious
He also accused Keith with “perverting” quotes in his narratives. Keith unsuccessfully sought a meeting to address these accusations. At some point, a meeting was arranged for the following Thursday to address the narrower question of Upsher’s contradicting himself. In the interval, William Shelton, the local Anglican minister, published a short collection of quotations from Quaker books and epistles (including those used previously by Keith).379

At the worship meeting, the Friends also adopted a tactic for silencing Keith based essentially on property rights. They argued the Hall belonged to them, and therefore they could exclude whomever they liked. “Thou Apostate, hold thy peace,” Keith records them inveighing, “this House is ours, thou hast no right to speak in it without our consent.” Keith rejected the characterization, and attacked them for popish credulity with respect to religious authority for suggesting that the London Yearly Meeting’s decision was sufficient to brand him an apostate. In rejecting the charge, he was also claiming a right to speak in the meeting “until they did prove, that he had forfeited his Right which he formerly had, all being Tenants in common, and that place being no Man’s proper Right,” but open to all “travelling Friends of the Ministry among that People,” including Keith until they prove “that he was no Friend of Truth.” To understand the peculiarity of this discussion, which would recur, one has to remember the public nature of the parish church in medieval society. The claim that a house of worship was merely a private possession held by an individual or corporate body (real estate rather than sacred ground) was a concept only half-understood.380

380 Keith, A True Relation of a Conference, p. 15.
Eventually the Friends resorted to another common tactic: they simply exited the building. Keith reappeared at another meeting, only to find the way barred by several men. Keith turned to the local mayor and managed to gain entry, whereupon the Friends again abandoned the meeting as Keith sought to speak. These events repeated themselves at Bristol. On July 23, Friends again barred his way. Keith claimed he was only there to listen, because he had heard the minister had changed to better doctrine, which the attendees denied. Others asked Keith what he was, Keith replied a “Christian.” They then asked if he is a Quaker, Keith pointed out this term was originally an insult, but owned being a “Friend of Truth.” Failing to address the Quaker meeting, Keith instead accepted an invitation to meet at a Baptist meeting house, then wrote to Penn and Bristol Quakers to attend on the next day. The Society, however, wrote their angry response, not to Keith, but to the Baptists, for allowing him entry “comparing what was to be done there to a Stage-play, and G. Keith to be the Actor.” As with Bugg in Norwich, they offered to meet with the Baptists if they dispensed with Keith, who was “offensive to Authority.”

These final two debates, therefore, repeat the themes discussed throughout this chapter and dissertation, of the interplay of corporate identities and personal honor, of political and religious identities. The public sphere was thus as connected to older systems such as affairs of honor as to changes to legal structures and new media. It was honor that prevented people from being able to follow their instincts and simply avoid the fray. At the same time, denominational identities created a replacement to the dangerous personal interactions of such a system, especially for Friends, who rejected violence. But

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neither corporate identities nor arguments about rights were useful only to the Society; Bugg, Keith and Leslie could likewise make use of them in their attempts to draw their opponents into public dispute (or themselves into their opponents’ meetinghouses). The corporate identities that particularly Keith and Leslie relied upon, however, were derived from a historical religious argument grounded in epistemological challenges to Christian mystery, ones which drew Keith to an ultimate conversion to Anglicanism. This is the subject of the next chapter.
Chapter VIII
“This Busie, Confident, Officious Tool”382
The Socinian Controversy, Reformation of Manners and Keith’s Conversion to Anglicanism

When Keith converted to Anglicanism, it was via the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (S.P.C.K.). With its sister organization, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (S.P.G.), the two organizations were part of a wider movement for moral reform, the healing of religious breaches, and combating heterodoxy. “The Societies for the Reformation of Manners” were stimulated by the belief that the Glorious Revolution was an act of special providence, which had miraculously saved England from popery and tyranny. As Tony Claydon has shown, the hope that William and Mary’s ascension would produce a religious reformation and subsequent purification of English society served as an important piece of propaganda for legitimizing the new regime.383

Conversely, for Jacobites, the usurpation of a divinely ordained monarch from his rightful throne constituted a national sin not soon to be forgiven. Many Dissenters and latitudinarians, Craig Rose has shown, believed interdenominational reform societies were possible predecessors to a formal reincorporation of Dissenters into a broadened Church of England. Connecting enthusiasm and willfulness to profaneness, meanwhile, High Churchmen identified Dissent as part of the problem. Reform, in their eyes, was intended to produce a more reasonable, obedient and moral citizenry. As a result, Anglican “High Flyers” tended to oppose the inter-denominational reform societies, both

382 A Letter on George Keith’s Advertisement of an Intended Meeting at Turners-Hall, the 29th of April, 1697 (London: Tace Sowle, 1697), p. 6.
for this reason and because their use of civil power seemed to detract from the autonomy of the church. Reversing the kingdom’s apparent decline into atheism, skepticism and debauchery became an incumbent religious duty for a spectrum of religious and political opinion. The sense that England was failing in its duty was only reinforced by a series of events: an earthquake that sank Port Royal, Jamaica in 1692, a subsequent tremor in London, the dismal state of the war with France, and the death of Queen Mary in 1692. Reform, therefore, far from being purely legalistic or moralistic was also providential and, at times, eschatological. The societies took several actions: disciplining public morality (including the use of paid informers to ferret out misbehavior), education (primarily catechizing and the creation of schools), and the construction of a religious infrastructure in the colonies. The nature of such a project - with its pan-Protestant and eschatological components – meant it could never be purely national or denominational. High Church influences, which argued bishops constituted part of the esse of a church and that Dissent constituted the sin of schism, were necessarily balanced by fears of Quakerism and Deism and the realities of toleration. Keith’s gravitation to the Anglican Church was connected to all three of these concerns. Finally, the project of reform dovetailed with concerns going back to Keith’s Kabbalistic readings, and the notion that good works could “heal the world.” While a clear connection cannot be established, because of Keith’s silence about Kabbalah during the Schism, his millennial concerns can be inferred in his interest in the reform societies he joined.384

Among many threats the Societies for the Reformation of Manners identified was that of Deism. A series of doctrinal disputes having to do with challenges to religious mystery known as the Socinian or Deist Controversy arose in the 1690s. The first was the republication of numerous Civil War Socinian tracts in new editions. The period also saw John Locke’s *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, followed several years later by his *Reasonableness of Christianity*. Where the former rejected innate ideas and set forth an empirical epistemology, the second sought to reduce religion down to two principles: faith in Christ as the savior and the duty of morality. These works attracted to Locke numerous critics, most famously the Bishop of Worcester, Edward Stillingfleet (himself involved in the latitudinarian wing of the reform movement). Finally, in 1696, John Toland published *Christianity Not Mysterious*, an even more radical statement of empiricism and a purely rational faith, which proved an embarrassment to Locke. By 1700, Toland’s book became a particular target for High Churchmen during the controversies surrounding the Convocation that was then sitting. Because mystery was embodied for these Anglicans in the sacramental ministry and apostolic church, High Church theologians (Juring and Nonjuring alike) generally also professed a strong Anti-Quakerism. Despite the differences between Quaker spiritualism and Deism’s empiricism, both were perceived as fueling one another because each sought to

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Kidd, “‘Let Hell and Rome Do Their Worst:’ World News, Anti-Catholicism, and International Protestantism in Early Eighteenth Century Boston” *NEQ* 76 (2003): p. 265-290, which seeks to amend an overly facile connection of print culture to national identity. Linda Colley pursues the inter-relationship between Protestantism and national identity in a more sophisticated fashion. For Colley, the greater access to religious print after 1695 fueled British pride in their sense of being “peculiarly blessed” in comparison to French Catholics, who were perceived as weighted down by clericalism and superstition. *Britons, Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 40-43. There was also an attempt by an Anglican minister in Delaware, Thomas Crawford, to establish a local Society, but it failed when he was removed from his position for (accidental) bigamy. Nelson Waite Rightmyer, *The Anglican Church in Delaware* (Philadelphia: The Church Historical Society, 1947), p. 46-47.
undermine the authority of the church, Christ, and the sacraments. The response of the Society’s leaders was the fruition of their ongoing project to achieve public respectability, but in the process they articulated the Inner Light as a neutered conscience.

Finally, these challenges were joined by the nonjuring schism within the Church of England. The deposition of James II and the installation of William III produced a crisis of allegiance for many, especially those whose politics were influenced by the historical memory of the Civil War and the regicide. This issue has already been seen in the previous chapter, where political loyalty was an effective tool and a dangerous charge in the public sphere. The relationship of political loyalty and religious ideology was complicated. It is important to remember that the belief in James’s claim to the throne did not preclude a dislike of his Catholicism or his policies. Precisely the same religious principle that led Archbishop Sancroft to choose imprisonment over reading the king’s Second Declaration of Indulgence also induced him, seven bishops and roughly four hundred clergy to choose deprivation to denying their oath to the previous king by taking one to the new. For “High Churchmen” (not per se synonymous with Jacobitism or nonjuring) the settlement’s recognition of religious pluralism through Toleration in the place of a unity of nation and church was equally troubling, as it undermined the High Church conception of the clergy, the visible church and the sacraments. The new reign also required a different relationship between church and king, which was argued to be a violation of English liberties. The High Church Anglicans’ vision of the Christian church combined history, the sacerdotal clergy and an orthodoxy grounded in the defense of mystery. These were precisely the targets of freethinkers, and (in a different fashion) of
Quakerism. It was Charles Leslie, operating within the fringes of Quakerism, who would make this connection explicit in the context of the Keithian Schism.

“Church in Danger”

The challenge presented by religious heterodoxy came in various forms, distinctions that are often clearer now than they were to their opponents at the time. The Unitarian position was essentially scripture based, unlike the more radical attack being leveled by the Deists. For the Socinians, belief in the Trinity required holding an idea that was contrary to (rather than merely above) reason in terms that were not contained in scripture. This distinction, between a belief that required one to argue that two ideas could actually contradict one another and yet both be true, and a belief that the contradiction was merely apparent rather than real (either because of the fallen state of human reason, or the incomprehensibility of God in worldly terms) was maintained in some fashion by almost all the participants. The question remained precisely where the line was drawn. Unitarians were also more respectable in their social networks. The major printer behind the Socinian tracts was Thomas Firmin, a friend to both Stillingfleet and Archbishop John Tillotson (who both at various points found themselves accused of heterodoxy). Charles Leslie published an attack on Tillotson and Gilbert Burnet shortly after the former’s death, in which he connected latitudinarianism, commonwealth ideology and Socinianism into a common lump of opposition to church and state.

Leslie’s other target was the Deist Charles Blount, whose works included veiled attacks upon the immortality of the soul and the uniqueness of Christian revelation, along
with the first English translation of Spinoza. He committed suicide in 1693 (despairing over the inability to marry his late wife’s sister) and his final work, the *Oracles of Reason*, was published posthumously. Leslie’s first anti-Deist tract was a response to this work. Like most of the Deists, Blount was less an original thinker than a recycler. The *Oracles of Reason* cited at length from Thomas Burnet’s work on the Creation story to argue that “the whole rather seems to have been but a pious Allegory, which Moses was forced to accommodate to the weak Understandings of the Vulgar (who were incapable of Philosophy, or any higher Notions).” Thus, the snake in the garden deceiving Eve was inherently silly and mythological, if read straightforwardly (a difficulty that Henry More had likewise recognized). In the process, Blount used Burnet’s more pious work to question the whole doctrine of original sin (an important challenge to “priestcraft,” since it eliminated the need for a sacerdotal ministry). The result was not a coherent philosophy, but a series of challenges to institutional religious authority.  

Blount, therefore, may have been deploying what has been called “theological lying.” This concept is borrowed from the historian David Berman, who argued that a comparison of various statements by Charles Blount reveals a “covert atheism” behind his professions of piety, the result giving him free reign to lay out heterodox ideas under the pretence of refuting them, precisely the same tactic adopted by continental Spinozists. The notion is a subject of some controversy, as it reads intent into what may be merely inconsistency. In his *Anima Mundi* (“World Soul”), Blount ostensibly argued in favor of the orthodox belief in the immortality of the soul and against the idea that the soul was

annihilated upon death by returning to a universal soul. The rhetorical effect of Blount’s argumentation, however, accomplished the opposite. Blount began by defending his work on pious grounds, that “Christianity appears in its greatest glory and splendor, when compar’d with the obscurity of Paganism; the deformity of the one, serving but as a foil to the beauty of the other.” This gave him license to then recite those “deformed” ideas at length. He attacked attempts to defend the immortality of the soul “not by Faith and Scriptures, whose sacred Authority were the most proper support of that belief, but out of the presumption of their own sufficiency, by the meer light of Natural Reason.” At an earlier point, however, Blount argued that all people consider themselves the first people from their sacred texts, by stating “For my own part, I who believe the Scriptures to be the Word of God, do in this point, as in all others, resign up my poor Judgment to that Sacred Oracle.” Having surrendered doctrine to scripture, he simultaneously undercut the authority of scripture as anything more than subjectively convincingly, and thereby handed the argument to his “opponents.” While there is a dispute among historians how far to push this esoteric reading of texts, a sense that their opponents were being less than forthright was likewise shared by anti-Quaker writers. As the Society translated its doctrines toward a more orthodox formulation, its enemies increasingly accused Quakers of lying.386

A solution to this, appearing repeatedly in this dissertation, was the drawing up of clearer denominational boundaries. In the wake of the Norwich dispute, John Meriton wrote that “if the Quakers be Sincere in this their Profession, if this little Pamphlet under Consideration, … do really, truly and unfeignedly contain their Faith,” they should “by

some Publick Act of theirs, Retract, Censure and Condemn” their previous tenets. “But how little Sincerity there is in these Confessions, I leave it to the Reader and the World to judge; for they are so far from Censuring, Condemning and Disowning those Books” that they instead claim “They have not deviated in any one Point of Doctrine which they first held.” During the preliminaries to the West Dereham debate, Meriton and his allies had likewise declared they found the Quaker apologetics against Bugg more orthodox than the original books Bugg quoted. Privately, the Society was attempting to deal with this issue by systematizing their printed responses.387

The republication of Socinian works complicated the reception even of works published within the established church. In 1690, the Anglican dean William Sherlock published A Vindication of the Doctrine of the Holy and Ever Blessed Trinity. Sherlock’s defense of the persons of the Trinity utilized a Lockean definition of a person as self-consciousness and avoided polytheism by arguing that the persons were also mutually conscious of one another. This novel explanation instigated a series of responses from fellow Anglicans and Presbyterians, who accused him of believing in three gods.388

As Justin Champion has argued, these debates over the nature of Christ came to involve deeper concerns over the identity and history of the Christian church. Arthur Bury’s The Naked Gospel opened with the question of why Christianity seemed to be in retreat and Islam in ascent. The answer, he said, was that the primitive faith had been lost. While Bury assured his readers that Islam was false, because it expanded through conquest and by feeding people’s lusts, he equally argued that it was a divine scourge for

388 For William Sherlock see Philip Dixon, Nice and Hot Disputes: the Doctrine of the Trinity in the Seventeenth Century (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2003).
the failure of Christians: “Whether Mahomet or Christian Doctors have more corrupted the Gospel; is not so plain by the light of Scripture, as it is by that of Experience, that the Latter gave Occasion, Encouragement, and Advantage to the Former.” Specifically, discord in the early Church over the Trinity, the rise of idolatry, and the use of persecution all facilitated the rise of Islam.\footnote{Arthur Bury, *The Naked Gospel* ([Oxford: s.n.], 1690), preface; see also J. A. I. Champion, *The Pillars of Priestcraft Shaken: The Church of England and its Enemies, 1660-1730* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991) for the anti-trinitarian uses of Islam.}

Bury claimed to be an orthodox Christian, but Stephen Nye contributed a series of tracts self-identifying as a Unitarian. He articulated his basic premise clearly: “\textit{There is but one God}, say the Holy Scriptures; where can be the Ambiguity of such usual and plain Words?” Nye, furthermore, gave this position an anti-clerical tinge by arguing that the Gospel message was meant to be plain and readily understandable, but had been buried under “Jargonry” by the “Schools.” He thus set himself the task of dismantling several different conceptions of the Trinity: Sherlock’s, the Platonist, and the peripatetic. Nye addressed the argument that the Trinity was a mystery that could not be comprehended. Nye distinguished between something that could not be comprehended by reason and something contrary to reason. \textit{“Mysteries there are,”} Nye declared, and included such “\textit{as are even contradicted by Reason}; that is, are \textit{in some respects Contradictions to our present (short-sighted and frail) Reason},” but are not actual contradictions. Thus Nye came to rely upon the same epistemology as the constructive skeptics in the Royal Society: a trust in the information acquired by the outward senses.\footnote{Stephen Nye, *Considerations on the Explications of the Doctrine of the Trinity* (s.n. 1693), p. 4, 31.}
In December of 1695, John Toland published the first, anonymous edition of *Christianity Not Mysterious*, followed by a signed edition the following summer. Building off of Lockean empiricism, Toland began by defining reason as the act of assembling chains of related ideas. Toland then distinguished the “means of information” from the “ground of persuasion.” Toland therefore divided truth from conviction. Having set up this strict rationalist ground for knowledge, Toland revealed his true intent with the mentioning of a third source of information: divine revelation. While defining revelation as truth revealing itself, he undermined any real meaning to this assertion by placing revelation under the sources of information distinct from the second category: the grounds for persuasion. The “infallible Rule” for persuasion was evidence, “and it consists in the exact Conformity of our Ideas or Thoughts with their Objects, or the Things we think upon.” How revelation was to be judged by this criterion was left unanswered. God made human nature such that people should give assent to evidently true propositions but could withhold it from unproven propositions. This formulation, which borrows heavily from Descartes’ concept of clear and evident ideas, without solving any of its problems, effectively moved everything about which there was significant disagreement into the realm of the merely probable. Against the objection that reason does not always work properly as a result of the Fall, Toland asserted reason to be sound, except when the organs suffer from some obvious defect. While reason does not always perceive accurately, this was because people allow themselves to act and reason corruptly. While superficially similar to latitudinarian attempts to simplify Christianity
into a common creed acceptable to all Christians, Toland’s intentions appear to have been more radical.391

This schema was the prelude to Toland’s basic assertion: that there was nothing “mysterious” (by which he meant something contradictory to reason) in the Christian religion. The mind cannot possess an idea of a contradiction, any more than it can understand something in an unknown language. Nor can a set of ideas be internally consistent, but contradict our common notions, since we can only perceive things through our common notions. This placed Toland near the Socinians, and Charles Leslie at one point challenged precisely this idea when arguing against the latter, arguing that the divine nature was so different from the human that contradictions in either need not be such universally. Although Toland did not explicitly return to the issue of authority at this point, he now asked how a person could have faith in scripture except through the use of reason, since the Church’s imprimatur created a circular argument, and contentions made from scripture’s internal merits constituted the use of reason. Toland then argued that the Gospel was clearly reasonable and should be evaluated like other texts. Scripture therefore ceased to be a repository of mystery and authority and instead a text to be comprehended according to a rational epistemology.392

Anticlericalism was the final component of Toland’s argument. Justin Champion has similarly put anti-clericalism forth as the defining characteristic of Freethought. The

391 John Toland, Christianity Not Mysterious in Christianity Not Mysterious: Text, Associated Works and Critical Essays eds. Philip McGuinness, Alan Harrison & Richard Kearney (Dublin: Lilliput Press: 1997), p. 27, 28, 30. Sir Robert Boyle, for example, shielded natural science from producing atheism by arguing, first, that religious truth was of a different order than natural, and secondly, that while nothing could be contradictory in the divine mind, something could appear so to humans; and thirdly, that the study of the natural world demonstrates God’s existence.
supposed mysteries of Christianity were actually the shams of priestcraft, designed first to protect religion from impiety and later to protect the clergy’s own interest. The “mysteries” of the Christian faith grew out of the need for the early Church to appease Jewish ceremonialism, pagan philosophers, and (after Constantine) state churches. Blount had also argued that Christians did not originally have churches but were eventually drawn to use pagan houses of worship. As has been seen, Keith and other Friends made a similar, though less accusatory, claim in respect to the sacraments, arguing that their outward administration was merely condescension to Jewish ceremonialism. The divergence between Friends and Freethinkers here, however, is equally important. The assault upon the sacramental clerical structure was, for Deists such as Toland and Blount, part of a de-Christianizing attempt to replace the Christian Church with a pantheistic civil religion. For Friends, however, the historical argument was an attempt to provide some Christian base (even one transcended by the fuller unfolding of the Inner Light) for a religion that could, nonetheless, easily spin off into pantheism. Here we see the dynamic Pocock has described of the illuminism of radical Protestantism leading to the deification of man in a fashion that de-emphasized external divinity and situated religious meaning in civil society. But attacks upon the Church of England were more than merely confessional fights, or even such fights in which one side was backed by the power of the state. The Church of England was an essential pillar of the monarchy - true religion was synonymous with legitimate political authority. The medieval system of nobility, clergy and commons serving the interest of defending and promoting Christ’s kingdom on earth was demolished if one rejected the new Covenant of Christ as man-god.393

393 See Justin Champion, Republican Learning: John Toland and the Crisis of Christian Culture, 1696-1722 (Manchester University Press, 2003); J. G. A. Pococke, “Post-Puritan England and the Problem of the
For High Church Anglicans such as Leslie, heterodoxy and irreligion were two sides of the same coin. High Church Anglicanism and nonjuring theology were marked by a strong emphasis on the sacerdotal authority of the clergy and *jure divino* episcopacy and hostility to erastianism. While most Christian theology was historical in its arguments, these two groups placed even more emphasis on the true church as a continuous institutional body first established by Christ through the Apostles. The act of consecration handed down a spiritual authority enshrined in the first bishops that then descended through all subsequent ones. Those alone who had received such an imprimatur were alone capable of investing a minister with proper authority both to preach and deliver the sacraments.

Apostolic succession, therefore, determined the boundaries of the true church for High Church Anglicans as the Inner Light did for Quakers and covenants did for Calvinist Dissenters. This succession, according to Leslie “is preserv’d only in the Bishops; As the continuance of any Society, is deduc’d in the Succession of the Chief Governors of the Society, not of the Inferior Officers.” The Church of England was almost uniquely blessed in not having thrown off episcopacy during the Reformation, thus preserving the line of succession even through the period of Roman apostasy. This point created certain difficulties for Leslie, since it required him to reject a central piece of Reformation apologetics: that the idolatry of the Roman Mass dischurched Catholicism and justified the break with Rome. Instead, he argued, idolatry constituted a form of corruption (like fornication) that nonetheless did not break the line of episcopal succession. As always, the issue was the fulfillment of Christ’s promise that his church

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would never cease to exist, but where other Protestants were willing to see that continuity of laity and lower clergy, Leslie was concerned to protect the institutions of the church. As a result he was forced to argue that the Papacy was false because papacy and cardinals undermined the authority of bishops. Samuel Young would subsequently attack him on precisely this point, mocking Leslie’s suggestion that idolatry does not unchurch: “Oh! Many Papists confess it doth.” At another point, however, Leslie simply stated that even if the line of succession had been broken, one should not abandon divinely ordained episcopacy for some human invention, but to seek to re-establish it as best as one could by remaining within the church that best preserved its remnants. The strength of the common corporate framework within which both the Society and High Churchmen such as Leslie argued is further demonstrated by his subsequent argument that allowing everyone to preach and baptize “no Society of Men will allow; For, the Members of a Society must be subject to the Rules of the Society, otherwise it is no Society: And the Quakers of Gracechurch-street Communion have contended as Zealously for this compliance as any.” The language is nearly identical to Robert Barclay’s in The Anarchy of the Ranters. Even if churches were established by compact, Leslie stated, rather than by succession it would be schismatic to break from the established church.394

This short description allows one to make better sense of the way in which Leslie took up the Deist’s “challenge” to defend religious tradition without turning to “authorities.” He instead set forth a method for defending mysteries that relied upon their historical continuity. The events revealing the mystery had to have occurred visibly and

in public and to be then enshrined in “monuments” and practices that originated to the
time of those events. The sacraments and the continuous institutional body of the church
served this function. According to Leslie, they and Christ’s resurrection were far more
believable than that somebody could have invented them and then convinced others that
they had always been practiced. That such mysteries were the product of “priestcraft” and
personal interest was ridiculous given the persecution of early Christians. For Leslie,
therefore, mystery and the integrity of the Christian faith were encapsulated in the body
of the church. Leslie returned to this argument while attacking the Quakers, declaring
baptism “an outward matter of Fact, of which Mens outward Sense, their Eyes and Ears
are Judges; not like Matters of Opinion, which sort of Tares may be privately sown, and
long time propagated without any remarkable Discovery.” The open nature of the
sacrament, combined with its practice throughout Christendom, meant it could not have
been imposed. “Can any Man imagin,” he asked, “that if Water-baptism were a Human
Invention, or Superstitiously either Continu’d or Obtruded upon the Church,” it would
have remained concealed until 1650, “when Thousands sacrific’d their Lives, for Matters
of much less Importance?” Ironically, Leslie was using suffering to demonstrate religious
truth in a manner very similar to the Quakers. 395

Leslie’s earliest writings were concerned with Socinianism and nonjuring and
with advocating a pro-French, anti-Dutch foreign policy. It was the Keithian Schism that
provoked his strongest interest in Quakerism, and he managed eventually to square the
circle. In A Short and Easie Method with the Deists (first written in 1698 and greatly
expanded in subsequent editions) Leslie argued that “With the Deists, in this Cause, are

395 Charles Leslie, A Discourse Proving the Divine Institution of Water-Baptism (London: Charles Brome,
1697), p. 6-7, 31-32.
joyn’d the Quakers and other of their Dissenters who threw off the Succession of our Priesthood (by which only it can be demonstrated) together with the Sacraments and Publick Festivals.” Leslie then called these elements of worship, “the most Undeniable and Demonstrative Proof for the Truth of the Matters of fact of our Saviour, upon which the Truth of His Doctrine does depend,” which proved the opposition to them diabolic. As seen in the previous chapter, this charge of Satanic influence ran throughout the Snake, and here it overwhelmed the charge of madness. Leslie concluded therefore by calling all those involved to realize the threat they represented to Christianity and repent.396

Earlier, while attacking Blount (and comparing his ideas to Tillotson’s), Leslie had pronounced the Deist’s intent was to throw “off all outward Ordinances; Sacrifices, Sacraments, &c. and resolve all to Inward Repentance [i.e. a purely moral faith]. Which is the very Notion of the Quakers, whither his great Wit has carried him.” He did concede that Quakers (and Muggletonians) “have (more sincerely) Rejected Baptism, as not allowable, because they think so,” in contrast to the Deists (and Leslie declared “All Deists are Latitudinarians”) who reject baptism intellectually, but nonetheless practice it as “Established by Law, as they would to anything else, rather than lose a Penny or their Ease.” That these were not merely opportunistic swipes at Deists and Latitudinarians, but that Quakerism was seen as an integral part of a unified threat is demonstrated by the extent of his anti-Quaker writings. His three book series on the sacraments was intended “to Demonstrate to the Quakers the Necessity of an Outward or Water Baptism.” The first of these defended the use of the sacraments, the second argued that only properly

ordained clergymen could administer them, and the third presented these arguments in a more specifically anti-Quaker form. In the *Snake*, meanwhile, Leslie claimed that Quakers believed that the Christ within them was “the true and real Christ, of whom that Man Christ Jesus was but a Type or Figure.” Leslie also argued that Quakers believed Christ’s physical body was akin to a garment that was cast off when no longer needed, and therefore not a necessary part of Christ’s nature. Again in this context, the physicality of Christ was important because it underlay the existence and duties of the visible church; denying it “Spiritualiz’d away all the Letter of the Scripture, the Sacraments, and Christ’s Humanity.” Leslie thus argued that the Quaker rejection of all outward forms placed them at odds with the visible church.397

As it began with the Deists, this line of argumentation ended against the Quakers with their rejection of mystery and the nature of Christ. Leslie defended outward baptism against Quaker charges that it promoted the outward form over the inward power by arguing that “by having thrown off the outward Baptism, and the other Sacrament of Christ’s Death, have, thereby, lost the inward thing signify’d, which is the PERSONAL Christ, as Existing without all other Men.” The sacraments had been “appointed for this very End (among others)” by Christ, of being “Remembrances of his Death: For it had been morally impossible for Men,” who regularly attended the sacrament “ever to have forgot his Death, so lively represented before their Eyes, … or to have turn’d all into a

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meer Allegory.” Their focus solely on the Inner Light made “the Heathen Faith as good as the Christian,” which joined rejecting baptism and the laying on of hands in consecrating clergy with the fundamentals of Christianity through their mutual rejection by the Society. Because these “Outward Institutions of God” depended “upon the Authority of God, no less than the Inward and Spiritual,” rejection “of the one overthrows the Obligation and Sanction of the whole, and is a rejecting of God the Institutor.” The Society thereby “forfeit their Title to such Participation” in Christ.

Having established, in his anti-Deist and Socinian writing the necessity of the outward church to the Christian mysteries, Leslie then easily excluded the Quakers from any part of Christian communion. Anti-Deism was central to his anti-Quakerism.398

Much as he believed the Anglican Church derived its authority from Episcopal succession, so Leslie worked out a lineage for heterodoxy and Quakerism. Aside from frequently calling Quakers Socinians, he declared that Quakerism was merely a collection of old heresies. The Ebionites and Nazarenes had produced the Socinians, who in turn led to the Quakers. At another point, he compared George Fox to the Biblical Simon Magus, declaring that “Simon Magus was the Father of the Quakers, Socinians, and all the rest of the Anti-Trinitarian Hereticks.” The Quakers, moreover, “Inherit the Subtilty as well as Heresie of the Arians and Socinians, ... And the Quakers do defend themselves with the same Distinctions, and even add to their Arts.” In a later tract defending The Snake, Leslie declared the Quakers to be “Associates” of the “Bidleite Socinians, or Unitarians.”399

In addition to being non-Christian, Leslie believed as early as the *Snake* that Quakerism was conducting a long-standing campaign to dismantle the Church of England. The Keithian Schism revealed the hypocrisy of the Quaker claim to simply desire liberty of conscience. Quaker intentions could particularly be detected in their attempt to exempt themselves from tithes. While dealing with a published declaration against tithes submitted to Parliament by a group of Quaker women, Leslie declared this statement to be the Quakers’ “Solemn League and Covenant” creating “a formal Association wherein they bind themselves, under their Hands, their Lives, and Estates, to Extirpate the Church, and the Laws and Government which support it.” Leslie also analyzed the Wilkinson-Story controversy (following Bugg and Crisp) as an example of Quaker persecution of those of their fellows who were willing to pay tithes. “Wou’d the Quakers Rulers allow them Liberty of Conscience, and give them leave to follow their Light within? No. No. That is but scaffolding to pull down our Church, and to build their own.” Conscience was a scam for illegitimate authority. 400

Leslie believed that, as with the Deists, dishonesty was at play in the Quakers’ statements of doctrinal orthodoxy. The Society’s writings “never gave the Scriptures a good word, but merely for Popularity, when forc’d to it, to avoid the Odium of the World.” As to Christology, they gave “double answers, and could subscribe the whole Creed ... and yet not mean one word of it.” Quaker claims to believe in the man Christ were merely subterfuge; they in fact were referring to the inward spiritual Christ. “The Quakers will seem to Confess any thing;” Leslie averred, “but with such Reserves as secure their own meaning,” “and serve to Amuse the Inadvertent Readers.” The

frustration many felt at their inability to pin down Quakers’ actual beliefs, as seen in much of this dissertation, was therefore eschewed by Leslie, in favor of simply accusing them of lying. Thus in *Primitive Heresie*, Leslie argued the title applied to the Society “before the late *Representations of Quakerism*, which have given it quite another *Turn* and *Face* than it ever had before.” But now Leslie began exploiting this argument in a new fashion, suggesting that if true the Society had no grounds to defend their defection from the established church. Their change was “Such a *Turn*, as has left nothing on their side, whereby to justifie their *Schism*.” As such Leslie hoped for the day of the Quakers’ conversion, or “if already *Converted*, their full *Reconciliation* to the *Church*,” particularly through the agency of “the Valuable Mr. *Penn*.” Leslie, unlike Keith, did not see Penn as more heterodox than Whitehead, though this seems to have reflected a certain social snobbery and deference to Penn’s origins.401

**The Deism of William Penn**

George Keith’s accusations of Deism, in contrast, were a continuation of his epistemic and Christological concerns. As early as 1694, Keith attacked “some Ranters and vain Notionists” who professed the classical belief in a world soul “*acting in the bodies of all men both good and bad*.” Suggesting that men were not creatures but part of God, “*taketh away all distinction of Vertue and Vice, and consequently all future Rewards and Punishments*; it is lately revived by them called *Hobbists* and *Deists*.” By 1697, Keith also argued that the “spring and rise” of the Quakers’ “great Opposition” to the outward sacraments “has been and is a secret Prejudice against the Doctrine of *Christ*.

crucified, and is the mysterious working of an Antichristian and Diabolical spirit, designing to draw men from Name and Thing of Christianity, to Paganism and Deism, and at the next stop to Idolatry and Atheism.” Rhetorically, at least, Keith was also willing to apply Leslie’s argument (that if the Society claimed orthodoxy on the basic issues of Christianity, they could not defend separating from it) against Penn as early as 1698. Similarly, in the letters exchanged before the third “meeting” at Turners Hall, Keith stated his willingness to accept as arbiters “any true Protestants, but no Deists, or otherwise Tinctured with your Vile Errors.” But as always, epistemology remained the central concern. As yet, Keith’s anticlericalism held him back from the High Church arguments of Leslie.402

The third meeting at Turners Hall, however, was marked by a significant change in Keith’s profession of identity: he declared himself no longer a Quaker in a letter to William Penn. He now accepted that “though your Excommunication was most Unjust,

402 George Keith, The Arraignment of Worldly Philosophy, or, the False Wisdom: (London: R. Levis, 1694), p. 15; idem, George Keith’s Explications of Divers Passages Contained in His Former Books (London: B. Aylmer, 1697), p. 30-31; idem, Third Narrative of Proceedings at Turners-Hall (London: Charles Brome, 1698), p. 52. That the statement concerning the world soul might reveal a familiarity with Blount on Keith’s part (though his Platonism is sufficient to explain his knowledge of the doctrine) is further suggested by a reference in a sermon to the ancient Britons who “worshipped Diana, and other Idols and false Gods.” idem, A Sermon Preached at the Meeting of Protestant Dissenters Called Quakers, in Turners-Hall London; on the 16th of the Second Month, 1696 (London: B. Aylmer, 1696), p. 25. See also Keith’s charging of Whitehead with Deism. Keith, Third Narrative p. 57. The argument for Keith’s avoidance of a full conversion to Anglicanism at this point and his avoidance of the Lord’s Supper in that church (though there is no evidence he did not administer it at Turners Hall, and some claims that he did) is in contrast to Claire Martin’s interpretation. Contrasting an inherently dogmatic and disruptive Keith against a rigid definition of Quakerism as (ironically) a profession of inner spirituality against formal doctrine, she is incapable of taking Keith’s own experience of the Inner Light seriously, and assumes he must necessarily have followed where his intellect led him. Her conclusion, therefore, was that a Keith frustrated in his attempts to reform Quakerism desired to lead his own sect out of ego (the post-disownment dominant view of Society apologists), but finally succumbed to pecuniary and ideological pressures to conform. Obviously my own interpretation does not deviate entirely from the forces toward conversion, but I hope to have demonstrated that neither Quakerism nor Anglicanism were so ideologically fixed as to raise questions or produce the resolutions as simply as Dr. Martin believes. That still leaves open the question of Keith’s delayed conversion. As stated before, Keith’s seeming belief in an imminent eschaton may have, rather than scared him into a denomination, made him feel his own correctness was about to be revealed.
yet it was full time for me to depart out of your Babylon.” As a result, Keith backed away from the communal, focusing instead on his own biography against the negative community represented by the Society:

whereas I had formerly been Swayed and Byassed by the undue Opinion I had of their chief Teachers and Leaders, who had Printed Books long before I came among them, as being greatly indued with Divine Revelations and Inspirations; and that I too Credulously believed their Bold and False Asservations; that what they had said and Printed against the outward Baptism, and outward Supper, was given forth from the Spirit of Truth in them; by means whereof, I had been drawn into the same Error, (as many other well meaning, and simple Hearted Persons have been, and still are by them) to oppose these Divine Institutions, and have in some of my Printed Books used some of the same Arguments which they had used; I having in a Measure of Sincerity (I hope) Repented, and been humbled before the Lord, for that my said Error; whereof I have given a Publick Acknowledgment in Print.

The instigating force in this change appears to have been Leslie. Keith was now serving as a go-between for letters between Samuel Young and Leslie concerning ecclesiology and the administration of the sacraments. This was also the period in which Leslie was printing his works on the sacraments. While Keith did not adopt a High Church stance, the influence of Leslie on his new opinion of the sacraments is a reasonable conjecture. While Keith did not convert to Anglicanism, a series of new priorities and relationships developed as a result of this change in self-identification.403

403 Keith, Third Narrative, p. 50; idem, The Arguments of the Quakers, ... Against the Baptism and the Supper (London: Charles Brome, 1698), unpaginated epistle. It is worth noticing that these works, along with several later ones produced for the S.P.C.K. were published by Charles Brome, a Jacobite printer, who produced many of Leslie’s works, DNB. The letters between Leslie and Young were published in [Samuel Young], An Apology for Congregational Divines (London: John Harris, 1698), p. 121-151; Young admitted their authorship and Keith’s role in transmission in Trepidantium Malleus, A Second Friendly Epistle to Mr. George Keith (London: John Marshall, 1700), p. 34.
Keith’s most explicit accusations of Deism, however, were leveled the next year in *The Deism of William Penn and His Brethren*. Toland’s division of knowledge between sources and means of determining truth paralleled a similar division that appeared here. Keith was responding to the republication of Penn’s *A Discourse of the General Rule of Faith and Practice, and Judge of Controversie*. Among other works, Penn cited Lord Herbert of Cherbury, a skeptic who is often interpreted as a proto-Deist. Penn’s argument was that the Inner Light, rather than scripture, was the “rule” for religious faith. In language that was the same as the early Keith’s, Penn explained that scripture could not have superseded some universal light, given the universal promises contained in the Bible, “unless Palestina or Canaan, a little Province of Asia, was the whole World, and that the Jews, a particular People, were All Mankind.” He then cited Socrates, Plato, Plotinus and Philo (among others) to the contrary. Penn argued the question was not the truth of scripture, but its interpretation: “The Question arises not about Truth of the Text, for that is agreed on all hands; but the Exposition of it: If then I yield to that Man, do I bow to the Letter of the Text, or to his Interpretation?” Penn also recited the argument concerning textual transmission discussed previously. As always, Penn was more orthodox than his argument might suggest. He thus claimed “Tis One thing to say the Scriptures ought to be Read, Believed and Fulfilled, and another thing to say they are the *Evangelical Rule* of Faith and Life.” Yet, to make this epistemological point he sought to prove “the Light and Spirit within the Heathens was sufficient to discover these things,” by claiming “it is granted on all hands that the Sybills had divine Sights.” Virgil had likewise written about a son born of virgin who would kill a snake. This mode of argument was Quakerism at its most intellectually (as opposed to
mystically) radical: launching a skeptical critique that devalued scriptures to the point of undermining them, but stopping just short of the cliff’s edge.404

The essence of Keith’s dispute with Penn at this point was over whether scripture or the Inner Light constituted the rule of religious faith. Keith declared that he had reappraised his view of the Inner Light, recognizing that it was the means of persuasion, not the source of essential knowledge. For Keith, the “rule of faith” was the actual intellectual content of religious belief and the guide for godly action. For Penn, the rule was a source of necessary knowledge, but primarily the means by which that knowledge was recognized and became effective. For Keith, Penn’s formulation presented the obvious problem that the Inner Light could not teach the Gospel events of Christ’s incarnation, sufferings and reincarnation. This meant Penn, according to Keith, did not believe these were necessary elements of Christian knowledge, but only the moral illumination available to all men, which led Penn to assert a de-Christianized Deism or Paganism. Quakers, according to Keith, held “that the Light within, with respect only to its ordinary and common Discoveries given to all Mankind, to Christians, Jews, Mahometans, Heathens of all sorts, Protestants and Papists, is the general Rule of Faith and Life to them all,” which led them to deny the “Christianity” of all but themselves “and their Deist and Heathen Brethren.” 405

Keith’s major epistemic innovation was to openly admit he had been wrong in his understanding of the Inner Light. In his earlier Quaker works “my chief Bent and Zeal,” was “against that which I judged a very Erronious Opinion, and Hurtful, held by some

counted Learned Men, and which I judge still that so it is, to wit, That the inward Evidence of the Spirit in the Souls of the Faithful, to the Truths of the Christian Religion, is only Effective and not Objective;” and “that the Spirits inward Evidence, otherwise called Testimony, Witness, Inspiration, Illumination, or Operation in the Souls of the Faithful, is not only Effective, but Objective also, to wit, by way of formal Object, or objective Medium, and Motive of Credibility.” While conceding the importance of this inward conviction, Keith conceded “I erred in calling this either inward Feeling, or the Object of it, the principal Rule,” because “That which is only, strictly and properly speaking, the Rule of the Christian Faith, is the Doctrine of the Holy Scriptures.” Keith was now drawing more clearly the line between what was to be believed and how it was to be believed.⁴⁰⁶

By this point, Keith was allying himself increasingly with members of the Anglican establishment. Keith was joined in courting Bodleian librarian Humphry Wanley by the other apostate Friends, and all sent him copies of their tracts. Interestingly, Bugg explained his breaking with the Society as not over money (a dispute over who should pay a fine he incurred by watching an illegal Quaker preacher in the 1670s), but his differences “Aboute ch: Governmente, womens meetings & the like Innovations at wch time I thought myself concerned in Conscience to oppose their Impositions.” This had led Bugg “to concider what I was.” On a more personal level, Bugg also pointed to the considerable time and expense he was at in writing against the Society.⁴⁰⁷

In a June 1697 letter, which included a postscript by Keith, Thomas Crispe noted that he had already sent one of his publications to the Bishop of London, who had

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid*, p. 4-5.
⁴⁰⁷ Francis Bugg to Humphrey Wanley, May 12, 1696, BL Harley MS 3777, f. 281.
approved of it and given him hope that a copy might be sent to the other Bishops. He assured his correspondent that he wrote “not for my selfe or in my own cause butt my concern for the scandall that thes quakers hav cast on the protestant ministers; and it was chiefly for the information off the clergy that I wrott itt.” Unlike Keith, Crispe claimed no identity as a Friend, and he dated his letter using the name of the month rather than numerical signification (Friends used numbers to avoid the pagan connotations of the names).408

The motive for these alliances on all sides appears to have been financial. Keith had resumed tutoring students to support himself, but publishing was expensive, especially considering he had to keep up with the much better funded Society (a complaint he used in defending his tardy responses to challenges, and no doubt a reason for his wishing to meet them publicly instead). Keith’s solution was the publication of a mathematical proof, which he then fed into the proper channels of the universities in pursuit of patronage as a tutor. Crispe specifically stated that Keith’s situation made publishing prohibitive, given booksellers’ expectation of recouping their expenditures. Crispe (whose increasingly erratic writing pointed to his disintegrating mental condition) specifically pointed to his “indevoring som acquaintance in the Universetys thinking ther be som very capable of doeing good in this controversy.” Wanley thus presented a possible avenue for such patronage.409

Despite these clear earthly concerns, however, the essential mission of exposing the Quaker war against Christ’s Gospel and Church remained paramount. Crispe asserted his own credentials as someone who understood the Quakers, even offering room in his
home and access to his collection of Quaker writings to any person willing to join him in
his polemical work. He assured Wanley that Quakers “Under Vallew the person of our
Lord Jesus of Nazareth & the scripture & to bring into contempt the minsters in
generall” and claimed that by “W penns interest in the Court soon after the restoration
they had incouragment & countenance therin.” Thus Crisp’s anti-Quaker attacks, with
their anti-clericalism and reference to the deposed Stuarts, claimed that Quakerism was at
war with true religion and sought its replacement by Quakerism: “I observ it was nott any
on pertikuler iudgment or som pertikuler men in all iudgments butt the ministers in
generall that they soe revile & render as soe many walking devils to after generations, &
themselves the only xtians all others Apostats.”

Samuel Young was not unaware of the direction that Keith and the Schism were
taking. In 1698, he published a “friendly epistle” to Keith that was in fact an attack on
Leslie’s book on right administration of the sacraments. He attacked the author for
dischurching all other communions, including the existing Church of England, for crypto-
papism, and for Jacobitism. “His present Majesty,” he declared, “cannot but know we are
his best Subjects. No Plots among us against his Life: No Friends among us to the once
Tyrant, and now Traytor.” Young gleefully pointed out that Leslie was now the Dissenter
“and that not of the best sort.” Young did then concede “But oh! how will the unreformed
Foxonians, especially the Pennites rejoice to see me drawing out my Pen againt the Man,
whose Snake in the Grass,” he had praised, but then pointed out that many Christian

410 *Ibid*, Crispe also asked Wanley not to reveal their correspondence to the Quakers, though this may have
simply been paranoia.
writers (such as Origen) produced both important and heretical works. Leslie “impedes his Work by numbring us with the Quakers.” 411

Wanley also traveled in the Anglican circles that would eventually produce The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, one of the many groups established as part of the Reformation of Manners. In 1700 Wanley became its secretary. The Society’s goals focused on establishing schools where children could learn to read and receive catechetical instruction, and libraries for the use of ministers and laity. The Society was the brain child of Thomas Bray, a clergyman who had already won some fame for his Catechetical Lectures, the first in an unfinished series of works on the subject of instructing children. High Church in his sympathies, especially toward the sacraments and episcopacy, Bray nonetheless took the oath and remained within the Church. In 1695, the Maryland government under Governor Nicholson, having recently created an Anglican establishment there, requested of the Bishop Compton a commissary (Bishop’s agent) to provide direction to the settlement. The appointment of Bray to the post was to mark the beginning of his involvement with the reform of religious institutions, which led him in 1698, along with several friends, to form the S.P.C.K. to combat “Enthusiasts and Antinomians” as well as “Atheists, Deists and Socinians.” 412

Fear of Quakerism, as has been seen, ran through Society, but Bray also derived his hostility to Friends from his dealings in Maryland, where the Society had a sizeable presence. As early as March 1699, the Society was in contact with Keith and supporting

his missionizing efforts. They resolved during this meeting to “procure for master Keith some Certificate or Recommendation which may protect him in his Travells and procure him some Encouragement from the Justice of the Peace,” and to “disperse” his “Narrative and Catechism up and down the Kingdome among the Quakers for their better conviction and Instruction.” The Society therefore sought to resolve two of Keith’s major concerns: the expense of printing and the need for legal protection in order to receive a hearing. This remained an ongoing problem, however, as Keith, while giving an account of his travels, reported “the Violent opposition of the Quakers in shutting the Doors of their Meetings against him” and asked “the Advice of the Society how he shall behave himself thereupon.” The S.P.C.K. told him to try once again to “Preach in a Quakers Meeting, and if he meets opposition that he pursue his Remedy according to Law.” By May, the Society not only was paying the printing costs of his works (as well as the Deism of William Penn) but paid Keith himself “Ten Pounds twelve shillings and six pence for his Bookes.” In April 1700, he received a further “Twenty Guineas as a Present from the Society.” Thus even before his conversion to Anglicanism, Keith was essentially a paid Anglican agent. In addition to Keith the Society also utilized the works of Charles Leslie, most notably the Snake. Bray was already including it in his proposed library catalogues in 1697, a year after its publication. 413

413 S.P.C.K. Early 18th Century Archives, microfilm, Part A: Minutes and Reports (Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1976) Reel #1 Minute Book vol. 1 p., 32, 41, 77; Thomas Bray, Bibliotheca Parochialis: or, a Scheme of Such Theological Heads Both General and Particular, as are More Peculiarly Requisite to be Well Studied by Every Pastor of a Parish (London: E. H. 1697), p. 118. At the same time, the S.P.C.K.’s anti-Quakerism was not absolute, as they recorded that the Agents for Schools in St. Andrews had received money from prominent Quakers towards building a school. Richard Clark has suggested this reflected an “ambivalence” towards Quakers. It seems more likely an assessment of local conditions. A school that did not enjoy the support of the resident worthies would not have lasted very long. Richard Clark, “The Gangreen of Quakerism”: An Anti-Quaker Anglican Offensive in England after the Glorious Revolution” JRH 11 (1980-1981): p. 404-429.
Conversion

Keith announced his conversion to Anglicanism in a sermon at Turners Hall that he subsequently printed. Previously, he had taken Anglican communion after baptizing one of his daughters. Keith completed his break from Quakerism by defining the Inner Light purely as natural conscience and declaring that the rule by which conscience was to be guided was “the whole revealed Will of God, as it is declared to us in the Holy Scriptures.” Without scripture, the light within could reveal only the moral law. To make this symbolically clear, two years later, Keith published a lengthy refutation of Robert Barclay’s Apology, under the title of The Standard of the Quakers. While partly tactical, since the Society had been reprinting the Apology repeatedly and distributing copies to meetings for help in articulating their beliefs, the act also had greater resonance. Not only had Barclay been Keith’s friend, but the Apology was in fact the product of considerable collaboration between the two. Key concepts such as that of the vehiculum Dei appear to have derived directly from Keith’s discussions with Henry More. The act of repudiating it, therefore, was an act of self-critique, a rejection of former principles he had previously been unable to manage. Keith backed off a bit by suggesting his refutation was also intended to show that Friends’ opinions did not equate to those in the Apology. But then he explained that refuting the Apology also provided him an opportunity to refute “the Errors and Arguments that are to be found in my former Books,” which had preceded Barclay’s “and wherein the Author of the Apology, had in great part followed me.” Finally, it allowed Keith “in point of True Love, and Good Will,” to prevent the Apology from doing further harm, “since my writing cannot reach him to his better Information.”
Biography was never far from group identity for Friends, as the repeated charges of apostasy and the use of attacks on personal morality suggest. Dismantling the Apology, therefore, served as a way of rewriting his past and more forcefully asserting his union with the Church of England.414

In the printed version of one of his post conversion sermons, Keith eschewed the High Church beliefs of Leslie, and denied that those “who have in some measure in Faithfulness held the Fundamentals of Christianity, and have sincerely endeavoured to obey such of the greater Commands of Christ, that they are perisht.” According to Samuel Young, however, he preached that Episcopal ordination was necessary to the lawful administration of the sacrament. Yet even after declaring his longstanding “secret” charity to Protestants of all stripes, Keith nonetheless argued that, without serious differences between them, Dissenters should yield to the majority and conform. Joining together was all the more imperative, as the Church of England was the “greatest Bulwark ... against Popery especially, and other old and new Heresies, as Deism, Atheism, &c.” Keith claimed that divisions among Protestants undermined their claim to truth in the eyes of their enemies. He continued these themes in his sermon the next week, but included a statement agreeing “Liberty is granted to all tender Consciences, that hold the Essentials of Christianity, and are of a Peaceable Conversation and Spirit,” but denying it should be extended to Ranters and “false Prophets.” In his travels as a S.P.G. missionary in the colonies, as part of revanchist Anglicanism fighting over the

414 George Keith, A Sermon Preach’d at Turners-Hall, the 5th of May 1700 in Which He Gave a Account of His Joyning in Common with the Church of England with Some Additions and Enlargements Made by Himself (London: Brabazon Aylmer, 1700), p. 9; George Keith, The Standard of the Quakers Examined or an Answer to the Apology of Robert Barclay (London: Brabazon Aylmer, Charles Brome and George Strahan 1702), preface.
nature of establishment, Keith’s High Churchmanship would be articulated more clearly.\textsuperscript{415}

The Society responded to Keith’s conversion, and the printed tracts it produced, with a barrage of publication, some official responses from the Society and some under false personas, such as “a Protestant Dissenter.” Several of Keith’s followers also published defenses of Keith and of their own conversions. Most of the works recited themes already familiar. The anonymous author of an answer to one of these tracts by a Keithian repeated the charge of inconsistency, and (adopting an Anglican persona) suggested that the Keithians were double agents out to destroy the Church of England from the inside. But this stance was only to permit the author, who claimed to be an Anglican, to defend the Society in a disinterested voice. “The many Books and Pamphlets, formerly and lately published by them ... abundantly prove,” that Friends believed in the Trinity, therefore, “your part is to over-Charge them, that they may have the opportunity to prove themselves Orthodox.” The substantive comments of this sentence work out to a profession of an orthodox belief in the trinity by the Society. That Keith produced what appears to have been a bestseller, \textit{A Serious Call to the Quakers}, in the process of these disputes appears to have furthered the Society’s concerns. The short work was a distillation of the quotations from Quaker books that had been circulating for the past decade. The Quakers issued a broadsheet response, citing in return Keith’s pre-Schism works to demonstrate that Keith himself had once argued the Society to be orthodox, and then asking the reader “can you think this a Teacher sent or called of

God?” Keith’s admission into the Church of England, while giving him the official
denominational identity the Society had demanded, made remarkably little difference to
the content or form of the dispute.416

While the Society perhaps wondered what took Keith so long, his allies were less
amenable to his conversion. Samuel Young in particular watched in horror as his attempts
to reclaim Keith to the Presbyterianism of his birth failed utterly. In 1700, he and Keith
had a falling out. Young wrote several works attacking Keith for supporting “plunging”
in baptism, rather than merely sprinkling. In the process he rehearsed the Quaker
accusations against Keith’s changeability in doctrine and even his adoption of the
Revolution of Souls. He also used Keith’s connections to Leslie to imply political
disloyalty. “How came you to preach in Churches,” he asked “where [there] are
Jacobitish Priests (are you turning one too?) who dare leave out King William in their
Prayers, and so are open Trumpeters of Rebellion.” Finally, Young suggested Keith was
motivated by ambition: “I dare not say if George Keith, and not William Pen, had taken
the Chair when George Fox dyed, we had never heard of George Keith, the Reformed
Quaker.” Young, however, soon faced problems of his own -- an accusation of
homosexuality -- which forced him to permanently withdraw from print.417

416 A Letter to Mr. Robert Bridgeman, George Keith’s Trophy; in Answer to his Reasons for Leaving the
Quakers (London: Printed and sold by the Booksellers of London and Westminster, 1700); the work is an
answer to Robert Bridgeman, Some Reasons Why Robert Bridgman, and His Wife, and Some Others in
Huntington-Shire, Have Left the Society of the People Called Quakers (London: Brabazon Aylmer and
Charles Brome, 1700); [John Field], The Christianity of the People Called Quakers Asserted, by George
Keith (London: Tace Sowle, 1700). An anonymous “dialogue” between Keith and a “Quaker” is more
puzzling, in that it does little more than have the two characters quite fairly state their positions. A Dialogue
Between George Keith, and an Eminent Quaker, Relating to His Coming Over to the Church of England
417 Trepidantium Malleus, A Dialogue Between George Fox a Quaker, Geo. Keith a Quodlibitarian, Mr. M.
an Anabaptist, Mr. L. an Episcoparian (London: John Marshall, 1700), p. 16; see idem, A Censure of Mr.
Judas Tull his Lampoon ([London : for John Marshall, 1700]), p. 11, for “Tulls hint of Sodomy” and the
following page for Young’s declaration he had not “abused my Body with Mankind this way hinted; or ever
With Young falling into seclusion, Keith involved with the S.P.C.K. and later the S.P.G., Crispe disappearing into either madness or death, and Bugg plugging along in his openly mercenary fashion, Leslie printed his final statement on the Society, in which he claimed to take their new professions of orthodoxy seriously. Leslie announced that two works, his *Reply to Joseph Wyeth* and his printed letter to the London Yearly Meeting, would be his last anti-Quaker works. Leslie explained in the latter that while “Five or Six years ago, I Met with Almost no Quakers, who were not Quakers indeed, ... I can hardly now in all London, find One of them. They are become Christians, at least in Profession.” This change would eventually “have its Effect, at least upon their Posterity.” In the other work he attacked the Quaker leadership for refusing to repent their errors “by the Little *Arts of False-Glossing, and Winding their Ancient Testimonies to Bear a Christian Meaning,*” in order to retain their popularity and “to take off the Odium of the Nation agains them.” But they felt confident in doing so “because they see, That, by the late Endeavours [that] have been us’d, the *Generality of the Quakers* have Embrac’d the *Christian Principles.*” Of course, for Leslie, this Christianizing of the Quakers merely made their continued separation from the Church of England all the more inexcusable. But that he was willing to concede the point with regard to the rank and file Friends reveals the success of the Society’s apologetic efforts. Leslie may not have been

*once did any thing that had a tendency thereunto; (or ever abused my Body with any Womankind either).*” The work in question may have been one written by “Philosensus,” who states he would have doubted the stories of Young’s sexualized beatings of his students “had I not heard that your Wife (and in that she’s a happy Woman) must lie alone ... you having something to teach the young Men in Bed.” *A Rod for Trepidantium Malleus, or a Letter to Sam. Reconcileable* (London: Mary Fabian, 1700), p. 10. Young repeated his accusation against Keith’s talking “as if the Cabalistical Notions were still working in your Head, or Transmigration of Souls, That all our Souls were in Adam’s Head.” *Trepidantium Malleus, A Snake in the Grass Caught and Crusht* (London: John Marshall, 1700), p. 12. A member of Keith’s congregation wrote a defense of their conversion to Anglicanism, J. C. *One of George Keith’s Friends Serious Inquiry, Whether it Be Better to Joyn with the Independents, Presbyterians, or Church of England* (London: Brabazon Aylmer & Charles Brome, 1700).
convinced but he had been, after six years, won over. Persecution was no longer possible, and so if the Society was willing to behave as orthodox Christians, thus being publicly inoffensive, it was pointless to continue the discussion. He thus constructed a plausible exit strategy, which prevented him from having to admit to losing. Leslie also had other concerns related to his connections to Jacobite spy networks. The corporate construction of religious identity won out over the ideological.418

He was not alone in this position. Some younger Friends were conscious of being in an act of reinterpretation. John Tomkins explained in a letter that in a book by Fox, “I find some passages not so well guarded against as I might,” while approving of Penn and Whitehead’s reading of the passages. Tomkins, nonetheless, was not impressed by Whitehead’s response to the *Snake*: “were he 20 years younger, he would be better for that work; for those who write Controversie, should have some mercury, as well as Truth in their Composition.” Instead, he had hopes in a (ultimately abortive) reply by Ellwood. Divisions within the Society were rarely open, and alliances even less so, but the relationship between these men, and Henry Gouldney, a confidant of Penn’s, offered at least a suggestion that Tomkins’s remarks were motivated by the quiet fight between Penn and Whitehead.419

Keith’s Christology can only be described as a drive towards formality or rationalism and away from mystery or spiritualism in the terms of his opponents. It was centrally Christ as mystery that he sought to defend, and, whatever the categories of his argumentation, he did so on the basis of faith not reason. Instead, he assimilated the Quaker notion of the Inner Light into the category of human reason, but only to declare it insufficient and then subordinate it to the structures of mystery, and finally scripture and the institutions of the apostolic church. J. G. A. Pocock has argued for an English Enlightenment based not upon the model of the French *philosophes*, seeking to undermine scripture and prophecy, but upon the longstanding tradition of English anticlericalism. The drive towards an ever greater spiritualism can lead, ultimately, to the deification of man. The result, however, would inevitably be the neutering of deity. As Spinoza made everything God, and the result was to make God meaningless, so extreme forms of mysticism could effectively strip away any externality to God, leaving only the man and his reason as a way of reaching higher gnosis. Pocock went on further to suggest that this ideology became the basis of an erastian consensus, with only the nonjurors rejecting it after 1688. With his defense of mystery, Keith was pulling away from precisely this trend. Keith’s attack on the Quakers pulled him toward the ecclesiological and sacramental structures that re-affirmed the distinction between the presence of God within man and the presence of God as every man. Ironically, the Society itself was trending along the same path, particularly with Fox no longer alive in his often heterodox role as Quaker messiah. Leslie’s statement that his recognition of this change was his
reason for withdrawing from anti-Quakerism may not have been sincere, but it must have been plausible in Leslie’s eyes to have made it.\textsuperscript{420}

\textsuperscript{420} The above is part of a much larger argument by Pocock, concerning religion and politics. “Post-Puritan England and the Problem of the Enlightenment”, p. 91-113.
Reverend Thomas Bray arrived in Maryland in 1700, as Commissary to the colony’s Anglican churches. Once there, he chaired the meeting of the colony’s clergy, where they addressed the issues of primary concern to him: catechizing the young, access to the sacraments, and guaranteeing an effective and moral ministry. To this end, he also presided over the ecclesiastical trial of a minister for polygamy. Yet, at the end of this meeting, Bray turned to one other matter: Pennsylvania. This colony “abounded” with those who “have been sadly deluded into a total Apostacy from the Christian Faith,” abandoning scripture for “natural Conscience.” He was referring to the Quakers. As a partial solution the meeting drew up proposals for Maryland and Virginia to raise funds for the establishment of an Anglican ministry to nurture the small Anglican community in the Delaware Valley and to help convert those who had abandoned the Quaker community. Bray was enthused by the creation of an Anglican church in Philadelphia, mostly by Keithian ex-Quakers. Bray was not alone, a Non-juring tract written ten years later praised Charles Leslie’s books, explaining “Particularly the Quakers in America have owned in their Letters ... that his Books were chiefly instrumental in recovering them out of that Error,” and leading them, not to other Dissenters, “as being nearer to their way,” but to the Church of England. The author credited this to Leslie’s focus on the sacraments and “who they were that had Authority to administer” them “derived to them

by Succession from Christ to his Apostles.” He named Governor Nicholson of Virginia and “the Reverend Mr. George Keith now beneficed in Sussex” as witnesses to this fact. Thus, from an early stage, the work of the S.P.G. was marked by a concern to undermine Quakerism in the colonies, and particularly in Pennsylvania, a concern that stood ahead of dealing with any other dissenting group (of which there were many in the polyglot middle colonies).422

At the same time, the S.P.G. was not like the interdenominational Societies for the Reformation of Manners, it was overtly Anglican and dependent on that identity and the support it derived for itself among the imperial elites in the colonies. Whereas the cosmopolitan printing center of London provided a complicated world of print and legal relations, which the Society could utilize and have utilized against it, the much smaller world of the colonies, before the explosion of print in the eighteenth century resulted in a narrower, far more controlled debate. The result was the Society’s effective shutting out of Keith, and the transformation of his mission into one of reclaiming his followers and redefining the Schism.

The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel

The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts was chartered in June of 1701, as an offshoot of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge. Its mission was to address the lack of Protestant worship in the colonies. While denominationally Anglican, the charter made no mention of Dissenters, but only of the dangers of Atheism and Roman Catholicism. The Society’s membership, as Craig Rose has shown, was a mingled collection of High and Low Church Anglicans and even a few non-jurors. While the early years of the S.P.G. coincided with the Crown’s move to consolidate the various colonial governments under new royal charters, its work was not official policy but a semi-private project of individuals within the ruling political and clerical English elites. In addition to this national agenda, however, the High Church influences on the S.P.G. were revealed by the honorary admission of Swedish Bishops (highly respected by High Anglicans for preserving episcopal succession through the Reformation) to the Society. The organization subsequently showed great interest in providing worship to the handful of Swedish settlers in the colonies. Along with the organization’s interest in Eastern Orthodox churches (including plans to translate the Book of Common Prayer into Greek) the above efforts reveal a dislike of erastianism and desire to reconstitute something closer to a catholic church. Finally, while Keith’s mission showed little or no interest in converting Indians, the S.P.C.K.’s concern with the
dangers of Freethought and Quakerism easily translated into the Society’s perception of a
the New World as a religious wilderness.423

It was these concerns that prompted the newly formed Society to employ Keith as
their lead missionary. Keith’s first task for the S.P.G. was to write an assessment of
religious life “in such parts of Northern America, where I have travelled and which I can
give of my own knowledge especially in relation to Quakerisme and some other things by
letters from my friends there In pensilvania.” Relying upon his continued contacts in
America, Keith pointed out the places where his supporters had opened up possibilities
for an Anglican congregation. In addition, he pointed to the Congregationalist churches in
East New Jersey, whose younger generation might be amenable to conversion. But the
central fact that Keith reported upon was the size of the Quaker presence in Pennsylvania,
East and West New Jersey and New York. Keith was then chosen to be the first
missionary to the colonies. He was supplied with a considerable number of anti-Quaker
books (his and others) to distribute among the colonists and put aboard the Centurion,
with the new governor of Massachusetts, Joseph Dudley. 424

Keith’s discussion of the religious state of the colonies connected the absence of
Christian church infrastructure with savagery. Thus East New Jersey had “no face of any
publick worship of any sort, but people live very mean like indians.” While a few
Quakers and English and Dutch Calvinists dwelled on Long Island “many of [the English

423 The last complete treatment of the S.P.G. is H. P. Thompson, Into All Lands; The History of the Society
colonial Swedes, see Ericus Biorck to the Society, Nov. 3, 1705, SPG Papers, vol XV f. 206, Lambeth
Palace, London.
424 “Mr Keith’s Account of the State of Religion in the Plantations,” 14 Sept. 1701, S.P.G. Papers, Volume
X, f. 6-20, Lambeth Palace, London. Bishop Compton to Archbishop Tenison, March 27, 1702, S.P.G.
Papers, VII, f. 14, Lambeth Palace, London, contains the Bishop’s recommendations for books to be sent
with Keith, which included five copies of The Snake in the Grass.
were] of no Religion [sic], but like wild indians.” Nor was Keith alone in this formulation. West New Jersey politician Lewis Morris (who was in London negotiating the end to proprietary government in the colony) later described East New Jersey as containing “many Dissenters of all sorts, but the greatest part generally speaking cannot with truth be call’d Christians.” A North Carolinian declared to the S.P.G. that without the aid of the Society “the most Part, especially the Children born here, [would] become Heathens.” Thus there was a continuum of corporate identity from the demands of the Society that Keith declare himself part of a denomination to the High Church arguments for an unbroken historical presence of the visible church: the absence of institutions equaled the absence of Christian identity.425

Quakerism, as a result, was not so much seen as a heathen religion than as the result of the absence of Christian worship. While Keith seemed to draw a distinction between Quakers (whom he accused of the “establishing of Deisme”) and those utterly devoid of churches and ministry, his successors in the S.P.G. saw Quakerism and a lack of religion as synonymous. John Talbot, an Anglican minister (possibly nonjuring) whom Keith met on the Centurion and persuaded to become his traveling companion, at one point explained that “Many goe to the Heathen Meetings of the People called Quakers

425 “Lewis Morris to Archdeacon Beveridge,” S.P.G. Letterbooks, microfilm at Harvard University, A XLV; “Mr. Henderson Walker to the Ld Bp of London,” October 29, 1703, S.P.G. Letterbooks A, CXXVIII. Colonel Lewis Morris was descended from a puritan family that had fought on the side of Parliament during the Civil War. His family settled first in Barbados and then East New Jersey, where they assembled considerable landholdings. Morris was raised a Friend, and educated by George Keith in the 1680s. As an adult, however, he moved from Quakerism to Anglicanism and finally to a form of Deism. Heavily involved in New Jersey’s contentious politics, he journeyed to London as part of the negotiations to transform the two colonies from proprietary to royal. In 1701, he met Keith again and returned to the colonies with him. Keith managed relations between both he and Lord Cornbury, the governor of New York, despite the political hostility between the two men, which included Morris’s infamous accusations (in letters to the S.P.G.) that Cornbury was a transvestite. Eugene R. Sheridan, Lewis Morris 1671-1746: a Study in EarlyAmerican Politics (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1981).
because there is no houses [sic] of God in their Provinces, till att last they come to be bewitched & forced out of their Faith & senses too.” Thus the connection in Anglican eyes between madness, diabolism, and Quakerism made in the previous chapter was repeated here. Talbot then connected this conglomeration of ideas to savagery: the proliferation of Quakers meant that “Africa has not more Monsters than America.” But he could also point with encouragement to three churches being built with Governor Nicholson’s aid in North Carolina, “to keep the People together lest they should fall into Heathenism, Quakerism, &c.” Later, he marveled that so many born “of the English” had never heard of Christ for lack of education, and “that any Place [that] has received the word of God so many years, so many hundred Churches built, so many thousand Proselytes made,” could “still remain altogether in the Wilderness as they without a shepherd.” Quakerism, after a fashion, could thus even reproduce the wilderness even where institutions existed.426

**Post Schism Developments in America**

Since 1694, epistles from the colonial Friends’ meetings had been testifying that Keith’s American supporters had atrophied. In part these reports reflect Friends’ difficulty with explaining failure, because of their claim to an immediate indwelling of Christ, and the millennial hopes it engendered. Because Friends’ common response to suffering was a combination of traditional martyrology and a providential interpretation in which Friends’ afflictions were believed to return back upon their persecutors, the

426 “Mr Keith’s Account of the State of Religion in the Plantations”; “Mr. Talbot to the Secretary,” April 7, 1704, S.P.G. Letterbooks A CLXXXI.
disorder produced within the Society by the Schism could only be explained by the ultimate failure of the schismatics. London was therefore assured by the West River, Maryland meeting, in 1695, that “the Lords Power was over [Keith] and disappointed him of his Evil Expectation.” The 1696 Burlington meeting declared that through divine aid it had gained “Dominion over all the Adversaries of Truth.” A year later, the same yearly meeting was reporting that its own attendance was larger than ever before, “Even notwithstanding the Backslidings & Apostacy of divers” Keithians. Other American Friends assured London that the Keithians’ “time is alsoe short, … and that power before which they have begun to fall, shall accomplish what is yet behind concerning them.” A year and a half after this, the meeting reported that a “Priest” (the Anglican minister who served in Philadelphia, perhaps Thomas Clayton) was “boasting” to the Bishop of London that he had converted many Quakers. The meeting, “for the satisfaction of all faithfull Friends and all well wishers to sions Prosperity,” assured London that the only converts were Keithians. Furthering the distinction between their own holiness and their enemies’ cynicism, they doubted the Anglican minister “has any great Esteem for [the Keithians], but it serves him, and he takes occasion by it to vaunt himself.” They consoled themselves that the minister “will get more trouble then Credit from them.”

427 In describing the weakness of the Keithians, however, they do not appear to have been inaccurate. The Keithians went in several different religious directions. In addition to those who became Anglicans, some rejoined the Society, and others having “been dipt

in Delaware [River] by a Baptist,” joined a number of the surrounding congregations. While Jon Butler has done invaluable work on the fluidity between the various Keithian, Baptist and Pietist groupings through which the Keithians passed, he overstressed the initial division within the Society. Connections between Keithians and orthodox Friends appear to have been retained in many instances. Keith sent letters to his colonial supporters, which “some friends had a sight of a Copy of some part as far as the friend had time.” The context in which this might have occurred is demonstrated by another incident, in which the almanac writer and pro-Keith polemicist Daniel Leeds printed a paper that the meeting had not wished to make public. The Burlington monthly meeting then proceeded to discipline the Friend who had been Leeds’s conduit for the paper, Abraham Hulings. They expressed incredulity at Hulings’s defense, that “he might have lett Robert young have itt at his request he being then as he alledged a Member of our Church here ... for it is to well Known that Robert Yong as well as himself had been long declining.” Hulings was eventually disowned, but the fact that these events occurred three years after Keith’s disownment suggest a more fluid situation. As in London, some remained in the main meeting despite reservations and personal relationships with separates.428

A final group, including Jon Hart, remained as separatist Friends and continued to harass the Society (though they quickly divided along theological lines). The main

Friends’ meeting attempted to bury the schism by ignoring their opponents, which seems to have made the Keithians continue using the tactic of public spectacle in order to keep the fight going. George Hutcheson, on one occasion in 1696, appeared at a Friends’ worship meeting with several allies, “under pretence of calling for Justice against a Publick Friend [i.e. a minister] and stranger whom he said he had divers things against” in doctrine and behavior. The Friends ignored him and continued with their meeting. This angered Hutcheson, who left, declaring his intention to “publish [the Society] to the World.” The Friends reported to London that the night before appearing at the meeting, Hutcheson and “a Tumultuous Company” had assembled in the street “there Exposeing and Calumniating friends in such Terms as is Common with him and that Party.” 429

In a similar fashion, in 1700, a pair of New Jersey Keithians (husband and wife) arrived in Bermuda on business, and began verbally attacking the Society there, as well as distributing a book by Daniel Leeds. Friends attempted to deal with them privately, and to convince them to rejoin the Society. One of the two schismatics complained that the Society was no longer “soe straightly bound up now as they used to be that was to suffer for their Religion,” instead the Society now advised its followers to “flee persecution.” This complaint was telling, as it was one of several that arose during the Wilkinson-Story Schism in the 1670s. It is unknown whether the two unnamed Friends had participated in this previous dispute, but the statement reinforces the connections between the two schisms. The woman continued pestering the meeting, one of whose members responded by reading letters from London describing George Keith’s “downfall

429 Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 7 mo. 15-19, 1695 in Epistles Received, I, p. 233-235, a similar statement was made in Philadelphia to Second Days Morning Meeting, 6 of 1 mo, 1698/9, Ibid, p. 290; Burlington Yearly Meeting, September 23, 1696, Epistles Received, I, p. 245-248.
... at w[hi]ch it appeared she was not well pleased.” The Society’s communications network -- in this case providing quick word of Keith’s conversion to Anglicanism -- was crucial to its ability to isolate Keithians wherever they appeared.\textsuperscript{430}

Neither had the American press gone silent. Keith’s ally William Bradford (now the official printer for the colony of New York) churned out a series of works by almanac writer Daniel Leeds. They largely reproduced the same language that had dominated the schism: group belonging, Christian identity and the transformation of both into questions of personal behavior and slander. These began with a 1695 reply to a London publication by John Penington, in which he printed certificates sent from the American meetings defending the personal behavior of Samuel Jennings. The meetings had first started issuing certificates to members in order to identify traveling Friends as members in good standing of the Society. In particular, this was important since Friends were supposed to be endogamous. The published certificates, however, had been sent by various meetings at the instigation of Jennings’ wife, Ann. The Keithian almanac printer Daniel Leeds reacted to the suggestion in one of the certificates that he had always been distanced from the Society. Continuing along Keith’s tact, he described how several of the meetings’ members refused to sign the certificates, which were then issued under the clerk’s hand alone. Precisely the same concern over controlling the boundaries of the Society as had helped initiate the schism only a few years before, therefore, prompted this pamphlet exchange.\textsuperscript{431}

Leeds followed this tract in 1697 with \textit{News of a Trumpet Sounding in the Wilderness}, which recycled arguments and quotations from Keith and Leslie (and was

\textsuperscript{430} Bermuda to London, Epistles Received, I, p. 319-320.
\textsuperscript{431} Daniel Leeds, \textit{The Innocent Vindicated} ([New York: William Bradford, 1695]).
itself reprinted in England two years later by Leslie’s main printer). Leeds opened, however, with a description of his own tumultuous relationship with the Society, including an early disillusionment with their claims of infallibility, and final conclusion that, since all sects were in error to some degree, he might as well remain a Quaker. Leeds drew the attention of Caleb Pusey, who responded with a tract from the press of the Philadelphia Friends’ new printer, a German immigrant named Reynier Jensen. Leeds’s subsequent News of a Strumpet shifted the discussion from one over doctrine, to (as the title suggests) personal attacks. Leeds defended doing so with a clear statement of the connection between behavior and the Quaker notion of the Inner Light: “if they will stand upon the Pinacle above the level of all the rest of Mankind, or of all who call themselves Christians, then must they expect to have their failings exposed.” While in England the colonial concerns were distilled by the Yearly Meeting into those of community (print and schism), whereupon doctrine quickly became the focus of Keith’s polemics, in the colonies personal insult remained paramount.432

This line of attack, as it had in 1692, quickly became inculcated in the political fights occurring within the Delaware Valley colonies. Penn had regained his charter based on the promise of mustering the colony’s support for King William’s War (1689-1697). This compromise, necessary for Penn in London, was another headache for Deputy Governor Markham, who worried about the willingness of colonial Friends to comply. Leeds kept up the attack upon Friends’ failure to abide by their pacifist

principles and the suggestion that Quakerism was fundamentally inimical to political office. It is also to be wondered what role Bradford’s position as official printer for New York’s colonial government and its royal governor Benjamin Fletcher (1692-1698) had in shaping these essentially religious critiques. Himself a former deputy governor of Pennsylvania, Fletcher was now involved in a dispute with New Jersey over whether to make Amboy a free port, or to continue requiring vessels to clear at New York. Finally the ongoing dispute between Samuel Jennings and Keith’s ally Robert Turner easily interchanged religious and political attacks. As always, the ongoing and shifting agendas of the schism became enmeshed in various events occurring within the wider Atlantic context.433

Keith’s Second American Sojourn

London Friends learned early of Keith’s intended visit to the colonies and prepared the colonial meetings to resist him. Three months after his appearance in Boston, the Delaware Valley Meetings were aware of his presence and wrote to London fearful of his approach. This was not the first transatlantic threat managed in part from England. Two years before, colonial Friends had opposed Bray’s attempts to establish Anglicanism in Maryland. Joseph Wyeth (who also wrote against Keith) launched an anti-clerical assault against Bray’s attempt to meld Quakers and Catholics into a common attack on the Anglican Church’s support through tithes. In November, the Second Days

Morning Meeting sent copies of this work to the Maryland Meeting. The 1702 Epistle included a postscript denouncing Keith. The Second Day Morning Meeting, hearing of Keith’s appearance in Boston only two months later, also apportioned five pounds for sending “such answers to George Keith & to New England and the American part as they see meet.” By November, Friends’ minister Thomas Story, fresh from the colonies himself, was reading his account of Keith’s activities to the meeting. Finally, several tracts written against Keith in England, including one written there under the guise of an Anglican, were reprinted by Jensen. The Society’s ability to mobilize resources was crucial throughout the Schism, and their response here undermined any pretence to being done with Keith.434

Keith’s journey on the Centurion from the Isle of Wight to Boston took six weeks, leaving on April 28th and arriving on June 11th. On the boat, Keith set a pattern that was to be the norm for much of his work in the colonies: alliances with imperial political elites. In this case, he and another missionary ate at the table of governor Dudley and deputy governor Povie of the Massachusetts colony “on free cost.” In these early days, the S.P.G. operated within local Anglican fiefdoms. In Dudley’s case, however, Keith only extolled the governor in his official correspondence; privately he made “a

434 Joseph Wyeth, An Answer to a Letter from Dr. Bray (London: Tace Sowle, 1700); the Burlington Yearly Meeting to the London Yearly Meeting, 19-23, 7mo. [September] 1702; MMM, p. 76. According to Wyeth, Bray’s plan was to “break the common Liberty of the People of Maryland, for the private Advantage of a few Clergy-men,” p. 3. As the Society had during in the Turners Hall Debates, Wyeth turned to political loyalty to argue that “our King is the common Father of his People, and hath carefully executed his distributive Justice [by striking down laws limiting toleration in Maryland], how is it consistent with that and with the established Privilege of that Province, to seek to draw his Authority to colour the Violence of a few,” who were “more bent on the Spoil of their Neighbours” than promoting religion,” p. 9. The reprinted tracts were John Field, The Christianity of the People Called Quakers Asserted, by George Keith (London: Tace Sowle, 1700); [Richard Claridge.] A Letter From a Clergy-Man in the Country to a Clergy-Man in the City (Philadelphia: Reynier Jensen, 1702); and Anon, Mr. George Keith’s Account of a National Church (Philadelphia: Reynier Jensen, 1701).
heavy complaint” that Dudley had ignored him the rest of the voyage. Keith’s relations with other colonial governors, notably Lord Cornbury in New York and Francis Nicholson in Virginia, were to prove more fruitful.⁴³⁵

Keith’s arrival did not go unnoticed. Samuel Sewall, a Boston judge, attended the arrival of the ship and the accompanying ceremonies related to the installation of the new executive. In his diary, Sewall recorded that “I saw an ancient Minister, enquiring who it was, Governour said, twas G- Keith, had converted many in England.” Sewall observed that “I look’d on him as Helena [i.e. Helen arriving in Troy] aboard.” In a letter to a London correspondent, Sewall elaborated: “we hear so much of what G. Keith has done with you, in converting his Brethren, that we even wonder how you could spare him. Many in this Province had rather he stayed where he was so usefull, as fearing that he will here do more hurt than Good.” The Congregationalist leaders perceived they were to become the subjects of an Anglican missionary campaign. Coming only a short time after the loss of the charter and of Congregationalist hegemony, this new arrival must have seemed merely the latest attack on the New England Way. The actual story of the S.P.G.’s relationship with New England Dissent was to prove more complicated, a combination of the practicalities of limited resources, the dominant concern of anti-Quakerism, and the ideological imperatives of being England’s national church (especially within a High Church context).

Keith’s old enemies, the Mathers, also took notice. Cotton Mather had been observing developments in the schism from Boston, both physically and conceptually.

⁴³⁵ Keith, Journal, SPG Letterbooks, IX; “John Chamberlayne to Joseph Dudley,” April 10, 1703, M.H.S. Coll. 6th series, III (1899), p. 536-537. Dudley’s relationship with the local religious and political establishments in Massachusetts were to prove no more friendly, as the governor aligned himself with the small Anglican presence in the colony.
Physically, the omnivorous bibliophile collected accounts of events in Pennsylvania and London, and applied them to his own anti-Quaker arguments. Recounting a debate between himself and an unnamed Quaker, Mather compared his own treatment of Keith (and implicitly New England’s treatment of Quakers generally) in 1688 with that of the Society of Friends: “I never got him into Goals, and under Fines. I should have been Troubled at any that would have done so. But you have done it. Therefore, I believe ’tis best for you to leave the Subject.” Mather hereby was able to alleviate his own unease and guilt over New England’s earlier hanging of Quakers. Conceptually, the Schism served his providential interpretation of recent events in New England, whom Mather believed the Quakers sought to use the devastation of New England settlements in the most recent Indian war as an opening to conversion, since Friends interpreted Indian predations as punishment for past Puritan persecution of Quakers. Mather, in response, compared the “molestations” New England suffered at the hands of Quakers to those inflicted by the Indians. Mather furthered this connection between Quakerism and the Indians by citing the Salem Quaker Thomas Maule, who defended the Indians and expounded doctrines that Mather described as Maule’s “Alcoran.” Mather also took credit for instigating the schism by having pointed out Keith’s differences with the “Foxian” Quakers. He gloried over Pennsylvania’s subsequent “persecution” of Keith, who had once been “the very Dalae or Prester John of all the English Tartars.” The S.P.G. was not alone in perceiving Quakerism as part of a continuum between Freethought, the Koran, paganism (the Tartars), and savagery (Indians).436

Three days after his arrival, Keith confirmed Sewall’s fears and preached a sermon at the Anglican Queen’s Chapel in Boston. Keith’s sermon recited much of his anti-Quaker argument: that the scriptures and not the inward presence of Christ was the foundation of the Church, and that Christ was both man and God. Then, however, he extended his discussion into an attack upon Dissenters for schism from a true church. “The great divisions that have happen’d amongst Protestants,” he declared, “though about lesser matters, when agreeing in the main, have mightily both strengthen’d the Popish faction, and weaken’d the Protestant Churches.” In particular, Keith argued that Dissenters had falsely rejected “the Mother Protestant Church of them all,” the Church of England. Keith concluded with a set of six principles, which argued for membership in the Anglican Church on the basis of political obedience and the sinfulness of separating from a true church. Finally Keith opposed the Congregational practice of limiting membership to the elect, and defended set forms of prayers (which would have been understood as a support of the Book of Common Prayer book against Puritan extemporary preaching and prayer).

Increase Mather responded to Keith’s challenge, but was presented with the difficult ideological position created by the new legal atmosphere of the Act of Toleration. As in London, toleration had institutionalized a pluralist status quo that had little intellectual basis for either Anglicans or the stalwarts of the New England Way. Dissenters had to explain their refusal to join the established church without declaring it to be a false church (and potentially bring down the wrath of political authority). Keith,

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437 George Keith, *The Doctrine of the Holy Apostle & Prophets the Foundation of the Church of the Church of Christ, As it was Delivered in a Sermon At Her Majesties Chappel at Boston in New-England, the 14th of June 1702* (Boston: Samuel Phillips, 1702), p. 11.
in his tract, had implicitly dared the Congregational ministry to do precisely this. Mather first challenged Keith’s argument for a wide body of adiaphora, insisting that the government could not lawfully impose anything that was not commanded in scripture. Puritans had made this argument since the Elizabethan period. Mather then muddled through a series of distinctions concerning the definition of schism. Most had little to do with the situation at hand, until Mather finally turned to his central argument: that in a situation where the church imposed non-essential ceremonies upon those who “in their Consciences ... are otherwise persuaded,” those members could legitimately separate. Mather, in contrast to his previous position, here argued for individual conscience. Keith similarly inflected his position, suggesting that what an individual felt to be heretical was “no good Proof whether a thing be true or false, except he bring Scripture or good Reason for him.”438

Beyond the question of charity to religious conscience, Keith found himself faced with the nature of Anglicanism as an established church in the colonies. Mather asked why, if one granted Keith’s point about the sin of separation, Congregationalists in New England should conform to the Church of England, and not the other way around. “Conformists [i.e. Anglicans] . . .,” Mather argued, “are in New England, Dissenters, there being but one or two Conformist Congregations in all New England, and those not the greatest.” This argument implicitly related to the question of the political status of the colonies: were they part of England, and thus under the national English church, or part of the conglomerate kingdoms of Britain, with separate religious establishments?

Ostensibly, they were under the (usually neglectful) jurisdiction of the Bishop of London, which suggests the importance assigned to them. Over the course of the seventeenth century, proposals for an American Bishop had been made, but all proved some combination of abortive and stillborn.439

As has been seen, Keith was willing to deploy the previous formulation, which saw the colonies as separate from the metropole, when it allowed him to brand the London Yearly Meeting with quasi-papal jurisdiction. Making an historical argument, he declared the Church of England to be “the Mother Protestant Church, retaining her first Purity, from whom the Dissenters made the Schism.” The distinction between Dissenter and establishment was not geographical but line of descent, thereby making any separation from it an act of schism. Finally, Keith turned upon Congregationalists’ restriction of church membership and the sacraments, which had “frightened away many of the People of New-England from joining with you,” leaving many particularly young people without alternatives to becoming “little better than Heathens,” who “are exposed to be leavened with Quakerism, and other vile Errors, as too many already are so leavened there-with.” While not defending episcopacy explicitly, this argument shows the influence on Keith of Leslie. Preservation of the body of the true church (both on the historical vertical and laity horizontal) was necessary to fighting off the dangers of irreligion.440


440 Keith, A Reply to Mr. Increase Mather’s Printed Remarks, p. 14, 15. Keith’s defense of his morals may have been prompted by one of the London tracts reprinted in America, which claimed he and Bugg “were not so much Deserters, as Cashiered Men, for their Immoralities; for they did not Come, but were Thrust
The question of true churches inevitably brought up his own authenticity; the Congregationalists were not above deploying Quaker arguments against him. In his reply to Mather, Keith was at pains to reiterate the point he had been making in London: his retraction of his former beliefs as a Quaker. He was uncertain how much news of the schism had traveled to the colonies. After assuring his readers that his errors were doctrinal not moral, he declared that he had renounced his errors “again and again, and in a much more publick place than Boston in New-England.” Keith also recounted a recent personal visit with Cotton Mather, during which he “acknowledged my Errors and Uncharitableness towards Him and his Brethren,” during his dispute with Mather in 1688. Keith then re-narrated the Schism, declaring that he had never agreed with the Quakers in their fundamental errors, but “was nearer in my Perswasions (even when a Quaker) to the Thirty Nine Articles of the Church of England,” which eased his passage into that church. This difficult position had led Arthur Cook at the time to declare that Keith “was never anything but an old rotten Presbyterian.” What Keith at the time probably saw as an insulting attempt to exclude him from the community of Friends, after his conversion he now reinterpreted as a confirmation of his essential orthodoxy throughout his life.441

The interconnecting of Keith’s personal religious identity, the de-civilizing dangers of a deinstitutionalization of the American wilderness, and the geography of establishment can be seen in a final accusation made by Mather. Keith had begun the encounter with a strident attack upon Dissent in the Congregational metropolis. With Mather now asking why Keith was so concerned to attack good Christians, and impose

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441 Keith, A Reply to Mr. Increase Mather’s Printed Remarks, p. 30-31, 32. “The Minister & Churchwardens of Road Island to the Society,” September 29, 1702, SPG Letterbooks, vol. 1 XLIV.
unscriptural ceremonies upon them, when he would be more effective in delivering those he had formerly led into Quakerism, Keith could merely agree that “for them I am the greatest Debtor.” He assured his readers that his Boston sermon had been directed as much towards the Quakers as the Congregationalists. Yet he then asked “why I may not at Times, and upon Occasion, when I see a Service, plead for the Skirts & Garments of the Church of England,” when Mather sought to “not only strip Her to the Skin, but would fley Her Skin off her Body,” and dress her “in the Attire of a Whore.” Quakerism and heathenism, therefore could be used both in a High Church and Dissenting argument, to draw support for the S.P.G. and Anglican establishment and to argue that New England, with its established church structure should not be the organization’s focus. But established Dissent could never be absent from the minds of those who held Anglicanism to be the true apostolic church.442

In early July, Keith traveled to Cambridge to witness Harvard College’s commencement, where he heard the president of the college, Samuel Willard, “maintain some Assertions that seemed to me very unsound.” Specifically, Keith objected to the consequences drawn from a student’s thesis (“That the Immutability of Gods Decree doth not take away the Liberty of the Creature”): that God had necessitated Adam’s fall and “That every free act of the Reasonable Creature is determined by God.” Keith concluded that these doctrines made God responsible for human sin. Keith decided not to declare his objections at commencement to avoid embarrassing Governor Dudley, who was a relative of Willard’s. Instead, Keith wrote the president a letter in Latin, which Willard promptly ignored. Willard later explained: “I thought it not worth Answering, nor like to do much

442 Mather, Some Remarks on a Late Sermon Preached at Boston, p. 33, 35; Keith, A Reply to Mr. Increase Mather’s Printed Remarks, p. 33.
hurt, whiles it spake in a language not known to the Vulgar.” Only later, he explained, when friends suggested Keith’s published translation of the letter would reflect badly on the college, did Willard see fit to print a response. The Mathers had prevented Keith from publishing his reply to Increase and his attack on Willard in Boston; he was forced to turn to his old ally, William Bradford in New York. No less than for the Quakers, the printed word for the Congregationalists added a new dimension to dispute, drawing them out into debates they would have otherwise sought to avoid.443

Willard’s response accused Keith of calumniating New England and non-conformists, in order “to insinuate that it was high time to look after them, when the chief Town in the Province was pestered with such a Minister.” Focusing upon the College, “the Fount of Learning in the Place,” Willard suggested that Keith prefer it become a source of “Pelagianism, Jesuitism, and Arminianism,” rather than remain a Calvinist bastion. Regardless of his conversion, Keith’s hostility to Calvinism remained, so while he would have opposed the invectives, the basic claim of seeking to reduce the college from its present theological state was fair.444

Much of Willard’s tract was a detailed discussion of free will relying upon distinctions that need not be fully fleshed out here. Essentially, within the psychological


444 Willard, A Brief Reply to Mr. George Keith, p. 4-5.
framework Willard was working in, the understanding and will were distinct, and thus God could work upon the understanding and other faculties in such a way that would move the will to act “according to its own nature.” Since the will was not coerced, it remained free, though this hardly matches modern notions of free will. Secondly, Willard distinguished an act according to its physical and moral natures. While God might determine the physical act, it was original sin that gave the act its sinful quality. Neither Willard nor Keith, however, could provide a particularly convincing explanation as to how God could will all things, and yet not be responsible for sin. At one point, Willard was forced to use the concept that has haunted much of this dissertation: mystery. In language that echoed John Toland’s opponents, Willard defended mystery against the “necessary consequences” Keith drew from Willard’s proposal. He declared the use of reason to be necessary and stated that something “which is in itself a contradiction cannot rationally be entertained by us for a truth,” but he distinguished absolute contradictions from “things which though not contradictions, yet surpass our power to see through them.” This common distinction, however, was now being deployed against an Anglican, revealing its rhetorical flexibility. 445

The commonalities concerning faith and reason between this exchange and the Socinian crisis in London were not the extent of Keith’s attempt to brand his opponents with heterodoxy. In his second response to Willard, Keith asserted that God’s decree worked through a foreknowledge of events. Attempting to turn aside Willard’s accusations of Socinianism and Arminianism Keith made the common argument that having similarities to heretics on non-heretical points did not inculpate one in their

heresies: “May I not more justly recriminate, That to say Adam and all men do necessarily sin, is Hobbism? for indeed it is the express Doctrine of Hobbs, which he defends with the like Arguments, and very near the same words, with those of Mr. Willard.” Again, citing Bramhall’s response to Hobbes at length, Keith sought to parallel the Calvinist and Hobbesian positions on free will. The use of Hobbes is important, since it was essentially code for calling someone an atheist. This accusation was part of a new religious language made possible by the very dangers that the Reformation of Manners sought to fight, and that the S.P.G. missionary now perceived greater threats behind doctrinal positions long held and disputed reveals the significance of those dangers.446

For all this, the S.P.G. lacked a clear position on New England’s established Dissent. The Society’s founder, Thomas Bray, while ideologically viewing non-conformists as schismatics, nonetheless conceded in printed statements that New England had successfully provided access to Christian worship to its population, and claimed he had little wish to disturb it. In a printed account of the state of religion in the colonies, he did not even mention New England, except for Rhode Island, where he complained that “for want of a Clergy, many of the inhabitants are said to be sunk downright into Atheism,” because the children of Quakers lacked “Outward Teaching, which those Enthusiasts at first denied.” Anglicans on the ground, especially elites involved in a colonial politics that was as often denominational as economic or social in nature, were keener to search out the possibilities of curbing Dissent. Many saw New England as a spreading problem. Lewis Morris suggested to the S.P.G. that a good Anglican minister at Braintree could promote conversion among Congregationalists in the surrounding

towns, “if the Church can be settled in New England it pulls up Schisme in America by the roots, that being the fountain that supplye’s with Infectious Streams, the rest of America.” The Boston Anglican minister, Christopher Bridge endorsed this plan in a letter to Keith, but warned “you cannot think how very industrious both the Mathers have been in opposing this Design,” including bullying Anglican congregants. Keith, in contrast, recorded in his published narrative numerous instances of Congregationalists who were amenable to Anglicanism, implying their willingness to convert. His letters to the S.P.G. similarly saw Congregationalists as the building material for colonial Anglicanism; his personal animosity was limited to the Mathers. The S.P.G. leadership at one point suggested using Harvard College graduates willing to conform to the liturgy of the Church of England to fill vacant colonial churches. Keith also suggested sending “some pious and able scholars from Oxford and Cambridge” to live near Harvard and endeavor to eliminate the local students’ “very bad principles,” namely being “much corrupted with Notions against the Church of England both in worship and Discipline.” He further suggested that the Queen replace outright the president and two fellows with Anglicans. Thus New England, as an institution represented by the Mathers, was a threat to the establishment claims of the Church of England, yet precisely its success in incorporating its population into organized Christian worship made it a valuable bulwark against the wilderness for an organization of limited means seeking to prioritize its attentions.447

This comparatively optimistic approach to New England, becomes clearer when set against the view that Quakerism was outside of the Christian community. John Talbot, in a letter, followed up a description of the heterodoxy to be found among colonists generally, with a description of how “since I came to be more acquainted with the Quakers, I have much worse Opinion of them than ever I had.” He then inserted a short attack upon one of William Penn’s books, and on Penn’s failure to convert the local Indians. Instead, “he Labours to make Christians Heathens.” Quakerism, Talbot concluded, abetted the heterodoxy already present among much of the population. Talbot also praised New England for its laws, which supposedly kept Quaker traveling ministers at a distance.448

Essex County was the seat of Quakerism in Massachusetts, and Keith traveled there soon after Harvard’s commencement. He had already sent a letter from Boston to an old acquaintance, the Friend Thomas Maule, declaring his intention to visit him and explain his abandonment of the Society. He assured Maule that “if ye think I am gone from the Truth, I shall be willing to hear patiently your reasons ye shall give to prove me so,” and if convinced would not “be refractory” Maule appears to have ignored the letter initially, instead printing an open declaration to Keith. Keith traveled first to Lynn, where he attended a Friends’ worship meeting. His experience would prove typical throughout the colonies. After attempting to refute the doctrines being expounded and being shouted down, Keith then waited until the meeting was over, at which point the Friends made a speedy exit before Keith could continue. Keith then took a place in the gallery and began expounding on the heresies contained in a book by the late Friend Edward Burroughs. In

448 “Mr Talbot to Mr Gillingham,” April 10, 1703, S.P.G. Letterbooks A, CXIX; “Mr. Talbot to the Secretary,” September 1, 1703, S.P.G. Letterbooks A, CXXV.
Rhode Island, some Friend’s ministers remained, fearing how it would look to leave Keith preaching in their meetinghouse. That American Friends adopted this tactic from London Friends is clear: “we have most Generally through out America taken like methods with him as you our Brethren in London did before us,” namely “to slight him,” which succeeded “to quench his Contentious spirit.” Thus the united front presented by Friends extended beyond texts to the very oral performances (or non-performances) adopted by colonial Friends.449

A traveling Friend, John Richardson, later recorded a more elaborate account of Keith’s appearance at Lynn. Having arrived from Nantucket, local Friends asked him to attend their meeting to refute Keith (who announced his intention to appear some two weeks before). Richardson seems not to have known Keith personally, but agreed to join them, though warning his allies to restrain their speech against him. Richardson met Keith’s arrival in the yard before the meeting house. Keith promptly spoke to the crowd, apparently containing both Friends and others, ridiculing Richardson’s lack of education, including in the Biblical languages. Richardson, perhaps mockingly, replied that English should be kept to for the edification of the crowd. Keith switched subjects, declaring “he was come in the Queen’s Name to gather the Quakers from Quakerism, to the Mother Church, the good old Church of England.” Keith then declared his intention to make his case for Quaker “Errors, Heresies, damnable Doctrines and Blasphemies” on the following day and warned Friends that the audience would assume his arguments to be true if they failed to attend. Richardson dismissed Keith, as “he was to us but an heathen

449 [Thomas Maule], For the Service of Truth, by PHILALETHES or Lover of Truth ([Philadelphia]: n.p. 1703), p. 1, 23; Philadelphia Yearly Meeting to London Yearly Meeting, 22, 7month 1703, Epistles Received, 1, p. 402.
Man and a Publican.” Keith’s specific response is unrecorded, but Richardson describes experiencing an increase of spiritual fortitude “and in this State George Keith appeared to me but as a little Child, or as nothing.” Richardson’s essential argument in this context was not doctrinal, but purely emotional. For him it was a moment of epistemological certainty, at once individually experienced yet tying him together into a larger metaphysical universe and community. When Keith accused Friends of persecuting him in Pennsylvania, Richardson called him a liar and revealed the absurdity of the actual story of their imprisonment. Confronted with someone he did not recognize (he asked Richardson’s identity) and therefore unsure who might contest Keith’s own description of those events, Keith retreated. The Society’s use of its lines of communication, both conceptual/spiritual and physical, to provide support for Friends wherever Keith might appear was central to this success against Keith.450

The next day, Keith arrived with several (presumably Congregationalist) ministers in tow, and was privately challenged by a Quaker woman as to something he had said the day before. Richardson had previously warned Friends not to speak too much but to let the spirit within them condemn Keith. The result seems to have been that they stayed silent while Keith first asserted his royal commission and then began expounding against the Society of Friends. “I expected some of the elder Friends would say something to him,” Richardson explained, “but none did.” Fearing his side would lose “thro’ our Mismanagement, and such as waited for Occasion, might have an Occasion administered by us against ourselves,” he chose to speak. Richardson then expounded a narrative of Keith’s history with the Society, denounced his unwillingness to accept their attempts to

reclaim him, and claimed he had since sought to misrepresent the opinions of the Society. A minister in attendance then challenged Richardson to a debate, which was accepted, but only if Keith did not participate. The strategy of the Society remained consistent throughout: to brand Keith a liar and thereby exclude him from debate. With Keith having been disowned in London, American Friends saw little advantage to be gained from these public encounters beyond publicly marginalizing him.451

Keith, meanwhile, began at Lynn a rhetorical tactic he would repeat on numerous occasions. As a Friends’ minister was leaving, Keith asked him if the Light within was sufficient to achieve salvation: did it “teach him without Scripture, that our Blessed Saviour was born of a Virgin, and died for our Sins, &c.” The minister replied “If he said it did, I would not believe him, and therefore he would not answer me.” In Dover, Keith, having been convinced that the Quaker minister had no concept of Christ beyond the Inner Light, “asked him again, did the light within him, without the Scripture, teach him that Jesus Christ was Born of the Virgin Mary?” The Quaker responded by asking Keith “who taught Joseph that Christ was to be Born of her?” Disputing the extraordinary nature of that revelation, Keith asked “had the Holy Ghost Taught him that without Scripture?” Keith now turned on its head his earlier attempts to universalize something resembling Christian orthodoxy through the Inner Light, by focusing upon the specific textual content of the Bible.452

Despite being mostly ignored, or (as in the case of Richardson) challenged, Keith went out of his way in his published narrative to mention Quakers who had shown

personal kindness toward him, and refused to name Quakers who had behaved poorly. At Hampton, Keith began preaching in the Quaker meetinghouse after the Friends had left, but then adjourned to a nearby orchard in order to escape the summer heat. Several Friends appeared and attempted to shout Keith down. But this time a Friends’ minister, Thomas Case, admonished the crowd that Keith “did not interrupt their Preachers, and therefore they should not interrupt” him. Case had heard Keith preach when he had still been a Friend. After the meeting, he invited Keith to his house and, according to Keith’s account, roundly approved of his Christological doctrine. Keith further described the minister as a man who did not speak very much in meetings, “but what he spoke was generally no other than the express words of Scripture, without his putting any Commentary or gloss on them.” As numerous historians have argued, this rhetorical style, of dissolving one’s own position into the language of scripture, was a source of unity and division for the Society. This contradiction, between Quaker heresies and actual Friends who had been sympathetic to Keith (though not willing to follow him out of the Society) runs through Keith’s published narrative. Thus Keith recorded in his official journal a Mrs. Knight, who had aligned with Keith during the Schism, and continued to have a favorable opinion of him. Keith pointed her out “to make it known, that some among the Quakers are not such Infidels, as they more generally are, though all of them, even the best, are involved in great Errors.” On another dramatic occasion, when Keith’s boat almost foundered in Narragansett Bay and he was saved by a Quaker ferryman, Keith attempted to convert him, to which the man replied “George, save thy own Soul, I
have no need of thy help.” This encounter, however, did not prevent Keith from spending the night at the Friend’s house.453

By the time Keith arrived in Newport, Rhode Island, Friends had begun denouncing him for violating the Act of Toleration. Keith denied this, explaining “neither the Act, nor any Law of England, did forbid a Minister of the Church of England to speak in their Meetings, if he did not interrupt them, as I did not, nor did I intend so to do.” Keith, moreover, argued that the Act of Toleration did not cover Quakers, though he did not press this point. As in London, the nature of the public sphere and of religious toleration were half-formed, a reality that had little basis ideologically. At a meeting in Flushing, Long Island, Friends again accused Keith with violating the Act, saying he “had put my self Twenty Pounds in the Queen’s Debt.” Keith disputed this, arguing that he had not interrupted the Quaker minister, and instead that they had violated the Act by interrupting him. To this, the Friends replied that he had no right to speak in their meeting, since it was private property, to which he had not contributed. One Friend “commanded me to go out of the House, for it was his House, and for me to stay in his House, against his Will, was contrary to Law, and he could prosecute me.” Keith replied that “all have a common right” to enter a meetinghouse and pointed out that the Act required meetinghouses to be licensed and to keep their doors open. The geographic question of establishment was, therefore, matched by a private/public geography. The Quaker in this case was declaring religious belief to be a private matter by comparing the meetinghouse to a private home. Yet the church had traditionally had a public nature, as the center of the parish community and the site of the sacraments.454

453 Ibid, p. 9, 13, 36.
454 Ibid, p. 18, 45-46. For a similar account, see “Mr. Keith to the Society,” November 29, 1702, S.P.G.
In response, Keith and his confederates attempted to claim authority as agents of the established church, as they had in Lynn. The Boston minister, Samuel Myles, charged the Newport Quakers with “Contempt of Supream Authority” for refusing to hear a missionary of the S.P.G. “the which Society hath a Patent from the Crown of England.” Keith himself was forced to concede he had “no immediate Mission from the Queen, and I knew not that ever the Queen ... had heard of me.” He, nonetheless, believed he was sent “remotely and mediately” by the Queen, because of the Society’s royal patent. Keith then turned to the colony’s non-royal governor (himself a frequenter of Quaker meetings) for help. The governor refused to involve himself, and left the meeting, while the lieutenant governor, Walter Clark, produced an anti-Keith tract printed in London, and read it aloud in order to drown Keith out. In Flushing, Friends threw Keith’s presumed authority back at him, saying “I came not in Love to Preach to them, but was hired by the Bishops to come, and that the Love of Money brought me to America, and not Love to their Souls.” Rhode Island, with its tolerant pluralist religious climate and non-royal government, presented a particular problem for the S.P.G. But it was also an attractive target as a base for colonial Quakerism.455

Keith managed to arrange a public dispute with Friends in Newport. They received permission from the governor, and agreed to terms. As in his Turners Hall debates, Keith read aloud from Friends’ books and offered to allow others to examine the texts, in order to demonstrate Quaker heresies. To Keith’s chagrin, the Friends attending the meeting did not answer his charges directly, but instead read aloud from The Christianity of the People called Quakers, as well as several anti-Keith tracts. As in the

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Letterbooks, A, L.

455 Keith, A Journal, p. 18-19, 20, 46.
American arm of the schism, the Friends turned to the authority of the London leadership to declare their orthodoxy, not to private statements. Their own words were limited to denouncing Keith’s depictions of their beliefs, and exposing his own changes of opinion.456

Keith’s travels served a coordinating role for the scattered Anglican churches throughout the colonies. Thus Samuel Myles, an Anglican minister in Boston, wrote to the S.P.G. shortly after Keith’s departure from Boston, listing towns in Rhode Island that had assembled significant Anglican congregations and were seeking a minister. An undated letter from the Bishop of London referred to a church founded and built locally in Pennsylvania, seeking a minister who spoke Welsh, “because a great many of that Nation inhabit the[re].” Unlike the Anglican establishments in Virginia, New York and South Carolina, the spread of Anglicanism was elsewhere a mixture of top down missionizing and bottom up institutional formation.457

In particular, the S.P.G. relied upon the distribution of religious literature, which it felt to be extraordinarily effective. While the connection between Protestantism and literacy has been a standard interpretation for Whig historiography, it was not until the late seventeenth century that reform movements showed a sustained interest in literacy and reading as the means of religious instruction. New England’s famous “Satan Deluder Law” had established the future nation’s first public education system, and Bible reading did form an important aspect of devotional behavior, but the main emphasis by Puritans (both in the Elizabethan and early Stuart periods) had always been upon supplying a preaching ministry. The Word preached (broken down grammatically and linguistically,
then used to illustrate doctrine and set forth practical applications) was necessary, according to Puritans, even for those with the ability to read scripture. The S.P.G. on the other hand, handed out devotional and polemical (mainly anti-Quaker) tracts and established libraries for the use both of ministers and their congregants. Samuel Myles listed several works as having been especially effective in assembling the Swanzy congregation, including a collection of tracts by Charles Leslie. John Talbot also described Leslie’s *The Snake in the Grass* as having “given Quakerism a deadly wound I hope never to be healed.” Talbot stressed that homiletic works were less useful against the Quakers, “to most of them nothing but Controversy will serve their turn.” He also stressed the usefulness of the *Snake*, along with several of Keith’s works, which they distributed liberally and gratis. Talbot, nonetheless, also asked for copies of the Common Prayer Book. The S.P.G.’s numerous library catalogues for the colonies likewise commonly listed the *Snake*. The Society of Friends, for their part, complained to the London Yearly Meeting about “Wicked Instruments,” who “hath sent soe many Lying books out of England.”

The Swanzy congregation’s interaction with the S.P.G. was typical. The Bishop of London referred to the congregation’s desire for a minister who “may cope with the Anabaptists & Quakers among them.” The congregation, in a letter to the Society,

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458 “The Lord Bishop of London to the Secretary,” n.d., S.P.G. Letterbooks A XXXV; “Mr. Talbot to the Secretary,” September 1, 1703, S.P.G. Letterbooks A, CXXV; Chucatuck Quarterly Meeting, 9, 5 month [July], 1702, Epistles Received, I, p. 384. For a library list containing the *Snake* and Leslie’s *Discourses*, see A Catalogue of the Books sent to Rhode Island towds the Raising a Parochial Library for the Minister There, Oct. 9, 1700, MS 4503, f. 282-284, Lambeth Palace, London. Keith similarly recorded distributing Common Prayer Books and Bibles in Pennsylvania, and inspecting the S.P.G. libraries throughout the colonies, “Mr. Keith to Dr. Bray,” February 24, 1703, S.P.G. Letterbooks A LXXXVII; “Mr. Keith to Dr. Bray” February 26, 1703, S.P.G. Letterbooks, A LXXXVIII; see also “Coll: Morris to Mr. A.D. Beveridge” July?, 12 1703, S.P.G. Letterbooks, A, CX; “Mr. Talbot to Mr. Gillingham,” May 3, 1703, S.P.G. Letterbooks, A, CXX.
referred to Rhode Island as “one of the Chief Nurseries of Quakerism in all America,”
though they now claimed to have “hope that the Reverend Mr. Keith by God’s assisting
his skill in that Disease, hath pretty well curbed (if not quite stopped) so dangerous a
Gangrene.” As in Leslie’s tracts, the congregation dismissed the outward civility of
Quakers, assured that “they would pinch us in the bud,” except that God “hath putt it past
their power.” The Newport vestry similarly pointed to the construction of Quaker
meetinghouses in Providence and Narragansett but assured the S.P.G. that this was done
for show, and that they were not converting new members.459 In September 1703,
churches in Burlington, New Jersey and Dover Hundred, Pennsylvania, both sent letters
to the Society asking for ministers to be sent to them. They sought the Society’s aid in
acquiring ministers, books, and other equipment.460

The bulk of Keith’s time was spent in the middle colonies, along a preaching
circuit incorporating Philadelphia, New York, Long Island, and Burlington, West New
Jersey. The combination of a large Quaker presence, the existing residue of Keithian
Quakers (believed to be likely converts), and the lack of any firm religious establishment
made the region a central concern of the Society. In a letter back to the Society, Keith
reported that many people were willing to support an Anglican minister, and warned that
if such ministers were not sent “Presbyterian Ministers from N. England would swarm
into those new Countries.” Keith also warned of the presence of Baptists, and that “it is
thought, most People of Long Island are Quakers or Quakerly affected.”461

459 “The Ministry and Vestry of the Church at Newport in Road Island to the Society,” December 23, 1703,
S.P.G. Letterbooks A CLVII.
461 “Mr. Keith to Dr. Bray,” February 24, 1703, S.P.G. Letterbooks A LXXXVII; see also “Mr. Keith to the
Secretary,” April 3, 1703, S.P.G. Letterbooks A XCVIII.
Keith’s narrative records the names of numerous former Quakers, whom he baptized. Most of these people had been his supporters during the 1692 schism and had maintained separate meetings, in places such as Freehold, New Jersey. Similarly, spending the winter of 1702-1703 in Philadelphia, Keith and Talbot were lodged at the home of a Mrs. Welch, who had supported Keith and converted to Anglicanism in his absence. While there, he met with the leaders of a local Keithian meeting (though they may have been Baptists), and sought to convince them to convert to Anglicanism. Keith later claimed that a dispute over his former ally Jon Hart’s “antinomian Notion” (reportedly including the suggestion that women “need not fear to comit the sin of whoredom”) actually helped bring many of the Keithians over to Anglicanism. In the end, however, Keith conceded that the congregation remained separate. In 1704, Evan Evans, the Philadelphia Anglican minister reported converting a Keithian and his wife, and another man through Keith’s and Leslie’s writings. More hostile was a former Friend, William Davis, who had separated from the Society and published a book. Keith met him in mid-March, opposed his ideas, and later printed against him.462

Keith also came to develop a close working relationship with New York’s Governor, Edward Hyde, Lord Cornbury, despite the political enmity between the Governor and Keith’s other ally, Colonel Morris. How this occurred is unclear. It appears that the interest of both men in promoting the King’s church led them to welcome the S.P.G.’s prize anti-Quaker minister. Similarly, in New York, with the patronage of

Virginia’s Governor Nicholson, Keith and the other New York Anglican clergy drew up an assessment of the state of the Church of England in the middle colonies. Nicholson likewise helped fund the construction of churches from Pennsylvania to North Carolina. Cornbury gave Keith a “recommendation” to the justices of the peace in the colony, for use against Quakers who charged him with creating a public disturbance. In Philadelphia, both Keith and Governor Cornbury recommended the local schoolteacher and assistant preacher there, John Thomas, to the Bishop of London, from whom Thomas sought Episcopal ordination.463

When Keith first read the letter at the Flushing Quaker meeting in the presence of two justices, Friends simply ignored the letter and continued to argue that Keith was acting illegally. To prove his point, Keith produced a printed copy of the Act to be read by Talbot, at which point, Keith claimed, the Friends changed tactics and argued that the Act of Toleration did not apply in the colonies. Keith pointed out, in his narrative, that the Act of Toleration required an orthodox Trinitarian doctrine, which the Quakers lacked. Keith complained about his treatment to Lord Cornbury, who declared his intention to shut down the Quakers’ meetinghouses, and especially prohibit their traveling ministers from preaching.464

Surprisingly, given the concern over heathenism in their official discourse, it was not until they reached New York that the missionaries first took notice of Indians. Talbot

described with derision French Catholics efforts at converting Indians in upstate New York, and the need for Anglicans to take up the task. Talbot suggested he would have been willing, but lacked the linguistic skills, while Keith said “if he were younger he would learn their Language & then I’m sure he might convert them sooner than the Heathen call’d Quakers.” Talbot’s offer was probably bravado, but Keith’s, given his earlier esoteric interests, may have been sincere. Generally, outside of New England, the early missionary efforts to Native Americans by the S.P.G. were half-hearted. In South Carolina, imperial policy dictated leaving the Yammasee alone to avoid driving them toward the Spanish. In Upstate New York, language barriers, the inaccessibility of the region and the migratory habits of the Iroquois made the Society hesitant to commit its limited resources.465

One of the weirder contests between Keith and Friends occurred in Kirketan, Virginia. One of Keith’s daughters lived there, married to an orthodox Friend named George Walker. Thomas Story appeared there in 1699 and “found myself under a particular Concern for the Restoration” of the woman. Story noted “she was of a quick Temper, and naturally high-minded, yet I observed the Love of Truth was toward her.” Story then “exhorted her therein to be humble and moderate in all Things, fearing the Lord.” She apparently took this as a reflection upon her father, but Story, in his account, was able to convince her of the genuineness of his intentions and “she began, in a short Time, to change Colours, and that was followed with gentle Tears.” Story finally left, hoping “that the LORD might restore her from under those Prejudices begotten in her

465 “mr. John Talbot to mr. Richard Gillingham,” November 24, 1702, S.P.G. Letterbooks, A, LVI. Elias Neau, who was originally intent to missionize to Indians in New York, instead became one of the few ministers to catechize to slaves. ‘Elias Neau to ?,” July 4, 1704, S.P.G. Letterbooks A CLXXVII.
Mind by the Apostacy of her lapsed Parents.” Five years later, Story was again disputing with her at her home, Keith having visited her in the meantime, but found her more willing to defend her belief that the Friends were in error. According to Story, she was forced to concede that their current position was orthodox, “but cavilled at some Expressions in the Books of some of our ancient Friends; which she fetched and shewed us.” Ultimately, the result was a stalemate, though Story felt the need to remark that she treated them “courteously.” Keith later recorded a more tragic situation, explaining that “her husband George Walker being a sort of Quaker, has been very Crasse and Cruel to her” because she had become an Anglican “so that he hath violently detained her from going to the publick worship, I suppose still doth detain her.” Keith used this, in his letter, as an example of Quaker hypocrisy in professing religious toleration.466

After preaching and printing a sermon in Annapolis, Keith again attended a Quaker meeting at Herring Creek with the President of the colony and a pair of magistrates, at which Thomas Story was also present. The meeting became chaotic, as the Friends declared Keith to have been disowned and therefore not their concern. Again, both sides disputed the nature of the Act of Toleration. After failing in their attempt to have the constables expel any Friends who interrupted anyone speaking, Keith and his supporters then adjourned to a local chapel, where he delivered his speech. Keith explained that he did this from memory, because the use of notes would have allowed Friends to accuse him with being “only a Minister of the Letter.”467

466 Thomas Story, A Journal of the Life of Thomas Story (Newcastle upon Tyne: Isaac Thompson, 1747) p. 165, 389; “Mr. Keith to the Secretary,” September 4, 1703, S.P.G. Letterbooks, A, CXXI; George Keith to the Secretary, June 4, 1708, S.P.G. Papers IX, p. 60.
467 Keith, Journal, p. 68; “Mr. Keith to the Secretary,” September 4, 1703, S.P.G. Letterbooks, A, CXXI.
Keith left the colonies in late May, departing Virginia on the warship *Dreadnought*. It is disputed how much he had actually accomplished, beyond collecting intelligence, riling Quakers and culling some of his former allies into the established church. John Talbot settled into a parish in Burlington New Jersey, where, along with Leeds, he continued their attacks against the society. Keith’s significance in this context is as exemplar of the early project of the S.P.G., a project informed by the dangers of heterodox religious thought connected to the radical Enlightenment, transformed in the colonial context into a fear of the de-Christianizing effects of institutional breakdown. But, as has been seen, the Christian framework deployed by the S.P.G. had its own ambiguities, especially in the context of a Toleration that no one could quite grasp intellectually, but which was a central component of the British political settlement after over a half century of instability. The S.P.G. would outlive Keith, both ideologically and physically. The organization’s origins, nonetheless, lay in the confluence of imperial establishment geography, fears of de-Christianization in the de-institutionalized American wilderness (connected explicitly with Quakerism and implicitly with Deism). For Keith, however, the missionary tour served a more personal importance: allowing him to relive the Schism in a way the reconfirmed his own incorporation and conversion into the Anglican Church.
Epilogue

By the time Keith returned to Britain, his anti-Quaker activities were all but done. While A Serious Call to the Quakers went into its fourth edition, Keith himself only produced three other works and printed a sermon. Of these, only one, The Magick of Quakerism, produced a sustained response from the Society. By now, Keith was ensconced in a parish at the town of Edburton in Sussex. Partly this decline was because of age, he turned seventy in 1707, and his health began to deteriorate, until he was eventually forced to be carried into the church in a chair, though “by God’s mercy I am help’d both to read the prayers, psalms, and lessons once a day, and also to preach.” He was saddened, however, that few seemed to attend, and some had apparently never attended the sacraments in their lives. “They are rather Profess’d Heathens than Christians,” he complained. Religious toleration he felt, had simply allowed indifference. Two years later, in 1714, he was welcoming the ascension of George I to the throne and the protection of the Protestant succession, but again fearing that the removal of the threat of popery and the pretender was enervating support for the Society, “whereas in my Opinion, it is not enough to gain a Victory, but we should follow the Blow.” All of these things reduced his capacity to travel, and, as seen, it was the face to face encounters that produced most print disputes.468

The decline of the Schism, however, cannot only be attributed to these factors. Anti-Quaker publishing itself was on the decline, after the large quantity produced in the

1690s. Bugg continued to produce regular works, and attracted the bulk of replies from the Society, but he proved the exception. The Act of Toleration was now entering its second decade of existence, and had thereby achieved a greater sense of permanency. The Society, moreover, had both achieved a political victory in the Affirmation Bill and successfully fought off a series of political challenges to their inclusion within official toleration. In commercial towns like Bristol, David Harris Sacks has found an increasingly acceptance of Friends, on the basis of their reputation for honesty in business dealings. The campaign for doctrinal reform must be set into these contexts. By the early eighteenth century, the Society of Friends had constructed a credible edifice of doctrinal orthodoxy for itself. Ironically, its centerpiece was Barclay’s *Apology*, the work whose formulations derived in good part from George Keith. By credible is not meant actually believed by many Anglican writers. Charles Leslie’s declaration that the Society had converted to Christianity may not have been sincere, but it was plausible at a time when the practical power of anti-Quakerism was limited. The Quakers, in essence, had made themselves tolerable.\(^{469}\)

That this was not merely the inevitable result of political change is revealed by one of Keith final polemical targets. In 1706, a group of refugee Huguenots appeared in London. Known as the Camisards, or the French Prophets, they preached the coming millennium (a belief born of years of brutal fighting against the forces of Louis XIV). The Camisards, while non-denominational, conducted ecstatic worship services, including panglossia, visions, miracles, and even occasionally going naked, very similar to the early Quakers, and attracted English followers. In comparison to the (even

grudging) acceptance that the Society now enjoyed, several Camisard meetings were met with popular violence. In addition several prophets were arrested for sedition and blasphemy. Convicted, they were forced to stand on a scaffold and be pelted with mud, manure and abuse. Even before this, the group had attracted the attentions of the S.P.C.K., which sent several ministers (including Keith) to attend a meeting, who walked away unimpressed by the group’s supposed miracles. That they chose to attend was significant: such claims of enthusiasm were still considered worth investigating. The distance between this group and the Society of Friends – despite some Friends having become Prophets – was made some years later, when a Bristol Friend stripped to her sackcloth undergarments, placed ashes upon her head (as Barclay had done years before) and began expounding in a meeting. The meeting promptly broke up and both she and the rest of the Prophets were expelled from the meetinghouse. Keith’s response was typical: he accused the Camisards of seeking to undermine all outward ministry through their claim to prophecy, like the Quakers.470

The end of the Keithian Schism, therefore, was the product of the end or completion of its root cause. The aging, death or disappearance of its major participants dismantled the network of personal relationships that fueled events. The achievement of the Society’s practical political goals, moreover, gave it little reason to continue participating in the public sphere in the form of religious dispute. Almost no major new works of Quaker theology were produced, though some answers to attacks were written,

470 Hillel Schwartz, *The French Prophets: The History of a Millenarian Group in the Eighteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980) remains the best treatment of this group. I have derived my descriptions of the above events from his work, p. 92-92 and 202-203. *The Magick of Quakerism; or the Chief Mysteries of Quakerism Laid Open. To which are added, a Preface and Postscript relating to the Camisars; in Answer to Mr. Lacy's Preface to the Cry from the Desart* (2nd ed., London: Brabazon Aylmer Senior and Junior, 1707).
and instead, the *Apology* was re-edited and reprinted repeatedly (notably excising Barclay’s reference to the *Hayy ibn Yokdan*) as the standard statement of doctrine for both Friends and potential opponents. The exceptions to this included, oddly enough, works of Biblical scholarship by Thomas Ellwood and Joseph Wyeth. What replaced formal theology and apologetics in eighteenth century Quaker writing was autobiography, as Thomas Story and Ellwood posthumously published a journal and autobiography respectively. Even lesser Friends such as John Banks produced such works, and the middle of the century would see the most famous Quaker journal, that of John Woolman. Meanwhile, Joseph Besse produced a collection of extracts of their sufferings while William Sewel wrote a formal history of the Society. Finally, John Bell produced *Piety Promoted*, a collection of the death-bed remarks of pious people, a text that became popular outside of Quaker circles. A further sign that the Society was becoming more inward looking was this project of remembering. The personal dynamics of dispute were replaced, as far as possible, by the reconstitution of dead Friends for future generations. The new Friend would focus on virtue rather than mystery and creed, since those had been established. The project would extend to Keith himself, who died in 1716. Shortly after, a manuscript report was collected by a Sussex Friend, “As it was faithfully described by a Neighbour of his, not taking Notice of every common report,” that by the end Keith could no longer pray effectively, and from “this I must conclude plainly proved the man was fallen from a good state.” Alternatively, the author repeated a story that Keith had fifteen years before suggested it would have been better he had died while still a Quaker. Thus in death the Society was able, if not to symbolically reclaim Keith, to at least properly construct him for future generations as the model of falling
from the Light within – a Light they themselves had transformed almost beyond recognition.471

Bibliography

Abbreviations

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<tr>
<td>DNB</td>
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<td>Journal of the Friends’ Historical Society</td>
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<tr>
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