

**A THEOLOGICAL EXAMINATION OF INWARDNESS IN THE FAITH AND
PRACTICE OF BRITISH QUAKERS**

By

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Abstract

This thesis examines Inwardness in the faith and practice of British Quakers.

Inwardness is identified within the spiritual and mystical component of individual Friends' experiences and discussed in terms of personal experiential knowing. Both academic and devotional discourses are used to clarify what is meant by 'spiritual consciousness', framed both within corporate, albeit mainly tacit, formulations of Inwardness, and expressed by leading exponents of Quakerism, at two different stages of the history of the Religious Society of Friends.

The thesis makes an original contribution to scholarship in three ways: it identifies a distinct view of Quaker Inwardness in terms of process and state; it provides a new model of spiritual development through the Quaker worship practice; and it offers an explanation of spiritual maturity. The latter is identified with reference to an understanding of Interiority, which has consequences. Two Conditions and seven Elements of the process of gaining the state of Inwardness are identified and are found to be consistent between seventeenth and twenty-first century Quakers.

Throughout the thesis analysis, reference to expansion of consciousness is interpreted in relation to mysticism, and proposes finally a new perspective on Quaker theology.

Dedication

For my sister, who introduced me to my spiritual path,

For my partner, who enabled me to live the path fully,

And

For His Holiness Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, my spiritual guide;

He made everything possible.

Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to two mentors in particular: One for theoretical and academic guidance, the other for influence both practical and spiritual.

In the course of working for this doctorate, Ben Pink Dandelion, has been a constant ‘by my side’. He has questioned and challenged me, and offered constructive comment and criticism, without Ben this thesis would not have been brought to a conclusion. Thank you so much Ben. Just as the thesis would not have been finished without Ben, it would not have been started without Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. The many years during which I studied, worked and travelled with Maharishi were formative. It would be difficult to put into words my reverent gratitude and continuing devotion ... suffice to say

Jai Guru Dev.

En route to completion, many people, Quakers and others, have stimulated my thinking, confirmed or challenged my understanding and helped me on my way: these people include some of those whom I have quoted, and especially, Rex Ambler and Melvin Keiser. Additionally, I acknowledge, with gratitude, those who have commented on sections of the thesis in progress as readers: Beth Allen, Betty Hagglund, Peter Leeming, Hugh McLeod, Rosemary Moore, and Chris Partridge; and I also thank my Local Quaker Meeting (in Kendal) for financial and other support, in particular Jane Chattell for early proofing guidance. I thank Maria Kennedy for later proofing, and Steve Timpson, Sonia Lee Cooke and the Birmingham University IT service department for computer-aid; the fellowship of the Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre (in Birmingham); Woodbrooke Librarian, Ian Jackson, and, in particular, Assistant Librarian, Bettina Gray, for her endless patience and practical help; the Quaker Adult Grants Group for financial support and, finally, many who serve differing communities, on the level of silent spiritual practice, as part of their devotion to a spiritual path.

Thank you all so very much.

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Note on Terms

- 1) The terms ‘Friend(s)’ and ‘Quaker(s)’ are used interchangeably throughout the thesis as they have come to be used synonymously through the 360 year history of the Religious Society of Friends.
- 2) Towards the end of the thesis reference is made to present day Friends who may continue to engage in the spiritual practice that is true to Fox’s seventeenth century teaching, as detailed in this thesis. These Friends are referred to as F-Q members or F-Q participants in worship, in order to distinguish them from those Friends who engage in other practices or are non-theist, termed here as non F-Q Friends.

Note on Text

- 1) Upper and lower case, and gender references are reproduced in quotations as printed in their original form.
- 2) Occasionally there may appear to be inconsistency in usage of upper case, as for example, L/light and U/unity. The difference in usage applies when quotation distinguishes between reference to ‘the Light’ as concerning God or Christ and ‘Unity’ in the specified sense of identified Elements of Quaker Spiritual Practice or the mature state of spiritual development. In these instances upper case is used. Some quotations differ however.
- 3) In the case of the term ‘Inwardness’ capitalisation is employed after chapter 2 to signify the specific understanding defined in chapter 1 and explained and made explicit in the progress of the thesis through chapters 2-5.
- 4) Several terms are specific in their usage, as defined within the thesis, when this is so upper case is used – examples include ‘Conditions’ and ‘Elements’. When the term is used to relate to a more general understanding lower case is used.
- 5) References noted as [g] in the text indicate glossary inclusions.
- 6) Biblical references, unless otherwise stated, are taken from the KJV study Bible, Red Letter Edition (Uhrichsville, Ohio: Barbour Publishing, 2011). Biblical references are used, in the main, to support the fact that Quakerism arose within a Christian context.

CHAPTER 1: Introduction to, and Academic Significance of, the Thesis

1.1 Introduction

This thesis examines Inwardness in the experiential theology of British Quakers by identifying and analysing accounts of the faith and practice of Friends.¹ It argues for an understanding of Quaker Inwardness in four ways: as process, as developmental, as having consequences and as having an ultimate state of Interiority. The latter entails a proposal for a model of spiritual maturity potentially attainable through Quaker spiritual practice.² The research examines Inwardness both as a theological concept and as a practical guide to living.³

¹ The term Inwardness, as used within this thesis, indicates self-referring consciousness (mind turned to its own consciousness): it is understood as a process of inwardly turned waiting. Inwardness is not a reflective engagement, in the sense of being discursively thoughtful; it is rather a silent witnessing which affords many Quakers the knowing of ‘that of God within’. (See also glossary). Hinds considers ‘inwardness’ in terms of ‘material internalisation of the divine in the doctrine of the inward light’ writing about the inwardness of everything. Additionally, Hinds makes reference to Richard Bailey’s language of ‘integrated immanence’. These conceptions relate to Inwardness in the specific sense examined here but entail ideas that are not intended in the thesis. See Hinds, H. *George Fox and the Early Quaker Culture*, (Manchester: University Press, 2011) p. 17 and p. 19.

² See Table 1.

³ The practical consequence of Inwardness is referred to in this thesis as ‘functional’ or ‘operational’. It is discussed in relation to Melvin Keiser’s understanding of Inwardness as the dimension of depth in human lives that has been largely overlooked by modern thought. Keiser maintains that this ‘dimension of depth’ must be engaged in the pursuit of truth yet acknowledges that academics have difficulty in doing this. (Personal communication by e mail 3.2.12). The term ‘inward’ was the favoured term of Fox and early Quakers. The use of the term ‘inner’ is, a later development, which ‘dramatically [redefines] where divinity resides and for some [replaces] the former Quaker idea of original sin with a sense of innate goodness’ Dandelion, B.P. ‘Finding our Vision’, in *The Friends Quarterly*, 2, (2011), pp. 13-25. Both terms imply an interiorised spirituality, the former interpreted as exclusively Christian by early Quakers, the latter as interpreted more liberally by present day Friends. See also Bailey, R. *New Light on George Fox and Early Quakerism*, (San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, 1992) for further examination of the nature of the inward/inner Light and its changed interpretation in late seventeenth century Quakerism. (See also later discussion in chapter 6).

The notion of Inwardness, as ‘turning within’, features regularly in Quaker texts.⁴ However, there is no explicitly held definition or corporate understanding of the term or its importance for Quaker faith and practice.⁵ Several studies touch on relevant issues but unanswered questions remain.⁶ These include, for example, the significance of Christianity in Quaker comprehension of Inwardness and the relationship between experience and theory in Quaker theology. Additionally, links between notions of ‘light’ [g], ‘seed’ [g], and ‘the Christ within’ are considered when associated with Inwardness in Quaker writings.⁷

The teachings of the dominant leader of Quakerism, George Fox, provide the starting point for analysis, following which the thesis examines the work of other Quaker writers to analyse the meanings attributed to Inwardness within British Quakerism.⁸ The thesis advances a new approach to a theological examination of Quaker faith and practice that acknowledges the relationship between Quakerism and mysticism.⁹ Thus, this work fills a

⁴ See, however, Fox, G *Works* Epistle LV1 (Philadelphia: AMS, 1975) p. 72, ‘... wait all in that which calls your minds inward and turns them to God’.

⁵ Examples of usage are to be found referenced liberally throughout the thesis.

⁶ Studies include: King, R. Hadley, *George Fox and the Light Within 1650 -1660*, (Philadelphia: Friends Book Store, 1940). Eeg-Olofsson, L., ‘The Conception of the Inner Light in Robert Barclay's Theology’, Unpublished Ph. D Thesis Lund: Gleerup 1954. Creasey, M. *Early Quaker Christology*. Unpublished Ph. D., Leeds: University of Leeds, 1956. Endy, M. J. *William Penn and Early Quakerism*. (Princeton: University Press, 1973). Gwyn, D. *Apocalypse of the Word*, (Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1987). R Bailey. *New Light*, 1992; Hinds, H., *George Fox*, 2011. All discussed in 1.3.

⁷ See 1.3.

⁸ Braithwaite, W.C. *The Beginnings of Quakerism*, (London: Macmillan, 1912), pp.28-42, Fox as the ‘founder’ of Quakerism. W.C. Braithwaite is, together with J. W. Rowntree and Rufus Jones, one of the authors of the *Rowntree History Series*, which outlines and promotes the growth of Liberal Quakerism and its concern to revitalise worship, education for ministry and the educational values of the Religious Society of Friends. According to Alice Southern, their writings demonstrate a degree of ‘re-styling’ of early Quakerism (see Southern, A. ‘The Rowntree History Series and the growth of Liberal Quakerism’ in *Quaker Studies* Vol. 16. No. 1. (2011) pp. 7-73, also chapter 5 for discussion of the developments in Liberal Quakerism). However, as referenced in the thesis, the claims attributed to Braithwaite are based on his assiduous collection of historical facts about early Quakerism rather than his opinion as to how these facts should be interpreted.

⁹ See Jones, R. *The Faith and Practice of the Quakers* (Richmond, Indiana: Friends United Press, 2002)[1927] p.34, regarding Friends aim to ground religion forever upon ‘an inherent relation between God as living Spirit and the elemental spiritual nature of man’. This thesis moves beyond the work of Rufus Jones in its detailed analysis of Quaker spiritual practice and examination of the potential of spiritual development as the outcome.

gap within the study of Quakerism, since it places Inwardness and its mystical background at the heart of Friends' faith and practice in a manner not previously undertaken.

Systematic analysis of Friends' spiritual practice facilitates a new mode of describing and interpreting both the practice itself and its potential for advancing the spiritual development of practitioners.¹⁰ Finally, the understanding of Quaker 'growth of measure' interpreted in terms of expansion of consciousness offers: 1) a new way of considering spiritual development and spiritual maturity in the theology of British Quakers, and 2) a potentially valuable approach to examining the contemplative practices of some other traditions, in terms of consciousness.¹¹

This research contributes new thinking to Quaker studies in three ways. These are:

- 1) The fact that there is no work which examines the inward dimension of Quakerism as its primary focus, despite its foundational significance for Friends, leaves a notable omission in the body of research into Quakerism. This thesis builds on earlier learning (1.3 and 1.4) to underpin a comprehensive and detailed investigation of early thinking, development and understanding of one of the major concepts of Quakerism. This has not been undertaken previously.

The theoretical position that this thesis advances acknowledges that controversy has surrounded other contentions regarding a mystical framework for Quakerism. William Braithwaite and Rufus Jones, for example, argued that Quakerism is basically mystical. Hugh Barbour and Arthur O. Roberts, although accepting mystical elements in the early development of the Religious Society of Friends, question this view of some aspects of 17th-century Quakerism. Barbour, H. and Roberts, A.O. (eds.) *Early Quaker Writings, 1650-1700*, Introduction, pp.13-44, (Wallingford, PA :Pendle Hill:2004)[1973 copyright]. See also Endy, M. 'The Interpretation of Quakerism. Rufus Jones and his Critics' in *Quaker History*, 70, No 1, (1981) pp. 3-21. As is shown throughout this thesis, Quakers are keen to gain immediate/direct experience of God. Descriptions of direct experience include that given by Carmody, D.L. and Carmody, J.T., *Mysticism: Holiness East and West*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 10 and concluding chapter. This resonates with Quaker accounts. Additionally Fox's 'openings', for example, recorded as among the earliest of Quaker descriptions, may be likened, albeit analogously, to the 'showings' of Julian of Norwich. Both Fox and Julian, in their own way, spent their lives being transformed by experience, which led to a prolonged period of growth, their need to fully comprehend their experience, and to transmit it to others. This resulted in ongoing journeying in the awareness of God.

¹⁰ The existence of the Quaker Study Centre, at Woodbrooke, in Birmingham, and courses designated for 'spiritual nourishment' is noted. However, it is argued that to date there is nothing offered that approximates to a practical application of Fox's Quaker spiritual practice as analysed in detail in this thesis. Thus, in this respect, there is a gap in Quaker studies in both its theoretical and practical dimensions..

¹¹Throughout the thesis the term 'consciousness' is understood as the foundation of awareness; the means by which individuals have the capacity to be both objectively and subjectively conscious (conscious of objects and self-referringly conscious).

- 2) Since there is to date no significant literature that deals directly with inwardness in processes of and practices for spiritual development in Quakerism, analysis of this dimension is important. In the present day, the Quaker position on equality militates against any notion of a hierarchy of spirituality within the Religious Society of Friends.¹² However, there is the need for this view to be examined objectively. Therefore, the Quaker notion of ‘measure’ [g] of spiritual endowment and development is discussed. The thesis analyses interpretations of spiritual growth (1.4.1, 1.4.2 and 1.4.3) in relevant Quaker literature in order to account for understandings of different stages or levels of experiential knowing. This is a new consideration within studies of Quakerism.
- 3) The lack of research in 1) and 2) above leaves a gap in Quaker theology, since there is no body of prior scholarship that provides a comprehensive explanation of how spiritual maturity might be gained or understood in terms of Quakerism.¹³ This thesis locates a framework for considering main concerns of the spiritual practice of Friends from within Quaker texts as the basis on which the issue of maturing experience, in different stages of development, is examined.¹⁴ It is suggested that these are available to Friends by means of their own practice. Consideration of the possibility of sequentially cognised states of inward expansion, and analysis of developmental experience and understanding of inwardness is new within Quaker theology.¹⁵

¹² The end of recorded ministers (1924) is noted in relation to growing ambivalence about spiritual hierarchy.

¹³ For many Quakers this is found in the ‘ideal’ of Christ’s life. Rufus Jones writes of the ‘supreme instance’ demonstrated in the life of Christ. He continues, ‘There are no known limits to the possible translation of the spirit of God – the Eternal Christ – into human personality’. ‘The historical and inward Christ’ in Bernet, C. *Rufus Jones (1863–1948)*, (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2009), p. 35.

¹⁴ Stages of development are examined in relation to experiential multiplicity, duality and unity and shown with reference to a diagrammatic representation of spiritual advancement – See chapters 2 and 6.

¹⁵ This is not a reference to merely cognitive knowing, understood as intellectual, but rather to experiential knowing and developmentally revealed understanding, known personally, which is consistent with Quaker theology.

These three areas of examination combine in offering a significant contribution to understanding: a) Quaker spirituality b) spiritual development within Quakerism, c) Quaker worship and the Quaker way of life, in mature spirituality. Although understanding of each of these three areas is developed within the thesis, the primary concern is a detailed theological examination of Inwardness within the faith and practice of British Friends.

Subsequent sections of this chapter include consideration of the context within which main issues discussed arose (1.2). Sections 1.3 and 1.4 focus on reviewing the relevance of previous literature to the research. Methodological approach and sources are discussed in relation to narrative, descriptive and analytic accounts of Inwardness (1.5). Section 1.6 outlines the thesis as a whole, and 1.7 summarises and concludes the chapter.

1.2 Context within which main issues discussed arose

Quakerism was, in its formation, in need of a developed theology, a clear statement of principles and practices, which was a theology of its own period and place: for the Quakers of the mid seventeenth century it is, then, relevant to note that ‘in the culture of the English Revolution...in this period of intense religious conflict religion and politics were inseparable: religion was politicized and radicalism often took a religious form’.¹⁶ However, Fox’s teaching was a fully committed response to spiritual seeking and, in turn, a revelation that led to his concern for spiritual, inward worship.

Fox’s injunction to ‘turn within’ became the foundation of his developing theology, but it did not imply a turning away from the issues of the age, which Quakers addressed as the outcome or consequence of Inwardness and discernment.¹⁷ Within a background of

¹⁶ Corns, T and Loewenstein, D. (eds.) *The Emergence of Quaker Writing*, (London: Frank Cass and Co., 1995) indicate that examination of Quakerism facilitates examination of ‘... the ways radical religious literature actively contributed to the culture of both the Interregnum and the Restoration, whose social, religious and political orthodoxies it vigorously questioned’ (p. 2). However, Fox’s spiritual and religious concerns were not merely a response to socio-political trends, rather he was primarily a seeker of God and Truth caught up in the upheavals of the time.

¹⁷ Braithwaite’s, *Beginnings*, writes ‘we find ourselves not in a region of dogma or tradition or external authority, but of the vital and vitalizing relations with God, and with each other which filled the Quaker groups with radiant strength’ (p. 526) and the ‘manifold social service for the Kingdom of God which should exercise and develop the faculties of countless groups of disciples’ (p. 529).

extreme political unrest in the mid seventeenth century and a context of proliferating sects [g] and separatists, Quakers, and some Puritans, began to practice their faith differently from the rest of contemporary Christianity. A growing emphasis on the need for personal experience, that would free all seekers from the binding influence of the Churches, developed. Quakers, in particular, engaged in meeting for worship based in silence. This bore resemblance to mystical observance with characteristics that were unique outside the monastic tradition.¹⁸ As Carole Dale Spencer maintains, ‘All Christian mysticism values the element of silence, the end of speech, but no Christian tradition, outside of monasticism, has elevated the use of silence on a regular, communal basis to the extent of the early Quakers’.¹⁹ Indeed aspects of Quaker worship bear comparison with the mystical silence of other traditions.²⁰

This research acknowledges and accepts key features of seventeenth century Quaker thinking as context-specific and compatible with the Christian roots of its birth. These include, for example, aspects of biblical teaching and the significance of the Person and work of Jesus Christ.²¹ It is, then, important to have an understanding of Inwardness within Quaker faith and practice to acknowledge not only specific features of Christian

¹⁸ Exact parallels cannot be drawn between aspects of early contemplative teachings and those of Quakerism, but similarities do exist. For example, St. Basil (329 or 330-379) speaks of the three phases of Monastic spiritual discipline: the purgative, illuminative (contemplative) and the unitive. By way of comparison in present day Quakerism, Rex Ambler, writes about ‘Experiment with Light’ [g], in terms of initial stages of recognising and removing sin and transgression (purgative) and subsequent transformation that leads to a new way of seeing (illuminative) and is ultimately unitive. Experiment with Light is an introspective practice concerned less with Inwardness itself and more with thoughts and issues that the practice discloses, which the individual feels in need of facing and, possibly, freeing himself or herself from. It is for this reason that the practice is regarded as purgative in this thesis. See section 1.4.2. Rex Ambler questions my interpretation of Quaker spiritual practice, as explained fully in chapter 6 of the thesis. It is my contention, however, that our main difference is that Ambler’s emphasis is on Fox’s teaching to ‘turn to the Light’ which he maintains discloses sin and transgression, whereas I place emphasis on the need to ‘turn within’ to find the Light and thus to ‘look over’ sin and transgression. See also Gwyn. *Apocalypse*, p. 66, on the need to cleanse transgressions in the process of spiritual development i.e. ‘the light in the first instance acts as revealer of sin and inwardly known law’. ‘Convincement is not by words as preached but by the *inward* Word known in spiritual silence to which Quaker preaching turned them [hearers]’ p. 67. Parallels are discussed in chapter 6.

¹⁹ Spencer, C. D. *Holiness: the Soul of Quakerism*, (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007), p. 30.

²⁰ See section below on spiritual growth.

²¹ See Creasey, 1.3 on the Bible and the Person and work of Christ.

teaching but also two factors that indicate the development of a unique perspective in Friends' theology.²² These are:

- 1) The experiential nature of Quaker theology,
- 2) Friends' selectivity and rejection of some Christian principles in the formation of the growing Quaker Movement.

Having its setting in a Christian framework, influenced by academic, philosophical, historical, and socio-political trends of the period, Quaker theology inherits a 'structure', an 'architecture' and modes of thinking about key issues, including inwardness.²³ It is, however, as William James suggested, 'a religion of veracity rooted in spiritual inwardness, and a return to something more like the original gospel truth than men had ever known in England.'²⁴ The specific and identifying features of Quakerism as radical are: 1) the extent of emphasis on the inwardness of experience, 2) its relative lack of liturgy and 3) Friends' distinctive social behaviours.²⁵ These arose out of the background of religious upheaval of the mid seventeenth century and the then current challenges to the church arising within the Puritan revolution.²⁶ Quaker theology is, thus, sharply distinguished from much of the Christianity of its day.²⁷

²² Creasey, *Christology*, p. 194, '... Friends were compelled to reconsider their message and, in some directions, to modify their manner of expressing it'.

²³ McGrath, A. *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), p.105.

²⁴ James, W. *The Varieties of Religious Experience*,(London: Fontana, 1960), p. 30.

²⁵ It is the first of these that is given primary consideration in this research i.e. extent of emphasis on inwardness.

²⁶ Braithwaite, *Beginnings*, chapter 1.

²⁷ For example, Quakers rejected the authority of the professors (academic, university trained ministers and theologians), much of the prevailing dogma and doctrine, and certain modes of behaviour, thus challenging what had been normative Christianity. However, Richard Bailey (*New Light*) suggests that many of the features associated with Quakerism were already to be found among other religious groups. For Bailey the truly radical element of early Quakerism was Fox's theology of 'christopresentism'. See his Introduction.

As Quaker faith and practice developed consistency, Friends' writing, behaviour and worship followed principles that became the orthodoxy of Quakerism.²⁸ A major exhortation was 'to turn to the light of Christ within you'.²⁹ This reference to inwardness was not given detailed or comprehensive explanation by early Quakers, but derived from biblical texts which were understood without elaboration.³⁰ The regularity of the usage of the terms 'inward' and 'within', related metaphors, symbols and associated terms, became the core of a developing Quaker theology, based on experiential practice. Quakerism spread rapidly and was quickly organised within a 'burgeoning movement'.³¹ It cannot be said with equal confidence, however, that Quaker theology was developed systematically among the first Friends.³² Nonetheless it did encompass the importance of inward worship from the very beginning and this was expressed consistently in Fox's later writings.³³

As Braithwaite indicates 'Religious movements develop with the help of a favouring environment, but they spring out of great personal experiences'.³⁴ So it was with Quakerism and its dominant leader, George Fox, in the first period, i.e. in the 17th

²⁸ Quakerism, and the sense in which the term Inwardness is used in this research, is thus influenced by a distinct theoretical position and its academic entailments. However, the theological context of Quakerism, as related to Christianity in earlier times (16-19th century), has changed in line with what may now be called the post-Christian period (20-21st century). In this later period a more liberal view of Christianity, and respectively of Quakerism, developed that embraces not only the importance of experience as of particular significance to Friends, but also its interpretation as faith 'relevant to the age', 'open to new light' (i.e. contemporary influence), and 'progressive revelation'. See also Dandelion, P. *The Quakers: A Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford: University Press, 2008). pp. 55-71. Dandelion discusses 'the different groupings of Quakers' both historically and in the present day.

²⁹ Fox, and others, identified within the thesis.

³⁰ According to Moore 'Quakers made much use of the "Johannine corpus", that is, the Fourth Gospel, the three Epistles of Saint John, and the Revelation, all books placing stress on Spirit, Light and Word'. They also turned to the Pauline Epistles and, when wishing 'to assert belief in union with God' without risking a blasphemy charge, they found 2 Peter 1:4 very useful. Moore, R. *The Light in their Consciences*, (Pennsylvania: University State Press, 2000), pp. 53-54.

³¹ Gwyn, D, *Apocalypse*, p.41.

³² Moore, R. *ibid*, chapter 8 'Serious Theology'; See also 'Publishers of Truth' [g].

³³ As indicated in quotations used throughout the thesis.

³⁴ Braithwaite, *Beginnings*, p. 28.

Century, typically taken as 1647-1660 or 1647-1666.³⁵ One problem for later commentators is that early Quakers were notable for failing to articulate a systematic account of the faith and practice of their Movement.³⁶ For this reason it is sometimes difficult to interpret statements with confidence, and reliance on the seventeenth century texts requires careful unravelling.

No comprehensive, systematic account of Quakerism existed until Robert Barclay's *Apology*, and Elizabeth Bathurst's *Truth's Vindication*.^{37,38} However, James Nayler wrote two pamphlets in 1654, and Moore suggests that Nayler's *The Discovery of the Man of Sin*,³⁹ 'was the most systematic and careful statement of Quaker faith that had [yet] been published'.⁴⁰

In this thesis emphasis is given to examining the form of Quakerism that Fox promoted as it developed from its very early provocative preaching to a form of expression that not only afforded limited respect to other 'dissenting groups' but also

³⁵ See Moore, R. *Consciences*, chapters 1, 2 and 3 for a thorough examination of the formative period of early Quakerism and the chapter on 'metamorphosis' that concludes her book.

³⁶ Initial 'formulation' of Quaker teaching was expressed, somewhat randomly and, perhaps, roughly in pamphlets and ministry. Much of it was expressed aggressively and was felt, by church and government, to be abusive and in some cases blasphemous. Four later works in particular provide valuable insight into early Quakerism and the stages of transition that ensued. These are: Gwyn, D. *Apocalypse*, Bailey, *New Light*, Moore, R. *Consciences*, and Hinds, H. *George Fox*. These texts identify how modification of the Quaker message arose in response to the various challenges and criticisms by opponents of Quakerism as the Movement developed. After 1666, there was both alteration of the message and a softened mode of expression. This was endorsed by Fox on his release from Scarborough Castle in September 1666.

³⁷ Barclay, R. (Sippel, P. Ed.) *An Apology for the True Christian Divinity*, (Glenside PA: Quaker Heritage Press, 2002)[1678]. See also Gurney, J.J., *A Peculiar People*, (Richmond, Ind.: Friends United Press, 1979). Note Greene's introduction, .pp. iii- v.

³⁸ Bathurst, E. *Truth Vindicated by the faithful testimony and writings of the innocent servant and hand-maid of the Lord*, London: Religious Society of Friends, 1691.

³⁹ Nayler's pamphlets of 1654 were in response to Thomas Weld, an experienced minister of the period, working in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Nayler, J. *Discovery of the Man of Sin*, (London: Printed for Giles Calvert, at the Spread-Eagle near the West End of Pauls, 1654).

⁴⁰ Moore, *Consciences*, p. 101.

utilised more conventional Christian Protestant language.⁴¹ The Quaker message was softened in its delivery, and modified in terms of the major tenet of the ‘light within’; there was recognition that much of Fox’s message could be expressed without the roughness of the very early days and still satisfy the developing theology that arose from Fox’s personal ‘openings’.⁴²

The term ‘inwardness’ relates here to the spiritual, sometimes termed ‘mystical’, features of individual experience. However, related terms can also be applied to the means by which the individual’s inward experience underpins the whole of life. In this thesis, inwardness, as an established state of life, is described via its synonym ‘Interiority’.⁴³ Thus used, the term implies an intimate connection, between spirituality, attitudes and behaviours.⁴⁴ Although not described by most Quakers in these terms, it is claimed here that this is the aim of the Quaker way of life in which the consequences of

⁴¹ Moore, *Consciencess*, p. 221. Fox’s teaching was tempered as a response to the excessive reaction of church and government that gave rise to the torture and suffering of many early Quakers.

⁴² Fox, G (Nickalls, J, Ed.) *The Journal of George Fox* (Philadelphia: Religious Society of Friends, 1997). pp. 7-18.

⁴³ As indicated above, Inwardness is understood in this thesis as a process of self-referring non-reflective consciousness, when the process develops into a stabilised state of living and there is porosity between Inwardness and outwardness, then the term Interiority is used in this thesis. Upper case is used where particular Quaker interpretations are intended as for Inwardness, Interiority and all Conditions and Elements identified in chapter 2.

⁴⁴ Rowan Williams questions understandings of interiority that are conceived in terms of spatial interpretation. He introduces the possibility that interiority is better understood in relation to time – the time it takes to understand ourselves. Williams quotes Walter Davis: ‘Inwardness is a process of becoming, a work, the labour of the negative. The self is not a substance one unearths by peeling away layers until one gets to the core, but an integrity one struggles to bring into existence’ (Williams, R. *On Christian Theology*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2000).p. 240, (quotation from Davis, W. *Inwardness and Existence. Subjectivity in Hegel, Heidegger, Marx and Freud*, University of Wisconsin Press, 1989, p. 105). The idea of bringing Interiority into existence in its fullness as a matter of integrity is appealing. It concurs, to some extent, with usage in this thesis; it is a work undertaken through worship and way of life. As used in this thesis, however, the definition given above implies a specifically Quaker identification of, what Friends refer to in attaining to ‘that of God’ within the self, often referred to as ‘the light within’. Williams questions such a notion if related to the idea of an ‘authentic self’. Williams, *ibid.*, p. 239.

Inwardness is as important as, or for some Friends more important than, the experience of Inwardness.⁴⁵

In choosing to focus on Quaker Inwardness, it is not intended to deny the place of inwardness, more generally understood, in the religious faith and practice of other traditions. Understandings of inwardness that extend beyond personal, largely unshared spiritual experience to dimensions of everyday living, and which include worship practices, are also relevant to the broader understanding of the inner-worldly knowing of spiritual practice.⁴⁶ The inward dimension, or spiritual essence, of individual and corporate life as an acknowledged and, in some cases, significant aspect of liturgical practices and observances, is accepted.⁴⁷

Rex Ambler refers to Quaker worship in terms of contemplative silence which allows for individuals to ‘turn within’ themselves in spiritual seeking.⁴⁸ As a starting point for further discussion of Quaker Inwardness, another interpretation of contemplative silence is also applicable. Thomas Merton referring to “monastic” prayer, which he maintained can fit the life of a lay person also, claimed:

... [this] is a prayer of silence, simplicity, contemplative and meditative unity, a deep personal integration in an attentive, watchful listening of “the heart”. The response such prayer calls forth is not usually one of jubilation or audible witness: it is a wordless and total surrender of the heart in silence.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ For some Friends of the twenty-first century the consequences of Inwardness are of major importance. See chapter 5 concerning the significance of the consequences of Inwardness i.e. community and social service, in the Religious Society of Friends.

⁴⁶ Borg, M. *The Heart of Christianity*, (New York: Harper Collins, 2003), See Borg chapter 8 on ‘Thin Places opening the Heart’. See also Barton, J. in Jones, C., Wainwright, G., and Yarnold, E. *The Study of Spirituality* (London: SPCK, 1986), p. 53.

⁴⁷ As, for example, in Christian performance of designated sacraments. See also Creasey, M. ‘Quakers and the Sacraments’ in Johns, D. (ed). *Collected Essays of Maurice Creasey, 1912–2004*, (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen, 2011), in particular, pp. 213-214.

⁴⁸ Ambler, R. Talk delivered to Kendal Quakers as part of National Quaker Week, 2010.

⁴⁹ Merton, T. *Contemplative Prayer*, (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2005a) p. 33. Also Stephen, C. *Quaker Strongholds*, (London: Hicks, 1891), and *Light Arising*, (London: Headley, 1908).

For Caroline Stephen, a notion similar to ‘deep personal integration’ concerns ‘the deep recesses of our being’.⁵⁰ Stephen says ‘those whose minds, to their own consciousness, are lighted from within’ find the depth of mystical spirituality.⁵¹ Here, in the ‘depth of mystical spirituality’, is the total surrender of the heart in silence.

These words of Merton and Stephen have a bearing on the interpretation of Inwardness to be used in this thesis as related to the worship practice of the Religious Society of Friends:⁵² this is that the process of turning within, or Inwardness, is self-referring. By this it is understood as a process of inwardly turned steadiness. It is not an introspective, reflective engagement, in the sense of being discursively thoughtful. Additionally, it is free from sensory experience in terms of attention outwardly turned to the world at large. In its fulfilled mode it is rather a witnessing to silent consciousness itself in which Friends find ‘that of God within’.⁵³ Thus Fox’s injunction to ‘turn within’ is recognised as a call to Inwardness, in which the activity itself is, initially, important for its own sake and on its own terms.⁵⁴ It is the turn to the ‘Light of Christ within’.⁵⁵ Table 1 depicts the generality of Quaker spiritual practice in Meeting for Worship

⁵⁰ With reference to the work of Stephen, C. *Quaker Strongholds* and *Light Arising*.

⁵¹ Stephen, *Quaker Strongholds*, p. 36. In chapter 2 on ‘The Inner Light’ Stephen provides a detailed expression of her understanding of characteristics of mysticism, emphasising the significance of stillness – ‘it is only in stillness that any perfect reflection from above can be formed in the mirror of the human spirit’.(p. 39). This is discussed more fully in relation to Quakerism in chapters 2-5. Note also Ward, K. *Is Religion Irrational?* (Oxford: Lion Hudson, 2011), p. 16, with reference to ‘learning to worship ... a personal reality that underlies the whole universe and our experience of it’ ... ‘God ... as the subjectivity of the Universe itself’.

⁵² See Table 1 below.

⁵³ As in Swinburne, R. *The Existence of God*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 2004, 2nd edition), chapter 13, p. 293, this process is understood as ‘a conscious mental event’. In the main it is further interpreted as a religious experience which may be defined, according to Swinburne, as ‘an experience that seems ... to the subject to be an experience of God ... (either of his just being there, or of his saying something or bringing about something) or of some other supernatural being, p. 295. Swinburne writes ‘I talk of such awareness of God as a perception without implying that the awareness is necessarily mediated via the normal senses.’ (p. 296). See also section 1.5 on methodology.

⁵⁴ In subsequent sections of this thesis the term Inwardness (upper case) is used to identify and discuss an experiential process and practice leading to states of awareness that are self-referring. The practice, process and states are in themselves the focus of conscious awareness as silent observance/witness.

Table 1 – Quaker Spiritual practice in Meeting for Worship

<p style="text-align: center;">Meeting for Worship (Corporate) Initially the Meeting Gathers Members enter quietly, sit and allow for a corporate ‘settling down’/stilling of the group</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The In-stroke, for the individual The in-stroke carries attention to depths of ‘Inwardness’: it is a move towards deep spiritual silence, free from discursive thinking</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Silence is found, in Attentive Presence, to be: -the foundation of thought -tacit, pre-cognitive, beyond rational thinking - at or beyond a level of felt experience -intuitively discerning in Oneness</p> <p style="text-align: center;">This silence is likely to become a corporate experience in a gathered Meeting</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The Out-stroke, for the individual The out-stroke frequently carries attention to the surface of ‘outwardness’: it is a move back to active thinking.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The individual’s attention shift (inward and outward) is known within a ‘skein of connections’ (Keiser⁵⁶); this can occur numerous times during Meeting for Worship</p> <p style="text-align: center;">At the end of Meeting There is return to thinking and dynamic spirituality in the world, which brings with it the values of Silence</p> <p style="text-align: center;">As ‘Inwardness’ grows in the individual It becomes an all-time lived reality: Ultimately Interiority is experienced everywhere and at all times</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Underlying the experience of Meeting for Worship is the Wholeness (the Holiness of the One): This is termed Eternal Being* that pervades all and is more than all</p> <p style="text-align: center;">*For many Quakers this is understood as the God of Christianity</p>

⁵⁵ When the term, inwardness, is used without upper case it is used as a reference to a more general understanding of inwardly focused spiritual practice i.e. reference intends a less specific definition and may incorporate the usage in other traditions, as, for example, *Vedic* where the term ‘meditation’ is sometimes used rather than ‘contemplation’. ‘Contemplation’ is used here to imply the silent witnessing of spiritual consciousness whereas in the eastern tradition the term ‘meditation’ is sometimes used to refer to a similar non-discursive involvement of spiritual consciousness.

⁵⁶ Keiser, M. ‘The Growing up of Principles: Otherness in Robert Barclay’s Emergent Thinking’, *Proceedings Quaker Theology Seminar* 1998-9, pp. 66-78. And also Keiser, M. ‘Touched and Knit in the Life: Barclay’s Relational Theology and Cartesian Dualism’, *Quaker Studies*, 5, Issue 2, March 2001: pp. 141–164. Also ‘Reflecting Theologically from the Gathered Meeting: The Nature and Origin of Quaker Theology’, *Quaker Theology*, 1-3, 1999-2001, Issue. 2, Spring 2000, pp. 1-9, Keiser writes, ‘That of God in everyone calls attention to the interiority and universality of God’s presence.’ (p. 23).

The understanding of worship, as shown in Table 1, is different from some interpretations of spiritual practice which include a degree of discursive thought.⁵⁷ As shown below, Merton's description is useful in identifying distinctions that are compatible with Quaker spiritual practice because his description a) excludes the notion of discursive thinking, and b) indicates relevant issues. The latter include the following:

1) The term *contemplative* in itself relates to examination of whether the Quaker practice of turning inward, i.e. Quaker worship, is in fact best described as a contemplative process (as Ambler suggests).⁵⁸

2) As Merton speaks of '*meditative unity*', it raises the question as to whether the silence in which Friends engage individually and corporately does create the conditions to experience 'unity'.⁵⁹

3) Concern over 'the prayer of silence', as raised in Merton, relates to the need to question how Friends, of the different historical periods discussed spoke, or wrote, of the focus of their worship⁶⁰ i.e. whether silence itself forms a focus or what presuppositions about God are held, and give a framework to describe the experience known within this silence.

Issues 1-3 above and others, arising from previous scholarship (see 1.3 and 1.4 below), form the context within which Quaker Inwardness is considered in this thesis.

1.2.1 Summary of 1.2

This section has considered the fact that Quakerism arose within a context of extreme political unrest. It has stated that Fox's concern, though taking place within the ongoing upheaval, was a genuine search for answers to spiritual questions. His injunction to his

⁵⁷ *Lectio Divina*, for example, does not always remain a fully discursive engagement, but is more often discursive than contemplative.

⁵⁸ Addressed more fully in 6.3.1.

⁵⁹ Addressed in chapters 2-6.

⁶⁰ Issues of God and Christ as interpreted by seventeenth century Friends and questioned by twenty-first century Friends require further consideration – See chapter 5 for the latter.

followers to ‘turn within’ has been shown to occur within a Christian framework, yet to depart from the seventeenth century norm.

Previous scholarship is reviewed next.

1.3 Quaker Inwardness: Relevant previous scholarship (Academic)

Introduction

This section examines previous scholarship in the area of this thesis, 1) to outline prior academic understandings of Quaker spirituality in relation to Inwardness and, 2) to delineate the original dimensions of the thesis.

Review of relevant literature indicates that previous academic consideration of the inward dimension of Quaker faith and practice has been disparate, often implicit rather than explicit and, to a large extent, disconnected. The authors discussed here adopt positions that are relevant to defining an understanding of Quaker Inwardness but do not build on each other’s work. The scholarship includes analysis of nuances in the meaning of Inwardness, using different reference points. The work of King, Eeg-Olofsson, Creasey, Endy, Gwyn, Bailey and Hinds is examined.

Consideration of the relevant scholarship is carried out under three headings.

- 1) The focus of knowledge gained in and through Inwardness;
- 2) The nature of knowledge gained as a) mystical (described as direct or unmediated) and b) psychological (described as mediated in various ways);
- 3) The purpose of knowledge gained as a) related to the model of Jesus Christ and b) as providing both inspirational and moral guidance.

There is, in the work discussed, considerable interweaving of these three themes but points of importance are separated in the review that follows. In the analytical processes of the scholars considered, taken separately and in combination, it can be seen that Inwardness is not understood as a simple term. Nonetheless, the differences of emphases contribute to general understanding and to recognition of factors of particular significance.

The sections below relate to the three key headings identified above.

1.3.1 The focus of knowledge gained in and through Inwardness

This section highlights questions about the experiential focus of Inwardness and the manner in which the 'inward' and the 'outward' are felt to be related.⁶¹ Notions of the consequences of Inwardness are introduced.⁶²

In examination of Inwardness, it might seem self-evident that any knowledge gained would be classified as 'inward knowing'. However, this would be a misleading simplification, since the significance of what is known inwardly is often for the consequences it entails outwardly. Many of the authors write of the importance of distinguishing between the 'inward' and the 'outward' both as reality and as experience: they acknowledge the relationship between the two in different ways. For Creasey, there has been a 'false severance' between the 'inward' and the 'outward'. He claims that this has resulted in Quakerism being in the 'unenviable position of a religious movement lacking an adequate intellectual formulation and means of self-criticism' over a considerable period of time.⁶³ Endy's examination of religious thought in the growth of Quakerism, distinguishing between inward and outward knowing, accepts a degree of confusion even ambiguity in usage of terms, most probably due to the fact that 'dualism played a part'.⁶⁴ For Gwyn, there is a 'mutually informing relation' between the two. However, Gwyn suggests that outwardness is beguiling:

Forsaking inward knowledge for the outward one forsakes the one living path for the many, all dead-ends in a wilderness of confusion; one worships not the one God but many gods, all of them changing and contradictory; one hears not the one Word but many words with no understanding.⁶⁵

⁶¹ Changing perceptions of this relationship are discussed more fully in connection with 'growth of measure' in chapter 6.

⁶² See further discussion under the heading 'Purpose of knowledge gained', below.

⁶³ Creasey, M., "Inward" and "Outward", *Journal of the Friends Historical Society*, Supplement No. 30 1962: p. 23.

⁶⁴ Concerning 'Ambiguity' in terms of lack of clarity regarding 'the Quakers and "Inward" Religion'. See Endy, M., *William Penn*, pp. 75-6.

⁶⁵ Gwyn, *Apocalypse*, p. 99.

It is in the multiplicity of the outwardly turned focus that, for Gwyn, human kind is confused and the knowledge of Inwardness becomes veiled.

Creasey, Endy and Gwyn consider the inward and outward as related but, to some degree, distinct, whereas Hinds claims that Quakers knew a continuity or ‘seamlessness’ between not only inward and outward, but also the social dimension of life. Hinds observes, quoting Richard Bailey, that for Quakers, ‘a new dispensation of the Spirit’ was already in place, in which ‘the indwelling Christ remade the subject not only spiritually but also corporeally’.⁶⁶ This view leads to consideration, similar to that of Gwyn, of eschatological issues in the revelatory experiences of Friends. Hinds claims that:

King Jesus was *already* returned, as the inward light dwelling within each believer. This led, potentially and ultimately, to a quite different relationship to *kairotic* time, because the inward light brought with it the possibility of ‘the regaining of Paradise *in the present*’, and with it the end of *chronos*...⁶⁷

The interpretation of Quakers as living ‘out of time’ is important in the sense that Fox preached of the Eternal Being, as known to himself and potentially accessible to Friends in their worship. It is not that *kairos* and *chronos* are in themselves crucial to understanding Inwardness in Quaker theology, but rather that Fox himself seems to preach from a transcendental perspective that acknowledges the universal, immanent nature of Christ the Word *kairotically*.⁶⁸ This position is analogous to mystical perspectives in that spiritual experience is found to be timelessly interwoven in the ever-present moment.⁶⁹ Of additional importance, from the Quaker perspective, is Keiser’s view that the inward is not

⁶⁶ Hinds, *George Fox*, p. 18. Bailey, R. *New Light*, p. 12, concerning Christ as ‘an operative power of the innermost being’.

⁶⁷ Hinds, *ibid*, p. 90, (original emphasis).

⁶⁸ Smart, N, (in Shepherd, J. ed.) *Ninian Smart and World Religions*, (Vol. 2), (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), p. 98 (Myth and transcendence, p. 483). For Smart, ‘Transcendence ... is only intelligible by reference to five elements: nonspatiality, secret omnipresence, special presence, independence and creativity’. His discussion concerns the manner in which these elements are ‘compatible’ and ‘hang together’. These elements are not considered fully here but may have relevance to any future research into the subject of this thesis.

⁶⁹ See below, next section – on the nature of knowledge gained.

separate from the outward, but rather exists as the ‘depth within, it is the inner dimension of everything’.⁷⁰

Knowledge that is termed ‘inward’ is often related to recognition of ‘that of God’ in everyone. However, Creasey holds the view that ‘in Jesus Christ the word became flesh, the divine and eternal manifested and embodied itself in the human and the temporal, the “inward” made itself known in and through the “outward”’.⁷¹

A further point of note is that Creasey speaks of doctrinal differentiation between the Quaker notions of:

- ‘That of God in everyone’ and
- Jesus Christ as ‘speaking to all conditions’.⁷²

He identifies not only the origination of this differentiation but also the leap-frogging resurgence and ascendancy of each at particular times and places in the history of the Religious Society of Friends.⁷³ It might appear that the appeal to ‘that of God in everyone’ relates to, what he terms, ‘Inner Light issues’, since ‘that of God’ is for Quakers often referred to as the Light within.⁷⁴ Additionally it might appear that Christ ‘speaking to all conditions’ is a matter of Christology, since Quakers hold that Christ is the Inward Teacher. However, it would seem that there is overlap between these two aspects of Quaker theology. For Gwyn the very nature of Inwardness, as preached by Fox, is to do with the incarnation of Christ, as full embodiment of the Light, but also with the incarnation in humankind of the gospel that brings knowledge which exceeds the law.⁷⁵ Within inward knowing is the promise of transformation that has the potential not only to

⁷⁰ Keiser, ‘The Growing up of Principles’, also Table 6, with reference to the manner in which this thesis claims that Inwardness and outwardness become porous to each other.

⁷¹ Creasey, M. “Inward” and “Outward” p. 24. See also Thomas, O. C. ‘Interiority and Christian Spirituality’, *The Journal of Religion*, 80, No. 1 (2000): pp. 41-60.

⁷² Creasey, *Early Quaker Christology*, p. 8 and 9.

⁷³ Creasey, *ibid*, pp. 8-10.

⁷⁴ On Inner/Inward Light, see chapter 5.

⁷⁵ See next section relating to covenantal knowledge.

fulfil personal life but also to in-fill a social community to live in the Spirit. It is then more accurate to accept the two notions, ‘that of God in everyone’ and Jesus Christ as ‘speaking to all conditions’, as concerning two aspects of one truth.

Reference to ‘that of God’ within is framed, by some authors discussed, in terms of the ‘inner light’.⁷⁶ Issues concerning the Inner Light, as of the pre-existing Christ and the Light that humankind receives only in and through Christ Incarnate, are raised in Eeg-Olofsson’s examination of Barclay’s *Apology*.⁷⁷ So also are those of the Light as an ‘object perceived’ or as a ‘means of knowledge’ by means of which theology is lived as personal devotion within a community.⁷⁸ In the latter interpretation, what becomes opened, or revealed, to awareness as experiential knowing, is sometimes categorised as inspirational and revelatory⁷⁹ and at other times as practical.⁸⁰ There is, of course, no reason why it should not be both.

There is little disagreement between these scholars that what is known inwardly is, in Endy’s terms, spiritual and vital *reality* rather than corporeal, as a dead notional *description of reality*. The focus of knowledge gained is worthy of the term ‘wisdom’, and as such it supersedes any trivial notions of human knowing. Inwardness leads to inspirational knowing. Gwyn quotes Fox, saying that having mortified the ‘earthly and natural knowledge’:

Keep to that of God in you, which will lead you up to God, *when you are still from your own thoughts, and imaginations and desires and counsels of your own hearts, and motions, and will*; when you stand single from all these, waiting upon the Lord, your strength is renewed; he that waits upon the Lord, feels his shepherd, and he shall not want; and that which is of God within everyone, is that which brings them together to wait on God, which brings them into unity, which joins their hearts

⁷⁶ Dismissed by Creasey as “un-Foxian”, Creasey, *Essays*, p. xxxix.

⁷⁷ Eeg-Olofsson, ‘Inner Light,’ p. 34. See also chapter 5. On ‘Inner’ and ‘inward’ light.

⁷⁸ Note relevant consideration in Blaiklock E. M. (Tr.), *The Confessions of St. Augustine*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2009). According to Maggie Dawn’s foreword, theology is not, for Augustine, something to be thought out in private, but rather it is a personal devotional involvement in gaining knowledge to be lived with others as a dynamic discovery. This position pertains also to Quakers.

⁷⁹ See below on the nature of knowledge gained.

⁸⁰ See below on the purpose of knowledge gained.

together up to God. ... Now thou must die in silence, to the fleshly wisdom, knowledge, reason and understanding.⁸¹

This is a clear statement of Fox's recognition of the manner in which God, in humankind through the Word that is Christ, enlightens not only individuals independently but also, in due time, everyone in unity. Eeg-Olofsson writes of this in terms of 'right knowledge', and of main significance here is the question, "what does the 'right knowledge of God' consist of?"⁸² Eeg-Olofsson maintains that Barclay's view of 'right knowledge' is that it is 'inner, immediate, certain, and spiritual'. He suggests, additionally, that Barclay's concern is to '... maintain the necessity and the possibility of mystical knowledge of God, in which this kind of knowledge of God is conceived of as something that cannot be attained by man's own efforts, neither intellectually nor morally, but is entirely as a gift of God'.⁸³ Endy regards this knowledge as the provider of 'ultimate authority' for the individual.⁸⁴

In turn, Hinds claims that:

Dwelling at the intersection of the still fallen and always renewing world, their [Quakers'] singular discourse ceaselessly recognised the dangers of divisive duality and testified to the power of unity. From there, the doctrine of the indwelling Christ unleashed a productive energy—religious, social, and rhetorical—that galvanised its adherents, as it returned them to a seamless field of divine signification, where the dualities of here and there, now and then, human and divine dissolved in the unbounded and ubiquitous timelessness of the *kairotic* moment of life dwelt in the inward light.⁸⁵

Hinds' contribution to an understanding of Inwardness hinges on an interpretation of individuals as 'redeemable, transformable, by the godly action of the catalysing Christ within, in which the seamless material-spiritual world of the early Friends is [once again]

⁸¹ Fox, *Works iv*, p. 132 (my emphasis).

⁸² Eeg-Olofsson claims that right knowledge, relates to knowledge gained that is mystical versus psychological.

⁸³ Eeg-Olofsson, *Inner Light*, p. 9.

⁸⁴ For Endy the individual alone is able to determine and accept the authority of personal experience.

⁸⁵ Hinds, *George Fox*, p. 154.

revealed, enacted and affirmed'.⁸⁶ The indwelling light (of Christ) is universally present and universally accessible; what is necessary is that Quakers bear witness to the presence, by turning to this 'single spiritual condition—the universally present inward light'.⁸⁷ Hinds refers to this as a habitation of 'unbounded and unified unity'.⁸⁸ Although the universal immanence of the light within is asserted as present, it is to be enlivened and particularised in the lived experiential knowing of individuals.

There is too a recognition within much of the work reviewed that experience of Inwardness has consequences. The result of such revelatory knowing is guidance for living. In the main the model of Christ provides the way. Creasey suggests that:

It is generally recognised that the central and distinctive doctrine of the Society of Friends is its doctrine of 'the Inner Light'. It may, however, be less generally recognised that the features of the doctrine which can truly be said to be distinctive of Quakerism are those which result from the Quaker attempt to express, in terms of the doctrine of the inner light, an interpretation of the Person and work of Christ. *In other words, the distinctive character of the Quaker doctrine of the inner light is that it is a Christological rather than an anthropological one.*⁸⁹

Whilst acknowledging the Christian framework, Eeg-Olofsson, referring to the work of W. C. Braithwaite, claims that Quakers belong to a type of 'mystical-spiritualistic Christianity'.⁹⁰ He adds that present day Quakers also call themselves 'mystics', and have a better acquaintance than Barclay, whom he is discussing, with the 'long tradition of their type of piety'.⁹¹ The Christian interpretation of knowledge gained is accepted by Eeg-Olofsson, thus it is the Christian perspective that forms doctrinal guidance. For Gwyn, such guidance leads to covenantal living: what is written 'in the heart' covenantally aligns human beings with Christ's teaching.

⁸⁶ Hinds, *George Fox*, p. 120.

⁸⁷ Hinds, *ibid*, p. 148.

⁸⁸ Hinds, *ibid*, p. 148.

⁸⁹ Creasey, 'Early Quaker Christology', p. 1 (my emphasis).

⁹⁰ Braithwaite, *Beginnings*. p. xxxiv.

⁹¹ A view referring to a form of 'rational mysticism' is expressed by Caroline Stephen, who writes 'I have no hesitation in describing myself as a 'rational mystic'. She explains her views in *Light Arising*, pp. 1-23.

The focus of knowledge gained in and through Inwardness is thus significantly experiential, personal and, to a large extent, inspirational, and there is the sense that the knowledge is ‘given’ by God rather than gained by human effort.⁹² Of particular significance is the manner in which the ‘inward’ and the ‘outward’ are felt to be related.⁹³ It is also important to note that it is through the corporate understanding of Friends that such knowledge informs and supports ‘gospel living’. [g]⁹⁴

1.3.2 The nature of knowledge gained in and through Inwardness

This section examines two major issues. One involves mystical connections and interpretations of immediate or direct knowing, the other is about reflection on experience after the event and for Quakers its, largely, Christian interpretation. Several authors, discussed in this section, raise issues relating to the mystical and revelatory nature of knowledge gained in and through Inwardness. This is knowledge gained personally and experientially.

King writes of the individual who is turned to God as engaged in an ‘ultimate experience’.⁹⁵ Accordingly she identifies in Fox’s writing references to salvation as a coming out of the transitory into the permanent and secure, from the changeable into the unchanging, to God as ‘unchanging’.⁹⁶ Additionally, King refers to living in the light ‘in that which is unchanging’.⁹⁷ This ‘self-authenticating intuition’ is, for King, about experiencing that which is ‘eternal’ is ‘internal’ i.e. inwardly known.⁹⁸ Quoting Fox, King emphasises his statement to his followers to: ‘See if you can find something in your

⁹² See Eeg-Olofsson above on the difference between experiential knowledge gained via mystical means as distinct from knowledge gained by psychological means.

⁹³ Changing perceptions of this relationship are discussed in connection with ‘growth of measure’ in chapter 6.

⁹⁴ See below on the purpose of knowledge gained.

⁹⁵ King. *Light Within*, p. 112.

⁹⁶ King. *ibid*, p. 114.

⁹⁷ King. *ibid*, p. 114.

⁹⁸ King. *ibid*, p. 112.

understandings made manifest which is eternal, to guide your mind out of all external things, which wither and fade'.⁹⁹ Thus King understands the nature of knowledge gained in Inwardness as that which is enduring and stable.

Hinds too emphasises an 'eternal embrace' from within the knowledge gained in Inwardness. However, her concern is to clarify the nature of 'the *kairotic*, or a-temporal, within Friends' experience. As indicated above, she writes that Friends of the early period 'revealed, enacted and affirmed' a 'seamless material-spiritual world'.¹⁰⁰ There is also here a sense of 'definition' that was, at the same time, a matter of declaration, demonstrated in the very manner of Quaker living, both as individual and corporate. Hinds' position is analogous to mystical perspectives in which spiritual experience is seen to be timelessly interwoven in the ever present moment.

'Coming into contact with God' is, for Eeg-Olofsson, intimately concerned with an understanding of mystical traditions and is significant in relation to spiritual experience. For Eeg-Olofsson, then, inwardness even in its general interpretation is relevant to a mystical interpretation of Quakerism; his spiritual, mystical view offers a perspective on the manner in which inwardness allows humankind to connect with God. Further Eeg-Olofsson proposes that inwardness, in a general sense, is a divine disposition in humanity through which people can come into contact with God. There is a parallel here with Hinds' view of the 'revealed' and 'enacted' life of Quakers which keeps the contact between Inwardness, outwardness and the social dimension of life. What is known through Inwardness lifts all living to a new dimension of spirituality.

Gwyn understands the manner in which knowledge is embodied or enshrined in human beings as covenantal. He claims that Fox fully understood and taught the implications of the New Covenant, professing a radical theology that placed 'inward knowledge in first place over outward knowledge-experience over scripture-while

⁹⁹ King, *Light Within*, p. 109.

¹⁰⁰ Hinds, *George Fox*, p. 120.

maintaining a mutually informing relation between the two'.¹⁰¹ For Friends, the 'mutually informing relationship' is important because, in the early days of Quakerism, Scripture was regarded as confirming experience. Subsequent understanding was more to do with the fact that the Inwardness of experience was both self-validating and reaped rewards in the consequences of Inwardness: the latter fulfils the relation between the inward and the outward.

Bailey stretches the understanding of how 'physical inwardness' prevails in Fox's view of himself and, potentially, his followers. He suggests that, in Fox, there is the sense of 'the inward revelation of the everlasting gospel, the rising of the Christ within'.¹⁰² For Bailey, this understanding of Fox is essential to recognition of the core of Fox's message: the indwelling Christ, once acknowledged and fully embraced within people, bestows knowledge that is transforming. Bailey claims that, as a prophet, Fox brought a message of this potentiality to and for all people; as a magus, he (Fox) performed miracles that endorsed his own power and convinced the people of his status and, as an avatar, he was the Son of God. He indicates that Fox proclaimed his own divinity in terms of 'christopresentism'; this inferred Christ's indwelling as 'celestial inhabitation', available for all to know in themselves.

Bailey quotes Fox, who preached:

The Scripture saith God will dwell in men, and walk in men ... Doth not the apostle say, the saints were partakers of the divine nature? And that God dwells in the saints, and Christ is in them, except they be reprobates? And do not the saints come to eat the flesh of Christ? And if they eat his flesh is it not within them?¹⁰³

The understanding of celestial inhabitation is, according to Bailey, crucial to Fox's message. It involves not only acknowledging the 'indwelling Christ' but also turning inward to the Christ as ever present.¹⁰⁴ Bailey's argument is that Christ in humankind is

¹⁰¹ Gwyn, *Apocalypse*, p. 107. See above on the focus of knowledge gained.

¹⁰² Bailey, *New Light*, p. 27.

¹⁰³ Fox, *The Great Mystery of the Great Whore*, (Works 3) pp. 181-182.

¹⁰⁴ See Bailey, *ibid*, pp. 77-84 and pp. 90-97 for full consideration of 'celestial inhabitation'. Note also Williams, R. *The Edge of Words: God and the Habits of Language*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), p.

not a spirit within, leaving the Christ-body far away in a distant celestial realm, but rather that the whole of Christ is substantially within people, and ever-present in all creation. Bailey seems to suggest that this understanding raises the level of knowing to the wisdom of the saints.

‘Celestial inhabitation’ is not, for Bailey, restricted to the heart, but extended to a total and substantial revelatory embodiment.¹⁰⁵ If this view of Fox’s faith, and the Christ within, is accepted it is easy to comprehend how early Friends were transported into a whole new perspective and framework for interpreting their own lives in Christ: clearly *as in the Bible* (John 15:4) mankind should ‘Abide in me and I in you [as I abide in you]’ *so for Quakers; Quakers abide in God as God abides in them.*¹⁰⁶

Eeg-Olofsson presents a different set of considerations, in which his argument concerns the psychological nature of some of the knowledge gained inwardly.¹⁰⁷ Eeg-Olofsson, using Barclay’s *Apology* as his reference, discusses a significant difference between knowledge gained that he terms ‘mystical’ and that which is ‘psychological’ in character, exposing distinctions which he considers to be lacking in Barclay’s explanations of Inner Light.¹⁰⁸ Further, he aims to show that Barclay is unclear or misconceived as to the manner in which contact with God is possible claiming that, in Barclay, there are competing lines of thought.¹⁰⁹ This discussion again raises the question as to the nature of knowledge gained inwardly and whether it can legitimately be called ‘unmediated’ as Quakers have claimed historically, and to which Barclay gives scholastic consideration. Additionally, Eeg-Olofsson, referring to the New Testament, claims two

169, quoting Jasper, D. *The Sacred Body: Asceticism in Religion, Literature, Art and Culture*, (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009), on ‘the absolute participation in the body of the Godhead at its deepest depths of humanity...’, p. 169.

¹⁰⁵ By contrast with, for example, the new covenant ‘written in the heart’.

¹⁰⁶ Note also: Eph. 3:17, ‘That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith...’

¹⁰⁷ The psychological interpretation may require consideration of ‘pre-conditions’ of experience. See references to Steven Katz and Robert Forman in reassessment of previous literature in chapter 6.

¹⁰⁸ See also chapter 4 on Barclay.

¹⁰⁹ See Eeg-Olofsson, *Inner Light*, pp. 134-5, concerning the grace of God’s gift as mystical versus man’s own insufficient efforts as psychological. Also more general discussion of the Inner Light. pp. 99-102.

kinds of relationship to God - spiritual through God's gift (mystical), and fleshly through humankind's efforts (psychological).

Eeg-Olofsson suggests that in Barclay the 'mystical' and the 'psychological' align with different aspects, or levels, of the spiritual. He claims, however, that a 'spiritual'/'moral' link can be justified and that, although outer performances and practices are 'psychological, and therefore not in themselves 'inner', 'mystical' or 'necessarily right', they can contribute to 'mystical ' knowledge'. It is also intimated by Eeg-Olofsson that 'inner revelation' can be 'psychological' and at one and the same time 'mystical'. The discussion is complex but does not contribute any definitive understanding for an interpretation of knowledge gained by Quakers in Inwardness.

Gwyn's contribution to understanding Inwardness, and the nature of knowledge gained, revolves, in the main, around Fox's concern with New Covenantal assurances of the 'second birth' that the light and law are 'written in the heart' of humankind.¹¹⁰ His outlining of issues relating to Inwardness not only rehearses the nature of this revelation but also Fox's teaching concerning a) the incarnation of Christ, as full embodiment of the Light, and b) the manner of Quaker witness in worship and the ministry of living. In terms of worship Gwyn emphasises the significance of silence, waiting and watching.¹¹¹ Gwyn's views are thus fully Christian relating to the lived gospel, as taught by 'Christ the Prophet', and Fox's proclamation that 'Christ is come to teach his people himself'.

A Christian interpretation is also expressed by Creasey, and, for the latter, in terms of the person and work of Christ. The primary concern of Fox's teaching is, for Creasey, to do with understanding Quakerism as a spiritual religion in which Christianity is central.¹¹² Creasey maintains that interpretation of the favoured terms of Friends, and consideration of light issues, is only meaningful within a Christological doctrine, and faithful to early

¹¹⁰ In the main, Quaker references to the 'heart' are more likely to imply matters of feeling than actual/literal heart focus i.e. attention given to the heart as an organ. Yet the latter is not precluded and does relate to the focus and depth of Quaker spiritual practice as described in chapters 2-5.

¹¹¹ Gwyn, *Apocalypse*.p. 161.

¹¹² Creasey identifies three features of early Quaker faith and practice. These are 'doctrinal', 'experiential' and 'operational', and he emphasises the intimate relationship of these three features in 'Rethinking Quakerism', *Collected Essays*, pp. 393-416.

teaching as an interpretation of the Person and work of Christ. Inwardness is then, for Creasey, to do with encountering ‘that of God’ within the person, known and interpreted as the Person and work of Christ. This view is then essentially Christocentric rather than theocentric.

Of importance to the argument within this thesis, is Creasey’s reference to ‘genuine interior change’; Inwardness is not a matter of ‘superficial acceptance of ideas’. It is a matter of transformational growth.¹¹³ Indeed the nature of knowledge gained inwardly is not, in general, to do with ideas, although subsequent interpretation that embraces doctrinal positions is undoubtedly relevant. The knowledge, which some of the authors examined have referenced in ways that suggest a context of mysticism, is, according to Keiser, linked with tacit and non-cognitive experience.¹¹⁴

Two major issues thus arise in relation to the nature of knowledge gained in Inwardness: one concerns mystical connections and the means by which experiential knowing is accessed immediately and directly. The second relates to reflection on experience and the Christian interpretation, which has prevailed to a large extent throughout the history of the Religious Society of Friends.

It is, then, relevant to note that the significance of Jesus Christ i.e. Christianity, is acknowledged by each of the authors, but given most precise emphasis by Creasey in terms of the Person and Work of Christ. Insofar as the main focus of each is, respectively, Fox, Barclay, Penington and Penn i.e. Quakers of the 17th-18th centuries, it is unsurprising that the interpretative context is Christian. However, of importance to later discussion within this thesis is:

- a) The extent to which the experiential knowledge of Quakers continues to be interpreted in Christian terms in the modern era

¹¹³ See section below on the purpose of knowledge gained in Inwardness.

¹¹⁴ Note Keiser’s reference to tacit/non-cognitive thinking and skein of connections, f/n on p. 13, no 56, concerning various relevant texts.

- b) The extent to which the Christian framework has itself been re-interpreted in the more recent past (20th-21st Centuries).¹¹⁵

The fact that several of these writers focus on a Christian interpretation in the twentieth century, without questioning its exclusivity, is indicative of the continuing prevalence of the Christian influence in many, if not most, Quaker academic contexts. This continues even following the development of Liberal Quakerism and includes the incorporation and westernisation of eastern themes in present day religious and theological thinking.

1.3.3 The purpose of knowledge gained in and through Inwardness

Consideration of the purpose of knowledge gained in and through Inwardness relates both to what Quakers term the ‘right ordering’ of behaviour; and also, in a very specific manner, to the unity of spiritual experience, which has the potential to transform life and living.

One term, above others, is used most often among scholars in describing the main purpose of knowledge gained in Inwardness: this is ‘transformational growth’.¹¹⁶ For many of the scholars discussed, the notion of growth, that is definitively transforming, either embraces or leads to other aspects of what spiritual development entails. Notions of ‘purification’ or ‘cleansing’ arise directly and tangentially; in turn ‘regeneration’, relates closely to suggestions of ‘redemption’ and ‘perfection’ involving ‘salvation’, ‘illumination’ and ‘enlightenment’. Specifically, relation to the Quaker understanding of

¹¹⁵ In his ‘Rethinking Quakerism’ Maurice Creasey reminds readers of the need to recognise changes in belief and the need to rethink ‘things about which we may have deep and responsible questions’ in the twentieth century’, *Essays*, pp. 396–399.

¹¹⁶ Referenced as ‘moral transformation’ in the move towards ‘perfectionism’ in King, *The Light Within*, p. 70, Creasey, *ibid*, “Inward” and “Outward”, Section 2, pp. 323-356, Bailey, *New Light*, in the sense that the ‘glorified soul was divinized’ (chapter 7 on Transformation), but later as the Society itself was transformed, its observations about Fox, according to Bailey, resulted in a de-divinization of the inner light. (p. 251). See also Hinds, *George Fox*, p. 38. King, *The Light Within*, p. 89, Finding the Light Within, ‘it will bring him [any individual] to do the will of God and bring him into quietness, peace, unity with God and the saints and eternal life ...’ this is purification, and Hinds, *ibid*, pp. 26–27, links ‘going naked’ and casting off filthy clothing with reference to Farnworth’s, *Pure Language and the Spirit of Truth*, (London: Calvert, 1655), her concern with purification is tangential, and implied rather than explicit, but offers a relevant area of consideration.

growth of the individual is to do with transformation toward ‘unity’ not only within the self, but also with others and with God.

King emphasises that ‘cleansing’ from sin is the means to living in the light.¹¹⁷ In turn this facilitates finding unity in the light; a moral transformation is the result.¹¹⁸ Now ‘man can turn to the divine within him and all will be well with him’.¹¹⁹ In her explanation of the cleansing function of the light, King makes connections between cleansing, living in the light, and realising that which is unchanging. This, she maintains, is the salvation wrought through Inwardness which brings Quakers ‘into unity with God and with men’. For King, practices and processes of Inwardness are important for the movement to Unity.¹²⁰

Creasey writes of deep transformation, as an experiential fact, that is a matter of the internalised Christ working within the individual as a living reality.¹²¹ He accepts that doctrinally the early Friends tended to prioritise the mystical Christ, the Christ of Inwardness, over the historical Christ but he questions the wisdom of doing so. Creasey, agreeing with Edward Grubb, does not make this inward reality something distinct from the fact of the historic Christ.¹²² He quotes Grubb who suggests that ‘[t]he greatest of the

¹¹⁷ King. *The Light Within*, p. 70 i.e. cleansing rather than forgiveness or pardon, see also 1.4.2 on purification.

¹¹⁸ King. *ibid*, p. 70.

¹¹⁹ King. *ibid*, p. 71.

¹²⁰ See Table 1 for a diagrammatic representation and explanation of Quaker Worship. This Table is the main reference in this thesis for describing the practice of Quaker worship and the possibility of development towards spiritual maturity. See also Figures 2-3 in chapter 2 and further figures in chapters 5 and 6. Table 6, in particular, identifies the knowledge gained in Unity.

¹²¹ See also King, section 1.3 above.

¹²² See Grubb, E. *The Historic and the Inward Christ*, Swarthmore lecture, (London: Headley Brothers, 1914).

problems that confronts the Society of Friends today ... is the reunion ... of the historic and inward Christ'.¹²³

Quoting Isaac Penington, Creasey clarifies his position regarding Christ as the Quaker 'saviour': He writes 'We do indeed expect to be saved ... by the revelation and operation of the Life of Christ within us; yet not without relation to what he did without us...': for Creasey the experiential component of Quaker Inwardness is complemented by full appreciation of the historic Christ.¹²⁴ The fully transformed life is that which follows the pattern of Jesus.¹²⁵ Bailey, on the other hand, expresses his understanding of transformation more extremely, and controversially. He explains, as indicated above, that Fox understands 'celestial inhabitation' as essential to full inward knowing: the core of Fox's message, the indwelling Christ, once accepted and fully enjoined within people, is transforming.

The authors discussed emphasise differently both the manner in which transforming growth occurs and also how it leads to changed priorities. Even when the Christian model is used, for some writers the concern is with the importance of the 'inner teacher' rather than the significance of the person and work i.e. changed behaviours. For Gwyn the purpose of Fox's prophetic preaching, was 'to bring people to their inward teacher and leave them there'.¹²⁶

Thus, according to Gwyn:

Inward knowledge ... is that which is revealed directly to the heart by the Spirit of Christ; it is knowledge of certainty, never changing. It surpasses and judges the

¹²³ Creasey, M., 'The Christ of History and Experience' in *Collected Essays*, pp. 125-128. Grubb, E. *The Historic and the Inward Christ*, p. 71. However, Creasey questions Grubb's formulation of the discussion in what he (Creasey) sees to be unhelpful seventeenth century terms i.e. dualistic.

¹²⁴ Creasey, M. *ibid*, pp. 331-335.

¹²⁵ See below on moral guidance.

¹²⁶ Gwyn, *Apocalypse*, p. 148.

human mind. It gives true knowledge of history and the *power* of God's will to live in true godliness.¹²⁷

Gwyn claims that Fox fully understood and taught the implications of the New Covenant, professing a radical theology framed in the promises expressed in Isaiah and Jeremiah. The Lord's teaching, written in the very hearts of humankind, provides an inward inspiration that animates human beings afresh. Here is one significant purpose of knowledge gained in inwardness. It is, however, of equal importance for many of the scholars, that inward knowing should have practical or outward consequences.

Endy acknowledges the significance of Quakerism as a spiritual religion with Christian foundations. He accepts the radical nature of Quakerism in terms of Fox's statement that 'God's Spirit' is pouring forth 'from within' and, in turn, he maintains that the Light is that which illuminates Inwardness to affect 'religious consciousness'. Endy's primary contribution to an understanding of Quaker Inwardness is, in agreement with King, on 'intuitive moral discernment'.¹²⁸ Endy, however, relates this to the significance of the Spirit or light' as 'an agent of the whole process of regeneration' by which 'the "Light" brings the ability to discern ... the voice of God in one's thoughts and readings and the hand of God in his experiences'.¹²⁹ The outcome of moral guidance and discernment is then, ultimately, for the betterment of the community.

The very nature of Inwardness as preached by Fox is to do with the incarnation of Christ, as full embodiment of the Light, but also with the incarnation in humankind of the gospel that brings knowledge which exceeds the law. Within inward knowing is the promise of transformation that has the potential not only to fulfil personal life but also to fulfil a social community to live in the Spirit. This is the purpose of knowledge gained in Inwardness.

¹²⁷ Gwyn, *Apocalypse*, p. 98.

¹²⁸ King, *Light Within*, p. 116.

¹²⁹ Endy, *William Penn*, pp. 157-8.

As Gwyn explains, ‘The new covenant is entered as the provisions of the old covenant are left behind in pure, inward worship’.¹³⁰ The revelation of the ‘new thing’ that is being born on earth is, for Fox, as explained by Gwyn, to do with receiving and preaching the word of God. However, ‘preaching’ is not merely the speaking of words, it is rather a life lived to enact the new knowledge, it is a preaching by deeds that witness to God in all things; this is the origin of the notion of Quaker Testimony, in which all life is Testimony to God.¹³¹ Quakers, for Fox, were to be living examples, ‘epistles’, urged ‘to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one; whereby in them ye may be a blessing, and make the witness of God in them to bless you’.¹³² In the last part of this quotation, in which Fox speaks of the ‘witness of God’ in others blessing ‘you’, is the notion of a special unity, it is not merely a fellowship but a level of a spiritual encounter, inward meeting inward, in which spiritual consciousness is mutually known and shared.¹³³

The fact that Inwardness is considered to have practical consequences for Quakers relates to the notion of ‘right ordering’ in which ‘the accumulated experience and insights of the Society support communities of Quakers in ‘gospel living’ [g].¹³⁴ Initial interpretation of this way of life concerns agreements, behaviours and, in general, concord. However, a more significant understanding relates to the reality of Unity. King formulates a view of Fox’s concern with the unchanging reality of God as embracing his interest in unity.¹³⁵ She suggests that, for Fox:

¹³⁰ Gwyn, *Apocalypse*, p. 113.

¹³¹ Muers, R., discussing Bonhoeffer on ‘truth telling’, writes of Testimony as a ‘collective, learned and ‘storied’ process of ‘doing the truth’ *Testimony: Quakerism and Theological Ethics*, (London: SCM Press, 2015), p. 63.

¹³² Fox, *Journal*, p. 263.

¹³³ See 2.5, on U/unity.

¹³⁴ See Grubb, E. *Authority and the Light Within*, (London: James Clarke and Co, 1909). Grubb, E. ‘*The Historic and Inward Christ*’, Swarthmore lecture, (1914) and Grubb, E. *The Religion of Experience* (London: Headley Brothers, 1918).

¹³⁵ A point of note, however, is that King apparently links ‘that which shows man evil’ and ‘that in which is unity’. This raises for discussion the issue of simultaneous, rather than sequential, changes in the process of transformation.

- ‘Unity [is] something that affords man permanent security from the evils of disunity and change’,¹³⁶
- ‘Unity ... involve[es] intuitive moral discernment’.¹³⁷

In combination, the most profound understanding of the manner of this moral imperative goes beyond mere shared behaviours to a lived unity where there is, as discussed in 2.4, on Fox, ‘the hidden unity in the Eternal Being’.¹³⁸ Fox wrote, ‘All they that are in the light are in unity; for the light is but one’.¹³⁹ Further in the same Epistle he wrote of living ‘in love’ and ‘abiding inwardly in the light, [which] will let you see one another, and unity with one another’.¹⁴⁰ Such Unity in the Light is a matter of consciousness that, for Fox, is informed by the ‘Word of Wisdom’, which renews or reforms knowledge in which God’s Word has the power to enlighten every one. Living together in this Wisdom is what King interprets as living in Unity that is ‘beyond human natures’. For Hinds, it is that the indwelling light (of Christ) is universally present and universally accessible, and what is necessary is that Quakers bear witness to the presence, by turning to this ‘single spiritual condition’.¹⁴¹ It is a habitation of ‘unbounded and unified unity’.¹⁴² Although the universal immanence of the light within is asserted, it is to be illuminated in the lived experience of individuals and ‘shared-in-common-in-unity’ (community).

¹³⁶ King *Light Within*, p. 114.

¹³⁷ King *ibid*, p. 115.

¹³⁸ Fox, *Journal*, p. 28.

¹³⁹ Fox, *Works 4, Doctrinals*, p. 43.

¹⁴⁰ Fox, *Works 4, ibid*, p. 43. In terms of a worshipping experience see Quaker Quest pamphlet *Twelve Quakers and Worship* (London: Quaker Quest, 2004), p. 26, ‘As each of us finds a tranquil centre within, so the stillness of each person meets the stillness of the others.’

¹⁴¹ Hinds, *George Fox*, p. 148.

¹⁴² Hinds, *ibid*, p. 148.

1.3.4. Conclusion to 1.3

Three areas of concern have been introduced in 1.3: these pertain to an understanding of the focus, nature and purpose of Inwardness. 1) The focus of Inwardness has been identified to include issues explaining the inward and outward dimension of life and knowledge, and their interpretation. 2) The nature of Inwardness has been considered as concerning mystical and revelatory knowing that is inspirational, usually interpreted within a generally Christian framework. 3) The purpose of Inwardness has been indicated as culminating in transformational growth, which leads to Unity that is both personally experiential and practical within community.

Earlier scholarship has provided avenues of thinking which, in combination, give direction to the detailed analysis of Inwardness undertaken in this thesis. In summary, it is the focus, nature and purpose of knowledge gained in and through the experience of Inwardness that leads to a schema for discussing not only the practice of Inwardness as process, but also its developmental characteristics. Comprehension of an ultimate stage of interior knowing emerges from recognition that spiritual development, gained through regular involvement in Quaker spiritual practice, is consistent within the framework identified as discussed above. Earlier academic research is thus useful for provision of guidelines but insufficiently complete in its arguments to indicate answers to all the questions that this thesis advances regarding Inwardness in the theology of British Quakerism. Examination of both the process of and development through Quaker spiritual practice, as undertaken here, provides a new perspective within Quaker studies of the twenty-first century.

There is asymmetry between discursively expressed academic discussion about faith development and the considerations of spiritual growth in 1.4, in that the latter often focus on devotional concerns rather than being conceptually rigorous in their mode of expression. The need to include analysis of different descriptions of spiritual progress relates to the significance of experience (as against belief and/or faith) in the Religious Society of Friends.

1.4 Quaker Inwardness: Relevant previous scholarship (Devotional)

This section examines previous scholarship relating to 1) pathways for spiritual development and 2) purification as a notion intrinsic to spiritual transformation.

Quakerism has its faith related theories. However, in the main, it is the importance of experience that is primary. It involves practice that, considered as contemplative, is better compared with other similar prayer and worship practices, than via academic, conceptual, or empirically based discussion. For this reason, understandings of growth in Christian contemplative practices provide useful comparison. Mark McIntosh's generalised discussion of 'Divine teaching' is particularly valuable in placing the dynamic of what is learned, or gained, in such practice within God's teaching. When there is openness of the disciple to God's reality, it is God who teaches.¹⁴³

The next section examines the significance of descriptions and discussions of the Christian contemplative tradition in relation to Quaker worship practice to extend understanding of both its nature and purpose.¹⁴⁴ Correlations that have been, in the main, overlooked in Quaker theology are highlighted here. These affinities have always been there but have not been examined as a priority of understanding Quaker spiritual practice, or explained according to the framework 'of the age' in previous generations. Pathways to spiritual growth are considered in 1.4.1, and 1.4.2 examines the issue of purification in relation to spiritual growth. 1.4.3 analyses Quaker 'measure' in terms of spiritual development

1.4.1 Pathways to spiritual growth

Discussion of spiritual growth in the Christian tradition is usually the province of examinations of spiritual, contemplative practice. One example is that of Martin Laird, who offers a thorough analysis of 'The Three Doorways to the Present Moment: The Way

¹⁴³ McIntosh, M. *Divine Teaching: An Introduction to Christian Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008).

¹⁴⁴ See Table 1.

of the Prayer Word'.¹⁴⁵ He explains the problem of interference in practice in terms of 'the Riddles of Distraction', indicating that the use of a prayer word, or phrase, to recollect the obsessive dimension of the mind reaches far back in the Christian tradition.¹⁴⁶ Interestingly it does not surface directly within Quakerism until the early twentieth century and then only in the work of Thomas Kelly, and more with reference to eastern than Christian contemplative/meditative practice.¹⁴⁷

In terms of records of growth or advancement, Laird emphasises the importance of 'not getting caught up in interior dialogues' and explains how the prayer word operates to facilitate inner silence.¹⁴⁸ Laird's exemplars from earlier times are Diadochos of Photki and Theophan the Recluse (The Jesus prayer), St. Augustine ('arrow prayers') and Evagrius (different scriptural phrases); also John Cassian (the formula). Additionally, he writes of two contemporary teachers: Thomas Keating, inspired by the *Cloud of Unknowing*, and John Main, rooted in the desert tradition.¹⁴⁹ The discipline of mental

¹⁴⁵ Laird, M. *Into the Silent Land* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2006. Laird's discussion is considered in some detail due to its usefulness in understanding the need to clear the mind of unnecessary activity in order to gain inner stillness and silence.

¹⁴⁶ See also Protopresbyter Pomazansky, M. *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology* (Tr.Heiromonk Seraphim Rose) (California: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 2005, 3rd Edition) p. 312 f/n 1 for a detailed account of the tradition of the 'word' or 'mantra'; 'the prayer of the mind in the heart'.

¹⁴⁷ 'Prayer word' practice is not found earlier in Quakerism although it should be recognised that many present day Quakers are dual practising i.e. Quaker spiritual practice and other approaches to worship. See Hamby, C. 'Inward Spiritual Experience-the Heart of the Quaker Way?' *Woodbrooke Journal*, No. 22 (Birmingham; Quaker Study Centre, Spring 2008). Gardner, C. *God just is: Approaches to silent worship* (London: Quaker Books, 2012) is a recent addition on avenues to spirituality, as also is Wall, G. *Deepening the life of the Spirit: Resources for spiritual practice* (London: Quaker Books, 2012) both are something of an exception, in dealing with practice and experience, when compared with earlier Quaker texts. See also chapter 5. Kelly does not stipulate a specific word but rather suggests self-chosen short phrases from a Psalm; or something such as, "Thine only, Thine only". Kelly, T., *A Testament of Devotion* (New York: Harper 1941), pp. 16–19. Endorsement of the practice of mantra meditation and or use of a 'prayer word' has been reintroduced into Quaker literature by Hamby in the last decade. Quaker practice in the context of mysticism and/or analogous or parallel themes relating to contemplative practices are considered in chapters 2.6 and 5.4.2. Thomas Kelly's thinking is informative but falls outside the scope of this chapter, it is thus outlined, as an appendix, at the end of the thesis.

¹⁴⁸ Laird, *Silent Land*,. p. 50.

¹⁴⁹ Laird, *ibid*, p. 57.

repetition of a prayer word, or mantra, is for Laird the spiritual practice that opens the door progressively to the ‘silent land’.¹⁵⁰

Laird indicates that the ‘first doorway’ of spiritual growth is opened as the individual learns to give the mind to the repetition of the prayer word in favour of its more usual incessant chatter; this is the practice to anchor oneself.¹⁵¹ It is what Fox is referring to when he maintains the need to be ‘cool from thy own thoughts’, though for Fox the mode of achieving inner silence makes no reference to a comparable practice. Laird considers the ‘second doorway’ as when the worshipper becomes one with the prayer word.¹⁵² The latter is about self-forgetfulness as the prayer word begins to overtake the mind leading it into a deep interior silence of full *being*: to paraphrase Stephen, the mind is alight ‘from within’ as it is consciously self-referring. The transition is from thinking and sensing to being; from active mind to silent consciousness. Here, in this silence, is the discovery that the person is not merely his or her thoughts; he or she is the awareness or the consciousness that has ownership of the thoughts. Letting go of thoughts and being silently aware, purely and simply present in one’s being allows the opening of the ‘third doorway’.

An earlier and longer description of the process of advancement through spiritual practice is that of Evagrius; it consists of three stages. These incorporate stages of practice, belief and experience, as the individual advances more deeply into Christian contemplation, through 1) *praktike* 2) *physike* and 3) *theologike*.¹⁵³ According to McGinn, von Balthazar criticises Evagrius, suggesting that his focus is more Buddhist than Christian.¹⁵⁴ This criticism arises from the view that he (Evagrius) fails to give sufficient

¹⁵⁰ See further discussion of the practice in Appendix 1 with reference to Thomas Kelly. The use of a ‘word’, ‘name’ or ‘phrase’ is well explained in relation to the Jesus prayer by Ware, K. ‘The Origins of the Jesus Prayer: Diodochus, Gaza Sinai’ in Jones, C., Wainwright, G. and Yarnold, E. (eds) *The Study of Spirituality* (London: SPCK, 1986) pp. 175–184.

¹⁵¹ Laird, *Silent Land*, p. 55.

¹⁵² Laird, *ibid*, p. 60.

¹⁵³ McGinn, B, *The Foundations of Christian Mysticism* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1991).

¹⁵⁴ McGinn, *ibid*, pp. 146-147.

emphasis to a specifically Christian, Trinitarian interpretation, when providing his more universal explanation of deep interior knowing.

This issue of Christian interpretation is relevant to understandings of Quaker spiritual practice over the history of the Society.¹⁵⁵ In the seventeenth century the Christian position was maintained unequivocally, whereas by the twenty-first century Universalist [g] and non-theist perspectives have become accepted by many Friends.¹⁵⁶ There are affinities and correspondences between different Quaker descriptions of spiritual experience even though accounts are diverse.¹⁵⁷

In the following explanation, in which he writes of the worshipper as being ‘the silent, vast awareness’ Laird maintains that ‘Awareness is the eye of silence’; the need is to cultivate the ‘contemplative discipline’.¹⁵⁸ The discipline is to be focused on awareness itself in which is found, ‘luminous vastness gazing on and gazed through luminous vastness’.¹⁵⁹ Laird also observes that ‘Contemplation is the prayer of *just being*’.¹⁶⁰ This is a description of personal consciousness, experiencing itself in its silent state beyond normal everyday mental activity.¹⁶¹ This opens up the conscious awareness of the individual who can become still in silence. Ninian Smart refers to this as a state of experiential ‘nakedness’.¹⁶² For the early Quakers, and all Christians, this is opening to God; for some Universalists it may be Being, or transcendental reality, that underlies all

¹⁵⁵ Abbreviation to ‘the Society’, within the thesis, is specific to the Religious Society of Friends.

¹⁵⁶ See chapter 5 and 6 where these theological distinctions are discussed more fully.

¹⁵⁷ See chapter 5.

¹⁵⁸ Laird, *Silent Land*, p. 85.

¹⁵⁹ Laird, *ibid*, p. 70.

¹⁶⁰ Laird, *ibid*, p. 73.

¹⁶¹ See Figure 6, in 6.3.2.

¹⁶² Smart, N. *World Religions*, p. 111. Discussing *The Cloud*, Smart suggests that ‘it seems quite possible that the author of the *Cloud* emphasized the absolutely nondiscursive character of the state of consciousness; he was aiming at being free even from the more “elevated” thoughts such as of the nature, goodness, and power of God’. See also Barclay, *The Apology*, p. 299, concerning the need to overcome ‘straying’ thoughts.

beings in creation; for Atheists (if experienced at all) it is some dimension of humanness not in need of sacred or sacramental attribution.

Other ways to attain ‘just being’ are expressed in a range of spiritual practices such as sacred reading, individual and corporate prayer and other approaches to silent worship. These are discussed by Thomas Merton and John Main as contemplative prayer and Christian meditation, and also by Curt Gardner and Ginny Wall with particular reference to Quakers.¹⁶³

1.4.2 Purification as a means to spiritual growth.

Notions of purification feature significantly in historical understandings of spiritual growth, and as this is equally true in terms of early Quaker teaching, some discussion of source material is included here. As indicated by King, quoted above, for Fox purification consisted of two aspects: the removal of sins and darkness, and the gaining of unity in the Light.¹⁶⁴ The two phases of gaining purity were not written about as separate or sequential in themselves, but rather in clarification of the outcomes of processes of spiritual practice.

As indicated above, the early Christian mystic, Evagrius, provided theological explanation of the developments within contemplative practice.¹⁶⁵ His influence, continued in relation to later spiritual teaching, is given specific focus by his follower, Cassian.¹⁶⁶ The teaching is relevant to a general understanding of processes of purification. Additionally, however, it is useful here because of direct relevance to a twenty/twenty first century Quaker practice termed Experiment with Light.¹⁶⁷ This

¹⁶³ Merton, T. *Contemplative Prayer*, Main, J. *Door to silence* (Norwich;: Canterbury Press, 2006). Gardner, C. *God just is* and Wall, G *Deepening the life of the Spirit*.

¹⁶⁴ See 1.3.

¹⁶⁵ Laird, M. *A Sunlit Absence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

¹⁶⁶ Merton, T. (O’ Connell P. Ed.) *Cassian and the Fathers* (Kalamazoo, Mich: Cistercian Publications, 2005b).

¹⁶⁷ See Lampen, J. (ed) *Seeing, Hearing, Knowing: Reflections on Experiment with Light* (York: Sessions, 2008). Ambler, R. *Truth of the Heart* (London: Quaker Books, 2001 and *Light to Live By: An*

practice, constructed by Rex Ambler from his interpretation of George Fox's writing, is a means to reveal and 'purge' the individual of transgressions (termed sin, evil or darkness by King, above). The practice is designated a 'contemporary Quaker spiritual practice' by Meads.¹⁶⁸

Issues of purification are concerned, in the main, with the removal of any obstacles to knowing and experiencing God, whether this be through Christ or in direct relation and, ultimately, in Oneness. The biblical notion of seeing 'through a glass darkly' (1 Cor. 13.12) is a straightforward metaphor for seeing that is sullied or cluttered by interferences. In Christian terms this may be a matter of inadequacy of intent, laxity of spiritual practice, error or sin. In Quaker terms the need is to remove the 'veil' that interferes with fullness of experience and clear vision. This is a matter of dealing with 'evils' (King) and removal of 'transgressions' (Ambler).¹⁶⁹

In terms of thoughts, as distractions and interference in spiritual practice, Mary Margaret Funk,¹⁷⁰ Executive Director of Monastic Interreligious Dialogue and formerly prioress of the sisters of St Benedict in Indiana, states that, 'It is comforting to know that all the major religious traditions teach about the mind, that a serious seeker must undergo training to redirect the mind in order to follow a spiritual path'.¹⁷¹ She writes of 'reclaiming the spirituality of the desert for our times'¹⁷² and as commented by one of her reviewers 'as open to anyone' not only those living a life of solitude.¹⁷³ Merton considers distractions as 'birds of appetite', those obsessions of mind and body that inhibit transcendental experience. In order to know that experience which is for Merton, in

Exploration in Quaker Spirituality (London: Quaker Books, 2002). Meads, H 'Researching Experiment with Light' in *Seeing, Hearing, Knowing: Reflections on Experiment with Light* (York: Sessions, 2008), pp. 89–94.

¹⁶⁸ Meads, H. 'Experiment with Light' in Britain: the Heterotopian Nature of a Contemporary Quaker Spiritual Practice', (Unpublished Ph. D thesis, University of Birmingham, 2011).

¹⁶⁹ See *Experiment with Light*, section 1.4.2.

¹⁷⁰ Funk, M.M. *Thoughts Matter: The Practice of the Spiritual Life*, (London: Continuum, 2011).

¹⁷¹ Funk, *ibid*, p. 11.

¹⁷² Funk, *ibid*, p. 11.

¹⁷³ See comment by Kathleen Norris back cover of Funk's *Thoughts*.

Christian terms, ‘metaphysically distinct from the Self of God and yet perfectly identified with that Self ...’ such ‘birds of appetite’ must be relinquished. Merton, as Funk, claims the possibility of this state for the generality of persons, not solely for those of monastic life.¹⁷⁴

A controversy within discussions about contemplative practice concerns the degree to which it is necessary to ‘deal with’ any negativity within the individual person by whatever means are possible.¹⁷⁵ One example historically is Evagrius, and, in the present day, Ambler.¹⁷⁶ A second view involves ‘looking over’ negativity to focus on the positive experience by attending to the Light, as for example Fox is interpreted here, as advocating on occasions in the early days of Quakerism,¹⁷⁷ and, as indicated by Hamby, in the present day.¹⁷⁸

In terms of the consideration of Quaker spiritual practice that follows in chapters 2-5, it is shown that the significance of purity emerges as one aspect among a range of Elements that form the process and outcome of Friends’ worship.

1.4.3 Growth of ‘measure’ as spiritual development

Views of spiritual development are used here to reflect on growth of ‘measure’ of spiritual endowment, as understood by Quakers. This is discussed in this thesis in terms of expansion of consciousness gained by means of growth of Inwardness.¹⁷⁹ The

¹⁷⁴ See reference to Merton, 1.2.

¹⁷⁵ The term ‘negativity’ is used here to refer to any inhibitors to or distractions from the possibility of transcendental experience, be they termed evils, sins, transgressions or, more simply, thoughts and desires.

¹⁷⁶ Ambler, R. concerning ‘Experiment with Light’, note: chapter 1 on purification in spiritual Growth.

¹⁷⁷ See discussion between Ambler and Hamby, *The Universalist*, Nos. 91, 92 and 94 between 2011 and 2012. Also note Nayler’s words ‘Art thou in Darkness? Mind it not, for if thou dost it will fill thee more ... wait in patience till Light arises out of Darkness to lead thee...’ (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 21.65).

¹⁷⁸ Hamby, C.A., ‘“The Light Within”—A Response to Ambler’ *Universalist No. 92* (June 2011). p. 12.

¹⁷⁹ Discussed in full in chapter 6.

understandings of faith development, outlined by James Fowler,¹⁸⁰ and utilised by Nicola Slee¹⁸¹ in her analysis of faith development in women, are distinctly different from the Quaker understanding discussed in this thesis.¹⁸² There are, however, some parallels. Considerations of the perspectives of Fowler and Slee raise questions of the importance of creed in belief, and the significance of belief in faith development. But, as Quakerism is non-creedal, other matters arise for discussion in relation to growth of Inwardness.¹⁸³ This is also the case in relation to other practices of Christian contemplation.¹⁸⁴ The notion of spiritual maturity is introduced but discussed in more detail subsequently in relation to Quaker faith and practice.¹⁸⁵

For Fowler, discussion of faith stage development, in relation to examination of Inwardness as developmental involves a) steps, states or stages, b) recognisable transitions in the distinct characteristics of changing experience, and c) resultant effects or new beginnings.¹⁸⁶ However for Slee (quoting Harris) it is an organic, flexible process that may occur differently in men and women.¹⁸⁷

Although both Fowler and Slee cover similar points in their references to adult development, Slee makes some distinction in findings among women.¹⁸⁸ Neither of these

¹⁸⁰ Fowler, J. W. *Faithful Changes* (Nashville: Abingdon Press.1996). Note also Whitehouse, D. *The Protean Way*, (2015, pending publication), Whitehouse attempts a comparative consideration of faith stages and their interpretation in relation to a transpersonal framework.

¹⁸¹ Slee, N. *Women's Faith Development* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

¹⁸² See 6.3.2.

¹⁸³ Note in particular figures included within chapter 2 and 6.

¹⁸⁴ For aspects of similarity see chapter 6.

¹⁸⁵ Note 2.5.

¹⁸⁶ According to Fowler, *Faithful Changes*, chapter 2, these new beginnings may be identified in how individuals live their lives subsequently, and possibly consequently.

¹⁸⁷ Slee, *ibid*, p.39.

¹⁸⁸ No comparable differences have been detected in the course of this research, or my Eva Koch scholarship work of 2008. However there is scope for empirical studies in this area. Further Jantzens's work is notable for its critique of patristic and patriarchal views of mystical experiencing. A distinction between

authors gives specific attention to children in their study, or the manner in which childhood formation might affect adult transformation.¹⁸⁹ According to Miller-McLemore,¹⁹⁰ Fowler does take seriously the importance of children's imaginary life but the measurements of 'change in moral reasoning, ego perspective, religious symbolization, world view, locus of authority' is with reference to adults. In relation to the latter, Endy points to the fact that the 'inner light was conceived of as able to impart all necessary knowledge to man'.¹⁹¹ Hinds indicates that the 'radius of social relationships' is 'seamlessly unified'.¹⁹² Both considerations are with reference to adult subjects.

The 'dimensions' indicated reflect other aspects of religiosity. However, there is not consistency in selected 'dimensions' and some are more relevant to the Quaker position than others. Experience is, for Quakers, primary; consequences, both individual and social, are also important.¹⁹³ Social involvement, for Friends, is frequently the outcome of spiritual practice: the expression of which is referred to as Testimony [g], understood here as the consequence of Inwardness. There may or may not be any direct connection for Quakers between growth of 'measure', spiritual maturity and social concern, but the majority of longer term Friends do engage with Testimony in practical, often socio-political, ways.¹⁹⁴

visionaries and mystics may be relevant to Jantzen's discussion. See Jantzen, G. (Carrette, J. and Joy, M eds.) *A Place of Springs: Death and the Displacement of Beauty, Volume 3* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), p. 3, p. 20 and discussion in chapter 7.

¹⁸⁹ However, see Oser, F and Scarlett, W.G. (eds.), *Religious Development in Childhood and Adolescence*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., 1991) *New Directions for Child Development*, 52, 1991. pp. 27-45.

¹⁹⁰ Miller-McLemore, B 'Whither the children? Childhood in Religious Education' in *The Journal of Religion* 86, No. 4, October (2006), pp. 635-637.

¹⁹¹ Endy, *William Penn*, p. 81.

¹⁹² Hinds, *George Fox*, p. 25.

¹⁹³ Use of the term 'consequences' is not meant to imply causality here; the term is intended as in common usage in the social sciences.

¹⁹⁴ See chapter 6 for discussion. Also Dale, J et. al. *Faith in Action: Quaker Social Testimony* (London: Quaker Home Service, 2000). However note that in early Quakerism Testimony meant that the whole of one's life was an expression of one's faith. It is a more recent interpretation that some Quakers

Whereas notions of faith stage development and the growth or expansion of Inwardness offer different ways of conceptualising the maturation of personal spirituality, there are connections. There are also differences. For example, it may be the case that states of Inwardness facilitate faith positions, though it is debateable whether faith positions automatically imply characteristic states of Inwardness.

Creasey expresses well the Christian Quaker position on spiritual development, using the phrase ‘Jesus pattern’; with Jesus as his model, he refers to the ‘qualities of personalness and relationship seen’.¹⁹⁵ Growth of ‘measure’ is then recognised in terms of the model of Jesus.¹⁹⁶ Creasey’s view builds on Rufus Jones’ understanding that ‘what really happens is that the human spirit through its awakened appreciation appropriates into its own life the divine Life which was always near and always meant for it’.¹⁹⁷ This involves a process of purification and transformation. Jones further asserts that, ‘there are no known limits to the possible translation of the Spirit of God—the Eternal Christ—into human personality’.¹⁹⁸ There is no direct correlation between the work of Fowler or Slee on faith development and the specifically Quaker Christian perspectives of Jones and Creasey. However, some points of reference are applicable as for example, mentioned above, ‘locus of authority’, and ‘radius of social relationships’, both of which are identified by other authors, and discussed in relation to Quakerism.¹⁹⁹

Examination of spiritual growth, as described and explained in relation to Christian contemplation, leads to recognition of correspondences between understandings and is relevant to the silent practice of Quaker worship. These correspondences concern creating

engage selectively in one or another Testimony. See further discussion concerning Testimony in section 6.3.4ii.

¹⁹⁵ Creasey, *Essays*, p. 384.

¹⁹⁶ Use of the term ‘measure’ is engaged subsequently, without inverted commas, to refer to Quaker understanding.

¹⁹⁷ Bernet, *Rufus Jones*, pp. 34-35.

¹⁹⁸ Bernet, *ibid*, p. 35. See also Barclay 4.2.1 on transmission of God’s Spirit to human-beings, as fulfilment of the New Covenant promise.

¹⁹⁹ See Endy on the locus of authority in terms of the Light which brings the power to discern, Endy, M. *William Penn* on ‘inward certitude’ p.158 and ‘authority and experience’ p. 211. Also Hinds on the radius of relationship, in terms of community. Hinds, *George Fox*, p. 25.

the conditions for worship, and elements of practice in terms of the significance of attentive presence, focus, awareness and outcome. In turn this bear comparison with other and earlier mystical practices, and Rufus Jones' work on mystical religion.²⁰⁰ However, this thesis moves academic consideration beyond the position of Jones, by means of its detailed examination of the process of practice, resultant development, or spiritual growth and a potential state of spiritual maturity.

Full understanding of Inwardness, interpreted in its complexity, thus benefits from both academic consideration (1.3) and analysis of modes of spiritual practice (1.4) as discussed above.

1.5.1 Methodological influences

This thesis examines Inwardness in the faith and practice of British Quakers by identifying and analysing accounts of the faith and practice of Friends. The methodological approach to examining Quaker statements about Inwardness, and related academic discussion in this thesis, has been influenced by a number of sources. These are: Richard Swinburne on what counts as a 'good argument' in terms of 'confirmation theory' and criteria of justified explanations;²⁰¹ theological, as for example, Rowan Williams on what 'theology makes possible';²⁰² philosophical, as for example, Ninian Smart, in terms of the importance of conceptual analysis and the rules of inference;²⁰³ and hermeneutic, as for example, Bernard McGinn, with reference to mysticism in particular, and in terms of his reflections on 'evidence'.²⁰⁴ Additionally, the work of Thomas Merton has proved useful in relation to his consideration of the contemplative aspects of spiritual religions

²⁰⁰ See consideration in chapters 2 and 5.

²⁰¹ See Swinburne, R. *The Existence of God* and Swinburne, *Is there a God?* (Oxford: University Press, 2010 [1996]).

²⁰² Williams, R. (in Higton, M. ed.) *Wrestling with Angels Conversations in Modern Theology* (Canterbury: SCM Press 2007) and Williams, R. *Dostoevsky: Language, Faith and Fiction* (York: Continuum, 2008).

²⁰³ Smart N. (Shepherd, J, ed.) *Ninian Smart on World Religions*, (2 volumes) (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009).

²⁰⁴ McGinn, B. *The Essential Writings of Christian Mysticism*, (New York: Modern Library, 2006).

such as Quakerism i.e. in terms of Merton's exposition of contemplative processes as amenable to life outside the monastery.²⁰⁵ Martin Laird's exposition of Christian contemplation has also been valuable. Both Merton and Laird's work has been helpful in general terms in framing theory, but, in particular, it is the means by which they undertake this that has been taken into consideration in the development of ideas relating to the spiritual religion that is Quakerism.

Some cross-over between the philosophical perspective of Swinburne, and theological perspectives is explained in the words of Rahner in that 'There must be 'philosophising' within theology', understanding the activity as a reflective engagement of self-understanding.²⁰⁶ The point Rahner makes is that experience, including that of spiritual revelation, sits inside what an individual already knows. Thus philosophising, even when not in terms of formal systems, is inevitable. As human beings reflect on their spiritual experiences they theologise, as they theologise reflections are philosophical in questioning what is asked; such questioning may be tacit or explicit. It is in this sense that the examination of Quaker statements is both analytical and personally engaged or self-reflective in this thesis.

Swinburne justifies a particular methodology and Williams explains and utilises a formulation of his thesis concerning a typology of theological styles. The relevance of each to the methodological approach of this thesis is considered in turn.

Swinburne, in applying philosophical thinking to matters of theology, discusses comparisons and differences between scientific argument and personal explanation.²⁰⁷ He utilises the latter to develop a case for dwelling on persons and purposes, rather than material and factual accounts, in theological arguments. Swinburne's emphasis is on the importance of rational and coherent argument, comparable to scientific objectivity in making the case *for* God; within this approach, however, he acknowledges the validity of

²⁰⁵ Merton, T. (O'Connell, P.F. ed) *Thomas Merton: Cassian and the Fathers*, also *Pre-Benedictine Monasticism* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 2006).

²⁰⁶ Rahner, I. (McCool, G. ed.) *A Rahner Reader* (London: Darton, Longmans and Todd, 1975). p. 81.

²⁰⁷ Swinburne, *The Existence of God*, pp. 35-45.

personal experience both in terms of a) the Principle of Credulity and b) the Principle of Testimony.²⁰⁸[g]

In *The Existence of God* Swinburne argues that certain religious experiences support the hypothesis that God exists.²⁰⁹ Indeed, the argument from religious experience is of crucial importance in Swinburne's philosophical theology. For, according to Swinburne, without argument from religious experience the combined weight of the other arguments he considers, e.g. the teleological, the cosmological, or the argument from miracles, does not render the theistic hypothesis very probable. However, the argument from religious experience, combined with these other arguments, makes theism more probable than its rivals for Swinburne.²¹⁰ Swinburne's line of argument has been useful in endorsing the significance of personal experience in Quaker theology.

Williams suggests that 'British theologians are ... inclined to begin haphazardly and let methodology look after itself'.²¹¹ However, he writes of methodological starting points, indicating a typology of theological styles which he terms 'celebratory, communicative and critical'. In writing about theological approaches Williams warns about the dangers of excessive strictures arising from attempts at final clarity.²¹² He maintains that such attempts can become 'so densely worked that the language is in danger of being sealed in

²⁰⁸ Swinburne, *The Existence of God*, p. 303, '... in the absence of reason for challenge, we should believe what people tell us about their experiences', p. 322.

²⁰⁹ For relevant discussion see Knitter, P. *Without Buddha I could not be a Christian*, (Oxford: Oneworld, 2009) p. 15, 'God must be an experience before "God" can be a word. Unless God is an experience, whatever word we might use for the Divine will be without content, like a road sign pointing nowhere, like lightbulbs without electricity.'

²¹⁰ Note Ward, K *Why there Almost Certainly is a God*, (Oxford: Lion, 2008), p. 23 addressing a criticism by Dawkins, who suggests that "Like Swinburne, Ward mistakes what it means to explain something". However, [says Ward], Swinburne and I are not making a mistake. We are claiming that there is more than one sort of explanation for why things happen as they do'. This perspective is maintained in this thesis in accounting for and explaining Inward Spiritual Experience.

²¹¹ Williams, R. *On Christian Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), p. xii.

²¹² See also O' Murchu, D. *Quantum Theology Spiritual Implications of the New Physics* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 2013[2004]) refers to an 'open and creative horizon of exploration' that is not constrained by narrow conceptual language, which he endorses throughout his book, p. 11. He describes this as 'an exploration of that wisdom which awakens and sustains the creative impulse of life'. p. 12.

on itself'.²¹³ Thus, in arguing for theological integrity, he suggests 'mobility' between styles that will allow for God to be 'addressed' as well as 'talked about'.²¹⁴ The interaction between celebratory, communicative and critical theology engages a manner of thinking and expression that admits prayer and worship into the equation. However, as Williams suggests 'Theology can be no more and no less (and not otherwise) 'systematic' than the, processes of faith to which it is answerable, and if it is confident of ways divorced from this, it loses its integrity'.²¹⁵ Every attempt has been made in this thesis to retain the integrity of Quaker theology to which the arguments presented are answerable, but at the same time mobility of approaches has been introduced.

The position of Swinburne has influenced the degree of concern with rational coherence aimed at in the writing of this thesis. At the same time Williams' acknowledgment of the need for 'mobility' of approaches has endorsed the importance of valuing Quaker emphasis on experience, as authorial and setting this alongside academic consideration. Williams' reference to an 'informal theology' includes prayer, worship, art and holy action.²¹⁶ The latter requires an understanding of the different kinds of material used in the thesis as: a) that which *addresses God, arising from approaches to worship*, and is celebratory and devotional and b) that which *talks about God and approaches to worship*, and is, or may be, in the main critical.

It is thus acknowledged that there is a difference between two types of material used within the thesis: on the one hand there is use of academic analysis and there is also use of descriptive accounts of worship experience and states of knowing.²¹⁷ It is Williams'

²¹³ Williams *On Christian Theology*, p. xiv. See also Ward, K *God: a guide for the perplexed* (London: One World, 2013).

²¹⁴ Williams, *ibid*, Prologue and p. 7.

²¹⁵ Williams, R. *ibid*, p. 14. Also Ward, K. *God: a guide for the perplexed*, especially .p. 241-253, for relevant discussion of different sorts of interpretation ('personal reality') and appropriate recognition of 'the beliefs to which we [all people] are most fundamentally committed' p. 241. This recognition is comparable to the need for a degree of flexibility in the formulation of theoretical positions such as Williams' plea for 'mobility'.

²¹⁶ Williams, *ibid*, p. xiii.

²¹⁷ As for example, sections 1.3 and 1.4 and chapter 5.

argument for a degree of flexibility in pursuing honest and truthful theology that has provided support for acknowledging “informal” theology (i.e. in prayer, worship and holy action or expression as indicated above) as important in understanding and interpreting religious faith and practice, including that of Friends.

Smart and McGinn have also influenced the way material has been discussed in the thesis. Smart’s ‘joint appeal to religious experience and philosophical analysis’ provides an exemplar for considering faith and practice.²¹⁸ The fact that his approach is primarily comparative does not diminish its importance for examining specific faiths and their practices. The ‘facts’ and ‘evidence’ that are to be located in the specific example of Quakerism are attributed to experience and amenable to analysis in context. In this thesis the task is conducted by evaluating narrative, descriptive and analytic accounts of Inwardness from the 17th century (chapters 2, 3 and 4) and examining them in relation to development and changes in the more recent history of the 20th and 21st century (chapter 5). This process involves, what Smart terms as, engaging in relevant selectivity. He indicates that ‘the philosopher, when he contemplates religious facts, is not merely interested in history, but in central likeness and difference...’²¹⁹ This selectivity is, then, required in the analysis and interpretation of Quaker statements about Inwardness, in order to evaluate the meaningfulness of Quaker accounts of one of their central concepts, and of analysis of this by relevant scholars.

McGinn reminds scholars that explanatory perspectives need to be aligned with description that acknowledges the background of Christian history and any particular, and related, example of mystical/spiritual faith or practice.²²⁰ This point is relevant both to the study of Quakerism and other faith positions. In this connection his heuristic approach emphasises the significance of interconnection between (mystical) experience and its (theological) interpretation in relation to historical record. Any reference to text thus

²¹⁸ Shepherd, J. (ed.), *Ninian Smart on World Religions*, (Vol. 1), p. xvi, on Smart’s concern for ‘the importance of comparative studies in religion’.

²¹⁹ Smart, N. (in Shepherd, J. ed.), ‘Empiricism and Religions’, *World Religions*, 1, p. 37.

²²⁰ McGinn, *Essential Writings*, p. xiv, ‘... mysticism is best understood in the light of its interaction with the other aspects of the whole religious complex in which it comes to expression’.

discloses ‘layers’ of occurrences and, potentially, differentiated meanings requiring acknowledgement of the historical and contextual situation.

McGinn also warns of over-emphasis on autobiographical accounts.²²¹ However, he points out that ‘the only thing directly available [to us] ... is the evidence, largely in the form of written record left to us of ‘former ages’.²²² In the case of Quakerism, much of this is in the form of Journals that are mainly autobiographical. Nonetheless, in the 360-year history of Quakerism, which both departs from and aligns with records of the key elements and stages of Christianity’s development, different nuances arise which make for a rich texture of Quaker statements that are amenable to discussion.²²³

1.5.2 Methodological approach

The fact that Quakerism is largely non-creedal, non-sacramental, and an experiential faith and practice based on mystical characteristics does create difficulties in identifying relevant theological certainties.²²⁴ For this reason the methodological influences outlined above are, as indicated, influences only rather than determining factors. They offer guidelines to the procedure undertaken in the analysis of descriptive, narrative and interpretative texts. However, the experiential theology of Friends is not without its clarifying statements and it is these that are analysed in this thesis as a means to discover the processes and outcomes of Quaker spiritual practice.

Critical analysis of Friends’ faith commitments, to the extent that these are written into the understandings cited, offers a means of interpreting the Quaker way of worship and living. The methodology used involves careful reading of texts, for the purpose of:

²²¹ McGinn, *Foundations*. pp. xiv-xv.

²²² McGinn, *ibid.* p. xiv.

²²³ An example of consonance is the liberalising effect of new knowledge, such as science and biblical criticism, on Christianity in general and also on Quakerism. An example of dissonance is, in the development in early Quakerism, including rejection of dogma and liturgy to the extent that Quakerism became a creedless religion, depending in the main on individual and corporate experience.

²²⁴ Spencer, C. D. ‘Quakers in Theological Context’ in *The Oxford Handbook of Quaker Studies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. p. 141 on profound contemplation

- 1) identifying and clarifying concepts deemed central to the study of inwardness
- 2) systematising the relationships between the concepts in order to reflect an understanding of the practice of inwardness
- 3) drawing out the consequences of the concepts separately and in combination to develop a significant body of evidence for main arguments, and
- 4) building the theoretical perspective that informs ongoing discussion.

Stillness and Silence are identified initially in Fox's work as the primary Conditions of Quaker spiritual practice. Subsequent references to each of these concepts, are found to indicate an important relationship between the two as their practise is infused in experience of profound contemplation. Fox's regard for the importance of Stillness and Silence is endorsed in the writings of the other Quakers discussed. Investigation into the literature of the seventeenth and the twentieth/twenty-first century further confirms that Friends' spiritual practice relies on 'still silence' or 'silent stillness'. The two concepts, Stillness and Silence, thus make plain the initial processes of spiritual practice as introduced by Fox.

Consideration of the primary concepts, as the Conditions that need to be created for involvement in Quaker spiritual practice, identifies the manner in which they are foundational. However, further analysis of relevant literature indicates that a number of other considerations (Elements) rest on this foundation to create, in combination, a sequence of significant concerns. These are examined to demonstrate their relationship and to draw out the consequences of their inclusion in the teachings and preachings of Fox, Penington and Barclay in the seventeenth century and other influential Quakers in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

For Fox, and other early Quakers, including Penington and Barclay, the significance of the two-step process of worship is to 'turn within' and then to 'stand [be] still'. For this to be possible a steady attentiveness was necessary. For early Friends, whose worship practice often lasted for many hours, this seems to have been without

problems.²²⁵ Thus fulfilling Fox's concern that worship formed the basis of the Quaker Way.²²⁶ Attentive Presence has been designated as an important concept for progressive practice and the move towards Unity, which, it has to be remembered implied unity, primarily, with God. For all Friends in the inception of Quakerism the intention was to find God within the self. Corporate spiritual practice, in the manner of Friends, focussed initially on the Christian teaching and 'called upon' God to be with, or among, the worshipping group; for this reason, God Focussing is designated among the Elements of Quaker spiritual practice.

Selection of these other concepts has required further detailed examination of texts in order to confirm their validity in explaining the means of entry into Inwardness. As Fox makes it clear, Quaker worship was 'new' in the sense that it was worship 'in the Spirit'.²²⁷ This emphasis provides a view of worship which necessitates direct and unmediated opening to God within the self (attentive presence) and, in turn, discernment that is pure, focussed one-pointedly on a purpose that Love alone can fulfil. It is likely that Love is the cornerstone of a developing relationship with God – a 'love that flows out of Truth'.²²⁸ In the context of this discussion, this love qualified as universal and Divine, is considered with reference to Heart Awareness. It is felt rather than thought, savoured rather than analysed, and it contributes in very large measure to the fullness of Friends' spiritual practice. It is shown in many of the early Quaker writings that a loving relationship with the self, others and God is essential to the development of God Focus. Such focus to God is thus attained by a uniquely bonding and prayerful attention.

²²⁵ Quaker Meeting for Worship lasted many hours, see *Quaker Faith and Practice* (London: Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain 1995) 19.20.

²²⁶ Fox, 'Keep all your meetings in the name of the Lord Jesus, and keep them gathered in His name, by His Light, grace, truth, power and spirit; by which you will feel His blessed and refreshing presence among you and in you to your comfort and God's glory'. *The Sealed Epistle*, (Philadelphia: The Tract Association (1690-1691) 2016).

²²⁷ Fox, *Journal*, p. 417.

²²⁸ Jarman, R. *Breakthrough to Unity*, (The Kindlers: North West London Area Meeting, Britain Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) 2010), p. 25.

The analysis described allows a cluster of concerns to be identified as concepts not merely relevant to but actually interwoven in practice. It is for this reason that Purity, Discernment and Growth have been recognised as significant in Quaker spiritual practice. Here then is a group of concepts, identified from within Fox's own writing, and endorsed in the texts of Penington and Barclay in the seventeenth century, that seem to depict the worship of early Friends. The order given is not intended as prescriptive but does offer a justifiable sequence, as explained, in 2.7 below.

The concepts identified as Elements of Quaker spiritual practice, in combination with the initial Conditions, are used to substantiate a proposal for a theoretical position on the Inwardness that is gained in Quaker Worship when Fox's counsel to 'turn within' is adopted.²²⁹ The theoretical perspective accepts the experiential focus of the Quaker way of worship and offers 'evidence' for ongoing argument from the available material. This is used to identify a new perspective on Quaker theology.

Janet Scott, one of the few contemporary Friends to address the matter of Quaker theology directly, asserts 'We decide what evidence is important and what can be ignored.'²³⁰ We sum up our experiences and attitudes in a set of mental constructs or models which help us to interpret and live in our world'.²³¹ Friends accept that 'experience is inescapable' not only in their faith and practice but also in the study of their religion.²³² However they also place emphasis on the 'stories' that emerge from the dialogue between worship and everyday living as corporately interpreted. This examination of Quaker perspectives thus necessitates recognition of how Quakers, in Williams' terms, 'make sense of the[ir] world' through their theology.

²²⁹ Identification and usage of Conditions and Elements is further indicated in chapter 2.

²³⁰ 'We' as Quakers and, in the sense that Swinburne emphasises, as 'persons'.

²³¹ Scott, J *'What canst thou say? Towards a Quaker Theology'*, Swarthmore lecture, (London: Quaker Home Service, 1980), p. 17.

²³² I am indebted to Rex Ambler for sharing thoughts with me about the nature of a 'theology of experience'. His work, as that of Melvin Keiser, has helped in clarifying my own views on Quaker experiential theology.

This research places significance on personal engagement with the worship experience to which Friends' faith is witness. In 'keeping faith' with the primary experiential concerns of Quakerism the thesis investigates religious concerns within the fundamental characteristics of the life in which Quaker faith and practice is encompassed. The thesis demonstrates the facts of experience and reasoning that have led to the specific understanding of Friends of the importance of Inwardness in British Quakerism.²³³

Five Friends, in particular, have been selected for discussion, each is influential in a different manner and for different reasons: George Fox, as the dominant leader of the Religious Society of Friends in chapter 2; Isaac Penington as a significant exemplar of Quakerism expressed in predominantly devotional terms in chapter 3; Robert Barclay, as the leading Quaker theologian and academic of his period in chapter 4; Rufus Jones and Wilhelm Rowntree, among others, as representative of emerging liberalism in theological traditions within Quakerism in chapter 5.²³⁴ In addition, a range of sources from *Quaker Faith and Practice (QFP)* [g], selected Swarthmore lectures [g] and the winning Quaker Essays of 2010 are examined representing twenty/twenty-first century Quakerism.²³⁵ In this way it is possible to consider changes in emphasis or interpretation of Quaker faith and practice and to examine how past Quaker theorising relates to Quaker theology of the present indicating, potentially, possibilities for the future.

The five authors selected for primary analysis are chosen, as mentioned above, for different reasons but each is recognised as having significance in their own historical period and being influential subsequently. In the case of the seventeenth century, it is acknowledged that other authors might have been chosen, for example, Margaret Fell or William Penn. Following some consideration however it was decided that Fox, Penington and Barclay offered a particularly suitable range of positions for discussion of issues

²³³ Given that Quakerism arose, at least in part, in reaction to emphasis on reason, its principles and practices were a move away from this emphasis.

²³⁴ Thomas Kelly, both as representative of 20th century liberalism in the Society and as one of the few Quakers to describe the reality of spiritual development in experiential terms is given particular consideration in Appendix 1.

²³⁵ Some of the authors referenced in chapter 5 are of particular interest in that they represent work 'selected' for publication by the discernment of Quaker Committees.

central to examination of the nature and purpose of inwardness in Friends' spiritual practice, as explained below.

Fox, being identified as the 'dominant leader' of the new movement that became known as Quakerism is inevitably important to the discussion.²³⁶ His thinking, fully documented in the writings quoted, delivers a comprehensive account of the manner in which Quaker spiritual practice was preserved and protected in a regular Meeting for Worship. The Meeting for Worship was, and is, for Friends the main focus of the spiritual dimension of their Quakerism, and this is largely due to Fox's teaching as initiated in the seventeenth century.²³⁷

Isaac Penington was highly thought of by George Fox, as is evident in Fox's testimony concerning Penington written following his death. This testimony concludes with the words: 'To him be glory and honour, thanks and praise...'²³⁸ Penington became one of the chief advocates of Quakerism, he published fifty-seven titles after his convincement of its importance in 1658.²³⁹ His writing places considerable emphasis on the spiritual dimension of Quaker faith and practice, often highlighting the significance of inwardness. Thus the relevance of Penington's work to the thesis validates his selection as representative of important considerations.

In turn, Robert Barclay is chosen for examination here because of his systematic analysis of Quakerism in the context of his *Apology*. *The Apology* was a very influential text in its day, and continues to be regarded as providing a significant contribution to investigation of Quaker faith and practice. He brought 'a new intellectual rigour' to Quaker writing.²⁴⁰ According to Moore, the *Apology* is 'arguably the most important and

²³⁶ See chapter 1, footnote 8.

²³⁷ Fox, urged Friends to keep Meetings for worship regular and faithful. This was what Fox envisaged as the means to the Quaker Way of life.

²³⁸ Penington, I. *Works*, (Farmington: Quaker Heritage Press, 1995) p. 1

²³⁹ Keiser, M. and Moore, R., *Knowing the Mystery of Life Within* (London: Quaker Books, 2005) p. x

²⁴⁰ Moore, R. 'Towards a Revision of the 'Second Period of Quakerism'' *Quaker Studies*, Vol. 17/1, 2012 pp. 7 - 26

influential statement of Quaker faith ever published...'²⁴¹ The chapters of Barclay's work given particular consideration in the thesis are thorough in their study both of Quaker faith in immediate revelation and the Quaker mode of accessing immediate revelation through worship. Thus these chapters in particular offer suitable material for analysis. Barclay's work demonstrates the manner in which inwardness is an important aspect of Quaker faith and practice and also how its experience and development facilitates the Quaker way of life.

The two Quakers of the modern period, whose work is examined, characterise the development of Quaker Liberalism. J. W. Rowntree and Rufus Jones remain significant representatives of how twenty-first century Quakers remained both true to some aspects of early Quakerism, as for example 'direct experience of God called the Light Within...'; yet, at the same time, sought development and change, including a view of 'social Christianity' based on more academic/ intellectual awareness, as urged by Rowntree.²⁴² John Wilhelm Rowntree was a successful businessman but also an important contributor to the Religious Society of Friends. He was persuasive in relation to the position of modern science and biblical criticism for Friends' interpretation of their faith and practice and he also encouraged a renewed understanding of its social significance. Rufus Jones and Rowntree became close friends and worked together on the *Rowntree History Series*.²⁴³ Rufus Jones wrote of his conviction concerning aspects of mysticism as influential in the beginnings of Quakerism. For this reason, his work is relevant to this thesis, even though the position taken is different in that the thesis does not place emphasis on the origins of Quakerism but rather on the nature and purpose of its spiritual practice. The works of Rowntree and Jones thus contribute to discussion in different, but equally interesting, ways.

²⁴¹ Moore, 'Towards a Revision of the 'Second Period of Quakerism'', p. 17

²⁴² Frost, W. 'Modernist and Liberal Quakers, 1887 – 2010, Angell, S.W. and Dandelion, P. *The Oxford Handbook of Quaker Studies* (Oxford: University Press. 2015) pp. 78 – 92. See also thesis chapter 5.

²⁴³ See Southern, A. 'The Rowntree History Series and the growth of Liberal Quakerism' in *Quaker Studies* Vol. 16. No. 1. (2011) pp. 7-73

From the sources identified above, statements concerning experience of Inwardness are analysed, interpreted, evaluated and collated, to determine and to balance relevant material, and to examine repeated terms and ideas: their usage facilitates identification of recurrent characteristics within the personal explanations of individuals, and their interpretation within the Religious Society of Friends.²⁴⁴ Thus theoretical progression within the thesis advances by reference to quotation from selected Quakers and confirmation of findings in sequence.

Care has been taken to identify, from within these writings, genuine similarities and differences of view. In some cases, descriptions provide what seem to be accounts of analogous experience; in others, although distinctions of emphasis are detectable, foundational agreement is often evident. Comparison of such positions contributes to:

- 1) interpreting Inwardness by examining the experientially influenced theology of the sources
- 2) correlating understanding that is consistent, albeit differently expressed according to history and culture.

This approach allows for identification of similarities and differences in nuance, or opinion, with regard to Quaker Inwardness, and tangentially to the consequences of Inwardness.

Acceptance of the importance of the consequences of Inwardness in Quaker living is significant for full comprehension of Quaker theology. As Scott indicates:

We [Quakers]...must understand religion not just as an intellectual exercise but as something which involves the whole personality. Our attitudes, emotions, behaviour and values are all involved and our thinking must be concerned with them. We cannot separate theology into a separate box that neither draws on our personal experience and ways of life nor contributes to them. This means, in particular, that theology should be moral. Our Quaker principles that the light leads out of sin and into unity also imply this. It should be moral towards people. That is, it must take seriously their deepest concerns and try to avoid facile answers.

²⁴⁴ Although the work of Swinburne has been influential, his use of tight logic, symbolic equations and causal explanations (e.g. for the existence of God) is not used here. Rather, the methodology of the thesis utilises inference and cumulative induction.

Thus, the problem of suffering has to be taken into account and the values of freedom, justice, equality and concern for others'.²⁴⁵

Scott thus asserts that the wholeness of Quakerism, its interior and exterior concerns, is to be accounted for in its theology. This thesis places more emphasis on the examination of the interior aspect (understanding of Inwardness) than on the exterior (consequences of Inwardness), but acknowledges the significance of both within the church and community of Quakerism. Melvin Keiser's elaboration of this point, reminding us that the importance of 'community' both as sensed and as fact, is relevant to understanding the relatedness that is the essence of, what he considers to be, relational thinking in Quaker theology.

It is apparent in the analysis of Quaker writers, that the perspective of experiential heart-felt theology affords different insights into meanings and offers, potentially, different interpretation from that of purely academic approaches discursively recorded.²⁴⁶ The experiential perspective, framed within community, is prioritised in this examination of Inwardness even when other perspectives are employed to clarify Quaker positions that are otherwise ambiguous, unclear or incomplete in their expression.

1.6 Thesis outline

- Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the thesis and outlines its original dimensions;
- Chapter 2 introduces George Fox's understanding of Inwardness and examines the foundations of a Quaker spiritual practice;
- Chapter 3 analyses Isaac Penington's interpretation of Inwardness in terms of Life, Light and Love;
- Chapter 4 examines Robert Barclay's apologetic account of Fox's teaching on Inwardness, and considers his systematic approach to the explanation of terms;
- Chapter 5 analyses Inwardness in relation to the interpretations of twentieth and twenty-first century Quakers;

²⁴⁵ Scott, 'What canst thou say?' Swarthmore lecture, p. 13.

²⁴⁶ See Keiser on Barclay, chapter 4.

- Chapter 6 provides an overall conclusion and summary to the thesis and outlines a new perspective on Quaker theology

1.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided an introduction to the thesis and shown how it contributes new thinking to Quaker studies. Additionally, it has outlined the context and background of the thesis and provided a review of relevant previous scholarship in terms of Quaker understandings of Inwardness, spiritual growth and purification as an aspect of spiritual development. The Quaker notion of measure was discussed in relation to spiritual development.

Methodological concerns have been introduced and discussed as involving analysis of narrative and interpretative work in order to locate ‘evidence’ for ongoing argument. Finally, the structure of the thesis was outlined.

The next chapter explores George Fox’s teachings on Inwardness.

CHAPTER 2: George Fox on Inwardness

2.1. Introduction

George Fox's work is analysed in this chapter because his writings were foundational to the beginning of the Quaker Movement. His teaching is seminal to understanding the background and underpinning of Inwardness in the essentially experiential and primarily spiritual religion that is Quakerism.¹ Fox's injunction to 'turn within' and 'wait in the Light' was timely in the mid seventeenth century conditions in England.² However, it set up the perhaps misleading understanding that, for Fox, there was an irredeemably sharp contrast between Inwardness and outwardness in which the inward is seen as primary in providing a spiritual foundation for living, and therefore more important than outwardness.³ There is some truth here but, as Creasey maintains, the sharpness of distinction is sometimes over-stated.⁴ Within the socio-political background and theological context of the period this is unsurprising but is, nonetheless, in need of explanation.

¹ It is relevant to discussion throughout the thesis that George Fox has been considered, either as a mystic or as someone with strong tendencies to mysticism, in several works on spirituality and mysticism, as for example, McGinn, B, (ed.) *The Essential Writings*, 2006, Section 10, No. 11. p 360 -364. Macquarrie, J *Two Worlds are ours: An Introduction to Christian Mysticism*, (London: SCM, 2004) chapter 11. Holt, B.P *Thirsty for God: A Brief History of Christian Spirituality*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005).

² Spencer, C D., *Holiness the Soul of Quakerism*, pp. 42-43, discussing 'the mystic vs. puritan debate, points out that even Barbour, who argued for a puritan origin to Quakerism, identified the fact that 'for puritans, personal experience of conversion and sanctification became crucial as for no other Christian group'. The tenor of spiritual seeking was for experience over dogma which favoured Fox's teaching.

³ A connection with the Puritanism of the time is evident, since the approach to reformed orthodoxy also placed emphasis on the experiential aspect of religious practice. In the main, however, Quakerism is concerned with a way of life in which there is an intimate connection between spirituality, attitudes and behaviours i.e. Inwardness and outwardness are coordinated aspects of Quakerism. The distinctions between outward and inward concerns, and their subsequent ramifications, as examined in this thesis, relate to Inwardness both in the seventeenth century and evolving Quaker usage of terms, and their treatment, in the last century. This research seeks to understand the inner spiritual dimension of British Quakerism and to explain its connection to Quaker living in terms of Worship and Testimony. The latter i.e. Quaker Testimony, is discussed subsequently in relation to the consequences of Inwardness – see 'social concern', chapter 2.

⁴ See 1.3 for relevant discussion.

Sections of Fox's major works, his *Journal*, *Epistles* and *Doctrinals*, are analysed to identify his understanding of Inwardness.⁵ The emphasis on Inwardness in Fox's thinking is discussed to show the meanings and consequences of his injunction to 'turn within' (2.3.). These are analysed in terms of his concern that his followers should not only 'turn within' (2.3.1) but also that they should then wait or 'stand still' (2.3.2) in receptive openness.⁶ In turn, understandings of the consequences of Inwardness (2.4) are explained (2.4.1 and 2.4.2). Fox's use of the term 'unity' is considered (2.5) to determine the relationship of the concept to Quaker faith and practice. The final section (2.6) provides a conclusion and 2.7 summarises Fox's teaching on Inwardness.

2.2. The importance of Inwardness for George Fox

Fox roused Friends exhorting them that:

... All friends of the Lord everywhere, whose minds are turned within towards the Lord, take heed and hearken to the light within you, which is the light of Christ and of God, which will call your minds to within (as ye heed it) which were abroad in the creatures; that by it your minds be renewed, and by it turned to God, with that which is pure to worship the Living God, the lord of hosts, over all the creatures ... wait all in that which calls your mind inward ... that the mind shall feed upon nothing but the pure light of God ...⁷

The ministry above links the 'inward' to 'the light within' and that which 'is pure'. It indicates the need to wait, suggesting that a focussed, attentive mind, or attentive presence, is necessary for opening to the light 'in pure worship'. Here Fox is offering a straightforward set of instructions for a spiritual practice intended to lead to unmediated

⁵ Fox, G. (Nickalls Ed.) *The Journal of George Fox*, and Fox, G., *Works*. Some of the 'threads' of Fox's experience, ministry, and teaching/preaching, as indicative of Conditions and Elements of a spiritual practice that he advocated, are highlighted by underlining in the chapter; this is also the case in relation to Penington and Barclay in chapters 3 and 4 and contemporary references in chapter 5.

⁶ Ambler, R. *A Light to Live By*, p. 10 refers to this as 'passive attention'. Keiser suggests, however, that although the silence entered is 'formless' it remains an area of some activity, a creative process, since the worshipper makes a choice as to focus – See 'Reflecting Theologically from the Gathered Meeting: The Nature and Origin of Quaker Theology' *Quaker Theology*, 2, (2000).

⁷ Fox, G *Works*, Epistle LV1 pp. 71-72. See also Figures 1 and 2 within the chapter.

encounters with God.⁸ The injunction to ‘turn within’ that underpins much of Fox’s teaching rests on the recognition that, ‘God, who made the world, did not dwell in temples made with hands ... but in people’s hearts ... his people were his temple, and he dwelt in them’.⁹ The teaching here is in accordance with his emphasis on the New Covenant, of which Fox, referring to the ‘blood of Christ’, said: ‘I saw it, the blood of the New Covenant, how it came into the heart’.¹⁰

In many references Fox writes of ‘bringing people off’ the outwardness of the world. He indicates that he was to bring people off ‘the world’s religions, which are vain’: off ‘all the world’s fellowships’¹¹ off ‘Jewish ceremonies and from heathenish fables...’¹² off ‘all the world’s ways and teachers’¹³ i.e. from all that is creaturely and outward. Fox is to bring ‘them [all people] to the Spirit of God in themselves’.¹⁴ This move away from outward concerns and towards Inwardness was based on Fox’s own experience and is reflected in his teaching and preaching to all people. It is a message of detachment from the ‘creaturely’ in favour of that which is spiritually known and lived, ‘seen’ by Fox to come into the hearts of all people, known in and through Christ.

Gwyn suggests that Fox had ‘a breakthrough experience’ which he wrote about in his *Journal*, as hearing a voice, saying ‘There is one, even Christ Jesus that can speak to

⁸ See Table 1 on spiritual practice/Meeting for Worship. Use of the metaphor ‘light’ in speaking of God is by no means the prerogative of Friends. This 17th Century language, and the thinking from which it derives, continues to be used in many texts both of Western and the Eastern Religious traditions. It is only necessary to turn to advices 1, 3, and 5, in the current *Advices and Queries* (London: The Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain (1995, 1997, and 2008) of British Quakerism, to find the emphasis Friends place on Light. Also see Moore, R. *Consciences* pp. 102-3 in relation to ambiguous use of the term ‘light’ among early Quakers.

⁹ Fox, *Journal*, p. 8.

¹⁰ Fox, *ibid*, p. 23.

¹¹ Fox, *ibid*, p. 35.

¹² Fox, *ibid*, p. 36.

¹³ Fox, *ibid*, p. 104.

¹⁴ Fox, *ibid*, p. 85.

thy condition'.¹⁵ This 'shifted Fox from seeking to what he would later describe as *standing still* in the light of Christ'.¹⁶ Gwyn maintains that, '[T]his was a 'consciousness raising' experience, opening the way for a new self to be constructed by the direct guidance of the light and the nurture of others struggling through the same experience'.¹⁷ For Fox, 'standing still' is 'standing still in the light'; it is a teaching that is irrevocably tied to recognition that the Lord's teaching is within people.¹⁸ It is in Inwardness that Fox found 'the unchangeable truth' which gave him strength¹⁹ and which he propagated as 'the light of Jesus Christ, which would keep their [people's] minds to the unchangeable, who is the way to the Father...'²⁰

Inwardness and stillness are, then, often interwoven in Fox's teaching.²¹ Though not always linked directly in his spoken or written words, these two aspects of dwelling in Christ and being open to the Christ, who dwells within human beings, are found in a totality of experience. Fox says, 'Christ hath been talked of, but now he is come and possessed ... The Son of God hath been talked of, but now he is come, and has given us an understanding. Unity hath been talked of, but now it is come...'²² and, 'Therefore ye, who know the love of God and the law of his Spirit, and the freedom that is in Jesus Christ, stand fast in him, in that divine faith which he is the author of in you'.²³

¹⁵ Gwyn, D. in Dandelion, B. P., Gwyn, D. and Peat, T. (eds.), *Heaven on Earth-Quakers and the Second Coming* (Kelso: Curlew, 1998), referring to, *Journal*, p. 11.

¹⁶ Fox's *Works*, Epistle X is discussed in section 2.3.

¹⁷ Gwyn et al, *ibid*, p. 103.

¹⁸ Fox, *Journal*, p. 76, in the sense that God dwelt within the temple of the body; often this notion is tied to inwardness as 'in people's hearts', *Journal*, p. 8.

¹⁹ Fox, *ibid*, p. 13.

²⁰ Fox, *ibid*, p. 13.

²¹ See section 2.3 below.

²² Fox, *ibid*, p. 204, the significance of unity in Fox's teaching is discussed elsewhere, see section 2.5 in particular.

²³ Fox, *ibid*, p. 17.

For Fox it is essential that all people should recognise that in Christ's coming something exceptional occurred and that Friends had a role 'to sound forth the everlasting Gospel'. The expression that Christ is 'the author' of humankind is particularly significant.²⁴ It implies that without Christ humanity is unfinished; what is necessary is that people come to know God by being in the Spirit and having the Spirit in themselves. Fox says, '[T]hough they [people at large] may have his light to condemn them that hate it, yet they can never bring any into unity and fellowship in the Spirit, except they be in it'.²⁵ So Fox speaks of feeling the light and thus feeling Christ in the mind as the means of knowing for oneself that Christ, the Son of God, is now among the people and thus the means to Unity is come.²⁶ The Quaker phrase that ensued concerns 'that of God' within the self, and Fox is persistent in urging his followers 'to turn within' and to 'stand still' in the pure light of God.²⁷

2.3. Inwardness and Stillness

Fox's writings offer numerous examples of his teaching concerning Inwardness, stillness and unity expressed in relation to the Light within. This thesis investigates Fox's understanding 1) of the meaning and significance of Inwardness in the life of individual worshippers, and 2) his interpretation of the means to create a community of Friends, who would live in the Light. The growth of Inwardness in individuals, through which the Light becomes operative, is understood, by Fox, to have consequences.²⁸

Inwardness as Stabilised Unity, in the sense in which Fox refers to knowing the 'hidden unity in the Eternal Being', is a state of purity and perfection beyond any evil that

²⁴ Dobbs, *Authority*, on authority in general and the ultimate authority of God (p. 1). Also note, Fox, *Journal*, p. 155, on Christ as the 'author of [their] faith and the finisher thereof'.

²⁵ Fox, *Journal* p. 17. See also King 1.3.

²⁶ Fox, *ibid.*, p. 205, letter to the Pope and Kings of Europe.

²⁷ Fox, *G Works* Epistle LVI, pp. 71-2; And *Works* Epistle X.

²⁸ Fox, *ibid.*, p. 156; 'the outward came from the inward'.

requires ‘saving’ action.²⁹ In this sense the saving function of inward experience here is taken to be a stepping stone to the longer term consequence of life lived in Eternal Being.³⁰ For Fox this is a matter of conscious choice. It is choice in freedom of will that distinguishes merely knowing the Light from actually living in the light.³¹ Living in the Light is what affords security in the unity of unchanging reality. For King this is what Fox means by salvation. This understanding gives rise to the view that unity could not become a stabilised experience in living, either individually or corporately, without the saving function of Inwardness as fully attained and established in experience.³²

As indicated above, for Fox it is the ‘hidden unity in the Eternal Being’ that once known and lived results in ‘purity’ and ‘perfection’.³³ If this is so then the saving function is to be considered as a potential result of the discovery and experience of the ‘infinite and incomprehensible God’ in union.³⁴ This suggestion alters the order of events positing unity as the pre-condition of freedom from sin and transgression. So, if Eeg-Olofsson is right in interpreting the Inner Light, which was for Fox the Inward Light, as ‘characteristic of a divine disposition in man through which he comes into contact with the Godhead’, it is reasonable to infer that this description concurs with Fox’s words concerning experience of the ‘infinite and incomprehensible God’.³⁵ It is in turn transforming.³⁶ As

²⁹ See chapter 6.

³⁰ Fox, *Journal*, pp. 27-8.

³¹ As explained, King (1.3) links realisation of the unchanging dimension of life with cleansing/purification and living in the Light.

³² The saving function of mature spiritual experience is its state in Unity.

³³ Note Fox’s references to ‘growth’ and ‘transformation’ are often expressed in terms of the move to ‘purity’ and ‘perfection’.

³⁴ Fox *Epistle CCCLVIII, Works* 8, p. 165.

³⁵ Note: chapter 4 on Barclay’s use and understanding of related terms.

³⁶ See Creasey on the transforming function of the ‘interiorised Christ’ and ‘the experiential component of Quaker Inwardness [as] complemented by full appreciation of the historic Christ’, (1.3).

Endy asserts, 'It is Inwardness that affords knowledge of the spiritual and vital-existential reality of God'.³⁷

Fox proposed a relationship with God which fed the whole of life: it was attained by means of spiritual practice which affected all behaviours. This concerns the requirement that people should 'wait to feel the Lord's power and spirit...' and is, in large measure, a reference to spiritual practice in worship.³⁸ Turning inward and dwelling (or standing still) in the spirit are both preparation and pre-requisite for living in unity and, through this, living righteously in accordance with gospel order [g]. As Fox says, he 'turned them to the spirit of God in themselves by which they might know the Scriptures and be led into all the truth of them, and with the spirit to know God; and in it to have unity one with another'.³⁹ This is the unity of which King writes that, 'Unity [is] something that affords man permanent security from the evils of disunity and change'.⁴⁰ This state of life is gained only if there is a choice by free-will and both regularity and frequency of spiritual practice.

Turning inward and standing still are discussed in turn below and unity in 2.4.

2.3.1. 'Turning within'

Faith in, or understanding of, what the Light within offers (according to Fox), is of no use unless the individual gives attention to the practice of locating it intentionally. Fox wrote to Oliver Cromwell 'Be still and in the counsel of God stand, and that will give thee wisdom...'⁴¹ Also in a letter to his parents, he urged them to '... return within, and wait to hear the voice of the Lord there; and waiting there and keeping close to the Lord, a

³⁷ See Endy, 1.3.

³⁸ Fox, *Journal*, p. 79.

³⁹ Fox, *ibid*, p. 235.

⁴⁰ King, *Light Within*, p. 114.

⁴¹ Fox, *ibid*, p. 93.

discerning will grow'.⁴² These words are central to his prophetic message: in order to grow in measure, to experience a development in discernment, to know the Lord's will, it is necessary to turn within and wait, or be still, in Inwardness. Fox continues,

...be still a while from thy own thoughts, searching, seeking, desires and imaginations, and be stayed in the principle of God in thee, to stay thy mind upon God, up to God; and thou wilt find strength from him and a present help in time of trouble, in need, and to be a God at hand'.⁴³

According to Braithwaite, once Fox 'possessed as the surest fact of his consciousness a wonderful newness and purity of life, which had come to him through the indwelling life of Christ,' he felt confident in his prophetic message about the importance of the 'inner spiritual knowledge'.⁴⁴ For Fox:

This is the word of the Lord God to you. Every one in the measure of life wait, that with it all your minds may be guided up to the Father of life, with your hearts joined together up to the Father of spirits, all receive power from him and wisdom that with it you may be ordered to his glory, to whom be all glory for ever.⁴⁵

Fox expressed the need to 'keep [the] mind in'⁴⁶ as the way to 'bring them [all people] to the Spirit of God in themselves',⁴⁷ where it becomes possible to 'wait to feel'⁴⁸ after God and to be 'patient and still in the power and still in the light...'⁴⁹ So, allowing the mind to focus on the Spirit of God in patience, Fox maintains that worshippers should 'wait for wisdom from God':⁵⁰ this is the way to 'right discerning.'⁵¹

⁴² Fox, *Works*, Epistle V, p. 19.

⁴³ Fox, *ibid*, pp. 346-7.

⁴⁴ Braithwaite, *Beginnings*, p. 39.

⁴⁵ Fox, *Journal*, p. 175.

⁴⁶ Fox, *ibid*, p. 58.

⁴⁷ Fox, *ibid*, p. 85; see also other examples, p. 196, p. 205 'feeling Christ in his mind', p. 231.

⁴⁸ Fox, *ibid*, p. 79.

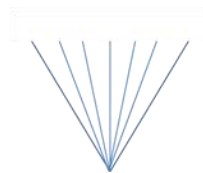
⁴⁹ Fox, *ibid*, p. 283.

⁵⁰ Fox, *ibid*, p. 173.

In his full statement Fox rehearses the requirement to ‘take heed and hearken to the light within you, which is the light of Christ and of God’.⁵² Although Fox does not deliberately juxtapose the terms inward and outward here, his meaning is clear: that it is necessary to turn the mind away from the ‘creatures’, out in the world.⁵³ Figure 1 is a simple visual depiction of the domain of outwardness, or creatureliness, as intimated by Fox and interpreted within this thesis.⁵⁴ It is shown as outwardly spreading or outwardly turned and thus as reference to the external world and all the multiplicity that this implies and embraces.

Figure 1–Outwardness:-outspreading

- External world
- Outwardly-turned disparate concerns
 - Multi focused attention
 - Changeable and temporal
- Multiplicity, diversity and materiality
- The ocean of darkness/the creaturely world
- The sphere in which Quaker Testimonies find their response to need
- The sphere of the consequences of Inwardness



Talk of the creatures and the world is linked by Fox with notions of ‘the will of man’, ‘selfish, fleshly, earthly will’, and being in ‘bondage’, in other words all that is contrary to

⁵¹ Fox, *Journal*, p. 173.

⁵² Quoted in full above 2.2.

⁵³ The ‘creature’ was, for Fox, the creation i.e. anything created, not just animals, Ambler, R. *Truth of the Heart*, p. 155.

⁵⁴ Figures 1-6 are ‘shorthand’ visual references to indicate different stages of the growth of Inwardness.

the Spirit.⁵⁵ When this is the way people live, Fox is implying, if not actually making explicit, the individual is failing to saturate himself, or herself, in the fullness of the light. It is the ‘*pure* light of God’ that must be imbibed in worship if spiritual nourishment is to be gained in full.⁵⁶ Living in outwardness is characterised by activity and multi focused attention that is changeable and temporal; the creaturely world is however the sphere in which Quaker Testimonies find action in response to need, the sphere to implement answers to the consequences of Inwardness.

Fox maintains that it is necessary not merely to ‘turn within’ but also to ‘keep within’, and:

... when they shall say, ‘lo here’, or ‘lo there is Christ’, go not forth; for Christ is within you. And they are seducers and antichrists which draw your minds out from the teaching within you. *For the measure is within, and the light of God is within, and the pearl is within you, which is hid; and the word of God is within you, and ye are the temples of God; and God hath said, he will dwell in you, and walk with you. And then what need ye go to the idols’ temples without you?*⁵⁷

This was Fox’s main advice: ‘Mind the pure light of God in you’, mind Inwardness and ‘mind your measure’ so that God may ‘walk with you’.⁵⁸ Fox was preaching that this is the means to a life well lived, a life of righteousness, which is for the benefit not only of the individual but also the community and the wider world. The purpose of Inwardness is practical. It is primary in facilitating ‘everlasting unity and fellowship’.⁵⁹ Thus Fox wrote that:

... all you that have received it, this heavenly and everlasting power of God, the heavenly dignity, keep in your possession of it, being heirs of it, and in the holy order of it, and walk as becomes the gospel, and let your conversation be according

⁵⁵ Fox, *Journal*, pp. 17-18.

⁵⁶ My emphasis on *pure*. See also Figures 4 and 5 and chapter 6.

⁵⁷ Fox, *Works*, *Epistle XIX*, p. 27 (My emphasis).

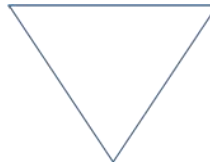
⁵⁸ Fox, *Works* 4, *Doctrinals*, p. 43.

⁵⁹ Fox, *Works* 8, *Epistle CCCX111* p. 67. See also Dobbs, *Authority*, chapter 5 on Gospel order and fellowship.

to it, as the saints, and the churches were in primitive times ... So this fellowship is not of man, nor by man; for it is in the everlasting power of God.⁶⁰

For Fox, then, Inwardness is not ultimately for its own sake but, as a means to personal transformation, it is for the praise of God and fellowship with all humankind. By contrast with Figure 1, Figure 2 signifies the domain of Inwardness as understood by Fox and interpreted within this thesis. It is intended to show that Inwardness is concerned with the interior world of experience, converging in its intensity to embrace the spiritual realm of transcendental reality.

Figure 2–Inwardness: in-focusing



- Internal/interior world
- Inwardly turned, focused attention
- Single minded concern
- Non-changing and eternal
- The realm of the spiritual, Transcendental Reality
- The Light Within/The Source and Nourishment of all living
- The Sphere in which Quaker Testimonies find their leadings
- The means for individuals to ‘live in guidance’

As indicated in Figure 2 the realm of the inward is concerned, for Fox, with progress towards the non-changing and eternal, with experience of stillness in single minded and focused attention; it is the sphere in which Quaker Testimonies find their leadings. Contact with the inward sphere offers individuals guidance for their living. It is necessary to ‘stand still’ in the inward dimension of one’s life.

⁶⁰ Fox, *Works* 8, Epistle CCCX111, p. 67.

2.3.2. 'Standing still'

The importance and purpose of standing still in the Spirit is well expressed in Fox's Tenth Epistle. He writes that it is necessary to 'stand still in that which is pure'; 'stand still in the light and submit to it'; 'stand still in that power which brings peace'; 'stand still naked, bare and uncovered before the Lord' since 'your strength is to stand still'.⁶¹ Elsewhere this teaching is termed as 'waiting'⁶² and 'abiding'⁶³ usually connected with the need for 'feeling his presence'⁶⁴ and watchfulness⁶⁵ for the Lord in attentive presence.

In a letter to Irish Friends, written in 1655, Fox says, '...now as you do walk in the light, and are established in the grace and truth, in your hearts, minds, and souls, it brings you to Christ, the heavenly spiritual rock and foundation ...'⁶⁶ And again, 'Therefore all wait patiently upon the Lord whatsoever condition you be in; wait in the grace and truth that comes by Jesus; for if ye do so, there is a promise to you, and the Lord God will fulfil it in you'.⁶⁷ Fox recognised that the way may not be easy for his followers and exhorted 'Friends, be not hasty; for he that believes in the Light makes not haste'.⁶⁸ By implication he is saying dwell in the light before speech or action, prepare heart and mind in this inward dwelling place: stand still in the power to gain strength and the right sense of direction, i.e. in discernment.

⁶¹ Fox, *Works* 7, Epistle X, pp. 20-21.

⁶² Fox, *Works*, Epistle XXXIII, p. 39.

⁶³ Fox, *Works* 8, CCCLXI, p. 175.

⁶⁴ Fox, *Journal*, p. 79 'wait to feel the Lord's power and spirit'.

⁶⁵ Fox, *ibid*, 'stirring up the pure mind... watchfulness in them', p. 173 and also 'brings up the witness in thee'. p. 346.

⁶⁶ Fox, *Works* 8, Epistle CCCLX, p. 175.

⁶⁷ Fox, *Journal*, pp. 12-13.

⁶⁸ Fox, *ibid*, p. 175.

Fox had no doubt about his message that what had ‘been talked of’ had now come.⁶⁹ This was an absolute promise fulfilled in Christ. In a short epistle to Friends (1655) he said, ‘Friends, wait in the light, that with the light every one of you may come to see Christ to be your wisdom and your righteousness ... [and] ye may come to reign in the life’.⁷⁰ He teaches that Friends should be ‘patient and still in the power and still in the light that doth convince you, to keep your minds to God...’⁷¹

Life in fulfilment is only possible according to Fox once Friends know how to be still in the light so as to be transformed by it. In his *Journal* Fox writes of ‘standing still’ in relation to the light showing transgressions and evil. It is through standing still in the light that ‘sin and transgressions’ are discovered.⁷² Their ‘redeemer’ is seen.⁷³ The connection is made to darkness and light and, metaphorically, to summer and winter.⁷⁴ The importance of dwelling in the light, and standing still patiently, is not merely to discover

⁶⁹ See 2.2.

⁷⁰ Fox, *Works 7, Epistles 1*, Epistle CVIII, p. 108.

⁷¹ Fox, *Journal*, p. 283. Also: Fox says: ‘In the stillness and silence of the power of the Almighty dwell, which never varies, alters, nor changes, but preserveth over and out of, and above all the changeable worships, religions, ministers, churches, teachings, principalities, and powers, with the power of God, which keepeth over all this, to the kingdom of Christ, that is everlasting, in which there is no changing, who is King of kings, and Lord of lords. All power in heaven and earth is given unto him, of whose light, life, power, and wisdom, grace, and riches have ye received, which comes from him, that doth not change. So in that live, that doth not change, the unchangeable life, the unchangeable mind, the unchangeable spirit and wisdom, and the unchangeable worship and church, of which Christ is the unchangeable head, who remains the same yesterday, to-day, and forever; in that ye will feel the blessing and presence of the Lord God of life amongst you, as ye all abide in the unchangeable kingdom, dominion, power, and life, who are heirs of it according to your measures, who have received the light, and received the life and grace, and the power of a kingdom and a word that hath no end. So wait all in it, that ye may be possessors and inheritors of the kingdom, and of the life and power which hath no end, and of the promises, that are yea and amen; and let nothing, that is of the world, alter you, but keep ye in that which keepeth you in the everlasting kingdom of God. (*In The Stillness and Silence of the Almighty Dwell* (Letter of the 3rd month, 1661) accessed from internet 7.7.12).

⁷² Fox, *Journal*, p. 117.

⁷³ Fox, *ibid*, p. 117, the ‘redeemer’ being the Light.

⁷⁴ Fox, *ibid*. pp. 283-4, ‘Be patient and still in the power and still in the light that doth convince you, to keep your minds to God; in that be quiet, that you may come to the summer, that your flight be not in the winter. For if you sit still in the patience which overcomes in the power of God, there will be no flying ... And so in the light standing still you will see your salvation, you will see the Lord’s strength ... you will see God revealing his secrets, inspiring, and his gifts coming unto you, through which your hearts will be filled with God’s love’.

transgression and feel rebuke however; it is to know the beneficence of the Lord through which comes 'unity in the same feeling, life and power.'⁷⁵ For Fox, this is also the means by which to gain the support of God, to have Him by one's side at all times and so to be able to rely on Him and allow the Lord to act through one. ('Stand ye *still* and see the salvation of the LORD with you' 2 Chronicles 20.17). Here is the way to spiritual discernment in mystical transparency.

Fox indicates growth or progression in the process of standing still in the light. There is 'a first step to peace' in which there is the possibility of gaining peace by virtue of relinquishing 'sin and transgression'⁷⁶ and thus being freed from it; and then, moving into peace and power with God, who will be the redeemer and saviour of all life, and lead humankind into unity, which 'hath been talked of but now it is come'.⁷⁷ Thus Inwardness is not a fleeting engagement. For Fox patience and waiting within the experience of God, in the Light, is vital to spiritual growth: it is 'the way to God, conversion, regeneration and translation ... from death to life, darkness to light...'⁷⁸

2.4 . Consequences of Inwardness

The focal concern of Fox's teaching is that all people participate in a transformative process through which the move from sin and transgression results in perfection. He says that, '... the Lord showed me that such as were faithful to him in the power and light of Christ, should come up into that state in which Adam was before he fell'.⁷⁹ The point here is not then to do with knowing but rather with becoming or, ultimately, with Being. This is a state of simplicity but also of fullness in God; a sinless state of purity and righteousness for which all mankind is intended. Thus there is in Fox's understanding a vision of possibilities: humanity, although frail and of limited spiritual measure, has the

⁷⁵ Fox, *Journal*, p. 282.

⁷⁶ Fox, *ibid*, p. 17; see also p. 348, 'the first step of peace' and p. 281 'patience must get the victory' in which '[all] come into peace and covenant with God, and fellowship with another'.

⁷⁷ Fox, *ibid*, p. 204.

⁷⁸ Fox, *ibid*, p. 283.

⁷⁹ Fox, *ibid*, p. 27.

capacity through Christ, to come to perfection: - ‘making people as clean here whilst upon the earth as Adam and Eve were before they fell’.⁸⁰ Cleansing is the process of salvation; and, as Fox suggests, ‘God would have all men to be saved’.⁸¹

Individuals and the corporate gatherings of Quakers must keep ‘still and cool’ and not allow ‘the heating state’ to prevail.⁸² ‘So every one in your measures of the spirit of God and Christ, be faithful, that in it you may increase and answer the Lord in a good life and conversation ...’⁸³ The need then is for everyone to grow in their measure. If Friends manage to stay ‘still and cool’ and to be low,⁸⁴ restoration,⁸⁵ and salvation⁸⁶ will be attainable. However, personal transformation is conditional upon spiritual practice and obedience to God. As Fox says, ‘All you who love the light, you love God and Christ, and *if you love it and obey it, it will lead you out of darkness, out of evil deeds into the light of life, into the way of peace and into the life and power of truth*’.⁸⁷ Quaker Inwardness is for the sake of fostering new life, seeing a new possibility – a life lived in fulfilment and fullness individually and corporately.⁸⁸

⁸⁰ Fox, *Journal*, p. 216.

⁸¹ Fox, *ibid*, p. 550, also, with reference to salvation by ‘grace’ see p. 530. See also Barclay, on the remission of sins, in the *Apology*, the seventh proposition concerning *justification*.

⁸² Fox, *ibid*, p. 340.

⁸³ Fox, *Works* 8, *Epistle CCLXXXVIII*, p. 37. See also Ephesians 4:11-16.

⁸⁴ Fox, *ibid*, p. 176.

⁸⁵ Fox, *ibid*, p. 575.

⁸⁶ Fox, *ibid*, p. 530 and p. 550, concerning ‘being saved’ and ‘salvation’.

⁸⁷ (My emphasis). In similar vein Fox maintains that growth is shared, or corporate, See 2.4.2.

⁸⁸ See Jantzen, G. *A Place of Springs: Death and the Destruction of Beauty*. (Vol. 3) (Carrette, J and Joy, M. eds.) (London: Routledge, 2010) pp. 182-194.

2.4.1. Personal transformation and individual concern

‘For with the light man sees himself’ asserts Fox.⁸⁹ He claims that ‘As the light opens and exercises thy conscience, it will ... let thee see invisible things, which are clearly seen by that which is invisible in thee ... That which is invisible is the light within thee, which he who is invisible has given thee a measure of...’⁹⁰ For Fox the transformative process of the individual concerns the transition from ‘darkness to light’,⁹¹ from ‘the changing to the unchanging’,⁹² and from ‘the temporal to the eternal’.⁹³ This is a process of growth in which ‘if you love this light it will teach you, walking up and down and lying in bed’ i.e. at all times.⁹⁴

Individual transformation is not inevitably instantaneous or even rapid, although for the first Quakers it would seem to have been so. Accounts of living in the light and of the joyful abundance of the experience indicate that many of Fox’s earliest followers were in a state of readiness to receive his message and to know, with the certainty of experience, the value of all that Fox offered. Men such as John Audland, Edward Burrough, John Camm, William Dewsbury, Richard Farnworth, Francis Howgill, and James Nayler, among others, seem to have been on the path to what Fox was teaching. As Braithwaite says of Dewsbury he ‘had won his way for himself to the Quaker experience’.⁹⁵ The immediacy

⁸⁹ Fox, *Works 7, Epistle CXLIX*, p. 142, this statement is often interpreted as reference to seeing that one has weaknesses and is sinful. However it is also possible that it can refer to seeing that one has the potential for life in Unity. The ‘invisible’ things, by whatever name, would surely include Spirit and Consciousness as the means to know that which is of most value in oneself – Eternal Being. The latter interpretation would encompass Fox’s vision of the potential of spiritual growth and the understanding discussed in chapter 6 of this thesis.

⁹⁰ Fox, *Works 4, Doctrinals*, p. 34.

⁹¹ Fox, *Journal*, p. 282-283.

⁹² Fox, *ibid*, p. 174-5, referring to the end of changeable things.

⁹³ Fox, *ibid*, p. 59, ‘... mind that which is eternal and invisible ...’ and p. 60, ‘immortal and invisible things brought to light in you...’

⁹⁴ Fox, *ibid*, p. 144. See also chapter 6 relating to ‘wakeful sleep’/awareness in sleep.

⁹⁵ Braithwaite, *Beginnings*, chapters 3 and 4, in particular, p. 65.

of convincement was not simply a matter of belief or faith but of intensity of religious experience among those (who became well known) who were ‘ready’.⁹⁶

The metaphor of ‘thin places’ might be usefully extended here to suggest a ‘thin period’ or time of readiness during which a rare spiritual enthusiasm, fuelled by Fox in relation to Quakerism, was igniting the fervour of new experience.⁹⁷ Many people, inspired by the possibility that was presenting itself, recognised the call. Braithwaite’s quotation of Howgill (below) gives a clear indication of the significance of what was happening in the dawn of Quakerism. Howgill uses the analogy of one’s own home (for the body as the temple of God) and the need to acknowledge and then clean away the clutter and dirt among which will be found ‘the grain of mustard seed which the Kingdom of God is like’, so it is necessary to ‘return home to within’ and ‘here you will see your Teacher not removed into a corner, but present when you are on your beds and about your labour, convincing, instructing, leading, correcting, judging and giving peace to all that love and follow Him’.⁹⁸

According to King, Fox maintains that anyone who turns to the light within:

... comes to *feel* the light, and in it to enjoy peace, quietness, purity, a state of permanence, and a unity and fellowship with God that is so intimate that he can realise that his body is the temple of God and Christ and the Holy Ghost for them to dwell in him and walk in him.⁹⁹

For Fox the regenerative, transforming process of spiritual development is one in which ‘the divineness and sufficiency’ of the light convinces humankind leading to conversion and a new life. The result is walking away from, or forsaking, sin and toward

⁹⁶ Braithwaite, *Beginnings*, ‘They were men, moreover, of a singular advanced religious experience, for their intense sincerity of purpose had carried them beyond the doctrines and professions which satisfied others till they felt themselves prodigals, who had spent all and were in want, and they had then been brought into the abiding bliss of the Father’s house through the eternal life which sprang up in their hearts and brought them into union with Him’ p. 94.

⁹⁷ Borg, *The Heart of Christianity*, Chapter 8. Borg attributes the metaphor to Celtic Christianity; ‘Thin places are places where [these] two places of reality meet or intersect’, p. 155.

⁹⁸ Braithwaite, *ibid*, p. 97. See also chapter 1 on spiritual growth and 4.2.2 on removal of the ‘veil’. Also 2 Corinthians 3: 13–18, concerning ‘the veil’ and as a token of modesty and concealment, Genesis 24.65.

⁹⁹ King, *Light Within*, p. 61.

the grace of God in which ‘Man’s free turning to the light makes possible the effecting of salvation within him by God’.¹⁰⁰

The first Quakers seemed almost immediately transformed. There is an indication in Fox’s writing, however, of the need for patience and waiting which suggests that transformation was, for most people, over time.¹⁰¹ King claims that ‘Fox had great confidence in the moral uprightness of Friends as individual men and women, but theoretically he seems to have believed that the regenerate man grew gradually within the human being and that it is only the regenerate man that is sinless’.¹⁰²

There is also indication that Fox implies an ‘if-then’ situation i.e. transformation is certain but only if mankind worships and lives in a certain way so that individual life is brought into intimacy with the divine.¹⁰³ As indicated above, according to King, this is a matter of individual choice in which the individual will is pivotal.¹⁰⁴ Nonetheless, Fox writes of the importance of grace, often in terms of God’s love. However, he ignores the Puritan distinction between the grace that was in everyone, but didn’t necessarily save them from sin and the ‘special grace given to some that does save them’.¹⁰⁵

So in the process of personal transformation the individual is substantially changed from a life of frailty, limitation and sinfulness into a new state of life and consciousness. It is the personal concern to grow that facilitates transfiguration and enables the individual to acknowledge the parallel nature of the mystical and the moral, which is the imperative

¹⁰⁰ King, *Light Within*, p. 64.

¹⁰¹ Fox, *Journal*, pp. 12-13, ‘Therefore, all wait patiently upon the Lord, whatsoever condition you be in; wait in the grace and truth that comes by Jesus; for if ye so do, there is a promise to you, and the Lord God will fulfil it in you’.

¹⁰² King, *ibid*, p. 74.

¹⁰³ Borg implies that, in terms of worship, it is not only possible but actually necessary to create thin places, ‘Worship is about creating a sense of the sacred, a thin place’, Borg, *The Heart of Christianity*, p. 157.

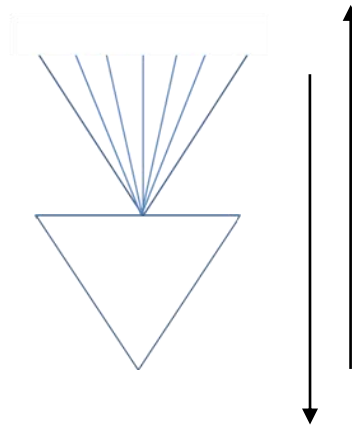
¹⁰⁴ King, *ibid*, p. 60.

¹⁰⁵ Ambler, R, *Truth of the Heart*, p. 159.

of God.¹⁰⁶ Fox's message was 'of universal significance and was proclaimed as a gospel for all men' known initially in Inwardness and in turn practised in life i.e. in 'gospel order'.¹⁰⁷[g]

Figure 3 combines and juxtaposes the two previously shown figures (1 and 2). The two shapes are not intended to be separate, as though dualistically related, but rather, they are understood as contiguously connected. Thus movement between the two domains is achieved smoothly. Together with the two arrows to the right, the figure is intended to show interaction between the two sections of the figure. It thus indicates the manner in which attention moves from outwardness to inwardness and back again in Quaker worship, and in living. This results in personal transformation as porosity begins to occur between the two domains.

Figure 3 Inwardness and Outwardness in alternating relation



Alternation of experience giving rise to porosity between Inward and Outward

¹⁰⁶ King, *Light Within*, p. 72.

¹⁰⁷ Braithwaite, *Beginnings*, p. 131.

The attention of individuals participating in worship is known to settle into the Silence within.¹⁰⁸ For Fox this is the Light of Christ, known and experienced as God. For practitioners of other spiritual practices, it may be termed the Transcendental Reality or Eternal Being.¹⁰⁹ In worship after a period of time (longer or shorter according to the consistency and regularity of practice) the individual's attention moves towards the outwardness of thinking. Thomas Kelly describes this as follows:

At first the practice of inward prayer is a process of alternation of attention between outer things and the Inner Light. Preoccupation with either brings the loss of the other. [Figures 1, 2 and 3] Yet what is sought is not alternation but simultaneity, worship undergirding every moment [Figure 4].¹¹⁰

The alternation between outwardness and Inwardness takes place both between daily living and worship, and also in the movement of the mind and heart during worship itself, as shown in Table 1. The result of this alternation is that Inwardness begins to be known in outwardness and, in due course, at all times.¹¹¹ Figure 4 represents the development of porosity between Inwardness and outwardness.

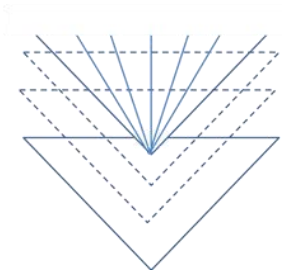
¹⁰⁸ For Fox Stillness and Silence are both considered significant in Quaker spiritual practice. It is interesting to note, by comparison, that in the Tibetan teaching of Dawa Gyaltzen, the Tibetan Bon *dzogchen* master of the 8th Century, Spaciousness is as important as Stillness and Silence. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, *Awakening the Luminous Mind* (London: Hay House, Inc. 2012), chapter 1, indicates that the three doors of refuge are referred to as stillness, silence and spaciousness.

¹⁰⁹ See Keiser's use of terms in 'Answering that of God' in *QTS Proceedings* for 1996/1997, p. 18-46.

¹¹⁰ Kelly T. *Testament of Devotion*, p. 13. See also Appendix 1.

¹¹¹ This state of consciousness, described fully in chapter 6, is a developed state of Inwardness rather than the first knowing, which occurs in worship initially but is not retained outside worship.

Figure 4–Growth of Interiority as process



The move towards Unity

In time, the practitioner/worshipper begins to find that the Silence of the Inward, Spiritual Realm is becoming established, remaining in awareness even when the period of worship is over.¹¹² This is the growth of Interiority in which the Transcendental Reality is infused into everyday life affecting all experiencing, relationships and behaviours.

2.4.2 Social concern and corporate discernment

Fox urged his followers not to:

... strive about outward things; but dwell in the love of God, for that will unite you together, and make you kind and gentle one towards another; and to seek one another's good and welfare, and to be helpful one to another; and see that nothing be lacking among you, then all will be well.¹¹³

He was keen to foster the fellowship that he believed would give rise to communities of F/friends, who grow into the Friendship that is specifically Quaker. Communities of

¹¹² See Quaker Quest, *Twelve Quakers and Worship* (London: Quaker Quest, 2004) 'worship is cumulative: stillness is expanding into the rest of my life...', p. 18.

¹¹³ Fox, *Works*, 8 *Epistle CCXL*, p. 131.

Friends were encouraged ‘to live in the light’ and to, ‘Mind the light, that all may be refreshed one in another and all in one’.¹¹⁴

Fox envisaged that a community of worshippers whose aspirations were those he preached would become a group of people who were not only friends with each other, but who lived in friendship with God – here arises the notion of Quakers as Friends, (sometimes called Friends in the Truth¹¹⁵) in which each person knows ‘the power of God in one another’.¹¹⁶ Social concern and corporate discernment were, and are, imperative to such a community. Any community, religious or other, consists of the individuals who comprise it. Therefore, in relation to Quakerism, there is considerable onus on each person to live in accordance with the principles and practices of shared faith: Fox urged, ‘everyone in your measures of the spirit of God and Christ be faithful, that in it you may increase and answer the Lord in a good life and conversation ...’¹¹⁷

Personal growth and transformation is therefore the means by which the communities of Friends were nourished. ‘Group life of the simplest kind began inevitably and naturally from the first; indeed, it was characteristic of Fox that he won men to an acceptance of his message, not merely as individuals but most often in groups’.¹¹⁸ The acceptance of Fox’s message by people in their groups thus aided the formation of a uniquely bonded fellowship, the characteristics of which were, in all ways, an expression of ‘gospel truth’. This did not mean, for Quakers, adoption of the written, biblical gospel but rather a state of life in which ‘the power of God’ ordered the life of the people of the whole community.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴ Fox, *Works 7, Epistle IV*, p. 18.

¹¹⁵ The first name for the Society acknowledged Quakers as Friends in the Truth. See Ambler, *Truth of the Heart*, p. 157, relating to John 15:14-15.

¹¹⁶ Fox, *Epistle XXXIV, Works 7*, p. 42. Fox also makes several references to the importance of knowing the power, life, image, wisdom of God in Epistle XXXIII, p. 40.

¹¹⁷ Fox, *Works 8, Epistle, CCLXXXVIII*, p. 37.

¹¹⁸ Braithwaite, *Beginnings*, p. 130.

¹¹⁹ Ambler, *Truth of the Heart*, pp. 158-159.

The outcome was to live in a) gospel order and b) in accordance with Quaker Testimony.¹²⁰[g]

Gospel order, according to Dobbs' interpretation of Fox, has its roots in an understanding that God's creation is a template for order.¹²¹ An important distinction arises in which doing things 'in God's will' is a world away from doing things 'in one's own will'; the first is divinely guided, the second merely a matter of human decision-making. Fox recognised the need to set up an organisation that would work in accordance with divine guidance; regular meeting for worship together with a life of fellowship as a 'gathered people' was the means to this.¹²² Quakerism:

...won its way because it brought to the simple-hearted a spiritual life, filled with sacrifice but filled also with joy of the Lord, rich in fellowship with Him and with one another, a life whose passion was obedience to the light, whose secret strength overcame all oppression, while its integrity of conduct shamed prejudice and scorn, and whose reward was continually being found in the greatest of all prizes-fuller and more abundant life.¹²³

Out of this mode of Quaker life and its developing patterns of organisation came the Quaker models of ministry, group discernment and social responsibility.¹²⁴ In 1659 Edward Burrough said:

We are not for names, nor men, nor titles of Government, nor are we for this party nor against the other ... but we are for justice and mercy and truth and peace and true freedom, that these may be exalted in our nation, and that goodness, righteousness, meekness, temperance, peace and unity with God, and with one another, that these things may abound.¹²⁵

¹²⁰ See Muers, R. *Testimony*, pp. 151-152.

¹²¹ Dobbs, J. *Authority and the Early Quakers*, (Frenchay: Martin Hartog, 2006). See also Cronk. S., *Gospel Order* (Pendle Hill Pamphlet No.. 297, 1991), pp. 9-13.

¹²² The record of this process is in Fox's *Journal*.

¹²³ Braithwaite, *Beginnings*, p. 513.

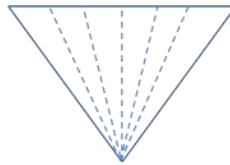
¹²⁴ Dobbs, *ibid*, chapter 6.

¹²⁵ *Quaker Faith and Practice*, subsequently *QFP*, 23.11.

This understanding remains the foundation of Quaker Testimony as witness ‘to keep the ancient principles of truth’ and to ‘live in the power of the Lord God’.¹²⁶ In the twentieth century the Testimonies, plural, have emerged as Peace, Equality, Simplicity and Truth in living Social Responsibility, although initially Testimony, singular, denoted all of life.¹²⁷ Growth of Inwardness provides the foundation of the consequences of Inwardness, and the infusion of Inwardness in outwardness as Testimony.

Figure 5 depicts the expansion of the conscious experience as Inwardness expands into outwardness by showing the two domains as fully infused.

**Figure 5–Infusion of Inwardness into outwardness:
the reality of experienced unity**



Inwardness and outwardness are depicted in Figure 5 as being totally enmeshed, porosity is complete.

2.5. Unity

To understand Fox’s teaching, it is often useful to juxtapose one statement with another. It is in seeing the different nuances of his meaning, by examining words in context, that profound implications become apparent. However, Fox’s repeated use of a

¹²⁶ Fox, *Works*, 7, *Epistle CCLXIII*, p. 328.

¹²⁷ In the twenty-first century there has been a suggestion that there should exist an Environmental testimony and much thought has been given to issues of sustainability. See Lunn, P. ‘*Costing not less than everything*’, Swarthmore lecture, (London: Quaker Books, 2011).

term sometimes with different explanatory concerns reveals that he is not entirely consistent.¹²⁸ Nowhere is this more evident than in references to ‘unity’.

There is no doubt that ‘unity’ as reality, rather than as idea or aspiration, is significant for Fox. However, there is need to distinguish different usages of the term and, especially, two particular interpretations. These are that ‘unity’ is:

2.5.1 Togetherness¹²⁹, or ‘fellowship ...in community’¹³⁰

2.5.2 The ‘hidden unity in the Eternal Being’.¹³¹

Fox wrote, ‘All they that are in the light are in unity; for light is but one’.¹³² Further in the same Epistle he wrote of living ‘in love’ and ‘abiding inwardly in the light, [which] will let you see one another, and unity with one another’.¹³³ Yet Fox indicates that there can be no ‘unity with one another being out of the power and spirit of God’. There can, however, be friendship and fellowship. Fox often uses the two terms, ‘unity’ and ‘fellowship’ where it is unclear if he intends to distinguish the two, to suggest one can lead to the other, or to indicate they are the same thing.¹³⁴ However, friendship, once having gained Quaker significance, was a friendship shared in and with God: it was Friendship (upper case F). As King indicates, it has the potential to bring a unity that exceeds human natures.¹³⁵

¹²⁸ Moore, *Consciencess*, p. 82 ‘idiosyncratic use of some words’ and p. 105 ambiguity on account of ‘blur[ring]’ distinctions.

¹²⁹ *QFP*, 2.47.

¹³⁰ Fox, *Journal*, (Letter to Lady Claypole 1658), p. 346.

¹³¹ Fox, *ibid*, 28.

¹³² Fox, *Works 4, Doctrinals*, p. 43.

¹³³ Fox, *ibid*, p. 43. In relation to Worship see Quaker Quest pamphlet *Twelve Quakers and Worship* p. 26. ‘As each of us finds a tranquil centre within, so the stillness of each person meets the stillness of the others.’

¹³⁴ Fox, *Journal*, p. 17.

¹³⁵ King, Section 1.3, King, *Light Within*, p. 154.

The distinction between the two interpretations of unity is discussed below.

2.5.1. Unity as ‘togetherness’, or ‘fellowship in community’

In the first interpretation integrity, love and truth all get bound together in understandings of unity as friendship, which facilitates gathering together: ‘all wait in the measure of life, that with it your hearts may be knit together’.¹³⁶

In his Preface to Fox’s *Journal*, William Penn, writing about those who rose against Fox’s teaching, says they did not consider the significance of the fact that ‘...the principle is one in all.’¹³⁷ And ‘though the measure of light or grace might differ, yet the nature of it was the same, and being so, they struck at the spiritual unity which a people guided by the same principle are naturally led into’.¹³⁸ The spiritual unity to which Penn refers was manifest in a way of life, based on spiritual practice, organised by a growing body of church affairs which embraced ‘gospel order’.¹³⁹ It is unclear to what extent, for him, Quaker fellowship and a more profound understanding of unity is seen to be related or to lead to the growth of the shared spiritual life.

Fox intends communities of worshippers who dwell in faithful lives as neighbours to uphold each other on their spiritual paths, both in worship and in everyday affairs. He explains:

... Friends are not to meet like a company of people about town or parish business, neither in their men’s or women’s meetings, but to wait upon the Lord, and feeling his power, and spirit to lead them, and order them to his glory; that so whatsoever

¹³⁶ Fox, *Works 7, Epistle CXXXII*, p. 129. Unity without a capital letter implies ‘Fox’s use regarding ‘Fellowship’ and also that of other theologies. Unity with an upper case will be used to refer to Unity as in this thesis as a particular development of consciousness. See also 2 Corinthians 3:1-5.

¹³⁷ See concerning the Perrot Affair, Braithwaite *Beginnings*, p. 420-426 and Dobbs, J. *Authority*, on the Wilkinson Storey Controversy, p. 182. Both relate to issues of authority and what was seen to be the erosion of the significance of the leadings of the Spirit.

¹³⁸ Fox, *Journal*, p. xlvi.

¹³⁹ Fox, *ibid*, p. 513.

they may do, they may do it to the praise and glory of God, and in unity and in fellowship in the order of the gospel...¹⁴⁰

The practice of Inwardness is shared in meetings for worship and its consequences lived together in a life that is ordered in the Spirit: the latter reflects 1 Corinthians 14:40 'let all things be done decently and in order'. This degree of fellowship is intense and the description that 'their [Quakers'] hearts were knit to one another and to the Lord in fervent love' is apt.¹⁴¹ It suggests that fellowship is rooted in faith and love. Fox explains:

... worship in the spirit and in the truth, hits all men and women; they must come to the spirit in themselves, and the truth in the inward parts; ... if they be worshippers of God in the truth and the spirit ... They must come to the truth in the heart, to the hidden man in the heart, to a meek and quiet spirit.¹⁴²

This suggests that Friends are to be in harmony, united in their Fellowship.

This is about a unity that produces and reflects joy according to Philippians 2:1-4. Here Paul says 'if then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind'. The possibility of a profound sense of Unity is intimated here.

Above is a first interpretation of unity. Thus the idea of Friends 'being in unison with' or agreeing with each other is one way that unity is understood as having a meaningful relation to the Quaker way of worship and behaviour. Sometimes a quality of togetherness is suggested as sweetness or coolness.¹⁴³ It may be referred to as attunement or meeting of minds i.e. concord as agreement.¹⁴⁴ In this understanding the further

¹⁴⁰ Fox, *Works* 8, *Epistle*, CCCXIII, p. 70.

¹⁴¹ Braithwaite, *Beginnings*, p. 96. See also Hinds on the notion of 'seamlessness', above 1.3.

¹⁴² Fox, *Works* 7, *Epistle* CCXXII, p. 229 and 1 Peter 3.4.

¹⁴³ *QFP*, 19.57.

¹⁴⁴ *QFP*, 13.09 indicates the need to come together in 'greatest love, kindness and discipline' as the means to such accord, especially in considering any Friend's concern [g].

implication is a readiness to be open to the will of God – and to ‘let thy will be done’.¹⁴⁵ However there may be recognition here that action might sometimes be other. Unity that is merely friendship may result from Inwardness as a natural duty of behaviour. It is not, however, Unity in Eternal Being.

2.5.2. Unity as the Oneness of Eternal Being

King’s discussion of unity as affording ‘permanent security from the evils of disunity and change’ suggests more than mere friendship, which is subject to the vagaries of influence and manipulation.¹⁴⁶ Reference to unity that is enduring and supersedes the world of change, being written in the heart, is of an entirely different order.¹⁴⁷ In the ‘hidden unity in the Eternal Being’ there is no possibility of doing other than acting according to the will of God.¹⁴⁸ Fox relates this state of life as reflecting ‘unity with all creation’.¹⁴⁹ King acknowledges that in Quakerism ‘unity that is fellowship involves a new more intimate relation between the individual and God’.¹⁵⁰ She suggests, however, that Fox’s ideas on this issue (the union that can be called Unity) are ‘shifting and blurred’.¹⁵¹ Nonetheless, Fox’s statement is straightforwardly expressed: ‘Mind that which is eternal, which gathers your hearts together up to the Lord, and lets you see that ye are written in one another’s hearts’.

¹⁴⁵ *QFP*, 21.51.

¹⁴⁶ Section 1.3.

¹⁴⁷ This is a reference to the New Covenant i.e. ‘written in the heart’. There is a long history of heart references concerning spiritual life and the inner prayer. ‘The heart has been called the ‘reception room’ of the Lord’. Theophan the Recluse (in Ware, 1979) says that ‘Everyone who meets the Lord meets Him there; He has fixed no other place for meeting souls.’ See also Hamby, C. ‘When the Mind Descends to the Heart’ in *Faith Initiative*, 19, (2008), p. 41–45, and Hamby, C. ‘Discipleship: When the Heart is Captured’ in *Faith Initiative*, 18, (2007 a), p. 34. Note ‘*Heart v Mind: what makes Us Human?*’ (Malone, D. BBC 4 Tuesday 10.7.12). Independent film-maker, David Malone, asks if we are right to see the heart as merely a brilliant pump or whether it should be allowed to reclaim something of its old place at the centre of our humanity. Continuing research into the neurons in the heart suggests a new understanding of ‘the thinking’ as well as the ‘feeling’ heart. Further research is now required.

¹⁴⁸ Fox, *Journal*, p. 28.

¹⁴⁹ Fox, *ibid*, p. 2.

¹⁵⁰ King, *Light Within*, p. 120.

¹⁵¹ King, *ibid*, p. 121.

The term ‘united in a single life’ (the life, which stands in the Lord God), means, for Fox, that the individual is ‘to abide in him, and to have his presence to strengthen you, so that through him you may do all things which he commands and requires of you’.¹⁵² The expression relates closely to what Fox’s use of the term unity might indicate in its deeper meaning. It includes but supersedes friendly fellowship. On many occasions Fox suggests that he is familiar with an invisible world, a world known to be eternal and unchanging, as indicated in his words: ‘mind that which is eternal, which gathers your hearts together up to the Lord’.¹⁵³ King maintains that Fox ‘himself felt in a high degree this craving for the unchanging’.¹⁵⁴ This seems to be reference to a second interpretation of unity: it has far reaching implications – togetherness in an invisible and eternal world suggests unity that is spiritual, and inward, rather than physical, emotional, and outward. Indeed, it is one that excludes the notion of togetherness, since togetherness requires more than one party or entity – a bringing of particulars into relation. True unity, in the sense that is of or within ‘Eternal Being’ dissolves particulars into an indivisible oneness: it is Unity of pure consciousness fundamentally unallied to, but influential upon, thinking and behaving.

Figure 5 indicates a state of life in which outwardness and Inwardness exist in a state that is continually united – outwardness is known in Inwardness and Inwardness is known in outwardness. This state stabilised in Interiority facilitates the fullness of Unity between individuals, not as between ‘mere human natures’ but rather in a mutually experienced state of consciousness.

A living experience of Inwardness known and felt together is the means for Friends corporately to ‘live in the Spirit’, and ‘the light’ as the light of God within. Fox used many and varied ways of urging Friends to focus their attention to the Lord: ‘stand in his will and counsel’,¹⁵⁵ as ‘Teacher within’, ‘Mind the light and dwell in it’,¹⁵⁶ ‘... mind the

¹⁵² Fox, *Works*, *Epistle CCCLXI*, p. 175.

¹⁵³ Fox, *Works* 7, *Epistle XXIV*, p. 31.

¹⁵⁴ King, *Light Within*, p. 110.

¹⁵⁵ Fox, *Works* 7, *Epistle CXIII*, p. 113.

light and power of Christ Jesus in you’...¹⁵⁷ ‘stand still in the light, and submit to it’,¹⁵⁸ ‘wait in it, and love it’, and ye shall have ‘the light of life’.¹⁵⁹ He indicated that the way to live in Unity was by living in the Spirit as present to consciousness at all times.

Sometimes early Quakers qualified unity as being spiritual and spoke or wrote of ‘spiritual unity’¹⁶⁰ or ‘our unity in the Spirit’.¹⁶¹ Although this use of terms is not sufficiently defining to provide an unequivocal interpretation, it is a phrasing that seems consistent with the second account of Unity indicated above. Isaac Penington, quoted in *Quaker Faith and Practice*, suggests the need for ‘feel[ing] the same Spirit’¹⁶² and, again ‘the same Spirit and life’.¹⁶³ This suggests more than mere agreement, it is Unity that is a way of being and living together.¹⁶⁴ Here is, in the latter, no joining of entities but a merging into and expansion on the level of Oneness.¹⁶⁵ Self-evidently this is not a reference to physical or material unity, but rather to Unity of consciousness in spiritual experiencing.¹⁶⁶

¹⁵⁶ Fox, *Works 7, Epistle CXII*, 112.

¹⁵⁷ Fox, *Works 7, Epistle CCLVII*, p. 308.

¹⁵⁸ Fox, *Works 7, Epistle X*, p. 20.

¹⁵⁹ Fox, *Works 7, Epistle XXXIV*, p. 42.

¹⁶⁰ Sometimes regarded as ‘reciprocal correspondence with God’, *QFP*, Rufus Jones, 2.16.

¹⁶¹ *QFP*, 19.22.

¹⁶² *QFP*, 23.74.

¹⁶³ *QFP*, 27.13.

¹⁶⁴ This is discussed more fully in chapter 5 and on Thomas Kelly in Appendix 1. Analogously the difference between Friends’ *togetherness in F/friendship* and their *unity in Eternal Being* is like the difference between beads strung closely together on a thread, and globules of mercury, which, once they touch, form a single pool.

¹⁶⁵ Subsequently, in this thesis, this distinction will be maintained and where the term ‘Unity’ is employed it will be in the latter sense (profound oneness in the Spirit, singleness of consciousness in the Life), otherwise the terms *agreement*, *concord* or *fellowship* are applied.

¹⁶⁶ Except in the sense in which the Church is sometimes described as ‘the body of Christ’.

This more profound understanding of Unity relates closely to King's recognition that 'There is no real unity between merely human natures'.¹⁶⁷ King is right to observe that knowledge, no matter the quantity, is not the means to unity. 'It is in living unity with the power, and seed, with Christ, who is eternal and without beginning or ending, that man has life, for Christ is that life.' Unity in the life of God through Christ is, then, for Fox true Unity that is known experientially in the self and thus united in the same living presence in others.

This second interpretation of Unity allows for an understanding that multiplicity and diversity are still part of a person's outwardly active life; their personality, their gifts and their behaviours and involvements remain different and distinct. However, on the level of their consciousness the person is attuned perpetually to oneness with God: Oneness predominates in experience. It is the sharing in this all-embracing Oneness that opens Unity as a reality rather than as an idea. In accord with 1 Cor. 10:17, this suggests a humanity 'united in the same mind and the same purpose' bestowed 'through the mind of Christ'. (1 Cor. 2:16) It is, in addition, a promise of greater knowing of God in the self and of more to be experienced that is yet to come, as shown in Figure 6 (in chapter 6).

2.6 Fox's Quakerism in the context of Mysticism

Even if not a mystic of the stature of some others, Fox's 'openings' and accounts of deep experience place him in the stream of mysticism. His teaching, thus demonstrates a developed sense of mystical concern.¹⁶⁸

The examples of 'great' mystics' statements, and informative theoretical considerations, provide a wealth of material for understanding the 'world' of mysticism and George Fox's place within it. It is, furthermore, unsurprising that the spiritual religion that he developed engages a contemplative practice that has mystical characteristics. These concern: a) the focus of engagement in such practice, b) the nature of experience

¹⁶⁷ King, *Light Within*, p. 154.

¹⁶⁸ Academic researchers connect description and interpretation of experience, recognition of the purpose of spiritual practices and evaluation of stages of spiritual development. In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, analysis of mysticism, and Quakerism in the context of mysticism, benefits from an age and culture that afford both a long view (historical) and a broad one (geographical).

gained, and c) the purpose in different stages of development. The intention is not to equate Quakerism with other modes of spiritual engagement but rather to draw attention to analogous or parallel themes.

The discussion that follows only provides a sketch of examples that have significance within Quakerism and also in other mystical practices. The section is important, however, as it affords comparison between Quaker practice and other mystical practices to show how the purpose of Quaker worship compares with other approaches to spiritual development.

Carmody and Carmody, in writing of the experience of Jesus, outline a significant experience and suggest that:

... one could call the intimacy of the man Jesus, his full identification with his Father, mystical, if only because it seems to have gone far beyond the ordinary unions with God that human beings have reported, into a directly experiential union with ultimate reality.¹⁶⁹

However, it is argued here that this ‘directly experiential union with ultimate reality’ is just the unmediated depth of experience that mystics refer to, and claim as their own. It is suggested that what Carmody and Carmody perceive in the experience of Jesus could be taken as a model for the mystical potential of all mankind. When a person seeks God in the manner of the commandment (Mark 12 30-31), with all his or her heart and mind and loves his or her neighbour as the self, that person demonstrates devotion to the search for ultimate fulfilment in God – ‘beyond the ordinary unions with God’.¹⁷⁰

The above represents a description of the life of the mystic, which also describes the life of the early Quakers and some present day Friends. More modest descriptions include Macquarrie’s suggestion that the mystic seeks a closer relation to God than most people and ‘has an intense experience of the holy, a contact with the divine, probably in itself

¹⁶⁹ Carmody, D.L and Carmody, J.T. *Mysticism: Holiness East and West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996) p. 196.

¹⁷⁰ This point is made in recognition of the Trinitarian perspective, which would argue for a degree of separation between human beings and God even in their deepest experience of union. See also William Johnston, below, on Oriental and Christian Nothingness.

wordless, but as he or she reflects upon it, it is put into words which embody the recipients interpretation of what has taken place'. Carmody and Carmody understand that mystics 'have a greater interest in reaching the goal than in tracking the method'.

The Christian interpretation that is associated both with Fox and, for example, Julian of Norwich resonates with Maurice Creasey's claim for the Christological framework as making most sense in explaining the purpose of spiritual practice. Any effort or struggle on the part of the individual is justified in relation to the suffering of Christ for mankind. Augustines's clear example of the difficulties of seeking offers a model with which some Quakers can empathise:¹⁷¹ The way is not always easy but it is nonetheless compelling.¹⁷² Those individuals, Quakers included, who demonstrate a tendency to mysticism engage in a life-long pursuit with all the urgent need that this involves (for example, Penington and Woolman in the past).¹⁷³

Examples concerning the nature of experience provide possibilities for in-depth examination and for cross-referencing Quakerism and other approaches to mystical practice.¹⁷⁴ The usefulness of the comparison adds depth to insights gained and to their description and interpretation. Consideration of the relationship between human effort (quest) and God's grace (gift), with reference to spiritual practice, relate to Friends as much as to any other individuals and groups, who are engaged in mystical practices. McGrath identifies three positions: 1) need for human kind to work towards spiritual

¹⁷¹ Blaiklock, E. M. (Trans) *The Confessions of St. Augustine* Book 3 'Son of tears' 'Way of restlessness'. Also Book 8, various 'musings' p. 173-184 (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1983).

¹⁷² See section 2.3.2.

¹⁷³ The writer of this thesis had her first mystical experience at the age of 13, following which most of her life has been a spiritual/mystical engagement. This has included significant periods of retreat, silence and solitude in many parts of the world. She has also been concerned for and involved in the spiritual development of others, in the role of teacher and spiritual mentor. Most recently she has taught contemplative practice workshops based on the Quaker spiritual practice outlined in this thesis.

¹⁷⁴ This exercise falls outside the possibility of the present research other than as expressed in this sketch of relevant issues. However, it is suggested here that such comparison and analysis would form a useful further study into the nature of mystical engagement.

development, 2) the grace of God as exclusive and, 3) that spiritual development is the result of human effort in conjunction with God's grace.¹⁷⁵

For most Quakers 3 is the norm.¹⁷⁶ Quakers engage in their mode of contemplation in order to put themselves in the way of God's gift; although acknowledging also that spontaneous illumination/revelation may occur. This falls outside the steady consistency of spiritual practice.¹⁷⁷ In general, however, it is the regularity of Meeting for Worship that is held as most important for Friends, especially following Fox's injunction to 'Keep your Meetings'.¹⁷⁸

The intent and purpose of spiritual practice and its resultant development of experience is to gain intimacy with what Fox terms 'Eternal Being', an expansive experience, which is often regarded as being beyond description.¹⁷⁹ However, as suggested by Maquarrie, even if the experience itself is wordless, attempts can be made at verbal interpretation after the event.

Carmody and Carmody acknowledge the 'limits of all language in the face of Ultimate Reality.'¹⁸⁰ It is this view which correlates with apophatic theology, i.e. the view that human concepts fail inevitably as descriptions of God, the Ultimate Reality, Eternal Being. A descriptive term proposed is 'divine darkness', and it is this darkness that kataphatic theologians regard as infinite, omnipresent and Absolute. God is described in various superlatives and by metaphor. The 'divine darkness' is said to be 'brilliant'.

¹⁷⁵ McGrath, A. *Christian Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), p. 44.

¹⁷⁶ Excepting those who regard themselves as non-theist.

¹⁷⁷ See Table 1.

¹⁷⁸ Fox, *Journal* p. 309.

¹⁷⁹ See also Carmody and Carmody, *Mysticism*, 'Ultimate Reality', p. 10-14. In general understandings of such experience are described within the theologies of apophaticism [g] and kataphaticism [g]. The apophatic regards mystical experience as being beyond verbal expression and the kataphatic approach uses ordinary everyday language to attempt the difficult task of describing that which is often regarded as being 'beyond words'. Each mode of interpretation finds its place within Quakerism. There are Friends, and others, who declare deep experience to be inexpressible, yet engage in lengthy verbal accounts.

¹⁸⁰ Carmody and Carmody, *ibid*, p. 204.

William Johnston's discussion of Oriental and Christian Nothingness provides some insight into the expansive 'void' of 'brilliant darkness' that seems beyond description to some mystics, and many Quakers. As Johnston makes clear there is considerable difference between Oriental understanding of Nothingness and the Christian interpretation of its experience. He claims, however, that there are also points of similarity. He argues that the Oriental view can be seen in terms of the sense of positivity in which, as likened to Julian of Norwich's words, 'All will be well, and all will be well, and all manner of things will be well'.¹⁸¹ In addition, Johnston emphasises that the negative descriptions of Oriental Nothingness are akin to the apophatic mode of understanding. In both cases it seems that the mystic experiences may relate to what scientists of the twenty first century refer to as 'the void that is not nothing': this void, for scientists, is the hotbed of creation.¹⁸² Much work may yet remain to be done on the interpretation of the Oriental, Christian and scientific accounts of no-thingness. However, it does seem likely that there is analogous understanding, where experience (or knowledge, in the case of science) is described.

The strict separation of apophaticism and kataphaticism is not a requisite of Quaker theology. If distinction is made it is argued here that it is between description of deep spiritual experience *per se* and any post event reflections. Like others before them, and in particular the Victorines,¹⁸³ the Quakers adopt a synthesis in which the nature and purpose of contemplative activity are interpreted in terms of love as allowing knowledge and the taste of the love of God.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸¹ Johnston, W. *The Inner Eye of Love : Mysticism and Religion* (London: Fount Paperbacks, 1981), p. 113.

¹⁸² Prof. Jim Al Khalili, asks 'the meaning of the void' and 'whether we can ever truly have completely empty space', concluding that this is unlikely, as he discusses forthcoming television programmes entitled 'Everything and Nothing' (Information accessed from Prof. Al Khalili's personal website. 15.6.15).

¹⁸³ Chase, S. *Contemplation and Compassion—The Victorine Tradition*, (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2003). Concerning Love and Knowledge as spiritual categories. 'Compassion in Victorine spirituality is that form of Christian love that expresses love of God through love of neighbour and which brings a complimentary (sic) balance to contemplation.' p. 87.

¹⁸⁴ See Barclay's *Apology* p. 295 with reference to Bernard and Bonaventure.

Each of these examples, concerning the purpose of engagement in spiritual practice contributes a) to cross-referencing Quakerism and other approaches to mystical practices, and b) to aspects of their interpretation in line with different, but potentially related, perspectives.

The notion of growth of measure provides a concept that members of the Religious Society of Friends accept readily. Furthermore, they understand this growth in relation to the Light: Light that is often interpreted as known in and through Christ, available to mankind as the Holy Spirit. However, if it is understood that this Light is co-extensive with all life and living the question arises as to whether the Light itself can grow. It might be argued that it is more appropriate to consider that development is rather to do with the enlivenment, in conscious acquaintance, of that which is already present. Inwardness is enlivened through contemplative practice, and enhances perception within both inwardness and outwardness.

Table 6 (chapter 6) outlines the manner in which personal spiritual development can be described both independently of and in conjunction with behavioural parallels. However, Friends do not place great emphasis on personal spiritual development as significant experience beyond all else. Fox's concern with growth of measure does prevail but it is expected to inform behaviours. Quakers teach the fact of equality, social justice and political action, (testimony), as outcomes of their religion. Emphasis on levels of personal growth, described in terms of levels of consciousness, acknowledges the possibility of engagement in a spiritual practice that gives rise to such growth, but also endorses a parallel between Quaker contemplative engagement and other approaches to and explanations of stages of spiritual development, and their consequences for living. Examples for consideration include Bernard of Clairvaux's 'stages of love',¹⁸⁵ Jan Van Ruysbroek's discussion of active life, the interior or yearning life and the contemplative

¹⁸⁵ Holt, B.P. *Thirsty for God*, Bernard of Clairvaux, (*Doctor Mellifluus*), p. 86-87.

life,¹⁸⁶ John of the Cross¹⁸⁷ and Theresa of Avila,¹⁸⁸ and the Victorine stages of contemplation and spiritual development.

The Victorine understanding is of particular relevance since it includes explanations termed ‘higher levels of knowing’.¹⁸⁹ These describe spiritual ascent within a structure of development involving six different kinds of contemplation. Whilst there is no direct connection between the Victorine scale and the levels of development shown in Table 6 to exemplify the potential of Quaker spiritual practice, a comparison is viable. It is important to the argument of this thesis in its assertion that spiritual growth is progressive and that stages are, potentially, distinguishable. The reason for emphasising this point is due to recognition that the Quaker view of equality is averse to notions of hierarchy within spiritual experience and knowledge. It is argued here, nonetheless, that this position is untenable and that the possibility of spiritual development, as growth of measure, is entailed in Fox’s preaching. It is further endorsed in other mystical teachings and records, and evident in some, though admittedly not many, Quaker writings.

Each of these explanations of spiritual development as process and path, even when different in emphasis, shares the recognition that it is possible to engage in modes of practice that facilitate growth towards the Divine. In the light of these other examples the Quaker spiritual practice, as identified in this thesis, together with the outcomes discussed, can be seen as analogous. It is thus meaningful to consider Quakerism as a mystical religion in which contemplative practice is at the heart. Rufus Jones adopted this position, asserting that Friends took readily to ‘ways of worship that encourage and assist mystical experience’.¹⁹⁰ Although there has been much discussion about, and indeed criticism of, Jones’ view, there has also been some support for a renewed consideration and a rethinking

¹⁸⁶ Holt, B.P. *Thirsty for God*, p. 93-94.

¹⁸⁷ Carmody and Carmody, *Mysticism*, p. 215-216.

¹⁸⁸ Maquarrie, J. *Two Worlds*, p. 169–173.

¹⁸⁹ Note Chase, *Contemplation and Compassion*, ‘the anagogic ascent into God’, p. 82; ‘consciousness of God is a way of life’ p. 116.

¹⁹⁰ Jones, R. *The Faith and Practice of the Quakers* (Richmond, Indiana: Friends United Press, 1980), p. 46.

of his position.¹⁹¹ Jones claimed that Quakers were, in the seventeenth century, involved in ‘a mystical group experience of a mild and unecstatic type’.¹⁹² Jones’s view on the mystical component of Quakerism is, to a large extent, consistent with the claims of this thesis. The argument here, which gives emphasis to explaining 1) the process of Quaker spiritual practice, as contemplative, and 2) its developmental nature, whilst it accepts relevance to the present day, at the same time questions the inevitability of a Christian interpretation. The detailed understanding of the process of Quaker spiritual practice initiated by Fox as presented in this thesis, and its systematised analysis, have the potential to be applied to or compared with other contemplative practices: as such the thesis makes a contribution to ongoing scholarship on mysticism.

2.7. Conclusion

This chapter has provided the framework to show how differentiated ‘threads’ of George Fox’s ministry interweave in a variety of ways. These ‘threads’ appear and re-appear in a manner which gradually gives rise to a ‘tapestry’ of concerns that provide insights into a spiritual practice that, it is claimed in this thesis, became distinctively Quaker, and intended for use in Quaker Meeting for Worship. These ‘threads’ are now presented for consideration, firstly as a conclusion to the chapter; secondly to identify key characteristics of Fox’s understanding of Inwardness; and thirdly in order to indicate their relationship with reference to the spiritual practice that Fox initiated. Thus this conclusion to chapter 2 sets out to clarify the process that facilitates what Fox seems to have envisaged as the means for his followers to ‘turn within’. It will be shown subsequently that this practice is one that offers both depth and breadth of spiritual experience on the path to Unity.

The chapter has identified key characteristics of Fox’s understanding of an approach to Inwardness as *settling/calming into stillness, development of silence, use of attentive presence, need for heart awareness in focus to God, importance of purity in uncluttered*

¹⁹¹ Endy, M.. ‘The Interpretation of Quakerism: Rufus Jones and his Critics’, *Quaker History*, 70, No. 1, (1981): pp. 3-21.

¹⁹² Jones, *ibid*, p. 47.

consciousness, discernment leading to spiritual growth, and resultant unity. These terms relate to Conditions that support experience 1) *settling/calming* into *stillness* and 2) *silence*. Once given or gained¹⁹³ the Conditions facilitate 3) *attentive presence*, 4) *heart awareness*, and 5) *focus to God* that affords 6) *purity*. Following in this sequence there is the possibility of an intensity of Elements including 7) *discernment* 8) *growth*, and the outcome that results in, or may become, 9) *Unity*.¹⁹⁴ Thus turning inward in stillness, silence and attentive waiting are necessary for personal and corporate development into u/Unity, both understood in terms of togetherness in the Fellowship of living and togetherness in Oneness of Eternal Being.

A degree of emphasis has been placed on clarifying the nature of Unity in two different interpretations in order to ensure that the significance of the practice is fully appreciated: the significance of the practice is in fact that it leads to Unity in its second and most profound interpretation. The practicalities of the first interpretation, as discussed in 2.5.1, are, it is argued, an automatic result of the second if achieved.

Section 2.6 has emphasised the fact that parallel or analogous explanations of other mystical teachings offer useful insights into Fox's Quakerism. To some extent, discussion of such an intense and deeply profound experience, as Inwardness, in terms of Conditions and Elements is a simplification that is questionable. It is justified here as offering a means to clarify aspects of the experience in order better to understand the processes and states under discussion. Thus, using the methodological approach outlined in 1.5.2, the list in Table 2 has been collated from relevant texts. It offers the possibility of 'check-marks' from which the very density of experience becomes fathomable by identifying and confirming the relationships between significant concepts. Once acknowledged these concepts are used to show how the interiorisation of spiritual practice has the potential to progress. Drawing out the consequences of the concepts separately and in combination

¹⁹³ In this thesis recognition is given to the fact that for Quakers Inwardness, as a profound spiritual experience is, in the main, gained through Meeting for Worship. (See Table 1, Meeting for Worship). It is acknowledged, however, that such experience is sometimes 'given' spontaneously and unexpectedly, as in Christian terminology 'by grace'; See also Casey, M. *Sacred Reading: the Ancient Art of Lectio Divina* (Missouri: Liguori Publications, 1996).

¹⁹⁴ All further reference to Conditions and Elements as explained and used in this thesis are given upper case to distinguish from use of terms with different or more general meanings.

allows for building the theoretical perspective that informs ongoing discussion. This same process is used in chapter 3 on Penington, chapter 4 on Barclay and chapter 5 on the modern period. Summary charts in chapter 6 demonstrate the fact that these concepts are crucial to understanding the consistency of Quaker spiritual practice since its inception in the seventeenth century as discussed in this thesis.

The texts identified for analysis, from Fox, Penington, Barclay and representatives of the twenty/twenty-first centuries are replete with information in view of which selection of quotations has been written into the main script, then designated for placement within the relevant tables. The purpose of examination in these subsequent texts is to consider how well matched Penington and Barclay, and then authors of the modern period, seem to Fox's initial teaching. It was the intention therefore to consider whether the work of these authors actually corresponds with the concepts identified in Fox. This was found to be so. If alternative concepts had seemed more important in their teaching, these would have been noted and discussed. However, in the course of the research it became clear that the approaches to gaining Inwardness, recognised as significant for Fox, were also the ones that Penington, Barclay and writers of the modern period articulated, even when on occasions expressed in different language. Of interest is the fact that although Barclay's work is stringently academic he emphasised the experiential dimension of spiritual practice.¹⁹⁵ For Penington matters of 'the heart' are voiced as of particular significance but not at the expense of the other concepts listed. In the case of the twenty/twenty first century, although the table has shown the same Conditions and Elements of spiritual practice, it has been necessary to extend headings to encompass Testimony and Political Involvement as held within the consequences of Inwardness. Tables 2-5 have been supported by the inclusion of quotations. The difficulty was in selecting appropriate results from the abundance of choice rather than its scarcity. Thus the informative samples are written into the main text, and merely placed into the charts for ease of reference.

The proposition that results from this chapter is that Fox's injunction to 'turn within' attaches specific Conditions and Elements that may be sequential and consequential in the spiritual practice of Quakers. In addition, it is suggested that the process discussed, its

¹⁹⁵ See chapter 4 on Proposition 11 of the *Apology*.

development and ultimate state are attainable through Quaker spiritual practice. The theoretical proposition is tested against the writings of Penington, and Barclay in chapters 3 and 4, and later Quakers in chapter 5. It is acknowledged, however, that the outcome and achievement of Unity is dependent, for any individual or community of worshippers, on regularity, frequency and depth of engagement with spiritual practice.

Table 2 lists the Conditions and Elements identified in Fox's teaching on Inwardness from which it is deduced that he indicated their necessity, at certain stages or phases, within Quaker worship. Listed vertically, Conditions for worship experience are: 1) *Settling/calming into stillness, waiting* 2) *Silence*. Elements of worship experience are: 3) *Attentive Presence*, 4) *Heart Awareness*, 5) *Focus to God*, 6) *Purity*, 7), *Discernment* 8) *Growth and* 9) *Unity*. These Conditions and Elements have emerged as noteworthy in the writings of Fox. The number of references and degree of emphasis that Fox places on these Elements is indicative of their significance in his teaching. Whilst it is not suggested that these are the only features of importance, it is nonetheless the case that the Conditions and Elements discussed demonstrate a continuity of concern that is worthy of emphasis. Additionally, as will be seen in chapters 3 and 4, they recur in the work of Penington and Barclay.

The order of Conditions and Elements, as noted, is not intended to be prescriptive, it does however offer a logical sequence. To put the argument in reverse order, it is worth indicating that Unity is only attainable if Growth, that is spiritual growth, both arises from and generates Discernment that demonstrates significant clearness. Many Friends will know from their own experience that without a pure heart, Purity that can sustain God Focus, any Discernment will be elusive.¹⁹⁶ This is why Attentive Presence in Silence and Stillness is essential. Here is an outline which provides a framework for understanding what Fox seems to have intended for a Quaker spiritual practice that could provide not only individual spiritual development but, possibly more important for the early Quaker project, lead to a sense of oneness among the family of Friends. It is acknowledged, however, that Stillness and Silence could seem better placed in reverse order for some

¹⁹⁶ Purity is probably best understood here in its simplest and most straightforward interpretation as one-pointedness in uncluttered and clearly focussed spiritual concern.

worshippers: this might also be the case with Growth and Discernment. Nonetheless, the order is justified as explained above. For Fox Quakerism was, and for present day Quakers remains, a church and community within which 'Unity in the Eternal Being' could become a reality. The chapter has shown the manner in which Quakerism, following Fox's introduction to spiritual practice, has the potential to lead into Unity and also demonstrates parallels with some other mystical practices.

Analysis of writings of later Quakers in chapter 5 results in the table of Conditions and Elements being supplemented.

Table 2: Fox on the process of gaining Inwardness: Conditions and Elements (Note reference numbers are self-contained in tables not continuous with main text).

CONDITIONS	
Settling/Stillness/Waiting	‘...be still a while from thy own thoughts, searching, seeking, desires and imaginations, and be stayed in the principle of God in thee ...’ ¹ ‘Be patient and still in the power and still in the light that doth convince you ...’ ² ‘Be still and wait in your own conditions, and settled in the Seed of God that does not change ...’ ³
Silence/ ‘Stayedness’	‘In the stillness and silence of the power of the Almighty dwell ...’ ⁴
ELEMENTS	
Attentive Presence	‘Therefore, all wait patiently upon the Lord, whatsoever condition you be in; wait in the grace and truth that comes by Jesus...’ ⁵
Heart Awareness/ Sensing and Feeling	‘Every one in the measure of life wait, that with it all your minds may be guided up to the Father of life, with your hearts joined together up to the Father of spirits ...’ ⁶ ‘And none can worship the God of truth, but who come to the truth in their own hearts’. ⁷
God Focussing/Attunement	‘Be patient and still in the power and still in the light that doth convince you, to keep your minds to God...’ ⁸ ‘... to stay thy mind upon God, up to God; and thou wilt find strength from him and a present help in time of trouble, in need, and to be a God at hand’. ⁹

¹ Fox, *Journal*, p. 346.

² Fox, *ibid*, p. 283.

³ Fox, *ibid*, p. 437.

⁴ *In The Stillness and Silence of the Almighty Dwell* (Letter of the 3d month, 1661, accessed from internet 7.7.12).

⁵ Fox, *Journal*, p. 75.

⁶ Fox, *ibid*, p. 175.

⁷ Fox, *Works 7, Epistle CCXXII*, p. 229 and 1 Peter 3.4.

⁸ Fox, *Journal*, p. 283.

⁹ Fox, *ibid*, p. 346-7.

Purity	‘.. the mind shall feed upon nothing but the pure light of God, ...’ ¹⁰ ‘... and so in savour and right discerning ye all in it [grace of the Lord] may be kept; that nothing that is contrary to the pure life of God ... may be brought forth...’ ¹¹
Discernment	‘... return within, and wait to hear the voice of the Lord there; and waiting there and keeping close to the Lord, a discerning will grow’... ¹² ‘wait for wisdom from God’; ¹³ this is the way to ‘right discerning.’ ¹⁴ ‘Then the spiritual discerning came into me...’ ¹⁵
Growth	‘... if you love this light, it will teach you, walking up and down and lying in bed ...’ ¹⁶ , ‘... wait for wisdom from God’ ¹⁷ ... patience and waiting ‘within the experience of God, in the Light, is vital to spiritual growth’ ¹⁸
Unity	‘Unity hath been talked of, but now it is come...’ ¹⁹ ‘... And I turned them to the spirit of God in themselves ... to have unity one with another’. ²⁰ ‘[I], being brought up into the covenant ... wherein is unity with all creation’ ²¹ Note: ‘the hidden Unity in the Eternal Being’ ²²

¹⁰ Fox, *Works 7, Epistle LVI*, p. 72 ; see also Figures 1 and 2 within the chapter.

¹¹ Fox, *Journal*, p. 173.

¹² Fox *Works 7, Epistle V*, p. 19.

¹³ Fox, *ibid*, p. 173.

¹⁴ Fox, *ibid*, p. 173.

¹⁵ Fox, *Journal*, p. 76.

¹⁶ Fox, *ibid*, p. 144; See also chapter 6 relating to ‘wakeful sleep’, better termed ‘awareness in sleep’ in the context of this thesis..

¹⁷ Fox, *ibid*, p. 173.

¹⁸ Fox, *ibid*, p. 283.

¹⁹ Fox *ibid*, 204; The significance of Unity in Fox’s teaching is discussed elsewhere; with reference to King in chapter 1, Penington in chapter 3 and, finally, in chapter 6, referring to Table 6.

²⁰ Fox *ibid*, p. 235.

²¹ Fox, *ibid*, p. 2.

²² Fox, *ibid*, p. 28.

2.8. Chapter summary

This chapter has examined aspects of George Fox's spiritual search and the significant features of his teaching, which both affected his emergence as the dominant leader of the Religious Society of Friends and shaped the Church it became. It has focused on Fox's writing to show the meanings and consequences of his injunction to 'turn within' and the manner in which this is developed in terms of Silence and Stillness, or standing still (referred to as Conditions of practice). It was shown that these two aspects of Fox's Quakerism were interwoven in his teaching on the spiritual life and well-being of Friends, both individually and in community, leading to the development of other concerns within the Quaker spiritual practice (referred to as Elements of practice).

The chapter then examined consequences of Inwardness both as personal transformation and individual concern and as social concern and corporate discernment. Unity has been discussed in terms of two distinct interpretations. These are a) togetherness in the Fellowship of living, and b) togetherness in the Oneness of the Eternal Being.

Table, 2 above, indicates a perspective on Fox's teaching concerning Quaker spiritual practice demonstrating that Quakerism has characteristics that can be compared to other mystical teachings and the manner in which they provide opportunities for spiritual development.

The next chapter explores the work of Isaac Pennington with reference to Inwardness.

CHAPTER 3: Isaac Penington on Inwardness: Life, Light and Love

3.1 Introduction

Isaac Penington has been influential throughout the history of Quakerism. His *Works*, and other writings, are broadly respected and the manner of his deeply devotional expressions has been particularly noted.¹ This chapter introduces his thoughts on Life, Light and Love. These are discussed in 3.2.1-3.2.3, to examine his interpretation of Inwardness, and 3.2.4 outlines and examines his interpretation of Quaker worship. 3.3 analyses his spirituality in terms of his understanding of Unity. 3.4 provides a conclusion to the chapter, which is summarised in 3.5.

3.2 Penington's Ministry

Much of Penington's ministry on Inwardness is discussed below under headings that reflect his primary themes: Life, Light and Love. However, by way of introduction some thoughts from Melvin Keiser's are presented as these are of significance to subsequent argument. Keiser draws attention to the fact that:

While principally talking about knowing God, all knowing for Isaac [Penington] involves connecting beneath consciousness. ...At the same time that Descartes is originating modern philosophy, grounding true knowledge in reason without prethinking awareness, and denigrating feeling as merely subjective, Isaac and other Friends are grounding knowing in feeling and sensing. Knowing is affectional. To know something in its mysterious depths is to be affected, moved emotionally, to be changed. Detached unemotional knowing is an illusion. Knowing is emergent. Waiting in silence, knowing arises through sense and feeling into patterns of thought, not, as in modernity, through imposing frameworks on phenomena – putting Nature on the rack (Francis Bacon).²

¹ Keiser, M and Moore, R. *Knowing the Mystery of the Life Within* (London: Quaker Books, 2005).

² Keiser, M in Angell, S.W. and Dandelion, P. *Early Quakers and their theological thought* (Cambridge: University Press, 2015) p. 200.

The significance of these words reminds us that Penington seems to have spoken and written from the ‘realm of spirit’; exhibiting a very deep level of consciousness. They also indicate that he (Penington) had an awareness that appreciated different levels of life as embraced in a divine reality. For Penington the ‘inward’ and the ‘outward’ are not two discrete domains of existence but are known on a sensory band or scale. What is suggested, in this thesis, is that there is movement between the inward and the outward, but a better interpretation is of a continuum that might be envisaged as a scale or range extending from one to the other. An even better image is found in recognition that the inward is known ultimately in the innermost depth of all else, and thus of the outward, so called: this gives a clearer idea of how it is that, in Eternal Being, everything is to be found ‘shading into mystery’. It is also a clarification of how Penington conceives of and embraces religion.

For Penington religion is situated in a level of consciousness deeper than what can [so] easily be named. Beneath understanding and will is the level of feeling, a dimension in the self of experience that is noticeable but also extends beneath the conscious threshold of what can be told or seen. Religion for Penington is to feel the divine life, so as to be transformed into a pure vessel of life and to manifest outwardly, and to interpret truly, the divine life in all we say and do.³

The manner in which attention in spiritual practice can seem to move from outward to inward, inward to outward and, finally, how outwardness can become porous to inwardness is made clearer as description and analysis is presented in ensuing chapters. Penington’s understanding of both religion and consciousness contribute to this clarification.

3.2.1 On ‘the Life’

Quaker theology is often concerned with descriptions and interpretations of *the Light within* (see section 3.2.2). However the focus selected by Keiser and Moore, in their comprehensive account of Penington’s life and work, is *the Life within*.⁴ Further, in his exposition of Penington’s spirituality and thought, Keiser emphasises ‘the life’ as

³ Keiser, and Moore, *Knowing the Mystery* p.213-214.

⁴ This text is thorough both historically and theologically; as such its relevance to the discussion of Penington’s understanding of Inwardness is considerable.

Penington's central theme: this theme covers 'the life of the Spirit, the life of selves in the world, and the full presence or obstruction of that divine life in our life on earth'.⁵ Keiser maintains that '[t]he metaphor life weaves together the multiple metaphors of Penington's thought'.⁶

Penington relies on many biblical quotations in his discussion and often uses lower case when writing of life. There are, however, distinguishable occasions, in Penington, when reference is being made to Life that is divine, of God in Christ, and all mankind, as against what is found in individual human being(s). Keiser maintains that the ambiguity in Penington's expressions is intentional in that he (Penington) implies not only intimate involvement of the divine in the human but also the indistinguishable 'mystery of life within'. Keiser asserts that Penington's concern was to hold divinity and humanity together in reciprocity, in recognition of the need that 'our [human beings'] spiritual existence is lived in our bodies and our bodies are sacred space (temples of the living God; see 1 Cor. 3: 16-17, 2 Cor. 6: 16)'.⁷

Another focus requires acknowledgement in discussing the relationship between human life and divine Life when links are made to Inwardness as intimate to both. This is a distinction between that which is 'in the life' and that which is 'out of the life'.⁸ The attached terms are of the self-lived in the spirit of the divine Life and 'the veiled self'.⁹ The 'veiled self is 'closed off to deeper reality', the inward.¹⁰ Keiser writes:

To observe this distinction between inward and outward, spirit and letter, is to affirm different levels of consciousness. The inward and spirit are beneath what appears on the surface. The structures of outward practice and behaviour are

⁵ Keiser and Moore, *Knowing the Mystery*, p. 121.

⁶ Keiser and Moore, *ibid*, p. 133.

⁷ Keiser and Moore, *ibid*, p. 133. In his introduction Keiser uses the upper case for Life and clarifies that God is the 'Life that engenders life'. Within this thesis the upper case is used for Life, meaning Supreme Being/Eternal Being, or God's Life and the lower case is used elsewhere.

⁸ Keiser and Moore, *ibid*, p. 136.

⁹ Keiser and Moore, *ibid*, p. 134.

¹⁰ Keiser and Moore, *ibid*, p. 134.

visible to anyone. The structures of inward thoughts and beliefs are visible as we express them, whether directly or indirectly. But beneath these there is a depth that shades into mystery at the roots of being, which contains the greatest meaning in our lives but is least accessible to others and to ourselves.¹¹

These distinctions in terminology have consequences for interpreting how Penington understands L/life. There are three in particular to be discussed.

- a) Implications of upper and lower case in discussion of L/life¹²
- b) Understanding the term L/life as metaphorical in Penington
- c) Comprehension of Inwardness, as distinct from or as a dimension of outwardness, in the interpretation of L/life.

These are considered in turn.

Penington wrote of life as follows: ‘the life God was, and is, and is to be all in all for ever’.¹³ He also wrote of ‘Pure Being itself’,¹⁴ ‘the invisible life in visibles’,¹⁵ ‘I am that I am’,¹⁶ God as the ‘spring of life’¹⁷ and ‘the infinite eternal Being’.¹⁸ In all of these references there is the implication of Life, God’s Life, as the creator, and sustainer of all life: the Life of God is written about as that which authors and engenders all other living forms.

¹¹ Keiser and Moore, *Knowing the Mystery*, p. 136. See also chapter 6 on states of consciousness and expansion of Inwardness.

¹² It is acknowledged that typesetting issues may affect publication, when this is so matters of theological distinction are not in every case clear.

¹³ Penington, *Works* ii, *Works (4 Volumes)* Glenside PA: Quaker Heritage Press, 1997 transcribed from the edition of 1863, p. 252.

¹⁴ Penington, *Works* ii, p. 252.

¹⁵ Penington, *Works*, i, p. 187.

¹⁶ Penington, *Works*, iii, pp. 95–96.

¹⁷ Penington, *Works* i, p. 402.

¹⁸ Penington, *Works* iii, p. 49.

Keiser makes it clear that, for Penington, the Life of Pure Being (God) and the lives of all living forms are enmeshed. However, if the Quaker understanding concerning the possibility of unmediated experience of God is accepted, it is questionable whether Penington means to use the related terms as metaphors. Penington's experiential theology reads as a description of his personal knowing of the Reality and realities of Life and living. In Penington the use of terms is, therefore, elaboration of an experiential understanding of the Reality and realities of Life and living rather than metaphor. He (Penington) wrote of the growth and development of his state, which Keiser refers to as a process of spiritual awakening into 'wholeness'.¹⁹ Penington expresses, with no degree of doubt, the importance of the life (using, surprisingly, lower case) that reigns 'in power and great glory'. His terms are Christian, even when his own increasing growth of measure engenders an understanding of the means of entry into the Life within that has universal connotations. This is "'the more" of Being that holds ultimate meaning'.²⁰ He entreats others to, '... [W]atch to feel the savour of life in thy heart day by day, and therein to feel leadings and drawings from life, suitable to thy state; for in this savour, and in these drawings, rises the true light, which leads into the way of life'.²¹

Here, then, Penington affirms that there is the possibility of new life, a new way of living, since all five senses are 'new made':

Life gives it [life and living] a feeling, a light, a tasting, a hearing, a smelling, of the heavenly things, by which senses it is able to discern and distinguish them from the earthly. And from this the Measure of Life the capacity increaseth, the senses grow stronger: it sees more, feels more, tastes more, hears more, smells more. Now when the senses are grown up to strength, ... doubtings and disputes in the mind fly away, and the soul lives in the certain demonstration and fresh sense and power of life.²²

¹⁹ Keiser and Moore, *Knowing the Mystery*, p. 124.

²⁰ Keiser and Moore, *ibid*, p. 147.

²¹ Penington, *Works*, ii, p. 395.

²² Penington, to Friends of Both Chalfonts, *Works* ii, p. 494. Keiser speaks of 'the spiritually enlivened physical senses' (personal communication by e mail 4.2.12). See also 'Touched and Knit in the Life' Barclay's Relational Theology and Cartesian Dualism (on the senses natural and supernatural) *Quaker Studies* 5, No. 2, (2001), p. 141-161.

For Penington living in the Life as distinct from living merely in the knowledge of the Life is considerably different. This difference is discussed further in 3.2.2 and 3.2.3.

3.2.2 On ‘the Light Within’

Life and Light are often linked in Penington but sometimes written about as though they are distinct. However, there are many occasions when Penington wrote of the Life as ‘the light of men’ clarifying that ‘the life is the light of men, and the light comes from the life, and is quick, piercing, quickening light, conveying warmth and life ... into the darkest hearts...’²³ He wrote:

Christ Jesus, the Son of God, he is the image of his substance, the exact image of this light, the light of the world, who is to light the world into this substance. So that as God the Father is to be known as light, so Christ the Son is also to be known as light. He is the only begotten of the Father of lights, the only image wherein the eternal substance is revealed and made known. And he that receives this image, receives the substance; and he that receives not this image, receives not the substance.²⁴

These words of Penington expand on John 1:5 that ‘... the light shineth in the darkness ...’ God’s Life is thus seen to engender and support all life of living beings, it is the enlightener of all that is. This view is given further expression in Penington’s *The Ancient Principle of Truth: or the Light Within Assured*. Here Penington addresses the ‘ministries’ of the Gospel (Light, Righteousness and Spirit) all of which humankind is called on to witness.

Interpretation of Penington requires examination of his words in different contexts and via different expressions. The density of his writing, and the frequent lack of a distinguishable linear argument, creates difficulties for the scholar, but the repetition of terms, issues and concerns within his articulation of experiential theology is rich and rewarding once considered. It is necessary to acknowledge significant factors, as, for example, that Penington:

²³ Penington, *Works*, iii. pp. 273-274.

²⁴ Penington, *Works*, i. p. 117.

- a) Spoke and wrote the Christian language of his time
- b) Embraced a sense of ‘threeness’ without strict adherence to Trinitarian theology
- c) Used Biblical quotation to empower his experiential knowledge in the eyes of others
- d) Encompassed a universalized comprehension of the Christian religion that extends not only to all people but to all creation.

In *The Light Within Assured* Penington asks four questions, these are:

- 1) What this Light is which we testify of, and what is the nature of it?
- 2) What it doth inwardly in the heart?
- 3) How it cometh to be lighted, set up, and increased there?
- 4) How it cometh to be diminished or extinguished in any?

In answering his own questions Penington set out to proclaim that the Light is the Light of the Spirit: God is Spirit and the Light shines from God into the heart of all mankind.²⁵ He then affirmed that ‘[F]or whosoever joineth the light of God’s spirit cannot but witness salvation thereby: for it is of a saving nature, and bringeth salvation with it (inwardly, spiritually, livingly known), and he is not, nor can be, known without it’.²⁶ He continued, explaining that the Light, working inwardly, enlightens by showing both evil and what is good in mankind, gradually inclining humanity towards the good and the righteous. The Light is not, therefore, seen as neutral. The Light shows ‘a way, a highway ... called the way of holiness’: it is to this way that Christ leads.²⁷

For humankind the need is to turn towards the Light, in order to be changed by it and transformed. This transformation is about ‘becoming light in the Lord’ so to ‘walk in the light as God is in the light’ (1 John 1:7). For Quakers and, as further explained by Penington, the manner of turning towards the Light is straightforward - it is to ‘turn

²⁵ Penington, I. *The Light Within and Selected Writings* (Philadelphia: The Tract Association of Friends, undated), p. 49.

²⁶ Penington, *ibid*, p. 50, Penington indicated that many had testified to the Light as recorded in the Bible and he cites Moses, Job, David, Solomon, the Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah Ezekiel, and Micah), John the Baptist, Christ himself and the apostles and evangelists, pp. 52–56.

²⁷ Penington, *ibid*, p. 57. See also Isaiah 35:8.

within' so as to continue in faith and practice. This is the means to 'continue in his [God's] goodness, and walk worthy of his love, that the fountain may be kept open, and the pure springs of the holy land flow, and not be sealed and shut up again'.²⁸

Penington suggests that it is possible to shut out the Light even when it has been 'discovered'. If the Light is to grow and be lived in fullness the individual must continue to be exercised in what has become known. At first the experience may be only 'in some measure and degree, and afterwards more and more' as Friends come '... to feel after, and have a sense of that which is of God, and good in the heart, and come to join and give up to it'.²⁹ In and through spiritual practice Life and Light grow in the individual.

Penington wrote frequently of 'the inward light' and 'the Light Within'. The terms 'inward' or 'inwardly' often qualify others, as for example, 'inward appearances of God',³⁰ being 'inwardly changed',³¹ 'inward reaching' to the heart³² and of God speaking 'inwardly in our own hearts...'³³ For Penington the work of 'turning within' is the way to the Life and the Light of the Spirit of God, it is the means of knowing the substance of Light and its image in full measure through Christ. Inwardness is also the means of experiencing that Love which is entailed in the Oneness of God's Life and Light known in the self.

3.2.3 On Love

That Penington experienced God as Love 'inwardly, spiritually, livingly known' ingrafted in himself is clear from the manner of his writing: it is unhesitating in its certainty. He writes with equal conviction of the fullness of God's love saying with simplicity, God

²⁸ Penington, *The Light Within*, pp. 61-62.

²⁹ Penington, *ibid*, p. 61.

³⁰ Penington, *ibid*, p. 3.

³¹ Penington, *ibid*, p. 33.

³² Penington, *ibid*, p. 14.

³³ Penington, *ibid*, p. 22.

is the fullness that runs daily, ‘that it may run into you and fill you’.³⁴ He also exposes the nature of fullness in terms of humanly known qualities that are descriptions of lovingness, ‘gifts and manifestations ... as a fountain of life and heavenly virtue...’ Penington is of the mind that God’s fullness is seen manifested richly in Christ.³⁵ Additionally it is available to all mankind as each person is ‘enlarged to receive it [fullness of love]’.³⁶

As indicated in 3.2.1, God, as Supreme Being, is discussed as Life itself which shines forth Light to animate, illuminate and enlighten, all that is in creation, according to measure of capacity: it is God’s Love that embraces and nourishes everything. God’s indwelling Light is discussed as that which awakens all beings, in their own consciousness, to the Life in which living finds its sustenance (3.2.2). In a lengthy account of Love, Penington ends with the sentence: ‘this is the nature of God’. In turn, as discussed below, God’s loving nature binds all into the overflowing Fullness that is God.³⁷

Penington draws on Ephesians 3:18 to speak of this fullness in its ‘breadth and length and height and depth’ entreating all to:

... be faithful, be faithful, travel on, travel on; let nothing stop you, but wait for, and daily follow the sensible leadings of that measure of life which God hath placed in you, which is one of fulness, and into which the fulness runs daily and fills it, that it may run into it and fill you...³⁸

So be still before him and in stillness believe in his Name...³⁹

³⁴ ‘you’ referring to Quakers in particular.

³⁵ Penington, *Works* iii, pp. 490-496.

³⁶ Penington, *Works* ii, p. 251.

³⁷ The Vedic term ‘*Purnamadah, purnamidam*’ describes the two fullnesses of God’s Reality; thus the manner in which fullness is ever full everywhere in both the uncreated and the created, the Absolute and the Relative. (Skt. *Purna(m)* full/ness of both this (*idam*) and the other (that, *adah*)). *Although* the two fullnesses are analytically described as ‘two’ they are known experientially in fully mature spiritual consciousness as One: The One Eternal Being that can never be diminished or divided.

³⁸ Penington, *Works* ii, pp. 495-496.

³⁹ Penington, *ibid*, p. 497.

Additionally in a letter *To Friends in Amersham* (1667) Penington urges Friends to ‘wait to feel this spirit, and be guided to walk in this spirit ...’ since ‘Our Life is love, and peace and tenderness; bearing one with another and forgiving one another, and not laying accusations one against another; but praying for one another and helping one another up with a tender hand’.⁴⁰ And in 1669 he wrote to Thomas Walmsley, quoting 1 John 4: 16, ‘... God is love and he that dwells in love dwelleth in God, and God in him’.

For Penington, dwelling in God arises from the ‘principle of God raised up’ in humankind and those who live inwardly in this principle come to know, what Penington describes as ‘the sweetness of life [that] fulfils the law’. It is further understood that ‘it [the principle of God raised up] fulfils the gospel; it wraps up all in one, and brings forth all in the oneness. ... A touch of love doth this in measure; perfect love doth this in fulness’.⁴¹ Penington is indicating that this Oneness is also Fulness.

O! how sweet is love! how pleasant is its nature! how takingly doth it behave itself in every condition, upon every occasion, to every person, and about everything! How tenderly, how readily, doth it help and serve the meanest! How patiently, how meekly, doth it bear all things ...⁴²

There is much more in this description of love that leads to the statement that ‘This is the nature of God’. All in all, love is enthralling, for Penington, and an all-embracing quality awaiting those who respond to the ‘knock at the door’ (Rev. 3:20). As humankind awakens to God, ‘as the Lord openeth the mind, and men come to a sense of his nature and Spirit, and his intent in sending his Son’ they receive the key that opens the truth. In Love, is found the means to transformation, even to ‘the image, purity and perfection of the light’.⁴³ The means, suggests Penington is, ‘To wait to know the mind of God and perform his will in everything ...’⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Penington, *Letters of Isaac Penington*, (London: J. and A. Arch 1828), p. 168.

⁴¹ Penington, *The Light Within*, p. 42.

⁴² Penington, *Works*, ii, p. 342.

⁴³ Penington, *Works*, i, p. 128.

⁴⁴ Penington, *Works*, ii, pp. 342-343.

For Penington, it is only possible to dwell in God when God is made alive in humankind.⁴⁵ He wrote ‘... no man can find or know him [God], but as he pleases to reveal himself by his own blessed Spirit. And Christ being God’s image, there is no knowing or confessing him, or right calling him Lord, but in and by the same Spirit’.⁴⁶ According to Penington this is a matter of inward transformation; it is spiritual and only possible for those who are ‘inwardly changed ... in the heart’.⁴⁷ The transformation that occurs in an individual, whilst from the grace of God, is nonetheless something to be sought in the spiritual worship of Friends. Penington, writing of worship, explains that it is necessary to ‘watch and wait’ ... ‘in silence of the fleshly part, to hear with the new ear what God shall please to speak inwardly in our own hearts’.⁴⁸ Penington acknowledges that Friends can learn ‘outwardly through others’ but emphasises the significance of meeting for worship in which ‘we [Quakers] appear before God’ with others.⁴⁹ Here there is ‘meeting of the same spiritual centre or streams of life’ in ‘the same spiritual nature’, that same spiritual nature that is the nature of God-Love.⁵⁰

3.2.4 On Quaker Worship

The way to God’s Life, Light and Love is, for Penington, in sensing and feeling the Presence. The most direct way to this experience is worship and it is a matter of dying ‘to your own wisdom, if ever ye will be born of, and walk in the wisdom of God’.⁵¹

Penington said:

For man is to come into the poverty of self, into the abasedness, into nothingness, into the silence in his spirit before the Lord; into the putting off of all his

⁴⁵ When the veil is removed, Barclay, *Apology*, p. 49 and section 4.2.2.

⁴⁶ Penington, *The Light Within*, p. 32; See also 1 Cor. 12:13.

⁴⁷ Penington, *ibid*, p. 33.

⁴⁸ Penington, *ibid*, p. 22.

⁴⁹ Penington, *ibid*, p. 23.

⁵⁰ Penington, *ibid*, p. 35.

⁵¹ Penington, *Letters*, p. 345. Also, personal communications by e mail, on letting go of the ego Rex Ambler, 1/2/12 and Mel Keiser, 3/2/12.

knowledge, wisdom, understanding, abilities, all that he is, hath done, or can do, out of this measure of life, into which he is to travel, that he may be clothed and filled with the nature, Spirit and power of the Lord.⁵²

This kind of worship is the wordless prayer that gives away, or gives up, everything for God: divestment of self allows investment in God the Spirit and the in-grafting of the human being in the Divine Being. As expressed by both Fox (see chapter 2) and Barclay (see chapter 4) this is a process, a spiritual practice which facilitates transformation; so also it is for Penington, who described it in the following manner:

After the mind is in some measure turned to the Lord, his quickening felt, his seed beginning to arise and spring up in the heart, then the flesh is to be silent before him, and the soul to wait upon him (and for his further appearing) in that measure of life that is already revealed. Now, this is a great thing to know flesh silenced, to feel the reasoning thoughts and discourses of the fleshly mind stilled, and the wisdom, light, and guidance of God's spirit waited for.⁵³

Penington is arguably the most thorough in explaining that the process of silent worship, and also of living in God's Presence at all times, is a matter of sensed experience.⁵⁴ His approach is not conceptual, not reasoned, not sought with an active mind. One of Penington's favoured terms is 'getting' or 'lying low'; this is about 'silent waiting on the Lord in subjection, till the life speak and make things manifest'.⁵⁵

Again and again Penington emphasises 'sink[ing]' into the feeling and 'dwelling' in the feeling and watching 'to feel the savour of life in the heart day by day...'⁵⁶ It is the savour or taste of the Life that is accessed by dwelling in the Silent Presence during worship. The means is to transcend the obvious phenomenal level of the relativities of physical existence; and even the ideas, thoughts and imaginings that refer to this level of manifestation. Keiser explains that for Penington 'God ... is not something experienced

⁵² Penington, *Works*, iv, p. 47.

⁵³ Penington, *ibid*, p. 47.

⁵⁴ Fox, chapter 2, and Barclay, chapter 4, (Tables 2 and 4) indicate compatible concerns in their consideration of process.

⁵⁵ Penington, *Works* ii, pp. 239-240.

⁵⁶ Penington, *ibid*. pp. 395-7.

yet mysterious like the sunrise. Rather God is mystery itself.⁵⁷ Thus, the movement of mind that transcends to felt and sensed Inwardness is at one and the same time a movement to the transcendental God, who is both within and beyond manifestation. This is the very grounding of all living, Being itself that is, for Penington, God regarded as ‘mystery’.⁵⁸

Of significance is the discernment that arises:

...If thou come to know God’s Spirit and to receive it, and feel it work in thee, and its pure light shine from the fountain and spring of life, thou wilt have a quicker sense and discerning therefrom, than can arise either from words written or from thoughts: that is the Lord will show thee the way, whereof thou doubtst quicker than a thought can arise in thee, and the Lord will show thee evil in a pure sense of the new nature, quicker than thou canst think or consider of anything.⁵⁹

Penington acknowledges that although fathoming the Inward is the key experience, once the individual is opened to the ‘inward parts’ the rest of life is illuminated also; and in ‘the inward and spiritual appearance of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ [is] revealing his power inwardly’ everything, even the outward and the literal, is known afresh.⁶⁰ As Penington suggested, in his *The Flesh and Blood of Christ in the Mystery, and in the Outward*, it is through the inward opening that the outward is fully appreciated.

For by the inward life and teachings of God’s Spirit, am I taught and made able to value that glorious outward appearance and manifestation of the life and power of God in that heavenly flesh (as in my heart I have often called it), for the life so dwelt in it, that it was even one with it.⁶¹

It is, then, through intimate knowing of the inward that the outward gains its full status in awareness.

⁵⁷ Keiser and Moore, *Knowing the Mystery*, p. 180.

⁵⁸ Penington, *Works* iv, p. 176. Also Keiser and Moore p. 180. According to Keiser, Penington never removed the notion of ‘Being’ from God, (Keiser and Moore, p. 179).

⁵⁹ Penington, *Works*, iii, pp. 443-44.

⁶⁰ Penington, *ibid*, pp. 357-359.

⁶¹ Penington, *ibid*, p. 359. See Figure 4, indicating porosity between inner and outer.

The perception of the inward in the outward and the outward in its full value in the inward is what Creasey emphasises as lacking in his discussion and criticism of ‘early Quaker language’. Keiser, in turn, explains that Inwardness is the dimension of the depth of the outward. In this thesis it is maintained that whilst it is possible to conceptualise this reality, as Penington asserts ‘there is a great difference between the truth held in the reasoning part, and truth held in its own principle.’⁶² ‘Held in its own principle’ truth is held in the Life, which is Light and Love in Unity.

Penington’s account of Unity is discussed next.

3.3 Penington and Unity

Penington distinguishes between uniformity and Unity, suggesting that the great error of the ages in the apostasy has been to set up an outward order and uniformity.⁶³ Such uniformity can be achieved by decision and action and, therefore, by imposition. It is, however, man-made and as Rachel King suggested not worthy of the name Unity. Rather Unity is something that is beyond human nature, requiring a growth in the Spirit.⁶⁴

Keiser points out that Penington ‘is not opposed to sameness, but spiritual unity does not consist in doing, thinking, and saying the same things but in *mutual participation in the Life*.’⁶⁵ In fact Penington says ‘Uniformity is very lovely [but it is] for the fleshly part.’⁶⁶ Unity is of a different kind. Penington answers the question: ‘Wherein doth this unity consist?’ by referring to a ‘knitting of natures’ and a fellowship ‘in the same spiritual centre or streams of life’ for preservation of the unity.⁶⁷ Here all differences are known to

⁶² Penington, *Works*, ii p. 454.

⁶³ Penington, *Works*, i p. 390.

⁶⁴ See section 1.3.

⁶⁵ Keiser and Moore, *Knowing the Mystery*, p. 160, my emphasis.

⁶⁶ Penington, *Works*, i, p. 390.

⁶⁷ Penington, *Works* ii, pp. 385-386.

and owned ‘by the same life’.^{68,69} In this state of consciousness it is possible to ‘see into the nature of things’.⁷⁰

... to feel the life, to unite with the life, and the eye will open which can see into the nature of things, and will behold all in its season; for that eye that is so eager to see, shall never see these things; but that eye alone which waits in stillness and quietness on the pleasure and good-will of the opener.⁷¹

As Fox said, ‘And the Lord showed me that such as were faithful to him in the power and light of Christ, should come up into that state in which Adam was before he fell ...’⁷² It is of this experience that Fox writes of the creation being opened to him and knowing the ‘hidden unity in the Eternal Being’. Writing of this experience, as described by Penington, Keiser maintains ‘existence shifts natural understanding’s dominion to Spirit in dwelling and leading’. This is a changed wisdom, it is no longer an intellectual construction, but a wisdom which ‘makes us like God [rather than] wisdom that makes us like our veiled selves’.⁷³

It would seem that Penington had knowledge of Unity that was experiential, that he lived in an expanded state of consciousness and expressed his understanding from a level of deeply known reality. Penington’s writing gives the sense that he was transformed into a state of life at one with the Life and consciousness, which he deemed to be the divine Presence within, Eternal Being.

3.4 Conclusion

It has been commented above that Penington is expansive in his devotion to God, which he expresses clearly in relation to the Life, Light and Love of God. This is known

⁶⁸ Figure 6 indicates that differences and diversity are not removed by unity they are, however, known experientially in a transformed consciousness that lives Unity.

⁶⁹ Penington, *Works*, ii p. 385.

⁷⁰ Fox, *Journal*, p. 27, ‘The creation was opened to me...’

⁷¹ Penington, *Works* i, p. 147.

⁷² Fox, *ibid.* 27.

⁷³ Keiser and Moore, *Knowing the Mystery*, p. 215.

in and through Inwardness in worship and lived in everyday life. Penington demonstrates qualities that have been used to characterise the involvements of mystics.

Penington's emphasis on the manner in which God is revealed to human beings facilitates an understanding of how he interprets Inwardness. His consideration of the need for stillness and silence in preparing the way for devotional worship is consistent with Fox's teaching. Furthermore, it is clear that Penington regards 'waiting' for guidance in Attentive Presence as central. Penington, perhaps more than Fox, places emphasis on the need to savour experience in and through the heart stating that it is in the heart that inward change is felt and known. In these statements, Penington confirms the validity of the proposal outlined at the end of the previous chapter i.e. that Fox's injunction to 'turn within' entails creating the Conditions of readiness to worship. Furthermore, Penington shows that once these Conditions are created Worship allows for progressive experience, suggested by the terms elicited from Fox's writing involving Attentive Presence, Heart Awareness, Attunement to God (God Focus), Purity, Discernment, Growth and Unity.

In Penington, as in Fox, the meaning and function of Inwardness is laid out for Friends in a manner designed to urge that spiritual practice and living is an orderly process: it constitutes the Quaker Way. Table 3 identifies that Penington's ministry is in accordance with Fox on issues of Conditions and Elements of Quaker faith and practice.

Table 3: Penington on the process of Inwardness

CONDITIONS	
Settling /Stillness/Waiting	‘So be still before him and in stillness believe in his Name...’ ¹ ‘Now this is a great thing to know flesh silenced, to feel the reasoning thoughts and discourses of the fleshly mind stilled, and the wisdom, light, and guidance of God’s spirit waited for...’ ²
Silence	‘For man is to come into the poverty of self, into the abasedness, into nothingness, into the silence in his spirit before the Lord’ ³ ; What is necessary is ‘silent waiting on the Lord in subjection, till life speak and make things manifest’ ⁴
ELEMENTS	

¹ Keiser and Moore, *Knowing the Mystery*, 145.(*Works*, ii, pp. 4-499).

² Penington, *Works* iv, p. 47.

³ Penington, *Works* iv p. 47.

⁴ Penington, *Works* ii, pp. 239-40.

Attentive Presence	‘[W]ait to feel this spirit, and be guided to walk in this spirit...’ ⁵ ‘Watch to feel the savour of life in thy heart day by day ...which leads into the way of life’ ⁶
Heart Awareness/ Sensing and feeling	Being ‘inwardly changed ... in the heart’ ⁷ ‘Watch to feel the savour of life in thy heart day by day
God Focussing/Attunement ⁸ ; ‘...to feel after, and have a sense of that which is of God, and good in the heart, and come to join and give up to it’. ⁹ ‘...travel on, travel on; let nothing stop you: but wait for and daily follow the sensible leadings of that measure of life which God hath placed in you.’ ¹⁰
Purity	Transformation is possible, even to ‘the image, purity and perfection of the light’. ¹¹ ‘So...come to know God’s Spirit ...and the Lord will show thee evil in a pure sense of the new nature, quicker than thou canst think or consider anything’. ¹²
Discernment	‘In that which is begotten of God there is not a hastiness or suddenness to determine; but a silent waiting on the Lord in subjection, till the life speak, and make things manifest’. ¹³
Growth	At first the experience may be only ‘in some measure and degree, and afterwards more and more’ as Friends come ‘to feel after, and have a sense of that which is of God, and good in the heart, and come to join and give up to it’ ¹⁴
Unity	All differences ‘are known to and owned by the same life’ ¹⁵ :

⁵ Penington, *Letters* p. 168.

⁶ Keiser and Moore, *ibid*, p. 155; (*Works* ii, pp. 395-396).

⁷ Penington, *The Light Within*, p. 33.

⁸ Keiser and Moore, *Knowing the Mystery*, p. 155; (*Works*, ii, pp. 395-396).

⁹ Penington, *The Light Within*, p. 61.

¹⁰ Keiser and Moore, *Knowing the Mystery*, p. 144.

¹¹ Keiser and Moore, *ibid*, p. 261.

¹² Keiser and Moore, *ibid*, p. 194, (*Works*, ii pp. 443-44).

¹³ Penington, *Works Vol. 11*, p. 240.

¹⁴ Penington, *The Light Within*, p. 61.

¹⁵ See Figure 6, differences and diversity are not removed by unity they are, however, experientially known in the transformed consciousness that lives unity.

3.5 Summary

This chapter has outlined Penington's thinking by examining his ministry on a) the Life, b) the Light Within, c) Love and, finally, d) Quaker worship, as the means to experiencing the Inwardness of God's Being and qualities of lovingness. Penington's experiential knowing and state of spiritual consciousness was considered in relation to an understanding of Unity.

The final section of the chapter showed how Penington's ministry seems to indicate a state of consciousness at one with the spiritual reality he described. In conclusion, it was argued that Penington's work validates the proposal indicated at the end of chapter 2, identified in Fox, on the process of Inwardness. Table 3 was used to show correlations between the ministries of Fox and Penington.

The next chapter examines the work of Robert Barclay.

CHAPTER 4: Robert Barclay on Inwardness

4.1 Introduction

This chapter examines Robert Barclay's *Apology* in order to analyse his view of Inwardness both as a theological concept and personal experience.¹⁶ 4.2 considers Barclay's dualistic language from two points of view, that of Keiser and Ambler, and sub-sections of the chapter deal with different aspects of Barclay's theology. Section 4.3 details Barclay's explanation of a conception of Inwardness. The section makes particular reference to propositions 2, and 11, from the *Apology*, selected for their thorough examination of 1) Quaker faith in immediate revelation and 2) the Quaker mode of accessing immediate revelation through worship. Sub-section 4.3.1 shows how Barclay's reference to the 'inward', together with a range of qualifications, is spread throughout propositions 2 and 11.¹⁷ Finally, his understanding of Inwardness is analysed in relation to the difference between covenantal assurances of the Law of the Old Testament and the New Testament Gospel. Sub-section 4.3.2 highlights the authority given to experience rather than doctrine in Barclay's work. His treatment of the experience of worship, in proposition 11, is important to a complete understanding of his view of Inwardness. The section demonstrates how Barclay distinguishes the new mode of Quaker worship, stripped of ritual and liturgy, as worship 'from the Spirit of God'. Furthermore, the section shows that Barclay intends a profound meaning for Inwardness as the source of, and means to, immediate revelation and

¹⁶ The full title of Barclay's work indicates the emphasis of the work and is, for this reason, given here in its entirety. '*An Apology for the True Christian Divinity as the same is held forth, and preached by the People, called, in scorn Quakers Being a full explanation and vindication of their Principles and Doctrines by many arguments deduced from Scripture and Right Reason, and the Testimonies of Famous Authors both Ancient and Modern with full Answer to the strongest objections usually made against them*'. Unless otherwise indicated quotations throughout the thesis are taken from Sippel, P. (ed.) *An Apology for the True Christian Divinity by Robert Barclay* (Glenside PA: Quaker Heritage Press, 2002). Sections of the *Apology* selected are central not only in terms of their biblical focus but also in the scope of their related arguments. They entail an exposition of faith in (Prop. 2) and practice of (Prop, 11) that provides insight into Barclay's conception of Inwardness. The *Apology* is written in a propositional format to offer a clear set of arguments best suited to its apologetic purpose.

¹⁷ See also analytical table at the end of the chapter.

Quaker Witness. Section 4.5 comprises a conclusion and 4.6 summarises Barclay's position on Inwardness. Finally, the chapter indicates issues discussed in tabular form.

4.2 Inwardness and Dualism with specific reference to Robert Barclay's *Apology*

Barclay's scholastic theology has drawn consideration from many Quaker scholars in the present day, since his attempts to articulate the 'spiritual religion' of Quakerism gave rise to concern about his dualistic expressions.¹⁸ Discussions include: a) Keiser's use of relational theology in his analysis of Barclay, and b) Ambler's justification of Barclay's use of apologetic language. Both are considered briefly below to remove any confusion that might otherwise arise if the issue of dualistic language is ignored.

4.2.1 Melvin Keiser's relational interpretation of Barclay's work

Keiser accepts the academic reasons for criticisms of Barclay but indicates that they should not be regarded as final in understanding Barclay's intent. He indicates that talk of 'otherness', 'beyond-ness', 'Spirit' and 'Inwardness', for example, as complex concepts, ultimately make sense only when seen in their connectedness. It is then necessary, for Keiser, that there should be comprehension, even if tacit, of a 'relational emergent framework'¹⁹ as the wholeness within which connectedness is One.²⁰ In turn, Keiser's view is that Barclay's conviction amidst the community of Quakers is paramount in reading beyond his academic language to its interpretation in terms of spiritual experience.²¹

¹⁸ Endy, *William Penn*, pp. 76-77, according to Endy, this tendency towards dualism was present from the beginning of Quakerism not merely once written in scholastic mode by Barclay.

¹⁹ Keiser explains that the term 'prehend' is often used in this sense to avoid interpretation of 'comprehension' as cognitive or intellectual. Keiser speaks of a tacit and pre-cognitive knowing from which emerges explicit expression of understanding. 'Comprehend' is used by Barclay to mean 'include'—*Apology*, p. vii.

²⁰ See chapter 6.

²¹ See also Ambler, R. 'Inward Light: Then and Now', *Universalist*, 90, (2010), pp. 3-15. Also, Keiser, 'Touched and Knit', *Quaker Studies*, 5 Issue 2, (2001), pp. 141-164.

Keiser's analysis begins with Barclay's 'starting point' i.e. community.²² This, in itself, provides a clue to Keiser's interpretation of Barclay's position: connectedness in community is seen as the lynch-pin of his argument. Barclay's expression of convincement [g] is understood in both the 'sense' and the fact of community. For Keiser it is important that Barclay says of the worshipping community, 'In entering physically into this space where people are sitting in silent worship, he is touched in his mind, but it is the mind as heart, not as head merely ...'²³

From this, and other similar expressions in Barclay's writing, Keiser shows that it is within community that certainty is attained and demonstrated. Importantly, this is certainty founded in connection rather than separation. For Descartes, the way to certainty is through questioning that eats away at all relations in search of an absolute idea that can be held beyond doubt. 'For Barclay, it comes through the sensing and trusting of experience felt within the inwardness of the individual self in the world and in community'.²⁴

So, 'Certainty comes through attachment and relatedness for Barclay: for Descartes it comes through separation and detachment'.²⁵ According to Keiser it seems that in the community of Friends, Barclay experienced the 'Spirit of God over all'; by extension this encompassed the manner in which, in biblical terms, the 'Spirit of God is over all' in the entire creation.²⁶ Biblical disclosure, even when regarded as metaphorical, is a guide to a) the will of God b) that will manifest in creation and c) the will and its manifestation in creation as *directly experienced encounter i.e. as personal communication, or revelation*. Keiser maintains that for Barclay this is knowledge available to individuals in Quaker worship, knowledge not reliant on scriptural acquaintance, but found in the depths of the self

²² As indicated Keiser refers to the importance of 'community', both as sensed and as fact, for understanding the connectedness that is seen as the essence of relational thinking.

²³ Keiser, 'Touched and Knit', *Quaker Studies*, 5, issue 2, (2001) p. 148.

²⁴ Keiser, *ibid*, p. 161.

²⁵ Keiser, *ibid*, p. 161.

²⁶As Genesis 1 and 2 suggests 'The Spirit of God moved over the face of the waters' i.e. the 'waters' being all, at this stage, of the creation. Although the narrative of Genesis may be factually questionable it is nonetheless, as other biblical narrations, a script that 'constitutes the *image* of truth or *record* of revelation'. Borg maintains it is not to be read as historically literal but rather as historically metaphorical.

in silence. It is here that, in Barclay's words, all who 'draw near him' (the Spirit) in experience, find that knowledge of God is inward, direct and objective.²⁷ Inwardness facilitates the move to discernment, which for Friends, gives rise to conviction.

Keiser's arguments about Barclay's Quakerism imply connections between delivering a ministry of words and a living ministry of action. Central to comprehending Barclay's theology, according to Keiser, is an appreciation of the way in which all things emerge from a 'skein of connectedness'²⁸ from the silent depths: from the Spirit at the heart of all that is. Keiser shows that major ideas from Propositions 2 and 11, examined from a relational perspective, reveal an understanding of Barclay's theology that is consistent with other expressions of Quaker experiential theology.²⁹ The main issue is that a radically different interpretation of Barclay's notion of Inwardness is accessed if his experiential theology is given precedence over his academic theology. Keiser's view is that the mode of Barclay's conviction, and its occurrence in the midst of the community of Quakers, is paramount in reading beyond Barclay's academic language to its interpretation in terms of his spiritual experience.

Keiser is describing and explaining the experiential realities of Quaker spiritual practice. He acknowledges that evolution of spiritual consciousness, as described by Quakers, in terms of growth of measure, brings about changes in experiential knowing.³⁰ Such growth is interpreted here as facilitating progressively distinction between multiplicity, duality and Unity.³¹ The use of the term 'duality' in this context is to be distinguished from Barclay's use of the language of Cartesian dualism. It is discussed further in chapter 6.

²⁷ See below 4.3.1.

²⁸ Keiser, M. 'The Growing up of Principles: Otherness in Robert Barclay's Emergent Thinking', *Quaker Theology Seminar* 1998-9, pp. 66-78.

²⁹ See Keiser, M. 'Touched and Knit.

³⁰ See chapter 6, and Appendix 1 on Kelly.

³¹ See Table 6.

4.2.2 Rex Ambler's supportive view of Barclay's use of dualistic language

For Endy, Barclay 'represents the tendency to focus on the noetic or epistemological function of the inner light and to use philosophical concepts to express spiritual-corporeal dualism present in Quakerism'.³² It is this dualistic reference that can lead to criticism of Barclay.

According to Ambler the earliest Quakers, including Barclay, understood that 'the light was a supernatural power' but understood little about 'the operation of the light within the human mind'. However, Ambler³³ maintains that 'it is not strictly fair to Barclay, or to other early writers for that matter, to suggest that their 'new idea' was 'locked up... in [the] old system'. His argument rests on two factors: one is the prevailing philosophy of Cartesian dualism, and the other is the fact that Barclay was writing an apologetic work. In so far as Barclay set out to write a defence of Quakerism against its philosophical critics, he used the language of these critics to clarify and justify his defence. Ambler asserts:

His great book was an 'Apology' after all, that is, a formal defence of the faith against those who were attacking it. And like all good defences in argument it appealed to the common ground, the ideas and principles that could be shared by all.

Barclay's concern was to demonstrate that Quaker faith and practice made sense even when framed in the language of the day. It was not however, says Ambler, 'a capitulation to his opponents' view'.³⁴ Ambler, in agreement with Keiser³⁵ indicates that Barclay's manner of expression was academic when needed but experiential when preferable.

Ambler points out that chapter 11 of the Apology 'stands out from the others as a genuinely Quaker way of articulating our (Quaker) truth, though, surprisingly, Barclay

³² Endy, *William Penn*, p. 151. Barclay and Penn both wrote of the relationship between the spiritual and the physical in their efforts to describe and explain Quakerism, Barclay in the *Apology* and Penn in his *Collected Works*, (2 vols. 1726).

³³ Ambler, R. 'The Light Within: Then and Now', A talk to the Quaker Universalist conference at Woodbrooke 13th March, 2010; p. 8 -f/n 17.

³⁴ Ambler, R. *ibid*; p. 8-f/n 17.

³⁵ Keiser, M. 'Touched and Knit in the Life: Barclay's relational theology and Cartesian dualism', *Quaker Studies*, 5, issue 2, (2001), especially pp. 158-163.

himself does not seem to have recognized the incongruity, or the immense potential for a new way of thinking to accompany and articulate the new way of being'. Barclay's apologetic work may have required, in his own view, the necessity of using the Cartesian language of his time, to facilitate and communicate meaningful apologetic analysis.³⁶ However the incongruities of language have led to an ongoing problem for subsequent academic considerations of Barclay's Quakerism. According to Ambler, Barclay's attempt to defend Quaker faith and practice seemed to be '(generally) distorted by his strategy for defending it'. In this respect the key concern of Barclay to defend the experiential aspect of Quaker theology, including the significance of Inwardness in spiritual practice, was open to the criticism of his detractors.

The views of Keiser and Ambler, as expressed above, suggest the need for a degree of open mindedness in consideration of Barclay's thinking as expressed in his *Apology*.

4.3 Barclay on Inwardness

Quakerism was for Barclay, as it was for Fox, an experiential religion; a religion that was essentially spiritual [g]. Further it involved the 'secret turning of the mind towards God'.³⁷ The inwardness of 'secret turning', facilitating the 'revelations of the Spirit', was the guide of seventeenth century Quakers.³⁸ In order to ascertain what Barclay meant by experiential Inwardness it is necessary to consider some of the ways in which he used and explained relevant terms.

³⁶ A distinction is to be made between the reality of existence described in terms of duality and explanations which speak of duality relating to a stage of experiential consciousness as there is movement from multiplicity, via duality to Unity (see Tables 6a-c). Efforts to explore this distinction can be misleading when not fully understood. Comparison from Eastern philosophy is found in the definition and explanation of *maya*. The term literally means that which is not (*ma-ya*). 'That which is not', in the material world, is multiple reality. *Maya* is 'illusory' but only in the sense that it is in fact Wholeness of Oneness. Paramhansa Yogananda refers to the 'limitations and divisions which are apparently present in the Immeasurable and Inseparable.' See Paramhansa Yogananda, *Autobiography of a Yogi* (Los Angeles: Self Realization Fellowship, 2007) p. 49, and p. 46 in terms of 'cosmic delusion'. Note also, Ward, K. *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God*, p. 14. Ward writes 'Some physicists, such as John Gribbin and Paul Davies, in their book *The Matter Myth*, argue that matter is a sort of illusion or appearance produced by some mysterious and unknown substratum in interaction with the human mind.'

³⁷ Barclay, *Apology*, p. 330.

³⁸ Barclay, *ibid*, p. 307.

Only one of the Propositions discussed in his *Apology* actually refers to the Inward directly within its title. This is Proposition 2. In other Propositions references to the ‘inward’ are used liberally to qualify a range of expressions such as: ‘*inward* objective manifestations in the heart’ (Prop. 2); ‘*inward* illuminations’ (Prop. 2); ‘*inward* testimony of the Spirit’ (Prop. 3); ‘*inward* testimony or seed of God’ (Prop. 4); ‘*inward* grace’ (Prop. 9); ‘*inward* and unmediated moving and drawing of his own spirit’ (Prop. 11); ‘the *inward* man is nourished’ (Prop. 13); and, possibly most significantly, ‘the chief purpose of all religion is to redeem men from the spirit and vain pursuits of this world, and to lead them into *inward* communion with God’ (Prop. 15). These references to the ‘inward’ contrast with those that speak of the ‘outward’ e.g. ‘*outward* voices and appearances’ (Prop. 2); ‘*outward* testimony of the Scripture’ (Prop. 2); ‘*outward* preaching’ (Prop. 6); ‘*outward* knowledge’ (Prop. 6); and ‘sustenance for the *outward* man’ (Prop. 15).³⁹ Of importance is whether there is precision and consistency of meaning in the use of these terms.

The fact that Proposition 1 is entitled ‘Concerning the true Foundations of Knowledge’ is significant to understanding what Barclay means when he uses the contrasting terms, ‘inward’ and ‘outward’, in subsequent Propositions. Furthermore, Proposition 1 quotes John 17:3.⁴⁰ It includes the sentiment that ‘the true and right understanding of this foundation and ground of knowledge is that which is most necessary to be known and believed in the first place’.⁴¹ ‘[R]ight understanding’ alone is not enough. It is unclear whether the implication is that ‘right understanding’ could seem unbelievable i.e. beyond normal comprehension, or whether this qualification suggests a particular kind of understanding, a quality of understanding in faithfulness or in the heart i.e. as ‘inward’.⁴² Whether or not this qualification of ‘belief’ carries significant weight, it warrants further consideration as it raises relevant issues. These are addressed later in relation to the difference between intellectual understanding and the understanding of the Spirit, or mystical understanding.

³⁹ My emphasis.

⁴⁰ John 17:3 ‘And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent’.

⁴¹ Barclay, *Apology*, p. 9.

⁴² Barclay, *ibid*, Prop. 2, p. 29. Concerning ‘...the infinite and incomprehensible fountain of life’.

Here, however, it is sufficient to emphasise the central importance of knowledge in the *Apology*.

The emphasis on knowledge is unsurprising in view of the theology of the time and the propositional presentation of the work. Yet in the conclusion of the *Apology*, Barclay maintains that the need is to know ‘the Just One’. He does not speak here of knowledge *about* ‘the Just One’, as a matter of belief, in a propositional manner. He says ‘we tell them [all people], while they are talking and determining about the resurrection, that they have more need to know the Just One...’⁴³ This is reference to knowledge by direct acquaintance, of meeting and being with ‘the Just One’.⁴⁴ Barclay elaborates saying:

...because we have desired people earnestly to feel after God near and in themselves

... Because we tell them that it is not their talking or believing of Christ’s outward life they must know...

We tell them they have more need to know the Just One...

[For this purpose] we worship him no more in the oldness of the letter, but in the newness of the Spirit.⁴⁵

There is through this practice the possibility of ‘sanctification’, of living the holiness of life. Here then is a doctrine of perfection through knowledge. Knowledge, structured in consciousness that has been transformed and is open to further development, impels a reorientation of living that reflects a new state of being. The result of this new state, both of consciousness and of living, results in a totally transformed relationship to oneself, others and the world; it is the ‘foundation and ground of knowledge’, which must be ‘known and believed in the first place’.⁴⁶ The new relationship to life, as Barclay outlines it, is in terms

⁴³ Barclay, *Apology*, p. 479.

⁴⁴ See also Isaac Penington’s words: ‘... there is a great difference between truth held in the reasoning part, and truth held in its own principle’. Penington, *Works*, ii, p. 454.

⁴⁵ Barclay, *ibid*, pp. 479-80.

⁴⁶ Barclay, *ibid*, p. 9.

of Christian principles. He suggests, (quoting Bernard) that the resultant way of life, for Quakers, is to '... walk the ways of the heart'.⁴⁷

There is a grasp of expanding possibilities in Barclay's theology. Through Inwardness, understood as experiential and spiritual, knowledge is gained and transformation occurs 'inwardly'; individual life is known to be in a new relationship with Life itself, what is for Christians 'the Life'.⁴⁸ This reference to 'the Life' implies a shift from the temporal to the eternal, further endorsing Barclay's reference to John 17.3. In Proposition 15, Barclay reminds the reader that 'true knowledge brings Life Eternal'. The connection is made, in the main, in Propositions 2 and 11, in his discussion of 1) 'Inward and Immediate Revelation' and 2) 'Worship': these entail an exposition of faith in (Prop. 2) and of practice of (Prop, 11) Inwardness. Propositions 2 and 11 are considered in sequence to provide insight into Barclay's use of terms associated with Inwardness in a specifically Quaker Christian manner.⁴⁹

4.3.1 Proposition 2 – Concerning immediate revelation

The emphasis of this Proposition concerns the difference between 'the certain knowledge of God and the uncertain, betwixt the spiritual knowledge, and the literal; the saving heart-knowledge, and the soaring, airy head-knowledge'.⁵⁰ '[C]ertain knowledge' is deemed to be of a particular quality and kind and it is, for Barclay, knowledge in which there is every reason to have full belief. In stating his position Barclay draws on:

⁴⁷ Barclay, *The Apology*, p. 25. Also *The Practice of the Presence of God* (Tr. Blaiklock, E. M.) Brother Lawrence Fourth Conversation, performance for 'the pure love of God' (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1981), p. 29.

⁴⁸ 'Life' refers here to the eternal Spirit of God in Christ; See Ashworth, T. *Paul's Necessary Sin* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006). Ashworth's argument is interesting and relevant to this point. The 'transformed life' is a relationship 'with the eternal Spirit of God' and what becomes possible is 'a new humanity', pp. 223-225.

⁴⁹ Spencer, C. D. *Holiness: The Soul of Quakerism*, pp. 200-204, for relevant discussion: and for an alternative view i.e. 'inwardness' as an open and contested theological principle, inferred in Williams, R *Christian Theology*, pp. 259-60.

⁵⁰ Barclay, *ibid*, p. 23.

- i) '[T]he most refined and famous of all sorts of professors of Christianity of all ages' to support what he refers to as this 'indispensable truth' that the knowledge of God that is certain is gained 'inwardly'
- ii) Scripture, in detailing the 'gifts' of the 'indwelling Christ'
- iii) Law and the Gospel, in The New Covenant, 'to show how the Spirit speaks to and through man'.⁵¹

These are considered in turn.

4.3.1i '[T]he most refined and famous of all sorts of professors of Christianity of all ages'

Barclay is concerned to demonstrate that true knowledge of the Father through the Son is found only as the Spirit shines in upon the heart and that 'God is known by the Spirit alone'.⁵² Barclay aims to identify what is 'absolutely necessary' for knowing God. He says '...there is no other way but by the Son; so that whoso uses not that way, cannot know him, neither come to him'. This is 'the saving, certain and necessary knowledge of God'.⁵³

Barclay built on Fox's understanding and description of Inwardness as a process to be engaged in. Inwardness, for Fox, is something to do. This interpretation finds a parallel in Barclay who explains that this practice is facilitated by stillness and silence.⁵⁴ Inwardness is attained by being in 'the secret power'.⁵⁵ Fox and Barclay indicate that patience is required. Barclay suggests that attentiveness to 'body, mind and heart' serves to deepen experience, empowering 'passive dependence',⁵⁶ in 'silent waiting', as the means to worship 'in the

⁵¹ Barclay, *Apology*, 1) pp. 23-25; 2) pp. 40-43; 3) pp. 47-50.

⁵² A relationship between Spirit and Heart is implied in Barclay. See also Rom. 8:9, 14.

⁵³ Barclay, *ibid*, p. 30.

⁵⁴ Barclay, *ibid*, Silence p. 297, 'inward silence of the mind', p. 304 and '... being silent, god may speak to him...' p. 307.

⁵⁵ Barclay, *ibid*, p. 296, p. 300, and p. 304.

⁵⁶ Barclay, *ibid*, p. 311.

Spirit'.⁵⁷ Inwardness is at the same time that which provides openness to recognition that 'God is Spirit'.⁵⁸

Thus, Inwardness is the means to spiritual knowing. The goal is spiritual maturity and, in turn, a life lived attuned to God. Fox, as has been shown in chapter 2, emphasises the need to 'turn within'; Barclay makes explicit reasons to have faith in so doing. In quoting Augustine, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Jeremiah, Athanasius and others, he maintains that 'turning within' is the way to recognise that 'God reveals himself to his children'. This is necessary because 'the object of this faith is the *promise, word, or testimony of God, speaking to the mind*'.⁵⁹ It is accessed '*inwardly and immediately by the Spirit of God*'.⁶⁰ Turning the mind within is the means to unveiled, pure recognition of the Spirit. Explaining his view more fully Barclay says that faith is: '... proceeded from the secret persuasion of God's Spirit in [the] heart. This then must needs be acknowledged to be originally and principally the object of the saints' faith, without which there is no true and certain faith ...'⁶¹

He goes on to state that this 'continues to be so today'; 'turning within' not only results from faith but confirms faith because it provides 'certain knowledge' [discernment].⁶² Faith nourishes conviction because what is experienced, or revealed in Inwardness is that 'the Spirit of God is within us [Quakers], and not without us...'⁶³ This revelation, resulting in faithful conviction, is also self-validating for Barclay because 'to state that this spirit is inward needs no interpretation or commentary'. The biblical quotation, "He dwells with you

⁵⁷ Barclay, *Apology*, p. 311.

⁵⁸ Barclay, *ibid*, p. 317, 'GOD is a SPIRIT, and they that worship him must worship him in Spirit and Truth' here is implied pneumatology as in Fox and Penington.

⁵⁹ Barclay, *ibid*, p. 35.

⁶⁰ Barclay, *ibid*, p. 39.

⁶¹ Barclay, *ibid*, p. 37.

⁶² The process or path to Inwardness, and thus to certain knowledge, is discussed in 4.2.2 below, in consideration of Prop. 11, On Worship.

⁶³ Barclay, *ibid*, p. 37.

and is in you” is self-sufficient, for Barclay; as is the cry, ‘Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?’⁶⁴

Thus ‘turning within’ is the means to locate, within the self, the ‘indwelling Holy Spirit’. For Barclay this is what Inwardness is about. It is the means of absolutely necessary recognition of what is within oneself, through which the redeeming Truth of Life itself is revealed. He quotes Melanchthon in support of his view.

Who hear only an outward and bodily voice, hear the creature; but God is a Spirit, and is neither discerned, nor known, nor heard, but by the Spirit; and therefore to hear the voice of God, to see God is to know and hear the Spirit. By the Spirit alone God is known and perceived.

... that which proceeds from the warm influence of God’s Spirit upon the heart, and from the comfortable shining of his Light upon their understanding.⁶⁵

In his *Loci Communes*, Melanchthon speaks of faith and justification indicating, as above, the significance of the ‘Spirit of God’ in religious knowledge.⁶⁶ Similarly Barclay’s concern is with the results of faith and the purifying knowledge that faith heralds in 1) discernment and 2) effective application to Christian living. Religion, and the Truth that can be disclosed to the very heart of serious seekers in faith, is non-trivial in every way; it is immeasurably profound and, for Barclay, the primacy of the ‘inward’ experience of the Spirit of God is essential.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ 1Cor.3:16, See also King, chapter 1.3 ‘self-authenticating intuition’.

⁶⁵ Barclay, *Apology*, pp. 25-6. Melanchthon, (1497-1560) was a colleague of Luther and responsible for an early formulation of systematic theology, *Loci Communes*, which was among the first of systematic approaches to theology, subsequently losing significance to Calvin’s *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, McGrath, *Christian Theology*, p. 63.

⁶⁶ Livingstone, E. A. (ed.) *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford University Press, 1997) (*Loci Communes*, 1535 edition). Although the *Loci Communes*, contrary to the view of Barclay, ‘stresses that Christians are bound by the Law of God contained in the Bible; they are not to rely on their predestination to salvation, but must act justly’ (p. 1066). However, Melanchthon accepts that ‘in the act of conversion the human will can cooperate with the Holy Spirit and God’s grace’ (p. 1568) confirming, in line with Barclay, that the primary cause of conversion is the Holy Spirit not the will.

⁶⁷ Whereas Melanchthon argues for a distinction between the event of Justification and the process of Sanctification, for Barclay ‘It [Justification]... is all one with Sanctification’. *Apology*, p. 177.

Continued discussion of Inwardness embraces related terms, metaphors and comparable expressions, as for example ‘seed’ and ‘light’.⁶⁸ Further, the work of other scholars provides insights into the density of Barclay’s meaning and differentiated nuances in uses of terms.⁶⁹ Some terms and metaphors seem to relate to what Inwardness *is*, some to what it *contains or reveals* and yet others to what may be the *benefits* of its experience. Distinctions are drawn here for the purpose of interpretative clarification not to suggest discrete components. Rather Barclay’s argument aligns terms in many, if not all cases, to indicate that what *is* (Non-trivial, Eternal, Universal, and of the Non-visible Inward Master), at the same time *reveals* of itself (Inward Light, Law, and the Holy Spirit) bestowing as its *benefits* (True Knowledge, Redemption and Justification).

Many of the qualifications of the term ‘inward’ occur in Barclay’s quotation of the ‘The most refined and famous of all sorts of professors...’ to endorse his own detailed view.⁷⁰ Inwardness provides understanding regarded as the true foundation of True Knowledge.⁷¹ Further this knowledge is found, by Barclay, to be consistent with Scriptural description.

4.3.1ii ‘Scripture’

As has been stated above, Barclay begins his *Apology* with reference to John 17.3:

Seeing the height of all happiness is placed in the true knowledge of God; “This is life eternal: to know the true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.” [John 17:3]; the true and right understanding of this foundation and ground of knowledge is that which is most necessary to be known and believed in the first place.⁷²

⁶⁸ See also Fox, *Journal*, on the ‘seed’ p. 574, and p. 371 concerning Christ; on the Light of Christ reference throughout the *Journal*, for example, pp. 33-35, p. 117, pp. 283-284, pp. 295-296.

⁶⁹ Also Pyper, H. ‘Resisting the Inevitable: Universal and Particular Salvation in the Thought of Robert Barclay’ in *Quaker Religious Thought*, 29, no. 1, (1998), pp. 5-18, Also, Keiser, ‘Touched and Knit in the Life: Barclay’s Relational Theology and Cartesian Dualism’.

⁷⁰ Barclay, *Apology*, p. 23.

⁷¹ There is a distinction between interpretation of truth as that which is true as statement, most reflecting or representing that which is, or exists, in reality, and truth that is said to be ‘an inward beauty, life and loveliness’ i.e. Divine Truth. See Creasey, *Essays*, p. 348, quoting John Smith, the Cambridge Platonist.

⁷² Barclay, *ibid*, p. 19. John 1.9 is usually accepted as *the* Quaker text. It reads: ‘... that was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world’. Barclay refers to this text in relation to Redemption.

Throughout the *Apology* Barclay uses biblical sources to provide authority for his theology. This is despite his main argument for the primacy of experiential and spiritual religion over Scripture. In this work of apology, however, Barclay takes on the task of showing that Quakers remain true to Christianity ‘in scripture truth and right reason’.⁷³ Thus, it is in relation to the Christian belief that his selection of biblical quotation is important for understanding his interpretation of Inwardness in Quaker faith and practice. In his apologetic work, Barclay aims to provide defences of Quakerism within the Christian context and theology of his day.

In Proposition 2, he maintains that inward revelations ‘do not contradict the Scriptures ... or sound reason’.⁷⁴ Yet he asserts the primacy of ‘inward’ knowing i.e. God as known by Spirit alone. He uses texts from the Bible not only to lend weight to his understanding of Inwardness but also to indicate precedent for his meaning in the primary text of Christianity. He says that ‘[T]his indwelling of the Spirit ... is [it] as positively asserted in the Scripture as anything else can be’.⁷⁵

...the Spirit of God dwell[s] in you... (Rom 8:9)

...know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you? (1 Cor. 6:19).

Inwardness emerges as spiritual, life-giving law, which stems from the source of knowledge and wisdom. The Holy Spirit, of all that is, is here in the ‘shrine’ of the body.⁷⁶ Suggestions as to the actual location of inward experience, when in or of the body, are usually linked with the heart.

⁷³ Cadbury, C. *Robert Barclay*, p. 43. Together with Penn, Barclay is concerned to readdress the manner in which Quakerism has expressed itself, leading to strife, arrest, imprisonment and torture of many Friends.

⁷⁴ Barclay, *Apology*, p. 51.

⁷⁵ Barclay, *ibid*, p. 41.

⁷⁶ Bailey, R. ‘Seventeenth Century Quaker Christology’ in Dandelion, P (ed.). *The Creation of Quaker Theory* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), p.73, on Anne Conway and ‘corporeality’ and immaterial substance i.e. the flesh and bones of spiritual presence.

This thesis does not place great emphasis on determining any location for Inwardness. However, some issues do arise since Barclay uses location as his second proof for the existence of the Holy Spirit in humanity, as known inwardly (“He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.”).⁷⁷ Thus, since location is expressly indicated by Barclay, his notion of location warrants mention. In the instances where he identifies the heart specifically it remains unclear whether this is as metaphorical reference, intending to direct attention to deeply felt knowledge, or to a literal interpretation. The latter is possible, if related to other religious teachings and expressions of spiritual knowledge.⁷⁸ However, it seems more likely that ‘heart’ is metaphorical for Barclay, as used here in the terms of Christian Scripture.

There are also references in the *Apology* to the soul as location: This is more nebulous, than reference to the heart, given that there is no known organic equivalent. In Proposition 2 the soul is mentioned, in passing only, but this expression offers no more clarity in understanding Inwardness of the soul, or Barclay’s use of the term.⁷⁹ However, Endy draws attention to William Penn’s dualistic position on the soul, writing of the ‘natural soul’ that is separated from the ‘Life of God’ and that which is called “‘infinite”, “eternal”, or “divine””, and accepted as having the “Life” breathed into it.⁸⁰ Although the distinction is made between the natural and divine soul, no clarification is suggested as to what the soul might be in essence.

Barclay inter-relates quotations from John Smith,⁸¹ including biblical quotations (1 John 1:1), through which he draws together several ideas. These include a) the knowledge of God

⁷⁷ Barclay, *Apology*, p. 40.

⁷⁸ Bailey, ‘Seventeenth Century Quaker Christology’, p. 64, concerning ‘... the cross in God’s heart’. Also in Palmer, G.E.H. Sherard, P and Ware, K (eds.) *Philokalia* Vol. 3 (London: Faber and Faber, 1984), p. 57 Item 78 and Glossary, p. 359.

⁷⁹ See McGrath, A. E. *Surprised by Meaning?* (Louisville, Kentucky: John Knox Press, 2011), p. 107 for reference to ‘soul’ as ‘human nature in so far as it relates to God’.

⁸⁰ Endy, W, *William Penn and early Quakerism* (Princeton: University Press 1973) p.197.

⁸¹ Smith (1618 -1652) was a Cambridge Platonist (who in 1644 had been elected to the Queen’s fellowship and appointed lecturer in Hebrew), writing before Barclay, whose life just overlapped that of Barclay.

b) through the Spirit c) as connected with the soul within, and the significance of d) the warmed heart. This relating of ideas provides Barclay with the framework to say:

Yea, all of those who apply themselves effectually to Christianity, and are not satisfied until they have found its effectual work upon their hearts, redeeming them from sin, do feel that no knowledge effectually prevails to the producing of this, but that which proceeds from the warm influence of God's Spirit upon the heart, and from the comfortable shining of his Light upon their understanding.⁸²

Barclay implies that the Inward is the source of immediate revelation, proceeding 'from the warm influence of God's Spirit upon the heart'. The 'shining of his Light upon their understanding' is the means to discernible guidance.

Barclay's attempt to explain the nature of this source of immediate revelation, especially when he enlists notions of location, is less clear than his explanation of purpose. This is unsurprising given the limitation of language and, as Braithwaite suggests, the 'conditions of thought of the age'.⁸³ To speak of the purposes, practicalities and outcomes that result from experience of Inwardness is less challenging than to speak of the source itself. According to McGrath the apophatic tradition 'preserves the mystery of God [and the Inward Holy Spirit] through its emphasis on the limitation of language'.⁸⁴ Discussing Dionysius, Jantzen reminds the reader of his view that:

Anything that could be adequately encapsulated in human language would not be worthy to be called God: in Dionysius' view God must be utterly transcendent, and therefore beyond human capacity for conceptualisation or verbalisation.⁸⁵

Barclay, to his credit and perhaps to the advantage of his detractors, struggles with the limit of human language but in so doing creates almost as many questions as he answers.⁸⁶

⁸² Barclay, *Apology*, p. 26.

⁸³ Braithwaite, *Second Period*, p. 390.

⁸⁴ McGrath, *A Christian Theology*, p. 194. Also McGinn, B. *The Harvest of Mysticism in Medieval Germany (1300-1500)* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 2005), pp. 17-29.

⁸⁵ Jantzen, *G Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism*, p. 101, on Dionysius and the path of negation, pp. 95-109.

Barclay attempts answers in discussing a new emphasis on the relationship of God with humanity. For all Christians this difference is between that available to humanity in its 'fallen state' and that as redeemed by Christ after the resurrection. The ensuing relationship between God and humanity is distinguished as of the New Covenant rather than the Old Covenant.⁸⁷ It is then necessary for Barclay to demonstrate his understanding in Covenantal terms.

4.3.1iii The New Covenant: Gospel supersedes the Law

Barclay's discussion of Inward and Immediate Revelation bears closely on his understanding of the New Covenant. For the Religious Society of Friends, he argues that, 'My second argument shall be drawn from the nature of the new covenant; by which, and those that follow, I shall prove that we [Quakers] are led by the Spirit immediately and objectively'.⁸⁸

His argument draws on the Biblical quotations of Jerimiah 31:33-34, as repeated in Hebrews 8:10-11:

... this *shall be* the covenant that I will make ... I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God and they shall be my people...And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother ... for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them. (Jerimiah 31: 33-34)

This is the covenant that I will make ... I will put my laws in their mind, and write them in their hearts and I will be to them a God and they shall be to me a people.

And they shall not teach [one another]... for they all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. (Hebrews 8:10-11)

⁸⁶ See McIntosh, *Divine Teaching*, (pp. 16-21) on the 'constraints of human language' in which the concepts are simply 'too small' (p. 18) and 'tied up at the moorings' (p. 19). Also, Section 4.2 on dualistic language.

⁸⁷ Gwyn, D. *The Covenant Crucified: Quakerism and the rise of Capitalism*, (Wallingford: Pendle Hill Publications, 1995). See also Jer. 31:33 quoted above.

⁸⁸ Barclay, *Apology*, p. 47.

In these quotations it is shown that a new relationship between God and people extends to all people: ‘...they shall all know me from the least of them to the greatest’. This is a life of ‘renewal’, a life in Christ, in which God ‘would breathe not just on a few special servants, but on all his people’.⁸⁹ ‘In that he saith, a new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxes old is ready to vanish away’ (Hebrews 8.13). So, of importance, for the purpose of this thesis, is Barclay’s interpretation of the nature of the Covenantal assurances themselves, rather than the recipients of these assurances. Barclay’s understanding of what Inwardness means encompasses the fact that the law of God is written in all mankind; God’s script is in the heart for everyone to access.

Christianity shows that this inward knowledge is essential to a full comprehension of what is available to humanity. The entire edifice of the Christian way, its message, its practices and its modes of living, is understood as being through God’s direct instruction and guidance. This is a new dispensation in which the law of life is no longer externally written as transmitted from God by man, but internally i.e. within human kind, as written directly by God in human beings. The law of humanity is now transformed as the gospel law, and is in turn, transforming, from *within*, through its enactment. Barclay maintains that, ‘... all of us, at all times, have access to him as often as we draw near unto him with pure hearts. He reveals his will to us by his Spirit. Where the law of God is put into the mind, and written in the heart, there the object of faith and revelation of the knowledge of God is *inward*, immediate, and objective’.⁹⁰

Barclay’s emphasis is not on the fact that the New Covenant extends assurances to those who were Gentiles. Rather, in the startling prophecy of change, he underlines the fact that the gospel law replaces the laws written in ‘tables of stone’.⁹¹ His explanation that ‘the Scriptures are not sufficient, neither were ever appointed to be the adequate and only rule’ is

⁸⁹ Zeisler, J. *Pauline Christianity*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990, revised edition from 1983), p. 10.

⁹⁰ Barclay, *Apology*, p. 49 (my emphasis).

⁹¹ Barclay, *ibid*, p. 48.

‘proven’, for Barclay, in the ‘promise of Christ’.⁹² Barclay maintained that, ‘*Christians now are to be led inwardly and immediately by the Spirit of God, even in the same manner...as the saints were of old...*’⁹³

He speaks of this in terms of the ‘gifts of the Spirit’ to be reaped through the New Covenant (1 Cor. 12: 1-11). Furthermore, Barclay refers to the fact that there is promise of ‘yet many things ...to come’ as described in the words of John 16: 12-13.⁹⁴ This is Barclay’s Quaker exposition of Christian promise in and through the New Covenant. He argues that a re-visioned Spiritual truth is available to humankind. What is necessary is the inward ‘drawing near unto him’ i.e. the Holy Spirit, to enable the Spirit to reveal himself to the faithful.⁹⁵ Thus, Barclay explains the fact that Quakers do not worship in the old ways but rather in a new mode of Inwardness and silence. Worship is the ‘...pure and spiritual worship which is acceptable to God and answerable to the testimony of Christ and his apostles’.⁹⁶ Through this mode of worship it is possible for humankind to discern God’s will and purpose.

In the proposition, ‘Concerning Immediate Revelation’, Barclay makes it clear that the teaching of the first Quakers, about the need to ‘turn within’, is both experientially and theologically sound. He also justifies his explanation as guided by the principles of the broader church of Christianity. However, even given the use of biblical support for his position, Barclay’s emphasis is on the ‘immediate revelation’ of these principles in worship.

The next section, which concerns Barclay’s discussion of worship, argues that ‘inward drawing near’ is the mode by which God’s will is revealed and discerned.

⁹² Barclay, *Apology*, p. 39.

⁹³ Barclay, *ibid*, p. 39.

⁹⁴ See Figure 6, concerning. knowledge ‘yet to come’.

⁹⁵ Barclay, *ibid*, p. 49.

⁹⁶ Barclay, *ibid*, p. 295.

4.3.2 Proposition 11: Concerning worship

Discussion of worship in Proposition 11 focuses on the time of spiritual emergence that is, for Barclay, characterised by the New Covenant. This provides a changed significance for what is necessary and what is unnecessary in terms of worship. Humankind's approach to God is no longer to do with appeasement, sacrifice, supplication, or even celebration in the old forms. The Spirit is now accepted as 'indwelling' and awaiting the opportunity to guide and instruct all of humankind in spiritual experiencing and knowing. God is known not merely outwardly but essentially inwardly.⁹⁷

The fact of God's 'indwelling' offers, for Barclay, a transitional learning opportunity. '[M]en find it easier to sacrifice in their own wills than obey God's will ... while they are both inwardly estranged and alienated from his holy and righteous life, and wholly strangers to the breathings of his Spirit'.⁹⁸ All people will need to learn a new way of relating to Him. This being so Barclay examines the need for all people to learn how to open themselves to the 'more full dispensation of Light' in the Spirit, and so to open the Spirit to themselves.⁹⁹ This is, in a sense, an 'unveiling' as the means to revelation; indeed, it is revelation, and the unveiled, pure Spirit is the revealed God seen as though 'face to face'.¹⁰⁰

This understanding of 'unveiling' the Spirit can apply to individuals alone. However, Quaker worship, as with all Christian worship, places significance on the worshipping group. Barclay writes that when the people of God meet together, '... the Spirit of God should be the immediate actor, mover, persuader, and influencer of man in the particular acts of worship ...'¹⁰¹ Quaker worship, as corporate, requires worshippers to leave the way open for God's action. This necessitates that Friends, in effect, 'stand back' and remove 'the

⁹⁷ Barclay, *Apology*, p. 300. Of his own experience Barclay wrote '... when I came into the silent assemblies of God's people I felt a secret power among them which touched my heart, and I gave way unto it, I found the evil weakening in me and the good raised up, and so I became thus knit and united unto them ...'

⁹⁸ Barclay, *ibid*, pp. 290-1.

⁹⁹ Barclay, *ibid*, p. 295.

¹⁰⁰ 'For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known'. (1 Corinthians 13.12).

¹⁰¹ Barclay, *ibid*, p. 293.

limitations' they impose. Barclay describes the process differently from Fox but the intention is the same.¹⁰² Barclay says 'Our (Quaker) work then and worship is, when we meet together, for everyone to watch and wait upon God in themselves and & to be gathered from all visibles thereunto'.¹⁰³ It is in Attentive Presence that Discernment occurs.

For Barclay, this distinct and new mode of worship supersedes previous forms where ritual and liturgy have been foremost, in their visible and audible forms. These latter forms he describes as being 'performed by and from the human will': whereas what is necessary is that worship is 'spiritual' i.e. 'from the Spirit of God'.¹⁰⁴ For Barclay, human beings simply need to place themselves in readiness and faithfulness, present and attentive in body, mind and heart, and wait. This waiting must not interfere with God's guidance and instruction. The means to non-interference requires that the Spirit be allowed 'to breathe *through* them [worshippers] and *in* them'.¹⁰⁵ This is about 'returning out of their own thoughts and imaginations, but also to feel the Lord's presence and know a "gathering into his Name" ...'¹⁰⁶ The parallel between the above words of Barclay and Fox's injunction to 'be still' is notable.¹⁰⁷

Both Fox and Barclay saw the need and felt the importance of revitalising an understanding of direct acquaintance with God. They were also aware of the implications, for worship, of criteria resulting from the New Covenant:

¹⁰² See chapter 2.

¹⁰³ Barclay, *Apology* p. 301. See also Barclay's own words of convincement, *Apology*. p. 300.

¹⁰⁴ Barclay, *ibid*, p. 291; See chapter 2, Fox 'worship in the Spirit and the truth'.

¹⁰⁵ Barclay, *ibid*, p. 293.

¹⁰⁶ Barclay, *ibid*, p. 296.

¹⁰⁷ See chapter 2 on Fox, also *QFP*, 2.18. (Quoted from Quaker Faith and Practice as indication of its enduring relevance to 21st century Quakers). Also concerning 'stand[ing] still' (Epistle X) Fox, G. *Works*, pp. 20-21.

1) Individuals should wait in faith. It is not their role to be active, merely alert, in their waiting i.e. the flow, or givenness of the fruits, of worship is from God to mankind.¹⁰⁸

2) Individuals should recognise that they are entirely ‘subject to God’, i.e. the resultant flow or benefit of worship is from God to mankind.

This does not suggest that there should never be praying, ministry, scriptural readings, or singing of Psalms but that these are secondary; waiting and watching are considered primary. Experience is of the essence.¹⁰⁹ Barclay quotes a number of biblical passages to state his position in relation to the worship practice of his day.¹¹⁰ This concludes in the view that silence is and must necessarily be a special and principal part of God’s worship.¹¹¹ Also this silence has as its necessary counterpart stillness of mind and body that is vividly receptive to the Inwardness in which revelation from God is available to man.¹¹²

‘In stillness there is fullness; in fullness there is nothingness; in nothingness there are all things.’¹¹³ Here is mystical recognition that divine stillness is as wholeness in which everything is connected within God, it is the source of all knowledge.¹¹⁴ Barclay maintains that worshippers are led to and embraced by ‘inward quietness, stillness, and humility of

¹⁰⁸ Any ‘rewards’ of worship are given by grace, freely given by God to man. However, this does not imply that humankind need not make ready with heart and mind to receive such gifts i.e. in the processes of worshipful Inwardness individuals create the Conditions for meeting God.

¹⁰⁹ Issues of passivity and questions of quietism arise here. See Robynne Rogers Healey, ‘Quietist Quakerism’ in Angell, S. and Dandelion, P (eds) *The Oxford Handbook of Quaker Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) pp. 47-62. Also *Friends Quarterly*, 1 (2010) especially Dandelion, B.P. pp. 12-17 and Pryce, E. pp. 18-27.

¹¹⁰ Barclay, *Apology*, p. 304.

¹¹¹ Barclay, *ibid*, p. 311. See also analytical chart at end of chapter.

¹¹² For parallel discussion in the modern era, see Wallace, A. *Contemplative Science: Where Buddhism and Neuroscience converge*. (Columbia U. P Columbia Series in Science and Religion, 2007), p. 52, concerning ‘stability and vividness’.

¹¹³ According to Dean Freiday’s biographical notes on Robert Barclay, Swinton, considered to be an early Quaker mystic, may have uttered these words, *Barclay’s Apology in Modern English*. p. xiv. Freiday’s edition of the *Apology* is much criticised in that of Sippel, P (ed.). The criticisms are enumerated in a lengthy appendix. However, these criticisms refer to the ‘modern English version’ of the text rather than the biographical notes.

¹¹⁴ Barclay, *Apology*, p. 47 ‘Therefore the Spirit of God leadeth, instructeth and teacheth every true Christian whatsoever is needful for him to know’.

mind where the Lord appears, and his heavenly wisdom is revealed'.¹¹⁵ The dual requirements are that humanity: 1) accepts the need for human kind to become open to God's fullness; 2) understands that God is and will always be the prime source of loving wisdom for and to humanity. Barclay indicates that the old ways of worship, were only accepted as a concession, 'in condescension to them who were inclinable to idolatry'.¹¹⁶ They were, however, neither necessary nor adequate for 'transmitting and entertaining a holy fellowship betwixt him [God] and his people'.¹¹⁷ For Barclay, this latter is attained by the dispensation of Grace.

Barclay sees the transmission of God's Spirit to humankind as the means of the transformation that the New Covenant promises. In addition, he suggests that experience and practice of Inwardness is the sole means to know 'immediately' that we are 'led by the Spirit ... directly'.

Proposition 11 of Barclay's *Apology* indicates that he has a clear understanding of:

- 1) The *need* for Inwardness as pure and spiritual,
- 2) The *purpose* of Inwardness as transforming i.e. to the pure life of righteousness.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ Barclay, *Apology*, p. 268.

¹¹⁶ Barclay, *ibid*, p. 292.

¹¹⁷ Barclay, *ibid*, p. 292.

¹¹⁸ It is possible to encapsulate Barclay's understanding in words derived directly from his work. 'Inwardness' is: a) (facilitated by) stillness and silence; it *is* stillness, 'not only an outward silence of the body but an inward silence of the mind' (*Apology*, p. 304), and silence 'naked and void of all outward and worldly splendour' (*Apology*, p. 298); b) (served by) attentiveness of body, mind and heart; it *is* attentiveness of body- 'sitting silent together' (*Apology*, p. 297 and p. 304), mind- 'inward quietness and retiredness of mind' (*Apology*, pp. 298-299), and heart – as 'we draw near unto him with pure hearts' (*Apology*, p. 49); c) (attained by) waiting and watching; it *is* waiting silently 'as pure motions and pure breathings of God's Spirit are felt to arise' (*Apology*, p. 296 and p. 300); and watching and waiting 'upon God' in themselves (*Apology*, p. 304 and pp. 331-332); d) (empowered by) receptiveness and self-surrender; it *is* receptiveness, waiting is a matter of diligence in 'passive dependence' (*Apology*, p.311); and self-surrender so that the 'pure Life has free passage through them [worshippers]' (*Apology*. 299); e) (the means to) worship in the Spirit; it *is* worship in the Spirit, feeling the 'Spirit to breathe *through* them [worshippers] and *in* them' (*Apology*, p. 293), f) (openness to) 'pure spiritual worship'; it *is* 'to restore the true spiritual worship' ... 'worship which is performed by the operation of the Spirit ...' (*ibid*, p. 306 and p. 318).

For Barclay, Inwardness is framed within the New Covenant¹¹⁹ in all the ways indicated *in combination*, it is ‘worship of God in these Gospel times’.¹²⁰ Worship which:

Jesus Christ, the author and institutor of New Covenant worship, testifies that God is neither to be worshipped in this nor that place, but in the Spirit and in Truth ... because it being purely spiritual, it is out of reach of natural men to interrupt or molest it. Even as Jesus Christ, the author thereof, did enjoy and possess his spiritual kingdom while oppressed, persecuted and rejected of men.¹²¹

As indicated above, Inwardness is often qualified by other terms, and spoken about through a range of metaphors, for example, ‘Light’ and ‘Seed’,¹²² when used to speak of the ‘Spirit within’ or the ‘Christ within’.¹²³ Overlaying the term in this way often complicates the meaning and focus of Inwardness in Quaker theology, yet it can also contribute richness of understanding allowing a metaphor to offer different interpretations. However, in the early days of Quakerism, and, as here in Barclay’s usage, reference to ‘inward’ experience, was to experience the ‘inward Light’ confirmed in and by the range of characteristics identified.¹²⁴ Whether understood singly or in combination, these characteristics, seen in the context of Christianity, were accepted by Barclay to ‘... be spiritual’ and ‘by the power of the Spirit’ accessed through New Covenant Worship.¹²⁵

4.4 Conclusion

Insofar as Barclay’s work is, primarily, an academic development of Fox’s Quakerism, post 1664, in apologetic terms, it is unsurprising that his view of the significance of

¹¹⁹ Barclay, *Apology*, pp. 315-6.

¹²⁰ Barclay, *ibid*, p. 292.

¹²¹ Barclay, *ibid*. p. 316. The implications of this state of Inwardness, as an uninterrupted and all-time living reality which endures all things with equanimity, is discussed and developed in chapter 6.

¹²² Chapter 2 on Fox.

¹²³ Barclay, *ibid*, pp. 150-155.

¹²⁴ Barclay, *ibid*, pp. 150-155, on ‘inward light’ as the ‘Christ within’, ‘inward Light of Christ’. Also Ambler, R. ‘The Light Within—then and now’ in *Universalist*, 90, (2010), pp. 3-15, and Hamby, C ‘The light Within—a response to Ambler’ in *Universalist*, 92, (2011), pp. 4-14. Also King-Ambler, C. ‘What is Experiment with Light? An Introduction’, *Universalist*, 91, (2011), pp. 4-12.

¹²⁵ Barclay, *ibid*, p. 316.

Inwardness is largely consistent with that of Fox. On occasions his explanations are expressed in different language and frameworks of thinking, but this does not obscure the bonds of understanding, even accepting the developments in Quaker interpretation of main tenets with reference to the Christian perspective.

The features of Quaker spiritual practice, termed Conditions and Elements in the two preceding chapters are found also in Barclay. In his apologetic consideration of Quaker faith and practice, Barclay is clear as to its nature within spiritual religion. For Barclay, transformation is the result of knowledge inwardly gained. His thinking, deriving both from other scholars and Fox, acknowledges ‘the primacy of inward knowing’ in God within the self. Thus, Barclay maintained that it is ‘drawing near unto him [God] with pure hearts’ that is essential, the means to which is turning within.

Examination of Barclay’s understanding of worship has shown that he writes of ‘inward quietness’, ‘silence’, ‘retiredness’, ‘passive dependence’, ‘watching and waiting’ and ‘attentiveness to body, mind and heart’ as the means to openness and recognition ‘that God is Spirit’. Thus his congruence with Fox can be charted as shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4 Barclay on the process of Inwardness

CONDITIONS	
Settling/ Stillness/Waiting	Practice is ‘facilitated by stillness and silence’ ¹ ‘[the] great work of one and all ought to be to wait upon God ...’ ²
Silence	Worship ‘requires the silence...to breathe <i>through</i> them [worshippers], and <i>in</i> them’ ³ practice is ‘facilitated by stillness and silence’, ‘silence is and must necessarily be a special and principal part of God’s worship’. ⁴
ELEMENTS	
Attentive Presence	‘In entering physically into this space where people are sitting in silent worship, he [Barclay] is touched in his mind, but it is the mind as heart, not as head merely...’ ⁵ Worship is to distinguish between ‘the certain knowledge of God and the uncertain, betwixt the spiritual knowledge, and the literal; the saving heart-knowledge, and the soaring, airy head-knowledge’. ⁶
Heart Awareness/Sensing and feeling	Barclay felt ‘a secret power which touched [his] heart’, Quakers were to ‘feel[ing] after God in and near themselves’: the resultant way of life, for Quakers, is to ‘walk the ways of the heart...’ ⁷ and feel the ‘warm influence of God’s Spirit upon the heart ...’ ⁸

¹ Barclay, *Apology*, ‘Sitting silent together’ (p. 297), Silent waiting upon God (p. 296 and p. 297), ‘Waiting together upon the Lord’, (296)

² Barclay, *ibid*, Waiting, p. 296.

³ Barclay, *ibid*, p. 293.

⁴ Barclay, *ibid*, p. 311; *See also*; p. 343 on ‘nakedness’ of worship. If this form of worship is observed, it ‘is not likely to be long kept pure without the power: for it is, of itself, so naked ... that it hath nothing in it to invite and tempt men to dote upon it, further than it is accompanied by the power.’

⁵ Keiser, ‘Touched and Knit in the Life: Barclay’s Relational Theology and Cartesian Dualism’, in *Quaker Studies*, (Vol. 5, Issue 2, March 2001) p. 148

⁶ Barclay, *ibid*, p. 23.

⁷ Barclay, *ibid*, p. 25.

⁸ Barclay, *ibid*, p. 26.

God focussing/Attunement	There was a ‘secret turning of the mind towards God’ ⁹ accessed ‘inwardly and immediately by the Spirit of God’ ¹⁰ ‘...the Spirit of God should be the immediate actor, mover, persuader, and influencer of man ‘ in [the] particular acts of worship...’ ¹¹
Purity	In Worship ‘we draw near unto him with pure hearts’ ¹² ‘As everyone is [thus] gathered ... the secret power and virtue of life is known to refresh the soul, and the pure motions and breathings of God’s Spirit are felt to arise’ ¹³ ‘God is Raising up a people to serve him according to primitive purity ¹⁴ and spirituality...’ ¹⁵
Discernment	It is in ‘inward quietness, stillness, and humility of mind [that] the Lord appears, and his heavenly wisdom is revealed’ ¹⁵ ...and confirms faith because it provides ‘certain knowledge’ [discernment]
Growth	‘...the warm influence of God’s Spirit upon the heart [facilitates] the comfortable shining of his Light upon their understanding’. ¹⁶
Unity	Through Christ there may be a ‘...a sensible union and friendship with God’ ¹⁷ In which ‘the elders might look that nothing be wanting, but that peace, love, unity, concord and soundness be preserved in the Church of Christ’ ¹⁸ ‘...a secret unity and fellowship may be enjoyed, which the devil ... can never break or hinder’. ¹⁹

⁹ Barclay, *Apology*, p. 330.

¹⁰ Barclay, *ibid*, p. 39.

¹¹ Barclay, *ibid*, p. 293.

¹² Barclay, *ibid*, p. 49.

¹³ Barclay, *ibid*, p. 296.

¹⁴ Barclay, *ibid*, p. 329.

¹⁵ Barclay, *ibid*, p. 268.

¹⁶ Barclay, *ibid*. p. 26.

¹⁷ Barclay, *ibid*, p. 174.

¹⁸ Barclay, *ibid*, p. 274.

¹⁹ Barclay, *ibid*, p. 313.

4.5 Chapter summary

This chapter has examined Barclay's position on Inwardness as a theological concept which has implications for a spiritual practice in worship. It has illustrated the fact that two distinct strands of thought, academic and experiential, interweave in his writing: although the *Apology* is an academic work it emphasises the inward, spiritual dimension of Quaker faith and practice.

Barclay's view of Inwardness has been analysed with reference to Propositions 2 and 11 of his *Apology*. His use of quotation from both Christians of all ages and from Scripture has been used to show how, for Barclay, Inwardness through worship is the source of and means to immediate revelation'.¹¹⁰ Barclay's discussion of humanity's 'new relationship' with God is important for understanding Quakerism in terms of the New Covenant. It has been indicated that this understanding leads to an essentially 'inward' mode of worship, which Barclay maintains, is 'from the Spirit of God'. It has been shown that he endorses a Christian view of Inwardness as entailing a range of features which are, in combination, distinctively Quaker.

Barclay has been found to agree with Fox on the main tenets of Quaker faith and practice in their Christian interpretation, and also in his understanding of Inwardness as the primary mode of spiritual knowing. Barclay asserts the fact that 'the chief purpose of all religion is to redeem men from the spirit and vain pursuits of this world and to lead them into *inward communion with God*' (Prop. 15). His work thus validates the proposal stated at the end of chapter 2 in relation to Fox's teaching that he encouraged early Friends to create the Conditions that would support Elements of the practice of Inwardness in their Meetings for Worship.

The next chapter analyses Inwardness in the modern era of Quakerism.

¹¹⁰ Barclay, *Apology*, p. 60.

CHAPTER 5: Quaker Inwardness at the turn of the twenty-first century

5.1 Introduction

This chapter examines Quaker faith and practice during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, particularly following the influence of the Manchester conference of 1895, and the developments that followed the growth of Liberal Quakerism. It outlines changes occurring at the turn of the twenty first century (5.2) and identifies distinguishable faith positions and resultant priorities.(5.3) The chapter examines Inwardness in the modern period, under three headings: These are a) Quakerism as described discursively in terms of intellectual/academic considerations versus devotional accounts of spiritual experience (undertaken in 5.4.1 and 5.4.2); b) understanding of ‘that of God within’ in terms of the ‘Inward’ versus the ‘Inner’ Light (discussed in 5.5), and c) the growth of non-theism (explored in 5.6). Section 5.7 provides a conclusion to the chapter, which is summarised in 5.8.

5.2 Change at the turn of the twenty-first century

In the modern era the Religious Society of Friends has been challenged in ways it had not encountered previously. The concerns and language of a group of articulate intellectuals who spoke and wrote as ‘relevant to the age’ had far reaching consequences in the re-evaluation of contemporary Quakerism.¹ However, there are, in the present, no “towering” figures, such as Fox, Penington and Barclay, discussed as representing seventeenth century Friends. For this reason, this chapter provides an overview both from Friends of the Britain Yearly Meeting at this time, and others from earlier times but still considered influential. The chapter demonstrates the theological diversity of Quakerism at

¹ *Manchester Conference of the Society of Friends 1895* (London: Headley: Bros., 1896).

this time and the fact that some practitioners are open to, and participate within, other traditions i.e. dual practising.²

The continuance of a tradition of silent worship brings a range of Friends into a form of shared communion in their meetings, often without full knowledge of each other's belief positions. Richard Bauman explained, with reference to seventeenth century Friends, what he saw to be Quaker distrust of speaking, in terms of plain language rhetoric as well as spiritual truth.³ For British Friends in the present, the greater reliance on silence, and the lesser on spoken ministry, in Meeting for Worship, is to do primarily with spiritual truth; however, uncertainty about currently held belief systems may have some influence also.⁴ The range and distinctiveness of Friends' involvement in their Society is sometimes hidden. What follows here makes the situation explicit.

There are a number of ways in which, in the twenty-first century, Quaker belief positions seem to be distinguishable: these lead to recognition that the relevance, and, potentially, the interpretations of Inwardness may vary accordingly. Distinctive positions are outlined below. These indicate a range of components that contribute to the 'large, relational and interdependent matrix' within which Quakers, and Quaker theologians, find meanings in their faith and practice.⁵ As Hinds suggests, there is for Quakers 'a seamless

² Hamby, C. Inward Spiritual Experience: the Heart of the Quaker Way? *Woodbrooke Journal*, No. 22, Spring 2008.

³ Bauman, R. *Let your Words be Few: Symbolism of Speaking and Silence among Seventeenth-century Friends* (London: QHS, 1998[1983]), p. 45; Note: Bauman suggests that terms such as 'word', 'Light' and 'Seed' are often used synonymously by Friends, but the main term for Quakers is the 'Light' within. The 'Light' stood for the 'indwelling spirit of God' sown in mankind as the 'seed' of the spiritual life. This seed would grow once its path was cleared, its energy released and the 'principle of God' awakened. All of this was explained in Christian terms largely with reference to Biblical meanings and metaphors. Bauman maintains that 'the Quaker belief in the voice of God speaking within those who were attentive to the Inward Light was the basis for a major doctrinal difference between others of their day' (p. 25).

⁴ A private conversation with a Kendal Friend, after Meeting for Worship on 30th October 2011 records that 'I don't minister as much as I used to as I am uncertain of how people will hear me, and what they will think'.

⁵ O'.Murchu, D *Quantum Theology: Spiritual Implications of the New Physics* (New York: Crossroad, 2013[2004]). The term 'large, relational and interdependent matrix' is used in connection with morality in the quantum context. The application of the term here concerns recognition that the full potential of the system *as a whole* i.e. Quakerism as a Society, requires acknowledgement of the range and fullness of its 'communitarian' context. p. 151.

field of divine signification, which is shaped by the doctrine of the inward light.⁶ It is thus, in a manner akin to Hinds' 'seamless field', that the positions indicated below are to be read. They provide an integrated account, within the interdependent wholeness that constitutes Friends' faith and practice in the modern era. Among the differences, there is a connectedness and interrelatedness in the range of positions that constitute present day Quakerism in Britain, even if these are not fully 'seamless'. Despite potential distinctions between resultant interpretations of Inwardness, over emphasis on these would subvert explanations of the integrated spirituality of the Quaker religion. It is Meeting for Worship that holds Friends, espousing these different positions, together in corporate Stillness and Silence.

Twentieth century developments, including the founding of Woodbrooke,⁷ 'combine 'religious nurture and academics'. Courses at Woodbrooke have been offered in 'Quakerism, Bible, church history, international affairs and problems of society'; the curriculum, in the twenty-first century, is increasingly diverse. The Manchester conference of 1895 set in motion changes that continue into the present day. The variety of spiritual concerns include the development of positions that range from Christian to Universalist, and Theist to non-theist.⁸ Dandelion's elaboration of the range makes reference to Pilgrim's 'model of the future of Quakerism'.⁹ He presents the model as useful in general but maintains that it places too much emphasis on belief, suggesting that the behavioural creed, which he proposes, remains definitional for Liberal Friends. The behavioural creed frees Friends from the constraints of belief in any of its configurations.

Twenty-first century Quakerism does not demonstrate simple either/or frameworks within its range, rather it is the range of contributions itself that informs current Quaker thinking, both at informal and local levels, and in its formalised descriptions of

⁶ Hinds, *George Fox*, p. 4 and p. 5. Hinds writes of the 'seamless field of godly signification' that dissolved all boundaries due to the unifying integration of the light within.

⁷ Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre in Birmingham, England, established in 1903.

⁸ For a more extended model and relevant comparison see Dandelion *Introduction*, table 3.4. 'A model of Quaker theology (after Taber 1992, p. 16)' p. 147.

⁹ Dandelion, P. *ibid*, p. 147 - 151

experiential theology. The distinction between those who do or do not engage in God-talk (theo-logy) does not equate one rather than the other with practices that involve conscious attention to inward engagement. Turning inward to one's own conscious contemplative activity may or may not entail, for the practitioner, a relationship with God. Indeed, the definition with which this research was initiated, paraphrased as, concerning those individuals who engage with self-referring consciousness, does not necessarily require theist interpretation. It is possible, then, that some Quakers, who are non-theist, understand, engage in and value Inwardness under a description that does not make reference to God.¹⁰

Questions arise as to interpretations of what is accessed in Inwardness: for Christian Quakers it is 'that of God within' understood, in the main, as in seventeenth century Quakerism. For others, Inwardness may be practised *via* Conditions 1-2, but take on different perspectives when notions of God are introduced. Therefore, in terms of the Elements listed as numbers 3-9 in Tables 2-5 any notions of God only have relevance for F-Q practitioners, who may continue to engage in a spiritual practice that seems to be true to Fox's teaching as identified in this thesis.¹¹ For others Inwardness may have connotations that are oceanic or cosmic, and be described in terms other than Godly, as, for example, unmoving, spacious or silent expansiveness.

These differences have led to identifiable, but not necessarily conflicting shifts in Quakerism, as 'liberal theology [which] silently and invisibly became orthodoxy among Friends ...'¹² In general influences have taken Friends in one of two directions: one spiritual and the other social, or socio-political, each of which contributes to the totality of the Britain Yearly Meeting and the range of its diversity.¹³ Punshon points out that the

¹⁰ See section on non-theism below.

¹¹ See text note.

¹² Isichei, E. *Victorian Quakers* (Oxford: University Press, 1970), p. 41. See Dandelion for a thorough examination of Liberal Quakerism, *Introduction*, 129-153.

¹³ The latter is discussed in terms of Inwardness i.e. as the consequence of Inwardness, see 2.4.

Society is transforming into ‘... a form of religion that is so open that it seems unable to provide clear guidance in the things that really matter’.¹⁴

Although the Meeting for Worship has continued to be the bedrock of Quaker life, emphasis on social action and political concern, always a feature of Quaker living, continues apace and with sharpening political focus in the twenty-first century. This is not at the expense of the spiritual significance of Quaker faith and practice but, rather in recognition that spiritual practice, accepted without question, is not emphasized in the way that the behavioural aspects of Quaker ways of life are.¹⁵ There continues to the present, some differentiation among Friends between those who have greater concern for spiritual matters from which social action emerges; and those who place greater concern on social action whilst acknowledging its spiritual underpinning in Meeting for Worship. Both contribute to the ‘body’ of Quakerism in its fullness, and although there may seem little distinction in these two positions as described, the significance of Inwardness in each is different.¹⁶ For the sake of clarification the two strands are referred to as social and spiritual Quakerism.¹⁷

Those Friends who engage in social Quakerism often work with particular allegiance to a specific Testimony position, for example peace activity or social service. Some of them display characteristics that are increasingly, and perhaps primarily, outwardly turned. For these Friends social action seems to be both within and beyond their religion. It cannot be said definitively that, for them, spiritual concerns are diminished, but Quakers who are

¹⁴ Punshon, J. ‘Some reflections on Quakers and the Evangelical Spirit’ in Anderson, P and Macy, H. R. (eds) *Truth’s Bright Embrace* (Newberg, Oregon: George Fox University Press, 1996), p. 217.

¹⁵ See, as indication, Swarthmore lecture titles. Curle, A. ‘*True Justice: Quaker Peace makers and Peace making*’ 1981, Bailey, S. ‘*Peace is a process*’, 1993, Newell, T. ‘*Forgiving Justice: A Quaker vision of criminal justice*’, 2000, Lacey, P. ‘*The unequal world we inhabit: Quaker responses to terrorism and fundamentalism*’, 2010, Lunn, P. ‘*Costing not less than everything: Sustainability and spirituality in changing times*’, 2011.

¹⁶ Though not necessarily its nature.

¹⁷ This is not a totally accurate distinction because, as indicated, the majority of Quakers respect Meeting for Worship. However, there may be a difference in the intensity of and concern for personal spiritual growth involved and involvement in practice of Inwardness may be a matter of degree rather than of kind. Empirical examination of individuals’ spiritual practice would provide interesting and relevant information relating to this consideration.

wedded to socio-political concerns seem to espouse a view similar to that expressed by the Dalai Lama.¹⁸ They are not however divorced totally from the spiritual practice of their heritage. There is little friction between F-Q participants in Quaker faith and practice and non F-Q participants, partly because of the lack of formal sharing of beliefs, but also because of the general tolerance of Friends for each other's views.¹⁹ There can be differences of emphasis in their practical activities: these contribute to the totality of the Religious Society of Friends, its engagement in Inwardness and the consequences of Inwardness in the world. Specific relationships between different theological positions, as described above, and the social engagements of Friends, are not definitive. It is intended here to show rather that individuals contribute in different ways to a Society that is flexible and mobile in its outwardly-turned activity, and firmly embedded in its inwardly-turned spiritual practice.

It is important to note that, in terms of changes within the Society and the identity of its membership, a recent and possibly more serious challenge to Quakerism, as a religious movement, comes from a humanist position. This is discussed here in order to clarify the full range of differences that exist within the present day Quaker membership. David Boulton, a self-proclaimed non-theist member of the Religious Society of Friends, raises issues about 'the twilight of God' and, under the influence of Don Cupitt, adopts a 'Sea of Faith' perspective.²⁰ For Boulton, and others, the Christian 'kingdom of heaven' is a non-notion when that 'kingdom' implies a rulership of God. In turn he questions 'what there is to worship in a Quaker meeting for worship: 'if not God, then what?' Inwardness is not the issue for Boulton, since there is merely, but importantly, a settling process, in which silence and stillness contribute to a significant corporate gathering – a corporately shared human presence. He writes:

Meeting for Worship is a *meeting*, a getting together of Friends. We can reflect, meditate, contemplate all on our own, but it's coming together and doing it together that makes a *Society* of Friends. Religion is above all about relationship, and

¹⁸ Considered 6.3.3.

¹⁹ See text note.

²⁰ Boulton, D. *The Trouble with God* (Winchester: O Books, 2005) chapters 12 and 17.

meeting for worship is relationship in depth. *Worship* comes from an old English word meaning *things of great worth*. Meeting for Worship is a time to focus together on what Friends have called “things eternal”, things of most worth that matter most to us.²¹

Boulton’s view might satisfy some Quakers as to its adequacy, but it is apparent that it is a world apart from an F-Q explanation of spiritual practice in its devotional form. As such it is unlikely to sustain the continuity of the Religious Society of Friends, as it has been understood traditionally, in the years to come.

As indicated above the range of faith and practice within British Quakerism in the twenty-first century is considerable. Significant changes in Quaker faith and the identity of the membership are reflected in a 2008 document on ‘Quaker identity and the heart of our [Quaker] faith’.²² These are encapsulated below:

In Quaker Life Central Committee we are aware that:

1. For the first time since the early days of the Quaker movement, convinced Friends with no previous Quaker background now greatly outnumber those raised by Quaker parents and that therefore assumptions about obtaining understanding of our peculiar ways of being and doing through osmosis can no longer be made.

2. Whereas a generation ago the largest theological divide among us [Quakers] was expressed as between the Christ-centred and the universalist, it now appears to be between those whose experience is of a transcendent God and non-theists, for whom ‘God’ is a metaphor for entirely human experience.

It is evident, from this statement of the Quaker Life Central Committee, that the Society’s corporate voice remains singular despite the existence of the diversity of how people are “Quaker” in the twenty-first century. Personal descriptions of the experience of Inwardness, within Meeting for Worship, are nonetheless likely to be varied.

Any acknowledgement or interpretation of Inwardness, from such contrasting positions as those of non-theists and Christian Friends, including for example Heron below, may be markedly dissimilar—a religious Quaker may address or refer to God, a non-

²¹ Boulton, Interview, *Quaker Focus* Vol. 2, No. 1, 2012, pp. 9-15.

²² Conference papers and study material for use in meetings for learning, based on the Quaker Life Conference held in April 2008.

theist is more likely to speak of self or consciousness. In the latter case, references to inwardly perceived knowing may be irrelevant or non-existent.²³

5.3 Inwardness in the modern era

As shown in 5.2 above, the development of Liberal Quakerism has led to increasing freedom from any specific faith definition, and, for many of its adherents, virtual freedom from any doctrine. It has sanctioned not only diversity among its practitioners, but also given way to uncertainty.²⁴ Dandelion concludes that:

Liberal Quakerism remains a distinct and changing tradition within Quakerism. It operates in a unique way amongst religious groups in its emphasis on form rather than belief and consequently transcends many of the philosophical and theological problems associated with the more doctrinal churches.²⁵

Thus one of the characteristics of ‘maturing’ Quaker Liberalism is that there are those who, like Boulton, dissociate themselves from religious language and God-talk. This fact affects, to a great degree, how Inwardness is likely to be discussed and, potentially, how it is understood.

Gorman’s consideration of what he considers the ‘amazing fact of Quaker worship’ involves, in his terms, avoidance ‘of [religious] words that ... are likely to cause negative reactions’.²⁶ Gradual undermining of the religious position, steeped in Christianity, has given way to new and different ‘legitimate standpoints’ to which Gorman affords respect. Language of Inwardness, and its consequences, is often reframed. In his discussion of

²³ It is questionable whether a Meeting for Worship, comprising such diversity of participants, can ‘gather’ in the sense Quakers intend and whether ‘ministry’ is sustained in distinction from ‘mere thoughts’ that non-theists wish to share.

²⁴ Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism*. (Cambridge: University Press, 2007), pp. 151-153, on ‘the absolute perhaps’.

²⁵ Dandelion, *ibid*, p. 153. ‘In Britain, nonetheless, the turn to Inwardness in un-programmed, silent worship remained the form of spiritual practice. This being so it was (and remains) necessary to consider what might be the new interpretations of its content that often remain hidden: one of which concerns a changing, modern understanding of the Light.’ See also Dandelion, B. Pink, ‘*Open for Transformation: Being Quaker*’, Swarthmore lecture. (London: Quaker Books, 2014) chapter 2.

²⁶ Gorman, G. ‘*The Amazing Fact of Quaker Worship*’, Swarthmore lecture (London: Friends Home Service Committee, 1973), pp. 3-4.

Quaker worship, Gorman ‘humanize[s]’ the experience of Meeting for Worship. He adopts the view that although Quaker worship is ‘a religious activity’ his examination is from the standpoint ‘of human experience’.²⁷

However, the experience of worship, even though ‘human experience’, is known by many Friends as a distinctive type of experience regarded as a search for spiritual knowing, which remains mystical and, for some, holy. Damaris Parker Rhodes describes an experience related to her spiritual journey as follows: ‘...then inwardly I saw. This seeing was echoed in the whole of my surroundings which became lighted from within with a holy light’.²⁸

Parker Rhodes distinguishes initially between *an* experience and ongoing experiencing. She took her first experience forward in becoming a member of the Religious Society of Friends. This enabled her to ‘seek inwardly to grasp what is most precious in our [Quaker] tradition’. She said, ‘It was necessary for me to belong to a religious fellowship in which experience and action could be tested and tried; Friends provide just this important living discipline’.²⁹

Liberal Quakerism in the twenty-first century is indeed liberal in its faith, yet, unprogrammed worship, practised in Britain, remains conservative in its practice.³⁰ Thus Gorman chooses his language carefully, with avoidance of certain words. In relation to faith position diversity increases among Friends but in terms of practice, both inwardly in worship and outwardly in the witness of testimony, much remains constant. It is within this range of constancy and change that issues of membership have focused on Quaker identity in the present day. Although emphasis on worship, as inwardly experienced is, in

²⁷ Gorman, ‘*The Amazing Fact of Quaker Worship*’, p. 5.

²⁸ Parker Rhodes, ‘*Truth: A Path not a Possession*’ Swarthmore lecture, (London: Friends Home Service, 1977), p. 9; compare ‘lighted from within with a holy light’ with Stephen’s ‘consciousness ... lighted from within’ (chapter 1).

²⁹ Parker Rhodes, *ibid.*, p. 13; this is the ‘singular voice’ mentioned above.

³⁰ For relevant comparison see Dandelion *Introduction*, table 3.3 ‘The operation of the culture of silence (after Dandelion 1996, p. 258)’ and table 3.4. ‘A model of Quaker theology (after Taber 1992, p. 16)’. His analyses focus on specific aspects of Quaker faith and practice including a ‘culture of silence’, showing its advantages and disadvantages, and also Quaker theology as multi-faceted.

the main, constant, belief is so changed in modern liberal Quakerism that Alistair Heron, questioning Quaker identity, asks: 'is our 'Christian heritage' so secularised that we are really humanist at heart?'³¹ Later in this publication he claims 'my concern is to assert afresh that ours (Friends') is a religious society, not a secular or humanist one'.³² In this view, inwardly experienced knowing is to be attributed to religious experience. However, as indicated above, this understanding and its attendant language is not shared by all twenty/ twenty-first century Quakers.

The following section identifies aspects of the many transitions that have affected the modern Religious Society of Friends and given rise to a range of specific issues. These are discussed under three headings to clarify attendant concerns: they include a) Quakerism in terms of discursively written academic accounts versus devotional descriptions of spiritual experience (5.4); b) Understanding of 'that of God within' in terms of the 'Inward' versus the 'Inner' Light (5.5.), and c) the growth of non-theism (5.6).

These are examined in turn.

5.4 Discursive accounts of academic considerations as compared with devotional descriptions of spiritual experience

This section indicates how, in the present, a range of perspectives show interdependence and interaction between different, but compatible, modes of description. There is a tone, language selection and purpose in academic writing that distinguishes it from the more personally experiential, often devotional, description of spiritual practice that is sometimes 'mystical' in its character. On occasions these two approaches to expressing spiritual understanding seem at variance. However, when given due attention, it is evident that they complement each other and, in combination, they offer the breadth of perspective that is needed to provide full understanding of Quaker spiritual practice, experience and knowledge.

³¹ Heron, A. *Our Quaker Identity—Religious Society—or Friendly Society?* (Kelso: Curlew, 1999) .p. 45.

³² Heron, *ibid*, p. 53.

They are discussed sequentially.

5.4.1 Discursively expressed academic considerations

Among his addresses, and following the Manchester conference, John Wilhelm Rowntree, suggested that the Religious Society of Friends had not had anything to say of public note or interest for at least half a decade.³³ He acknowledged internal communication among different trends and movements within the Society but lamented that, once having been a forward player in theological change, Quakers were theologically silent in the eighteenth century. He asked searching questions rhetorically;³⁴ but he required the Society to address them: ‘Is there a God? Is He knowable? What is inspiration? How far can we rely on the Bible? Was Jesus divine? Can we trust his claim to reveal the Father? How does the evolution of species affect the problem of sin?—and so forth and so forth’.³⁵ However, as he suggested that Friends ‘had stopped thinking in the seventeenth century’, his tone was not optimistic of receiving profound answers and explanation, despite the fact that he claimed the time as one of ‘peculiar hopefulness’ (yet also one of ‘peculiar peril’).³⁶

Rowntree maintained that ‘He who neglects his intellectual powers or refuses to be guided by them in discovery of truth, is not only an intellectual coward, he is defying the purposes of the Almighty ...’³⁷ Inwardness, as the rest of Quaker faith and practice had become, for him, not only significant as experience exclusively and without confirmation in the Bible, but also subject to and supported by intellectual consideration. He urged the

³³ Rowntree, J. W. *Essays and Addresses* (London: Headley, 1906), p. 241. John Wilhelm Rowntree, was an activist of the Quaker Movement in the 19-20th centuries. He played a significant role in enabling the Religious Society of Friends of his day to encompass the new knowledge of the period—particularly in the form of biblical criticism and that gained from scientific developments. He also helped to establish the Quaker Study Centre at Woodbrooke, in Birmingham.

³⁴ Rowntree, J. W. *Claim your Inheritance. Essays on Man’s Relation to God* (London: Bannisdale Press, n/d.).

³⁵ Rowntree, *Essays and Addresses*. pp. 241-242. See also Rowntree, J. W. *Claim your Inheritance*, pp. 61-68 for an argument for Christianity and, p. 50 for ‘truth ... [to be] tested by experience’.

³⁶ Rowntree, *ibid*, p. 242.

³⁷ Rowntree, *Manchester Conference, 1896*, p. 235.

Society to recognise that it was necessary to re-evaluate all that they stood for and he challenged Friends ‘boldly to face facts and frankly review their position’.³⁸ He stated that:

The conception of inwardness of the Kingdom faithfully interpreted, cut at the root of all shams, all mere conventionalities, all religion by proxy, all unbrotherliness, all injustice, all artificial limitation. Interpreted with sincerity, it worked itself out into a practical gospel, a spiritual and social order transcending all contemporary ideals in its realization of lofty purity, and loving fellowship.³⁹

Once the fact that ‘the Bible was never the ultimate court of appeal’ had been accepted, Rowntree’s assertion, concerning lack of understanding of the Inward Light, resounds as particularly damning of Quaker theology. Rowntree was urging Quakers to rethink their theology, to clarify their religious stance and to challenge each other to better expressions of their faith and practice. Whilst at the same time he claimed the stance for such theology to be based in worship. He maintained that:

It is only in the inwardness of true spiritual worship that the soul grows aware of its deepest need, becomes impatient of self-deception and of the world’s poor baubles, and seeks with passionate longing to know the real basis and meaning of life.⁴⁰

The increasingly discursive approach to explaining and interpreting faith and practice is expressed in more recent times in many of the *Swarthmore lectures* [g] yet, at the same time, the lectures are accepted by some of the lecturers and the Swarthmore lecture committee as ministry. Some Friends offer approaches that are exclusively Christian and others provide Universalist positions yet seek to maintain and express the core ‘Quaker propositions ... derived from experience’ devotionally; additionally, some are presented in discursive mode theologically and philosophically.

³⁸ Rowntree, *Manchester Conference*, p. 78.

³⁹ Rowntree, *ibid*, p. 101.

⁴⁰ Rowntree, *Claim your Inheritance*, p. 33.

Janet Scott's *Swarthmore lecture*, has been and remains important in facing the questions that seek to define the wider view of Quaker theology for this generation.⁴¹ In her reference to 'experience' Scott means not only that encompassed in the three hundred and sixty-year history of the Religious Society of Friends, but also that of God's disclosures to human beings individually. Addressing the latter Scott asks 'what canst thou say?' There is in Scott no explicit talk of the meaning or significance of Inwardness or inward knowing, although in her closing paragraph she intimates the importance of truth known in 'that tenderest compassion' as a 'response in the silence of waiting'.⁴² For Scott, and for many twenty/twenty-first century Friends, a Christian interpretation of Quaker theology remains acceptable, and for some essential, for others a 'reasonable uncertainty' is more appropriate.⁴³ Despite the challenge presented by language, Gerald Priestland maintains 'we cannot pursue our [Friends'] interior life without some attempt at formulation, some resort to language' in expressing our [Quakers'] experience.⁴⁴ Writing of the relationship between language and experience, Keith Ward argues that:

Linguistic tradition is vitally important in religion. But experience is an equally important factor in enabling us to understand diverse traditions, and to revise or advance our own tradition in creative ways. It is thus possible to run together the experiential and cultural-linguistic dimensions in such a way that new and vivid experiences prompt the linguistic tradition to move in new directions, while the existing interpretative tradition governs to some extent the way in which the religious object is experienced.⁴⁵

Ward's observation is significant not only for the fact that Quakers use increasingly diverse ways of describing their faith and practice, but also for the fact that one stage of

⁴¹ Scott, 'What canst thou Say?' Swarthmore lecture, p. 10.

⁴² Scott, *ibid*, p. 82.

⁴³ Priestland, G. 'Reasonable Uncertainty: A Quaker Approach to Doctrine', Swarthmore lecture, (London: Quaker Home Service, 1982).

⁴⁴ Priestland, *ibid*, p.50.

⁴⁵ Ward, K. *The Case for Religion*, p. 75. In relation to the issue of the extent to which our knowledge and its related language affects experience, see also Katz, S, on conceptualised experience.

developing spiritual consciousness seems to involve a language of dualism, as referring, apparently, to perceptions of reality.⁴⁶

Beth Allen's Swarthmore lecture,⁴⁷ as that of Janet Scott, attempts to provide some theological certainty through a particular line of questioning.⁴⁸ She asks:

- 'What experience lies behind this [any] statement?
- What concept of God does this [any] statement imply?
- What is God doing?
- How can I help?'⁴⁹

Although her own answers are as a Christian Quaker, Allen acknowledges that Universalist and non-theist Friends might answer such questions differently.

For Allen, the 'inner spaces within each of us are mental and spiritual worlds huge beyond our [human] imagining'.⁵⁰ So Allen's view is that everyone is the same—all people are endowed with far reaching inner dimensions, an immensity of Inwardness.⁵¹ Allen's lecture speaks of 'inner worlds' and what is held 'within our hearts' [Quakers']. In conclusion, she suggests that for Quakers 'worship teaches us quietly how to enter the world in our heart, how to wait upon God, how to listen to the inward teacher, and how to watch for the hints and guesses, the sparkles along the web of our community'. She asks 'In our silence, what is God doing? How can we help?'⁵²

⁴⁶ See Table 6.

⁴⁷ Allen, B. *Ground and Spring: Foundations of Quaker discipleship*, Swarthmore lecture (London: Quaker Books, 2007).

⁴⁸ Scott, J. *What canst thou Say?*.

⁴⁹ Allen, B. *ibid*, p. 12.

⁵⁰ Allen, B. *ibid*, 'As we [Quakers] meet together our inner worlds can combine so that new links are made, new cross fertilisations take place and new life springs up. It is a wonderful time to open our [Quaker] inner eyes ...', p. 32.

⁵¹ Allen, B. *ibid*, 32-33.

⁵² Allen, B. *ibid*, 118. It is of interest to note that Allen uses the term 'attentive availability' rather than 'Attentive Presence'.

In the present generation it is Allen's fourth question that Friends embrace particularly fully, especially in academic presentations i.e. what can Quakers *do*? This question upstages the importance of what Quakers need to *be*. As Christine Trevitt says, 'The worthy issues of peace and social action seem to occupy a higher place in Friends' thinking and giving than does our own [Quaker] spiritual nurture'.⁵³ 'The rock of modern Quaker diversity' leaves Friends with many unresolved uncertainties and no clear faith position.⁵⁴ There are, however, increasing numbers of academic journals, and research publications that focus on the subjects that need clarification, and which answer questions such as those posed by Allen and Scott.⁵⁵

In 2010, the Religious Society of Friends ran a Quaker Essay Competition comparable to that of the one organised in 1859. These essays include some interesting material relating to the nature of contemporary Quakerism and the significance of the inward dimension of worship experience. Of the three prize winning Quaker essayists, Felicity Kaal⁵⁶ writes most explicitly about the inward dimension of Quaker spiritual practice. However, both Linda Murgatroyd,⁵⁷ the outright winner, and Simon Best⁵⁸ also emphasise the importance of the religious nature of the Society and, in turn, the significance of its spiritual practice as the core of the Quaker Way.

Murgatroyd is even-handed in relation to Quaker faith and Quaker action. She writes 'we are a faith of applied mysticism: without the mysticism – the direct experience of the

⁵³ Trevitt, C. '*Previous Convictions*', Swarthmore lecture, (London: Quaker Home Service, 1997), p. 148.

⁵⁴ Trevitt, C. *ibid*, 17.

⁵⁴ See Quaker Studies Research Association and its related publications.

⁵⁶ Kaal, F. 'The Future of Quakerism in Britain Yearly Meeting', (*Quaker Essay Competition*), *The Friends Quarterly*, No. 2. 2010 pp. 64-85

⁵⁷ Murgatroyd, L, 'The Future of Quakers in Britain: Holding Spaces for the Spirit to Act', (*Quaker Essay Competition*), *The Friends Quarterly*, No. 2., 2010, pp. 1-29

⁵⁸ Best, S. 'The Religious Society of Friends in Britain: Simple, Contemporary, Radical?' (*Quaker Essay Competition*), *The Friends Quarterly*, No. 2. 2010 pp.49-63

holy - the action is meaningless, but without the action our Quaker faith is hollow'.⁵⁹ However, she is unequivocal in affirming that the fact 'That we humans can each have a direct communication with God, has been central to Quakerism from the outset'.⁶⁰ Although she does not provide a detailed explanation of the means by which 'communication with God'/'direct experience of the holy' occurs, she does state clearly that, 'It is the very process of our worship - rooted in silence and reaching inwards and outwards in open listening – that lies at the core of British Quakerism'.⁶¹

Further, Murgatroyd recognises that from this practice,⁶² usually corporate, the individual gains immense benefit. She writes, 'Quaker worship is a wonderfully energising and healing activity, the more we practise it the greater the power of the spirit in our individual lives'.⁶³ She only mentions the term 'inward' once in her essay and her description of process is of 'sinking into our spiritual shared silence, ... activity that seems eternal and intangible, yet very much in the present moment'.⁶⁴ For Murgatroyd, Quaker worship involves a process based in and utilising silence that is in the main corporate. Her description of 'reaching inwards and outwards' is consistent with Table 1, p. 11, which depicts the practice of worship as described in this thesis.

For Best, the issue of Quaker worship gives rise to a questioning of practice. He writes, 'We need to move away from our rigid adherence to the silent form of Quaker Worship and explore different approaches to worship, including semi-programmed worship that enables different types of people and people of all ages, to engage with worship'.⁶⁵ Best endorses Dandelion's claim concerning the importance of silence and the

⁵⁹ Murgatroyd, 'The Future of Quakers in Britain...' p. 9

⁶⁰ Murgatroyd, *ibid*, p. 9

⁶¹ Murgatroyd, , *ibid*, p.9; and see also Table 1.

⁶² Although in Meeting for worship, in Quakerism, this is corporate, spiritual practice can be engaged in individually.

⁶³ Murgatroyd, *ibid*, p. 10

⁶⁴ Murgatroyd, *ibid*, p. 8-9

⁶⁵ Best, 'The Religious Society of Friends in Britain...', p. 54

fact that 'silence still marks the boundaries of the collective worship'.⁶⁶ However, he contributes nothing further to an understanding of the inward dimension of Quaker spiritual experience.

Kaal, on the other hand, voicing her own Quaker views, yet inferring a wider application, writes, 'Accepting that the Spiritual Realm exists is not based on belief in its existence but in *knowing* of its existence through a subjective experience of going there, by using a spiritual practice.'⁶⁷ For Kaal the 'spiritual practice' that she identifies is the 'Inward path' of Quakerism, a direct line to 'that of God within'.⁶⁸ Thus, as an experiential religion, Quakerism is, for Kaal, concerned with facilitating access to the personal within-ness of worship. She maintains 'that we speak [to new attenders] of centring down in Meeting as if it is an easy and obvious thing to do, but it is not. It involves switching into a subtly different state of consciousness'.⁶⁹ Kaal is here writing of what is needed to 'turn within' (Fox's phrase) and she argues that 'As we travel further into the Spiritual Realm our spiritual practice needs to change and deepen'.⁷⁰ She is unequivocal in statements concerning her:

- 1) Recognition of an inward dimension in Quakerism
- 2) Description of processes of turning within
- 3) Acknowledgement of the importance of constancy of practice
- 4) Identification of states and stages of spiritual advancement.

Thus, she writes, with reference to 3 above, 'we need to open a pathway to the Spiritual Realm, and gradually widen it and keep it clear by constant use, otherwise when we need guidance in emergency, it will be overgrown and you will not be able to get through in a

⁶⁶ Best, 'The Religious Society of Friends in Britain...', p. 54

⁶⁷ Kaal, 'The Future of Quakerism in Britain Yearly Meeting', p. 66.

⁶⁸ Kaal, *ibid*, P. 66

⁶⁹ Kaal, *ibid*, p. 70.

⁷⁰ Kaal, *ibid*, p. 70-71.

hurry'.⁷¹ However, perhaps more significantly in relation to the importance of regular and frequent practice, she reminds (in relation to 4 above) that:

We are a mystical tradition and all mystical paths acknowledge levels and stages on the spiritual journey. We progress through these stages at different rates, so inevitably some will have travelled deeper in the Spiritual Realm and be more experienced than others.⁷²

Throughout this thesis differing understandings and experiences of the inward dimension of Quakerism have been set alongside each other for discussion. Here there is consistency between the three Quaker competition winners of 2010 in affirming that spiritual practice, in the manner of Friends, is the core of Quaker spiritual life. It is Kaal, however, who expresses most fully an understanding of how Quaker Spiritual practice, if engaged in diligently over time, has the potential to offer spiritual advancement. She writes:

... the Quaker spiritual practice we share is that through a process of continuing and continual discernment we open ourselves to the Inward Light, to reveal our darkness and allow the experience to transform us, and then go and act in the world from that place. It was through this practice that early Quakers achieved the heightened inner consciousness they call the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. It is the mystical core of all traditions.⁷³

The interpretation expressed above does not preclude understanding of unity, but in placing greater emphasis on accord and shared agreements in gospel order i.e. going into the world and acting, it emphasises a lesser role – that of friendship.⁷⁴ Consideration of whether such a way of life is, or could be, accepted as the consequence of Inwardness through which growth *of* unity is an *outcome* requires further examination.

In considering the writing of the winning essayists of the Quaker Essay competition of 2010 it has been demonstrated that worship and action are equally important to Quakers of

⁷¹ Kaal. 'The Future of Quakerism in Britain Yearly Meeting', p. 70.

⁷² Kaal. *Ibid*, p. 69.

⁷³ Kaal, *ibid*, p. 74. Reference to the 'Kingdom of Heaven' is less acceptable to some twenty-first century Quakers than it was in the seventeenth century and even throughout later periods of Quakerism in the eighteenth and nineteenth century.

⁷⁴ Friendship, see section 2.5.1.

the present generation.⁷⁵ It has been stated that Best questions the reliance of Quakers on one mode of engaging in worship and maintains that it is time to rethink Friends' worship to appeal to a broader range of ages and types of people. He does not face the question as to whether different modes of worship could in fact offer similarly profound 'approaches to God':⁷⁶ this having been the purpose of Worship that Quakers have held fast for over 350 years. As shown, Kaal and Murgatroyd stress the foundational significance of inward, personal, spiritual experience, as in the long-standing mode of Quaker worship, to support living the Quaker Way. Kaal appeals to Friends to be diligent in the practice of discernment in which 'we open ourselves to the Inward Light': For Kaal, Inwardness gained in the Quaker way of worship is the priority of Quakerism on which all else rests.

It cannot be said with certainty that a consistent 'conception of God' emerges in these essays. Nonetheless, what can be claimed is that God within remains the underpinning of the faith and practice discussed by these essayists. Inwardness is about reaching towards the call of God. It is evident that the discursive accounts, and analyses of questions that face the Religious Society of Friends considered above, help to provide clarity with regard to contemporary concerns and understandings of Inwardness. The issues raised offer a systematic way of reviewing subjects that remain matters of uncertainty or challenge to members. However, it is argued here that they offer only part of the answer in attempts to understand Quaker Inwardness comprehensively and that the descriptions of experience that are often framed in personal, spiritual, sometimes mystical, terms complement and interact with the academic to provide fullness of understanding.

Examples are given in the next section.

5.4.2 Devotional descriptions of spiritual experience

Rufus Jones, maintained that, 'We [Quakers] are [thus] called by the very obligations of our spiritual pedigree, to be bearers today of a type of Christianity which is essentially

⁷⁵ By virtue of selection 'as winners' the views of these essayists are understood to have a wide reference, and to be applicable to the membership of the Religious Society of Friends as a whole.

⁷⁶ *QFP*, chapter 2.

inward, spiritual and mystical'. He continued: 'I mean a religion of inward first-hand conviction, a religion rooted and grounded in experience, a religion whose authority is as little endangered by science and criticism, as is the authority of the multiplication table, or the laws of gravitation'.^{77, 78}

Jones referred to the mystical dimension of Quaker experience, pointing out that the current position (including the early twentieth century) spoke for a 'consciousness of finite spirit meeting infinite Spirit, an inward testimony to the Great Companion of our souls'.⁷⁹ The apparent difference of approach, between Rowntree and Jones, one advocating intellectual enquiry the other spiritual practice, is interesting but not incompatible: Jones maintained that:

The type of religion which is to prevail and which will support the individual, and nourish the ideals of the nation in these days of expanding knowledge and scientific attitude, is one of [an] experimental sort—one of inward conviction, of first-hand authority, of demonstration of the spirit and power [of God].⁸⁰

Only by returning to 'first-hand religion inwardly felt and buttressed on the facts of the soul's experience, can we speak to our age with power'.⁸¹ The difference between Rowntree and Jones is more apparent than real, one of emphasis rather than substance, and Rowntree stated that, 'In the writings of Rufus Jones, to name no other, the attempt is being made to attack the problems which remain unsolved ...'.⁸² There was a need as Rowntree urged, in the first period of Liberal Quakerism, to clarify the theological position of Friends. He urged this, nonetheless, not as an alternative to inward experience, but rather as a result of 'new birth', writing:

⁷⁷ Rufus Jones, one of the Swarthmore lecturers ('*Quakerism: A Religion of Life*', 1908), is discussed here because of his emphasis on the significance of experience, 'the religion of inward first-hand conviction', the extent of his influence and the importance of personal spiritual knowing expressed in experiential language. Jones, *ibid*, 1908, p. 19.

⁷⁸ Jones, *ibid*, p. 20.

⁷⁹ Jones, *ibid*, p. 25.

⁸⁰ Jones, *ibid*, p. 26.

⁸¹ Jones, *ibid*, p. 27.

⁸² Rowntree, *Essays and Addresses*, p. 249.

No legal bargain, but a spiritual conflict, an inward change, the rejection of the living death of sin, the choice of new birth, of the purified self, the conversion from a low and earthly to a high and spiritual standard of life and conduct—here you have the practical conditions of salvation ...⁸³

For Rowntree the need was for an operative and personal renewal, in relation to which theoretical reflection was essential. However, the theoretical position was not a substitute for the experience, which as Jones indicated, necessitated Inwardness as the significant process of experiential knowing.

For Caroline Stephen (1834–1909), writing at about the time that Rowntree describes as the ‘history of an inward revolution’, this is a matter of rational mysticism.⁸⁴ She explains: ‘I speak not only as believing that there is a school of the inner, or “interior” life, but as having in my measure been consciously under that discipline’.⁸⁵ She continues:

The essence of the mystical faith is the belief of an actual spiritual intercourse between us human beings and the Father of our spirits—an interchange of meaning as real as that which takes place between one human being and another. In other words, “he that cometh unto God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him”.⁸⁶

Stephen expresses a very clear understanding of the potential effectiveness of both individual and corporate Quaker worship. She recognises the relationship between individual discernment and that of the group.

In Rowntree, Jones and Stephen, there is growing understanding that it is possible to speak of the ‘Light within’ in a reasoned manner, in terms reflecting modern knowledge, and thus in a manner ‘relevant to the age’. The latter arose from ‘a new interpretation of our universe and of its history’ and also the rejection of a doctrine of ‘Biblical infallibility’.⁸⁷ The ‘Light Within’ became amenable to description in a language that

⁸³ Rowntree, *Claim your Inheritance*, p. 64.

⁸⁴ Stephen, *C. Light Arising*.

⁸⁵ Stephen, *C. ibid*, p. 6.

⁸⁶ Stephen, *C. ibid*, p. 7.

⁸⁷ Jones, *Quakerism: A Religion of Life*, 1908, p. 23.

Stephen suggests is ‘invested by the glowing quality of their [mystics] own inner experience; or in the flash of certainty by which a solution may be lighted up, to be afterwards verified and tested by purely intellectual processes’.⁸⁸

For some liberal Friends Inwardness began to be described in less Christian, and devotional terms, than those of early Quakers. However, in Quaker worship, Inwardness remained, as previously discussed in the expression of Stephen, a turning of the mind to its ‘own consciousness’ in and through a silent practice, process and state. Silence was, ‘the *sine qua non* of Quaker worship’ in Britain and it remains so.⁸⁹

*Quaker Faith and Practice*⁹⁰ includes, arguably, the most comprehensive collection of expressions of experiential understandings of Quakerism relevant to the present time.⁹¹ The fact that this is the most recent version of the publication indicates the Society’s acceptance of its relevance, even though it does not contain passages arising after 1995 and many are considerably earlier.⁹²

Four sections of *QFP* contain statements that are of particular relevance to twenty first century understandings of Quaker Inwardness. These are chapter 2 on ‘Approaches to God’ (5.4.2i), which includes matters of Worship and Prayer; chapter 19, ‘Openings’ (5.4.2.ii); chapter 26 entitled ‘Reflections’ (5.4.2iii) and chapter 29: ‘Leadings’ (5.4.2iv). Each of these sections offers differently focused expressions about experience of

⁸⁸ Stephen, *Light Arising*, p. 13.

⁸⁹ See chapter 1. Also Bauman, *Let your Words be Few*, p. 124.

⁹⁰ Edition of 1995, hereafter *QFP* [g].

⁹¹ Of particular note is the fact that the chronological spread of these expressions ranges from the seventeenth to the twentieth century. The selected passages are thus not only representative of the entire history of Quakerism but also, continuing to be used in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, deemed to be of continued relevance within the Society’s teaching. Thus the significance of the message of selected passages has a place in this examination of Inwardness within the Quaker faith and practice of modern-day Friends. All references in this chapter are taken from the 1995 Edition of *QFP*.

⁹² The suggestion of Meeting for Sufferings to begin revising it, *QFP*, was not shared by Britain Yearly Meeting in 2014. However, in 2015 an eighteen months reading/discussion has been initiated.

Inwardness; they include references to what seem, for the experiencer, its characteristics in relation to the inner-world.⁹³

Each of the selected chapters of *QFP* is considered separately and, then discussed together. The words of William Penn (1694) serve as an introduction.⁹⁴

If you would know God and worship and serve God as you should do, you must come to the means he has ordained and given for that purpose. Some seek it in books, some in learned men, but what they look for is in themselves, yet they overlook it. The voice is too still, the Seed too small and the Light shineth in darkness. They are abroad and so cannot divide the spoil; but the woman that lost her silver found it at home after she had lighted her candle and swept her house. [26.44].⁹⁵

There could not be a more pointed instruction to seek ‘at home’ i.e. ‘within yourself’. As a seventeenth century expression of the manner in which Friends might seek Truth: the notion of ‘the Light’, consistent with seventeenth century thinking, is qualified as ‘the Light of Christ within’. Subsequent inclusions from *QFP* indicate some shifts in terminology without negating a broad understanding of Inwardness already considered as that which Quakers continue to approach in their worship, both corporately and individually.

The four chapters of Quaker Faith and Practice identified are considered sequentially.

5.4.2i ‘Approaches to God’: Worship and prayer (Chapter 2 *QFP*)

Five main themes emerge in this chapter of *QFP*. They are grouped here under the following headings: Stillness, Silence, Heart awareness, Inwardness, and Links to God

⁹³ Other chapters of Quaker Faith and Practice also include relevant passages but in the main their concerns are more practical relating to the administration and organisation of the Society.

⁹⁴ Brackets used in this chapter are normal curved bracket for the date of the passage, and square bracket for its location in *QFP*.

⁹⁵ The final part of this passage is given here as it is relevant to consideration of growth of Inwardness and the notion of perfection for Quakers. It reads as follows: ‘Do you so too and you shall find what Pilate wanted to know, viz., Truth. The Light of Christ within, who is the Light of the world and so a light to you that tells the truth of your condition, leads all that take heed unto it out of darkness in to God’s marvellous light; for light grows upon the obedient. It is sown for the righteous and their way is a shining light that shines forth more and more to the perfect day’.

(God Focus). Additionally, references to the ‘mystical’ and the ‘mysterious’ afford interpretation in terms of the inner-worldly or spiritual realm⁹⁶ as ‘mystical’, in the manner discussed earlier.⁹⁷

A broadly similar understanding of Quaker worship has endured in Britain from its origin in the seventeenth century. The main change is found in the duration of practice as a corporate activity. Whereas in the early times practice could continue for many hours, in the twentieth century it is usually a Meeting of one hour only.⁹⁸ The seminal expression regarding practice is that of Fox (1658), ‘Be still and cool in thy own mind and spirit from thy own thoughts...’ [2.18]. Fox’s words, although not using the term Inwardness (or ‘inward’) nonetheless, describe the process by which Attentive Presence in worship facilitates inward/inner experience.⁹⁹ The importance of Stillness in this process is emphasised in 2.01, 2.39 and 2.53, whereas that of Silence (‘cool in thy own mind’ as expressed by Fox in this quotation) is emphasized in 2.01, 2.12, 2.13 and 2.15.

That the Stillness and Silence of Quaker worship is important for heart-felt/heart-known awareness of Inwardness is expressed in several passages. References to Heart occur in 2.12, 2.57 and 2.60; whereas terms associated directly with Inwardness are used in 2.02, 2.10, 2.22, 2.57, 2.58, 2.72 and 2.81. Taken together, indications of Stillness, Silence, Heart Awareness and Inwardness connect with the fuller expression of the manner in which worship concerns turning to God. They are in combination about creating the Conditions, and facilitating the Element of Attentive Presence in the process itself. Notions of *forging links with God* [2.16], *sacred interchange* [2.24], *sharing with God* [2.42], *communion* [2.39] and *heavenly communion* [2.43] all relate to the intended outcome i.e. the possibility of Unity.

⁹⁶ See Kaal, F. ‘The Future of Quakerism in Britain Yearly Meeting’, *Friends Quarterly*, 2, (2010), pp. 64-85.

⁹⁷ Chapter 1 and 5.

⁹⁸ Advices and Queries, 19.20 (Edward Burrough).

⁹⁹ The terms ‘Inward’ and ‘inner’ are sometimes taken to be distinct both historically and theologically, but on occasions distinction is disregarded as unimportant, see consideration below. Also see Jantzen, G. *A Place of Springs....* chapter 4 for a Quaker feminist perspective on ‘Quakers and the Inner Light’.

John Punshon (1987) writes of Meeting for Worship, as giving emphasis to the ‘ministry of silence’, further referring to the importance of coming regularly with ‘heart and mind prepared’ [2.37]. For Woolman, what is important is that his ‘understanding became more strengthened to distinguish the language of the pure spirit which inwardly moves upon the heart’ [2.57]. It is in this interrelation of 1) creating the Conditions for worship, 2) engaging ‘the pure spirit’ that ‘inwardly moves upon the heart’,¹⁰⁰ and 3) communion with God that defines the process of Quaker worship: a process that is central to gaining the guidance of the Inward Teacher.

5.4.2ii ‘Openings’ (Chapter 19 *QFP*)

The chapter of *QFP* on ‘Openings’ tells the story of ‘the origins of our [Friends’] Religious Society’. The introduction to the chapter states:

As we look at these openings-both beginnings and insights-we are not telling the full history. We are telling those parts of the story which explain and illuminate the identity of our yearly meeting as it is now, as it interprets its origins in the Light now given to it, and as it is called by the same Inward Teacher to find, in differing times and circumstances, the same Truth.¹⁰¹

This passage and many of the inclusions in chapter 19, place emphasis on the ‘Inward Teacher’ as primary guide. Thus, the importance of personal and inner experience is maintained. The texts draw attention to the fact that Fox wrote, ‘I had nothing outwardly to help me’ [19.02]; ‘This I saw in pure openings...’ [19.04] and ‘I felt the hand of the Lord within me’ [19.05].¹⁰² Twenty-first century Friends are thus urged to the same experience i.e. direct communication with God. This is the essence of Quaker spiritual practice. What is most important for Friends is that their knowledge should be ‘inwardly from God’ [19.07]. It is necessary to know for oneself not to know only what others have

¹⁰⁰ See Hamby, C. ‘When the mind descends to the heart’ in *Faith Initiative*, Issue 19, (undated), pp. 41-45.

¹⁰¹ See *QF*, chapter 19, introduction, no pagination.

¹⁰² ‘Openings’ understood as ‘the hand [word] of the Lord within me’ can be taken as synonymous with the term ‘revelation’ in Fox.

said otherwise ‘we are all thieves’, according to the words of Margaret Fell. So her question is ‘What canst thou say?’¹⁰³

By means of personally experienced acquaintance with God, in Meeting for Worship, the ‘Spirit and Truth of Quakerism’ is owned individually and corporately. For Howgill, in the seventeenth century, the means and the certainty of this ‘ownership’ were expressed as follows:

The Lord of Heaven and earth we found to be near at hand, and , as we waited upon him in pure silence, our minds out of all things, his heavenly presence appeared in our assemblies, when there was no language, tongue nor speech from any creature. ... We came to know a place to stand in and what to wait in ... [19.08]

As in *QFP* chapter 2, calls to Stillness, Silence, Heart Awareness, Inwardness and direct communication with God, (God Focus) recur.¹⁰⁴

The latter part of chapter 19 reflects on the manner in which Testimony expresses living the Quaker way and, although these later passages do not directly endorse the previously emphasised concerns (Silence 19.12, Heart, 19.59, and Inwardness 19.14 ‘reaching to my heart and conscience’), the significance of the later passages is to show, that ‘the Truth is one and the same always, and although ages and generations pass away, and one generation goes and another comes, yet the word and power and spirit of the living God endures for ever, and is the same and never changes’. [19.61]

5.4.2iii ‘Reflections’: Experiences of God (Chapter 26 *QFP*)

Geoffrey Hubbard’s (1974) words are used to introduce this section.

So one approaches, by efforts which call for the deepest resources of one’s being, to the condition of true silence; not just of sitting still, not just of not speaking, but of wide awake, fully aware non-thinking. It is in this condition, found and held for a brief instant only, that I have experienced the existence of something other than

¹⁰³ Fell, M. *Quaker Faith and Practice* 19.07, (London: Quaker Home Service, 1995). Margaret Fell became the wife of George Fox and an important figure in the early organisation and administration of the Society. Fell’s question ‘What canst thou say’ was adopted by Janet Scott as the title of her Swarthmore Lecture.

¹⁰⁴ Silence – 19.19, 19.20, 19.28; Heart–19.13, 19.14, 19.17, 19.20. 19.21, 19.59.

‘myself’. The thinking me has vanished, and with it vanishes the sense of separation, of unique identity. ... It is in this condition that one understands the nature of the divine power, its essential identity with love, in the widest sense of that much misused word. [26.12].

This particular reflection illuminates the manner in which the Conditions of Stillness and Silence can cultivate a silent consciousness that, even though initially and importantly self-referring, expands in due time beyond the self.

This ‘wide awake fully aware non-thinking’, is described by Emilia Fogelklou as ‘exceptionally wide awake consciousness’. [26.05]¹⁰⁵ For Caroline Stephen, the description is ‘Minds to their own consciousness lighted from within’ (see chapter 1). Practices that facilitate openness of pure consciousness are important for Quakers in releasing ‘inward wonder’ [26.05] in such a way as to reveal a sense of the inward depth of all creation. Stephen writes of the ‘nearness’ of the Divine Presence in terms of ‘something other and deeper than words’, ‘unseen and eternal things’.¹⁰⁶ Fox refers to the need to ‘keep in the wisdom of God that spreads over all the earth, the wisdom of the creation that is pure. Live in it; that is the word of the Lord God to you all, do not abuse it; keep down low; and take heed of the false joys that will change’. [19.32]

The shift in emphasis in these passages alerts to the possibility for all, and the reality for some, of the widening vision that occurs with growth of measure. The means are the same, the outcomes a matter of time and dedicated spiritual practice. Inwardness continues to be emphasised [26.28, 26.29, 26.37, 26.41, 26.44, 26.49, 26.61, 26. 62, and 26.63]. Passages relating to Silence and Heart also recur (Silence, 26.02, 26. 12 and Heart, 26.30, 26.43, 26.70 and 26.75). In the main, the manner in which ‘the leadings of God’ [26.01] extend to the broader, yet unified sense of ‘otherness in creation’, is emphasised in chapter 26 in ways that extend understanding of the Quaker experience of Inwardness.

Howard Collier (1947) provides a clear expression of experience:

¹⁰⁵ See also Kaal, *Friends Quarterly*, 2, (2010) ‘different states of consciousness’, p. 71, ‘higher states of consciousness, p. 75, ‘heightened inner state of consciousness’, p. 74.

¹⁰⁶ Fox, *Journal*, 59 ‘mind that which is eternal and invisible’.

As I stood relaxed and still, I had the illusion that I was enveloped in light. I had the feeling that the light and I were one. Time and space slipped from me. I was tranquillised and steadied by the beauty, the stability of Nature. I do not suppose that I learnt anything that was new to me during this experience. But I believe I was taught something and that something happened to me. [26.08]

John Macmurray (1967) expresses something of this immensity of existence and his awareness of it as follows:

Whenever we are driven into the depths of our own being, or seek them of our own will, we are faced by a tremendous contrast. On the one side we recognise the pathetic littleness of our ephemeral existence, with no point or meaning itself. On the other side, in the depth there is something eternal and infinite in which our existence and indeed all existence is grounded. This experience of the depth of existence fills us with a sense of both reverence and of responsibility, which gives even to our finite lives a meaning and a power which they do not possess in themselves. *This, I am assured, is our human experience of God* [26.11].¹⁰⁷

In chapter 26 ‘our inner world’ [26.29] is connected to what Fox refers to as ‘the pure openings of light’ [26.42] in a way which many term ‘the Light of Christ within’ [26.44]. This is also described as ‘a new invasion of spirit’ [26.58]. The latter appears very close to what Woolman speaks of as ‘a principle which is pure, placed in the human mind’ [26.61] as ‘deep and inward’.¹⁰⁸ What it reveals is the extended reality of the Holy Spirit - the ‘inspiration of the Holy Spirit’ [26.67], the ‘pure living eternal spirit’. [26.69] Howgill wrote ‘Return home to within’ [26.71], for the ‘Divine Principle of Light and Life in the soul’ [26.62] opens to worshipping Friends a knowing and experiencing that is as ‘revelation and encounter with that which is holy’. [26.75]

In this section, entitled ‘Reflections’, there are many and varied ways in which ‘experiencing God’, ‘the Light of Christ’ and ‘the universal light’, is expressed. Particularly clear is that of Kelly (1941) in the words, ‘There is a Divine Center in which your life can slip, a new and absolute orientation in God, a center where you live with Him and out of which you see all life through new and radiant vision’. [26.72]¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ My emphasis.

¹⁰⁸ As Woolman said ‘confined to no forms of religion’[26.61].

¹⁰⁹ See Appendix 1 on Kelly’s teaching.

5.4.2iv 'Leadings': (Chapter 29 *QFP*)

The introduction to chapter 29 states that 'Our [Quaker] hope and our experience is that when we are faithful we shall be rightly led'. The order of chapters in *QFP* is not prescriptive but it may suggest not only an interweaving of faith and practice but also a logical sequence. The fact that worship precedes openings could be taken as indicative of means and outcomes. In turn, the fact that reflection is dependent on openings and results in leadings is logical. Thus the notion of 'leadings'; has significance in giving direction to living.

QFP chapter 29 encourages Friends to 'dwell in the place where leadings come from ... dwell in the presence of God': [29.01] this is first and foremost an inward movement of experience. 'We [Quakers] must look to ourselves, to speak our lives and let our lives speak. Above all we must look to the Truth. We have an Inward Teacher who teaches guides and commands us. When we know what we have to do, how to do it will come.' [29.02]

Passage 29.10 suggests that '[Quakers] are trustees of a long tradition which has sought to bring our religious convictions into the world'. Friends do and must engage with multiple and complex issues-social, economic, political, yet are reminded that 'the world with all its sin and splendour belongs to God' [29.14]. Beth Allen suggests that we must have a 'big enough' understanding of God to do justice to framing all that needs to be encompassed in the knowledge and experience of the Divine, the creator. She writes:

The God before whom we sit in silence is transcendent, beyond space and time, holding all the universe in being in all its complexity—God to whom we respond with awe and wonder and respect. We need big enough words to describe God, our minds need to be enlarged, elastic and strong enough at least to try to frame the Divine and convey our experience.¹¹⁰

Grace Blindell (1992) also acknowledges the need for an expanded view of God and creation. She writes in a manner that suggests a very challenging time for Friends, but also indicates that the means is available to those who keep in tune with Quaker teaching and

¹¹⁰ Allen, B. 'Ground and Spring...' Swarthmore lecture, p. 31.

spiritual practice. It is worth quoting her in full as an indication of the changing orientation of some of the *QFP* chapter Leadings. Speaking for and of Quakers she says:

And now at this critical point in time, when our outdated world view no longer satisfies, comes this breakthrough: science and mysticism speaking with one voice, the rediscovery of our own (Christian) creation-centred and mystical tradition, and the recognition of the spiritual wisdoms of the native traditions. All uniting and all challenging in a profound way our narrowly drawn boundaries.

Are we willing to open ourselves to this wider vision, to cease our urge to control and dominate, to listen instead to our hearts, to recognise again the integrity and sacredness of this planet which we have so abused? This means entering a new relationship with ‘our Mother the Earth’, it means seeing ourselves again in a cosmic context, a larger perspective, which includes fire-ball, galaxy, planet and all other life forms.

If we can move from our ‘human-sized’ viewpoint and look instead from the cosmic viewpoint, there is a sudden and dramatic widening of the lens through which we look. Redemption is seen to be for all creation, and our human story, far from being diminished, is incorporated in the whole drama of an emerging universe [29.18].¹¹¹

QFP chapter 29, following this passage, concludes, with the words of William Dewsbury from 1675, indicating the interlacing of Friends thinking across the generations.

Dewsbury writes ‘Therefore, dear Friends, wait in the Light, that the Word of the Lord may dwell plentifully in you’. [29.19]

The passages quoted from this chapter of *QFP* demonstrate that twenty first century guidance for Quakers remains a) largely Christian yet b) open to a range of perspectives, with the recognition that liberal developments have affected attitudes. This edition of *QFP* contains texts that remain relevant for most Friends of the twenty-first century but are, arguably, felt to be less prescriptive than they were in their own period. Although

¹¹¹ Note other reference to the ‘Cosmic Christ’, Parker-Rhodes, Swarthmore lecture, p. 34. The significance of confronting the need for an expanded understanding of God becomes increasingly important as the horizons of scientific knowledge grow. In view of the dominant scientific paradigm on the multiverse, it is no longer relevant to think in terms that constrain the view of God’s creation and are narrowly confining and excessively limiting. Note BBC Television Horizon 2/9/15, relating to different models of the multiverse.

Quakers have moved on with the passage of time their inheritance continues to be bonded to their traditional teaching in the ‘heart and mind’ of the Society itself.¹¹²

5.5 ‘That of God within’ in terms of the ‘Inward’ versus the ‘Inner’ Light¹¹³

In the early days of Liberal Quakerism, understandings of Inwardness were expressed both in terms of the ‘Inward Light’ and the ‘Inner Light’. However, it seems unlikely that any distinction of interpretation was intended. As information from the sciences of the material world including, for example, physics and from the newly developing sciences of the psyche including, for example, psychology developed, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, changes in descriptive language began to be accepted. In terms of psychology references to ‘self’ and ‘consciousness’ resulted from new interpretation of ‘interior knowing.’ Increasingly a self-oriented interpretation of consciously experienced Inwardness has given rise to the possibility of a different understanding.

As Friends became, in fact rather than in aspiration, open to multiple influences the terms ‘Inner light’ and ‘Inward Light’ often changed places in popular usage. However, Dandelion explains:

‘Inward’ implies that the Light comes from beyond, as if through a keyhole. It is a dualistic concept and sets the Light up as separate from humanity. ‘Inner’ situates the Light inside the individual and can be used to accommodate more monistic interpretations of how God works with humanity. ‘That of God in every one’ changed its meaning from the ability of everyone to turn to the inward Light of Christ to a sense that a piece of the Divine resides in everybody (Dandelion, 1996, 268). The ‘inner Light’ is mainly a twentieth-century invention along with much of normative Liberal Quakerism and has been wrongly imputed to earlier generations by countless scholars.¹¹⁴

¹¹² See discussion concerning the revision of the Book of Discipline in *Friends Quarterly*, p. 41, Issue 3, (2014).

¹¹³ For interesting discussion relating to Quaker emphasis on the inner light as relevant to a feminist theology see Jantzen, G. (Carrette, J. And Joy, M. eds.) *A Place of Springs*, pp. 6-9.

¹¹⁴ Dandelion, *Introduction*, 132. Note, however, that earlier reference is found in Jackson, J. *A dissertation historical and critical on the Christian ministry* (Philadelphia: Ellwood Chapman, 1855), p. 16. Jackson, a Hicksite (Quaker) minister of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, in the mid-1850s, makes reference to the principle of the Inner Light. ‘We assert unequivocally, without concealment and without compromise adherence to the doctrine of the *inner light*. ... We are not satisfied merely with the admission that God has immediately communicated light and knowledge to a few individuals in days that are past. We claim that

Dandelion thus distinguishes between the earlier Christian Quaker acceptance of original sin and the later acceptance of an apparently divine indwelling or ‘original blessing’.¹¹⁵

Early in the twentieth century, Edward Grubb (1854-1939) identified ways in which reference was made to the s/Spirit as ‘the I/Light within’.¹¹⁶ He claimed that ‘[it] is always a thought of God present in the Spirit of the risen Jesus’.¹¹⁷ He maintained that, ‘The doctrine of the Spirit, as it is expressed by Paul and John, is a thought of God, present in the Spirit of the risen Jesus, and manifesting Himself in the renewed personalities of men.’ More specifically, Grubb maintained that knowledge of God is made possible by entering into the consciousness of God.¹¹⁸ It is worthy of note that Grubb does not speak of ‘becoming aware of’ the consciousness of God but rather of ‘entering into’ the consciousness of God.¹¹⁹

There is, in Grubb, much that relates to new understandings of consciousness, and of philosophy that demonstrates interest in developments in psychology. He wrote of ‘the very long step from “universal consciousness” to the Christian idea of God’ but acknowledged a relationship between ‘a universal and eternal Consciousness, of which the

Divine Grace is universal and that the Creator of the world of universal beings imparts light and knowledge to every soul, made answerable for its conduct in a state of probation, in a degree *sufficient* for its salvation’. It is unclear whether Jackson is referring to himself as ‘we’ the reference could be to ‘Christian ministers’ mentioned in his previous paragraph. But, as a Quaker minister he may be speaking as a Quaker. See also Bancroft, G *A History of the United States (Vol. 2)* concerning Inner light and the rule of conduct (London: Kennett, 1837). pp344 -351.

¹¹⁵ Dandelion, *Introduction*, p. 197. Ever increasing scientific discovery enables deeper and finer understanding of physical reality and continues to provide areas of new thinking about the relationship between science and theology. New ways of conceiving the depths of reality i.e. in its innermost nature also contribute to modern interpretations and requires new ways of thinking about the ‘inner’ and the ‘inward’. See also Clayton, P. and Peacocke, A., (eds) *In whom we Live and Move and Have our Being* (Cambridge, U.K.: Eerdmans, 2004).

¹¹⁶ Grubb, E, *Authority* p. 124.

¹¹⁷ Grubb, *ibid*, p. 124.

¹¹⁸ Grubb, *ibid*, pp. 73-74.

¹¹⁹ Issues of activity/passivity, effort/ grace are pertinent here, to the questions of what we do and what we facilitate i.e. in ‘creating the Conditions’ to experience God. See also end of chapter 6.

consciousness of each of us is (so to say) but a fragment'.¹²⁰ Grubb was persuaded that the developing knowledge of his period (early twentieth century) was useful to altered understanding and description of spiritual experience. The new thinking and changed apprehensions of the realities of the created universe enabled Grubb to say, 'God is that Eternal and Universal Consciousness which is necessary for the existence of the world'.¹²¹ In turn, he intimates that this Light is necessary for knowing that God 'is *immanent* in, and not external to, our experience'.¹²²

Grubb continued to use the term 'inward' rather than 'inner' yet at the same time he wrote of both the transcendent God and of the work of God immanently in creation. That which is immanent is not as a 'light' shining in from without but rather as a light existing within life itself and all living beings; it is the light which reveals knowledge and experience to human beings and is, thus, the means to revelation. Grubb claims that 'the knowledge of God must come to us [all people in general and Quakers in particular] by revelation, or by an Inward Light' i.e. by illuminated experience within the person. Grubb implies that the balance between individual effort as active and personal experience as passively received (or given) is a delicate one.

For Grubb the 'within-ness' of the source of illumination termed universal consciousness [g] is consistent with Quaker emphasis to 'turn within to the Light' throughout the history of Friends' faith and practice. Yet differences do arise in relation to understandings of the 'transcendence', the 'immanence' of the Light and the manner in which there is, or can be, porosity between the two and then union in Oneness – when human beings are described as 'entering into' the consciousness of God.¹²³ The notion of

¹²⁰ Grubb, E. *The Religion of Experience* (London: Headley Brothers, undated but probably 1918), p. 40.

¹²¹ Grubb, *ibid*, p. 40.

¹²² Grubb, *ibid*, p. 40.

¹²³ See Kelly, Appendix below, on the transcendental experience of Inwardness. Thomas Kelly's account of his experience results in a contribution to Quaker theology that is, arguably, without parallel in its completeness of description of spiritual development. It is analysed as a case study that discloses new thinking within the developing liberalism of Quakerism. Discussion is not intended to present Kelly as representative of all Quakers of the period but rather to indicate that the range of experiential knowledge, opened to new thinking in the period, allowed for the development of new insights and thus interpretation.

becoming acquainted directly with God by ‘entering into’, and being entered by, the very consciousness of the deity is discussed further below.¹²⁴ It is this participation with God, in the Light, that results in acceptance that the Inward teacher is the operational guide to the spiritual knowing that develops in and through spiritual practice.

A significant parallel exists between the Quaker understanding of the Inward Teacher and Mark McIntosh’s explanation of how ‘God makes theologians’.¹²⁵ According to McIntosh, writing about the ‘the impact the subject matter [God]’ has on the student, this is ‘studying by a special kind of apprenticeship, with your subject as your true teacher’ and it is this that results in the ‘transformation’ of the student. In writing of ‘study’ McIntosh draws on the reading of primary biblical texts, but he is also cognisant of the nature of spiritual practice as ‘a mysterious sharing in God’s way of life, God’s talk (*theologia*), God’s knowing and loving of Godself’.¹²⁶ In principle, the transformation of the student or worshipper concerns the same process as that of Quakers; a new identity is discovered as the individual, who seeks after God, is increasingly drawn into God’s presence. McIntosh claims that: ‘For many Christians across the centuries, this has meant that theology is really a form of prayer or communion with God, in which, ultimately, the thinking of the theologian about God comes to life as *God’s presence* within the life of the theologian’.¹²⁷

The transforming process experienced in communication with the Inward Teacher, as expressed by Friends, and discussed by McIntosh in terms of the full discipleship of the theologian, is not a matter of belief. Indeed, it is neither dependent on belief nor creed. However, McIntosh suggests that Faith can offer ‘a provisional sharing’ insofar as it allows insights into the manner of God’s thinking. For Friends this is analogous to *entrée*

¹²⁴ The notion of ‘deity’ may not be apt for all Quakers as the liberal position advances, also, even if accepted, a Christian interpretation is not the only one current among Friends in the later stages of the twentieth century .

¹²⁵ McIntosh, M. *Divine Teaching*. Part 1, chapter 1.

¹²⁶ McIntosh, M. *ibid*, p. 7.

¹²⁷ McIntosh, M. *ibid*, p. 13: See also, Jantzen, G. *Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism*, (Cambridge, U.K.: University Press 1995) on the aim of studying Scripture as ‘conversion’. ‘This is a means to an end, and that end is transformation into the love of God’, pp. 81.

into the will of the Lord in discipleship, gained through the in-turning practice of worship. For Quakers, Inwardness has always been the way of ‘sharing’ with God, the matter of faith, as a ‘provisional sharing’, does not feature in any major sense.

5.6 The growth of non-theism

A challenge to the specifically religious identity of the Religious Society of Friends has emerged in the rise of non-theism among attenders. Also, and more surprisingly, the acceptance into membership of self-proclaimed non-theists has created disturbance among Quakers in general. However, the latter fact has also given confidence to attenders, who have not previously declared themselves to be non-theist, but have expressed uncertainty about theist interpretations of what it is they explore in their inwardly turned spiritual practice.

In the present there is no clarity that what non-theist Quakers reject is in fact understood in the same manner as that which theist Quakers accept. Ambiguity in use of terms can lead to uncertainty as to meaning. The Nontheist Friends Network (NFN) website statement of aims indicates the following:

The Nontheist Friends Network UK (NFN UK) is an informal group within the Quaker movement aiming to

(i) provide a supportive framework for Friends with an agnostic, humanist, atheist or related world-view, and those who experience religion as a wholly human creation;

(ii) join with all Friends who are interested in exploring varieties of nontheism as a recognised strand within modern diverse liberal Quakerism; and

(iii) strengthen and celebrate theological and spiritual diversity by promoting dialogue at all levels within the Religious Society of Friends.¹²⁸

The statement is not helpful, regarding a non-theist view of ‘God’, in any way that is definitive. When theist Quakers claim that they are Christian, existing understandings are, to a large extent, shareable since the Christian teachings offer guidance. However, when

¹²⁸ Accessed from the NFN website 16.7.15.

Quakers claim that they are non-theist, or theist but do not provide a Christian explanation of what the term means to them, misunderstandings can arise.¹²⁹

There are, thus, two main positions regarding the current debate. The first, is relatively clear cut, and is expressed by David Boulton and the membership of the Nontheist Friends Network. In this view, the notion of God as a construct, relating to a supernatural being, is virtually nonsensical. It has given rise to what is termed a form of radical religious humanism. It is questionable, however, why the term ‘religious’ is necessary to this definition, since the key element is humanism.¹³⁰ The second, is rather more ‘frayed edged’. In this view, the Christian notion of God is clearly unacceptable especially when it is linked with outdated understandings, expressed colloquially as a humanly envisaged ‘old man in the sky.’ However, the notion that may replace this, as more cosmically, and less personally described, seems too abstract for some Quakers to grasp. Terms such as ‘Eternal Being’, despite its usage by George Fox, fail to create an adequate vision of the deity that Friends’ faith and practice seeks to find ‘within’, as ‘that of God’ who is the inner guide and teacher.

Since the age of questioning, which embraces the modern era, invites Quakers, and others, to engage in general suspicion and doubt of most religious dogma and doctrine, an atmosphere of uncertainty, rather than faith, prevails among many non F-Q Friends. Yet, according to Boulton, even so:

... the language of faith—its symbols, metaphors and mythologies—is written on our bodies, wired into our souls, embedded in our poetry, painting and music. That’s the trouble with God. We are not at all sure that we believe in him any more, or that we know what believing in him means, but he haunts us ...¹³¹

¹²⁹ Hamby, C. ‘Our Father’ ... Who are you?’ in *Quaker Voices*, Vol. 4 No. 6, (2013), pp. 20-23.

¹³⁰ Boulton, D. *The Trouble with God*, p. 208, ‘radical spiritual humanism’ might be a more suitable term. See also Boulton, ‘Theism and Nontheism: tension created and tension overcome?’ in *Quaker Voices*, Vol.5 No.4 (2014) pp.2-6.

¹³¹ Boulton, *The Trouble with God*. p. xiii.

Quakerism, as many other liberal religious Bodies, is beset by the uncertainties of many of its adherents. The structures of religious faith, dogmatically expressed in the teachings of generations, are giving way to questions that arise from spiritual unease.

The Dalai Lama,¹³² Alain de Botton,¹³³ and Diarmuid O' Murchu each raise searching questions that unsettle what has been accepted in general terms as a long standing *status quo*. O' Murchu frames his challenge in terms of the rise of spirituality over religion. He suggests that the current journey is 'about an *experience*: of a world awakening to its own inner meaning and mystery...'¹³⁴ He maintains that this is a spiritual search but not necessarily a religious one and claims that:

The mystics seem to have been the most successful, the ones who realized that their pilgrimage was not to a holy place without, but to a sacred place within. And that interior search is personal, interpersonal, planetary and cosmic all at once. Mystics are quite adept at discerning the underlying unity that maintains and nurtures the tremendous diversity we experience in everyday life.¹³⁵

In the present, the interior journeys of humankind are both objective and subjective: objectively the search penetrates the deepest places of outwardly known reality and subjectively it fathoms the most intimate places of inwardly known reality. Each of these journeys to the interior reveals understanding that is awesome, yet increasingly comprehensible and, perhaps surprisingly, congruent. As the horizons of new knowledge expand, correlations between the inward-inside and the inward-outside are found to be

¹³² The Dalai Lama, *Beyond Religion: Ethics for a Whole World* (London: Rider, 2012).

¹³³ De Botton, A. *Religion for Atheists*, (London: Penguin Group for Hamish Hamilton, 2012).

¹³⁴ O' Murchu, D. *Quantum Theology*, p. 6; O' Murchu is not an academic theologian comparable to, for example, John Polkinghorne. Rather O' Murchu's concern is to examine a relational framework within which to consider what he terms 'quantum theology'. He uses this approach to build insights that reveal new and increasingly extensive ways of discussing theological issues. By contrast, Polkinghorne, (Polkinghorne, J., *Quantum Physics and Theology: An Unexpected Kinship*, (London: SPCK, 2007) undertakes an intensive examination of the methodological approaches of physics and theology and claims that there is a 'cousinly relationship' not previously appreciated. In one of his examples, he highlights the paradoxical relationship between 'wave' and 'particle' understandings in physics, and draws a parallel with the paradoxical relationship between, the second person of the Christian Trinity, seen as 'Jesus' and 'Christ'. The contributions of Polkinghorne and O' Murchu to current theological debates provide opportunities to step outside the 'excessive strictures' (Williams, R. *On Christian Theology*, p. xiv) of theological language, in such a way as to allow questioning not previously undertaken.

¹³⁵ O' Murchu, *ibid*, p. 7

contiguous with each other and coherent. Finkelstein writes, quoting Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's Commentary on the Bhagavad-Gita:

Maharishi (1990¹³⁶) explains: The faculty of experience becomes extinct when the mind loses its individuality. The state of Being knows no knowing; it is a state that transcends all knowing or experiencing. ...It should be noted that the Lord uses the word "upaiti", which means "comes to"; the word experience is not used. However, even if the word "experiences" were used, it could be regarded as valid. The mind does have the ability to experience when it is on the verge of transcending, at the junction point of relativity and the Absolute. Experience of Reality by the mind is always at the junction-point: while it is about to transcend at the end of the inward stroke of meditation, and while coming out of transcendence at the start of the outward stroke of meditation.

[thus] ... the above commentary from *Maharishi*, clarifies that an individual can experience God but only at the junction point between the unmanifest transcendent and the finest relative level of existence. It is the finest or subtlest relative level of life that is at the junction point between relativity and the absolute because it is that level that is the first manifestation from the unmanifest.¹³⁷

It is here that "... supreme happiness comes to the yogi whose mind is deep in peace":

Fox was unlikely to have referred to 'supreme happiness' but his concern for a fulfilled state of individual and corporate spiritual life may well equate with this expression as deriving from a different theological perspective. The foregoing statement is an explanation of how the inward-inside and the inward-outside are found to be contiguous with each other in such a way that consistency between the two can be fathomed, yet may be described in different terms. The scientific explanation may seem to offer understanding of a quite different reality from that described by the theologian, yet

¹³⁶ Finkelstein, E 'Universal Principles of life expressed in Maharishi Vedic Science and in the Scriptures and writings of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, (unpublished Ph.D. thesis: Submitted to the Graduate School of Maharishi University of Management, 2005). Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, *Maharishi Mahesh Yogi on the Bhagavad-Gita: A Translation and Commentary, Chapters 1-6* (London: Penguin, 1969, original publication 1967), pp. 437-438.

¹³⁷ My emphasis, 'yogi' may here be seen to apply to worshippers who are dedicated and consistent in their spiritual practice and familiar with transcendental (silent) consciousness.

increasingly, as suggested here, the two are proposed as the same reality differently described.¹³⁸

Vernon Katz, in turn, quoting from conversations with Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, explains that: ‘the Vedanta view [is] that the world is just a superimposition upon the reality of Brahman and that, in truth, all this is Brahman’. The implication here is that there is but one reality—relative creation, the outwardly known world, is amenable to experience ‘out of’ or within The Absolute, the Unmanifest, inwardly known world that is more than the created order.¹³⁹

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi¹⁴⁰ refers to the linked study as the Science of Creative Intelligence, O’ Murchu refers to an apparently related area of study in terms of Quantum Theology.¹⁴¹ The Vedic and the Christian perspectives offer alternative but compatible descriptions of existence. These indicate the growing recognition that there are ways of understanding Eternal Being, the ground of Existence, which may enable theists and non-theists to find some agreement.

Quakers are in a unique position to facilitate dialogue of this kind as a result of the creedless nature of their religion. Open minded, creative explorations of understanding,

¹³⁸ See O’ Murchu, D *Quantum Theology* and Polkinghorne, J. *An Unexpected Kinship* each consider the relationship between theology and Science. O’ Murchu uses the relational approach to build insights that reveal new and extensive ways of discussing theological concerns. Polkinghorne, however, engages in an intensive investigation of the different means of truth-seeking undertaken by science and theology. He concludes that there are many similarities, and methodological comparisons. He writes: ‘Our discussion of the truth-seeking strategies employed in science and theology has revealed significant underlying similarities between these two superficially different forms of rational enquiry’. p. 105. Furthermore, Polkinghorne suggests, referring to Galileo and Newton, that the ‘two books, the Book of Scripture and the Book of Nature’ having the same Author, may provide two ways of knowing the same reality. See also Melvin Keiser ‘Answering That of God: Authority and Tradition in doing Quaker Theology’ pp 18-46 in *QTS Proceedings* 1996/7.

¹³⁹ Katz, V., *Conversations with Maharishi* (Fairfield, Iowa: MUM Press, 2011), pp. 112-116.

¹⁴⁰ Maharishi Mahesh Yogi was the founder of Maharishi University of Management in Iowa, USA and initiator of twenty first century Vedic Studies, with its related practice of Transcendental Meditation. He encouraged millions of people around the world to engage in the interior journey of contemplative practice. His work continues both in academic studies of consciousness and in courses that teach the practice of Transcendental Meditation. I am indebted to the late Maharishi Mahesh Yogi for the ideas developed in Table 6, chapter 6, with amendments as necessary for discussion in terms of the potential for spiritual development through Quaker worship and spiritual growth in Quaker living.

¹⁴¹ See O’ Murchu, D. *Quantum Theology*.

based firmly in experiential practice, should enable Friends to meet the present challenge as well as, and better than, most other religious groups. The rigid understanding of theism, as O' Murchu indicates, is open to re-thinking that may accommodate a valid review of seemingly conflicting positions, and provide a notion of 'God for the modern world'.¹⁴² O' Murchu maintains:

In today's world, we often confuse *religion* and *spirituality*, giving the impression that one can be spiritual only by adopting and practicing a formal, official faith system. Around our world, however, are millions of people who do not belong to any specific church or religion, but still grapple with spiritual questions and strive to live out of a spiritual value system. This fact, combined with the diminishing influence and impact of formal religions—especially in the Western world—would seem to indicate that the religions are in decline, while the revitalization and rediscovery of spirituality engages the human heart and imagination in a range of new and exciting ways.¹⁴³

It is the suggestion of this thesis that the 'challenge' that non-theism has seemed to present to Friends will become less of a concern and more a matter of exciting and fruitful comprehension and redefinition of terms in the near future. As Jung has intimated, 'Sooner or later, nuclear physics and the psychology of the unconscious will draw closer together, as both of them independently of one another and from opposite directions, push forward into transcendental territory'.¹⁴⁴ It is the transposition of insights from different sources and the creative re-interpretation of existing understanding that may have the potential to push forward these boundaries of knowledge.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter has indicated how Quakerism has developed in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, advancing altered concerns and emphases in line with the modern era. Understandings of Inwardness have gained new interpretations and been subjected to academic considerations that reveal searching questions and tentative answers. These exist alongside the continuing power of mystical, experiential expressions, which fathom

¹⁴² Boulton, *The Trouble with God*, p. xv.

¹⁴³ O' Murchu, *Quantum Theology*, p. 49.

¹⁴⁴ Jung, C.G. *Man and his Symbols* (New York: Dell, 1968) quoted in O' Murchu *Quantum Theology*, p. 145.

ever more deeply the interior world of God's consciousness, and the inmost dimensions of all life.

The two sections, above, on discursive records v mystical description, demonstrate differences of priority, each characteristic of Quakerism in the modern period. The first, largely intellectual, provides examples, urged by J W Rowntree at the Manchester Conference of 1895 and developed, most notably within academic research into Quaker issues and concerns. The second, largely experiential and, in some cases, devotional, gives examples, which feature spiritual practice and its outcomes within the many witness statements of Friends. In the first case, academic expression is about Inwardness and its attendant issues; in the second case, experiential expression, deriving from Inwardness, is rather a description of personal acquaintance. The difference in these two modes of expression is that one seeks to clarify and systematise understanding, whereas the other seeks to embrace and share experience. These different descriptions of Inwardness are complementary rather than contradictory.

Consideration of the non-theist incursion into Quakerism has questioned the nature of the challenge presented. It has outlined a new perspective on radical spiritual humanism that may challenge the perceived difficulties and reveal some consistency between two previously irreconcilable positions. Notions of Quantum theology have provided a range of insights into new ways of addressing relevant questions, and shown that there is the possibility of fresh thinking that offers tentative answers, (O' Murchu¹⁴⁵). Quotations from modern day Friends, and the current edition of *QFP*, and also from the Quaker essay competition of 2010, have provided recognition that the Conditions and Elements outlined in previous tables remain consistent within contemporary Quaker thinking. These are identified below in Table 5a. Additionally, however, the turn of the century embraces a changing and perhaps developing view of Testimony. It is now commonplace to see reference as 'relating our testimonies to the realities of [the period] ...'¹⁴⁶ As Jonathan Dale indicates: 'My understanding is that the core of the testimony is to do with the

¹⁴⁵ See also Polkinghorne, *Quantum Physics*.

¹⁴⁶ Dale, J. et al. *Faith in Action: Quaker Social Testimony*, p. 6.

spiritual imperative to ‘let go’, to practise ‘detachment’ from everything’.¹⁴⁷ He fully acknowledges the spiritual basis of testimony, yet seems to accept a splitting of testimonies into differentiated concerns, endorsing the perspective of ‘testimonies to’ specific issues. By implication, the Society seems to have accepted the notion of having different ‘testimonies’; yet the original understanding has been that, for Quakers, all life is Testimony, as witness to faith in God’s will and, as expressed in this thesis, as the consequence of Inwardness. See Table 5b.

¹⁴⁷ Dale, *Faith in Action*, p. 137.

Table 5a: The process of Inwardness at the turn of the twenty-first century

CONDITIONS	
Settling into Stillness/Waiting	Truth may be known ‘in your [Quaker] hearts’ as a ‘response In the silence of waiting’. ¹ Stillness in this process is emphasised in 2.01, 2.39 and 2.53 <i>QFP</i>
Silence	Friends emphasise the ‘ministry of silence’ and ‘the importance of coming regularly with heart and mind prepared’ [2.37 <i>QFP</i>]. ‘The Lord of Heaven and earth we found to be to be near at hand’ ‘as we waited upon him in pure silence’ [19.08 <i>QFP</i>]; One approaches ‘the condition of true silence’ in Meeting for Worship [26.12 <i>QFP</i>]
ELEMENTS	
Attentive Presence	Quaker worship teaches us...how to listen ‘to the inward teacher’ (Allen)
Heart Awareness/Sensing and feeling	Quaker worship teaches us quietly how to enter the world in our hearts’ ² , such that truth is known ‘in our [Quaker] hearts’ (Scott); Heart Awareness is emphasised in 2.12, 2.57 and 2.60 <i>QFP</i>
God focussing/Attunement	‘Quaker worship teaches us ... how to wait upon God’ ³ ; ‘This experience of the depth of existence fills us with a sense of both reverence and of responsibility, which gives even to our finite lives a meaning and a power which they do not possess in themselves. <i>This, I am assured, is our human experience of God</i> ’ [26.11 <i>QFP</i>] (my emphasis)
Purity	In a ‘new birth’ is found the ‘purified self’[26.49 <i>QFP</i>] From Christ ‘a beam of light comes shining’ [26.48 <i>QFP</i>]; ‘There is a principle which is pure’, placed in the human mind...’[26.61 <i>QFP</i>], ‘Mind that which is pure in you to guide you to God’[26.69 <i>QFP</i>]
Discernment	‘We join Fox in affirming our faith in the contemporary inspiration of the Holy Spirit’ [26.67 <i>QFP</i>]; ‘We were directed to

¹ Scott, J. ‘What canst thou say?’ p. 82.

² Allen, B. ‘Ground and Spring’ p. 118.

³ Allen, B. *ibid*, p. 118.

	search for the least of all seeds and to mind the lowest appearance thereof, which was its turning against sin and darkness; we came by degrees to find we had met with the pure living eternal Spirit'. (Fox) [26.69 <i>QFP</i>]
Growth	'... what I believe is crucial, is that each one of us needs deeply to desire to grow in to the person whom God wills us to become.' ⁴ ; 'we look back over a period of time and see that there has been change' ⁵ ; 'Our consciousness is enlarged and seems to incorporate many other consciousnesses ...' ⁶
Unity	'Their purpose [practice] ... is to lead us [Quakers] into the light and call forth love of God and our neighbour in unity of the spirit'; ⁷ 'As I stood relaxed and still, I had the illusion that I was enveloped in light. I had the feeling that the light and I were one. Time and space slipped from me. ... I was tranquillised and steadied by the beauty, the stability of Nature...' [26.08 <i>QFP</i>]

Table 5b: The consequences of Inwardness at the turn of the twenty-first century

Testimony	'The worthy issues of peace and social action seem to occupy a higher place in Friends 'thinking and giving than does our [Quaker] spiritual nurture'; ⁸ 'Spiritual growth often comes about as a result of engaging in social action'; ⁹ 'Peace is a process to engage in, not a goal to reach'. ¹⁰
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⁴ Holdsworth, C. 'Steps in a Large Room' *A Quaker explores the Monastic Tradition*' Swarthmore lecture, (London: Quaker Home Service, 1985), p. 66.

⁵ Curle, A. *True Justice. Quaker Peace makers and Peace making*' Swarthmore lecture, p. 23.

⁶ Curle, A. *ibid.* p. 30, 'There is a Divine Center in which your life can slip, a new and absolute orientation in God, a center where you live with Him and out of which you see all life through new and radiant vision'. [26.72 *QFP*]. 'Therefore, dear Friends, wait in the Light, that the Word of the Lord may dwell plentifully in you' [29.19 *QFP*].

⁷ Scott, J. 'What canst thou say?' p. 71.

⁸ Trevitt. C., *Previous Convictions*, p. 148.

⁹ Newall, T., *Forgiving Justice: A Quaker Vision for criminal justice*, Swarthmore lecture, p. 126.

¹⁰ Bailey, S. 'Peace is a Process', Swarthmore lecture, p. 173

Political involvement	The ‘... rediscovery of testimony ... [is necessary] because it is the place where individual and corporate merge, fusing together lifestyle and politics and faith’. ¹¹
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¹¹ Dale, J. ‘*Beyond the Spirit of the Age*’, Swarthmore lecture, (London, Quaker Home Service, 1996), p. 120.

5.8 Chapter summary

This chapter has examined Quaker faith and practice during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Issues of change and differences in Quaker perspectives have been identified to clarify distinguishable faith positions and resultant priorities. Three areas of interest have been identified to examine different aspects of Inwardness in the modern period. These are a) Quakerism in terms of intellectual/academic considerations as compared with descriptions of personal/spiritual experience; b) Understanding of ‘that of God within’ in terms of the ‘Inward’ versus the ‘Inner’ Light, and c) the growth of non-theism.

Table 5 (a and b) encapsulates present thinking regarding the previously identified Conditions and Elements of Quaker faith and practice. These indicate a degree of consistency between the present day and the seventeenth century positions, thus showing the extent to which a majority of modern Friends continue to uphold the main tenets of Quakerism, and its spiritual practice, as established over 360 year ago. Table 5b includes additional headings representing renewed emphasis on some of the practical aspects of Quaker living.

The implications of these findings are discussed in the final chapter of the thesis.

CHAPTER 6: Towards a new perspective on Quaker Theology

6.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes the thesis. Section 6.2 summarises and clarifies the main arguments from chapters 1-5. 6.3 identifies the original contribution of the thesis. The four areas discussed concern: a) Inwardness as process (6.3.1), b) Inwardness as developmental (6.3.2), c) Inwardness as having consequences (6.3.3), and d) Inwardness as having an ultimate state, or stage (6.3.4). 6.4 outlines some of the implications that arise from this original contribution both in relation to previous scholarship and future research. 6.5 concludes and summarises the thesis.

6.2 Overview of chapters

Chapter One provided an introduction to the thesis and showed how the thesis contributes new thinking to Quaker Studies. It outlined the context and background of the thesis and included a review of relevant previous scholarship in terms of Quaker understandings of Inwardness, spiritual growth, purification as an aspect of spiritual development and the Quaker notion of ‘measure’. The methodological approach used was explained as involving analysis of narrative and interpretative work.

Chapter two, three and four examined the significant features of the teachings of George Fox, Isaac Pennington and Robert Barclay. Analysis of their writings was used to explain Inwardness, showing the meanings and consequences of Fox’s injunction to ‘turn within’, and the manner in which Pennington and Barclay expressed their understandings in relation to stillness, or standing still in Inwardness, and the subsequent considerations. These chapters also examined the consequences of Inwardness both as personal transformation and individual concern, and also as social concern and corporate discernment. Aspects of Pennington’s thinking were examined to exemplify his ministry on, a) the Life, b) the Light, c) Love and, finally, d) Quaker worship, as the means to

experiencing the Inwardness of God's Being and qualities of lovingness.¹ Barclay's position on Inwardness as a theological concept and a spiritual practice in worship, also illustrated the fact that his work is in most respects consistent with that of Fox, as utilised in the thesis, even though expressed in apologetic terms. The *Apology* is an academic work, yet it endorses the inward, spiritual dimension of Quaker faith and practice. It was argued that both Penington's and Barclay's work validated the proposal indicated at the end of chapter two, concerning Fox, on the process of Inwardness. Thus indicating consistency of emphasis between these seventeenth century Friends: In parallel with Fox, *The Apology* was found to encourage early Quakers to create the Conditions that would support specific Elements of practice necessary to attain full potentiality of Inwardness.

Fox urged early Friends to engage in spiritual practice to achieve Unity through Meeting for Worship. It was shown, however, that Unity has two distinct interpretations in Fox, i.e. togetherness in the fellowship of living, and togetherness in the Oneness of Eternal Being. In conclusion, chapter two indicated that specific components of the spiritual life were for Fox, and mid-seventeenth century Quakers, the contemplative basis for living in gospel order. Penington and Barclay each expressed similar understandings.

Chapter five identified the characteristics of Liberal Quakerism. Aspects of change were outlined including: shifts of interpretation resulting from new knowledge, in particular scientific and biblical, which led to rethinking of previous convictions. It was claimed that Inwardness, as introduced in chapter one with reference to worship, was the norm for Friends in the seventeenth, eighteenth and most of the nineteenth century. However, general growth in knowledge, and new developments in many disciplines, may have influenced descriptions and understandings of Inwardness over time and embraced new insights and interpretations in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. It was argued that 1) there are a range of Quaker positions on matters of belief in the modern era, yet 2) there remains a degree of consistency in practice of Inwardness within Meeting for Worship. Statements concerning the Conditions and Elements of worship, previously itemised, were summarised and shown in Table 5.

¹ Table 3 was used to show correlations between the ministries of Fox and Penington and Table 4, between Fox and Barclay.

6.3 Original contribution

This section demonstrates four ways in which this systematic analysis of Inwardness, in the faith and practice of British Quakers, has been shown to make original contribution to scholarship. These concern:

6.3.1 Inwardness as process

6.3.2 Inwardness as developmental

6.3.3 Inwardness as having consequences

6.3.4 Inwardness as having an ultimate stage, or state, of maturity.

These are reviewed in turn, with some references to mystics and mysticism of earlier periods.

6.3.1 Inwardness as process

Examination of the nature of Inwardness within Quaker thought has identified 1) that Inwardness can be categorised as involving a specific process of turning within, elsewhere termed introspection or interiority;² and 2) that it is possible to develop a systematic means of analysing Inwardness in relation to this process. This has been demonstrated in tabular form at the end of chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5.

A definition of the process of Inwardness was given in section 1.2 of the thesis as utilising consciousness in a way that is self-referring.³ This was explained as a process of inwardly turned responsive waiting. It was identified as a non-reflective engagement, in the sense of not being discursively thoughtful but rather, for Quakers, as silent witnessing to ‘that of God within’, thus questioning the relevance of conceptual or imaginative pre-

² McGinn, *Foundations of Mysticism*, p. 329, discussing the work of Rudolf Otto, distinguishes ‘introspective’ and ‘extrovertive’ mysticism. Introvertive mysticism concerns ‘sinking down’ into the self (compare with Fox’s ‘... keep in the life of God to keep you low’. *Journal*, p. 176).

³ Note the potentiality for a secular interpretation of this term.

conceptions.⁴ The process was described in 1.2 as free from sensory experience in terms of attention outwardly turned to the world at large.⁵ This understanding was shown to reflect Fox's injunction to 'turn within', recognised as a call to Inwardness that urged a process which is, initially, important for its own sake and on its own terms: For Fox it was the turn to the 'Light of Christ within'. The sequence of experiencing is shown diagrammatically in Figures 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6.

This thesis has claimed that the process described, as involving Conditions and Elements, (Tables 2-5), is, for most Friends, in the modern era of Quakerism, consistent with that of the seventeenth century. The process, or spiritual practice, involves first settling the body into a relaxed at ease physical posture. Ideally this posture uses the least possible energy to maintain an upright sitting position. The physical posture of Stillness (1) facilitates the possibility of gaining a degree of Silence (2) in which the mind parallels the body in moving from activity to rest and quietness. These phases create the Conditions for worship in which restfulness is maintained in alertness. As indicated alertness is not a matter of discursive mental activity, it is rather alertness, attained by a fully focused Attentive Presence (3).⁶ This is a perceiving or watching presence. The individual keeps a steady sense of being in the here and now. As Attentive Presence is gained the shift to feeling⁷ rather than thinking has the potential to engage the heart: Heart Awareness (4), which may be literal, is the means.⁸

⁴ Such as claimed by Katz, S 'Language, Epistemology and Mysticism' in Katz, S (ed.). *Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis*, (London: Sheldon, 1978), pp. 22-74.

⁵ See further discussion of this interpretation in the summary of chapter 6.

⁶ Comparable to Buddhist 'mindfulness'. See Thich Nhat Hanh *living buddha, living christ* (London: Rider 1995), concerning practice, sanskrit '*citta bhavana*' is cultivating both mind and heart.

⁷ See relevant discussion in Mbogu, N. I. 'The Pragmatism of Religious Experience: William James' Interpretation of Religious Experience' in *Maryland Studies*, Vol. 10, Nov. 2011, 27-166. Also, 'Unlike Schleimacher, James does not couple feeling with intuition, nor does he claim any special status for feeling as an exercise of the mind, which pro[e]ceeds and informs both knowing and doing'.

⁸ See text note on use of upper case.

Processes of gaining Stillness and Silence, allow a move to specific Elements of worship. Attentive Presence and Heart Awareness prepare the heart and mind⁹ for the God Focusing of the Quaker worship of the early period, and for Friends of the present day whose practice continues to follow in Fox's manner of turning within, as identified in this thesis. It is claimed that the sequence, as outlined, remains an accurate description of spiritual practice for F-Q practitioners in the modern era.¹⁰ Chapters 3 and 4 have indicated that Fox's initial teaching is upheld by both Penington and Barclay, even when described in different terms: devotional in the case of Penington and academic in the case of Barclay. Furthermore, different elaborations in the form of operational Testimony and political concern are tied to the process of Inwardness initially taught by Fox. It is outwardness that proceeds from Inwardness rather than the converse.

Notions of Growth (8), as indicated in chapters 2, 3 and 4, remain significant for all Quakers. However, for those Friends for whom the concepts of classical theism, or indeed other theological concerns, have ceased to be meaningful, growth may be seen in terms of human potential, in which humanness at its best is full of concern for the well-being of all people. Such conceptions of Growth intend that living in community, a world community, require respect and love for others but do not need to call on gospel order for their interpretation.¹¹ Thus the latter aspect, the consequences of Inwardness, as demonstrated through Testimony in a community called to live in gospel order, does not apply to non-theist Quakers. For this reason, conclusions concerning the consequences of Inwardness,

⁹ See *Advices and Queries*, (The Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain, 2010) regarding coming to worship 'with heart and mind prepared' No. 9 p. 7.

¹⁰ For some twenty first century Quakers, who doubt the Reality of God, the relevance of God Focusing (5) is questionable. So if there is, in the twenty-first century, significance for Purity (6) and Unity (9) it does not, for some Quakers, reflect a divine interpretation or questions of Discernment (7) that respect the importance of the will of God. For the non-theist, Quaker worship is often interpreted as addressing matters of worth in life and the needs of human beings. Such a process is more likely to be discursive than contemplative. It is an interpretation of worship which ceases to imply notions of Testimony: behavioural considerations are not linked with understandings of divine guidance or the promptings and leadings of an Inward Teacher. It is argued that for these Quakers Inwardness is, or may be, irrelevant.

¹¹ Note: 6.3.4ii; Testimony as related to gospel order.

as Testimony, are not relevant to Quakers who are not enjoined to the practice outlined by Fox in the seventeenth century.¹²

The Elements (3-9) of worship identified differ from the means to create the Conditions (1 and 2) of worship. The latter, Conditions, involve some degree of activity, even though it is activity that has the intention of lessening activity. These aspects of worship have been described as active, insofar as they involve a small degree of human effort. The Elements of worship are more likely to occur spontaneously rather than being generated or worked for. Therefore, once the individual has created the Conditions and given focus to the attention, a more passive involvement can be engaged. It is this which facilitates the deepening of the experience of Inwardness. In this condition, Discernment and Growth may be felt to be enmeshed as the individual waits for guidance from the ‘Inward Teacher’.

Although the process of Inwardness remains a constant in the writings of Friends across three and a half centuries, interpretations of the meanings and functions of Inwardness have changed for sections of the community of Friends over time. Indeed, in the twenty first century, questions have been raised by some members about the possibility of excluding the term ‘religious’ from the name of the Society.¹³ As has been shown from the nineteenth century when Quakerism was unequivocally Christian, Quakerism has diversified.¹⁴ It is then unsurprising to find re-formulations of the meaning and function of Inwardness in the last one hundred years. It is maintained here however that, in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the means of settling down and the matter of process of spiritual practice are little changed. Preparing for worship remains consistent with earlier times, but the focus of worship, including concern with the Unity that God Focusing allows, has diminished or ceased for non F-Q participants. The process

¹² See: 6.3.3, Inwardness as having Consequences.

¹³ See chapter 5.

¹⁴ The eighteenth century went through a period of Quietism, the nineteenth became more Evangelical and the twentieth moved into modern Liberalism, within the twenty-first century Liberalism demonstrates further developments. Note also the differences around the world, African and US Quakerism are not quite as liberal as Britain and Europe, for example. See Dandelion, *Introduction*, chapter 6.

described, as initiated by George Fox, is to be distinguished from the contemporary practice of Experiment with Light constructed by Rex Ambler in recent years.

Earlier discussion has introduced Quakers who refer to themselves as mystics¹⁵ and academics who include consideration of the mystical dimension of Quakerism in their discussion.¹⁶ It is claimed in this thesis that the process described in the analysis of Quaker Inwardness has parallels with the mystical concerns and contemplative practices of other traditions.¹⁷ It is notable, however, that analysis of Christian mysticism¹⁸ places spiritual practice mainly within a monastic framework. In general, therefore, there is a distinction between Quaker mysticism in its worldly context, and monastic mysticism. Nonetheless, both the practice and consequences of Inwardness demonstrate parallels.

What McGinn refers to as the ‘introspective or metapsychological dimension’ of spiritual knowing places emphasis on the contemplative process itself but also acknowledges the significance of the way of life.¹⁹ Thus analysis of the work of some mystics of different periods shows concern for process and consequence comparable to Quaker spirituality. For Quakers ‘the community’ focus is more outward turned than that of many monastics. Quaker inclusivity of loving wisdom, that invokes ways of caring for neighbours is, in part at least, an exemplar that love of God and love of neighbour are not mutually exclusive but rather mutually enhancing:²⁰ The vertical and the horizontal axes

¹⁵ Note Stephen in 5.4.2.

¹⁶ See Eeg-Olofsson in 1.3.

¹⁷ Refer to 6.3.1.

¹⁸ McGinn, *The Presence of God Vols. 1-4*; Christian mysticism as largely monastic. See also, King, U. *Christian Mystics: Their lives and legacies throughout the ages*, (London: Routledge, 2004).

¹⁹ See McGinn, *Foundations*, pp. 326-343. Appendix, Theoretical Approaches, section 3, Comparativist and psychological approaches to mysticism.

²⁰ The lives of notable Quakers of the past, as for example John Woolman, (and also contemporary Quaker Jonathan Dale and others, who are much engaged in worldly issues and concern), are important signifiers of this position.

of spirituality are fundamentally related. Jantzen's discussion of the social implications of the experience and concerns of certain mystics is thus particularly relevant.²¹

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to unravel the unfolding of Christian mysticism and its Hellenic influences in any detail or to show minutely the threads of connection with Quaker practice. However, notions of process, progress and goal intersect. McGinn considers these under three headings.²² He discusses a) 'mysticism as a part or element of religion' b) 'mysticism as a process or way of life', and c) 'mysticism as an attempt to express a direct consciousness of God'. The Quaker parallels are a) in its practice; b) in Friends' living testimony in gospel order; c) in 'unmediated or immediate revelation of God'.²³

Quakers, described as F-Q Friends, who follow Fox's injunction to turn within, continue to claim a sense of mystical unknowing²⁴ in turning inward to the 'Light of Christ within'. That is, they continue to practice Inwardness as a process of seeking. Their understanding is that the process is the means to the goal, but the goal does not have, for all practitioners, clearly defined characteristics. Inwardness is, nonetheless, inherently

²¹ Jantzen questions patristic notions of mysticism as a journey towards union with God. For Jantzen, as other feminist theologians, the significance of God's involvement in the world is to do with engagement in all of life in a practical and palpable manner. This is visible in human relationships, but also concerns the functioning of living processes beyond the human. In terms of the interpenetration of the human and divine Jantzen's proposition is that the world might be considered to be God's body, and if this is so, the processes of interaction, human and other, are found within a sacred and sacramental relationship, honoured and supported by mystics. See Jantzen, G. *God's World: God's Body* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1984) and *Becoming Divine: Towards a Feminist Philosophy of Religion* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998).

²² McGinn, *Foundations*, pp. xv-xvi.

²³ Hicks' more recent consideration of mystical experience uses a different range of topics, see Hicks, P. 'Fathoming the Unfathomable: Mysticism and Philosophy' in Partridge, C. and Gabriel, T. *Mysticisms* (pp.325-344) p. 326. Hicks discusses '1) Mystical experience as something that is wholly subjective', '2) Mystical experience as something to be explained in terms of its immediate cause', '3) Mystical experience that has (or claims to have) a passive objective reality as its object', and '4) Mystical experiences that claims to be two-way, or relational'. Hicks, p. 238, opts for (4) as 'the paradigm mystical experience' 'while allowing for the validity of (3) as well'.

²⁴ See *The Cloud of Unknowing*: In general, talk of 'the Cloud' is more conspicuously apophatic than the Quaker understanding, but the sense of 'unknowing' is, for some Friends, an appropriate explanation of experience.

mystical.²⁵ General aspirations concern contact with and guidance from God. This is central to notions of union with God that embrace the understanding of Unity within the self, with others and with God, and a sense of Oneness as, potentially, the ultimate outcome. If there is a parallel with earlier mysticism, it concerns progressive stages of engagement in spiritual practice. According to McGinn, Augustine's description of spiritual process, influenced by Plotinus, concerns a threefold explanation: a) removal from corporeal reality, b) movement within, described by Augustine as 'movement within the soul', and c) elevation to the divine level.²⁶ These stages relate more to the process of growth than to the process of practice itself; and concern is both individual and corporate advance towards God. If there is a connection with Quakerism it concerns the parallel, throughout the history of Quakerism, with the corporate nature of faith and practice. Therefore although the process of Inwardness and development of measure, described through Conditions and Elements is practised individually, for Quakers the corporate context of the practice is seen as vital.

The detailed understanding of Quaker Inwardness as process bears upon notions of 'Mystical Itineraries'²⁷ that refer to different accounts of processes of contemplative practice. Whilst distinct in their emphasis there are points of comparison. These relate to stages of progress on the journey to God: they are better discussed in relation to

²⁵ Jantzen engages in serious questioning of what she considers to be patriarchal interpretations of **who** may be considered a mystic/visionary and **what** counts as mysticism. She advances a feminist perspective of engaged, socio/political spirituality and mysticism. See Jantzen, G, *Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism* (Cambridge, U.K.: University Press, 1995), chapter 1, pp. 1-25.

²⁶ McGinn, *Foundations*, p. 237. Development of the Trinitarian position requires Augustine to re-interpret contemplative experience and to move beyond the neo-platonic explanation. McGinn indicates that 'Augustine is led to suggest that the search for some understanding of the trinity must begin on a [more] modest level of the nature of the human mind'. Further Augustine explains this in terms of the intimate link between love and knowledge. Note McGinn, B. (ed) *The Essential Writings*, Section 5 on 'Mystical Itineraries' concerning different mystical accounts, for example, the threefold way, four degrees of love, the mind's journey.

²⁷ McGinn, B. (ed.) *The Essential Writings*, section 5.

progressive or developmental Inwardness than in terms of the process of spiritual practice itself.²⁸

6.3.2 Inwardness as developmental

The examination of texts from the three hundred and sixty year history of Quakerism has given rise to the proposal detailed in Table 6.²⁹ This shows how the expansion of consciousness may be described as leading, *via* the experience of multiplicity, to intimations of Eternal Being, and thence to life lived in the Unity of Eternal Being.³⁰ Seven states of development, are indicated giving rise to growth of measure in Quaker terms, 1) as delineated directly or indirectly within Quaker texts³¹ and 2) as given full explanation in the teaching of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. These are outlined in Table 6.

²⁸ See section 6.3.2, which examine some specific concerns and characteristics of mysticism and mystics in relation to Quakerism.

²⁹ See also Finkelstein, E. 'Universal Principles of Life expressed in Maharishi Vedic Science and in writings of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Doctoral thesis completed, 2005, Maharishi University of Management, Fairfield, Iowa.

³⁰ Different explanations termed 'higher levels of knowing' describe the ascent of the structure in which this development occurs. Note, for example, the Victorine understanding of different kinds of contemplation. See section 6.4.2iii.

³¹ As quoted and utilised throughout the thesis, and tabulated at the end of chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5. and also summary charts below.

Table 6a ‘Growth of measure’ through expansion of consciousness¹ (see following)

1st State²	2nd State	3rd State	4th State	5th State³	6th State	7th State
No Inwardness	Inwardness	Inwardness	Inwardness	Inwardness	Inwardness	‘Interiority’
	Sensed but not known fully	Experienced but as distinct from and at the expense of outwardness	Experience fleetingly in outwardness	Remains constant in waking consciousness ²	Inwardness constant maintained in outwardness Constant in sleeping ³ and dreaming	Transforms not only the sense of self but also perception of the very nature of ‘outwardness’ - Existence itself.

¹ Appropriation and transposition of insights from the teaching of the late Maharishi Mahesh Yogi is acknowledged. I am indebted to the Maharishi for ideas, as developed in Table 6, with amendments as necessary for discussion in terms of Quaker worship and spiritual growth in Quaker faith and practice.

³This state of consciousness may bear comparison with the state of ‘spiritual freedom’ described in the principles of Ignatian spirituality. The 5th state of consciousness, indicated above, is one in which pure consciousness in the Silence of God is established in the individual allowing constant freedom from the claims of the relative and freedom for the Absolute fulfilment of God’s will. In Ignatian terms ‘Spiritual freedom always entails interior deliverance and includes some kind of external liberation’. ‘Ignatius recognized that spiritual freedom is the characteristic of the human as *imago Dei*, as one made in God’s image’; see Burke, K.F. and Burke-Sullivan, E. *The Ignatian Tradition* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press) pp. xxxiii–xxxiv.

Table 6b ‘Growth of measure’ through expansion of consciousness

Life is lived in:						
The Outward	The Outward	Outward	Outward	Inward	Inward	Inward porosity with Outward
Dominant no awareness of any alternative	Dominant but with a hint of an ‘other’	known as separate from Inwardness	and Inwardness alternate	known in outwardness during wakefulness	constant in sleeping and dreaming. ³ Inwardness maintained in outwardness	Inward and Outward in union (Infused)

⁴ Understanding of consciousness in deep sleep, as distinct from in dreaming may be comparable to ‘wakeful sleep’ discussed by Carmody and Carmody, *Mysticisms*, p. 200. However, the state is better described as having awareness within deep sleep, since the sleep state and the waking state of consciousness are mutually exclusive.

Table 6c ‘Growth of measure’ through expansion of consciousness

Life experienced as:						
Multiplicity and ever-changing diversity	Multiplicity Felt to be incomplete and therefore unsatisfactory	Duality sensed sometimes dislocating multiplicity	Duality as Reality duality is felt to be real	Oneness , as the boundaries that seem to create duality begin to dissolve from experience	Sense of Unity in which the sense of duality dissolves	Unity , known as a state of Life. Life experiences itself in and through the Individual consciousness within the wholeness of the Divine, Eternal Being-God ⁴

⁴ See analogous description relating to Vedanta Hinduism by Chatterjee, S.K. ‘Quantification of Human Development –A Holistic Approach’ in the *Indian Journal of Statistics* (Vol. 70-B, Part 2, 2008), pp. 157-229. The article concerns ‘unitive consciousness’ in relation to the individual and the cosmic levels of life.

It has been indicated that in Fox's writings there is an indication of progression in the process of spiritual practice and development towards spiritual maturity.³⁵ However, Fox's thought is not systematically expressed throughout his teaching, and academic researchers have selected and emphasised different aspects of his work. No scholars have previously analysed the potentiality of growth of measure in detail, in order to fathom Quaker understandings of spiritual development, either of the past or the present. However, Rufus Jones proposed three stages in practice to promote 'the 'progress of the soul':

- Concentration, an essential discipline
- Active meditation and "recollection"
- Contemplation where the soul is no longer focused on an object but experiences a quickening and "unification of all the powers of the spirit".³⁶

A proposal that growth of measure, Jones' 'progress of the soul', should be described in terms of higher states of consciousness is discussed further in 6.3.3. It is also shown that different states of consciousness reflect transformed perception, moving from multiplicity to Unity, with recognition that this has consequences. Gregory the Great's discussion of light in which the entry point is understood, possibly metaphorically, as narrow but the chamber of reception is wide provides a useful analogy. Gregory's related discussion of the temple in *Ezekiel*, with its talk of measure, is interpreted in terms of the highest aspirations and achievements and the widest and most expanded experiences of contemplative practice. In this vast interior is to be found the voice of God but also the silence; a silence that is far removed from mere absence of noise.³⁷ This analogy relates more to the Quaker understanding of the 'inward light', than that of 'inner light'³⁸, but is

³⁵ See thesis, chapter 2, p. 55.

³⁶ Jones, R quoted in Post Abbott, M., *Quaker Views on Mysticism*, (Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Pamphlets, No.375), p. 11.

³⁷ For comprehensive discussion of Gregory the Great on contemplative practice, showing how Gregory built on Augustine but also developed new thinking, see McGinn, *Growth*, chapter 2.

³⁸ See discussion 5.3.4.

nonetheless useful in relation to the notion of inward expansion. When consciousness is experienced as both pure and increasingly expanded it affords, in Gregory's terms, recognition that 'the part through which the light enters [may be] narrow, but the interior part that receives the light is wide'

Figures 1-4, in chapter 2, provide a diagrammatic representation of growth in the experience of Inwardness. Initially outwardness (Figure 1) is shown as the primary experience of individual consciousness; and even if there is knowledge *about* the possibility of Inwardness, it is not experiential. However, in the course of regular engagement in the Quaker spiritual practice, Inwardness (Figure 2) is experienced and gradually known in increasing depth and fullness. Shifts of attention between outwardness and Inwardness, in terms of the movement of conscious attention, are indicated in Figure 3 and Table 1, (ref. Meeting for Worship). The result is a maturing awareness within the individual of the interrelation and finally a growing integration of outwardness and Inwardness. Figure 6 is indicative of the possible realisation of the biblical 'more' that is to come (see John 16 .12-15, below).

This thesis also maintains that different descriptions and interpretations of experience are in accord with the level of consciousness of individual and/or corporate discernment. Awareness of 'more' to come, that is at first indefinable, has the possibility of being realised at a later stage of development, yet may not become known to all.

Figure 6 The biblical promise of ‘more’ to come indicated by greater depth within Inwardness as consciousness ‘expands’³⁹

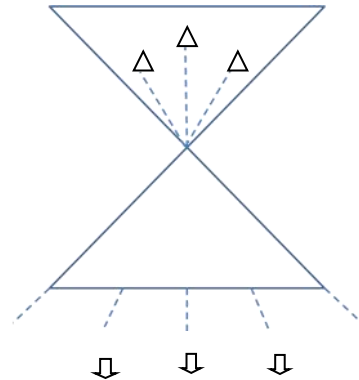


Figure 6, indicates how, within outwardness, there is ever increasing infiltration of Inwardness, and also how in the foundation of Inwardness further depth may be opened to awareness. It is a matter of speculation what the biblical words actually intend. However, as Inwardness itself becomes deeper and more insightful it allows for knowledge to become more profound and full. Inwardness, as fully developed in consciousness, changes the entirety of experiencing as shown in Table 6.

The diagram above is intended to represent, the promise of the words of John 16: 12-13, ‘I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself: but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come’.¹⁴⁰ Whether or not this perception could have been entailed in Fox’s preaching that ‘the Lord has come to teach his people himself’ cannot be claimed with certainty. However, the main contention of this thesis is not about the teachings but about the actual

³⁹ John 16: 12-13, ‘I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.....’ i.e. there is ‘more’ to be known and experienced.

⁴⁰ Ward, K. *A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: One World, 2002. Ward considers mysteries that are beyond ‘normal experience’ as that which is beyond the range of most humans, p. 25, and, discussing prophets to whom the immensity of reality is revealed, suggests that this experience is rare because ‘most of us could not cope with such a disclosure of reality’ (p. 47). The possibility is that the experiencer would be overwhelmed beyond ‘all energies and powers, in face of which they [experiencers] fade into oblivion’. p. 49.

experience through spiritual practice. It is the latter which, in due time, has the potential to disclose ‘the more to come’ in experiential knowing.

Growth of measure, although without explicit explanation in the past, is a notion familiar to Friends.⁴² Fox expressed the principle in the following terms: ‘as people come into subjection to the spirit of God, and grow up in the image and power of the Almighty, they may receive the Word of wisdom that opens all things, and come to know the hidden unity in the Eternal Being’.⁴³ In these words Fox emphasises that development is possible and desirable if Quakers are to grow in the Spirit. Moore explains that:

In principle, all Quakers were sons and daughters of God and united with Christ, but everybody’s ‘measure’ was not equal, and some Friends recognised that certain people had special calling as “elders” or ministers of the flock and that George Fox had an extraspecial calling, and only a minority of Quakers had quarrelled with this assumption.⁴⁴

It is suggested here that, expansion of consciousness in different states or stages of the growth of measure, achieved through developmental experience of Inwardness, accounts for such gifts and callings. For early Quakers, trust was in God’s guidance,⁴⁵ reliance on turning to God when in need and understanding that God alone is the light to enlighten humankind.⁴⁶ But understanding that development of consciousness is the means of attunement to guidance, whether qualified as spiritual or not, has not been expressed previously in relation to an understanding of Quaker Inwardness, and growth of measure.

As distinct from George Fox’s references to growth in Christian terms, this thesis proposes that Quaker Meeting for Worship constitutes a contemplative practice for spiritual progress, expansion of consciousness, opening of the heart and developed

⁴² See Ambler, R. *Truth of the Heart*. pp. 161-162 – and biblical reference ‘I say ... to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith’ (Romans 12:3) and ‘Unto everyone of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ’ (Ephesians 4:7).

⁴³ Fox, *Journal*, p. 28.

⁴⁴ Moore, *Consciences*, p. 44.

⁴⁵ See 3.2.1, ‘Watch to feel the saviour of life in thy heart day by day ...’

⁴⁶ Note; 3.2.2.

discernment that may, but need not, be interpreted in Christian terminology. The broader application of the interpretation proposed leads to the possibility of making comparison with other contemplative practices and also for understanding Friends who no longer regard themselves as Christian or theist.

The compilation charts (below) outlining Conditions and Elements of Quaker Spiritual practice indicate repeated reference and continuity of concern in the writings of Fox, Penington, Barclay and writers of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The ‘threads’ identified in chapter 2 as comprising the ‘tapestry’ of Quaker spiritual practice have been referenced consistently in subsequent chapters. The continuity of these references is shown in the summary charts below. The continuity, as evident in these writings, is shown below, in the order previously given. (Stillness, Silence, Attentive Presence, Heart Awareness, God Focus, Purity, Discernment, Growth and Unity). (All references within the summary charts are to be found in Tables 2-5 as given).

1 **Stillness (Summary Chart 1)**

<p><u>Fox</u> Settling/ Stillness/ Waiting</p>	<p>‘...be still a while from thy own thoughts, searching, seeking, desires and imaginations, and be stayed in the principle of God in thee, ...’: ‘Be patient and still in the power and still in the light that doth convince you ...’ ‘Be still and wait in your own conditions, and settled in the Seed of God that does not change ...’</p>
<p><u>Penington</u> Settling / Stillness/ Waiting</p>	<p>‘So be still before him and in stillness believe in his Name...’ ‘Now this is a great thing to know flesh silenced, to feel the reasoning thoughts and discourses of the fleshly mind stilled, and the wisdom, light, and guidance of God’s spirit waited for...’</p>
<p><u>Barclay</u> Settling/ Stillness/ Waiting</p>	<p>Practice is ‘facilitated by stillness and silence’: ‘[the] great work of one and all ought to be to wait upon God ...’</p>
<p><u>21st Century</u> Settling /Stillness</p>	<p>Truth may be known ‘in your [Quaker] hearts’ as a ‘response in the silence of waiting’. Stillness in this process is emphasised in 2.01, 2.39 and 2.53 <i>QFP</i>.</p>

2 Silence (Summary Chart 2)

<u>Fox</u> Silence/ Stayedness	‘In the stillness and silence of the power of the Almighty dwell ...’
<u>Penington</u> Silence/ Stayedness	‘For man is to come into the poverty of self, into the abasedness, into nothingness, into the silence in his spirit before the Lord’, What is necessary is ‘silent waiting on the Lord in subjection, till life speak and make things manifest’.
<u>Barclay</u> Silence/ Stayedness	Worship ‘requires the silence to breathe <i>through</i> them [worshippers], and <i>in</i> them’ ...; practice is ‘facilitated by stillness and silence’, ‘silence is and must necessarily be a special and principal part of God’s worship’.
<u>21st Century</u> Silence/ Stayedness	Friends emphasise the ‘ministry of silence’ and ‘the importance of coming regularly with heart and mind prepared’ [2.37 <i>QFP</i>]. ‘The Lord of Heaven and earth we found to be to be near at hand’ ... ‘as we waited upon him in pure silence’ [19.08 <i>QFP</i>]; One approaches ‘the condition of true silence’ in Meeting for Worship [26.12 <i>QFP</i>]

The two conditions, Stillness and Silence, are regularly and forcibly projected in each of the writers discussed. It is apparent that the Quaker Spiritual practice, as initiated by Fox and sustained throughout the history of Quakerism, is dependent on the successful creation of these two Conditions. Indeed, it is possible that Friends may place emphasis on the experience of growth of Silence in everyday living rather than the growth of Inwardness.

Robert Sardello, whose concern is with the psychology of spiritual experience, writes that:

To be fully with Silence requires that we develop a capacity to be present to both the most subtle qualities of objective touch imaginable and to the manner in which this touch resonates the soul interiorly. That is, to be fully present to the experience, we have to be inside ourselves and outside ourselves at the same time. It is also possible in practice to alternate between emphasizing the interior quality by putting our attention at the level of the interior of the body and then emphasizing the exterior quality by putting our attention at the level of the outer form of our body. Alternating attention like this while we are in Silence can help us to experience the fullness of the

phenomenon. This practice, however, needs to be accompanied by one through which we experience the border between the interior and exterior, between the objective touch and the resonance of it.²

Indeed, as the Silence of Inwardness is experienced fully and known to be the foundation of other experiences within spiritual practice and living, a new reality begins to open up. The perceptions of ourselves, others and God as understood through experience are all changed.

However, the Elements discussed previously also form important features of the practice of Inwardness. Once the Conditions for spiritual practice have been established, it becomes possible for worshippers to be attentively present in Heart Awareness and God Focussing, each of which Element provides depth of spiritual concern and progress towards inspirational nourishment.

3 Attentive Presence (Summary Chart 3)

<p><u>Fox</u> Attentive Presence</p>	<p>‘...be stayed in the principle of God’: ‘Let your patience be perfect...’</p>
<p><u>Penington</u> Attentive Presence</p>	<p>‘[W]ait to feel this spirit, and be guided to walk in this spirit ...’, ‘Watch to feel the savour of life in thy heart day by day ...which leads into the way of life’.</p>

² Sardello, Robert. *Silence. The Mystery of Wholeness*, (Berkeley, Ca: North Atlantic Books, 2006[1942]) p.41.

<u>Barclay</u> Attentive Presence	‘In entering physically into this space where people are sitting in silent worship, he [Barclay] is touched in his mind, but it is the mind as heart, not as head merely ...’ Worship is to distinguish between ‘the certain knowledge of God and the uncertain, betwixt the spiritual knowledge, and the literal; the saving heart-knowledge, and the soaring, airy head-knowledge’.
<u>21st Century</u> Attentive Presence	Quaker worship teaches us ... how to listen ‘to the inward teacher’ (Allen)

4 Heart Awareness (Summary Chart 4)

<u>Fox</u> Heart Awareness/ Sensing and Feeling	‘Every one in the measure of life wait, that with it all your minds may be guided up to the Father of life, with your hearts joined together up to the Father of spirits ...’, ‘come to the truth in the heart, to the hidden man in the heart, to a meek and quiet spirit’.
<u>Penington</u> Heart Awareness/ Sensing and Feeling	Being ‘inwardly changed ... in the heart’, ‘Watch to feel the savour of life in thy heart day by day...’ ‘... to feel after, and have a sense of that which is of God, and good in the heart, and come to join and give up to it’.
<u>Barclay</u> Heart Awareness/ Sensing and Feeling	Barclay felt ‘a secret power which touched [his] heart’: Quakers were to ‘feel[ing] after God in and near themselves’, the resultant way of life, for Quakers, is to ‘walk the ways of the heart’... and feel the ‘warm influence of God’s Spirit upon the heart ...’
<u>21st Century</u> Heart Awareness/ Sensing and Feeling	Quaker worship teaches us quietly how to enter the world in our hearts’ such that truth is known ‘in our [Quaker] hearts’ (Scott); Heart Awareness is emphasised in 2.12, 2.57 and 2.60 <i>QFP</i> .

5 God Focus (Summary Chart 5)

<u>Fox</u> God Focussing/ Attunement	‘Be patient and still in the power and still in the light that doth convince you, to keep your minds to God...’ ‘... to stay thy mind upon God, up to God; and thou wilt find strength from him and a present help in time of trouble, in need, and to be a God at hand’.
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<p><u>Penington</u> God Focussing/ Attunement</p>	<p>Friends come ‘to feel after, and have a sense of that which is of God, and good in the heart, and come to join and give up to it’... ‘travel on, travel on; let nothing stop you: but wait for and daily follow the sensible leadings of that measure of life which God hath placed in you, ...’</p>
<p><u>Barclay</u> God Focussing/ Attunement</p>	<p>There was a ‘secret turning of the mind towards God’ accessed ‘<i>inwardly and immediately by the Spirit of God</i>’: ‘... the Spirit of God should be the immediate actor, mover, persuader, and influencer of man in [the] particular acts of worship ...’</p>
<p><u>21st Century</u> God Focussing/ Attunement</p>	<p>‘Quaker worship teaches us ... how to wait upon God’... ‘This experience of the depth of existence fills us with a sense of both reverence and of responsibility, which gives even to our finite lives a meaning and a power which they do not possess in themselves. <i>This, I am assured, is our human experience of God</i>’ [26.11 QFP] (my emphasis).</p>

As spiritual practice embraces the whole being of the worshipper the possibility of one-pointed and pure engagement in worship becomes automatically enjoined, allowing discerning openness and guidance to increase.

6 Purity (Summary Chart 6)

<p><u>Fox</u> Purity</p>	<p>‘.. the mind shall feed upon nothing but the pure light of God, ...’ ‘... and so in savour and right discerning ye all in it [grace of the Lord] may be kept; that nothing that is contrary to the pure life of God ... may be brought forth...’</p>
<p><u>Penington</u> Purity</p>	<p>Transformation is possible, even to ‘the image, purity and perfection of the light’.</p> <p>‘So...come to know God’s Spirit ...and the Lord will show thee evil in a pure sense of the new nature, quicker than thou canst think or consider anything.’</p>

<u>Barclay</u> Purity	In Worship ‘we draw near unto him with pure hearts’.
<u>21st Century</u> Purity	In a ‘new birth’ is found the ‘purified self’ [26.49 QFP] From Christ ‘a beam of light comes shining’ [26.48 QFP]; ‘There is a principle which is pure’, placed in the human mind...’ [26.61 QFP], ‘Mind that which is pure in you to guide you to God’ [26.69 QFP].

7 Discernment (Summary Chart 7)

<u>Fox</u> Discernment	‘...return within, and wait to hear the voice of the Lord there; and waiting there and keeping close to the Lord, a discerning will grow’, ‘...wait for wisdom from God’: this is the way to ‘right discerning’.
<u>Penington</u> Discernment	‘Wait to learn the mind of God’: ‘[God’s Spirit], that can arise either from words written or from thoughts’
<u>Barclay</u> Discernment	It is in ‘inward quietness, stillness, and humility of mind [that] the Lord appears, and his heavenly wisdom is revealed’, and confirms faith because it provides ‘certain knowledge’ [discernment].
<u>21st Century</u> Discernment	‘We join Fox in affirming our faith in the contemporary inspiration of the Holy Spirit’ [26.67 QFP]; ‘We were directed to search for the least of all seeds and to mind the lowest appearance thereof, which was its turning against sin and darkness; we came by degrees to find we had met with the pure living eternal Spirit’ (Fox) [26.69 QFP].

8 Growth (Summary Chart 8)

<u>Fox</u> Growth	‘... if you love this light, it will teach you, walking up and down and lying in bed’ ‘... wait for wisdom from God’: patience and waiting ‘within the experience of God, in the Light’, is vital to spiritual growth.
<u>Penington</u> Growth	At first the experience may be only ‘in some measure and degree, and afterwards more and more’ as Friends come ‘to feel after, and have a sense of that which is of God, and good in the heart, and come to join and give up to it’.

<u>Barclay Growth</u>	‘... the warm influence of God’s Spirit upon the heart [facilitates] the comfortable shining of his Light upon their understanding’.
<u>21st Century Growth</u>	‘... what I believe is crucial, is that each one of us needs deeply to desire to grow in to the person whom God wills us to become’, ‘we look back over a period of time and see that there has been change’, ‘Our consciousness is enlarged and seems to incorporate many other consciousnesses ...’

In this state of absorbed worship growth of knowledge and experience of God facilitates, in Fox’s words, knowing ‘the hidden Unity in the Eternal Being’.

9 Unity (Summary Chart 9)

<u>Fox Unity</u>	‘Unity hath been talked of, but now it is come...’, ‘[A]nd I turned them to the spirit of God in themselves ... to have unity one with another’, ‘[I], being brought up into the covenant, wherein is unity with all creation’. ‘the hidden Unity in the Eternal Being’.
<u>Penington Unity</u>	All differences ‘are known to and owned by the same life’ ... (to feel the life, to unite with the life, and the eye will open which can see into the nature of things).
<u>Barclay Unity</u>	Through Christ there may be a ‘...a sensible union and friendship with God ... In which the elders might look that nothing be wanting, but that peace, love, unity, concord and soundness be preserved in the Church of Christ’, ‘...a secret unity and fellowship may be enjoyed, which the devil ... can never break or hinder’.
<u>21st Century Unity</u>	‘Their purpose [practice] ... is to lead us [Quakers] into the light and call forth love of God and our neighbour in unity of the spirit’, ‘As I stood relaxed and still, I had the illusion that I was enveloped in light. I had the feeling that the light and I were one. Time and space slipped from me. ... I was tranquillised and steadied by the beauty, the stability of Nature...’ [26.08 <i>QFP</i>].

Thus the ‘itinerary’ of spiritual practice, as a progression towards Unity, engages developmental experience in the direction of a maturing state of spiritual knowing. The

‘threads’, described as Conditions and Elements throughout the thesis constitute the means by which this occurs. The texts quoted in the thesis are indicative of the experience, ministry, teaching and preaching that either encourages or facilitates the Conditions and Elements of spiritual practice. If the practice is carried out regularly and frequently, and its consequences are lived progressively in outwardness, a state of consciousness in Unity is the outcome.

Explanations of spiritual development in terms of a journey, which culminates in perfection, are found frequently in Christian mysticism. McGinn identifies several ways in which this symbolism is discussed including the simple version of a threefold path, that identifies a beginning, a middle and an end; *praktike, physike and theologike* (Evagrius), and purification, illumination and perfection (Dionysius and John Scotus Eriugena).⁴⁷ The threefold explanation continued to be used by, for example, Bernard of Clairvaux and William of Saint-Thierry.⁴⁸ In turn Bonaventure discussed stages of prayer, meditation and contemplation as hierarchical in the mind’s journey to God.⁴⁹ Other constructions of a developmental path or way include the four degrees of love of Richard of St. Victoire, and the ladder of perfection of William Tauler.⁵⁰ Each of these explanations is useful in confirming the view that spiritual development is a process, which gives rise to different states and stages of experiencing and knowing.⁵¹ The notion of ‘journey’ or ‘path’ serves a purpose as a metaphor or symbol for understanding that humankind engages in progression towards, encounter with God. However, in the description of the development, shown in tabular form (Table 6, above), notions of journey or itinerary may not be the most suitable.

⁴⁷ McGinn, B *The Essential Writings of Christian Mysticism* (New York: The Modern Library, 2006), Section 5, numbers 1 and 3. See also McGrath, A. *Christian Spirituality* (Malden, Mass. : Blackwell, 1999), pp. 91-93 on journeying as a rich image for spiritual progression, including reference to the wandering people of the Old Testament.

⁴⁸ McGinn, *ibid.* pp. 253-255, Saint Thierry concerning. the three Powers of the Soul, the will, memory and intellect enlivened by love.

⁴⁹ McGinn, *ibid.* pp. 162-171, Bonaventure on ‘The mind’s Journey into God’.

⁵⁰ McGinn, *ibid.* section 5, numbers 2 and 6.

⁵¹ See Fowler, section 1.4.1a. Fowler’s provides an interpretative framework for considering growth in spiritual experience and, conceivably, practices discussed in relation to ‘meaning-making’ as selfhood is formed. His consideration thus differs from present discussion but is useful with regard to ‘aspects of religiousness’.

Rather, since the transformation is an inner one and the individual simply changes within as there is expansion of consciousness. Different states of consciousness give rise to different experiences in living, a more useful metaphor might employ an alchemical description like, for example, the transformation of base metal into gold. This image is of spiritual development as a precious transformation to be valued and continually cherished or, metaphorically, burnished.

Table 6 identifies a means of depicting growth of measure in Quakerism in a way that has not been undertaken previously. States of consciousness are described in relation to how life is experienced and how it is lived in each state. Different states of consciousness give rise to different experiences in living. Table 6 shows that in the first state there is no experienced Inwardness and so life is lived in outwardness and experienced in multiplicity. In the second state Inwardness is sensed but not fully known to experience; life is still lived in outwardness and engaged through multiplicity. In this state, however, multiplicity may be felt to be incomplete and therefore unsatisfactory. In the third state, Inwardness is experienced but as distinct from, and at the expense of, outwardness: outwardness is known as separate from Inwardness. Inwardness and outwardness are experienced in alternation. Duality is thus glimpsed, sometimes dislocating multiplicity, as perception engages a new dimension of experiential knowledge. The fourth state brings a significant change in that Inwardness begins to be experienced fleetingly in outwardness: in the main outwardness and Inwardness still alternate but the deepening experience of Inwardness brings the experience of duality as a fact of personal experience, felt to be real. Once Inwardness remains constant in the waking state of consciousness, known in all the activities of wakefulness, experience begins to engage Oneness. Thus, in the fifth state of consciousness, as the boundaries that had seemed to create duality begin to dissolve from experience, perception is significantly altered. In the sixth state of consciousness Inwardness becomes constant, it is maintained in outwardness and, more important, it has the potential to be constant in sleeping and dreaming. At this stage when awareness is maintained in sleep and the sense of Unity is gained duality dissolves. The final stage of consciousness, as indicated in Table 6a, b and c, thus develops; the seventh

state as identified in this thesis is when Unity is gained fully.⁵² Porosity between the inward and outward gives rise to Unity, which becomes a state of Life. Cosmic Life⁵³ experiences itself in and through the individual consciousness within the wholeness of the Divine, Eternal Being, God.⁵⁴

It is claimed in this thesis that the spiritual practice of Friends has the potential to facilitate the stages of development outlined, if practised regularly. This offers a new way of explaining spiritual practice; and a new perspective on Quaker theology. Quaker theology is accepted as experiential, but this interpretation of the experiential component, as reliant on expansion of consciousness, is distinctive. Nonetheless it affords a link with Gwyn's recognition that Fox's revelation, that 'there was one even Christ Jesus' who could speak to his condition, was a 'consciousness raising' experience;⁵⁵ and Keiser's claim that reference to the inward and the outward is, at the same time, reference to different levels of consciousness.⁵⁶ Consciousness can be moved suddenly, but fleetingly, into a different state of experiencing, but it is the description of sequentially cognisable stages and states of consciousness, which casts new light on an explanation of Quaker development in spiritual growth to maturity.

⁵² Examination that compares this state of knowing with Eckhart's understanding of 'God beyond God' is not included here but may be of interest to future scholars. Note, McGinn, B. 'The God beyond God: Theology and Mysticism in the thought of Meister Eckhart', Paper presented as an inaugural lecture at the Divinity School of the University of Chicago, Oct. 1979. Printed in the *Journal of Religion*, 61, No. 1(1981).

⁵³ Life-the Life-cosmic Life of Christ, see Grace Blindell (QFP, 29.18). See also Maquarrie, *Two Worlds*, p.26 'universal Being's thinking in us [mankind]'.

⁵⁴ See analogous description relating the Vedanta Hinduism by Chatterjee, S.K. 'Quantification of Human Development—A Holistic Approach' in the *Indian Journal of Statistics* (Vol. 70-B, Part 2, 2008) pp. 157–228. The article concerns 'unitive consciousness' in terms of both the individual and the cosmic levels of life. Note also Barnes in Partridge on 'Unanimity theory', and Laird, *Silent Land*, p. 70 concerning 'luminous vastness'.

⁵⁵ Fox, *Journal*, p. 19 'I could find none to open my condition to but the Lord alone, unto whom I cried day and night'. Gwyn's use of the notion of 'consciousness raising' has a different connotation but is nonetheless of some use in making relevant links.

⁵⁶ Keiser and Moore, *Knowing the Mystery*, p. 136

6.3.3 Inwardness as having consequences

The description and explanation of states or stages of consciousness outlined in section 6.3.2 gives an indication of the way in which individual people have the potential to progress in growth of measure. As a person gains deeper experience and understanding of Inwardness, there are consequences that affect not only the way the individual perceives his or her life but also how he or she engages in living.

The first state of consciousness, in which multiplicity dominates, places many and varied demands on the individual: choices have to be made, priorities sifted, and decisions taken and acted upon within a complex world.⁵⁷ Such a plethora of demands can be bewildering and on occasions the greatest concern is for the individual's personal needs and wants.⁵⁸ For such individuals there may be little sense of life's totality and of the significance of the needs of others. This does not mean, however, that there is inevitable selfishness in the first stage of consciousness. As the Dalai Lama⁵⁹ urges, if individuals realise that their needs and wants are just the same, in essence, as those of others, there is, or can be, recognition of commonality.⁶⁰ This may provide a moral guide for people in the first state of consciousness.

Individuals whose level of consciousness is underdeveloped may be religious in their inclination. However, they may also be inclined to eschew religion, feeling religious beliefs make no sense. In the latter case, Alain de Botton,⁶¹ makes a simple plea for kindness. He suggests that some of the lessons learned in childhood need to be continued

⁵⁷ The same range of demands continue as consciousness is transformed, but in Unity the coherence of all experience in Oneness gives rise to more expanded understanding of all life as interconnected.

⁵⁸ Abraham Maslow's 1960's 'hierarchy of needs' has relevance here. Maslow, A. *Psychology of Being*, (New York: van Nostrand, 1962).

⁵⁹ Dalai Lama *Beyond Religion: Ethics for a Whole World* (London: Rider, 2012). The double meaning in the use of the indefinite article in the title is significant. The Dalai Lama plainly intends reference not only to the whole world but also to a world made whole.

⁶⁰ The Dalai Lama suggests and promotes a form of secular ethics that he believes may be more relevant to the non-religious in our society today.

⁶¹ de Botton, A. *Religion for Atheists*, pp. 91-96.

into adulthood even when religion is not the reason. Thus his view, though significant, is far from a call to Inwardness.

As spiritual consciousness develops, however, it carries with it its own consequences. These have been outlined in section 6.3.2. Additionally, it is notable that a level of consciousness, although it has consequences, is not inevitably recognisable in a person's behaviours. It is argued here that there are two distinct ways of conceptualising maturing spirituality. One relates to the side of the experiencer and focuses on the nature of experience and the manner in which it changes during the processes of growth. The other relates to behaviour and may be evident to others in some degree; nonetheless, growth is not necessarily demonstrated in a series of behavioural signs.

As higher states of consciousness are gained, and living is experienced in duality and then in Unity, concerns and priorities begin to change. There is a natural correlation between how the world is experienced and how the individual chooses to live his or her life. Recognition of the interconnectedness between all things begins to prevail, as growth of measure gives rise to a totally new way of perceiving reality and being in the world: there is a shift *from* the world as outwardly experienced and recognised in multiplicity *to* the world as experienced from its innermost dimension and recognised in Unity.⁶² Choices and decisions still have to be made, but they are felt within and guided by a new perspective. This development aligns with an understanding of giving back to God what God has given to humankind. As in 2 Corinthians 3:18, 'But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord'. For F-Q Friends, the emphasis on God Focus,⁶³ especially when linked to Heart Awareness, expresses this inspiration and aspiration. It is a state of experiencing that exceeds the understanding of many individuals. However, there are examples, described in the Bible, which indicate that 'the righteous, while still

⁶² de Chardin, T. *Le Milieu Divin* (London: Harper books, 1957), p. 114 'In the divine *milieu* all the elements of the universe *touch each other* by that which is most inward and ultimate in them', i.e. by their 'innermost dimension'.

⁶³ See Elements of worship.

living on earth, can see and hear and know much more than is inaccessible to the ordinary understanding'.⁶⁴

Table 6 shows how expansion of Consciousness leads *via* experience of multiplicity, to intimations of Eternal Being, and thence to life lived in the Unity of Eternal Being.⁶⁵

6.3.4 Inwardness as having an ultimate stage, or state, of maturity

As indicated above, growth of measure leads gradually to spiritual maturity in which the person experiences the Unity or Oneness of Eternal Being: Quakers describe experiences in a variety of ways from living in the fellowship of 'gospel order', in Christian Quaker terms, to friendship 'with self, others and with God'. Neither of these descriptions is, however, likely to refer to the more profound recognition, beyond friendship, of Fox's own experience of the 'unity in the Eternal Being' in which 'wonderful depths were opened...'⁶⁶ The ultimate stages of development to maturity are examined here in terms of states or levels of consciousness, through which perception changes (6.3.4i). However, another depiction of mature spirituality and full growth of measure is the kind of life that the spiritually mature person lives (6.3.4ii). These are discussed in turn.

6.3.4i Level of consciousness and personal experience

Spiritual experience, as a primary focus of spiritual maturity, is often written about with a degree of scepticism and sometimes in derisory or dismissive tones.⁶⁷ However,

⁶⁴ Protopresbyter Pomazansky, M *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*. p. 319. See also thesis f/n 146.

⁶⁵ Different explanations termed 'higher levels of knowing' describe the ascent through a structure in which this development occurs. See for example the Victorine understanding of different kinds of contemplation. It is not intended here to suggest that contemplative engagement is about cultivating certain states of consciousness but it is proposed here that consciousness does change as 'measure', in Quaker terms, increases. Note Dom David Foster *Contemplative Prayer*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2015) p. 1.

⁶⁶ Fox, *Journal*, p. 28.

⁶⁷ McGrath, *Mystical Theology*, p. 140 reference 'language of consciousness' and 'solipsism'. Jantzen, G *Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism*, concerning the 'social construction' of mysticism and the 'silencing of women', pp. 326-327. See also: Williams, R. *Wound*, concerning 'muddled bundle of experiences', (p. 2), and mere 'religious moments' versus 'the whole of experience', (p. 137). Also Katz, S. *Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis*.

this reference is usually to interpretation of ‘experience’ in terms of visions, voices, passions and/or exceptionally altered states of consciousness, deemed ‘abnormal’. Such experiences, plural, fall outside the discussion of experience, singular, that constitutes the focus of this thesis. The view of experience discussed here, as relevant to an experiential theology of Quakerism, is to do with a whole new way of perceiving and being in the world, which comes with growth of measure, through regular encounter with Inwardness. The relationship between the vertical and the horizontal axes of spirituality result in life-style changes, and Table 6 details how this comes about. As indicated above, one result of this is a life that is experienced in Unity and, in Christian Quaker terms, lived in the fellowship of ‘gospel order’; it is expressed in ongoing service, which is to the advantage of the whole community. Once individual life is fulfilled and lived in Unity, it is experienced as overflowing for the benefit of multiplicity. Spiritual living is, then, understood as a way of life that benefits everyone i.e. living the oneness of the Life. In this sense accounts of Inwardness are not merely descriptions of personal experience but exemplars for others to envisage a changed relationship to practical living in the world i.e. for F-Q Friends, involving Testimony in truth, equality, simplicity, peace and the needs of the environment. The outcomes of Inwardness in mature spirituality are embedded in a ‘pattern’ that relates to the model of the life of Jesus Christ for the modern era. This is a pattern of living which is meaningful for humanists, non-theists and theists alike, Quaker or not.

Both spiritual experience and spiritual living, as considered, are encompassed in Kelly’s suggestion that the individual’s awareness positions itself in two different modes, or states: One, silent, and the other, active.⁶⁸ His view provides clarity as to what spiritual development and spiritual maturing, as relevant to Friends, might encompass. In an ultimate state however this duality dissolves. The separation previously experienced between active and silent consciousness changes by means of a porosity that facilitates a single and unified mode of experiencing.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Thomas Kelly, see Appendix 1. See also Sardello above.

⁶⁹ Different perspectives on ‘duality’ i.e. in terms of a) Cartesian theory and b) the matter of experience relating to level of consciousness, as outlined previously, are indicative of distinctly different theoretical frameworks. It is the latter, level of consciousness, which is relevant for interpreting developing

Different experience in living leads to changes of concern and changed priorities. For Bernard of Clairvaux, it was the degree of love that provided the central explanation. Individuals needed to progress through carnal love, progressive love for God, freely given love-the love of God for God's sake, and, finally, the perfect love, in which there is love of self for God's sake.⁷⁰ The latter involves union of wills since '...he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit'.⁷¹ In the growth of love impediments to spiritual advance cease to be active and destructive, according to Bernard.⁷²

As in Quakerism, issues of love and levels of loving occur frequently in the writings of the mystics. For Augustine, also, there had been need for loving prayer in solitude, but also love for one's neighbour that provides 'access to the vision of God'.⁷³ Additionally, Augustine maintained the importance of the intimate relationship between love and knowledge suggesting that at all times the engagement of the heart is essential i.e. both in verbal prayer and when the individual is engaged in other work. The insistence then is for praying continually⁷⁴ by holding to the sense of the heart-turned-to-God. The parallel with the Quaker concern for Heart Awareness, expressed through love, is notable, and by which Interiority develops and life is experienced in Unity. Love of neighbour, and care for the world at large, grows spontaneously, as life is known as a Single Life embracing all that is.

spirituality in this thesis. Comprehensive knowing engages a position, which encompasses transcendental and immanent Divinity, sometimes termed unmanifest and manifest respectively. In Vedic [g] terms, the understanding is that Absolute and relative are known simultaneously in the higher states of spiritual development. As shown in table 6, stages of Quaker Inwardness include duality as felt to be real and, at a later stage the singularity of Inwardness as knowingly lived in the midst of multiplicity.

⁷⁰ This is well explained by King, U. *Christian Mystics: Their lives and legacies throughout the ages*, (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 67.

⁷¹ 1 Cor. 6:17.

⁷² See McGinn, *Essential Writings*, Union with God: On Loving God, Section 13 Number 2, (New York: Modern Library, 1991)

⁷³ McGinn, B, *The Foundations of Mysticism* (New York: Crossroad 1991) p. 245.

⁷⁴ Concerning prayer without ceasing -1 Thess 5:17, Carmody and Carmody, *Mysticism*, p. 218, The Jesus prayer. Also Maquarrie, *Two Worlds*, pp. 203-204.

Heart Awareness is emphasised as significant in spiritual practice, and as key to corporately lived Testimony. For Friends, love plays a central part in faith and practice.

Love is the will to nurture life and growth in oneself and in another. Love is personal; it is the sacred trust of living things. Likewise, love, is neither need nor dependency. 'I need you' is not the same as 'I love you'.

Love is so vastly different! It is freeing; it acknowledges the separateness of the beloved. It treasures the unique otherness of the beloved that is each one's contribution to the relationship. Love calls for submission and sacrifice. It does not seek to possess, but rather to empty itself in nurture of the loved one.⁷⁵

Donald Green's 1982 statement, (as quoted above) is an aspiration and a guide to living for Quakers. It confirms an ongoing drive to 'love thy neighbour' as one loves oneself. As William Penn said, in 1693, 'Love is the hardest lesson in Christianity; but, for that reason, it should be most our care to learn'.⁷⁶

Personal recognition of the depth and expansiveness of consciousness, and growth of lovingness in experience, are aspects of the move to mature spirituality.

6.3.4ii Behaviour and the importance of Testimony

Testimony is defined in this thesis as the consequence of Inwardness (1.4.3.). When similarly visible involvement in, for example, peace activities is engaged by Quakers who have no concern for or experience of Inwardness this definition does not apply. Such behaviour and activity is the outcome of a faith position⁷⁷ i.e. as faith that guides living, but without dependence on practice of the process of Inwardness.

As already indicated, for early Quakers, Testimony was equivalent to their way of life. It was synonymous with fellowship in gospel order, which respected all humankind and revered all of God's creation.⁷⁸ A mature spiritual life, for Quakers, was then a

⁷⁵ *QFP*, 22.42, Donald Green.

⁷⁶ *QFP*, 22.01, William Penn, 1693.

⁷⁷ See distinction between belief and faith, in 1.4.3.

⁷⁸ Fox, *Journal*, .p. 2, 'Unity with the creation', p. 27 'the creation was opened to me'.

spontaneous expression rather than a calculated call to duty; so it remains for some Friends in the twenty-first century. As Peter Leeming suggests:

The Quaker testimonies are end products. They are, as such, the evidence of something that has happened or is happening deep within us. They are the proof and fruit of an ongoing spiritual transformation. Our testimonies are certainly not principles that we seek to observe. They are not guidelines for daily life. Rather, they should be understood as the expression of the Light to which we turn, that it may shine through us.⁷⁹

6.4 Implications

As already indicated, Inwardness is considered in this research, in relation to British Friends, both as *process* and as *state*: each of which has been exposed to analysis. In the systematic examination undertaken issues arose, throughout the thesis, which now invite both reassessment of previous scholarship and consideration of further research. Topics are drawn both from the research discussed in chapter 1.3 (6.4.1) and also from conjunction of ideas within the thesis (6.4.2). These are considered in turn.

6.4.1 Reassessment of previous scholarship - (Academic)

A main argument of this thesis is that Quakerism entails a spiritual practice that, if practised regularly, has the potential to facilitate expansion of consciousness thus promoting spiritual growth. This argument accepts the understanding that Friends are no longer exclusively Christian in their faith position and that they accept a range of understandings of the relationship between their spiritual practice and their modes of living. This view contrasts with Barclay's claim that Quakers are 'all of those who apply themselves effectually to Christianity, and are not satisfied until they have found its effectual work upon their hearts'.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Leeming, P. 'Thought for the Week', *The Friend*, July 27th, 2012, p. 3. Peter Leeming is a member of the Kendal Local Quaker Meeting, in Cumbria, U.K. However note that Fox used the term 'testimony to' in referring to Truth (see Fox, *Journal*, p. 118).

⁸⁰ See chapter 4.

Of particular significance is the fact that although some Friends continue seem to engage in a spiritual practice that is true to Fox's seventeenth century teaching, others, in the twenty first century, have gradually lost sight of this mode of worship. For non F-Q participants, Meeting for Worship may gain different priorities and new interpretations.⁸¹ Comparison with the writings examined in 1.3 highlights some of the differences between the arguments expressed in this thesis and the views of earlier scholars that encompassed the perspective of classical theism.

6.4.1i Christian explanation of Quaker faith and practice

All arguments that involve exclusively Christian explanation of Quaker faith and practice require rethinking in the light of changed Quaker membership. One argument of this thesis is that Quakerism is no longer a religion that demands explanation solely in Christian terms.⁸² In contrast, Creasey's (1.3) examination of Quakerism rests upon a Christological interpretation. He writes of deep transformation, as 'an experiential fact', with which the argument of this thesis would agree; but also as 'a matter of the internalised Christ working within the individual as a living reality', with which this thesis is not in full agreement, as applicable to all Friends in the twenty-first century. The significance of such a view, in relation to an increasing emphasis on perspectives other than Christianity among Friends, warrants examination.

It has been shown that Creasey considers Quakerism to be a spiritual religion in which Christianity is central. This argument may be acceptable as reflection on earlier British Quakerism, but as faith positions have changed, there is need to re-assess the relevance of Creasey's argument for the present day. Current understanding of secular ethics, i.e. as beyond religion or humanist, is relevant to the views of many contemporary Quakers. Lack of certainty as to Quaker identity, Christian or other, indicates the importance of empirical research into Friends' beliefs and conceptual investigation of twenty-first century Quaker writings.⁸³

⁸¹ As, for example, non-theist members. (See 5.3.5).

⁸³ An empirical study of what proportion of twenty-first century Quakers approach their faith and practice in terms of a Christian interpretation in general, and a Christological understanding in particular,

6.4.1ii Issues of purification and purgation

Explanations relating to growth of measure and progressive spirituality that place emphasis on purification by purgation require re-thinking in view of the argument of this thesis.⁸⁴ As suggested in 1.4 if increased experience of Inwardness allows for negativity to ‘dissolve’ spontaneously, specific practices of purgation fail to be meaningful for Friends.

The work of King (1.3) suggests the importance of ‘Seeing that which is evil, and being cleansed of it’, as the means to bring man out of transitory and unstable living into the ‘eternal and unchanging’. The issue here is that the occurrence described obviously necessitates a process of change, and the question arises as to what this might be. Two contrasting explanations are relevant.

One view is that the light challenges the will, prompting and leading to a position of acceptance. In bringing the will into conformity with the light, a person is converted, thereby becoming regenerated. That person will now be gradually sanctified, changing into the likeness of Christ. This view accepts that human beings are always in the process of sanctification, of having the will shaped by the (unchanging) light and this is taken to completion once in conformity with the light.⁸⁵ ‘For with the light man sees himself’ asserts Fox⁸⁶ and ‘As the light opens and exercises thy conscience, it will ... let thee see invisible things, which are clearly seen by that which is invisible in thee. That which is invisible is the light within thee, which he who is invisible has given thee a measure of...’ For Fox the transformative process of the individual concerns the transition from ‘darkness to light’,⁸⁷ from ‘the changing to the unchanging’,⁸⁸ and from ‘the temporal to the

would benefit clarity concerning the prevailing membership of the Society. Also, among twenty-first century Friends there are different concerns and priorities e.g. spiritual and social. Examination of the significance of these priorities might benefit understanding of membership trends.

⁸⁴ Purification by purgation as, for example, Experiment with Light.

⁸⁵ Partridge, C., Professor and founding co-director of the Centre for the Study of Religion and Popular Culture, at Lancaster University, U.K. Personal communication by email 14.6.12.

⁸⁷ ‘Darkness to light’, Fox, *Journal*, p. 252 and p. 283.

eternal’.⁸⁹ This understanding admits a cognitive process in which the will is exercised, decisions taken and change is consciously chosen and worked towards. It is one interpretation of the process of Inwardness, which acknowledges that Fox accepted the need for some conceptual or discursive involvement in the process of change. However, the claim of this thesis is that discursive involvement is not part of the process of spiritual practice of Friends as intended by George Fox.

The view taken in this thesis also accepts that individuals might make a conscious choice concerning their wish for transformation. However, the proposal here is that increasing exposure to Inwardness in spiritual practice results in the gradual, and inevitable, infusion of the ‘eternal and unchanging’.⁹⁰ It is this that brings about personal transformation. This is a process of growth in which ‘if you love this light it will teach you, walking up and down and lying in bed’⁹¹ i.e. at all times, waking, dreaming and sleeping.⁹² The choice, as exercised by the will, is a straightforward decision to engage in spiritual practice.

The difference between the two views of the process of transformation is more to do with means than end, but both warrant further investigation, and each is amenable to further academic consideration in the reassessment of earlier scholarship. Suitable investigation would provide a deeper understanding of the nature and purpose of Meeting for Worship as, potentially, a process of Inwardness and illumination, in the twenty-first century. Also, for those committed to the practice as spiritual, it would affirm the value of Meeting for Worship in relation to spiritual growth. Reassessment of earlier scholarship in terms of, for example, Experiment with Light, regarded here as a process of purgation,

⁸⁸ ‘the end of changeable things’ Fox, *ibid*, pp. 174–175. See also King, *The Light Within*, p. 89.

⁸⁹ ‘The temporal to the eternal’, referring to the ‘end of changeable things, Fox, *ibid*, pp. 174-75. King, *The Light Within*, p. 109, with reference the change from transitoriness to permanence.

⁹⁰ Metaphorically, like turning on a light that automatically extinguishes the darkness in a room.

⁹¹ Fox, *ibid*, p. 144.

⁹² Note: reference to the ‘waking sleep’ above and see Table 6, column on 6th state of consciousness.

presents an interesting challenge.⁹³ It offers a comparative model for consideration, the status of which (in relation to Fox's teaching) is questioned by this research.

6.4.1iii Psychological and mystical explanations of spiritual experience and development

Consideration of aspects of spirituality, as discussed by Eeg-Olofsson (1.3) in relation to Barclay's understanding of Inwardness, has the potential to expose issues relevant to this examination of Inwardness. Eeg-Olofsson's discussion distinguishes between the 'mystical' and the 'psychological' which, in turn, suggests that different *aspects* might include areas of living in the world as distinct from engaging in worship. *Levels* might refer to degrees of spiritual development. Eeg-Olofsson's research is not concerned primarily to expose the matter of degrees, levels or states of expansion of consciousness. Nonetheless, his perception of Barclay's position would benefit from informed understanding of the spiritual and mystical emphasis of Meeting for Worship, which this thesis proposes.

Further research into this question is amenable both to conceptual and empirical study that could, but need not, be connected to the questions raised by King's thesis.

6.4.2 Conclusion to 6.4.1

The range of research suggestions indicated above arises from theoretical positions discussed in 1.3: they relate closely to considerations of Inwardness. These academic positions are directly relevant to the manner in which both Friends, and subsequent scholars of Quakerism, have viewed the Society and its faith and practice. The continued importance of earlier arguments is not denied, rather questioned in relation both to more recent thinking among Friends, and to changed academic perspectives, some of which are taken into consideration in this thesis.

⁹³ See 1.4.2.

6.4.3 Further reassessment of previous scholarship concerning issues that arise as the result of interface between ideas presented in different sections of this thesis

Arguments advanced in the preceding chapters have given rise to a number of issues, some of which are presented below in combination. In some cases, there are implications relating to the processes of spiritual practices involving Inwardness, irrespective of content or focus. Other implications arise in relation to the specific focus of attention in contemplative practice. The understanding of Inwardness used in this thesis, relating to Fox's seventeenth century teaching, has been correlated with that of other notable seventeenth century Quakers. Additionally, it has been questioned in relation to contemporary Quaker writings. Different views and understandings of the relationship between the Inward and the Outward have been found in interpretations of each of the following:

- 1) What is accessed through the process of Inwardness with regard to conceptions of God (and thus, potentially, to pre-conditions of experience)? (6.4.3i)
- 2) States of Inwardness as understood according to different faith perspectives and thus *as differently described after the experience of Inwardness*. (6.4.3ii)
- 3) What is understood to expand, or evolve in the process of growth of measure in expansion of consciousness? (6.4.3iii)

6.4.3i Issues relating to inward experience as potentially pre-conditioned

A rewarding examination, might undertake philosophical clarification of how Quakers interpret what they access in worship. Steven Katz argues, contrary to Quaker belief in 'unmediated experience', that:

There are NO pure (i.e. unmediated) experiences. Neither mystical experience nor more ordinary forms of experience give any indication, or any grounds for believing, that they are unmediated.⁹⁴

⁹⁴ Katz, S. *Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis*, p. 26.

The corollary of this statement is that all Quaker description and explanation of experience is dependent on pre-conceptions held as a result of faith positions. Katz continues:

This 'mediated' aspect of all experience seems an inescapable feature of any epistemological inquiry A proper evaluation of this fact leads to the recognition that in order to understand mysticism it is *not* just a matter of studying the reports of the mystic after the experiential event but of acknowledging that the experience itself as well as the form in which it is reported is shaped by concepts that the mystic brings to, and which shape, his experience.⁹⁵

Although this consideration has not been given in-depth analysis in this thesis, the fact of potential pre-conditions of experience has been acknowledged and the need for further examination is accepted. Of particular interest is the comparison and contrast of Katz's position with that of Barnes' view of unanimity between experiences of pure consciousness, whatever the means of attaining the experience. According to Barnes, contemplative practices that seek to remove any imaginative or conceptual content remove the possibility of pre-conditions of experiencing in pure consciousness. Thus, pure consciousness is by definition, devoid of content, including all distractions, volitions, desires and expectations.⁹⁶

Examinations, both conceptual and empirical, would lead to increased understanding of Quaker experience and its interpretation. In turn such research might be used to provide additional perspectives on other contemplative practices, including those of other faiths.

6.4.3ii Description of states of Inwardness

There has always been a degree of ambiguity in Quaker use of terms. Instances of the 'same thing' being described, if not under fully different descriptions, then at the very least by use of a range of concepts, as for example 'light' and 'seed', or 'inward' and 'inner'

⁹⁵ Katz, S. *Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis*, p. 26.

⁹⁶ Barnes in Partridge, C. *Mysticisms*, pp. 291-292, concerning 'Content' and 'experience'. See also Forman, Robert. *The Problem of Pure Consciousness*, (Oxford: O.U.P. 1990).

light. Different terms often lead to differences of description and interpretation. In the case of Inwardness the density and complexity of meanings exacerbates the situation. However, new insights into both processes and states of Inwardness, as interpreted within Quakerism, have been identified above.

Three examples of frameworks that result in differences of description and interpretation are indicated below.

a) In Bailey's (1.3) description of Fox's teaching of Christopresentism, Inwardness is to be understood as a first hand acquaintance with the indwelling Christ. In this instance any description of a state of Inwardness is to do with Christ consciousness and Christ's substantive indwelling, which gives rise to a particularly profound personal experience.

b) In Barclay and Penn's, descriptions of the light of Christ within, which became normative in Quakerism, Inwardness is interpreted as the respectable mystical engagement of Quaker spiritual practice. The 'inward light' leads to awareness of 'sin' (judgement) and the possibility of a life free of transgression and open to gospel living (in relationship with God).

c) In relation not only to liberal developments but also descriptions of non-theists, the significance of Inwardness, as a means to access God, is diminished. A new interpretation of faith and practice has developed and classical theism is, for many Friends, not the primary point of reference for their spiritual life. Thus, it becomes necessary to question the relevance of the earlier meaning and purpose of different approaches to and conceptions of Inwardness for twenty-first century Quakerism.

Each of the above frameworks facilitates a nuanced view of Inwardness which leads to different areas of interest. In the first the significance of Christ's substantive indwelling in individuals as divine inhabitation is specific and primary. In the second, although a Christian interpretation is maintained the inward/inner light is open to interpretation as influential on conscience or will rather than as inhabitation of divinity itself. The third example allows a Universalist position, and the very notion of Inwardness may be open to question.

Thorough examination of the manner in which each of the above frameworks discloses different concerns would allow a comprehensive review of how it is that different descriptions either reflect theoretical positions or demonstrate distinct modes of relating to experience. Such conceptual examination could deepen understanding not only of Quaker identity but also, and perhaps more significantly, of contemporary Friends' understanding of their spiritual practice. The ever-tolerant and increasingly diverse membership of the Religious Society of Friends has led to a lack of clarity about its central tenets.⁹⁷ It is suggested here that further research into descriptions of the meaning and function of Quaker Inwardness in the twenty-first century that builds on this thesis, would have considerable value for the Society in determining its current 'identity'.

6.4.3ii Growth of measure and the process of expansion of consciousness

The understanding of Inwardness, utilized in this thesis and developed in relation to notions of spiritual 'growth' and 'maturity', places emphasis on consciousness: it has relevance for consideration of similar issues described differently. However, within other faith perspectives the understanding, and description, of what it is that develops or grows as spiritual maturity is gained, may differ. For example, Christian notions of 'Trinity' and its full realisation for the individual, are distinctly different from the understanding of 'multiplicity' used in this chapter, which contrasts 'Unity' with 'multiplicity' i.e. the One contrasted with the many.

In the case of the Victorine understanding,⁹⁸ what grows is knowledge and the very object of knowledge is understood to change in tandem. This knowledge includes an understanding of God as Triune. Progression, which is towards a comprehensive understanding, is at the same time toward the more invisible and more abstract aspect of the Godhead. The fact that a Trinitarian perspective is the culmination of the Victorine ascent, as indicated, and that it also features in Augustine's work removes the direct

⁹⁷ Lack of clarity regarding central tenets include, for example, the need to 'turn within', to be still and open to the experience of silence in Meeting for Worship (rather than thinking about problems etc.), and also living Testimony at all times.

⁹⁸ Victorine explanation involves progressive modes of divine knowing. See McGinn, *Essential Writings*, pp. 336–340 and Chase, S. *Contemplation and Compassion: The Victorine Tradition*, (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2003).

relevance of this ultimate stage of progress from Quakerism. It is not, however, without interest in terms of other analyses.

Research into the implications of differentiations as applied to the other traditions, both Eastern and Western, could offer valuable insights into the relationship between Quaker Inwardness and concerns about other perceptions of inwardness. An investigation of this kind would allow for an expanded understanding of the manner in which Quakerism both shares characteristics with other faiths and is distinct from them. Even if some Friends feel that they themselves are already clear as to their own position, other faiths are often less certain as to the central spiritual concerns that are 'Quaker'. A re-evaluation and re-statement of Quaker faith and practice in terms of Inwardness, as related to other faith positions, has the potential to go some way to removing confusion.

Scales, or outlines of the results, of contemplative practice (such as in Tables 6) imply acceptance that there are stages of development on which all individuals' rates of movement may vary. Therefore, however laudable the Quaker aspiration for equality of corporate advancement and shared, or communal, growth it is unlikely that individual differences are not apparent.⁹⁹ Reasons for disparity are likely to be many and varied, but it is beyond the scope of this thesis to enter detailed discussion. Nonetheless, two main reasons are worthy of note: an individual's experience in early life may result in different degrees of spiritual nourishment and preparation. In turn, stages on the 'spiritual journey' are, or may be, distinguishable, as an individual's regularity, frequency and depth of spiritual practice in later life may differ from that of another. Thus, ongoing spiritual nourishment may be greater in some individual's lives than others.

Quakers are not adherents of any single creedal position and the view which shows changed perceptions and experience of living, as in Table 6, is not intended to relate exclusively to any particular faith perspective, or none. There is, however, a structural analogy between this description and Mark McIntosh's work,¹⁰⁰ which characterises the

⁹⁹ As distinct from equality in the eyes of God.

¹⁰⁰ McIntosh, *Mystical Theology*, p. 17. Discussing the mid-thirteenth Century mystic and

paradoxical move between Trinitarian differentiation and Unity in Christian terms.¹⁰¹ McIntosh writes of the ‘eternal flowing and surging: Trinity into Unity into Trinity’.¹⁰² Plainly there are distinct differences here (from the position of this thesis) not least the significance of his explanation of the fecundity and fullness of the Trinitarian differentiation, explained as the Father, the Son and their Holy Spirit. Understanding of ‘multiplicity’, considered in relation to the Table 6, is interpreted as a much more extensive differentiation of life’s variety. It would not, however exclude the Trinitarian explanation. A point of significance that McIntosh’s discussion underlines is that Unity is not an emptiness or known as void. It is rather divine fullness that entails relationality. So there is an eternal flowing and surging: Trinity into Unity into Trinity. The divine unity exists because of mutual abandonment of the Three, and the Three are identified eternally as the Persons they are because of the yearning which draws them into unity’.¹⁰³ A non-theist, and even a non-Christian theist, framework requires considerable re-formulation of the move between multiplicity and unity. It is, nonetheless, entirely relevant to examine the position that emerges, especially with reference to layers of meaning that the term ‘relational fullness’ might represent in any non-Christian context: one possibility for which would be the Vedic understanding of ‘relative’ and ‘Absolute’.¹⁰⁴

As explained by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, Veda is complete knowledge: the knowledge of the full potential of natural law as entailed in God and God’s consciousness.¹⁰⁵ In turn Vedic studies describe, aspire to and, in a uniquely Eastern interpretation, reveal the knowledge and experience available to individuals. Finkelstein

theologian, Hadewijch of Brabant (a Beguine), McIntosh explains the radical relationality of the Trinity. Through this he shows how Hadewijch expressed the view that the individual human soul could be directly united to God. The emphasis, discussed by McIntosh, as in much Christian mysticism, stresses love as the way to the divine union.

¹⁰¹ McIntosh, *Mystical Theology*, p. 179.

¹⁰² McIntosh, *ibid*, p. 175.

¹⁰³ McIntosh, *ibid*, p. 175.

¹⁰⁴ See for example considerations of Samhita of Rishi, Devata and Chhandas (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi *Maharishi Vedic University: Introduction* Maharishi Prakashan. 1995), pp. 154-156. Also Katz, V. *Conversations*, pp. 26-44, with reference to discussion of refinement of perception as Unity consciousness is gained.

¹⁰⁵ Mahesh Yogi, Maharishi, *Maharishi Vedic University*, p. 2-6.

argues that as individual consciousness is known through a genuine and widening change, which is both purifying and transforming, it becomes aligned with the consciousness of God.²¹⁰⁶ Such a process is not the result of commandments or doctrines but of spiritual practice: practice through which encounter, direct communication with and guidance from God, is understood to be attained. This description bears comparison with the spiritual practice which, it is maintained here, Fox introduced to his followers i.e. waiting in stillness and silence with focus to God.

Finkelstein claims further that it is lack of alignment with God that is the cause of problems in life.¹⁰⁷ This interpretation suggests, with reference to Matthew 23:26 concerning ‘cleaning the inside of the cup’, that enduring transformation, problem free living and divine perfection in human beings, is only possible through ongoing spiritual practice. In Vedic studies, and related practices, this is described as personal encounter through transcendental consciousness with God’s consciousness. In Fox’s teaching a parallel process is described as encounter with the Light of God within; this offers an interpretation of purification and transformation which resonates with the proposal that transgression/sin/impurity is, in a sense, dissolved by contact with God, through which conscious awareness expands spontaneously in purity.

Variations within the Quaker membership require questioning of arguments that claim to depict the Society as a whole. The understanding and interpretation of Inwardness utilized in this thesis would therefore be open to further examination in relation to changes of membership patterns, and variations in practices, as they arise. As further changes occur within the Religious Society of Friends both the Conditions and Elements itemized and discussed may warrant review in terms of the *process* of gaining Inwardness; as also the outline of the characteristics of Inwardness in varying *states* of consciousness.

Further empirical study of the significance of Inwardness in present day Quakerism would provide valuable information regarding the way in which contemporary British

¹⁰⁶ Finkelstein, E. ‘Universal Principles of Life expressed in Maharishi Vedic Science and in the Scriptures and Writings of Judaism, Christianity and Islam’, Unpublished Ph. D Thesis Maharishi University of Management, 2005. p. 196.

¹⁰⁷ Finkelstein, ‘Universal Principles...’, p. 196.

Friends perceive their faith and practice and understand outcomes in terms of personal experience. Investigation into a range of different member beliefs and practices would improve understanding of the current membership of the Society.

6.5 Summary and conclusion

Material gathered throughout the thesis has informed and confirmed the view that Inwardness is to be found in the personal, spiritual and mystical components of Quakerism experienced by individual Friends.

In this examination of Inwardness in the faith and practice of the British Quakers, attention has been given to delineating: a) how analysis of texts has informed interpretation and b) the manner in which the methodological approach has supported observations.¹⁰⁸ The use of both devotional and academic texts has provided breadth and depth of perspective to show that Quakerism is not merely, or trivially, experiential in its theology but, more profoundly, that it aligns, in some ways, with other mystical theologies. As discussed, Inwardness as process, as developmental, as having consequences and as having an ultimate stage or state of maturity combine in the formulation of a new approach to Quaker theology.

Examination of the four aspects of Inwardness form the original contribution of this thesis to scholarship and underline the significance of aspects of mysticism in Quaker faith and practice. It is acknowledged that the depths of this process of gaining Inwardness and its results may not be available to all Quaker worshippers for a range of reasons, also that they may be differently described. Nonetheless it is claimed that the practice, as initiated by George Fox in the seventeenth century, has the potential to facilitate a very profound acquaintance with spiritual consciousness and resultant growth in spiritual knowledge and experience. The intention of the thesis is not to categorise Quakerism *per se* but rather to advance discussion within Quaker theory.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁸ See section on methodological approach, 1. 5.

¹⁰³ Dandelion, P (Ed.) *Creation of Quaker Theory: Insider Perspectives* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

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Glossary

Arminianism: A teaching regarding salvation, which rejects the notion of predestination, thus affirming the freedom of the human will, based on the ideas of Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609). See his five Articles of Remonstrance concerning: Salvation, Atonement, Holy Spirit, [Christian] Grace and Scripture.

Attender: A regular attender at Meeting for Worship, who is not a member of the Society of Friends.

Birthright Friend: Term applied to children of Members in earlier years of Quakerism, laid down in 1960.

British Quakers: Those who belong to Britain Yearly Meeting, which is the final “Constitutional Body” of the Society in Britain.

Centring down: Quaker term for a process in which the group of people attending a Meeting for Worship gather into inward silence, and use silence as the basis in which they seek corporately to be open to the leadings of God: a process of gathering together.

Certificates: Authority given to an individual Friend, by a Local Meeting, to take action on behalf of the Society.

Concern: Not to be confused with being concerned. For Quakers ‘a concern’ denotes a divine leading or imperative to action. If this is individually discerned, it must be tested corporately in a religiously valid way within the Religious Society of Friends.

Conversion/conviction: For Fox, a spiritual experience that followed Convincement.

Convincement: ‘Convincement’ is the term most frequently used by Quakers to refer to a transforming experience: a uniquely Quaker enlightenment as the individual is ‘convinced of one’s sin’. It is now a term used to indicate spirit led acceptance of Quaker faith and practice.

Elders: Those people within a Meeting given responsibility for the Spiritual oversight and nourishment of its members and attenders.

Gathered Meeting: A Meeting for Worship in which members and attenders experience together a deep phase of silence. Once individuals have centred down a sense of togetherness in unity in the Inward Light may arise facilitating a gathered meeting.

Gospel living/ Gospel Order: For early Friends Gospel order was reference to the order established by God that exists in every part of creation concerning the right relationship of all things, which mankind is called to uphold.

Inward Light/Light: Distinguished from ‘inner light’. ‘Inward’ implies shining into, whereas ‘inner’ implies dwelling within. The shift from one understanding (inward) to the other (inner) has come into Quaker vocabulary with the growth of liberalism. Inner is now more frequently used. Use of the term light is not a reference to the physical quality of brightness.

Inwardness: A state of self-referring consciousness in which the individual experiences a restful alertness that gives rise to an extended and fully silent calm. This state engages quietened listening to and witnessing of the state of consciousness itself, ‘leaning into’ ‘That of God Within’.

Leadings: Spirit led guidance familiar to Friends.

Liberal Quakerism: Arising following the Manchester Conference of 1895 and the growth in knowledge of the Period–biblical criticism and scientific thought in particular—which affected the Society at large.

Light: see Inward Light (above).

Liturgical observances and practices: Customary public worship performed by a group according to beliefs, customs and traditions.

Manchester Conference (1895): Conference called to address the apparent need to reinvigorate the Religious Society of Friends. (See also: the Quaker Essay Competition).

Measure: Quaker term used to refer to ‘weight’ and ‘depth’ of spiritual knowing and experiencing, expressed in everyday life. In this thesis the understanding of growth of measure is discussed in terms of expansion of consciousness.

Meeting for Worship: A silence-based gathering for religious observance in the manner of Quakers. This Meeting is relatively free of ritual and liturgy but, over time, it has gained a regular form of practice. (See Table 1).

Oneness: The entirety of Wholeness in one single Life. This is known to experience in the seventh state of consciousness (see Table 6) which is Unity consciousness

Openings: Revelations as knowledge, usually personally rather than corporately, received.

Pneumatology: Reference to the study of the Holy Spirit; from two Greek words: πνευμα (*pneuma*, spirit) and λογος (*logos*, teaching about). Pneumatology normally includes study of the person of the Holy Spirit, and the works of the Holy Spirit.

Principle of Credulity: With the absence of any reason to disbelieve it, one should accept what appears to be true. (e.g. If one sees someone walking on water; one should believe it is occurring. Swinburne).

Principle of Testimony: With the absence of any reason to disbelieve then, one should accept that eyewitnesses or believers are telling the truth when they testify to religious experience.

Professors of Religion: During the early days of Quakerism the ministers were academic, university trained theologians, hence the term ‘professors’. Quakers were not admitted to university because of their refusal to swear oaths. They rejected the need for University training of religious leaders.

Publishers of Truth: Quakers were initially concerned to be and called themselves ‘Friends of the Truth’—thus they knew themselves as publishers of the Truth as they perceived it. The Publishers of Truth were itinerant Friends who had a gift to spread the ministry of the Quaker message.

Quakerism: The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) dates from the mid-17th Century. Members were termed Quakers derisively because of their tendency to quake/shake during worship. The terms Quaker and Friend are interchangeable.

Quaker Essay competition (2010): See also the Manchester Conference of 1895 in relation to which the first Quaker Essay competition was initiated. In 2009 a similar exercise was organised to aid examination of the present needs of the Religious Society of Friends in Britain.

Quaker Faith and Practice (QFP): The book of discipline of the Religious Society of Friends in Britain: A compilation of writings from the present and previous generations deemed to encapsulate the Society’s faith and practice.

Quaker Testimony: Historic witness in life in, for example, Peace. Now including, Truth, Equality, Social Responsibility. In the first days of Quakerism the Witness was to God in the whole of life.

Quietism: An 18th century practice of inward-looking faith and practice. Not exclusively Quaker but the term is used to refer to a development within Quakerism in this period.

Ranters: One of the Sects to arise during the Civil War in England. Some early Quakers were originally Ranters.

Right ordering: A term that refers to the consistency of accumulated experience and insights of the Society, recorded within *Quaker Faith and Practice*.

Sacraments/Sacramental living: Christian life permeated and marked by the liturgy and the sacraments of the church. However, Quaker understanding is that, as all of life is holy, there is no need for separate sacraments; rather all life is to be lived as sacred.

Sects: As for example Ranters and Seekers.

Seed: A metaphor used by Quakers to indicate the inner kernel of God within, the ‘Inward Light of Christ’ that facilitates growth.

Seekers: A small group of dissenters, contemporary with the growth of Quakerism, who met in ‘silent waiting’.

Sola-Gratia Mysticism: The Five Solas are five Latin phrases that emerged during the Protestant Reformation and summarize the Reformers' basic theological beliefs in

contradistinction to the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church of the day. The Latin word *sola* means "alone" or "only" in English. The five *solas* articulated five fundamental beliefs of the Protestant Reformation, pillars which the Reformers believed to be essentials of the Christian life and practice. All five implicitly rejected or countered the teachings of the then-dominant Catholic Church, which had in the reformers' mind usurped divine attributes or qualities for the Church and its hierarchy, especially its head, the pope. They are: 1 Sola scriptura ("by Scripture alone"), 2 Sola fide ("by faith alone"), 3 Sola gratia ("by grace alone"), 4 Solus Christus or Solo Christo ("Christ alone" or "through Christ alone"), 5 Soli Deo gloria ("glory to God alone").

Spiritual Religion/ Mystical Religion: Religion based on spirituality and spiritual practice rather than dogma and liturgical practice.

The Swarthmore Lecture Series, (1908–to present): An annual lecture series which ‘has a twofold purpose; first, to interpret further to members of the Society of Friends their message and mission; and, secondly, to bring before the public the spirit, the aims and fundamental principles of the Friends.’ (London: Quaker Books).

Terminus Technicus: Specialised language of the field—in this case religion and theology.

Threshing: A Quaker term for vigorous consideration of complex and challenging issues

Universalist/Universalism: This term can be understood in three ways. a) As referring to the universal saving will of God’ (McGrath, p. 357) and or b) As a form of inclusivism in which it is acknowledged that although ‘Christianity may be regarded as the normative revelation of God, salvation is nonetheless possible for others who belong to other traditions’ and finally c) As ‘*pluralism*, which holds that all religious traditions ... are equally valid paths to the same core religious reality’ (McGrath, p. 457).

Universal Consciousness: That consciousness, by which existence breathes life, giving everything in creation its own awareness of itself and its surroundings, allowing unbounded alertness to permeate that which lives. (Maharishi Vedic University, 1994).

Veda: Veda means knowledge; constituted by Mantras (structure) and Brahmanas (function) of the knowledge entailed in the Natural Law that organises order and promotes the processes of creation and evolution. (Maharishi Vedic University, 1994).

Wholeness: the term implies a both/and rather than an either/or relation. This is reference to Life itself implying Life as both Absolute, uncreated and unmanifest (possibly what scientists term ‘the void that is not nothing’), and the created world, relative and manifest.

Appendix 1 Thomas Kelly (1893-1941) on Inwardness

Introduction

Thomas Kelly was an American Friend of the liberal period, whose writings have been influential on subsequent Quaker theologians, and many ‘every-day’, practising members of the Religious Society of Friends in Britain. This appendix outlines the manner in which Kelly contributes to an understanding of Inwardness in relation to both spiritual growth and spiritual maturity.

A) Devotional theology

Thomas Kelly’s own words introduce his deep knowing of what he termed the inner ‘sanctuary of the soul’. He wrote:

Let us explore together the secret of a deeper devotion, a more subterranean sanctuary of the soul, where the Light Within never fades, but burns a perpetual Flame, where the wells of living water of divine revelation rise up continuously, day by day and hour by hour, steady and transfiguring.¹

Kelly urged his readers to yield to the Inward Living Christ by means of ‘practice of inward orientation, inward worship and listening’.² He maintained that Practice comes first in religion, not theory or dogma’:

A practicing Christian must above all be one who practices the perpetual return of the soul into the inner sanctuary, who brings the world into its Light and rejudges it, who brings the Light into the World with all its turmoil and its fitfulness and recreates it (after the patterns seen on the Mount).³

Kelly outlined, from his experience, the means by which an individual can move through stages in initial recognition of God, into attunement with God’s will and purpose and, ultimately, become a ‘participant’ in life with God, such that he or she can ‘live in

¹ Kelly, T *A Testament of Devotion* (New York: Harper 1941), p. 5.

² Kelly, *Testament*, p. 6.

³ Kelly, *Testament*, p. 8.

guidance'.⁴ The teaching, of the Master, Jesus, according to Kelly is meant for everyone, it is not for special 'interior souls'; it is a 'universal obligation'.⁵

Four aspects of Kelly's theology disclose the depth of his spiritual knowing and its contribution to an understanding of Inwardness. These are:

- God and reality of the spiritual world
- The importance and nature of spiritual practice
- Awakening and development of spiritual awareness
- Growth into spiritual maturity.

B God and reality of the spiritual world

Arguments for the importance of Inwardness in spiritual practice rest, for Kelly, on a satisfactory understanding that God is real. In his discussion of this question Kelly uses arguments from analogy, authority, and causation. Also, and more important for the purpose of this thesis, he draws on evidence from experience.

Accepting all the reasons that may seem to offer plausible justification for an understanding of God and the Reality of the Spiritual World, the only convincing approach for Kelly was through 'the vividness and vitality which some of these views develop in ourselves by an inner experience'.⁶ Statements concerning experience are offered by Kelly in rational manner to provide 'evidence' for interpreting the importance of Inwardness.

C The importance and nature of spiritual practice

For Kelly 'the springs and sources of dynamic, creative living lie not in the environmental drives and thrusts outside us but deep within us is the meeting place with God'.⁷ He urged the development of 'continuous inner mental habits pursued through

⁴ Kelly, *Testament*, p. 100.

⁵ Kelly, *Testament*, 6. Kelly's interest in Eastern Philosophy is recorded in Douglas Steere's biographical memoir, *Testament*, pp. 103-127. There is an indication here that 'the source' to which Kelly appeals allows a universalised interpretation of spiritual reality.

⁶ Kelly, *Reality*, p. 24.

⁷ Kelly, *Reality*, p. 34.

years'.⁸ Further, he explained inner practice itself and also an understanding of 'developing the habit of carrying on mental life at two levels.'⁹

In *Reality*, Kelly wrote about spiritual practice in terms of prayer turned inward; this is also the case in *Testimony*, but in the latter text he also used the term 'technique'. He explained that '[t]here is no new technique for entrance upon this stage where the soul in its deeper levels is continuously at Home in Him. The processes of inward prayer do not grow more complex but more simple'. His recommendation, like that of the Benedictine monk, John Main, (who was like Kelly influenced by Eastern meditation and spiritual practice,¹⁰) concerns inward repetition of a single phrase or word. This may start with verbal repetition but soon sinks to a quieter level 'as habitual divine orientation', says Kelly¹¹ describing this sequence in stages of practice:¹²

- a) In the early weeks we begin with simple whispered word/s
- b) Repeat it/them inwardly, over and over again
- c) If you [the practitioner] wander, return and begin again
- d) If you [the practitioner] find, after a time these attitudes [of humble bowing before Him, ... lifting high your whole being before Him, ... of amazement and marvel at His transcendent glory, ... of self abandonment, ...] become diffused and vague, no longer firm, then return to verbalization and thus restore their solidity.

He explained that 'the conscious cooperation of the surface level [of consciousness] is needed at first, before prayer sinks to the second level as habitual divine orientation'. Then it is possible:

- e) [By] longer discipline ... [to] establish ... unworded orientation of all oneself (?) about Him who is the Focus.

For Kelly, this was the spiritual practice that facilitates a move **from** outwardly-turned, multi-focused attention (see Figure 1) **to** inwardly-turned single focused attention (see Figure 2). What Kelly terms 'infused prayer'¹³ develops over time and the human initiative acquiesces.

The significance of Kelly's analysis is that he provides a relatively unique account (within Quakerism) of the personal experience of spiritual practice and development. The

⁸ Kelly, *Reality*, p. 34.

⁹ Kelly, *Reality*, p. 35.

¹⁰ Main, J. *Door to Silence* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2006) 'the fidelity of the mantra' p. ix and 'how to meditate, p. xvi.

¹¹ Kelly, *Testament*, p. 16.

¹² See also chapter 1, section 1.5.2, Laird

¹³ Kelly *Testament*, p. 18, *Reality*, p. 41-43. Also Ericjohn, T. *The Point of Origin: The evolution of Religious Consciousness* (Xlibris Corp), p.100-101 on Augustine 'infused contemplation

usefulness of this account to understanding Quaker practice is not that he generalises from the particular (his own experience) to the general (a possibility for all Friends), but rather that he confirms the results of a known technique from his experience within practical Quakerism.

D The awakening and development of spiritual consciousness

Kelly¹⁴ does not go into detail about how the technique of mental repetition facilitates the movement to silent awareness in personally known transcendental consciousness.¹⁵ Finkelstein however, referring to the practice of Transcendental Meditation, explains that:

The process of turning the mind within to experience the transcendental, absolute Being takes place by learning how to naturally experience increasingly subtle states of thought until even the subtlest state of mental activity is transcended and our consciousness arrives at the ‘source of thought’, which is the absolute state of Being.¹⁶

He continues: ‘The way to contact the Divine is for the human mind to effortlessly transcend the space-time boundaries of creation and experience the transcendental light of God within’.¹⁷

Even without providing this detail of explanation regarding technique of spiritual practice using mental repetition Kelly, like Main, assumes and assents to the understanding that this technique is as a means to knowing ‘the silence which is the source of sound’ (Kelly). It is a ‘door to silence’ (Main). Main suggests that this offers ‘access

¹⁴ John Main also neglects any full explanation.

¹⁵ For fuller explanation see Hamby, C. ‘When the mind descends to the heart: formulaic prayer and mantra meditation’ in *Faith Initiative*, 19, (2008), pp. 41-45.

¹⁶ Finkelstein, E. *Universal Principles of Life* (Unpublished Ph. D thesis, Maharishi University of Management 2005). See Section 4 on the Technology of Transcending and the fine mechanics of experiencing Divinity.

¹⁷ See also section 6, unanimity thesis of Barnes (section 6.4.3.i) and Chatterjee, p. 171.

to the universal source in the oneness of spirit'.¹⁸ Similar to the process of mantra meditation the mind simply lets go of distractions.¹⁹ Vernon Katz explains that:

Through regular repetition of the process of transcending [attaining pure silence and stillness of consciousness], the awareness becomes accustomed to maintaining itself in its 'pure' state as the subject, or Self, so that, even when confronted with the objects of experience, it is able to register them without being overshadowed and limited by them. The dignity of the knower is not overthrown by what he knows; the unbounded awareness of the perceiver is not lost in the boundaries of perception; silence is not lost in the midst of activity.²⁰

As Kelly expresses it two levels of consciousness are experienced simultaneously rather than successively. In Fox's terms the practice described above is a means to;

Be still and cool in thy own mind and spirit from thy own thoughts [such that] thou wilt feel the principle of God to turn thy mind to the Lord God, whereby thou will feel his strength and power from whence life comes, to allay all tempests, against blustering and storms. That is it which mounds up into patience, into innocence, into soberness, into stayedness, into quietness, up to God, with his power.²¹

This is an example of Fox's straightforward descriptions of mystical consciousness. Of importance is the development of an ongoing state of experiencing, to be distinguished from 'having experiences'.

Mark McIntosh utilises and endorses Bernard McGinn's distinction between 'having experiences' however intense and exalted and a process of growth in which mystical consciousness is an important part of all experiencing. He argues that the use of the term 'mystical experience' is unhelpful in placing emphasis in the wrong place such as in altered states, visions, raptures etc. rather than in a broader cognitional context of 'mind-*fullness*' and 'meaning-*fullness*'.²² He claims that:

Mystical consciousness is the impression in human existence of infinite coherence, expressivity and meaning, namely the trinitarian life of God. Mysticism bears this

¹⁸ Main, *Door*, p. 6.

¹⁹ The term *mantra* is used in Vedic, and other Eastern, spiritual practices; the term *formula* was used in early Christianity by Cassian; 'arrow prayers' by Augustine and the term *prayer word* is used by the John Main's School of Meditation. All serve a similar function in spiritual practice.

²⁰ Katz, V., *Conversations with Maharishi* (Fairfield, Iowa: MUM Press, 2011), p. 21.

²¹ *QFP*, Fox 2.18.

²² McIntosh, M. *Mystical Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell), p. 32.

speech of God, God-talk, theo-logy, within it and is therefore inherently theologically fruitful.²³

For all Quakers, and especially modern-day Quakers, the God talk employed is often framed outside the known categories of classical, systematic theology.

It takes time, according to Kelly, to learn that the life of outward affairs can and will become subordinated to the inner life. It is the individual's choice and discipline that can bring about spiritual growth, growth of measure in Quaker terms, and ultimately spiritual maturity.

E Growth into spiritual maturity

Implicit in Kelly's writing is reference to the relationship between the spiritual integrity of experiential religion and, in turn, theology. McIntosh considers the related debate concerning 'the intrinsic connection between proper theological vision and spiritual healing and maturation.'²⁴ He (McIntosh) indicates fluctuations, in different historical periods, of the relative priority of spirituality over theology and the reverse. However, he reminds us that:

Even for thinkers sympathetic to the role of spiritual conversion in theology, this privileging of the 'interior' has made it difficult to recover an authentic sense of the genuinely divine Other when interpreting Christian spirituality ... development[s] in late modernity ... have reopened the modern self to a relational interpretation of its constitution that need *not* threaten to reduce every theological insight to an application of anthropology.²⁵

Kelly did not fall into the trap of divorcing the spiritual transformation of the seeker from the traditions of interpretation in which it occurs, nor did he reduce his theological expressions solely to anthropological ones. His perspective was Christian in general and

²³ McIntosh, M. *Mystical Theology*, p. 32.

²⁴ McIntosh, M. 'Theology and Spirituality' in Ford, D and Muers, R. (eds.) *The Modern Theologians* (Oxford: Blackwell 2005).

²⁵ McIntosh, *The Modern Theologians*, p. 394.

Quaker in particular. Thus, in disclosing spiritual maturity, he acknowledged the relevance of a Christian perspective in which Christ is known as living in and through humankind.

For Kelly the experience of mature spirituality in which the Reality of God is ever present is found in the experience of 'infused prayer'; his powerful experience is situated within his Quaker theology i.e. experiential theology. Yet comprehensive knowing in spiritual maturity is not merely a type or mode of prayer. According to Kelly, on the one hand there is no longer alternating experience *between* the transcendental experience of reality within and beyond everyday living, *and* engagement with the relatively changing aspects of life. Thus mature spirituality is a state of being and of living, in which all things are freshly known, seen anew and lived differently.

For Kelly, it seems as though all experiencing becomes suffused with the reality of 'hidden unity' or Oneness. This is known as profoundly different from merely having an intimation of Oneness through religious faith, hope or belief, or of adhering to a life that follows a 'pattern'. The result is a new way of being and of living, according to Kelly. When there is porosity between time and Eternity, between human life and the Divine Presence:

We know increasingly that, whether elation or depression fills the upper levels of our conscious life, down deep within is real bondedness of our life with God's life that is an essential situation, that does not come and go with fluctuating states of consciousness, that God is a persuading goodness moving us home to Himself. ²⁶

Kelly intimates that 'spiritual maturity is not tested by the frequency of our mystical moments of exaltation'.²⁷ He does not dismiss the significance of mystical knowing, but he emphasises that mature spirituality is to be lived in the world of action and deeds for the benefit of all humankind. It is for this reason that his exemplars, of 'God-possessed channels'²⁸ includes John Woolman.²⁹ It is also worthy of note that this understanding is compatible with the Victorine mapping of an integrated life. 'Victorine maps of the spiritual journey lead the awakened soul through the created world, into the self, beyond

²⁶ Kelly, *Promise*, p. 92.

²⁷ Kelly, *Promise*, p. 93.

²⁸ Kelly, *Promise*, p. 96, see also chapter 4.

²⁹ Kelly, *Testament*, p. 93-94.

the self into God, and from God back into the world where one encounters both the mystery behind the real and ultimate meaning in community, connection, and relation.’³⁰

If Kelly’s description of different levels of awareness as alternating experience is accurate and shareable among others of similar experience then, there is an interesting feature of Quaker theology to be re-visited and potentially revised.³¹ This relates to the selection of language within the evolving tradition of modern day Quakers. Kelly’s suggestion that the individual’s awareness can position itself in two different modes, or states: one, silent, and the other, active, demands a further examination of what spiritual growth and spiritual maturity might encompass, and of the modes of describing and re-figuring developments in experiential knowledge.

Thomas Kelly’s thinking is inspiring and enlivening, it fulfils the promise of religious practice acknowledging that, ‘Religion as a dull habit is not that for which Christ lived and died’.³² He shows how Quakerism can be spiritually exciting.

³⁰ Chase, *Contemplation and compassion*, p. 151.

³¹ See chapter 2 and 3.

³² Kelly, *Testament*, p. 27.

