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NO APOLOGY REQUIRED: QUAKER FRAGMENTATION AND THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF A UNIFIED CONFESSIONAL APOLOGIA

DAVID L. JOHNS

INTRODUCTION

A Quaker *Apology* for our time is both impossible and unnecessary, at least in the spirit of the *Apology* that comes immediately to mind when we say, “Apology.”

Robert Barclay’s work has taken on mythic proportions in the Religious Society of Friends, if for no other reason than that it has no peer in the wider Quaker theological tradition. A number of other substantial works were published in the early decades of the movement by Isaac Penington, William Penn, Elizabeth Bathurst, and others. But nothing has paralleled the longevity and wide-spread impact of this particular book. Whether out of appreciation or hubris, others have fancied writing its sequel. In 2007, Patricia Williams’s *Quakerism: a Theology for Our Time* was heralded by the publisher as “the first substantial work of Quaker theology since Robert Barclay’s *Apology* of 1676.”¹ While her work has some merit, it is disappointing on several levels, not the least of which is in its lack of familiarity with subsequent theological work and its inability to dialog creatively with contemporary Quakerism.² As we know, many Quaker theological projects have not been as ambitious as Barclay’s; however, important theological engagement has been and continues to be published, both in book length treatments, university theses, and in journals such as *Quaker Religious Thought*, *Quaker Studies*, *Friends’ Quarterly*, and *Quaker Theology*.

To write something akin to the *Apology* is a project besieged on several fronts. As Quaker theologians and Quakers interested in theology, there are other projects that require attention. Secondly, rather than conclude that Quaker theological reflection is impossible or that it has come to an end, I will outline what I believe is possible

and necessary as indicated in some directions I am pursuing in my own work.

PART I: NO APOLOGY REQUIRED

Generally speaking, an apology can be developed along two trajectories. These are not mutually exclusive but may be differentiated as a matter of emphasis and for explanation. The first is an apology as *a defense of, in favor of, or for a particular faith or a particular view*. Most theological dictionaries or encyclopedias offer some variation on this definition as the primary function of an apology or the practice of apologetics. A second trajectory, however, that may be developed is an apology as *an articulation of the merits and or intelligibility of a particular faith or particular view in a specific context*. In other words, its intention may be the conviction of the unconvinced, or it may be simply to establish intellectual credibility and to relate its claims in terms comprehensible to a contemporary audience. In either case, the perceived urgency of such an undertaking increases when there are significant shifts in the cultural and intellectual landscape which, whether intentional or not, present a challenge to that faith.

In the *broadest sense*, every act of proclamation functions thusly, that is, as an apology, as an effort to bring a Christian vision into vigorous conversation with and within the present context. “It is theology that seeks to express itself in contextual terms so that the gospel will be heard and understood.”³ Tillich stated this clearly and directly: “...systematic theology is ‘answering theology.’ It must answer the questions implied in the general human and the special historical situation. Apologetics, therefore, is an omnipresent element and not a special section of systematic theology.” Apologetics is the “art of answering.”⁴ In the more *restricted and literal sense*, an apology is a defense of a view point against something else, whether that something else is real or whether it is imagined.

This enterprise is apparent in the biblical texts. Paul’s discussion with the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers at the Areopagus is a classic New Testament example (Acts 17), as is the book of Hebrews. Paul placed the emerging Jesus movement in a contextual conversation arguing for its intelligibility within the wider Greco-Roman philosophical traditions, while the writer of Hebrews made sense of the emerging movement within Jewish theological categories. Several

patristic writers directed their attention to this work: Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Irenaeus, Jerome, in particular. Additionally, every student of philosophy or theology has pondered the arguments for the existence of God advocated by Anselm of Canterbury or the five-ways of Thomas Aquinas. Each of these writers was, in his specific context, arguing for Christianity's intelligibility and relevance or defending it against critics.

In the late 20th century, apologetics was often associated with conservative and fundamentalist Protestantism: Josh McDowell, Norman Geisler, John Warwick Montgomery, Francis Schaeffer, C.S. Lewis. Each defended traditional Christian belief's reasonableness against some contender, whether the contender was logical positivism, claims of scientific materialism, or historical relativity, or, more recently, against the increasingly public challenges by atheists.

However, as noted in connection to Tillich, correlational theological approaches also function apologetically, and these are frequently associated with mainline, liberal, and some Roman Catholic theological systems. For example, when Schleiermacher wrote to religion's cultured despisers, he was defending the reasonableness of faith by situating it within and interpreting it through intellectual and affective categories accessible to his readers. A similar dynamic is in play in Gordon Kaufman, Catherine Keller, Douglas John Hall, in process theologians such as Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki and John Cobb, and in John Polkinghorne's vigorous engagement of theology with the natural sciences.

Apologies of either type, however, are directed generally to those outside the particular faith community or who are not fully convinced, at least initially. Yet, apologies clearly provide encouragement and intellectual support to those inside inside the particular community of faith. Barclay's work was designed initially, or so it seems, to function principally as the first, that is, to defend the movement from misunderstanding and to situate it as a corrective to dominant theologies of his time (an "explanation and vindication"). In his preface to clergy, he writes:

Unto you these following propositions are offered; in which, they being read and considered in the fear of the Lord, you may perceive that simple, naked truth, which man by his wisdom hath rendered so obscure and mysterious, that the world is even burthened with the great and voluminous tractates which are made about it, and by their vain jangling and commentaries, by

which it is rendered a hundred-fold more dark and intricate than of itself it is: which great learning, (so accounted of,) to wit, your *school-divinity*, (which taketh up almost a man's whole life-time to learn,) brings not a whit nearer to God, neither makes any man less wicked, or more righteous than he was.

Therefore hath God laid aside the wise and learned, and the disputers of this world; and hath chosen a few despicable and unlearned instruments, (as to letter-learning,) as he did fishermen of old, to publish his pure and naked *truth*, and to free it of those mists and fogs wherewith the *clergy* hath clouded it, that the people might admire and maintain them. And among several others, whom God hath chosen to make known these things, (seeing I also have received, in measure, grace to be a dispenser of the same Gospel,) it seemed good unto me, according to my duty, to offer unto you these *propositions*; which, though short, yet are weighty, comprehending much, and declaring what the true ground of knowledge is, even of that knowledge which leads to *Life Eternal*; which is here witnessed of, and the testimony thereof left unto the *Light of Christ* in all your consciences.⁵

Barclay here refers to “truth” and “true” three times, he accuses clergy of obfuscating the simple truth of God out of vanity, and he denounces formal theological formation as incapable of assuring spiritual maturity. He elevates his fellow Quakers as being contemporary apostles, and announces his own obligation to correct his readers’ theological misunderstanding. Without a doubt, Barclay aims to persuade; he is missing only a reference to John 20:31, “I write these things to you that you might believe.”

There are significant difficulties in pursuing an (A)apology in this spirit. I will delineate two. The first is internal to the Religious Society of Friends itself; the second concerns the wider cultural context.

Internal Challenges

For an apologetic to function more or less effectively, particularly an apologetic of the defense type that Barclay articulates, one needs a reasonably identifiable group on whose behalf one is arguing, and one requires something against which the group is being defended.

Early Quakerism was not a monolith; this is well understood. Diversity and dissent were present long before the 19th century separations. However, in our own era it has become increasingly difficult to identify any particular religious group as Quakerism. I will stop short of arguing that Quakerism does not exist. Of course it exists in monthly and yearly meetings and other institutional agencies, not to mention in the minds and practices of individuals. However, apart from the most local and most restrictively focused collective, it does not exist as a sufficient unity for which one might offer a defense or into which one might catechize. Maurice Creasey noted that Friends lacked a “widely shared sense of purpose, a common vision of what the Society of Friends exists to be and to do.” This state was not, in his view, a “glory and strength” of Quakerism. In fact, various projects and conversations concerning mission, ministry and renewal had little meaning or value “unless [they] proceed...from a clear and uniting vision of the Society’s vocation.” Friends are not as diverse as they are fragmented. Creasey voiced over forty years ago the exasperation still felt today: “Why should we encourage people to come into our fellowship unless we are pretty clear as to its nature and purpose?”⁶

The challenges of articulating a sufficient and reasonably coherent Quaker-identity is apparent in the sometimes contentious and strained relationship between yearly meetings and their member monthly meetings. It is particularly evident, for example, in Friends United Meeting, which has for years struggled with a reason for its own existence and with how to express the identity and vision of the Religious Society of Friends in a manner acceptable to its constituent members.⁷

Quakerism, as it were, dies the death of a thousand qualifications when one tries to describe it. Nearly every assertion of a characteristic or a belief or a commonality may be qualified with the statement, “Yes, but there are other Friends who...” Quakerism *is*, so it seems, what Quakers *do* and Quakers do whatever they like. This might be the pinnacle of religious freedom, or it may be the end of the movement—perhaps it is both. To the degree, however, that this explication bears any resemblance to reality, an apology in the spirit of the *Apology* is not possible.

Cultural Challenges

I have stated that for an apologetic to function more or less effectively, particularly an apologetic of the defense type that Barclay articulates, one needs a reasonably identifiable group on whose behalf one is arguing. I am suggesting that this is problematic in the case of Friends. But secondly, I noted also that one requires something against which the group is being defended or over-against the group is being situated.

Consider that Barclay wrote within not only a predominantly Christian context, but a particularly Puritan one. Clearly, this predominance was not absolute nor without its own diversity, but it was significant. Barclay, to some degree, structured his *Apology* upon and in response to Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* and the Westminster Confession of Faith. It was reasonable to do so. Such was *the* religious context against which to evaluate one's own thinking and against which to push.

Religiously speaking, in the western world it would be difficult to name something in our present era that exists so dominantly. Consequently, to whom and for whom and within what do we formulate an apologia? Against what or whom must Friends defend themselves? Secularism, or religious indifference? Perhaps. Zealous scientific materialism, or religious triviality? Possibly. Consumerism? Militarism? Absolutisms? Any of these may be seen as influences, or even as ultimate concerns. However, it is unlikely that any has the degree of cultural dominance equal to the Puritanism in which Barclay situated his own work, and most of these would require a very different kind of response than is evident in the *Apology* or any of its offspring.

Thus: no *Apology* required. An apology in the spirit of the *Apology* is neither necessary, nor is it possible.

PART II: WHAT IS REQUIRED?

Having said this, I want to make it clear that interesting and useful theological work is possible within the Religious Society of Friends at this time, even if that is not the creation of an apology (in the spirit of the *Apology*) for the 21st century. It may be less ambitious than Barclay's, in one sense, but it can be important and vital for our own

time if we accept its challenges and eschew the self-congratulation that is a particular Quaker temptation.

I am finding the work of Maurice Creasey and Harold Loukes to be enormously helpful in my (re)visioning of Quakerism, and their influence will be evident in the following remarks. Creasey was correct in his assessment of the philosophic and linguistic error of early Friends. This has set Friends along a trajectory that is theologically unhelpful and, at worst, one that perpetuates a sectarianism resistant to the *other* and resistant to a full appreciation of created reality. Loukes, likewise, understood well that Quakerism is unintelligible apart from the wider Christian movement. The Religious Society of Friends does not have a life of its own and should not. In fact, Friends are a corrective, and ought not to exist beyond their usefulness to the Church catholic. For Quakerism to defend itself (as in an Apology) might miss the point of its own existence.

Whereas some liberal Friends argue for a *post-Christian Quakerism*, both Creasey and Loukes challenge them as completely inverting the situation. Following their lead, I am arguing in favor of a *post-Quaker Christianity*, one wherein Quakerism is free to let go of itself and allow its vision to animate the entire Church catholic, rather than to defend a peculiar sectarian collective.

There are many themes, I would surmise, that might be pursued and clarified in our theological work. Since many of them are widely understood as being necessary, however, I shall not elaborate by expounding upon the Holy Spirit, importance of the gathered community, the role of experience in knowing, the testimonies, and so forth.⁸

I will outline very briefly *two general emphases* and *two specific issues* that are in my view are essential and will be the focus of my own theological efforts. These were not fundamental to Barclay's *Apology*; nevertheless, it is my contention that they do need to be a principal focus of contemporary Quaker theological work.

Ecumenicity (1st Emphasis)

The first is ecumenicity. Quakerism does not exist on its own; it did not come into existence on its own, and has no future apart from the future of other religious bodies. As I have argued elsewhere, Quaker beginnings were not based upon unmediated, direct revelation, but

were connected to tradition, history, and a fresh understanding of already present realities.⁹ Loukes elaborates by stating that religion comes “as all our life does, from others: from the language we learn, the way of behavior we unquestionably acquire, the habits of thought which we accept as inevitably as we wear our clothes. Our most intimate and personal religious experience takes its shape from the beliefs and attitude of those among whom we are born. Even at the greatest moments of dynamic religious movement, the work of tradition is powerful, for the most original criticism takes its form from what it criticizes and cannot be understood without it.”¹⁰ This is so with the Religious Society of Friends, as well.

To a significant degree, Quaker identity has been one of contrast and critique. It is not the whole of the gospel, “but a commentary on it and an emphasis within it.”¹¹ This illustrates all the more the importance of the *other* for Friends. Stated somewhat differently: just as atheism cannot exist without theism, so Quakerism exists, as von Hügel noted, only because “...this real world has not always been, has at no time predominately been, a Quaker world.”¹²

More importantly, the disestablishment of Christendom has permitted various family groups within the Christian tradition to acknowledge areas of commonality and move away from the nuanced specificity of communal separatism.¹³

Quakers, with varying degrees of enthusiasm, participate in local, national, and international ecumenical organizations. Such interactions have the potential of affecting all participants, if all are open to discerning the measure of grace present in the *other*. Participants may bear witness to aspects of truth, holding in trust elements of the Church catholic’s historic faith and practice. But this runs more than one direction. For Friends to be ecumenical with integrity, they need to be open to receiving the witness, critique, and, perhaps correction of others, as well as sharing their specific vision of religious truth.¹⁴

It has long concerned me that Quaker rhetoric sometimes takes a form that is both spiritually arrogant and dismissive of the legitimacy of the wider religious world. Popular categories of Quaker self-description regard the religious experiences and worship practices of others as implicitly inferior: what Quakerism offers is *genuine, authentic* in contrast to *imitation, inauthentic*; Quaker practices are *meaningful* versus the *meaningless* or *rote* practices of others; Friends focus on the *inward* and living spirit rather than the *outward* dead letter. Quaker worship and sacramental practice is of the *substance*,

not the *shadow* of other practices.¹⁵ On one hand, the enthusiasm of Friends evident in such characterizations is admirable; on the other hand, it is inexcusably naïve. It betrays a lack of deep encounter with the religious *other*, an unreflective understanding of the concept of “meaning,” and a limited vision of the magnitude of God.

As Harold Loukes states it, “We feel we have one or two things to say and that may be true: but do we know the language of God well enough to hear all that he has to say?”¹⁶ In listening deeply to the expressions of spiritual meaningfulness experienced in non-Quaker fashion, Friends might better discern their role in the larger whole rather than rhetorically posit themselves as the apex of spiritual evolution.

Global (2nd Emphasis)

The second emphasis necessary for contemporary Quaker theology is an interaction with the global manifestation of Quakerism. The demographics of Christianity in general have been shifting for the past half-century. This is as true for Quakers as it is for Roman Catholics, Pentecostals, and Anglicans. It is well known that Friends in the two-thirds world outnumber those in the United States and England, and the rate of expansion by these Friends counteracts the rate of decline among early geographic strongholds of the movement. There have been published works about specific missionaries and particular groups of Friends in specific locations (India, China, and so on), but I am not aware of a serious treatment of or theological interaction with global Quakerism. An interesting project would be an internationally collaborative one, where Friends thinkers not only state their respective visions, but where they actually work together on a constructive statement—a consensus response to a specific theological or social question. This would be ambitious, but the foundation for this work is underway, in an important sense, in the work of Friends World Committee for Consultation/Comité Mundial de Consulta de los Amigos.¹⁷

How are North American and British Quakers formed by Guatemalan, Bolivian, and Kenyan Friends? Is there openness for a mutual formation? Is the Christology of Quakers in the United States wrestling with and challenged by Honduran Quakers? Are Kenyan Quaker worship practices considered and explored in Britain Yearly Meeting? These questions are not as easily answered as they may seem.

Global Quakerism is for some an unspoken embarrassment. It is a sign of Quaker success, but this success is the result of missionary effort, and there continue to be misgivings about the imperialism and religious colonialization of such activity. Additionally, it can be troubling for some Friends because, by and large, Quakers outside North America and western Europe are theologically and socially conservative with an orthodoxy rivaling any Gurneyite from the American heartland.

Nevertheless, while large portions of the Religious Society of Friends suffer substantial numerical decline and a crisis of identity, other groups of Quakers are thriving. Yet, the global Friends reality is more than the numerical salvation of Quakerism; it may well reintroduce the Religious Society to the spiritual vibrancy and prophetic witness of the early generations of the movement.

In addition to these two emphases—ecumenism and the global reality of Friends—I believe further elements are necessary in any of our contemporary theological efforts. I shall mention very briefly two specific issues in my own work, which suggest further examples of the work that is to be done, even if an *Apology* is not a viable option.

A. Dualism at the Heart of Quaker Thinking (Sacraments and Christology, Mediated Reality)¹⁸

The literature of early Friends, their manner of expression, and their perspective on reality is replete with dualism, with a spiritualization of reality. Whether this emerged as a result of the philosophical influence of Descartes, whose *Discourse on the Method* (1637) was published only fifteen years prior to Fox's Pendle Hill experience, or whether it was principally mined from the dualisms of the Johannine texts, is not clear. However, what is clear, according to Maurice Creasey, is that "...particularly in the hands of Barclay...Quakerism became wedded to a prevalent and quasi-Cartesian dualism and, as a consequence, set its feet upon paths which, for many a year, led it into the barren places of quietism and formalism."¹⁹

I am convinced this dualism has affected and continues to affect Friends' theological efforts. As I have stated elsewhere, "[This] spiritualization...is inexorably linked to a dualistic view of existence: shadow and substance; form and reality; cultic practice and 'the real thing'; mediated and unmediated; inner and outer. This perspective creates difficulties with regard to worship, to liturgical practices, to Christology, to theological anthropology, to language, to human imagination and culture, and of course to the sacraments and sacramental living."²⁰ Additionally, this has fueled the egregious

notion of unmediated revelation, that knowing may take place apart from history, language, and physicality.

This leads to a second issue that is emerging as important in my own theological work.

B. A Truncated Doctrine of Creation

Given the social dynamics at play in the beginning of the movement, Quakerism did not, I am convinced, develop a thoughtful doctrine of creation. More attention was given to the world's unraveling than in its unfolding. In fact, at the level of spiritual rhetoric (the testimonies function(ed) as a corrective to this), the *outer* physical world—which was corrupted through sin—was of lesser importance than the *inner* spiritual one. Fox's vision of returning through the flaming sword into a pre-Fall state of creational purity is a blessed vision and aim for the Church. However, a doctrine of creation based upon this alone does not move us closer to understanding human culture.

I want to be mistaken about this, and I realize there is much study necessary to clarify what is at the moment a suspicion more than a verifiable fact. However, a restored creation is restored to a state *before* culture and the many works of human hands. However, creation is not only about pristine perfection; it is about the messy compromise of politics, the beauty and ambiguity of modern art, the violence of war and the belligerence of free moral agents, the raw edges of literature and music, the tragic.²¹ It is about pastures and fields, yes, but also about *planted* fields and the genetic modification of the seed in those fields. In short, a doctrine of creation places us in conversation with ourselves about humanity and about human effort.

I do not deny for a moment Quaker affection for creation and the attention many have given to environmental concerns as a principle of commitment to justice.²² I merely wish to suggest that the ambivalence Friends have traditionally felt toward the arts, creativity, imagination, humor, color, ornament, as well as physical sacraments and patterned corporate worship practices, may well be rooted in a doctrine of creation that has not yet been thoroughly developed. Like the previous theme of dualism, the inner/outer typology present in Friends spirituality and certainly in Barclay's *Apology*, does little to help us when applied to thinking about creation and about human participation in the world.²³

CONCLUSIONS

I am not convinced that an apology for the 21st century is possible, particularly in the spirit of the *Apology*. That time may come, but it is not now in sight. We Quaker theologians have much work to do, but I think it best if we allow the *Apology* to be what it is and move forward with the work our particular moment in history requires (which is not, in my view, a defense of the values and virtues of Quakerism *qua* Quakerism). It is a constant temptation of groups that have attained a certain measure of success to congratulate themselves and, before long, to have their principal success be little more than their own existence. This would be a sad conclusion to the Religious Society of Friends. However, our work, as I have briefly noted here, is to find our way into the wider stream of God's movement among the faithful and to animate this body with the particular charisms with which we have been entrusted, not for our own sake as a group, but for the sake of humanity.

Our work will also include bringing into full partnership Friends from around the globe and facing, when necessary, the theological and institutional imperialism that has kept these Friends at a "safe" distance. It will mean thinking carefully about the structures of our denominational agencies and asking questions about the distribution of leadership in view of shifting membership demographics. It will mean addressing together the challenges of the *world-God-so-loves*. Already Friends have done much in order to live without national borders as obstacles to cooperation and fellowship. But we need to address the theological boundaries that prevent the wider family of Friends from seeing the Spirit of God in the other and that prevent Friends from discerning the passionate movement of God in other expressions and practices of faith.

I have named Quaker dualisms in vision and spiritual practice and a doctrine of creation—along with their implications—as particular concerns of mine (among others, of course). I have also confessed that I am considering the idea of a *post-Quaker Christianity*, one wherein Quakerism is freed from the burden of self-preservation and self-defense and freed for sharing its gifts to the wider faith community, while receiving reciprocally the gifts this larger family has to offer. These matters continue to form the work I do as a theologian within this tradition.

A hegemonic christendom in the United States and in western Europe has been in rapid decline throughout the twentieth century and shows no sign of returning. Disestablishment, as we know, may drive some separatist groups, including Quakers, into a deeper, more isolated and peculiar sectarianism. It may fan the flames of utopianism. Such a reaction may give rise to sufficient over-against-ness to birth an apology on the order of Barclay's. However, the internal fragmentation of the Religious Society of Friends, along with the dismantling of a reasonably dominant and unified religious context, suggests that other theological work is required. I do not despair this reality. The work we have to do will be on one hand less ambitious than Barclay's, but on the other hand, it will be more appropriate for our own time and more ambitious than that which many of us have yet to undertake.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Patricia A. Williams, *Quakerism: a Theology for Our Time* (York, England: William Sessions Ltd., 2007). This claim is printed on the book's back cover.
- 2 "Although this book concentrates on the Quakerism of the seventeenth century, the Quakerism I describe is alive and well in the twenty-first." (1) The book cites very few contemporary Quaker scholars and, in addition to offering an account of 17th and 18th century Quakerism, argues principally for the compatibility of Friends thinking to biblical criticism and contemporary science. "Science offers a world-view to replace the fictitious orthodox Christian one....Core Quaker theology fits into this..." (140).
- 3 *Global Dictionary of Theology*, s.v., "Apologetics," by W. A. Dyrness.
- 4 Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology* I (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 31; Tillich, *Systematic Theology* III (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 195.
- 5 Robert Barclay, *Apology for the True Christian Divinity* (1678; 1827 edition), 2.
- 6 Maurice A. Creasey, "A Frame of Reference for Friends," *Quaker Religious Thought* #16 (Autumn 1966): 15. More recently, Mel Keiser writes: "no one can speak with certainty of where Quakerism in general is in our present time." "Figuring the Future: Where is Quaker Theology Going?" 73-80. *Celebrating Quaker Theology: a Symposium for the New Millennium* (Birmingham, England: The Quaker Theology Seminar in association with Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre, 2001), 73.
- 7 Ben Dandelion presents a concise summary of four characteristics more or less consistent and pervasive in *The Quakers: a Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 2, 118.
- 8 Keiser outlines several important points in his "The Quaker Vision and the Doing of Theology," *Quaker Religious Thought* #88 (January 1997): 21-37. His brief exposition of what makes theology Quaker is evocative and full of possibility.
- 9 David L. Johns, "Historically Ungrateful? Baron Friedrich von Hügel's Critique of the Quakers," *Friends' Quarterly* 31 (October 1998): 165-174. See also, Richard K. Ullmann, *Between God and History: the Human Situation Exemplified in Quaker Thought and Practice* (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1959), 58-70. "Fox did not recognize any of the influences which had worked upon him, neither those of the spiritual

- reformers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries nor those of such contemporaries as created for him, and together with him, the historical climate for this ministry.” Ullmann, 59.
- 10 Maurice A. Creasey and Harold Loukes, *The Next 50 Years* (London: Friends Home Service Committee, 1956), 36.
 - 11 Harold Loukes, *The Discovery of Quakerism* (London: Friends Home Service Committee, 1960), 200.
 - 12 Friedrich von Hügel, *Selected Letters: 1896-1924*, edited with a memoir by Bernard Holland (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1927), 235. See also, Loukes, *The Discovery of Quakerism*, 201.
 - 13 In view of these shifts, it will be important for Quaker thinkers to evaluate certain Quaker language and public witnesses for their intelligibility. Sacramental non-practice, plain speech, peculiar nomenclature, are ripe for this consideration (see also, Creasey & Loukes, *The Next Fifty Years*, 56).
 - 14 “When it began, Quakerism was an emphasis on a neglected aspect of the Christian faith; now it must assume a wider responsibility, and seek to transmit the faith in all its fullness and depth. If it cannot do so, if it cannot sustain the Christian tradition and transmit the richness of the Christian experience, then it has no right to exist at all, a stumbling block to would-be Christians and a source of weakness to the Church.” Creasey & Loukes, *The Next 50 Years*, 39.
 - 15 See my, “(Re)Visioning Sacramental Theology: a Response,” *Quaker Religious Thought #109* (December 2007): 56-61. Martin Davie has delineated what he understands to be three obstacles to Friends’ full engagement in ecumenical efforts. He notes, rightly in my view, that these Quaker positions are unconvincing and in need of serious reconsideration: 1) unwillingness to subscribe to any form of creedal orthodoxy; 2) unwillingness to accept the need for the celebration of the sacraments or for a distinctive threefold order of ministry within the Church; 3) widespread rejection of the belief that there needs to be greater uniformity of Christian faith and practice between the various Christian churches. Martin Davie, “Reflections on an Ecumenical Pilgrimage,” in *The Creation of Quaker Theology: Insider Perspectives* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2004), 187-205.
 - 16 Creasey & Loukes, *The Next Fifty Years*, 48.
 - 17 I have in mind here something on the order of the consensus documents produced by the *Faith & Order Commissions* of the National and World Council of Churches.
 - 18 See also, Tony Adams, ed., *Dualism: Immanence and Transcendence in Quaker Theology*, Proceedings of the Quaker Theology Seminar (Birmingham, England: The Quaker Theology Seminar, 1999).
 - 19 Maurice A. Creasey, *Inward’ and ‘Outward:’ a Study in early Quaker Language*, Presidential Address: JFHS Supplement 30 (London: Friends Historical Society, 1962), 11-13; 20. Creasey argues that Barclay took the idea of *levels of apprehension* and transposed them into distinct *modes of revelation* and *organs of reception*.
 - 20 Johns, “(Re)Visioning Sacramental Theology: a Response,” 58.
 - 21 I want here to avoid the extremes of utopianism on one hand and cynicism/ despair on the other. I address this in more detail in, “A People of Unclean Lips: Reclaiming an Anthropology of Complexity,” in Jackie Leach Scully & Pink Dandelion, eds., *Good and Evil: Quaker Perspectives* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2007), 121-129.
 - 22 See, Virginia Schurman, “A Quaker Theology of the Stewardship of Creation,” *Quaker Religious Thought #74* (December 1990): 27-41.

- 23 Ullmann sounds this note as well, and adds to his critique a Quaker misuse of and irresponsibility toward history and tradition (which I understand as an implication of the dualistic thinking in the RSF). Ullmann, *Between God and History*, 64ff.