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Authority, Mind, and Politics: The Anti-Enthusiasm of William Penn

It is customary for historians to introduce William Penn with a list of his supposed attributes or the causes with which he has come to be associated. One such combination opens *The World of William Penn*:

> [Penn was] at one time or another a rebellious son, a doting parent, a persecuted martyr, a deferential courtier, a religious enthusiast, a political lobbyist, a patrician gentleman, a weighty Friend, a polemical disputant, a sententious moralist, a shrewd entrepreneur, an improvident spendthrift, a visionary idealist, and an absentee landlord.[1]

That William Penn assumed many such roles over the course of his life cannot be disputed. It is possible, however, to strike at least one designation, that of religious enthusiasm, from such lists of attributes. Although an avowed Quaker for the duration of his adult life, Penn inherited an attitude to religion, and to the political implications of religious belief, that was informed by fundamentally conservative assumptions. At times he resembled a Latitudinarian, or a low church Anglican, in the manner he balanced individual religious freedom and corporate religious discipline. But at other times he advanced arguments in defence of authority against the spirit of the type employed by Restoration high churchmen. At all times he was very far removed from the religious radicalism that seemed to contemporaries to inhere in the Quaker doctrine of the inner light, the instrument of immediate communion with the divine.

To arrive at a clearer understanding of Penn and his place in Restoration political and religious life, three aspects of his thought will be scrutinized. The first was is attitude to religious authority, which will be divided into his engagements with Quakers and non-Quakers. This assumed a particular importance for Penn who balanced his membership in a high-born socio-economic milieu with a commitment to Quakerism, widely

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[1] Richard S. Dunn and Mary Maples Dunn, 'Introduction', in Richard S. Dunn and Mary Maples Dunn (eds.), *The World of William Penn* (Philadelphia, 1986), p. x. A similar formulation appears in Richard S. Dunn and Mary Maples Dunn, 'Introduction', in William Penn, *The Papers of William Penn, Volume One: 1644-1679*, ed. Richard S. Dunn and Mary Maples Dunn (5vols., Philadelphia, 1981), p. 3 (hereafter *PWP I*).

perceived as the most radical and dangerous of Protestant religious sects. Penn achieved this balance by settling very early upon a specific code of ethical conduct that he found useful for admonishing those of his own sect he perceived as wayward, as well as any individual whom he felt abdicated moral responsibility.

The second aspect is his own personal habit of worship, which Penn flagged throughout his life in terms relating to spirit, mind, and body. The spirit, understood here as the third person of the trinity, was not, of course, ignored by any seventeenth-century Christian. But like ethics and attitudes to authority, it occupied an elevated importance for a 'sober' Quaker accustomed to accusations of enthusiasm. In meeting this problem, Penn developed an intense commitment to a form of self-denial that went beyond standard Protestant calls for austerity and stringency in lifestyle. Authority, ethics, spirit, and mind all converge in Penn's understanding of self-denial. His inner life has typically been passed over in silence by historians, dazzled by Penn the public figure, or dismissed as shallow or undeveloped. But it provided the basis for his life-long resistance to enthusiasm and grounded his support for 'weighty' Friends and the broader social order.

The wider implications of Penn's engagements with civil politics is the third aspect examined here. His decidedly conservative support for the Restoration social order combined uneasily with his advocacy for toleration and liberty of conscience in England and America. Penn's image as an original whig is likewise confounded by his support for James II between 1685 and 1688. His links with Quaker radicalism, particularly in its earliest millenarian expressions, can easily be overstated, for Penn was neither a radical in politics nor a millenarian in religion. His political orientation was one of acceptance of - rather than rejection, or rebellion against - England's political order, imperfect though it may be.

This task entails identifying not only the discursive forms of Penn's ideas, but also the principles, habits, and tendencies of mind that underpinned his convictions. It is limited to Penn himself, and his ideas, and no effort will be made to trace the popular influence of these ideas or their passage through his public. This admittedly limited objective has required consulting his papers, manuscripts, and personal correspondence, collectively edited in *The Papers of William Penn,* in addition to his

published works. Because Penn typically immersed himself in multiple related projects for several years before moving on to initiate new projects or revisit unfinished ones, sources relating to authority, spirit, or politics can seem concentrated at various stages in his life. His engagements in matters relating to civil politics, for example, were strongly apparent during his involvement with American and English politics, particularly those associated with colonial policies and toleration, in the 1680s. The extended significance of the individual's relationship with the holy spirit for ethics, mental discipline, and personal piety emerged most clearly during his retiring years of the 1690s. His attitudes to authority, civil and religious, in contrast, cannot be easily linked to specific stages in his life, and are interlaced through all of them.

I

By the time Penn became a convinced Quaker in 1668, in his twenty-fourth year, George Fox had emerged from the first generation of Quakers as the movement's foremost leader. The broad shift within the Society of Friends under his leadership, from a charismatic religious movement to an organization with a structure comparable to those of other seventeenth-century dissenting sects, is well documented by historians. William Braithwaite's two volumes on early Quakerism are still the most comprehensive sources on the subject and 1660 is his point of division between the first and second periods.[2] Adrian Davies, Richard Vann, and Phyllis Mack observed that between 1655 and 1725 Quakers, in their social conduct and theological tendencies, assumed increasingly more circumspect postures to meet the expectations of influential leaders.[3] Barry Reay

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2 William C. Braithwaite, *The Beginnings of Quakerism* (London, 1912); William C. Braithwaite, *The Second Period of Quakerism* (Cambridge, 1961).

3 Adrian Davies, *The Quakers in English Society, 1655-1725* (Oxford, 2000); Richard T. Vann, *The Social Development of English Quakerism, 1655-1755* (Cambridge, 1965); Phyllis Mack, *Visionary Women: Ecstatic Prophecy in Seventeenth-Century England* (Berkeley, 1994), p. 260. Some studies of seventeenth-century Quaker politics pick up with the peace principle of 1659-61 and proceed to its later significance for non-violent protest and civil disobedience. See Stephen A. Kent and James V. Spickard, 'The "Other" Civil Religion and the Tradition of Quaker Radical Politics', *Journal of Church and State*, 36.2 (1994), 374-87; Meredith Baldwin Weddle, *Walking in the Way of Peace: Quaker Pacifism in the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford, 2001); Jane E. Calvert, *Quaker Constitutionalism and the Political Thought of John Dickinson* (Cambridge, 2009).

concluded that Quakers were unlikely to have been carriers of radical ideas after 1660,[4] and according to H. Larry Ingle, Quakers 'withdrew from confrontations with society at large'.[5] Christopher Hill, who believed that all the radical sects experienced near fatal defeat at the Restoration,[6] despondently wrote that 'God the great Leveller, who wanted everything overturned ... seems to have left England after the 17th-century Revolution; and not to have returned'.[7]

Penn discovered Quakerism in this Restoration milieu and placed himself among those who would prevent that God from returning. In this respect he embodied a particular consensus that developed after the Restoration. Penn self-identified as a Quaker, and indeed helped shape mainstream Quakerism with Fox and Margaret Fell, but his serious lifelong interest in negotiating individual freedom and corporate discipline meant that on certain points his actions and beliefs yield to those characteristic of the Restoration Anglicanism described in chapters one and three.[8] There it was argued that in the early 1660s advocates for the restored Church of England endeavoured decisively, and effectively, to claim reason and sober piety on behalf of religious authority and the political order.[9] But the enthusiastic obverse of Anglican piety, whereby the will of God was believed - or alleged, for sceptics - to find direct expression within the inspired individual, was still present, in variegated forms, among some nonconformists who remained preoccupied with the possibilities of the holy

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4 Barry Reay, *The Quakers and English Revolution* (London, 1985), pp. 110-12.

5 H. Larry Ingle, *First Among Friends: George Fox and the Creation of Quakerism* (New York, 1994), p. 190.

6 Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution* (London, 1972), chapter ten especially; Christopher Hill, *The Experience of Defeat: Milton and Some Contemporaries* (London, 1985).

7 Christopher Hill, 'God and the English Revolution', *History Workshop Journal*, 17 (1984), p. 31.

8 On the stressing of internal coherence and the importance of the patrician leadership of weighty Quakers, see Bonnelyn Young Kunze, *Margaret Fell and the Rise of Quakerism* (Stanford, 1994), p. 234; Richard Bauman, *Let Your Words Be Few: Symbolism of Speaking and Silence Among Seventeenth-Century Quakers* (Cambridge, 1983), pp, 138, 146.

9 Some of the literature touching on aspects of this issue are Hugh Trevor-Roper, 'The Religious Origins of the Enlightenment', in *Religion, the Reformation, and Social Change* (London, 1967), 193-237; J. G. A. Pocock, 'Post-Puritan England and the Problem of the Enlightenment', in Perez Zagorin (ed.), *Culture and Politics From Puritanism to the Enlightenment* (Berkeley, 1980), 91-112; John Spurr, '"Rational Religion" in Restoration England', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 49 (1988), 563-585; B. W. Young, *Religion and Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century England: Theological Debate From Locke to Burke* (Oxford, 1998).

spirit, even if it seemed to violate conventions of sober worship.[10] But for Penn, discipline and obedience were permanently linked with pious religious practice. Consequently Penn's holy spirit lacked the kind of unpredictable qualities nonconformists such as John Bunyan and Richard Baxter attributed to it. As an advocate of toleration in England and America for nearly thirty years, Penn joined with nonconformists in recoiling at the idea of coercion in religion and criticized the Church and government accordingly. But he admitted authority significant space in religious affairs. For Penn the holy spirit and the overturning or prophetic qualities of radical protestantism were measured against, and always mitigated by, urgent duties necessary to stability and authority, civil as well as religious. With some reservations, Penn joined this Restoration consensus.

His ideas on limiting the radical tendencies of some forms of religious belief are evident from the inception of his convincement. Although his earliest religious statements evinced some of the characteristic enthusiasms of a recent convert, these unusual pieces were the last of their kind for Penn either in print or in manuscript.[11] At this stage, additionally, he was already attracted to the idea of weighing various claims as a principle of just government. God will 'weigh the nations as in a balance',[12] he noted, and in a more practical vein, he asked Lord Arlington in 1669, 'Shall it not be rememb[e]red with what successe Kingdoms & Commonwealths have liv'd by the discreet ballanceing of Partys?'[13] As Hugh Barbour observed, even as early 1668, Penn tended to eschew the mantle of the prophet, preferring instead the scholarly language of the humanist.[14]

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[10] A sample of the relevant literature includes N. H. Keeble, *Richard Baxter, Puritan Man of Letters* (Oxford, 1982); N. H. Keeble, *The Literary Culture of Nonconformity in Later Seventeenth-Century England* (Leicester, 1987); N. H. Keeble (ed.), *John Bunyan: Conventicle and Parnassus: Tercentenary Essays* (Oxford, 1988); Richard Greaves, *Glimpses of Glory: John Bunyan and English Dissent* (Stanford, 2002); Sharon Achinstein, *Literature and Dissent in Milton's England* (Cambridge, 2003). More radical expressions of discontent are described by Richard Ashcraft, *Revolutionary Politics and Locke's Two Treatises of Government* (Princeton, 1986); Richard L. Greaves, *Deliver Us From Evil: The Radical Underground in Britain, 1660-1663* (New York, 1986); Richard L. Greaves, *Enemies Under His Feet: Radicals and Nonconformists in Britain, 1664-1667* (Stanford, 1990); Richard L. Greaves, *Secrets of the Kingdom: British Radicals From the Popish Plot to the Revolution of 1688-89* (Stanford, 1992).

[11] *PWP I*, 'God's controversy proclaimed (1670-71)', pp. 184-91.

[12] *PWP I*, 'God's controversy proclaimed (1670-71)', p. 185.

[13] *PWP I*, 'God's controversy proclaimed (1670-71)', p. 191.

[14] William Penn, *William Penn on Religion and Ethics: The Emergence of Liberal Quakerism*, ed. Hugh Barbour (Lewiston, 1991), p. 186.

The basic concept of balance introduced here would underpin most of his claims for toleration over the next twenty years and would surface again in his 1693 design for a European parliament.[15] But while the problem of just government would occupy him as a whig, the conduct of his own religious party was always the pillar of his work as an influential and weighty Friend. Consequently Penn began endearing himself to leading London Friends as early as 1668,[16] and by the mid 1670s was working closely with Fox on the task of fortifying Quaker ministry. Penn's engagements with a multitude of adversaries, very often Quakers themselves, indicate a firmness in defending the authority of Fox and the conventions that had come to be espoused by the Quaker elites associated with him. The conflicts he willingly initiated or took part in with fellow Quakers invariably related to what, for him, constituted appropriate conduct. As an emissary for Quakerism to the broader polity, Penn was keen to defend it as a sober, respectable, and peaceable religion. By way of both endeavours, Penn emerged not only as a Quaker conscious of balancing personal piety and civil authority, but also as a straightforward anti-enthusiast.

Whether owing to his background as a 'gentleman commoner', as he described himself in 1660,[17] or his early attraction to moral seriousness and austerity,[18] Penn inherited Fox's strand of Quakerism unambiguously.[19] He was consistently clear on distinguishing two varieties of 'spirit' and dividing Christians into two corresponding camps: One sober, peaceable, and law-abiding, the other enthusiastic, disordered, and dangerous. His efforts to clarify Quakerism for non-Quakers or distance it from unacceptable, though

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[15] William Penn, *An Essay Towards the Present and Future Peace of Europe* (London, 1693).

[16] In December 1668 Penn addressed a letter to George Whitehead, Amor Stoddard, John Burnyeat, Samuel Newton, and Gerard Roberts intending to demonstrate his fidelity to them and the seriousness of his religious feelings. See *PWP I*, pp. 83-84.

[17] Quoted in William Penn, *The Papers of William Penn: William Penn's Published Writings, 1660-1726: An Interpretive Bibliography*, ed. Edwin B. Bronner and David Fraser (Philadelphia, 1986), 'Epicedia Academiae Oxoniensis (1660)', p. 89 (hereafter *PWP V*).

[18] Penn described university life at Oxford as 'hellish darkness and debauchery'. Quoted in Catharine Owens Peare, *William Penn: A Biography* (London, 1965), p. 30; Samuel Pepys, an associate of the elder Sir William Penn, remarked sceptically in 1667 that the younger Penn became 'a Quaker again, or some very melancholy thing'. Quoted in Davies, *Quakers in English Society*, p. 35.

[19] Fox could not conceive of the inner light issuing 'divine openings' that violated his own 'gravity and stayedness of mind and spirit'. See Rufus Jones, 'Introduction', in Braithwaite, *Beginnings*, p. xxxii.

related, religious practices reveal a full awareness of the wider implications of enthusiasm.

Penn reiterated the distinction when, during a brief trip to the continent in 1671, he was acquainted with an obscure sect known as Labadists. Established by John De Labadie, the Quaker-like sect believed in immediate communion with God by way of the holy spirit[20] and likely attracted the attention of Penn on that basis. He suggested the company had a reputation for godliness, crediting them with 'that great Noise of Spiritual Reformation'.[21] But his address to the sect quickly fixed on their enthusiastic abuse of the holy spirit, 'whose best Revelations are mostly Fantastical Imaginations'. This sort of carelessness in conduct, Penn thought, 'ends in very Loosness & Ranterisme'.[22] He sympathized with the Labadist rejection of the 'Formalized Articles' of Germany's Calvinist churches. But separatism, often undertaken by the 'most pretendedly refined' comes with certain responsibilities of modest behaviour, principally following the 'pure way' that will never lead to sin.[23] He visited the Labadists again in 1677 with the memory of how 'unhandsomely' he 'was used at Herwerdern 6 years ago',[24] but this time was in a conciliatory mood. Shortly after arriving he met two professed Labadists, Anna Maria Schurman and 'Ivor the pastor', and the three in turn discussed their personal histories and the dissatisfaction in religion that led to them seek a purer relationship with the spirit.[25] He hinted at the nature of his inner spiritual life when relating how he heard, for the first time, 'a certain sound & testimony of his eternal word through one of those the world called a Quaker'. It was, he continued, 'a sign and wonder' and it encouraged 'the great cross of resisting & watching ag[ains]t my own inward vain Affections & thoughts'.[26] In a characteristic move, he linked the expression of the inner life of the holy spirit with its appropriate public context, giving them 'an Acc[oun]t of that power & presence of god, w[hi]ch attended us in our

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20 *PWP I*, p. 218n.
21 *PWP I*, 'To John Labadie's Company (1671)', p. 215.
22 *PWP I*, 'To John Labadie's Company (1671)', p. 217.
23 *PWP I*, 'To John Labadie's Company (1671)', p. 217.
24 *PWP I*, 'An account of my journey into Holland & Germany (1677)', p. 473.
25 *PWP I*, 'An account of my journey into Holland & Germany (1677)', pp. 473-79. Schurman's life and interests, including her involvement with the Labadists, is investigated in Mirjam de Baar and Lynne Richards (eds), *Choosing the Better Part: Anna Maria van Schurman (1607-1678)* (London, 1996).
26 *PWP I*, 'An account of my journey into Holland & Germany (1677)', p. 477.

publique testimonys'.[27] He asked that they let Christ 'preach & speak amongst you ... to sigh, groan, pray, preach, sing, & not otherwise'.[28]

Penn's encounters with the Labadists suggest what, for him, constituted proper Quakerism as well as the appropriate standards of behaviour for other godly separatists. But as part of his raised profile in the 1670s, he did not need to travel as far as Germany to encounter individuals interested in querying his beliefs. When historians have focused on this period of Penn's life they have typically been drawn to the controversialist aspects of his public disputes.[29] The most dramatic of these, his publication of *The Sandy Foundation Shaken* in 1668 and imprisonment shortly thereafter, warrants inclusion here on account of the shrewd means by which Penn reconciled himself and his beliefs to civil and religious authorities.

Written as a riposte to the Presbyterian minister Thomas Vincent, with whom Penn had an aborted debate in Spitalfields,[30] the tract addressed atonement specifically and its relation to the trinity. In Bronner's and Fraser's words, at the time of its publication Penn was a member of a 'despised religious movement, and possibly too full of his own importance and learning', producing a work steeped in reckless and indiscreet language about the trinity in particular.[31] It generated controversy immediately upon its publication, its infamy earning commentary in the journals of Samuel Pepys and John Evelyn, the latter remarking that 'Sir William Penn's son had published a blasphemous book against the deity of our blessed Lord'.[32] Penn was committed to the Tower in early December, only weeks after its publication, and was freed in July 1669.[33]

How Penn effected his release speaks to the careful manner by which he negotiated his own unconventional beliefs with those of the religious authorities. He was initially imprisoned on the technicality of failing to obtain a licence but as the full import of the tract's contents were felt, the offense of denying the trinity, which carried with it the offense of denying

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27 *PWP I*, 'An account of my journey into Holland & Germany (1677)', p. 477.
28 *PWP I*, 'An account of my journey into Holland & Germany (1677)', p. 478.
29 Hugh Barbour, 'The Young Controversialist', in Richard S. Dunn and Mary Maples Dunn (eds.), *The World of William Penn* (Philadelphia, 1986), 15-37; Caroline Robbins, 'William Penn, 1689-1702: Eclipse, Frustration, and Achievement', Richard S. Dunn and Mary Maples Dunn (eds.), *The World of William Penn* (Philadelphia, 1986), 71-87.
30 Peare, *Biography*, p. 77-79.
31 *PWP V*, p. 96.
32 Quoted in Peare, *Biography*, pp. 83-84.
33 Peare, *Biography*, p. 88.

the divinity of Christ, quickly emerged as the centrepiece of his infraction.[34] *Innocency with Her Open Face* (1669), which Penn wrote at the urging of Edward Stillingfleet while incarcerated, was instrumental in ending the affair. *Innocency* was an apology, but not a recantation, and the council was satisfied that Penn had retracted his 'Hereticall Opinions'.[35] It is not clear whether Stillingfleet or George Whitehead introduced Penn to the strategy of turning to the matter of Christ's divinity, and firmly endorsing it, thereby drawing attention to what appeared to be a Sabellian rather than Socinian heresy.[36] As Barbour observed, no one was burned for Sabellianism, a heresy of Saint Augustine, which involved emphasizing the unity of God.[37] Even though a postscript stated in no uncertain terms that 'there are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, which are one',[38] Penn was cagey about the trinity. He seemed sufficiently confident that a clarification of his Sabellianism would satisfy the authorities - a correct assumption, as it turned out - that he felt free to convey some thoughts on Socinus himself which can only be described as laudatory.[39] 'But [I am] therefore not a *Socinian*', he wrotem 'any more than [I would be] a Son of the *English-Church* whilst esteemed a *Quaker*, since I justify many of her Principles, since the Reformation, against the Roman Church'.[40] If Penn was a covert Socinian, the matter did not subsequently trouble his public life nor did it explicitly resurface in his personal correspondence. Doctrinally, the unity of the Godhead, or its 'oneness' in his preferred terminology, was undoubtedly given special emphasis by Sabellians and Socinians.[41] But as Penn learned, it could also be reconciled to what constituted orthodox Christianity in the Restoration period. In the opening passages of *Innocency* he astutely narrowed the scope of the controversy to a quarrel with one particular group of Christians, insisting that 'all this [is]

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34 Peare, *Biography*, p. 81.

35 *PWP I*, 'Release from the tower (1669)', p. 97.

36 It has been observed that both Stillingfleet and Whitehead were in contact with Penn during his stay in the Tower. See Braithwaite, *Second Period*, pp. 61-64; Peare, *Biography*, p. 81; *PWP I*, p. 86n; *PWP V*, p. 100; Mary Maples Dunn, *William Penn: Politics and Conscience* (Princeton, 1967), p. 21; Penn, *Ethics*, pp. 233-34; Barbour, 'Controversialist', pp. 20-21.

37 Barbour, 'Controversialist', p. 20.

38 William Penn, *Innocency With Her Open Face* (London, 1669), pp. 38-39.

39 Penn, *Innocency*, p. 13.

40 Penn, *Innocency*, pp. 13-14.

41 H. John McLachlan, *Socinianism in Seventeenth-Century England* (London, 1951), pp. 57, 321-22.

about my late *Answer* to a disputation with some *Presbyterians*'.[42] Penn would likely have reduced the problem further to a particular Presbyterian, Thomas Vincent, but was by then probably reluctant to dignify him by name. This, like his remark on the justness of many of the Church of England's principles, signaled to Anglicans the possibility of shared ground with Quakers.

Penn's resolute emphasis on God's oneness reflected a habit of reducing religious essentials, famously espoused at this time by liberal Anglican Latitude-men (and, for that matter, Socinians.)[43] Penn's clearest expression of this conviction was in Pennsylvania. An early draft of the province's constitution, dated January 1682, states that 'all who profess faith in God, And that live soberly honestly & peaceably under the Governm[en]t of the said Province, shall Enjoy the free practice of their particular perswasions in Matters of Religion'.[44] Officials must acknowledge but 'one Almighty & Eternal God'.[45] Conveying a truly idealistic proclivity, a deleted clause in the fifth draft of the constitution even hoped for an end to not only the language of abuse current among Christians, but also an end to the various terms that distinguished them: '[T]hat occasions of Heartburnings may be removed, No such ~~Nick~~names, EPISCOPALIAN, PRESBITERIAN, INDEPENDENT ANABAPTIST, QUAKER &c shall be ~~used~~ {at no time used by way of Reproach, or Scorne} in this province ~~but all professing Christianity shall be {accounted &} called PROFESSED CHRISTIANS~~'.[46] One of his earliest addresses in print to American Indians, which also carried with it this reduced emphasis on religious essentials, opens with the declaration that 'There is one great God and power that hath made the world and all things therein'.[47] A 1682 letter addressed to 'the Emperor of Canada' opens similarly, invoking 'The Great God that made

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42 Penn, *Innocency*, p. 4.

43 McLachlan, *Socinianism*, p. 338.

44 William Penn, *The Papers of William Penn, Volume Two: 1680-1684*, ed. Richard S. Dunn and Mary Maples Dunn (Philadelphia, 1982), 'Sixth Draft: The Fundamentall Constitutions of the Province of Pensilvania in America (1682)', p. 192 (hereafter *PWP II*).

45 *PWP II*, 'Draft of laws agreed upon (1682)', pp. 208-09.

46 *PWP II*, pp. 183-84n. This quixotic idea led some of Penn's politically astute friends to criticize him for muddled thinking. John Locke thought that saddling the legal system with provisions for abusive language would result in 'perpetual prosecution and animosity'; at worst, it would be 'dangerous'. Quoted in Ashcraft, *Revolutionary Politics*, p. 519. Less constructively, Algernon Sidney thought that the citizens of Pennsylvania would be 'less free than Turks'. See *PWP II*, pp. 124-35.

47 *PWP II*, 'To the King of the Indians (1681)', p. 128.

thee and me', and closed again with reference to the 'Great God', a peculiar idiomatic formulation that Penn seemed to employ when appealing to Indians, presumably inspired by his own research into Indian languages and religious beliefs.[48] All of these gestures carried significance for the most high-profile ambassador of Quakerism, and there was a strategy at work in his engagements with Labadie, Vincent, Stillingfleet, and the Indians, one that involved refinement, definition, and diplomacy. Where Quaker practice or doctrine was revealed or elaborated upon, it was also defended and demonstrated as neither contrary to mainstream Christianity nor its official formulation by the religious and political establishment.

One point Penn returned to repeatedly in all such engagements was his conviction that Quakerism, though defined by individualistic Protestant principles, derived significant meaning from its collective activities. Although Penn's ideas on the individual's method for understanding divine 'openings' will be examined in the following section, Quakerism as a social activity carried with it additional measures that had the effect of managing the public expression of the spirit among its practitioners. The quarrels that stirred his concern on this front demonstrate why he failed to meet any contemporary definition of the enthusiast, despite his Quakerism, and reveal him to have been uncompromising, even authoritarian, in his quest for religious order and respectability.

When pitted against 'true' Quaker enthusiast John Perrot, a colourful individual who carried controversy with him from Ireland to England, Turkey, Rome, Maryland, Jamaica, and finally Barbados,[49] the conservative contours of Penn's outlook become clearer. For Penn, a major source of spiritual certitude could be achieved by group consistency,[50] and by all accounts Perrot's revolt against standard Quaker group conventions was thoroughgoing.[51] He claimed to be guided by divine inspiration alone and believed Quakers ought to avoid organization, structure, and form in their religious lives, objected to 'doffing' the hat, and even spurned the idea of prescribed times for prayer gathering.[52] Perrot died in 1665, but William

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48 *PWP II*, 'To the free society of traders (1683)', p. 448.

49 Perrot's eclectic life and career is chronicled in Kenneth L. Carroll, *John Perrot: Early Quaker Schismatic* (London, 1971); Stefano Villani, *Tremolanti e Papisti: Missioni Quacchere nell'Italia de Seicento* (Roma, 1996), chapter four especially.

50 Barbour, in Penn, *Ethics*, p. 11.

51 Braithwaite, *Beginnings*, p. 425.

52 Barbour, 'Controversialist', pp. 21-26; *PWP V*, p. 152.

Mucklow, his associate, published a tract entitled *The Spirit of the Hat* in 1673 against '*George Fox* and other Leading-Men,'[53] that in turn elicited a direct response from Penn.

Mucklow delighted in drawing analogies between the empowered Quaker leadership and the power of the Roman Church. What difference was there, he asked, 'between *George Fox and the Papist?* The one saith, *No Liberty out of the Church*; the other, *No Liberty out of the Power*.'[54] Of the hat, Mucklow, like Perrot, perceived no spiritual basis for removal during prayer, he wrote, 'We do not forebear the *Hat* ... for want of reverence to Holy, Pure God (for if he required it, I believe we would not only offer that, but our lives also.)'[55] In his response, *The Spirit of Alexander the Copper-Smith*, published in the same year, Penn attempted to justify the power of the Quaker 'body' by using the language of Reformation. He began with a flatly-stated defence of the body as a Church, defined in a way consistent with the principles of early Christianity:

> 1. That we are a Religious Body. 2. That we have, as such, a Power within our selves. 3. That by the Power and Spirit of the Eternal God we have condemned many Practices. 4. That being in Holy Peace and Unity ... [we did] condemn that of keeping the *Hat* on in time of publick Prayer to Almighty.[56]

To the modern observer these seem like obvious contrasts. But they undoubtedly helped Penn to convey and clarify, for his contemporaries, a crucial point on the location and nature of power. For Penn, this meant the practical power that such a body employed to overcome the divisions that grew within it.[57] Mucklow had complained, for example, of the powers of excommunication that Quaker leadership exercized.[58] But there was also a spiritual power that seated within such bodies and it found its expression there in accordance with the respective body's conventions. The question was not '*[i]f we prefer the body above the Holy Spirit* ... [b]ut, *[w]hether we, as a Believing Body have the Holy Spirit, or no*.'[59] The spirit moved within the congregation. In this, Penn prefigured Robert Barclay's *Anarchy*

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[53] William Mucklow, *The Spirit of the Hat* (London, 1673), p. 1.
[54] Mucklow, *Spirit*, p. 12.
[55] Mucklow, *Spirit*, p. 26.
[56] Penn, 'The Spirit of Alexander the Copper-Smith (1673)', in Penn, *Ethics*, p. 375.
[57] Penn, 'Alexander Copper-Smith', p. 375.
[58] Mucklow, *Spirit*, p. 13.
[59] Penn, 'Alexander Copper-Smith', p. 377.

of the Ranters (1676), in which it was argued that the spirit will be felt most powerfully by the congregation's most sensitive and mature members.[60]

But Penn did not break the bonds of his underlying Protestant principles, and he emphasized that the visible church would fail to earn its distinction if the holy spirit was not present within each of its individual members: 'For it is not an Hundred Persons (singly void of the Holy Spirit) coming together, that makes them any whit more certain in their Judgement.'[61] Mindful of discrediting his principles with the tincture of Roman Catholicism, in several private exchanges with Mucklow and Mary Pennyman, another associate of Perrot, Penn made some additional attempts to harmonize the spirit's individual and corporate expressions. Conceding that certain ceremonies were practiced at Quaker meetings, Penn distinguished them. The word ceremony itself may be used inoffensively to describe motions that are 'exteriour or bodily, that is relative & adjunctive to that Spiritual Worship'. They were relative in the sense that when the soul worshipped, so too did the body.[62] But not every visible gesture was a legitimate form of worship because true ceremonies 'are as relative to body as body is to soul'.[63] The participants at an orderly Quaker meeting will be individually infused with the holy spirit, and their worship will derive 'from the Interiour, as its root'.[64] This was Penn's compromise: God had given the greater judgment to his church, not to the particular individuals that constituted it,[65] and the church itself was subject to the authority of its most senior members.

But there was an impasse. Whereas Perrot and Mucklow based their refusal to doff the hat on the belief that God did not require it, Penn performed it as a 'Holy and Due Reverence' to God.[66] The wearing of the hat, for Penn, was an intrusion, not a motion of the holy spirit.[67] Squarely conflicting claims of the spirit such as these reduced Penn to issuing his crudest announcements. Well aware that the Roman Church assumed a very similar power of disclosing the holy spirit to its communicants, Penn could

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60 Barbour, in Penn, *Ethics*, p. 381.
61 Penn, 'Alexander Copper-Smith', p. 377.
62 *PWP I*, 'To William Mucklow (1672)', pp. 251-52.
63 *PWP I*, 'To William Mucklow (1672)', p. 251.
64 *PWP I*, 'To William Mucklow (1672)', p. 251.
65 *PWP I*, 'To William Mucklow (1672)', p. 254.
66 Penn, 'Alexander Copper-Smith', p. 375.
67 *PWP I*, 'To William Mucklow (1672)', p. 254.

muster no more than to say that the Roman, unlike the Quaker, was not a true church.[68] Like Fox, who believed that Perrot was compelled by delusion rather than the spirit,[69] Penn decided that John Story and John Wilkinson, who vexed the Society as individualist schismatics throughout the 1670s,[70] were simply 'men of bad spirits'.[71] At his least subtle, Penn concluded that Story 'must bee of a wrong spirit, if hee bee dissatisfied with some things given forth' by Fox.[72] In *Judas and the Jews* (1673), he commented ambiguously on Perrot's imprisonment in Rome, and though presumably in an ironic tone, it rings a note of bad taste: '[T]his J*ohn Perrot* (who if he had been as faithful as his Companion [John Luffe], might with him have been hanged at *Rome* ... to his own Comfort, the Truth's Honour, and the Churches Peace).'[73] Penn's own coinage, 'Paratonian Spirit', captured the 'Idle Fancys, nauseating gestures, ridiculous sounds &, vile conceits of that foolish man & his Adherents'.[74]

The truth is that Penn did not formulate a more elaborate means of meeting this problem. He went as far as he felt was required of him, and in doing so began to resemble the kind of anti-enthusiast Anglican divines who rebuilt the Church of England after 1660. This parallel will be made clearer in the following section. But his encounters with Quakers and non-Quakers do demonstrate a dual aptitude for going some way towards accommodating his occasionally unorthodox beliefs to the authorities, on the one hand, and tightening the disciplinary practices of his own sect, on the other. His attempts to affect the ultimate accommodation with the civil political establishment, toleration for dissenters, will be examined in the final section. First Penn's inner life, at this point inspected only briefly with respect to his fellow Quakers, will be explored.

II

The language of mind provides key insights into Penn's personal

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68 *PWP I*, 'To William Mucklow (1672)', p. 254.
69 *PWP I*, 'To William Mucklow (1672)', p. 249.
70 Braithwaite, *Second Period*, pp. 290-323. See also Hill, *World Turned*, pp. 255-58; Richard L. Greaves, *God's Other Children: Protestant Nonconformists and the Emergence of Denominational Churches in Ireland, 1660-1700* (Stanford, 1997), pp. 281-85.
71 *PWP I*, 'To William Mucklow (1672)', p. 256.
72 *PWP I*, 'To William Mucklow (1672)', p. 258.
73 Penn, 'Judas and Jews (1673)', in Penn, *Ethics*, p. 385. For Villani, Penn's tone was explicit rather than merely ambiguous or ironic. See, Villani, *Tremolanti*, p. 75.
74 *PWP I*, 'To William Mucklow (1672)', p. 255.

piety and has significance for his wider political and social outlook. Historians have not typically made much of this feature of his thought. Hugh Barbour notes the emphasis Penn placed on the importance of group worship and remarks that Penn's inner life exhibited a 'shallowness in his own understanding of his own and other people's worship experience'.[75] Perhaps an enduring influence of Christopher Hill is felt here. Hill did not think less of Penn for suppressing the sect's history of faith healing and miracles, and for encouraging Quakers to drop their eccentricities. This was the 'consequence of the survival of a group which had failed to turn the world upside down'.[76] But it was nevertheless a defeat, for Hill himself if not for the Quakers, demonstrative of the end of the 'great period of freedom of movement and freedom of thought'.[77] His various descriptions of this shift, whereby each sect disavowed those 'to the left of themselves', and which involved 'organizing, distinguishing, purging', 'adjustment to the state', and adjustment to the 'commercial world', evoke a nation of shopkeepers, not prophets.[78] The sense that a kind of spiritual atrophy set in widely after the Restoration has been observed and countered by John Spurr.[79] It assumes that, in terms of spiritual experience and depth of feeling, the relatively conservative orientation of Restoration piety can be compared only unfavourably to the excited outpouring of heterodoxy during the 1640s and 1650s. Men such as Penn and Robert Barclay, both friends of the Stuart state,[80] helped bring Quakers into the fold of bland respectability.

This assumption has the effect of leaving significant aspects of mainstream Restoration religious practice unexamined and unworthy of examination. It is more accurate to say, along with the editors of *The Papers of William Penn*, that his 'interior life' largely remains a mystery.[81] Barbour has observed that Penn rarely reported in detail on his own divine 'leadings'.[82] But to seek the qualities of his inner life in the conventional language of early Quakerism or even contemporary nonconformity is to

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75 Barbour, in Penn, *Ethics*, p. 19.
76 Hill, *World Turned*, pp. 256, 292.
77 Hill, *World Turned*, p. 378.
78 Hill, *World Turned*, pp. 245, 378; Hill, *Defeat*, p. 165.
79 John Spurr, *The Restoration Church of England, 1646-1689* (New Haven, 1990), pp. xii-xiii.
80 Hill, *World Turned*, p. 254.
81 William Penn, *The Papers of William Penn, Volume Four: 1701-1718*, ed. Craig Horle, Alison Duncan Hirsch, Joy Wiltenburg and Marianne Wokeck (5 vols., Philadelphia, 1987), p. 5 (hereafter *PWP IV*).
82 Barbour, in Penn, *Ethics*, p. 22.

miss it. Penn's lifelong commitment to self-denial was not simply a holdover from traditional puritan calls to austerity, and within it the mind, the spirit, and the self interacted in ways that insulated him from the perils of enthusiasm. Penn's self-denial focused on the will of the individual and assumed an importance in wider issues of human dishonesty, greed, rebelliousness, and impiety.

Penn's views on the holy spirit and the nature of its engagement in the inner lives of believers corresponded with those of prominent Restoration Anglicans on key points. Both Stillingfleet and the late Henry Hammond advanced an Anglican 'testimony of spirit' designed to avoid the perils of enthusiasm.[83] As was shown in chapter one, Stillingfleet distinguished private inspiration, which he associated with enthusiasm, from a properly Anglican testimony, a 'habit or the act of Divine infused faith' that did not entail 'new objects' of faith or private revelations, and operated in a manner best described as passive.[84] Hammond considered the assistance of the holy spirit 'ordinary', its function in piety on a par with those of studying, meditating, and reason.[85] Whereas Hammond and Stillingfleet anchored the testimony of spirit in the safely anti-enthusiastic structures of the episcopacy, Penn looked for an ethical solution, a thoroughgoing self-discipline, individualistic, but cultivated under the auspices of a religious community.[86]

Penn's first detailed investigation into self-denial was *No Cross, No Crown*, which was originally published in 1669, and enlarged and reissued in 1682. The work is an ethical demand for holy living, pleading particularly for resistance to pride, gluttony, and avarice. Its central theme is the seven deadly sins.[87] In one respect, the work was an entirely typical challenge to worldly vanities such as hat honour and the needlessness of

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[83] Spurr, *Restoration Church*, pp. 9-13.

[84] Edward Stillingfleet, *A Rational Account* (London, 1665), p. 174.

[85] Henry Hammond, *A Paraphrase and Annotations Upon All the Books of te New Testament* (London, 1659), p. 9.

[86] For the importance of Stillingfleet and Hammond and and other Anglicans associated with them, including the civil-war era thinker William Chillingworth, see Hugh Trevor-Roper, 'The Great Tew Circle', in *Catholics, Anglicans and Puritans: Seventeenth Century Essays* (Chicago, 1987), 166-231; Spurr, *Restoration Church*, pp. 2-13, 255; Penn also expressed an admiration for the work of Chillingworth. See William Penn, *The Papers of William Penn, Volume Three: 1685-1700*, ed. Richard S. Dunn and Mary Maples Dunn (5 vols., Philadelphia, 1986), pp. 378-79 (hereafter *PWP III*).

[87] Barbour, in Penn, *Ethics*, p.38.

adornment in appearance, conduct, and language.[88] The first version also reflects the kind of prophetic tone that occasionally crept into his thinking between 1667 and 1670.[89] The title of the tract itself draws upon a specific image of overcoming that is believed to have captivated him in Cork in 1667, from a sermon by Thomas Loe, to which he returned throughout his life: 'Bear the cross, and stand faithful to God, then he will give thee an everlasting crown of glory, that shall not be taken from thee. There is no other way that shall prosper than that which the holy men of old have walked'.[90] The Anglican philosopher Henry More remarked in a 1675 letter to Penn that 'No cross, no crown is in the main very sober and good, though it may be over strict in some things'.[91] The strictness that More found off-putting extended from the world of vanities into a vigilant attention to mental habits that, because of its comprehensiveness, might have indeed appeared onerous.

As part of this, Penn mapped out the causes and potential correctives to enthusiastic behaviour. Some of the language here is typical of what had become the critique of enthusiasm developed by Anglicans.[92] Pious minds were not to be occupied with 'foolish, superfluous, idle inventions', nor 'enflame[d] to inordinate Thoughts ... continually haunting their minds'.[93] He took the opportunity to vilify the traditions of the Roman Church, whereby men expressed '*rote babble with a forc'd zeal ... of other mens words*'.[94] Those who do so were 'strangers to the hidden Life, [and] thus are they diverted from all serious examination of themselves'.[95]

The hidden life was associated in part with the standard categories of Calvinist salvation. '[T]rue worship', he wrote, 'can only come from an

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[88] On the Quaker preference for 'plainness' in written and spoken expression, see Meiling Hazelton, '"Mony Choaks": The Quaker Critique of the Seventeenth-Century Public Sphere', *Modern Philology*, 98 (2000), 251-70; N. H. Keeble, 'The Politic and the Polite in Quaker Prose: The Case of William Penn', in Thomas N. Corns and David Loewenstein (eds.), *The Emergence of Quaker Writing: Dissenting Literature in Seventeenth-Century England* (London, 1995), 112-25.

[89] Hugh Barbour, 'Foreward', in William Penn, *No Cross, No Crown*, ed. Hugh Barbour (London, 1682; facs., York, 1999), p. xviii.

[90] Norman Penney, 'Introduction to the 1930 Edition', in William Penn *No Cross, No Crown*, ed. Hugh Barbour (London, 1682; facs., York, 1999), p. xi.

[91] Penney, 'Introduction', p. xi.

[92] See chapter one above; Michael Heyd, 'The Reaction to Enthusiasm in the Seventeenth Century: Toward an Integrative Approach', *Journal of Modern History*, 52 (1981), 258-280; Michael Heyd, '*Be Sober and Reasonable': The Critique of Enthusiasm in the Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries* (New York, 1995).

[93] Penn, 'No Cross, No Crown (1669)', in Penn, *Ethics*, pp. 39, 64, 76.

[94] Penn, 'No Cross, No Crown (1669)', p. 78.

[95] Penn, 'No Cross, No Crown (1669)', p. 78.

Heart Prepared by the Lord. This *Preparation* is by the *sanctification* of the *Spirit*'.[96] He continued:

> But it may be askt, *'How shall this* Preparation *be obtained?'* I answer; 'By *Waiting patiently, yet watchfully and intently upon God'* ... Here thou must *not think thine own* Thoughts, *nor speak thine own* Words ... but be sequestered from all *confused Imaginations*, that are apt to throng and press upon the Mind.[97]

With this combination of languages - self-denial, Calvinism, Anglican-style anti-enthusiasm - Penn fashioned an understanding of the individual's relationship to God, to himself, and to society.

To arrive at a clearer conception of this it is necessary first to pursue what, for Penn, was contained in 'the self'. '[F]or what has been the original of those great Debates, Contentions, and Religious Duels through the World', he asked in *The Guide Mistaken* (1668), 'but SELF?'.[98] This was the self unprepared for justification, liberated from its disciplinary bearings, 'dark' in comprehension.[99] To a considerable extent, *No Cross, No Crown* was a guide to the follies of this benighted self and the means by which it was stirred into action. He remarked on the problem of having one's mind 'stolen away' from pious activities. Recreations and vanities 'secure the mind' and assured it of its own ambitions and conclusions.[100] Once active in the world, this distracted individual would not only have failed to to commit sufficient attention to godly matters, but could very well be expected to trouble civil government. In a published tract to Labadie from 1672, Penn made the connection between enthusiasm and the distracted mind, warning that 'unless you all sink down, out of your own runnings, willings, & conceivings ... your conclusion will be meer ranterisme'.[101] The ranter's delusion was matched by his pride and avarice. When proud, he wrote, 'we are apt to be full of ourselves' instead of God, carelessly fulfilling our own will when promising instead that '*Thy Will be done*'.[102] From this, it is an

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[96] Penn, 'No Cross, No Crown (1682)', in Penn, *Ethics*, p. 172.
[97] Penn, 'No Cross, No Crown (1682)', p. 172.
[98] Penn, 'The Guide Mistaken (1668)', in Penn, *Ethics*, p. 191.
[99] Penn, 'A Trumpet Blown (1671)', in Penn, *Ethics*, pp. 123-24.
[100] Penn, 'No Cross, No Crown (1669)', pp. 71-72.
[101] Penn, 'Plain Dealing (1672)', in Penn, *Ethics*, p. 366.
[102] Penn, 'Some Fruits of Solitude (1693)', in Penn, *Ethics*, p. 520. Penn lined up with John Locke and dissenters of the period in the belief that freedom of conscience entailed not only freedom of thought but also freedom of worship. Penn thus did not separate 'understanding' and 'conscience' from 'will' and 'action', in the manner of Thomas Hobbes or Samuel Parker. But like Hobbes, Parker, and Stillingfleet, owing to his low

easy transition to consider the wider social implications of attempting to satisfy the appetites of the proud self-will:

> Pride does extremely crave power, than which not one thing has proved more troublesome and destructive to mankind. I need not labour myself much in evidence of this, since most of the wars of nations, depopulation of kingdoms, ruin of cities, with the slavery and misery that have followed ... have been the effect of ambition, which is the lust of pride after power.[103]

Via Calvin's fallen man, Penn seems to have peered into the state of nature. There are some curious reports issued by John Blackwell, deputy governor of Pennsylvania between 1688 and 1690, that would have made such a theoretical scenario plainly real to Penn.[104] Although Penn never lost faith in the capacity of Pennsylvania's Quakers to govern themselves and manage the province's conflicting factions,[105] by 1686, while energetically supporting James II, he had become increasingly alienated from his colonial subjects in America. Writing to Thomas Lloyd in Philadelphia, he expressed regret 'that Pennsylvania is so litigious, & brutish. The report reaches this place, that we have lost I am told, 15000 persons this fall, many of them men of great estates that are gone & goeing for Carolina.'[106] When his anger with the disordered state of affairs in Pennsylvania was at its most

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opinion of human nature, he worried that the uncultivated, undisciplined, and cloistered will would find destructive expressions in society, hence his preoccupation with collective consistency in Quaker worship and practice. On the relationship between the understanding and the will in Restoration religious controversy, see Mark Goldie, 'The Theory of Religious Intolerance', in Ole Peter Grell, Jonathan I. Israel, and Nicholas Tyacke (eds.), *From Persecution to Toleration: The Glorious Revolution and Religion in England* (Oxford, 1991), 332-64; John Dunn, 'The Claim to Freedom of Conscience: Freedom of Speech, Freedom of Thought, Freedom of Worship?', in Ole Peter Grell, Jonathan I. Israel, and Nicholas Tyacke (eds.), *From Persecution to Toleration: The Glorious Revolution and Religion in England* (Oxford, 1991), 171-93. On the respective views of Penn, Parker, Stillingfleet, and Hobbes, see Ashcraft, *Revolutionary Politics*, pp. 60-67; Jon Parkin, 'Liberty Transpros'd: Andrew Marvell and Samuel Parker', in Warren Chernaik and Martin Dzelzainis (eds.), *Marvell and Liberty* (Basingstoke, 1999), 269-89; John Marshall, *John Locke, Toleration and Early Enlightenment Culture: Religious Intolerance and Arguments for Religious Toleration in Early Modern and 'Early Enlightenment' Europe* (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 131-32, 554-57; John Marshall, 'The Ecclesiology of the Latitude-Men, 1660-89: Stillingfleet, Tillotson and "Hobbism"', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 36 (1985), 407-27.

[103] Penn, 'No Cross, No Crown (1669)', p. 108.

[104] An overview on Blackwell is provided in G. E. Aylmer, 'Blackwell, John (1624-1701)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004), online edn. (24 August 2010). Blackwell features prominently in Penn's correspondence and political affairs during this period. See especially *PWP III*, pp. 226-79.

[105] Despite attempting to sell the province back to the government in order to settle his debts, as late as 1712, and in failing health, Penn wistfully hoped to 'see pennsylvania once more, before I die'. See *PWP IV*, 'To James Logan (1712)', p. 724.

[106] *PWP III*, 'To Thomas Lloyd (1686)', p. 128.

intense pitch, he complained of the '*numskulls that [Quaker provincial council member] D[avid] L[loyd] governs'* and warned ominously that '*Sampson killed more Philistians at his death than in his life, let them have a care in provoaking me too far. They are a pack of vile brutish spirits*.'[107] These kinds of disillusioning experiences must have led him to explicitly communicate what, for him, was a basic principle of government, in a speech to the provincial council in 1700: 'I wish there wer no need of anie, but since Crimes prevail government is made necessary by mans degeneration.'[108]

Blackwell, no Quaker himself, focused on the problems of governing subjects of what appeared to him to be unruly religious inclinations. Consequently his letters to Penn are revealing of the political and religious affairs of the province in its second decade, and his brief tenure one of exasperated frustration. He reported of rampant greed, whereby the 'poorer sort', many of whom had taken to living in caves along the Delaware River[109] experienced extortion at the hands of the unscrupulous rich.[110] Of the Quakers themselves, he decided it was impossible 'to govern a people who have not the principles of governm[en]t amongst them'.[111] Driven by what Blackwell perceived to be perfidiousness and widespread disrespect for Penn's authority, the colonists were finally 'themselves ... the judges, in their owne boundlesse appetites, of every Right & Rent you challenge'.[112] The echo here of Thomas Hobbes's remark in *Behemoth* (1682) that the Reformation, having given 'every man, nay, every boy and wench' the belief that 'they spoke with God Almighty', turning them into judges of their own conduct,[113] was probably inadvertent. But the underlying assumption was the same: That individuals with principles anchored in nothing more robust than their own impulse for self-preservation - or the fulfilment of their own self-will, as Penn would have it - were corrosive to religion and government.

But in Penn the straying human will receives less attention than the

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[107] *PWP IV*, 'To James Logan (1709)', p. 660.
[108] *PWP III*, 'Speech to the provincial council (1700)', p. 591.
[109] *PWP III*, p. 134.
[110] *PWP III*, 'From Blackwell (1689)', p. 228.
[111] *PWP III*, p. 252.
[112] *PWP III*, 'From Blackwell (1689)', p. 244.
[113] Thomas Hobbes, *Behemoth* (London, 1682), p. 35. See also Ross Harrison, *Hobbes, Locke, and Confusion's Masterpiece: An Examination of Seventeenth-Century Political Philosophy* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 20.

methodical improvement of it. There are first of all two popular means of self-denial that Penn was careful to reject. The one, described in *No Cross, No Crown*, was a form of reclusiveness whereby the 'Soul is *Encloister'd* from *Sin*'. This '*lazie*, *rusty*, *unprofitable Self-denial'* was contrary to experiential Protestantism which, on the contrary, did not 'turn men out of the *World*, but enables them to live better in it, and excites their Endeavours to mend it'.[114] The other means, drawn here from *An Address to Protestants* (1678), was derived from his attitude to Roman Catholics and others who denied their own 'understanding':

> [I]t is one great Mark of the False Church to pervert the right End of True Doctrine, so hath she excelled in the Abuse of that Excellent Word SELF-DENYAL: For she hath translated it from *Life* to *Understanding*, from Morals to Faith, *Subjugare intellectum in Obsequium fedei*.[115]

For Penn, Protestantism restored to '*every man his just right of Inquiry and Choice*'.[116] True self-denial, then, entailed the testing of one's mind and soul, with the cooperation of reason and understanding, against the worldly temptations that besieged them.

Penn considered self-denial a lifelong habit necessary for consistently keeping one upon a godly path. It was a crucial element in the initial spiritual breakthrough that brought one to the light of the 'divine sense', and thereafter counterbalanced the destructive tendencies of human nature. This scheme is roughly analogous to the Calvinist process of justification and sanctification.[117] But Penn went only as far as conjuring the language of Calvinism, not Calvinism proper, as a means of conceptualizing his spiritual method. In Penn the arbitrary element inhering in predestination and the existential angst that went along with it are entirely absent. Instead the full expression of the inner light, which resided within all individuals without exception, entailed a kind of excavation undertaken by the individual, the success of which depended upon one's discipline. This is partly why Penn spent much of his life defending his beliefs from accusations of popishness. To one such accusation - that Penn's salvation

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[114] Penn, 'No Cross, No Crown (1682)', pp. 170-71.
[115] Penn, 'An Address to Protestants (1678)', in Penn, *Ethics*, p. 468.
[116] Penn, 'An Address', p. 469.
[117] On what remained of Calvinism in England's largely post-Calvinist theological climate, see R. T. Kendall, *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649* (Oxford, 1979).

was somehow dependent on one's works rather than the absolute will of God - he adroitly responded in 1693 that belief itself, as an 'Act of Mind', could be interpreted as God working upon one's mind, thereby affecting a godly form of good works.[118]

So thoroughgoing was Penn's lack of faith in the self-willed individual that he advises a denial of not only the 'unlawful self' but also the 'lawful self'. The lawful self enjoyed the gifts of God's favours, such as '*Husband, Wife, Child, House, Land, Reputation, Liberty and Life itself*'.[119] But these must be denied whenever 'the Lender calls for them, or is pleased to try our affections by our parting with them, I say, when they are brought into Competition with him, they must not be preferred, they must be denyed'.[120] As Barbour notes, here Penn must have had in mind his first three children, all of whom died in infancy.[121] But as always he likely also had a mind towards a concern for public religious order. His encounter with William Mucklow in the early 1670s, which came to focus on hat honour, was initially inspired in part by the rejection of Mucklow's marriage to a non-Quaker by senior leadership.[122] Penn's response to this particular issue was clear enough:

> [A]s for *Marriage*, we cannot have Unity with any in that solemn Performance of Marrying, who are acted by a Wrong Spirit, and so gone out of the Union of the Body of Friends: We do not deny them that are so Married, to be Married at all, as this Enemy [Mucklow] would conclude, though to be Married in the Unity we can never own them.[123]

One must sympathize with Mucklow's irritation with this appraisal of his wife in such language. But it was entirely characteristic of Penn to have placed the importance of the unity of the body over the fractious personal decisions of its individual members. Penn would not have interfered with Mucklow's freedom to marry such a woman, but if he were to find fellowship with the main body of observant Quakers, those who are moved by the holy spirit and not their own self-will, he must deny her for the sake of Christ.

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[118] Penn, 'A Key Opening a Way (1693)', in Penn, *Ethics*, p. 507.
[119] Penn, 'No Cross, No Crown (1682)', p. 167.
[120] Penn, 'No Cross, No Crown (1682)', p. 167.
[121] Barbour, in Penn, *Ethics*, p. 167.
[122] Barbour, in Penn, *Ethics*, p. 380.
[123] Penn, 'Judas', p. 388.

At bottom, however, it was the mind itself that is the site of expression of either the holy spirit or the self-will, and Penn suggests some specific guidelines for godly mindfulness. One must be aware that it was possible to employ the mind unlawfully when contemplating lawful things. To do so unseasonably (that is, at inappropriate times) or excessively might set one on a course towards atheism:

> How doth the soul come under an eclipse, lose sight, and at last all Sense of the living God, like men drowned in great waters? And thus many have lost their condition, and grown insensible: and then questioned all former experiences, if they were not mere imaginations; till at last they arrive at *atheism*, denying and deriding God and his work.[124]

This was another example of the confused mind, alienated from the inner light and the holy spirit. For Penn, that vanities and entertainments, the objects of the unlawful self, polluted the mind was self-evidently clear.[125] But the mind was not, and never could be, completely invulnerable to the 'noise' of self-will and the world's temptations.

As one means of meeting this challenge, Penn recommended the virtues of solitude. This was not a variety of reclusive monasticism. Cities, the handiwork of men, are contrasted to the natural setting of the country, 'God's provision for food, study, life, and learning'.[126] Penn's own retirement to the country in the 1690s occasioned the writing of his most well-known works, and it seems significant that he opted to extol the virtues of retirement from worldly affairs during this period, certainly the most chaotic and trying of his life. Between December of 1688 until June of 1689 he was imprisoned three times on numerous warrants and charges, the most serious of which was treason.[127] As noted above, this period was also characterized by intensifying factionalism in Pennsylvania. Adding to all of this was his increasing financial ruin, which led at last to the indignity of a stint in debtor's prison between January 1707 and August 1708.[128]

Penn, then, had an enhanced incentive to withdraw from the affairs

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[124] Penn, 'Tender Counsel and Advice (1696)', in Penn, *Ethics*, p. 139.
[125] Penn, 'A Letter of Love (1670)', in Penn, *Ethics*, p. 115.
[126] Robbins, 'Eclipse', p. 77.
[127] *PWP III*, p. 217.
[128] *PWP IV*, pp. 567-607; Richard S. Dunn, 'Penny Wise and Pound Foolish: Penn as a Businessman', in Richard S. Dunn and Mary Maples Dunn (eds.), *The World of William Penn* (Philadelphia, 1986), 37-55.

of men. He envisions the solitary mind as one freed from impatience and agitation. Sounding consistent with his younger self, he advised acting not 'by *Imitation*, but *Sense* and *Feeling* of God's Power in yourselves'.[129] Jesus himself 'chose out *Solitudes*; often going to *Mountains*, to *Gardens* and *Sea-sides* to avoid *Crowds* and *Hurries,* to shew his *Disciples* it was good to be *Solitary*'.[130] The objective was to silence not only the crowds and business of others, but to be situated in an environment conducive to reflecting attentively on the activity of one's own mind. In *Fruits of a Father's Love* (1699) he recommended spending every morning in such contemplation, the retirement of the mind into 'pure silence', emptied of 'Thoughts and Ideas of Worldly Things'.[131] To successfully 'sink' into this state was to find true communion with the holy spirit, to enlighten the mind, and to allow an individual 'true sight of himself'.[132]

Since Penn was no antinomian, he believed sanctification was an ongoing trial, and denying the folly of the self and self-will against the purity of holy spirit was a religious as well as a psychological challenge. But the site of this dynamic was not limited to the mind, although it was initiated there. Self-will - angry, enthusiastic, greedy, disruptive - everywhere found expression in society, and as Penn had pointed out in his debate with Mucklow, where the mind and soul moved, so too did the body.[133] The missing piece of Penn's views on spirit, religious belief, and authority, namely the wider body politic itself, will now be examined.

III

Penn's engagements in civil politics were at all times closely bound with the effort to achieve toleration. In the unfinished autobiographical pieces he wrote following the Glorious Revolution, when his loyalty to William III and the whig establishment was under suspicion, he stated defensively that he laboured for the cause of conscience for twenty years and believed his close association with Stuart monarchs would advance it.[134] Penn's credentials as an advocate for toleration are indeed firm, having

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[129] Penn, 'A Brief Account of the Rise and Progress (1694)', in Penn, *Ethics*, p. 601.
[130] Penn, 'A Brief Account', p. 602.
[131] Penn, 'Fruits of a Father's Love (1699, 1726)', in Penn, *Ethics*, p. 632.
[132] Penn, 'Primitive Christianity Revived (1696)', in Penn, *Ethics*, p. 615.
[133] *PWP I*, 'To Mucklow', p. 251.
[134] *PWP III*, p. 335.

exhausted every argument in favour of its utility to political and economical stability.[135] However, his involvement with the Stuarts, especially James II, 'the most autocratic and bigoted' of them, has been perceived by historians as mystifying.[136] Penn certainly aligned himself with what became whig principles over the course of the 1670s and 1680s, and even supported the republican Algernon Sidney for parliament in 1679 and 1680.[137] But he was neither a republican nor an exclusionist.[138] In *England's Great Interest* (1679), one of 'the first clear statements of party doctrine put before the English electorate',[139] he affirmed the main contours of the whig platform: the safety and security of the Protestant religion, relief for Protestant dissenters, liberty for the subject, rights of property, and the supremacy of parliament.[140] The task of securing the country from 'Popery and slavery' was, as Dunn notes, the closest Penn came to joining the whig chorus for a Protestant succession, and his views depart from those of other whigs on the issue of exclusion.[141] *One Project* (1679), which contains a test to separate Protestants who owe their allegiance to a government that allows them basic freedoms from Catholics who owe their allegiance to the pope, was strongly anti-Catholic, but it was implicitly an alternative to exclusion.[142] All of this, it might be added, placed Penn very far from the Shaftesbury circle and the other radical whigs on the political spectrum.[143]

This latter point is significant because it adds to the background of Penn's disinclination for radical political ideas and action. Historians of Penn the political activist, such as Dunn and Mary Geiter, have built their analyses upon the assumption of this disinclination. Geiter, for example, ruthlessly demystified him, evoking a wealthy individual, a courtier, concerned above all with his elevated social position, his economic prospects, and his efforts to preserve them.[144] Perry Miller concluded that

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[135] Penn, *Ethics*, pp. 395-402.
[136] *PWP III*, p. 26.
[137] Jonathan Scott, *Algernon Sidney and the Restoration Crisis* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 128-38, 155-62.
[138] Dunn, *Politics*, p. 32. For a contrary view on possible republican elements in Penn's politics, see Jonathan Scott, *Commonwealth Principles: Republican Writing of the English Revolution* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 330.
[139] Dunn, *Politics*, p. 27.
[140] Dunn, *Politics*, p. 27; Richard Greaves, 'Shattered Expectations? George Fox and the Restoration State', *Albion*, 24 (1992), p. 245.
[141] Dunn, *Politics*, p. 29.
[142] William Penn, *One Project For the Good of England* (London, 1679), p. 10.
[143] Dunn, *Politics*, p. 32.
[144] Mary K. Geiter, *William Penn* (New York, 2000), p. 1.

while Penn's authoritarianism and tolerationism could co-exist in practice only with some difficulty, an unwavering belief in the importance of wealth and property gave force to both convictions, in his own mind at least.[145]

But historians of Penn the religious visionary have been slower to grasp the point. In *William Penn and Early Quakerism*, Melvin Endy Jr. conjured ideas associated with millenarianism, overturning, and transformation rather hastily. Endy suggested at one point that Penn was inspired by an apocalyptic hope of overturning the structures of history.[146] 'It was Penn's hope', he wrote, 'that England could be goaded by the Quakers into becoming the vanguard of the coming kingdom of God, and this led him into some activities that seemed strange to older Friends who had accommodated the Restoration'.[147] Then, at another point, Endy stateed that Penn's 'transformationist hopes were most evident in the most distinctive area of his witness, his political activities on behalf of toleration and his attempt to set up and lead a society based on Quaker principles in Pennsylvania'.[148] It is surely more precise to say that Penn was no 'transformationist' at all, in either the milleniarian or the politically radical sense of the term. Certainly Penn occupied himself with affecting specific reforms, but he exerted more effort in defending the existing structures of society than in overturning them.[149]

Although Geiter added what could be deemed a conservative dimension to Penn's thought and action, she also drained the religious elements of his activism away almost entirely. This was presumably deliberate, as Geiter's efforts were partly polemical, directed against Endy, who argued that Penn's 'spiritual purpose' was his 'one steady object', as well as Edwin Bronner and *William Penn's Holy Experiment*.[150] Rather than picking up where Geiter left off and remaining at cross purposes with these two emphases, it is possible to understand how Penn's spiritual purpose, as one of his steady objects, fit into his practical-minded conservatism.

It is clear that Penn was no radical because he made the point,

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[145] Perry Miller, 'Review Article', *American Literature*, 12 (1940), 252-55.
[146] Melvin Endy, Jr., *William Penn and Early Quakerism* (Princeton, 1973), p. 127.
[147] Endy, Jr., *Early Quakerism*, p. 127.
[148] Endy, Jr., *Early Quakerism*, p. 137.
[149] Craig W. Horle and Richard Greaves have described in detail the practical political and legal reforms Quakers pursued after the Restoration under the leadership of Penn, Fox, and Fell. See Craig W. Horle, *The Quakers and the English Legal System, 1660-1688* (Philadelphia, 1998); Greaves, 'Shattered Expectations', 237-59.
[150] Geiter, *Penn*, p. 1.

constantly and systematically. A call for loyalty to the government was advanced clearly in *One Project*. Like many liberal-minded Protestants during this period, Penn believed the correct policy response to religious diversity was not to enforce uniformity but to open the state and the church to broad membership grounded in limited fundamental principles. Barbour, who believed that humanism powerfully animated Penn's outlook on this problem, judged that Penn 'reject[ed] no one, yet he felt no truth in moral relativism'.[151] Penn's advocacy of fundamentals was rooted in the conviction that they had both saving power and practical utility. One of these fundamentals, mentioned above, was the belief in God alone, and another was the belief in the rights of property.[152] A further political fundamental, the subject of *One Project*, was loyalty to the government. The state would earn 'civil interest' by according protection to peaceable dissenters, thereby strengthening social cohesion and economic prosperity, the latter of which was the grand theme of Penn's later tracts on toleration. Like contemporary contract theorists, he believed violations of the agreement's terms would result in social dislocation.[153]

Penn also appealed to Matthew 22:21[154] on multiple occasions to conceptualize obedience to the state. 'God & Caesar divides the man', he wrote in 1680, and 'if thes[e] people shall refuse to Caesar that w[hi]ch belongs to Caesar, to wit, Tribute & Civil Obedience, let the Law be executed w[i]th so much the more severity'.[155] The state, for its part, must avoid making

> [m]en, living never so honestly and industriously, and having else as good a Claim to Civil Protection and Preferment, [who] shall meerly for their Dissent from the Religion (a Thing they can't help; *for faith is the Gift of God*) be reputed the worst of Evil-doers.[156]

Although the consequences of evading responsibility to God or to Caesar

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[151] Barbour, in Penn, *Ethics*, p. 358.
[152] Dunn, *Politics*, p. 30; Edward Corbyn Obert Beatty, *William Penn as Social Philosopher* (New York, 1930), p. 190.
[153] Dunn, *Politics*, p. 58; Beatty, *Social Philosopher*, p. 23. On contract theory generally, see Richard Tuck, *Natural Rights Theories: Their Origins and Development* (Cambridge, 1979); Noel Malcolm, 'Hobbes and Spinoza', in *Aspects of Hobbes* (Oxford, 2002), 27-53.
[154] 'They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.'
[155] *PWP II*, 'To William, Prince of Orange (1680)', pp. 27-28.
[156] Penn, 'Address', p. 472.

were problematic, they did not invite apocalyptic or revolutionary correction. On this point especially, Penn hoped his efforts to refine Quaker discipline would find favour with the government. It is true that in his efforts to convince lawmakers of his case he could occasionally turn to a kind of 'gentle blackmail', to use Dunn's phrase.[157] Persecution injured the state by creating malcontent individuals, dispossessed of their freedoms and livelihoods, 'rend[e]ring a great Body of people *Useless* ... [and] provoking them to be *Dangerous*'.[158] '[R]aped Consciences', he wrote, 'treasure up *Revenge*, and such Persons are not likely to be longer Friends to *Caesar*'.[159] His advice to princes was to avoid 'strain[ing] Points too high, with their People: For whether the People have a Right to oppose them or not, they are ever sure to attempt it, when things are carried too far'.[160]

On behalf of the spiritual estates of persecuted individuals, he reminded those in power that incompetent administration would 'provoke' God.[161] In *The Great Case of Liberty of Conscience* (1670), the most comprehensive of his toleration tracts, he delved into greater detail on the spiritual problems that would follow persecution. Penn's interest in 'balance' in government seems to have helped him imagine the principle of separate realms of authority. The authority of the civil realm did not extend into that of the holy spirit or conscience, the 'just claim and Privilege' of God.[162] Consequently there was no reason why those living quietly ought to be disturbed by the state.[163] In the event that they were, 'the Work of his Grace, and the invisible Opperation of his eternal Spirit' was thwarted.[164]

In addition to forcing otherwise honest individuals into hypocritical conformity, he expressed concern that persecution would initiate a series of problems throughout the spiritual realms. Thus, 'Every spark of Integrity must be extinguisht. where *Conscience* is sacrificed to *Worldly Safety* and

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[157] Dunn, *Politics*, p. 33-34.
[158] Penn, *Ethics*, p. 297; Penn, 'Address', p. 472.
[159] Penn, 'Address', p. 474.
[160] Penn, 'Some Fruits', p. 538.
[161] *PWP II*, 'Second draft of the frame of government', p. 182.
[162] Penn, 'The Great Case of Liberty of Conscience (1670)', in Penn, *Ethics*, p. 421.
[163] *PWP II*, 'Petition to Parliament', p. 51; 'To the Earl of Arran (1684)', p. 511.
[164] Penn, 'Great Case', p. 421. This is the distinct spheres argument advanced most famously and forcefully by John Locke, which posits a dichotomy between the individual conscience and the interests of civil authority. See Ashcraft, *Revolutionary Politics*, p. 494; John Dunn, 'Measuring Locke's Shadow', in John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government and A Letter Concerning Toleration*, ed. Ian Shapiro (New Haven, 2003), 257-85.

Preferment; so that this *Net* holds no *Temporizers: Honest Men* are all the Fish it catches'. He warned, finally, 'NEVER TO THINK HIM TRUE TO *CAESAR* THAT IS FALSE TO HIS OWN CONSCIENCE'.[165] Penn ultimately directed a greater part of his displeasure with hypocrisy at the state rather than the hypocrite. '*Unreasonable are those* Imposers', he writes, '*who secure not the* Imposed *or* Restrained *from what may occur to them, upon their account; and most inhumane are those* Persecutors *that punish men for not obeying them to their utter ruin*'.[166]

A major component of Penn's strategy for correcting imbalance in government and hypocrisy in religion was to rehabilitate the popular perception of dissenters, particularly Quakers, in the eyes of authorities. Part of this effort was to convince them that Quakers espoused no principles threatening to government. At his most indulgent, and perhaps unwhiggish, he argued in the preface of his Pennsylvania *Frame of Government* (1682) that '*[t]he Powers that be, are ordained of God: Whosoever therefore resisteth that Power, resisteth the Ordinance of God*'.[167] Distinguishing between indispensable and indifferent matters in religion, he characterized the former as 'our Duty to God, to our Superiours, to the Household of Faith, and to all men and Creatures'.[168] He praised the late Hammond for '*exhorting his Party'* to tolerate 'private disobedience' and to disallow only the 'overweening conceit' that comes with enthusiasm and religious absolutism.[169] True religion 'excites obedience to superiors', and that respect was best expressed by obeying all just laws.[170] Penn also undertook a campaign of an entirely different nature to reconcile himself to authority in the late 1680s, dispatching private pleas to men of power to absolve him of the suspicion that lingered over him following William III's accession.[171] But even in this somewhat squalid context he found the initiative to advertise his confidence in Quaker innocence. Having no principles offensive to government, he confidently reported to the Earl of Arran that 'if

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[165] Penn, 'Address', p. 474.
[166] Penn, 'Great Case', p. 426.
[167] *PWP II*, 'The Frame of government *and* laws agreed upon in England (1682)', p. 212.
[168] Penn, 'A Brief Examination and State of Liberty Spiritual (1681)', in Penn, *Ethics*, p. 392.
[169] Penn, 'Great Case', p. 437; Barbour, in Penn, *Ethics*, p. 54.
[170] Penn, 'A Defence of the Duke of Buckingham's Book (1685)', in Penn, *Ethics*, p. 392.
[171] In March 1689 he wrote to the Earl of Shrewsbury to this effect, and in June 1689 he wrote to the Marquis of Halifax, claiming 'I am no fighter, no plotter'. See *PWP III*, p. 253.

god should suffer men to be so farr infatuated as to raise commotions in the Kingdom, he would never find any of that [Quaker] Party among them at least of note or credit'.[172]

The 'Generality' thought early Quakers '*Turners of the World upside down*', he wrote in *Brief Account* (1694), 'as indeed, in some Sense they were'.[173] But no longer. Penn's learning and experience in government compelled him to develop a more sophisticated outlook on how power might be accorded in state and civil society without turning either upside down. The truth is that the man who would later be heralded as a hero of American liberty and whose name in later centuries is associated with the many radical causes with which that ideal is known, exhibited a religious politics that was marked by a kind of eclectic flexibility, a facility for negotiating various traditions, but quite at home, in many ways, in the more conservative quarters of the Restoration polity.[174] Thus he lined up with some of the period's influential Anglican thinkers who attempted to throw reasonable and sociable religion into sharp relief. It is even tempting to perceive within his attachment to order and tradition the kind of legal-constitutionalist defences of institutions by law established favoured by tories. But the point cannot be carried this far.[175] Penn's experience as an aggrieved dissenter who desired to improve the body politic with the industry and reasonableness of his sect added to his perspective by awakening him to the importance of personal piety and how it might be practised in a way that was both godly and responsible.

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[172] *PWP II*, 'To the Earl of Arran (1684)', p. 512.

[173] Penn, 'Brief Account', p. 582.

[174] Two such Penn-related whiggish narratives, which deserve a more dignified fate than dismissal on that basis alone, are Edith Florence O'Brien, *An Admiral's Son and How He Founded Pennsylvania* (London, 1917); William Wistar Comfort, *William Penn and Our Liberties* (Philadelphia, 1947).

[175] Tim Harris, *Politics Under the Stuarts: Party Conflict in a Divided Society, 1660-1715* (New York, 1993), p. 37. The changes the Revolution of 1688 forced upon the terms of political debate, for Anglicans and tories especially, are conveyed by H. T. Dickinson, *Liberty and Property: Political Ideology in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (New York, 1977), pp. 13-57; J. G. A. Pocock, 'The Significance of 1688: Some Reflections on Whig History', in *The Discovery of Islands: Essays on British History* (Cambridge, 2005), 114-33; Robert Eccleshall, 'From the Restoration to the French Revolution', in Robert Eccleshall (ed.), *English Conservatism Since the Restoration: An Introduction and Anthology* (London, 1990), pp. 29-30, 57-60.