

‘UPON THE QUAKERS AND THE QUIETISTS’: QUIETISM, POWER
AND AUTHORITY IN LATE SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY FRANCE,
AND ITS RELATION TO QUAKER HISTORY AND THEOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

This article poses a number of questions around its subject matter, from which I develop some explanatory frameworks and further conceptualizations of Quietism. It addresses, primarily, the questions: What is Quietism? What were the issues of power and authority leading to the infamous Quietist Controversy in late seventeenth-century France? And subsequently, what is the nature of Quietism’s connection to the Quaker theological tradition?

KEYWORDS

Mysticism, Francois Fenelon, Madame Jeanne Guyon, Robert Barclay, George Fox, Isaac Pennington

INTRODUCTION

The appellation ‘Quietism’ is a linguistic construct and onetime ‘polemical term’¹ used to attribute pejorative meaning² to a particular form of mysticism which found its nemesis in the infamous Quietist Controversy³ of late seventeenth-century France. The particularity of Quietism lay in its emphasis on ‘a radicalizing spirituality which rejected every visible expression of piety’ and external religious observances, while emphasizing the pre-eminence of interiorized spirituality.⁴ Theologically, Quietism in late seventeenth-century France embraced the idea of democratic, unmediated access to the Divine through the ‘prayer of quiet’⁵ and the exercise of ‘pure love’. Its methodology, advanced by the influential lay mystic and writer, Madame Jeanne Guyon (1648–1717), encompassed various stages of contemplative practice, focused on developing and maturing the interior spiritual life of the practitioner.⁶ One of its core premises, furthered by Francois Fenelon (1651–1715), tutor at the Court of Louis XIVth and Archbishop of Cambrai,⁷ comprised a teaching on pure, disinterested, or ‘indifferent’ love,⁸ emulating the sixteenth-century theologian Francois de

Sales's *Treatise on the Love of God*, in which 'quiet is a precondition for God's action within the soul'.⁹ This had been 'read by an authority like Fenelon as a major exposition of the benefits of quiet and passive prayer'.¹⁰

This form of 'holy indifference'¹¹ mystical teaching had attracted the attention of Catholic inquisitors from the time of the Mediaeval Church,¹² namely in the trials of the Beguine, Marguerite Porete, and Meister Eckhart in the fourteenth century,¹³ and subsequently in sixteenth-century Spain and Italy.¹⁴ In later seventeenth-century Rome, the Spanish priest Miguel Molinos's writings¹⁵ on quietist mysticism (extracts of which, along with extracts from Madame Guyon and Fenelon's writings, comprised the popular nineteenth-century Quaker booklet, *A Guide to True Peace*¹⁶) precipitated his trial and imprisonment in 1687.¹⁷ Mita Choudhury, writing on the heterodoxical nature of Molinos's doctrine, remarks that,

Molinos's focus on the individual, along with the absence of any clerical influence in his theology, made him a target for ecclesiastical and lay authority... Molinos's contemplative doctrine gave the individual believer too much independence and had the potential to allow heterodox manifestations of faith.¹⁸

Following this, according to Marie-Florine Bruneau writing on Madame Guyon and the Quietist Controversy, 'accusations of quietism multiplied everywhere in a collective hysteria, making it impossible to distinguish fact from fiction'.¹⁹ In France, around the same time, it drew the attention of both ecclesiastical and State hierarchies to the writings and teachings of Madame Guyon, and, later, Fenelon, whose adamant allegiance to their quietist faith led them into direct conflict with State and ecclesiastical authorities.²⁰

QUIETISM AND RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY

Bernard McGinn, writing on the mystical tradition in Christian history, and tracing its inherent challenge to orthodoxy to Gnostic practices in the early Church,²¹ points to

certain inherently explosive tendencies in the interaction of mysticism and religious authority... These tendencies, or perceived dangers, are fundamentally relational, that is, they are not so much inherent to mysticism itself as they are expressive of the way in which the mystical aspect of the tradition comes to be viewed by the representatives of its institutional life and teaching.²²

While Michel de Certeau and Marsanne Brammer connect mysticism to 'a marginal and threatened tradition' existing within the Church, which they estimate is still identifiable today.²³ They speculate on an evolving process in which mysticism became detached from traditional ecclesiastical and theological orthodoxies, wherein it presented a divergent mode of consciousness, with differing religious references. This placed it in an 'abnormal' categorization within an increasingly secularizing society. A society, moreover, which attributed ultimate 'truth-value' to its own self-defining, rationalistic constructs.²⁴ Added to this, as McGinn tells us, mysticism appealed to 'the uneducated crowd' (as did the Quietism of Madame Guyon, as I show later) which automatically rendered it 'more dangerous to the guardians of orthodoxy'.²⁵

By the late seventeenth-century the ‘interiorized spirituality’, which Quietism promoted, presented a considerable theological challenge to the absolutisms²⁶ of both Church and State in France. Moshe Sluhovsky introduces a number of questions which illustrate the dialectical position between orthodoxy and Quietism. It was this dialectic which reconstituted issues of power and authority in the French Court and the Church of the time, and which led directly to the crisis of the Quietist Controversy in the last decade of the century,²⁷ of which, I suggest, given their connections with France,²⁸ and the availability of Fenelon and Guyon’s writings to them (see n. 38) British Quakers were not unaware. Sluhovsky asks:

What is more important—sacred doctrine or experience? Affection or scholastic reasoning? Learning from books, or learning through Love? What is the role of good works and human effort? Which prayers are better—vocal or mental? Do men and women, the clergy and the laity, the learned and the unlearned, enjoy equal access to the spiritual life? Who had the authority...to control such interiorized experiences?²⁹

This last question is especially salient in the context in which Quietism in late seventeenth-century France both flourished *and* became the victim of power struggles which consumed State and Church. The dualisms the questions suggest reflect the many opposing dualisms which surrounded Fenelon and Madame Guyon during the Quietist Controversy, and which provided a context of immense complexity, as both Mark Bryant and Bruneau show, especially for a spirituality which predicated its appeal on egalitarian simplicity.³⁰ These opposing dualisms concern polemics around power and authority in both State and Church versus the subversion of both by a mysticism whose references concerning power and authority lay in an amorphous interior landscape incomprehensible to the brokers of externalized forms of power.³¹ Sluhovsky comments that ‘One is immediately struck by Guyon’s radicalism...she did not shy away from controversial issues and did not hesitate to declare the complete lack of resistance by the soul to anything that was taking place within her’.³² This dialectical contrast is cogently demonstrated in Madame Guyon’s autobiographical account³³ of her interrogations, as well as in her ecclesiastical interrogator Bishop Jacques Bossuet’s polemical account, published interestingly under the title *Quakerism-a-la-Mode: or a History of Quietism*.³⁴

Caroline Walker Bynum theorizes, according to Bruneau, that ‘female mysticism in the Western tradition has to do with issues of authority and female, creative resistance’.³⁵ Certainly, Bruneau’s re-interpretation of the Quietist Controversy places Guyon in this tradition. Bruneau’s incisively intelligent analysis of Guyon and the Quietist Controversy deconstructs perceptions of Guyon as ‘victim’ and re-creates her as subversively exposing and reversing, by her radical mysticism, the antithetical values which were meant to destroy her.³⁶

Similarly, Don Cupitt re-frames mysticism as a protest against an institutionalized, dogmatic theology, which provides at the same time a ‘female critique of male-dominated religion’,³⁷ or, in Fenelon’s case, evidentially, a male critique of male-dominated religion. It was not for nothing, I suggest, that Fenelon persisted in his path of defending a lay female mystic³⁸ against all the orthodox values and expectations of his time, even though this led directly to confrontation with both State and

ecclesiastical power.³⁹ Indeed, some of his most significant writings⁴⁰ and letters, including to king and court, both during and after the Controversy, are bold confrontational exposés of the political and personal corruptions which abounded in both State and Church in the latter half of Louis XIV's reign.⁴¹

Theologically, both Guyon and Fenelon take the Catholic/Christian-based dualism of the individual as sinful and corrupt on the one hand, and therefore in need of the Church as 'institutional dispenser of the means of salvation'⁴² on the other, and subvert it. For them, the individual is, on the one hand, in need and spiritually hungry, and on the other, offered all the possibilities of unmediated transformation,⁴³ in which the only preparation needed is 'a quiet waiting on God'.⁴⁴ Guyon writes, in *A Short and Very Easy Method of Prayer*, which was to become a widely popular text with Quakers,⁴⁵

If you are starving and can find nothing to satisfy your hunger, then come. Come and you will be filled. You who are poor, come. You who are afflicted, come. You will be comforted... I especially address those who are very simple and...uneducated. You may think yourself the one farthest from a deep experience of the Lord, but in fact the Lord has especially chosen you!⁴⁶

While Fenelon writes that,

man, who does not bring himself about, is not made to seek after himself, but to exist solely for Him who has made him. His glory and his perfection consist in going out of himself, in forgetting himself, in losing himself, in being swallowed up in the simple love of infinite beauty.⁴⁷

It is interesting to compare these writings with the Quaker historian Rufus Jones's ultimately prejudicial view of Quietism, that 'the experience was so completely negative and devoid of content, that the individual could bring back nothing in its hands to show for its solitary journey'.⁴⁸

However, W.R. Ward notes that 'There was nothing particularly distinctive about Madame Guyon's formulation of Quietist doctrine, except that...there is no doubt that she had found a way of circumventing the institutional Catholicism of her day',⁴⁹ while Bruneau appraises Guyon as someone who 'courageously challenged the authority of the church in matters of spirituality. Her originality resides in the fact that she radicalized negative mysticism by democratizing its teaching, while the church wanted to keep it esoteric'.⁵⁰

The complex binary, therefore, as McGinn, De Certeau and Gershom Scholem show, is between mysticism and institutional religion, and also the fact that these are located within a particular cultural, social, and political ethos.⁵¹ I propose that Guyon stood between the polarities represented by female lay religious authority, operating independently of the patriarchies of the Church, while Fenelon stood between the polarities of absolutism and freedom of conscience.⁵² The confluence of these polarities, I suggest, invited a controversy which was ignited by the implacable integrity of both on these positions.⁵³ Samuel Laeuchli captures perfectly the dilemmas and processes—although writing about the struggles accompanying the emergence of canon law within the early Church—when he says,

The accounts show a sequence of encounters; they reveal fears, desires, shifting stances and fixed positions among those who made the decisions. They record a process, not merely a result; they uncover, on close inspection, a collision occurring at that moment [in Christian history].⁵⁴

‘UPON THE QUAKERS AND THE QUIETISTS’

In 1698, when the Quietist Controversy was drawing to its close, Bishop Jacques Bossuet, an eminent ecclesiastical prelate, antagonist of Quietism (and of Quakers, whom he regarded as ‘the most extreme fanatics’⁵⁵), and arch-defender of absolutist orthodoxy in the Gallican Church,⁵⁶ wrote to his nephew in Rome, ‘The Quakers are ordering M. de Cambray’s [Fenelon’s] book so eagerly that it has been necessary to stop its circulation’.⁵⁷ This was a reference to Fenelon’s *Maxims of the Saints of the Interior Life*, a thinly veiled and widely read defence of Quietism and Madame Guyon’s teachings. Dorothy Gilbert and Russell Pope, having made translations of original documents from the French, draw parallels between passages from the Quaker theologian Robert Barclay’s *Apology*,⁵⁸ published and available in France from 1676, and passages from Fenelon’s *Maxims of the Saints*, implying that Barclay’s theology had had at least some influence on Fenelon⁵⁹—which begs the question regarding the Quietists and Quakers as to just who influenced who. Undoubtedly, if Bossuet knew and had read Barclay’s works, then so had Fenelon. ‘It was more than strange’, comment Gilbert and Pope, ‘that Fenelon’s condemned book should contain a few paragraphs resembling those which Bossuet quoted from Barclay as examples of the heresy of the Quakers’.⁶⁰

Consequently, the Quaker historian Rufus Jones’s comments that ‘Robert Barclay...held the central positions of the continental quietists, and that his *Apology* is one of the main direct sources of Quaker Quietism’⁶¹ may be nothing more than assumption, the converse never having occurred to him—that possibly it was the continental quietists who held the central position of Barclay, and that the *Apology* was maybe not so much the *source* of Quaker Quietism as a *reflection* of what was already apparent within early Quaker faith and practice. Certainly, since the *Apology* pre-dates the Quietist controversy, it seems possible that quietism was foundational to Quakerism from its beginnings, as Bossuet believed, and as J. Rendel Harris suggested.⁶² Rufus Jones himself writes that there are ‘plain signs’ of quietism in Quaker groups, prior to the ‘influence’ of the Continental Quietists on them,⁶³ while Ben Pink Dandelion, in 2009, notes that,

Indeed, with an emphasis on the God-led as opposed to the human-motivated actions, we could see a genealogy of Quietism running back to the thinking of George Fox, the early Quaker leader, even before the influence of the continental Quietists and the seventeenth century writings of an earlier Robert Barclay to which Jones gives so much weight.⁶⁴

It is unlikely, I contend, that the *Apology* would have been approved by Barclay’s contemporaries and after, if it had not been considered to have been a true representation of Quaker theology. Gerardina Van Dalfsen contends that ‘George Fox...

encouraged Barclay's theology and considered it very important', quoting Fox as writing to Barclay:

And now Robert concerning the things thou speaks of about thy books, I say, it is well that they are sent, and keep within the Rule of the Spirit of life which will lead into all truth, and that all may be stirred up in your Nation to walk in it, for they have been a long time asleep.⁶⁵

Indeed, Francis B. Hall states that 'after the publication of Barclay's *Apology* in 1676, it was accepted as the definitive statement of the Quaker faith, and...this status continued for two centuries'.⁶⁶ Hall also writes that Barclay was familiar with Catholic mysticism and that 'it is important to realize that there are close parallels between the thought of Barclay and that of St. John of the Cross'⁶⁷ (one of the major influences on the Continental Quietists): 'For Barclay, as well as for the Catholic mystics, there must...be a "Night of Faith" or a "Cloud of Unknowing", and in worship this meant silence, both exterior and interior'. And again: 'Mystical experience...is witnessed to time and again in the writings of Barclay, and from this experience there emerged the use of mystical terms, principles and practices'.⁶⁸

Of course, Barclay did not just pluck these quietistic teachings out of thin air. Indeed, it does seem that quietist ideas pre-dated Barclay's time. Van Dalsen mentions Barclay's account of his first Quaker Meeting, in which a specific ministry, which was profoundly quietist (and Meister Eckhartian⁶⁹) in its theology, left a great impression on him: 'In stillness there is fullness, in fullness, there is nothingness, in nothingness there are all things'.⁷⁰ Compare this with Fenelon's statement that 'God who made us out of nothing, re-creates us, as it were every moment... Of ourselves we are nothing; we are but what God has made us'.⁷¹

Again, George Fox in his *Journal* expresses (consciously or not) the quietist *Via Negativa* experience of times of spiritual darkness,

And Friends, though you may have tasted of the power and been convinced and have felt the light, yet afterwards you may feel winter storms, tempests, and hail, and be frozen in frosts and cold and a wilderness and temptations. Be patient and still in the power and still in the light that doth convince you, to keep your minds to God; *in that be quiet*,⁷² that you may come to the summer, that your flight be not in the winter.⁷³

Compare this with Madame Guyon's instruction that,

If the wind be contrary and blow a storm, we must cast anchor in the sea, to hold the vessel. This anchor is simply trust in God and hope in his goodness, waiting patiently the calming of the tempest and the return of a favourable gale... We must therefore be resigned to the Spirit of God, giving ourselves up wholly to his divine guidance... The soul advanced thus far has no need of any other preparation but its quietude.⁷⁴

In a sometimes abrasive diatribe against the ungodly, an evangelistic tract written in 1653 by Fox advocates, alongside general wrathful condemnation of 'ungodliness', dwelling in 'pure Wisdom' and the Light of Christ,⁷⁵ and, in quietistic mode, 'to be taught alone of God, who teacheth eternal things eternally, and leads the Mind up⁷⁶ out of external things'.⁷⁷ He promotes differentiation from the world, as well as laying a precedent for the Barclayan idea of the originating Spirit behind all things,⁷⁸ which

signified Quaker quietism: 'God is the Word, Christ is the Light; and it is a Declaration of the Spirit, but the Spirit is not it; a declaration of Power, but the Power is not it...' ⁷⁹ Writing of the eminent Quaker and contemporary of George Fox, Isaac Penington, Andrew Brink convincingly charts Penington's pronounced quietism, influenced by his background in Puritan mysticism, and demonstrated in Penington's pre-Quaker tracts. It was in these, Brink claims, that 'The increasing quietism of the early pamphlets prepared for the contemplative Quakerism Penington adopted'. Penington clearly advocates, as Fox ⁸⁰ and the continental Quietists ⁸¹ were to do, that quietistic 'Abandonment of self-will to the divine was the only cure for perverse human nature'. ⁸²

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I propose that the evidence suggests that rather than Continental Quietism 'influencing' British Quakerism into quietist mode, what happened was effectively more a confluence of ideas and common experience, to which British Quakers responded, recognizing their own spiritual philosophy and lived values in that of the continental Quietists. As well as this, of course, the persecutions, imprisonments, and general sufferings shown on behalf of their faith by these Quietists were reminiscent of the experiences of the early Quakers in *their* confrontations with institutional power and authority. The paradox of both differentiation from and involvement with the world ⁸³ seems to be the cusp on which the Quietists attempted to resolve a spirituality which, for them, demanded totality of commitment, and, as Brink says of Penington's aspiration, 'a fuller mystical life within the Society of Friends'. ⁸⁴

NOTES

1. Armogathe, J.-R., 'Quietism', in Lacoste, J.-Y. (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Christian Theology*, New York/London: Routledge, 2005, p. 1329. Armogathe dates the nomenclature 'Quietism' as 'a polemical term that appeared in French, Italian and Latin around 1680'.

2. Conzemius, V., 'Quietism', in Rahner, K. (ed.), *Sacramentum Mundi*, V, London: Burns & Oates, 1971, p. 169. Conzemius claims the term was first used pejoratively at the trial of the Quietist Spanish priest, Miguel Molinos, in 1687.

3. The Quietist Controversy, one of several controversies engulfing the French Catholic (Gallican) Church at the time (others notably involving the Jesuits and Jansenists), took place over a time span of twelve years, between 1687 and 1699.

4. Conzemius, 'Quietism', p. 169.

5. Renoux, C., 'Quietism', in Levillain, P. (ed.), *The Papacy—An Encyclopaedia*, III, London: Routledge, 2003, p. 1268. The 'Prayer of Quiet' can be traced to the sixteenth-century Spanish Carmelite mystic, Teresa de Avila (a personal influence mentioned, among others, by the Quietist Madame Guyon in her *Autobiography*). See especially Teresa's work, *The Interior Castle*, 4th Mansion, Chapter 1.

6. Guyon, J., *A Short and Very Easy Method of Prayer*, ed. Metcalf, J.W., New York: M.W. Dodd, 1853.

7. Clarke, M.L., 'Bossuet and Fenelon as Tutors to Royalty', *History Today* 27/2 (1977), n.p.; see also Fenelon, F. *Dissertation on Pure Love*, London, 1698, repr. 1769.

8. The concept of 'pure love', although commonly attributed to seventeenth-century Quietism, was already well established in the Christian tradition. Bernard McGinn notes that 'All the forms of mediaeval theology tried to be true to two goals: deepening the understanding of faith (*intellectus fidei*) and enkindling charity (the *experientia caritatis*) so that one could arrive at the higher understanding of love...' ('The Changing Shape of Late Mediaeval Mysticism' [paper presented at the presidential address to the *American Society of Church History*, 6 January 1996]).

9. Sluhovsky, M., *Believe Not Every Spirit: Possession, Mysticism and Discernment in Early Modern Catholicism*, Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 2007, p. 126.

10. Sluhovsky, *Believe Not Every Spirit*, p. 126.

11. Evans, G.R., 'Sancta Indifferentia and Adiaphoria: "Holy Indifference" and "Things Indifferent"', *Common Knowledge* 15/1 (2008), pp. 25–26.

12. See Moore, R.I., *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Authority and Deviance in Western Europe, 950–1250*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2nd edn, 2007, re. the infraction of ecclesiastical authority and the systematic creation of the 'heretic' by the Mediaeval Church. See also Don Cupitt, *Mysticism After Modernity*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1998, p. 47, in which Cupitt remarks that 'Both of these terms ["orthodoxy" and "heresy"] are "floating" and political. Neither of them has any stable referent'.

13. Conzemius, 'Quietism', in which Conzemius comprehensively traces the origins of Quietism in both Eastern and Western religious cultures. See also Evans ('Sancta Indifferentia and Adiaphora', pp. 26–27) for the background to the ecclesiastical persecution of the Beguines and Marguerite Porete; and Bruneau, M.-F., *Women Mystics Confront the Modern World*, New York: SUNY Press, p. 140, where Bruneau writes that 'what distinguishes Porete and Guyon from other female mystics...is their strong critique of the church...and their clear message that the entire church hierarchy should be put into abeyance...'

14. Dupre, L., 'Quietism', in Dupre, L., and Saliers, D.E. (eds.), *Christian Spirituality: Post-Reformation and Modern*, London: SCM Press, 1990, pp. 121–41; see also O'Reilly, T., 'Meditation and Contemplation—Monastic Spirituality and Early Sixteenth-Century Spain', *Hallel* 26 (2001), pp. 10–26, in which O'Reilly charts some of the historical ecclesiastical injunctions over the issue of 'interiorised spirituality'.

15. Molinos, M., *Guia espiritual*, Rome, 1677; trans. Trevor Boiling as *The Spiritual Guide*, London: Lutterworth Press, 2006, as part of his doctoral research at Birmingham University.

16. Backhouse, W., and Ianson, J. (eds.), *A Guide to True Peace, or a Method of attaining to Inward and Spiritual Prayer, Compiled Chiefly from the Writings of Fenelon, Guyon and Molinos*, Darlington, 1813. The influential Quaker historian, Rufus Jones, comments that 'This tiny book is full-fledged Quietism, and...exerted an influence [on Quakers] out of all proportion to its size' (*The Later Periods of Quakerism*, I, London: Macmillan & Co., 1921, p. 58). This is probably because Quakers were already familiar with the complete works on which these extracts were based, as I show later.

17. Evans, 'Sancta Indifferentia and Adiaphora', pp. 27–30.

18. Choudhury, M., 'A Betrayal of Trust: The Jesuits and Quietism in Eighteenth-Century France', *Common Knowledge* 15 (2009), p. 168.

19. Bruneau, *Women Mystics*, p. 145.

20. Bruneau, *Women Mystics*, pp. 167–96; also Choudhury, 'A Betrayal of Trust', pp. 168–69.

21. Gershom Scholem, scholar of Jewish mysticism, traces this dissension between mysticism and orthodoxy to St Paul whom he denotes as 'the most outstanding example known to us of a revolutionary Jewish mystic. Paul had a mystical experience which he interpreted in such a way that it shattered the traditional authority' (*On the Kabbalah and its Symbolism*, New York: Schocken Books, repr. 1996, p. 14). I would suggest that this denotation belongs to Christ himself, of which early Quakers would have been well aware, given their extensive biblical knowledge and 'revolutionary' lens.

22. McGinn, B., "'Evil Sounding, Rash, and Suspect of Heresy": Tensions Between Mysticism and Magisterium in the History of the Church', *Catholic Historical Review* 90/2 (2004), p. 202.

23. De Certeau, M., and Brammer, M., 'Mysticism', *Diacritics* 22/2 (1992), p. 12.

24. De Certeau and Brammer, 'Mysticism', p. 13.
25. McGinn, "'Evil Sounding, Rash"', p. 209.
26. Blanning, T., *The Pursuit of Glory: Europe 1648–1815*, London: Penguin Books, 2008, pp. 207–17; see also Briggs, R., *Communities of Belief*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995, esp. Part 2, 'Agencies of Control' for background.
27. Bryant, M., 'Francoise d'Aubigne, Marquise de Maintenon: Religion, Power and Politics—A Study in Circles of Influence During the Later Reign of Louis XIV, 1684–1715', Unpublished PhD dissertation, London University, 2001.
28. Philips, E., 'French Interest in Quakers before Voltaire', *PMLA* 45/1 (1930), pp. 238–55. Philips also charts British Quaker connections with France in the seventeenth century in her book, *The Good Quaker in French Legend*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1932, esp. Chapter 1.
29. Sluhovsky, *Believe Not Every Spirit*, p. 98.
30. Molinos, *The Spiritual Guide*, p. 1; Guyon, *A Short and Very Easy Method of Prayer*, pp. 4, 29; Fenelon, F., *Christian Counsel on Divers Matters Pertaining to the Inner Life*, ed. Metcalf, J.W., New York: M.W. Dodd, 1853, pp. 40–44.
31. Bruneau, *Women Mystics*, pp. 169–79, in which Bruneau charts this polarity meticulously.
32. Sluhovsky, *Believe Not Every Spirit*, p. 130.
33. Guyon, J., *Autobiography*, Chicago: Moody Press, n.d. English translations are generally edited versions of the original. For background and competent analysis of Guyon's *Autobiography*, see Cholakian, P.F., *Women and the Politics of Self-Representation in Seventeenth-Century France*, London: Associated University Presses, 2000, in which Cholakian concludes that Guyon's spiritual journey is paradoxically both enhanced and subverted by her 'struggle to resist repression... They co-exist one beneath the other as two stories, text and subtext, discourse and narrative' (p. 146).
34. Bossuet, J., *Quakerism-a-la-Mode—or A History of Quietism*, Rome, 1698, p. 1. Described in its Preface as 'the Controverisie of Quietism...having made a great Noise in the World...this Book is the Bishop of Meaux's History of that Heresie...' Already in its title, Bossuet is making a connection between Quietism and Quakerism, as I show later.
35. Bruneau, *Women Mystics*, p. 221 (paraphrasing Bynum).
36. Bruneau, *Women Mystics*. This is Bruneau's thesis throughout, but see the discussion in her 'Conclusion' (pp. 221–25) on the subversive reversal of values imbued in the practice of negative mysticism by female mystics.
37. Cupitt, D., *Mysticism After Modernity*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1998, esp. Chapter 6.
38. In 1698 an English publication of Fenelon's book, *The Maxims of the Saints Explained Concerning the Interior Life*, appeared with an Introduction attributed only to 'A.N.' which describes how the book caused a furor within the French State and Church: 'the occasion of [the Rulers of the Gallican Church] taking a more publick [*sic*] notice was a certain Womans [*sic*] putting out a Pamphlet called "A Short Method etc" and dispersing some other papers, favouring very much of Quietism...' It also gives an overview of the accusations, trials, and imprisonment of Guyon, explaining that as a consequence Fenelon produced this book in her defence. The book includes a letter to the Pope from Louis XIV (1697) stating: 'They have all, as well Bishops and Doctors, unanimously reported that it was a very ill and dangerous book'. This is the version that Quakers would have so eagerly bought (see quote from Bossuet's letter to his nephew later in this article). Thus Quakers would have been well acquainted at the time with the issues concerning the Quietist Controversy in France and Madame Guyon's persecution at the hands of the authorities because of her teachings on the 'interior life of the soul'.
39. Ramsay, A.M., *The Life of Francois de Salignac de la Motte Fenelon*, London, 1723. Ramsay, Fenelon and Guyon's friend and Fenelon's biographer, gives an early account of Fenelon's disputes with State and ecclesiastical hierarchies. This is also numerous recounted in historical accounts of his life: e.g. Sanders, E.K., *Fenelon: His Friends and His Enemies*, London: Longmans, Green & Co.; New York, Bombay, 1901; Davis, J.H., *Fenelon*, Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1979, pp. 25–29.

40. Fenelon, F., *Telemachus, Son of Ulysses*, ed. Riley, P., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994; *The Maxims of the Saints* (London, 1698).

41. See Kekewich, M.L. (ed.), *Princes and Peoples*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994, pp. 227–28, for a complete transcript of Fenelon's letter to Louis XIV; and Fenelon, *Letters of Love and Counsel*, New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1964, p. 195, for Fenelon's censoring letter of 'Advice, Addressed Particularly to Persons Living at Court' in which he compares their profligacies to imprisonment.

42. Ward, W.R., *Christianity under the Ancien Regime, 1648–1789*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 21.

43. Fenelon, *Maxims of the Saints*, pp. 126–29, in which Fenelon explores at length the concept of spiritual transformation; see also Guyon, J., *Union with God*, 1688, ed. Edwards, G., Maine: Christian Books, 1981, in which spiritual transformation is a recurring theme.

44. Guyon, J., *A Short and Very Easy Method of Prayer*; Fenelon, *Christian Counsel on Divers Matters* in which 'waiting on God' is a prominent theme. This premise can be traced throughout their spiritual writings. It is also reminiscent of the Quaker founder George Fox's numerous references in letters to his followers to 'wait' on God. Epistle 20, written in November 1652, is particularly quietist: 'And if every Particular of you know not a Principle within, which is of God, to guide you to wait upon God, ye are still in your own knowledge; but waiting all upon God in that which is of God, ye are kept open to receive the teachings of God...it commands your own reason to keep silent, and to cast your own thoughts out... So, dwelling in the Spirit, it keepeth all your hearts to God'. See also Ep. 33, 43, 51, 55 (1653), 58 (1654), 97 (1655), and the pastoral treatise, 'A Visitation of Love Unto All People' (1659), to name just a few examples.

45. Part of this was reproduced in the nineteenth-century Quaker spiritual classic, *A Guide to True Peace*, but as Dorothy Gilbert and Russell Pope observe (in reference to Bossuet's *Quakerism-a-la-Mode*), 'This contains an account of Madame Guyon's life—the first one available to English readers. It antedates Josiah Martin's first brief study...in 1727, and makes it possible that English Quakers knew of her teaching as well as Fenelon's, during her lifetime' ('Quakerism and French Quietism', *Bulletin of Friend's Historical Association* 29/2 [1940], p. 95).

46. Guyon, *A Short and Very Easy Method of Prayer*, p. 3. This passage is also quoted in the Quaker text, *A Guide to True Peace* (1813).

47. Fenelon, *Telemachus, Son of Ulysses*, pp. xxi–xxii.

48. Jones, *The Later Periods of Quakerism*, p. 56. I develop a critique of Jones's approach to Quietism in my forthcoming article, "'Negative to a marked degree" or "an intense and glowing faith": Rufus Jones and Quietism Re-appraised', *Common Knowledge* (forthcoming 2010). In it, I attempt to show Jones's problematic inability to resolve the dialectical interplay between negative and affirmative theologies, which, I contend, is seminal to Quietist theology.

49. Ward, *Christianity Under the Ancien Regime*, pp. 22–23.

50. Bruneau, M.-F., 'Guyon, Jeanne Marie Bouvier de la Motte', in Young, S. (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Women and World Religion*, I, New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 1999, p. 385.

51. McGinn, "'Evil-Sounding, Rash'". McGinn discusses the complexity of the issues between mystics, including Quietists, and institutional authority, in a wide-ranging examination of contemporary scholarly writings on the subject; also see: de Certeau and Brammer, 'Mysticism', p. 13; Scholem, G., *On the Kabbalah and its Symbolism*, New York: Schocken Books, 1960, repr. 1996, p. 5 (also discussed in McGinn, "'Evil-Sounding, Rash'"). Scholem, in particular, identifies a 'revolutionary' aspect of mystical spirituality.

52. See Rapley, E., *The Devotes: Women and Church in Seventeenth-Century France*, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990, where Rapley traces the dialectical power dynamics of lay and religious women in relation to ecclesiastical authority, and the rise of civil and religious absolutisms of the period.

53. Ramsay, Fenelon's biographer, records that the outcome of the Quietist Controversy was that Madame Guyon, having spent ten years in prison, was eventually completely exonerated by a convocation of bishops, who issued a statement in her defence (arguably in defiance of Bossuet, her

chief prosecutor). Although exiled from Court to his diocese, after Bossuet's death in 1704 Fenelon continued to be active in pastoral work, writing, and politics (see Davis, *Fenelon*, esp. Chapters 6 and 7).

54. Laeuchli, S., *Power and Sexuality: The Emergence of Canon Law at the Synod of Elvira*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1972, pp. 4-5.

55. Bossuet, J., *The Animadversions of Bishop Bossuet upon the Quakers and the Quietists*, Rome, 1689.

56. Bossuet, J., *Politics Drawn from the Very Words of Holy Scripture*, ed. Riley, P., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990 (1st paperback edn 1999), which is Bossuet's extended apologetic for absolutism.

57. Quoted in Gilbert and Pope, 'Quakerism and French Quietism', p. 95. Bossuet had already made a connection between Quakerism and French Quietism when he had written in the Preface to *Quakerism-a-la-Mode* that 'It will also appear but too evidently from this treatise, that Quakerism owes its origine [*sic*] to that anti-Christian Church [Quietism], and that their opinions are much favoured there [in Quakerism] at present'. Therefore, in 1698, Bossuet was already identifying the origins of Quakerism as quietist, and implying this as the reason the Quietists were favoured by Quakers. The treatise, which was an account of his disputes with Guyon and Fenelon, carried no other reference to Quakerism in its text, despite its title, which was meant satirically.

58. Gilbert and Pope, 'Quakerism and French Quietism', pp. 94-95.

59. Gilbert and Pope, 'Quakerism and French Quietism', pp. 94-95.

60. Gilbert and Pope, 'Quakerism and French Quietism', p. 94.

61. Jones, *The Later Periods of Quakerism*, p. 59.

62. Bossuet, *The Animadversions of Bishop Bossuet*; Harris, J.R., 'The Influence of Quietism on the Society of Friends', *Founder's Lecture* given at Bryn Mawr College, USA, 30 April 1900, p. 7, in which Harris comments that 'it might be urged that in some respects the Society [of Friends] is Quietist in consequence of its original foundation...'

63. Jones, *The Later Periods of Quakerism*, p. 57.

64. Dandelion, P., 'Guarded Domesticity and Engagement with "The World": The Separate Spheres of Quaker Quietism', *Common Knowledge* 16 (2009), pp. 95-109.

65. Van Dalfsen, G., 'The Faith and Theology of Robert Barclay', *Bulletin of Friends Historical Association* 3/2 (1948), p. 61.

66. Hall, F.B., 'The Thought of Robert Barclay', *Quaker Religious Thought* 7/1 (1965), pp. 2-31. Dorian C. Bales also states that 'The *Apology* was accepted by Quakers as reliable summary of their religious thought soon after its publication...', p. 5 ('Barclay's Apology in Context: The Quaker Understanding of Revelation in 17th Century England', Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 1980).

67. Hall, 'The Thought of Robert Barclay', p. 10.

68. Hall, 'The Thought of Robert Barclay', pp. 12, 4.

69. See Matthews, M., *Awake to God: Explorations in the Mystical Way*, London: SPCK, 2006, p. 28, in which Matthews writes that 'God for Eckhart is nothingness—"no-thing-ness"—not a thing'. He quotes from Eckhart: 'For this ground [God] is a simple silence, in itself immovable, and by this immovability all things are moved' ('German Sermons', no. 48).

70. Van Dalfsen, 'The Faith and Theology of Robert Barclay', p. 58. For this source Van Dalfsen references in a footnote *Diary of Alexander Jaffray...with Memoirs*, p. 271. She gives no publisher or date.

71. Fenelon, F., *Dissertation on Pure Love*, London, 1698, p. 4.

72. Fox, G., *Journal*, London: Religious Society of Friends, pp. 283-84. See also further examples in Fox's Epistles, such as: 'in it [power] keep your Meetings, and be quiet, and live' (Ep. 82, 1660), and 'An Epistle to All the People on the Earth' (1657): 'Such shall find mercy of God, when their minds are guided up unto God, and their spirits and minds are quieted in silent waiting upon God... Here they come to feel that which quiets their minds to God, and they find and feel

the way of peace'. Quoted in Ross, H.M. (ed.), *George Fox Speaks for Himself*, York: William Sessions, 1991, p. 46.

73. Fox, *Journal*, pp. 283–84.

74. Guyon, *A Short and Very Easy Method of Prayer*, p. 28. This is reminiscent of Fox's admonition to 'be faithful and still, till the winds cease, and the storm be over' (Ep. 121, 1656).

75. Tavad, G.H., 'George Fox Among Christian Mystics', *Quaker Theology* 2/1 (2000). Online: <http://www.quaker.org/quest/issue2-3.html> (accessed 6 February 2010), in which Tavad outlines Fox's concept of the Inward Light, identifying its roots in Scriptural and Christian theological history.

76. It is interesting how Fox frequently utilises the concept of upwardness, 'up to God' (Ep. 14; 20; 24; 140; 149 *et al.*; and papers in 1650 (Tavad, 'George Fox Among Christian Mystics', p. 12), and 1653 ('To All That would know the Way to the Kingdome', pp. 5, 10), as a dualistic polarity to 'inwardness'. This is a common polarity in Christian mystical theology—as in 'ascent' to God—from Pseudo-Dionysius to John of the Cross, and is a core concept and polarity in Quietist writings.

77. Fox, G., *To All That would know the Way to the Kingdome: A Direction To Turn your Minds Within...*, London, 1653, repr. 1746, Library of the Society of Friends, 215/7, pp. 4, 10.

78. This is the theme of Robert Barclay's 'Second Proposition, Of Immediate Revelation' in his *Apology*, in which he argues that 'this divine revelation and inward illumination is that which is evident and clear of itself' (p. 22), proposing that God's first relationship with humankind occurred through immediate revelation and only afterwards through such means as the word and the law ('Third Principle', p. 33).

79. Fox, *To All That would know the Way to the Kingdome*, pp. 5, 10.

80. Sharman, C. (ed.), *No More But My Love: Letters of George Fox, Quaker*, London: QHS, 1980, p. 11 (Ep. 24), in which Fox writes: '...form nothing in your own wills and minds...growing up in wisdom and understanding to do the will of God, not your own wills'.

81. The thematic idea of 'abandonment to God' is advocated throughout their writings, but see especially Guyon's *Short and Very Easy Method of Prayer*, and Fenelon's *Dissertation on Pure Love*.

82. Brink, A., 'The Quietism of Isaac Penington: A Study Based on his Pamphlets of 1648–1650', *Journal of the Friends Historical Society* 51/1 (1965), p. 32.

83. See Dandelion, 'Guarded Domesticity', pp. 95–109.

84. Brink, 'The Quietism of Isaac Penington', p. 53.

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