

# 'A New Order of Things': Benjamin Furly, Quakers and Quietism in the Seventeenth Century

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## Abstract

The historian Paul Hazard commented that, 'In the closing years of the seventeenth-century a new order of things began its course.'<sup>1</sup> This article examines Quaker connections with Quietism in the theological and cultural context of the later seventeenth century, as reflected and contextualised in the diverse social *milieux* of Benjamin Furly's Quaker home and wider friendship network. It contends that through Furly, his alliances and the creation of his library, as well as the querulous times they lived in, Quietists were understood by Quakers as innovators and as belonging to the forward-thinking new order of early Enlightenment principles of spiritual democracies, toleration and liberty of conscience.

## Keywords

Benjamin Furly, Quakers, Quietism, Toleration, Furly's Lantern and Library, Republic of Letters

## Furly's Quaker Context

Benjamin Furly (1636–1714), an English Quaker merchant and scholar, settled in Rotterdam in 1659, where he established his home as a centre for Quaker Meetings for the next 30 years or more. He received regular visits in the 1670s and 1680s from such Quaker luminaries as George Fox (1624–91), William Penn (1644–1718), Robert Barclay (1648–90), George Keith (1638/9–1716), and other

1 Hazard, P., *The European Mind 1680–1715*, trans. May, J. Lewis, Harmondsworth; Victoria, Australia: Penguin, 1973 [1953; 1964], p. 504.

Quakers who accompanied them whilst on their travelling missions in Europe.<sup>2</sup> Quaker worship meetings in Furlly's house adhered to the practice of silent worship. From a statement of William Ames (d.1662), an early Quaker pioneer in Holland, silent Quaker meetings were established in Rotterdam from as early as 1656. William Hull noted that, in 1656, William Ames, 'the first Apostle of Quakerism' in Holland, wrote to Margaret Fell of the routing of some quasi-Quakers in Rotterdam, where 'a separation began to be made betwixt those that owned the truth and the Contenders and a silent meeting was established'. Having routed further bogus claimants from the Quaker ranks, he organised 'a "silent meeting", that is, a regular meeting for worship'.<sup>3</sup> It can be surmised that thereafter silent worship meetings became an established practice in Rotterdam, since, in 1675, Furlly and other members of Rotterdam Meeting reiterated the custom in a letter 'to the burgomasters and regents of Rotterdam', in which they complained that the locals were treating and handling Quakers 'with violence and annoyance' when they 'come together to wait in silence upon the Lord'.<sup>4</sup> By 1677 things had improved to the point where they were treated with a measure of acceptance and civility.<sup>5</sup>

During their 1677 missionary journey in Holland and Germany, William Penn, in his *Journal*, also confirmed the practice of the Quaker silent worship meeting and its purpose when he recorded that, having arrived at the town of Frankfort, George Keith, Benjamin Furlly and himself held a meeting with non-Quakers who proved interested in and amenable to Quakers. Penn wrote that, to these people, they 'recommended a silent meeting, that they might grow into a holy silence unto themselves; that the mouth that calls God father, that is not of his own birth, may be stopped, and all images confounded, that they might hear the soft voice of Jesus to instruct them'.<sup>6</sup> This quietist practice in worship had already been endorsed by leading Quakers. Fox, Barclay and Keith had written significantly on the theology

2 George Fox recorded in his *Journal* that, in 1677, 'The Friends that went over with me were William Penn, Robert Barclay, George Keith and his [second] wife [Elizabeth Keith], John Furlly and his brother, William Tallcoat, George Watts, and Isabel Yeomans, one of my wife's daughters.' (*Journal of George Fox*, Vol. 2, London: W. and F. G. Cash, 7th edn, 1852), p. 176. Furlly acted as general interpreter for them (pp. 177, 178). Penn had already visited in 1670/1 and again at least in 1686. Fox visited Holland again in 1684, along with Alexander Parker, George Watts, Nathaniel Brassey, William Bingley and Samuel Waldenfield (pp. 269–70).

3 See Hull, W. I., *Benjamin Furlly and Quakerism in Rotterdam*, Swarthmore College Monographs on Quaker History, 1941, pp. 203–04; 213.

4 Sachse, J. F., *Benjamin Furlly, 'An English Merchant at Rotterdam'*, Philadelphia, 1895, pp. 6–8. This letter is quoted in full by Sachse (p. 8).

5 Fox, *Journal*, p. 176. Fox wrote in his *Journal* that during the groups' 1677 visit to Holland and Germany, '... we had two Meetings at Benjamin Furlly's where many of the town's people and some officers came in, and all were civil'.

6 Quoted in Janney, S. M., *The Life of William Penn: with selections from his correspondence and autobiography*, Philadelphia: Lippincott Grambo & Co., 2nd edn, rev., 1853), p. 130.

and practice of silent meetings and the importance of quiet meetings prior to this 1677 mission.<sup>7</sup> This practice is noteworthy in understanding the theological connection that occurred not just in Furly's context but in a wider cultural context between Quakers and Quietists in the later seventeenth-century mind-set.

### Furly's 'Lantern'

Furly went further than simply allowing his domestic sphere to be used as a space for Quaker devotional meetings. He also created it as a public sphere for learning and for the cultivation and dissemination of tolerationist religious and philosophical ideas, based on the right to liberty of conscience and its free expression. Leading Quakers such as William Penn distinctly supported the principle of toleration. In 1670 Penn wrote a tract affirming himself as 'a friend to an universal toleration of faith and worship',<sup>8</sup> and another specifically on 'Liberty of Conscience'. In the latter he mounted a defence of persecuted Quakers, asserting that 'what God had discovered to us' (i.e. to Quakers by revelation) was that religious intolerance is a violation and an offence to both believers and to God.<sup>9</sup> By 1681 Penn actively promoted toleration and religious diversity in recruiting for and establishing his settlement in Pennsylvania, aided by Furly from his base in Rotterdam.

Founded on this Quaker value,<sup>10</sup> Furly's home with its extensive library became a gathering place—designated the 'Lantern' by its members—for a group of

7 Fox had written a short piece, 'Concerning Silent Meetings', endorsing the practice of silent worship, among many other endorsements of a silent form of worship and praise for 'quiet' Meetings in his Epistles. In 1670, George Keith had written a treatise, 'The Benefit, Advantage and Glory of Silent Meetings'; Barclay had published his, *An Apology for the True Christian Divinity*, first in 1676, a theological rationale for silent worship, among other things.

8 This was *A Seasonable Caveat Against Popery*, in which, although expounding that there was no authority in Scripture or in the early church for certain Catholic practices, he nevertheless affirmed his support for universal toleration in worship (See Janney, *Life of William Penn*, p. 87).

9 *The Great Case of Liberty of Conscience once more briefly Debated and Defended by the Authority of Reason, Scripture and Antiquity*. The original first edition of this tract does not identify the printer, but states the year as 1670 and gives the inscription 'Presented to the KINGS Consideration' (i.e. Charles II).

10 However, unlike his Quaker colleagues, Fox, in 1673, appeared to be antipathetic to the idea of liberty of religious conscience, reportedly stating at one point that 'Though many Friends have writ for Liberty of Conscience, I never liked the word, it is not a good word ... . No Liberty to the Presbyterians, no Liberty to the Papists, no Liberty to the Independents, no Liberty to the Baptists, &etc.' Source: see Anon, *The Spirit of the Hat* (no publisher stated), 1673, p. 41, and quoted in 'George Fox and Liberty of Conscience', Research Notes by K. Saylor, accessed online 24 March 2018 at <<http://www.quakerquaker.org/profiles/blogs/geroge-fox-and-liberty-of-conscience>>. Saylor suggests that this stance by Fox may have contributed to the tension between himself and James Naylor (and possibly with Penn and Furly), a significant early Quaker who 'writes of the Liberty of Conscience often'.

far-reaching radical thinkers. This diverse group, not uncommon in Rotterdam at the time, consisted of scholars already renowned as philosophers, theologians, physicians and litterateurs. They included Quakers, such as the German physician and Quaker author/apologist Ludwig Kohlans, who practised in Rotterdam, and the Christian Kabbalist/chemist philosopher and physician Francis Mercury van Helmont, who had converted to Quakerism in 1675—though not renouncing his Kabbalistic philosophy.<sup>11</sup> It would be surprising if Furlly's close Quaker friend Arent Sonnemans, similarly prominent in the Rotterdam Meeting, was not also an attender at the Lantern.<sup>12</sup> Hull writes of further (unnamed) Quaker ministers who visited Furlly's home regularly.<sup>13</sup>

As is typical of the time period, it seems the group did not include women, although Furlly, Penn, Keith, Barclay and other Quakers visited, debated and corresponded with reputed female scholars, and women scholars certainly contributed to the intellectual life of the day (see 'Quakers and the "Republic of Letters"' below). The Lantern's non-Quaker intellectuals included radical religious-tolerant theologians, philosophers and physicians from across Europe. These included, among others, the English philosophers John Locke (1632–1704) and Anthony Ashley Cooper, third earl of Shaftesbury (1671–1713); the onetime British politician Algernon Sidney (1623–83), later executed for high treason; the French Huguenot philosopher Pierre Bayle (1647–1706); and two Remonstrant<sup>14</sup> Calvinist-sceptic theologians, the Flemish Genevan Jean LeClerc (1657–1736) and the Dutchman Philipp van Limborch (1633–1712).<sup>15</sup>

11 A. P. Coudert recounts the Flemish van Helmont's life of persecution and imprisonment on a charge of heresy by the Inquisition and his conversion to Quakerism in 1675 whilst residing as physician and spiritual mentor to the respected Quaker philosopher/scholar, Lady Anne Conway, at Ragley Hall in Warwickshire, England. Furlly had been interested enough in Kabbalistic philosophy to help research and translate books by van Helmont. Van Helmont left the Quakers in c.1684 (amicably, according to Coudert), after objections, not least by George Fox, to attempts to fuse Kabbalistic beliefs with Quakerism. Coudert discusses the controversy surrounding this matter: *The Impact of the Kabbalah in the Seventeenth Century: the life and thought of Francis Mercury van Helmont (1614–1698)*, Brill's Series in Jewish Studies; Leiden, Boston: Brill, 1999, pp. 257–62.

12 See Hull, *Benjamin Furlly*, pp. 131–36.

13 Hull, *Benjamin Furlly*, p. 52.

14 Remonstrants were followers of a Dutch Protestant theologian, Jacobus Arminius (1560–1609), who was condemned and ostracised by the Dutch Reformed Church for challenging Calvinist precepts. He had many supporters of 'the Libertine conviction that religion should not be forced into an ideological straightjacket by Reformed churchmen any more than by Catholic prelates'. The Remonstrants were later severely persecuted by the Reformation hierarchy, a fact of which Furlly would have been aware (See MacCulloch, D., *Reformation: Europe's House Divided 1490–1700*, London, New York: Penguin Books, 2004, pp. 373–78).

15 See Coudert, *Impact of the Kabbalah*, pp. 273–75, where she provides an exhaustive inventory of Furlly's network. Furlly himself was a proficient scholar and 'As the leading Quaker in Rotterdam he authored and translated books defending his co-religionists' (p. 272).

Many of the members had already authored acclaimed works and, in Bayle and LeClerc's case, also founded widely distributed tolerationist periodicals.<sup>16</sup> In a 1687 edition of his periodical, *Bibliothèque universelle et historique*, LeClerc produced an article entitled 'Livres Mystiques', comparing and contrasting Quakerism and Quietism.<sup>17</sup> LeClerc's detailed knowledge of both groups, as illustrated in the article, indicates that he had discussed his subject comprehensively with Furly. Indeed, it could be argued that Furly's influence is apparent throughout the piece. The article reviewed Penn's *No Cross, No Crown* and three Quietist works, including one—of many—that Furly took pains to acquire for his library.<sup>18</sup> LeClerc explains that 'We have put this author [Penn] among the mystics (although he is anything but a Catholic) because his doctrine is rather like theirs.' He then lists similarities and differences, comparing and contrasting theology and praxis. Similarities outweigh differences, in that the similarities are explained in a longer-listed parity of teachings. These are to do with self-renunciation, interior Grace, and that 'prayer consists in keeping silence, in waiting on God with a heart fired by love'. The differences have to do with their divergent relationship to the Church establishment: 'the Quackers [sic] have broken with Protestantism', whilst the Quietists have had to compromise with the (Catholic) Church; the Quietists are necessarily circumspect, whilst the Quakers are more publicly audacious, flaunting their faith and their 'peculiarities' of social behaviour.<sup>19</sup> LeClerc wrote his review in the year that the works of the Quietists Miguel Molinos (1628–96) and Jeanne Guyon (Madame Guyon, 1648–1717) were being examined and Indexed (banned) by the Inquisition. These were the first intimations of the Quietist Controversy in France, which would engage the minds of the European religious intelligentsia for the next decade.<sup>20</sup>

In addition to scholars such as LeClerc, Furly's Lantern society included printers, booksellers and publishers of tolerationist and 'heretical' works. John Marshall cites the prominent Amsterdam printer/publisher Heinrich Wetstein (sometimes Wettstein, 1649–1726) as a member of Furly's circle.<sup>21</sup> Wetstein

16 Pierre Bayle produced *Nouvelles de la république des lettres* (1684–87) and Jean LeClerc *Bibliothèque universelle et historique* (1686–?). These journals were distributed internationally.

17 See Philips, E., *The Good Quaker in French Legend*, Philadelphia, London: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1932, pp. 23–25.

18 This was *Recueil de diverses pieces concernant le Quietisme et les Quietistes*, Amsterdam, 1686, a treatise mostly on Molinos (see text to n.76–78). Furly had also overseen and advised Stephen Crisp in his translation of Penn's *No Cross, No Crown* into Dutch, published in this year (1687).

19 See Philips, *The Good Quaker*, pp. 24–25.

20 The Quietist Controversy is further discussed in Pryce, E., 'Upon the Quakers and the Quietists: Quietism, Power and Authority in Late Seventeenth-Century France, and its Relation to Quaker History and Theology', *Quaker Studies* 14/2 (2010), pp. 212–23.

21 See Marshall, J., *John Locke, Toleration and Early Enlightenment Culture*, Cambridge Studies in Early Modern British History; Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006 (2010), p. 518, in which Marshall comments that 'Furly's circle included Quakers and

published and disseminated works by the seventeenth-century French Quietists across Europe during their own lifetimes. This included to Jeanne Guyon's followers in Scotland,<sup>22</sup> to Furly (see below) and possibly to further Quakers. Paul Hazard details the central role of printers and publishers in northern Holland in the international distribution of dissenting works. This included printing books banned in France, which were then smuggled back into France and distributed there. Hazard notes that,

[o]ccasionally, some French freethinker would have a current account at the Hague. Out there you could speak your mind freely; a writer was not obliged to trim his sails to the breath of political prejudice, or theological dogma. That then, was the place for a man of independent ideas to make his supply base.<sup>23</sup>

This fact may explain why Guyon entrusted her autobiography for publication after her death to Wetstein's friend, the Quietist sympathiser Protestant theologian, Pierre Poiret (1646–1719), as I show later. Wetstein himself may have also known Guyon, as he published her complete works in 1704, after her release from the Bastille in 1703 (see below).

Apart from Wetstein, many of the 'men of letters' in Furly's circle were both exiles and refugees, driven out of their birth-place or countries of occupation after suffering persecution and imprisonment.<sup>24</sup> In the larger cultural context, as reflected in Furly's domestic environment, the Netherlands, with its tolerationist stance, had become at this stage 'something of a European clearing-house; a home for political and religious exiles from many countries, a centre for the international collection and dissemination of literature and scholarship'.<sup>25</sup> In support of this trend, both Rotterdam and Amsterdam developed a significant trade in printing, publishing and bookselling. Although not without theological

Arminians [Remonstrants], and hosted, among others, Locke, LeClerc, Limborch and at least occasionally, Bayle, Basnage, and the publisher of many of their tolerationist works, Wetstein.' Justin Champion cites further acquaintances of Furly, 'associated with the radical publishing side of the "republic of letters"' (See Champion, J., "'The fodder of our understanding': Benjamin Furly's library and intellectual conversation c.1680–1714', in Hutton, S. (ed.), *Benjamin Furly and his World*, Leiden: Brill, 2007, p. 1; accessed online 4 January 2017, under Free Access at Royal Holloway publications portal. Now accessible through Royal Holloway Research Online, Digital Repository, at <https://repository.royalholloway.ac.uk/access/hierarchy.do?topic> under 'Author', Champion, Justin.

22 See n.97 in this article.

23 Hazard, *The European Mind*, pp. 112–13.

24 For example, Locke, Shaftesbury and Sidney from England, van Helmont from the Flemish lands, Bayle and LeClerc from France, after Louis XIV revoked in totality what had been already limited Protestant privileges and freedoms, in the infamous Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685), instigating a Huguenot diaspora across Europe, including to the northern United Provinces of The Netherlands and London.

25 Barber, W. H., 'Cultural Change in Western Europe', in Bromley, J. S. (ed.), *The New Cambridge Modern History: the rise of Great Britain and Russia 1688–1715/25*, Vol. VI, London, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1970, p. 74.

fractiousness, these cities attracted an intellectual *milieu* in which prominent religious scholars, writers and philosophers met regularly at venues such as Furly's Lantern. Here, they discussed and deliberated philosophical and religious ideas that interrogated and challenged the bounds of orthodoxy. Most, though not all, in Furly's circle were avowedly Christian, though of a progressive, and even sceptical, tendency. Consequently, their debates and disputes frequently focussed on such subjects as biblical interpretation, the nature and efficacy of the Christian faith and its teachings, and its practices and heterodoxical manifestations.<sup>26</sup>

Quakerism itself had not been free from such disputes, both externally and internally. Externally, Quakers engaged vigorously in written and verbal debate, whilst internal dispute had occurred from the James Naylor upset in 1656, and after.<sup>27</sup> George Keith and van Helmont eventually separated from Quakers because of internal controversies involving their particular perspectives on Quaker theology, and both William Penn and Furly were disconnected for a time. Many of these religious disagreements—within and outside of Quakerism in the contentious Europe of the mid to late seventeenth century—can be summed up in two ways: first, in differences over the question of how humanity should most effectively relate to God; and, second, in what way the Bible was either an indisputably fixed and literal authority or an otherwise fluid authority, open to interpretation in respect of this question.<sup>28</sup> These issues were just as much apposite to the group that met at Furly's home. However, though not always in agreement regarding theological nuances, nor indeed accepting of Quakerism, Alison Coudert considers that 'those whom Furly counted as close friends were united in their staunch opposition to intolerance and persecution, although they differed widely in their interests, religious affiliations, and beliefs'.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, Furly's home and the Lantern represented a microcosm and prototype of a growing reaction, first in the Netherlands, then in the wider European context, against the enforced assumption of the universal discourses and 'truths' of orthodoxy.

26 J. Marshall details how members of Furly's circle—such as Locke and Bayle, and presumably Furly himself—redefined the meaning of heresy and schism: 'many of the advocates of religious toleration did not accept that "heretics" and "schismatics" were correctly identified. They also questioned the capacity of humans to identify heresy accurately, or redefined "heresy" and "schism" so that the "heretics" and "schismatics" were held to be the *imposers* of belief and worship and not those departing from the imposed orthodoxy and practices' (See *John Locke*, p. 575).

27 C. J. L. Martin details controversies within Quakerism of the 1660s to 1690s in 'Tradition versus Innovation: the Hat, Wilkinson-Story and Keithian Controversies', *Quaker Studies* 8/1 (2003), pp. 5–22.

28 See MacCulloch, *Reformation*, p. 374, where the author succinctly cites the main issue of the Reformation disputes as 'how humanity relates to God'. This phrase encapsulates the essence of many religious disputes of the period, including between seventeenth-century Quakers and the established church and between the Quietists and the Catholic Church hierarchy.

29 Coudert, *Impact of the Kabbalah*, pp. 273–74.

In religious terms, this reaction exhibited as a response to the ‘heresies of divided Churches’, precipitated by the ideological struggles of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Reformation movement. MacCulloch quotes the French historian Dominique Colas, who describes the religious context of the Dutch Provinces of the time as a ‘multiplication of intolerances and fanaticisms within the different religious groups’.<sup>30</sup> Similarly, Hazard describes the developing hegemony of the Reformation Church as reflective of the Catholic Inquisition’s activities. He quotes Pierre Bayle, of Furly’s Lantern group, who found himself arraigned before magistrates and who wrote to his accusers in 1691: ‘God preserve us from the Protestant Inquisition; another five or six years or so and it will have become so terrible that people will be longing to have the Roman one back again.’<sup>31</sup> According to Hugh Trevor-Roper, the Reformation, which had begun with such promise, had itself soon fragmented into a repressive movement in which historic, ‘intellectual traditions of scepticism, mysticism, critical scholarship, lay reason, free will’ were soon denominated into heretical categorisations,<sup>32</sup> as many of Furly’s network had discovered. Nevertheless—as pre-figured by the Lantern—Trevor-Roper optimistically maintained that the impending eighteenth-century Enlightenment would eventually herald ‘a reunion of all the heretics’.<sup>33</sup>

As a result of the Lantern meetings in Furly’s home, John Locke, the English philosopher, became a Quaker sympathiser and lifelong family friend of Furly. It is not clear whether any non-Quaker members of Furly’s Lantern became Quakers,<sup>34</sup> and/or attended his Quaker Meetings for Worship regularly, but it was certainly described by Fox after his 1684 visit as a ‘pretty large’ Meeting.<sup>35</sup> In the Lantern itself, it can be surmised that Quietism figured at least as a broad consciousness among its members, especially as its historical ‘heretical’ categorisation had been renewed with the Inquisition’s condemnation of Molinos’ and Guyon’s publications in the 1670s and 1680s respectively (see below). These publications coincided with Barclay’s widely distributed *Theses Theologicae* (1674), a prelude to his later *Apology for the true Christian Divinity* (1676 in Latin, 1678 in English, with later translations by Furly from Latin into Dutch and French).

30 See MacCulloch, *Reformation*, p. 373.

31 Hazard, *The European Mind*, pp. 117–18. These circumstances indicate the level of risk of Furly’s alternative Quaker context and his radicalism in creating the tolerationist climate of the Lantern, and indeed, of his library.

32 This lengthy passage of H. Trevor-Roper’s *The Crisis of the Seventeenth-Century: religion, reformation and social change* is quoted in Coudert, *Impact of the Kabbalah*, p. 339 n.43, with only a very limited citation. However, the collection of essays is now freely available online in differing formats. Its original 1967 publication can be accessed at the Online Library of Liberty: <<http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/roper-the-crisis-of-the-seventeenth-century>> (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund inc., 2001), p. 215.

33 Trevor-Roper, *Crisis of the Seventeenth-Century*, p. 215.

34 Apart from Francis van Helmont, who became a Quaker in 1675 whilst living for nine years in England, though he later left to pursue his Kabbalistic course.

35 Fox, *Journal*, p. 271.



Molinos' and Guyon's publications also coincided with Penn's *No Cross, No Crown* (1669, rev. 1682), and further Quaker writings translated—mostly by Furly—and distributed on the wider European continent. The *Biographia Britannica*, a mid eighteenth-century multi-volume series detailing the lives of eminent people, observed of Barclay's *Theses Theologicae* that:

The *Theses Theologicae* which were the groundwork of [the *Apology*], were sent abroad sometime before the book itself, in Latin, French, High and Low Dutch, and English, addressed to the clergy of what sort soever ... he sent them to the Doctors, Professors and Students in Divinity, both Popish and Protestant, in every country throughout Europe, desiring they should examine them and send him their answers.<sup>36</sup>

It is not known whether Barclay received any 'answers'. But this action on the Quakers' part may well have contributed to the conflation, especially in France, of Quakerism with Quietism,<sup>37</sup> the learned recipients having perceived similarities in the teachings of the two movements. This happened markedly so with the French Quietists' main opponent, Jacques Bossuet (1627–1704), a prominent bishop at Louis XIV's court, who derisively conflated Quietism with Quakerism in his public sermons and writings.<sup>38</sup>

36 Oldys, W. (ed.), *Biographia Britannica, or the Lives of the most Eminent Persons who Have Flourished in Great Britain and Ireland*, London, 1747. No author specified for the entry on Barclay. We know that Jacques Bossuet, the main prosecutor of Jeanne Guyon and Francois Fenelon in the later Quietist Controversy, had received and read Barclay's works because he referenced them in his sermons and written disputes with the Protestant Calvinist pastor in Rotterdam, Pierre Jurieu, in 1680. This being so, we can assume that Fenelon, as an archbishop and prominent member of the Catholic Church at Louis XIV's Court, would also have received and read Barclay's works.

37 See Philips, *The Good Quaker*, esp. ch. 1, where she also discusses theologians' attitudes—'bitterly hostile'—towards Quakers (p. 18), and how knowledge of Quakers was spread in Europe and particularly in France.

38 See Gilbert, D. and Pope, R., 'The Aminadversions of Bishop Bossuet upon the Quakers and Quietists', *PMLA* 57/1 (1942), pp. 105–15. The authors discuss Bossuet's references to Quakers and to Barclay. He utilised both his sermons and letters to conflate Quakers with the French Quietists (Philips, *The Good Quaker*, pp. 22–23). Quakerism is also used in the title of his book, *Quakerism-à-la-Mode or a History of Quietism* (French publication, *Histoire du Quiétisme*, Paris, 1697; London: John Harris, 1698; Holland, 1698), his disputatious account of his involvement in the Quietist Controversy and an attempt to attack and ridicule Fenelon and, especially, Guyon. Despite its title, there was no reference to Quakerism in the text of the book at all. Since this was its English title, it is not even clear that it was chosen by Bossuet. However, since it was printed in London under this title in 1698, and was causing a stir in Europe, undoubtedly Quakers would have known of it and the implication in its title of synthesis between Quakers and Quietists. It would also have educated them (with all its bias) about the Quietist Controversy in France and the fate of Guyon, who was imprisoned in the Bastille in 1698—also the year in which Quakers were reported by Bossuet as clamouring to buy Fenelon's book, *Maxims of the Saints of the Interior Life* (*Explication des maximes des saints sur la vie interieure* (Paris, 1697; English publication, London: H. Rhodes, 1698).

### Furly's Library and Quietism

Like Penn, Barclay and Keith, Furly became a scholar, multi-linguist and author. He was also a prolific translator, translating numerous Quaker texts for the European market, and a knowledgeable bibliophile. As such, he established what became a renowned library at the time, one which reflected his active interest in religious toleration. Consequently, in the tolerationist, multi-cultural climate of the Netherlands, Furly's home became a well-known and accessible 'public' library as well as a social hub for like-minded *avant-garde* thinkers from a variety of backgrounds. According to Justin Champion, 'The picture of Furly's library as an intellectual entrepot, an epicentre of radical Enlightenment intellectual production seems well-forged and unimpeachable.'<sup>39</sup>

This home library contained an extensive collection of both scholarly works and rare books and manuscripts, largely focussed on various versions and analyses of the Bible, and diverse—not least those considered 'heretical'—theological thematics.<sup>40</sup> According to the sales catalogue compiled after Furly's death,<sup>41</sup> his library contained a substantial and eclectic range of religious and philosophical works, including those relevant to his own Quaker faith, as well as some on politics, secular history, lexicography and grammar. William I. Hull remarked that:

The catalogue bears eloquent testimony to Furly's intellectual and religious interests, revealing the large number of his books which related to early Quakerism and to the mystics and theologians of the seventeenth century and earlier writers, most of whom were regarded as heretics or 'free thinkers'.<sup>42</sup>

Among these religious works were a number of books on mystical subjects, mostly Christian mysticism, although a smaller section comprised various works of Jewish theology (*Theologia Judaica*). These volumes covered topics both orthodox

39 Champion, 'Fodder of our understanding', p. 2. Coudert, *Impact of the Kabbalah*, notes that Furly 'owned many works by sectarians and heretics as well as radical works by Spinoza, Bayle, Hobbes, Toland, Trenchard, Collins and Blount, which presaged the Deism, skepticism, and irreligion characteristic of the Enlightenment' (p. 272). His library also contained publications by eminent members of his Lantern group (See Hull, *Benjamin Furly*, pp. 82–100; 105–23; 128–30).

40 Hull notes that of 'more than 4,400 books' in Furly's library, 2,177 focussed on the Bible and theological themes [Champion records c.1500 titles compiled from Reformed and Catholic theology, 'Fodder of our understanding', p. 6], with 250 further books dealing with church history [*Historia Ecclesiastica*] and 'twenty parcels more of all sorts of Friends' Books' (*Benjamin Furly*, pp. 137–38). Hull also comments that Furly's library contained 'Scores of books and tracts written by upwards of a hundred Quakers themselves, published in English, Dutch, German, French and Latin', as well as copies of his own translations of books (pp. 149–50). Furly was also familiar with a further range of classical and biblical languages (p. 138).

41 *Bibliotheca Furliana sive Catalogue Librorum*, Rotterdam, 1714.

42 Hull, *Benjamin Furly*, p. 137.

and heterodox, and among them stood a significant collection of Quietist works. Those under the main heading of *Theologia Christiana* comprised sub-headings under which Quietist books would have been included: 'Catholici', along with 'Lutherani, Reformati, Remonstrantae, Mennonitiae etc.', and 'Mystici; Spirituales Quakeri; Enthusiastae, Prophetae etc.'<sup>43</sup> Champion, who examined the content and broader contextual function of Furly's library, comments that the range and variety collected under these headings reflected Furly's tolerance and inclusiveness, as well as 'Furly's own search for an authentic belief from amongst a diversity of theological positions'.<sup>44</sup> This is an intriguing statement, given Furly's lifelong Quaker faith. Notably, Champion makes no reference at all to Furly's Quakerism, an evidential influence in Furly's life and belief system, as Hull shows. This omission somewhat distorts Champion's estimation of Furly's personal spiritual context. That is, it is likely that Furly's position was not one of a 'lack of religious faith', as Champion interprets Furly's alleged comments to a visitor, who reported him as claiming to have 'no adherence to any religion'.<sup>45</sup> Rather, it is more likely, in the wider context, that Furly's comments reflected his affirmation of tolerance and liberty of conscience supported by his Quaker principles.<sup>46</sup> Hull quotes Charles Talbot, duke of Shrewsbury, who remarked of Furly at the time: 'Furly seems a pious Christian, but of no church, nor goes to none.'<sup>47</sup> Nevertheless, in terms of Furly's library, Champion testifies to its value in providing 'a source for the history of ideas and intellectual life in the later seventeenth century'; whilst Furly's wide-ranging correspondence with noted correspondents 'can provide the historian with a significant pathway into the sociability and life of the world of ideas in the period'.<sup>48</sup>

Although ownership of books does not necessarily provide evidence that the books were read, or show how, or if, they were instruments of circulation and influence, as a bibliophile/scholar and author with an active interest in the world of religious thinking and ideas, it is highly probable that Furly had read or was at the very least familiar with the content of his library. This included works that contained the 'infection of heresy', which 'was (in some sense) cultured within this environment of suspect books'.<sup>49</sup> We can at least assume that he purchased books

43 Champion, 'Fodder of our understanding', pp. 5–6.

44 Champion, 'Fodder of our understanding', p. 6.

45 Champion, 'Fodder of our understanding', p. 1.

46 Champion, 'Fodder of our understanding', p. 1. Quakers routinely did not see themselves as connected to a religion in an orthodox sense. Furly did separate from Quakers temporarily, seemingly over the issue of differences in ideas of religious tolerance (according to Coudert, *Impact of the Kabbalah*, p. 286) rather than his 'lack of religious faith', as Champion interprets it ('Fodder of our understanding', p. 1).

47 Hull, *Benjamin Furly*, p. 159 n.13. Hull surmises, although the evidence is unclear, that a temporary separation from Quakers occurred in about 1693 (p. 157). Coudert cites 1694 (*Impact of the Kabbalah*, p. 286).

48 Champion, 'Fodder of our understanding', pp. 3, 1.

49 Champion, 'Fodder of our understanding', p. 1.

whose thematic subjects were important to him, and/or he considered significant: that is, they explicated a way of thinking and belief that fitted his dissenting Quaker faith and, further, his commitment to religious toleration and enquiry. It follows that the books he acquired also contextualised a society and culture on the threshold of, if not immersed in, the embryonic but dynamic Enlightenment principle of liberty of conscience, thought and belief. It is therefore noteworthy that he included in his library a substantial number of books on Quietism or by Quietist authors.

### Quietist Books in Furly's Library

Within the category *Theologia Christiana*, as catalogued after Furly's death, lay a significant number of works about Quietism or by Catholic Quietists suspected of heresy. Sachse remarks that Furly's library reflected his interest in 'taking the side of the Separatists as opposed to the established churches' and that it consisted largely 'of theological subjects of the *suspectae fidei* order'.<sup>50</sup> Many of these 'suspected' Quietists were Furly's contemporaries or near contemporaries, whom Quakers later published in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They included the French priest and bishop of Geneva Francis de Sales (1567–1622), the Belgian Catholic mystic Antoinette Bourignon (1616–80), the Protestant theologian Pierre Poiret (1646–1719), the Spanish priest Miguel Molinos (c.1628–96) and the French Quietists Jeanne-Marie Guyon (1648–1717) and Francois Fenelon (1651–1715), archbishop of Cambrai.<sup>51</sup> In Furly's library, the works of these Quietists significantly outnumbered works by or about the more traditional Christian mystics (as below), except for Thomas a Kempis (c.1380–1471)—a favourite 'quietist' author of both Guyon and seventeenth- to nineteenth-century Quakers.<sup>52</sup>

According to Charles R. Simpson,<sup>53</sup> who detailed the mystical categories of Furly's library, among works by experiential Christian mystics—in all 27 are

50 Sachse, *Benjamin Furly*, pp. 18–19. Sachse records a visit to Furly in 1710 by an eminent German book collector, a Zacharias von Uffenbach, who later noted in his *Memoirs* that Furly's books 'were mostly on theological subjects of the *suspectae fidei* order and appear to be well-suited to Mr Benjamin Furly's taste'.

51 These are confirmed by Jones, R. M., *The Later Periods of Quakerism*, Vol. 1, London: Macmillan, 1921, pp. 57–58 n.1. Although Jones claims that 'after the seventies of the eighteenth century Quietism came [into Quakerism] in full flood through the translations made by the Quaker preacher and schoolmaster, James Gough' (p. 57), I suggest that the evidence shows that, in fact, these works were acquired by Quakers, as with Furly, before the end of the seventeenth century, through the Amsterdam publisher Wetstein, or perhaps through London publishers who had published the writings of Guyon and Fenelon in 1699 (see n.59).

52 Jones, *Later Periods*, p. 59.

53 Simpson, C. R., 'Benjamin Furly and his Library', *Journal of the Friends Historical Society* 11 (1914–15), pp. 70–73. Simpson remarks that 'It is interesting to note the large number of works that Furly had collected, and which in all probability had been used in the literary circle of which he was the centre.'

named—explicating the way to God through the interior life, a number of volumes by Catholic saints emerge. These include works by Bonaventure, Dionysius (later Pseudo-Dionysius), John of the Cross, Theresa of Avila, Jan Ruysbroeck, Johannes Tauler, Catherine of Genoa and the Lutheran pastor and mystic Jakob Boehme. In terms of collected works, Quietist-related volumes outnumber those by these Christian mystics. For example, of the general works of Christian mysticism in Furly's library as shown by Simpson, multiple-collected volumes (three or more) are by or about acknowledged Quietist authors: Dionysius (sixth century CE) (3); Thomas a Kempis (8); Francis de Sales (5); Antoinette Bourignon (5); Jeanne-Marie Guyon (5); and Francois Fenelon (5). This last included a transcript of the outcome of Fenelon's ecclesiastical condemnation after publication of his *Maxims of the Saints of the Interior Life*, a work so clamoured for by Quakers on its publication in 1697/8 that it caused alarm among Catholic Church authorities.<sup>54</sup> Also included are writings on 'Pure Love' (2 copies), a major Quietist theme, particularly explicated by Fenelon (after Francis de Sales), as well as a book entitled *Recueil de diverses Pieces concernant le Quietisme* (see below). Interestingly, only two works by Molinos are recorded.

From the record of his library, therefore, it seems that Furly had accumulated a notable collection of works on or by 'suspect' Christian mystics. That is, he collected works expressing the fissure and dialectical relationship that had been created between mystical spirituality, with its personal, experiential immediacy of access to the divine, and the dogma-centric, mediated praxis of faith in the ecclesiastical system. Undoubtedly, this dialectic, with its long-hereticised status in respect of mysticism, would have engaged the debates and discussions of the radical group that gathered around Furly's library, many of whom, as exiles and refugees from religious persecution, had undergone personal and often sore experience of these fissures.<sup>55</sup>

Historically, like the 'heterodoxy' of Christian mysticism in general, Quietism represented a mystical determinant which reawakened a fundamental debate in the later seventeenth century concerning the nature of the believer's relationship/contact with the Divine. This determinant had been relegated to an adverse categorisation by the theologically orthodox status quo, as indeed had Quakerism in its thus-far short history. In Furly's very lifetime, such adverse categorisation turned out to be present and evident—apart from continuing Quaker 'hereticisation'—in the evolving Quietist Controversy stirring the consciousness of European Christians during the later seventeenth century. The issues held intense relevance to the ongoing experience of first British, then

54 See n.84.

55 Whilst connected to Furly's group, Pierre Bayle had authored an extensive debate concerning structural definitions and distortions relating to the concept of heresy and toleration in his *Philosophical Commentary* (1686/7) and a *Supplement* in 1688 (See Marshall, *John Locke*, pp. 575–78, for an overview).

wider European, and afterwards North American Quakers: what is the nature and intent of God in Jesus Christ? How is the divine to be experienced and known by the spiritual seeker? What is the purpose, relevance and authority of Scripture, if any, in revealing and supporting the truth of this experience and its consequences? In what or whom rests the authority of interpretation and revelation? Each of these issues implied a further question, informed by the persecutory environment of centuries: what is the essence, authentic expression and meaning of ‘ecclesia’?

Clearly, the structural heresiologies these questions created interested Furly—particularly so when, as with Quietism, they implicated Quaker teaching on direct and immediate contact with God through the practice of silent worship and inward discernment of the Spirit’s leading, apart from any external mediation. This is key in considering the sizeable collection of books on Quietism or by Quietist authors that Furly took pains to order (as below). Hull writes that Furly ‘evidently fortified himself by reading the history of heresies throughout the centuries’, naming several books from his collection as examples.<sup>56</sup> Among these he cites as follows: ‘Madame Guyon: *The Song of Songs*;<sup>57</sup> *A Collection of several Treatises on Mystical Theology or Quietism* (coauthor Brother Laurent);<sup>58</sup> and *A short Means of learning to pray well*’, familiar to later Quakers by its more accurate and generally known title of *A Short and Easy Method of Prayer*.<sup>59</sup>

There seems to be no record of any of the books in Furly’s collection being objected to by the many prominent Quaker visitors and guests who used his

56 Hull, *Benjamin Furly*, pp. 148–49.

57 Its full title being: *The Song of Songs: explanations and reflections having reference to the interior life* (originally, *Commentaire au Cantique des cantiques de Saloman*, Lyon, 1687).

58 In fact, *A Collection of several Treatises on Mystical Theology, or Quietism* (1699) was not, as stated by Hull, ‘coauthored’ by ‘Brother Laurent’ (Brother Lawrence, a Carmelite lay brother, c.1614–1691), but, as mentioned in its Preface, included extracts from his letters instructing recipients on the practice of the presence of God. It also included the complete text of Guyon’s *A Short and Easy Method of Prayer* (*Moyen Court et très-facile de faire Oraison*, 1685), and letters of Francis de Sales and Jeanne de Chantal, both prime influences on Guyon and Fenelon’s Quietism. Pierre Poiret (Guyon’s friend and publisher, and known to Furly) is stated as a ‘contributor’ (editor). The publisher Wetstein had previously sent a similar ‘Collection’ containing Molinos’ writings in 1686–89 to Furly, through John Locke, along with other Quietist material (see specifics below).

59 See Hull, *Benjamin Furly*, p. 148. Hull cites these books by their Dutch titles in a footnote, published respectively in Amsterdam (1699) and Rotterdam (1699). Neither publisher nor translator is named. These works of Guyon had already been published in France in 1685 and 1687 respectively, with *Spiritual Torrents* (*Les Torrents Spirituels*) having been published in 1682). Despite being Indexed, these books were published in Holland in 1699—just after Quakers so eagerly bought up Fenelon’s *Maxims of the Saints* at the height of the Quietist Controversy. Guyon’s imprisonment in the Bastille, from 1698 to 1703, would have additionally enhanced the appeal of her works to Quakers. In other words, all of these titles, and more, were accessible to Quakers before the seventeenth century had ended.

library. Fox, Penn, Keith and Barclay, who stayed with him whilst on their travels, were themselves prolific authors and/or scholars—Fox would have avoided the term ‘scholar’ for himself—who maintained libraries of their own. Whilst at Furly’s home, there was reportedly ‘much literary labour accomplished’ by Fox and Penn,<sup>60</sup> and a number of Penn’s tracts were completed, ‘all of which were written in Holland in 1677’.<sup>61</sup> In addition, George Keith and William Gibson stayed for a prolonged period whilst on a mission to the Rhineland in 1679, and Steven Crisp stayed for extended periods at various times—all Quaker authors who utilised the facilities at Furly’s home and produced writings or collaborations with Furly.<sup>62</sup> Gertrud Deriks, Crisp’s second wife and a prominent Friend in Amsterdam, wrote an *Epistle to Friends* in 1682 from Rotterdam, probably from Furly’s home.<sup>63</sup>

Non-Quaker scholars also utilised his extensive library for their own writings, or, as Champion shows, for the copying and dissemination of ‘suspect’ works.<sup>64</sup> The philosopher John Locke resided at Furly’s home from around 1687 to 1689, and engaged in writing/revising some of his seminal works there. Locke published his treatise, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, one of the ground-breaking texts of the Enlightenment, in 1690, and it is likely that he at least part-composed and/or revised it in Furly’s library and discussed it with Furly and his Lantern group.<sup>65</sup> Luisa Simonutti suggests that Locke probably drafted a short essay entitled *Pacifick Christians* at Furly’s house in 1688,<sup>66</sup> whilst Gerald Cerny states that Shaftesbury stayed in Furly’s home and used Furly’s library to write his *Inquiry Concerning Virtue*.<sup>67</sup> As with Locke’s *Essay*, this philosophical treatise was considered one of the most influential works of the Enlightenment period and after.

60 Hull, *Benjamin Furly*, pp. 46–47.

61 Hull, *Benjamin Furly*, p. 44.

62 Hull, *Benjamin Furly*, pp. 50, 42.

63 See Hull, *Benjamin Furly*, pp. 42–44, 50, 74–75, 260. A number of further Quaker visitors are mentioned throughout Hull’s book, especially at pp. 20–29.

64 Champion, ‘Fodder of our understanding’, p. 2. Coudert describes Locke and Van Helmont residing with Furly for extended periods (*Impact of the Kaballah*, p. 272). Hull shows, throughout his book, *Benjamin Furly*, the wide variety of visitors, Quaker and non-Quaker, who utilised Furly’s library and hospitality.

65 Most historians cite 1687–89, but this may be because they derive it from Hull. Edith Philips writes that Locke lived at Furly’s home from 1684 to 1688 (*The Good Quaker*, p. 19). From 1686 to 1689 Locke corresponded with Furly from Amsterdam about obtaining Quietist books for him, so he clearly made forays away during this time, assisting Furly in building his library.

66 See Simonutti, L., ‘Circles of *Virtuosi* and “Charity under Different Opinions”: the crucible of locke’s last writings’, in Hutton, S. and Schuurman, P. (eds), *Studies on Locke: sources, contemporaries and legacy: in honour of G.A.J. Rogers*, Dordrecht: Springer, 2008, p. 161.

67 Cerny, G., *Theology, Politics, and Letters at the Crossroads of European Civilization: Jacques Basnage and the Baylean Huguenot refugees in the Dutch republic*, Dordrecht: Springer, 1986, p. 90.

Of course, Furly clearly accomplished more than simply providing library services and hospitality. As well as being an author/translator/activist, he also functioned as a prolific correspondent. Sachse writes that

His correspondence, however, with Locke, Sidney, Lord Shaftesbury and others, shows that Benjamin Furly was a man whose literary attainments were of no mean order, and that he was on intimate terms with many of the leading scholars and statesmen of the period who laboured incessantly to establish civil and religious liberty in Europe.<sup>68</sup>

This context is significant because, as already shown, Furly also accumulated a significant collection of Quietist works in his library from at least 1686—according to his correspondence with John Locke (see below)—until before his death in 1714. Some of these, in full or as a collection of extracts, would continue to be published by British Quakers and catalogued among Quaker writings from the mid eighteenth to the later nineteenth century, indicating their worth in Quaker spiritual historiography.<sup>69</sup> According to Champion, libraries such as Furly's offer important information to the historian, highlighting the interrelationship between 'books and ideas and people and beliefs'.<sup>70</sup> In Furly's case, the contents and utilisation of his library by a range of radical thinkers of the time made it a space for the broadening liberality of thought and ideas of the gestational Enlightenment.<sup>71</sup> Clearly, for Furly, a significant archive of Quietist thought and ideas was included in this fertile, heresiological space. The salient questions are perhaps those indicated by Champion's article and which are pertinent to Furly's collection, and the enquiry of this article: to paraphrase—how did Quietist books end up in Furly's library? And 'why these books, there?'<sup>72</sup>

68 Sachse, *Benjamin Furly*, p. 16.

69 See Smith, J., *Descriptive Catalogue of Friends Books*, London, 1867; Supplement, 1897, pp. 81, 85, 157, 397, 827, 853, 854. The Quaker Josiah Martin published or translated works on the life of Guyon and by Fenelon in 1727 and 1738 respectively, but their works had been widely available in translations in London from the end of the seventeenth century. P. Ward gives an overview in 'Continental Spirituality and British Protestant Readers', in Coffey, J. (ed.), *Heart Religion: evangelical piety in England and Ireland 1680–1850*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016, pp. 68–70.

70 Champion, 'Fodder of our understanding', p. 3.

71 I refer to the 'gestational' Enlightenment in Furly's time, in the light of Paul Hazard's assertion that 'its essential characteristics were discernible much earlier than is commonly supposed, that they were identifiable in a complete state of development while Louis XIV was still at the zenith of his power and glory, and that virtually all those ideas which were called revolutionary round about 1760, or, for that matter, 1789, were already current as early as 1680' (*The European Mind*, p. 10).

72 Champion, 'Fodder of our understanding', p. 9.



### Correspondences and Connections

In practical terms, the ‘how’ is answered in Furly’s correspondence with Locke with regard to Quietist books (see below). The ‘why’ is a more pertinent question with wider connotations. It is as applicable as the question over how and why the Quakers of 1697/8 clamoured so enthusiastically for Fenelon’s *Maxims of the Saints* that the ecclesiastical powers—that-be had to halt its circulation. How did so numerous a collection of Quietist books end up in Furly’s library? How were the larger community of his network, including Quakers, involved? Why these books? And who or what triggered his interest?

The answer to this last question may be ‘word of mouth’—from his Huguenot refugee friends or through various correspondences; perhaps contact with Quakers domiciled in Paris during his lifetime, and the lifetime of the Quietist Controversy.<sup>73</sup> It is possible that the widely publicised conflation of Quakers with Quietism emanating from France and the Netherlands inspired him; or it was simply his own interest in the heretical side of Catholicism through the written or spoken discourse of the ‘Republic of Letters’ (see below). Taking Furly as exemplar, such speculation may at least go part-way to answering the conundrum of the connection between Quakers and Quietism in the seventeenth century. As a preliminary, Furly’s friendship with John Locke and the publisher Heinrich Wetstein is a pivotal point of interest.

As Champion shows, for Furly, the construction of his library grew out of a communal process. This involved collective participation in harvesting recommendations and purchasing and obtaining books, as well as facilitating their circulation/usage with its corresponding dissemination of knowledge and ideas. The effort and expense expended in obtaining books in those times—particularly of the ‘heretical’ kind—meant that book collectors such as Furly, whose collection also developed into a significant ‘public’ library, would have purchased books that were likely to have been of importance not only to himself but also to the social/intellectual circle, including Quakers, who utilised his library. Therefore, for Furly, collecting Quietist books for his library entailed a dynamic process, a statement of purpose, and a reflection of his and his guests’ intellectual, political and spiritual orientation. It has to be said, however, that this was not all of his intent. Furly and his learned network ‘were not just interested in reading “radical” books, but importantly wanted to engage with the arguments of the mainstream’—both Reformed and Catholic—as also shown by the contents of his library.<sup>74</sup>

73 Further research and writing on this subject is as yet still in progress.

74 Champion, ‘Fodder of our understanding’, p. 16 (also for the contents of his library pp. 6–8). In this sense, it is significant that Furly also included in his library a book or books by Bossuet, the traditionalist, French Quietists’ prosecutor and nemesis (p. 7), although this may have been Bossuet’s *Quakerism-a-la-Mode or a History of Quietism*, his personal and disputatious account of the Quietist Controversy (see n.38).

Quakers of the time, especially on the European mainland, were evidently aware of the Catholic controversy surrounding Quietism, as was Furly—especially during the last two decades of the seventeenth century. A record of Locke's correspondence with Furly from Amsterdam in 1686–89 showed his attempts to purchase books on, or by, 'the Quietists' for Furly. It seems from Locke's letters to Furly that Furly had commissioned him to acquire these Quietist books for his library whilst in Amsterdam. Locke writes first on 26 December 1686 referring to 'The book called *Receuil des diverses pieces concernant le Quietisme, &c*, I have got for you ...'.<sup>75</sup>

Here, Locke is referring to a book whose full title is *Recueil de diverses pièces concernant le Quietisme et les Quietistes, ou Molinos ses sentimens et ses Disciples* (*Collection of various pieces concerning Quietism and the Quietists, or Molinos, his sentiments and his followers*).<sup>76</sup> As the title indicates, the book cites Miguel Molinos' writings. His *Guia Espiritual* (*The Spiritual Guide*), first published in Spanish in 1675,<sup>77</sup> included chapters on the inward spiritual life—especially Chapter 17, 'On Interior and Mystical Silence'—together with extracts from his and other less well-known Quietists' letters. The book Preface sets these works in context, addresses Molinos' extensive persecution by the authorities, and mounts a defence of both Molinos and the mystical way of 'true contemplation'. It declares that Quietism has not been destroyed by 'the matter of exterior worship', nor by the 'malice' of its enemies 'to make Quietism heinous'.<sup>78</sup>

Three days later, on 29 December 1686, Locke again writes to Furly: 'I have been with Wetstein: he says those books are not to be gotten. I asked the names of them and finde that one of them is in that collection concerning the Quietists which I intend to send or bring you.'<sup>79</sup> It is not clear from the letter what 'those books' are which Furly had requested. But, by 1685, Guyon had published the two books among those later referred to as 'indispensible' to Quaker travelling ministers<sup>80</sup>—that is, *Spiritual Torrents* and *A Short and Very Easy Method of Prayer*.

75 Forster, T. (ed.), *Original Letters of John Locke, Alg. Sidney, and Lord Shaftesbury*, London, 1847, p. 21. These extracts briefly mentioning Quietist literature are also quoted in Hull, *Benjamin Furly*, p. 140.

76 This is probably the 1686 edition, reviewed by LeClerc in his *Bibliothèque universelle et historique* (see n.18). A second edition in French was published in 1688 and edited by LeClerc's Huguenot friend and literary collaborator, J. Cornand de la Crose (Amsterdam: Chez A. Wolfgang et Chez P. Savouret, 1688).

77 The full title is *The Spiritual Guide, which releases the soul, and conducts it through the interior path to acquire the perfect contemplation and rich treasure of interior peace* (Spanish edition, 1675). It was published in several editions and many languages, even after his trial (1685) and imprisonment (1687). An abbreviated English edition appeared in 1688.

78 This may be a reference to Molinos' Jesuit opponents, who manoeuvred the prosecution against him in Rome in 1685.

79 Forster, *Original Letters*, p. 24.

80 Jones, *Later Periods*, p. 58.

Locke's reference to Wetstein in his letter to Furly is interesting, since Heinrich Wetstein, a leading bookseller and publisher in Amsterdam, was well known to both Locke and Furly. Wetstein was a long-time friend and publisher of Pierre Poiret, a theologian with a keen interest in mystical theology and Quietism, whose writings were later published by Quakers.<sup>81</sup> Poiret was also a close friend and follower of the Belgian mystic Antoinette Bourignon, as well as of Jeanne Guyon, also both later published by Quakers.<sup>82</sup> According to Samuel Richardson, Wetstein, in the later seventeenth century, was 'particularly responsible for publishing works by Jacob Boehme, Madame Bourignon, Madame Guyon and other [unnamed] spiritual writers ... . Wetstein also published all the titles of the pietist *philosophe* Pierre Poiret.'<sup>83</sup> Fenelon is not mentioned at this time, though his writings came to the notice of Quakers at least during the closing stages of the Quietist Controversy in the late 1690s, when Wetstein was probably the Amsterdam publisher referred to by the prominent French Catholic bishop Jacques Bossuet in a letter to his nephew—a cardinal in Rome—when he wrote:

They have reprinted [Fenelon's] book in Holland at the same print-shop which formerly did work for the fanatic Bourignon, who talked of nothing but pure love. The Quakers are ordering M. de Cambray's [Fenelon's] book so eagerly that it has been necessary to stop its circulation.<sup>84</sup>

On 9 January 1688 Locke wrote to Furly regarding further books by 'the Quietists', although these are not specifically named: '... to save you thirteen styvers for so much the book of the Quietists cost me'. On 26 January 1688 Locke again writes, informing Furly that 'the book of the Quietists that you sent for has been ready ever since the receipt of your letter'. Again, this book is not named. What is clear is that, at least from 1686, Furly was keen to acquire numerous books by or about 'the Quietists', as his library catalogue shows, and it may be, and is probably likely, that he had acquired Molinos' widely published and translated

81 Jones, *Later Periods*, p. 57–58 n.1.

82 Jones, *Later Periods*, p. 57–58 n.1. Poiret also later carried on a lengthy correspondence with Fenelon (See Corday, P. J., *Francois Fenelon: A Biography – The Apostle of Pure Love*, Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2012, pp. 201, 239.

83 Richardson, S., *The Cambridge Edition of the Correspondence of Samuel Richardson: correspondence with George Cheyne and Thomas Edwards*, Vol. 2, eds Shuttleton, D. E. and Dussinger, J. A.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014, p. 115 n.9.

84 Quoted in Gilbert, D. and Pope, R., 'Quakerism and French Quietism', *Bulletin of Friends Historical Association* 29/2 (1940), p. 95. Bossuet is probably referring to stopping the circulation of Fenelon's book in France, since he would have had no power over the presses in Holland. This raises the question as to who the Quakers he was referring to were—perhaps those domiciled in Paris at the time. It is of note here that Quakers were well known enough for one of the most prominent bishops of the French Catholic Church and the Court of Louis XIV to allude to them, without explanation, in correspondence with a prominent cardinal of the Vatican.

*Spiritual Guide* by then, and possibly Guyon's *Spiritual Torrents*, her *Short Method of Prayer*, and possibly her commentary on the *Song of Songs*, all published between 1682 and 1687.

Despite Furly's and his circle's early-Enlightenment approach to rationality of knowledge and to critiquing the status quo of religion, their interest in Quietism and mysticism (including Kabbalistic philosophy) reveals a more coalescent dimension in their approach to religious faith. Timothy Blanning sums it up when he stakes a claim for this 'age of reason' being also 'the age of faith', since it inspired a number of religious revivals, controversies and dissensions within both Catholicism and Protestantism. Despite trends towards new scientific approaches to the world with an emphasis on rationality of thinking, it was nevertheless a period in which 'religious literature had never been more popular'.<sup>85</sup> This polarity/conflation of reason and faith is reflected in both the constitution of Furly's network of friends and the contents of his library. Consequently, if the make-up of Furly's library is illustrative of the intersection between books and ideas and people and beliefs at the time, then his collection of Quietist books, along with his Quaker collection, reveals that he regarded them as part of the 'bridge' and dialectical tension of the age between reason and faith and orthodoxy and dissension. As Blanning comments of this era: 'it makes more sense to conceptualize [religious] cultural developments not as a linear progression from faith to reason but as a dialectical encounter between a culture of feeling and a culture of reason.'<sup>86</sup>

From the composition of Furly's library and the numerous selection of visitors he received into his home, it could be said that Furly exemplified this sphere of dialectical juxtaposition which typified the age: that is, both dissension from and dialogue with a faith-experience of the heart and inward spirit—subjective truthfulness—as well as of the rational mind with its externalities of reference—objective truth. In France, a faith-juxtaposition which included an experiential religion of the heart represented an emerging sphere. Though clandestine, this experiential faith nevertheless continued to develop in the face of persecution and repression. Typified by several ecclesiastical controversies within French Catholicism, the seventeenth-century Quietist Controversy, with its preferment of experiential knowledge of the Divine, epitomised this emerging sphere, with its implicit reference to tolerationist values. In non-Catholic territories, nothing characterised this dialectic more than Furly's creation of the Lantern society and his library. Both these resources supported engagement with reason and the esoteric dimension of the mystical—including, given Furly's audacious Quaker background, the comparative audacity of Quietism.

85 Blanning, T., *The Pursuit of Glory: the five revolutions that made modern Europe, 1648–1815*, New York, London: Penguin, 2008, p. xxvii.

86 Blanning, *Pursuit of Glory*, p. xxvii.

### Quakers and the ‘Republic of Letters’

As shown by Champion’s research and Hull’s statistics,<sup>87</sup> Furly’s library contained predominantly theological material, including its biblical content. It was also radically diverse in its composition. It could be argued that the nature of Furly’s library and the groups gathered around it, as well as his active participation in the ‘Republic of Letters’ through his prolific correspondence, intellectual friendships and extensive book collection, actually indicates that a gestational version of the Enlightenment—usually attributed to the eighteenth century—had begun in Europe in the last quarter of the seventeenth. It could also be argued that Furly, as well as his compatriots Penn, Barclay, Keith and Fox, participated fully in the widespread and international phenomenon of the Republic of Letters, and fully exploited it in their dissemination of Quaker knowledge and beliefs.

The Republic of Letters in the seventeenth century, nominated and identified as such by one of the Lantern’s own participants,<sup>88</sup> represented a democratisation of learning, information-sharing and communication through an invigorated ‘apolitical community of discourse’.<sup>89</sup> This phenomenon traversed national, cultural, religious and linguistic boundaries. Thus, in 1699, a Vigneul Marville wrote fulsomely that ‘The Republic of Letters ... embraces the whole world and is composed of all nationalities, all social classes, all ages and both sexes.’<sup>90</sup> Despite this, in most accounts—and certainly in Furly’s circle—its participants entirely comprised educated ‘men of letters’ who corresponded and published extensively, attracting an ever-expanding and participative audience. In contrast, Carol Pal provides evidence showing that, despite societal constraints, a number of notable women also contributed actively to the ‘intellectual commonwealth’ of the Republic of Letters in the seventeenth century.<sup>91</sup>

In reviewing Pal’s book, Sarah Gwyneth Ross writes that,

In these decades, personal and epistolary networks connected women intellectuals to each other and to their male colleagues, spanning confessional and geopolitical boundaries and encompassing interests as seemingly diverse as feminism,

87 See n.40.

88 Pierre Bayle (1647–1706), philosopher, Huguenot exile and member of Furly’s circle, produced and edited a literary periodical entitled *Nouvelles de la Republique des Lettres* (*News from the Republic of Letters*) in 1684–87. Such journals or periodicals, sometimes known as *gazettes*, became an integral part of the Republic of Letters for their function in spreading news, knowledge of publications, intellectual discussions and literary reviews.

89 Goodman, D., *The Republic of Letters: A Cultural History of the French Enlightenment* (Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 1996), p. 12.

90 Goodman, *The Republic of Letters*, p. 16.

91 See Pal, C., *Republic of Women: rethinking the Republic of Letters in the seventeenth century*, Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012, pp. 1–21.

mathematics, philosophy, practical medicine, high politics, Hebrew studies, pedagogical reform, and Pietism.<sup>92</sup>

She particularly emphasises ‘the collaboration between men and women’ as they ‘joined their era’s prominent conversations and debates’.<sup>93</sup> Of these women, Pal includes Princess-Abbess Elizabeth of Palatine and Bohemia (1618–80), grand-daughter of James I, herself an erudite philosopher, mathematician and religious scholar—with Quietist sympathies—who corresponded widely with some renowned philosophers, mathematicians and scholars of her day.<sup>94</sup> She also corresponded with George Fox, Robert Barclay, William Penn, George Keith and Furlly himself, before and after their visits to her in 1677.<sup>95</sup> As a result, she became a convinced Quaker sympathiser.

Quakers in the later seventeenth century corresponded with and included women in their own vigorous, informal Republic of Letters. Apart from Elizabeth of Palatine, they were correspondents on matters of theology and spiritual practice with the philosopher/mathematician Lady Anne Conway, who became a Quaker in 1676. Stephen Crisp and Furlly corresponded with and exchanged views—mostly disputatious, because she did not take well to Quakers—with the Flemish Quietist, Antoinette Bourignon; as did Barclay—and Miguel Molinos—with the scholarly Queen Christina of Sweden.<sup>96</sup> In

92 This reference to ‘Pietism’ is interesting as, during the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the term became somewhat conflated with Quietism, some historians perceiving similarities. M.-F. Bruneau writes that, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, ‘A common religious inspiration and a common philosophical reflection brought together Christians from a variety of traditions. This movement was manifested in the Quietist movement within Catholicism, in the Pietist Movement in the Lutheran Church ... . Breaking their national and confessional barriers, these individuals, sharing a commonality of spirit, found a religious “internationale”’ (*Women Mystics Confront the Modern World*, New York: State University of New York Press, 1998, p. 147). F. E. Stoeffler claims that the fact that the Quietists were severely persecuted in the latter decades of the seventeenth century ‘tended to recommend their beliefs to those Protestants [including Quakers, it can be surmised] who resented both the Catholic and Protestant religious establishments’. He identifies Quietism as a stream of mystical spirituality that coalesced with Pietism through the writings of, first, Molinos and, later, Guyon (*German Pietism During the Eighteenth Century*, Numen Book Series, *Studies in the History of Religions*, Vol. 24; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973, p. 172).

93 Review of C. Pal’s *Republic of Women* by Sarah Gwyneth Ross, *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 44/2 (2013), pp. 258–59.

94 See Pal, *Republic of Women*. These spanned René Descartes, Gottfried Leibniz, Nicolas Malabranche and Anna Maria van Schurman, whose Labadist/Quietist group she sheltered at her abbey (pp. 23 n.4, 24, 72).

95 See Hull, *Benjamin Furlly*, pp. 33–34, 49, 110. Also see Janney, *Life of William Penn*, p. 126.

96 Molinos, M., *Miguel Molinos: the spiritual guide*, ed. and trans. Baird, R. P.; New York: Paulist Press, 2010, pp. 5; 15. More research is needed, I suggest, which would undoubtedly throw light on Quaker women correspondents during this era.

France, where the Republic of Letters participants were known as *philosophes*, there is evidence of extensive correspondence, book publishing and manuscript-sharing between the French Quietists, Guyon and Fenelon, with those connected to Furly's network, such as Poiret and Wetstein; and the group of Scottish Episcopalian followers and personal friends of Guyon. Wetstein is pivotal in the contact network between all parties.<sup>97</sup>

In terms of Furly's book collecting and friendship network, and the intellectual community who met at his home—and for Quakers in general—this Republic of Letters represented liberty of conscience and an extraction of intellectual authority, learning and interpretation from the exclusive province and jurisdiction of the Church, where these things had been embedded throughout the centuries. In many ways the Republic of Letters exemplified a seventeenth- and eighteenth-century democratic equivalent of the twenty-first-century technological revolution in communications. Quakers of the seventeenth century fully embraced the spirit of this Republic. In addition to the female correspondents already mentioned, Furly, Fox, Penn, Barclay and Keith corresponded and counter-responded prolifically with a wide range of friends and foes, Quaker and non-Quaker, over religious issues of both accord and contention. Furly himself was quite exceptional in this sense. As part of his varied interests, he maintained an international network of correspondents of all persuasions, as well as welcoming researchers and visitors to the extensive hospitality of his home and library.<sup>98</sup>

Such a democratic criss-crossing of discourse—letters, publications and written discussions between people of all kinds, bridging national, cultural

97 See Henderson, G. D., *Mystics of the North-East*, Aberdeen: The Third Spalding Club, 1934. This is an account of the connections and letters between a group of Scottish Episcopalian in north-east Scotland—the most named are George Garden, James Keith, James Forbes and Lord Deskford—who became followers of Guyon and Fenelon. Henderson also reproduces original reciprocal letters between themselves and Guyon, with whom they formed a lasting friendship after her release from the Bastille. Some of the group resided with Guyon at her home and/or with the international tolerationist communities which formed around her nearby. It is interesting to speculate about whether any Quakers participated in these communities. She writes movingly to the Scottish group about the death in 1715 of Fenelon, with whom she had remained friends after the Quietist Controversy had ended (p. 94). Two members of the Scottish group were present at her deathbed. Wetstein is referred to numerous times throughout Henderson's book—mostly in the recorded correspondence between Guyon's Scottish supporters—as the go-between and supplier of Guyon and Fenelon's writings and published letters. Poiret is referred to in the correspondence as 'the venerable Poiret'. The members of this group were often persecuted and accused of being Jacobites, with its main adherents recorded as fleeing to Holland—including Rotterdam—and France at various times (p. 131).

98 Hull, throughout his book, shows how Furly corresponded and collaborated widely with Quakers and non-Quakers in writings, translation and publishing to disseminate knowledge of Quaker and tolerationist thought and belief in Europe, which undoubtedly would also have found its way to America. As examples, see Hull, *Benjamin Furly*, pp. 8, 32–33, 42, 68–76.

and theological boundaries—combined with the tendency of recipients to retain personal annals of the correspondence, mean that diverse connections—semblances of opinions, learning, ideas, critique and rebuttal—can be traced between disparate communities of people who otherwise would have remained unknown to each other. It also meant that, at the time, participants learned of a variety of writings and ideas through channels of reference and recommendation of which otherwise they would have had no knowledge.<sup>99</sup> In this way book collections were compiled from connections made, ideas that appealed and learning that expanded a consciousness of a wider, more eclectic thought-world. These connections were often the product of someone who knew someone who corresponded with someone else. In this way also, connections with like-minded people were made that otherwise would not have occurred.

This connectedness is just as apposite to Furly and his circle. That is, there is evidence of interrelating correspondences and friendships both within and outside Furly's group that could well have intersected, in turn, with Furly and his Quaker network. This includes connections with the French Quietists Guyon and Fenelon themselves. Thus we find, as previously illustrated, the English philosopher John Locke writing to Furly in 1686–88 about obtaining books for him concerning the Quietists from the prominent Amsterdam publisher Heinrich Wetstein. Wetstein was also connected to Furly and the Lantern, as was Locke. Wetstein, in turn, knew Madame Guyon through his long friendship with Guyon's close friend, Pierre Poiret, both of whose works Wetstein published. Both Wetstein and Poiret must have corresponded with Guyon and visited her after her final release from prison in 1703 (and possibly before), to discuss her writings and potential publications. These were published by Wetstein in 1704. Guyon also entrusted to Poiret the manuscript of her autobiography for publication after her death. Poiret also maintained a lengthy correspondence with Fenelon, which has been preserved.<sup>100</sup> In addition, Wetstein and Poiret regularly kept in contact with Guyon's Protestant followers in Scotland.<sup>101</sup> Therefore, at the very least, Furly—and his Quaker group—must have been aware of connections, even if indirect, with the French Quietists.

Despite uncertainty of delivery and occasional disruption in the postal or carrier system, the Republic of Letters thrived, with its dynamic counter-culture of written discourse. What could be termed a community or Republic of Spoken Discourse also thrived, transferring knowledge and information through oral communication in meetings and gatherings, as at Furly's Lantern, that were

99 Certainly, Hull's book is sourced largely through evidence from archived original correspondence, and William Sewell was said to have compiled his authoritative 25-year project on Quaker history, begun in the late seventeenth century, by utilising 'a mass of correspondence' as the basis of his research (published Amsterdam: 1717; London: 1722).

100 See Corday, *François Fenelon*, pp. 200–01, 239 n.486.

101 See n.97.



emulated throughout the Netherlands.<sup>102</sup> In this way, it could be surmised, seventeenth-century Quakers began to learn of and understand similarities of experience and belief between themselves and European Quietists. This would have occurred through verbal interaction, writings, personal experience and communications, so that knowledge was also being constantly transferred through a vibrant transmission of information where like-minded groups met together for conversation, discussion and debate.

It seems that seventeenth-century Quietists also participated in this influential counter-culture of gatherings involving like-minded people in republics of spoken and written discourse. Indeed, Fenelon and Guyon's first meeting took place at a gathering of spiritually minded 'court devots' to which she belonged, which met outside the Church's domain in private houses.<sup>103</sup> It was this group that first read and then encouraged Guyon to publish her writings, unusual as it was for a lay female in those times. Fenelon and Guyon were also prolific correspondents, using the opportunity for teaching, exposition and learning. Volumes of their letters were published either just before or soon after their deaths.<sup>104</sup> As did Quakers, they used the printed word and assumed the dissemination and democratisation of learning as a means of transmitting their ideas, and of—consciously or unconsciously—subverting the exclusive authority of the ecclesiastical hierarchies. Books may be banned and burned (as were Guyon's), but it was very difficult to ban and control such a flow of personal correspondence.

Guyon undoubtedly held to the principles of the Republic of Letters in her communications. Ronney Mourad and Dianne Guenin-Lelle claim that Guyon 'maintained an extensive correspondence with leaders of various spiritual movements in the countries where she was becoming known, including self-identified Quietists, Quakers and Pietists',<sup>105</sup> although they provide no additional information to expand upon this statement. In her treatise, *A Short and Easy Method of Prayer*, Guyon clearly states a democratisation of spirituality and

102 These groups were also replicated by the *Salon* culture in France, largely hosted and attended by women, which met for education, debate and discussion purposes, and the more egalitarian coffee-house culture in Britain (mostly male in composition) and Germany (where women participated), where people met to transact business, discuss the events of the day, read newspapers and generally converse.

103 Corday, *Fenelon*, pp. 69–70.

104 Henderson, *Mystics of the North-East*. Letters between Guyon's followers in Scotland frequently discuss the writings of Fenelon and Guyon ordered and received (usually from Wetstein in Holland), with references to these throughout their letters to each other (pp. 75, 79, 82, 130, 148, etc.). Volumes of Fenelon and Guyon's published *Letters* are recorded as being obtained by them: Guyon's *Discours chrétiens et spirituels*, 2 vols, 1716; and *Lettres chrétiennes et spirituelles*, 4 vols, 1717–18 (pp. 109, 154) and Fenelon's *Spiritual Letters (Oeuvres Spirituelles)*, 2 vols, published in Antwerp in 1718 (pp. 151, 155). Fenelon died in 1715, and Guyon in 1717. These volumes would have easily been available to Quakers in Holland and elsewhere.

105 Mourad, R. and Guenin-Lelle, D., *The Prison Narratives of Jeanne Guyon*, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2012, p. 52.

communicates this message outside the bastions of male authority. She authoritatively contextualises the spiritual life as an event that is universal in scope, emphatically and repeatedly utilising the word 'all': 'all are capable of prayer, and all are called thereto, as all are called to and are capable of salvation'.<sup>106</sup> In this way, and in the communities that gathered around her later, she advocated tolerationist principles. She addressed the poor, the unlearned and the disadvantaged and audaciously advises (male) spiritual directors on the best methods of connection and communication with the illiterate and unread.<sup>107</sup> In her first published book, *Spiritual Torrents*, she states unequivocally at the beginning that 'Souls under divine influence are impelled to seek after God, but in different ways'.<sup>108</sup> For statements such as these, her books were Indexed by the Inquisition.

Towards the end of her life, when religiously diverse communities had gathered around her, Guyon's Scottish followers who resided with her said of her that she refused to consider any attempt at 'converting' her adherents, being adamant that everyone should stay within their own tradition and follow their own light:

When any of her Protestant friends consulted her about going over to the Roman Church, she dissuaded them, and advised them to remain where they were and labour there to become true Christians, that it was no more ye will of God that such distinctions should subsist, which he was to remove and unite all and govern them in the unity of his spirit.<sup>109</sup>

Mourad and Guenin-Lelle also suggest that it was through her followers in these communities that her work gained widespread readership among Quakers,<sup>110</sup> suggesting that Quakers may have had close links with these groups, perhaps from the residual Quaker community domiciled in Paris at the time of the Quietist Controversy.

Undoubtedly, such statements of toleration from Guyon in her writings would have appealed to Furlly's radical ideas, as well as to those in his Lantern and Quaker community committed to the concept of liberty of conscience. Added to this, Guyon had been 'hereticised' by the Catholic church for her letters and publications, and her audacity as an informed lay female mystic and prolific biblical interpreter.<sup>111</sup> Molinos and later Fenelon were also severely censured

106 Madame Guyon, *A Short Method of Prayer and Other Writings*, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 2005; reprinted from the Allenson edition, London: 1907, p. 8. No translator identified.

107 Guyon, *Method of Prayer*, pp. 9, 63.

108 de la Motte Guyon, J. M. B., *Spiritual Torrents*, trans. Marston, A. W., from the Paris edition of 1790 (Dodo Press, 1875), p. 1.

109 Quoted in Henderson, *Mystics of the North-East*, pp. 49–50.

110 Mourad and Guenin-Lelle, *Prison Narratives*, p. 3.

111 Guyon had published extensive biblical commentaries beginning with her commentary on *The Song of Songs* in 1687. Her 12-volume commentary on the Old Testament (*Commentaires sur le Vieux Testament*) was published in Holland in 1714–15; and her eight-volume commentary on the New Testament (*Commentaires sur le Nouveau Testament*) was

for their communications by a Church and State seeking to consolidate their positions in the face of increasing societal change and theological challenges—not least, in France, from its Protestant and mystical-orientated minority. These ‘heretical’ writers, just as the Quakers, had seized the often tyrannical narrative of theological and ecclesiastical orthodoxy and subverted it. It is little wonder that Furly saw fit to seek out and include the hereticised writings of Molinos and the French and further Quietists in his library.

### Conclusion

Benjamin Furly and his network, Quaker and non-Quaker, were emblematic of a changing age in which freedoms of conscience, thought and varied religious sensibilities were beginning to feed into the discourses of paradigmatic ways to be part of the human endeavour. This involved toleration and democratisation of being in the world; and Quietism, as Quakerism, was part of that process. Contrary to Rufus Jones’ negative portrayal of Quietists, they were, for Furly and his network, precursors and symbols to seventeenth-century Quakers of an age opening up to a different kind of religiosity; free-thinking, tolerationist, impatient of ecclesiastical hegemony, immersed in the values of freedom of conscience, prayer and worship. Contrary to accusations of individualism, the Quietists transcended such narrow definitions. They belonged to what Guyon’s confessor, the Quietist Francois la Combe, called ‘the little Church’,<sup>112</sup> or the Quaker Stephen Crisp ‘the little Remnant beyond the Seas’:<sup>113</sup> that is, those individuals who were a church-within-the-church, connected through a like-minded, vibrant, international community of spirit.

Paul Hazard sums up the spirit of this transitional Enlightenment-age-in-embryo, to which Furly made a significant contribution:

Here it is Pietism, and there Quietism that discover to us the aspirations of those lofty spirits for whom Reason sufficed not, and who, with hungry heart, yearned for a God of Love. But this very mysticism contributed its quota to the crisis, intellectual and moral, that marks the epoch with which we are to deal. It disavowed the alliance between religion and authority, and, throwing off all the bonds of orthodoxy and regarding religion as the spontaneous uplifting of the individual soul to God, it too played, on its own account, the part of innovator.<sup>114</sup>

published in 1713, edited by Pierre Poirer (*Mystics of the North East*, p. 75 n.8). She died in 1717.

112 As he explained it: ‘a simple and natural expression to designate a small number of people united by feeling and charity, as belonging to God in a more particular way than is common for other men, or as Saint Paul expresses it in one of his Epistles, belonging to the same family or the same house—whatever it might be’ (Mourad and Guenin-Lelle, *Prison Narratives*, pp. 61–62).

113 Hull, *Benjamin Furly*, p. 260.

114 Hazard, *The European Mind*, p. 12.

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