

# Leaving Father or Mother for Christ's Sake: William Penn's Veiled Autobiography through Scripture References

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## Abstract

This article examines Penn's attitudes toward family as displayed in two books (*Innocency with Her Open Face Presented* and *No Cross, No Crown*) that he wrote in 1669 while incarcerated in the Tower of London. The examination of Penn's use of certain biblical references printed in the margins (Mt. 10:37; Mt. 19:29) suggests that Penn used these to create a layered text (similar to twenty-first-century hypertext) that helped to communicate in a veiled, but fervent, fashion his strong estrangement from his own birth family. The use of these Scripture passages renders as credible an early tradition from William Sewel that Penn's father (Sir William Penn) was complicit in ensuring his son's imprisonment in the Tower. The pattern of usage also tends to corroborate the generally accepted view that father and son were reconciled in 1670, before the elder Penn's death. Comparing Penn's use of these biblical passages on family with those of other Quaker contemporaries, the article demonstrates that at least two other Quakers also demonstrated estrangement from family through use of these Scriptures, but also proposes that the lesser use of such Scripture passages from most travelling Quakers who seem not to have been estranged from their families could be explained by the writers' desires not to hurt their families with the wounding implication that they were not valued by the author.

## Keywords

William Penn, Humphry Smith, Sophia Hume, family, Quaker ethics, hypertext, Quaker interpretation of Scripture

Everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold, and will inherit eternal life. (Mt. 19:29)

They only shall have right unto the Tree of Life, for whose Name sakes I have been made willing to relinquish and forsake all the vain fashions, enticing pleasures, [Matt. 10:37–39]<sup>1</sup> alluring honours and glittering glories of this transitory world, and ready to accept the portion of a Fool from this deriding Generation, and become a man of sorrows, and of perpetual reproach to my Familiars [Luke 18:32;<sup>2</sup> Luke 23:36;<sup>3</sup> and 1 Pet. 4:14<sup>4</sup>]. (Penn 1669a: 20–21)

And therefore it was that he was pleased to give us, in his own Example, a tast of what his Disciples must expect to drink more deeply of; namely, *The Cup of Self-denyal, cruel Tryals, and most bitter Afflictions*: He came not to Consecrate a way to the Eternal Rest, through Gold and Silver, Ribbons, Laces, Points, Perfumes, costly Cloaths, curious Trim's, exact Dresses, rich Jewels, pleasant Recreations; Play's, Parks, Treats, Balls, Masques, Revels, Romances, Love-Songs, flattering Sonnets, and the like Pastime of the World: No, no, alas! But by forsaking all such kind of entertainments, yea, and sometimes more lawful enjoyments too, and chearfully undergoing the loss of all on the one hand, and the Reproach, Ignominy, and the most hateful Persecutions from ungodly men on the other; alas he needed never to have wanted such variety of worldly Pleasures, had they been suitable to the work he came to do; for he was tempted (as are his followers) with no less bait than all the Gloryes of the World (however Satan ly'd, in saying they were his to give:) but he that Comanded his followers to seek another Country, and to lay up Treasure in the Heaven [Matt. 19:27–29 and numerous other biblical verses]. (Penn 1669b: 37; emphasis in original)

During the eight months from December 1668 to July 1669 when the 24-year-old William Penn was incarcerated in the Tower of London on charges of blasphemy, he wrote two books, *Innocency with Her Open Face Presented*, which would be published in July 1669 and helped to bring about Penn's release from imprisonment, and *No Cross, No Crown*, which would be published that autumn, shortly after Penn had regained his freedom. This article examines Penn's attitudes toward family as displayed in those two works. The first section briefly reviews Penn's family history up to 1669, with a focus on the interaction between his religious experience and his sufferance of parental estrangement. The second section closely examines portions of these two 1669 texts, focussing especially on Penn's use of biblical references in the margins. It suggests that Penn used these to create a layered text (similar in some respects to twenty-first-century

1 Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.

2 For he will be handed over to the Gentiles; he will be mocked and insulted and spat upon.

3 The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine.

4 If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed; because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you. On their part he is blasphemed, but on your part he is glorified.

hypertext) that helped to establish and to communicate in a veiled fashion his strong estrangement from his own birth family. Following this, a brief review of Penn's family history after 1669 on the above themes will be offered. Then Penn's use of biblical passages on family will be compared with that of other Quaker contemporaries. Methodological considerations will be explored in an appendix.

### **Penn's Family History to 1669: Religious Experience and Parental Estrangement**

The historical record suggests a high degree of closeness, mutual affection, mutual regard and support among the Penns, as well as moments of great animosity, discord and profound disagreement. This is especially true of the two Williams, father and son. From an early age the handsome William Penn Jr. was groomed by his father through refinement of manners, connections and education to succeed at the court of the English monarch and at the highest levels of English society. Whether the advancement promised by such paternal striving for his son would ever be a comfortable fit had been an open question for years prior to Penn's 1667 conviction as a Quaker.

Young William displayed a strong streak of spiritual sensitivity from a very early age. In a 1677 letter Penn recalled, from his childhood onward, being 'a Seeker after the Lord, and a great Sufferer for that Cause, from Parents, Relations, Companions, and the Magistrates of the World' (Penn 1726, I: 80). At age 11, alone in his room at Chigwell School, the 'Seeker' Penn 'was so suddenly surprized with an inward comfort and (as he thought) an externall glory in the roome that he has many times said that from thence he had the Seale of divinity and Immortality' (Dick 1950: 234). He occasionally wondered if his father shared his spiritual tendencies. When Quaker Thomas Loe preached at the Penn family mansion in Ireland in 1657, 13-year-old William saw 'Tears Runing down' his father's cheeks, and permitted himself to muse what it would be like if his family 'should all be Quakers' ('The Convincement of William Penn' 1935: 22).

His father's apparent openness to this kind of religious experience constituted a fleeting moment. There is much evidence to confirm seventeenth-century biographer John Aubrey's judgment that, although the elder Penn 'was a very good man', he was 'very much against his sonne' (Dick 1950: 234). Seventeen-year-old William Jr., provoked his father's anger by his expulsion in March 1662 from Oxford University, probably because the college authorities disliked his attendance at Puritan worship. Penn remembered suffering a 'whipping, beating, and turning out of doors' from his father (Penn 1726, I: 92). Father and son seemed to reconcile (Angell 2012: 158; Murphy 2018: 28), although Penn recalled being 'a Sufferer ... Constantly from the 17th yeare of my age' (Penn 1981, I: 84; cf. I: 264–65).

This family drama recurred on a larger scale after Penn's conviction to Quakerism in Cork, Ireland, probably in the late summer of 1667 (Murphy

2018: 48). Undoubtedly tipped off by his friends in Ireland, the elder Penn peremptorily and urgently called his son to return home in October (Penn 1981, I: 50). In the midst of this conflict George Bishop, an old military comrade of the admiral during the years of Cromwell's regime and more recently a Quaker, provided the younger Penn with a letter pleading that the father 'be tender' with his offspring, who had so recently, 'through the kindness of the Lord', received a new 'conviction of that, which all along since his childhood, he hath sought to understand' (Penn 1981, I: 54).

When the young William reached his father's home a series of unpleasant confrontations ensued, most notably over the issue of the son's use of plain Quaker language. The elder Penn saw his son's use of 'thee' and 'thou' toward his father as blatant disrespect, whereas the younger Penn pleaded for the father to acknowledge and appreciate his son's newly found deep piety and conviction. At some point during the family crisis the son was banished from his father's house, although the exile may have lasted no more than one day (Murphy 2018: 51–54). The younger Penn had to swallow his father's threats to disinherit him. His reflections on the baleful effects of possessions and luxuries on the rich, a staple lament of Quakers, may serve to signify his rebellious rejection of his family's core values.

One of Penn's biographers, Mary Maples Dunn, attempted a Freudian analysis of the father–son conflicts:

The mysticism of the son may have been an early attempt to escape from the authority of his father, or from his father's dreams ... He may have viewed his father, on the sailor's occasional visits home, as an interloper who deprived him of his usual measure of his mother's attention ... Quakerism even gave Penn good religious grounds for disobeying his parents ... He clearly relished the quarrel with authority (or with his father) at every turn. (Dunn 1986: 4–7)

While this article proceeds along a similar path in terms of its interest in Penn's family dynamics, it leaves as an open question the most Freudian aspects of Dunn's analysis. Specifically, in his writings from the Tower of London, Penn makes no distinctions between his father's and mother's attitudes toward his activities as a Quaker convert.

In 1668 Penn launched headlong into a series of theological debates, one of which, an encounter with Presbyterians at a church in the Spitalfields neighbourhood of London, as narrated in his tract *Sandy Foundation Shaken*, had significant consequences. The tract, a blistering attack on Protestant ideas of the Trinity and traditional atonement theory, was so radical that both Penn and his printer, John Darby, ended up in prison because of it. Penn was charged with denying the divinity of Christ, and the Privy Council, on the basis of information from secretary of state Lord Arlington, ordered both men held in close confinement until Penn recanted his blasphemous theological convictions (Penn 1981, I: 82–83, 97). Penn was held in the Tower of London from December 1668.

In this same month Penn wrote to London Friends, echoing Abraham's departure from his home in Ur (Gen. 12:1) and praising 'the everlasting Love of God, which had called me out of my Fathers House, & from amongst my kindred & Acquaintance, Yea from the Glorys, Treasures and Pleasure of that Egypt and Sodom, wherein Jesus lay crucified' (Penn 1981, I: 83; Endy 1973: 94). Penn intimated that, just as Abraham was called by God out of his father's house, he too had been divinely inspired to leave his father's house. This motif would soon be echoed in the 1669 edition of *No Cross, No Crown*, where Penn commended 'good old *Abraham*, the excellency of whose Faith is set out by his obedience to the Voice of God, *in forsaking his Fathers house, Kindred, Lands, Countrey, and Customs of it; never to return again*' (Penn 1669b: 109). This sentiment serves as something of a counterpoint to the oral traditions of Penn's banishment from his father's house. Penn stated that God actually led him out of his father's house, and thus implies that the elder Penn pushing him out was not the whole story.

In *No Cross* Penn built on the Abraham motif with similar observations concerning Moses and Jesus, culminating in a very 'memorable' quotation from a 'dutiful and tender', yet resolute, early Christian theologian:<sup>5</sup>

If my Father were weeping upon his knees before me, and my Mother hanging about my neck behind me, and all my Brethren, Sisters, and Kinsfolks, lamenting on every side, to retain me in the life and practice of the World, I would fling my Mother to the ground, run over my Father, and tread them under my feet, that I might run to Christ. (Penn 1669b: 109)

It would be in the Tower that Penn wrote his tract *Innocency with Her Open Face* and the first edition of *No Cross, No Crown*, analysis of which will form the central portion of this writing (Penn 1986, V: 100–04). Penn's plight may have caused his father to renew his campaign to get his son to renounce his religious views, because shortly after his imprisonment in the Tower Penn instructed his servant Francis Cooke that 'Thou mayst tell my Father, whom, I know, will ask thee, these Words, that my Prison shall be my grave before I will budge a jot, for I ow[e] my Conscience to no mortall man' (Penn 1981, I: 85).

While Penn's father did visit him in prison, some historians, including William Sewel, have speculated, or even preserved an ancient oral tradition, that Sir William had requested that Charles II hold his son in prison 'perhaps to prevent a worse treatment', according to Sewel (Sewel 1774 [1718]: 546). If that was truly the case, the elder Penn came to a different view about midway through the young Penn's eight-month imprisonment, in March 1669 petitioning the Privy Council unsuccessfully to gain his son's release (Peare 1956: 86). It is also important to note that parents are often conflicted about such matters, wanting their children to change their views, but also not wanting them to suffer.

5 Penn assigned these words to the third-century Origen, but the Fifth Monarchist John Rogers (Rogers 1657, 141) and Penn's Spitalfields debate opponent Thomas Vincent (Vincent 1677, 19, 50–51) attributed them to the fourth-century Jerome.

The editors of Penn's papers failed to find any evidence for this longstanding contention by Sewel and others, inasmuch as a June 1669 letter from the younger Penn to Lord Arlington clearly expected kindness, not hostility, from Arlington, who would have had a close acquaintance with the elder Penn (Penn 1981, I: 89). On the other hand, the timing of this letter may actually support Sewel's contention, in that it was written after the elder Penn had already petitioned for his son's freedom and thus arguably reconciliation between Penn, family and friends was already underway. The contents of Penn's letters to Arlington, when examined in their entirety, may well suggest that the younger Penn was in respectful disagreement with both family and friends: that is, not only in disagreement with his father but also in disagreement with his father's close associates.

It would be the publication of *Innocency* in July, however, that caused the Privy Council to decide that the younger Penn had recanted his radical theological views sufficiently that he could be released from the Tower (Penn 1981, I: 97). In *Innocency*, Penn strongly affirmed the divinity of Christ, but he did so without renouncing his anti-trinitarianism (Barbour 1991, I: 239).

### Penn's Use of Biblical Passages Relating to Family Estrangement

Numerous passages in the gospels suggest a strained relationship between Jesus and his family in Nazareth, or, at the least, present him as urging his followers to subordinate family relationships to devotion to himself. Penn, striving for Christ-like holiness, seemed comforted by his understanding that the divine 'Lord Jesus Christ' had either suffered similar estrangement or seen such strained family relations to be an acceptable part of the religious mission for himself and his followers (Penn 1669a: 18–20). In these works Penn cited Matthew 10:37: 'Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.' Luke 14:26 was a parallel, harsher text that Penn refrained from using: 'Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple.' Penn did also cite Matthew 19:29, which added an eschatological edge to the theme of family estrangement: 'And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold, and will inherit eternal life.' While Quakers such as Penn refrained from writing biblical commentaries, much can be gleaned about their interpretation of specific passages of the Bible through attending to the frequency, manner and meaning of their citations and allusions to them (Angell 2006: 36–37).

This section of the article focusses, to a large extent, on the use of marginalia, a prominent part of many seventeenth-century literary texts. Marginalia were often read very closely. For example, one reason that James I sponsored a new translation of the Bible was to get rid of the anti-monarchical notations of the most popular Protestant English translation of the Bible, the Geneva Bible

(Greaves 1980; Nicolson 2003: 60). 'By forecasting interpretative strategies in printed marginal notations' authors were able to deepen and complicate their relationship with their readers (Auger 2015: 82–83). Furthermore, the function of seventeenth-century marginalia may be compared to more contemporary forms of paratextuality, such as the use of hypertexts in electronic publications. Seventeenth-century marginalia, like contemporary hypertexts, often create multiple paths for constructing meaning out of a literary text; grant freedom and autonomy to readers in the way that they negotiate those texts; and may be fairly characterised as non-linear, in that they allowed readers to 'skip [and to] access information in the order that the ... user chooses' (Garcia Rosales and Abuin Vences 2019: 354–55).

Among Penn's voluminous writings, discourse utilising the biblical passages endorsing estrangement from one's family occurs almost entirely in his books published in 1669 and composed in the Tower of London. These are *Innocency with Her Open Face*, a 4,000-word work that is at turns defiant and meekly confessional, but which accomplished its aim of obtaining Penn's release from the Tower by its unequivocal statements that the Saviour Jesus is divine. The second, *No Cross, No Crown*, outwardly a book of Christian ethics, would become more famous in its much-expanded 1682 second edition. Both books in their 1669 form lack a publisher's imprint, but they were probably published by Friend Andrew Sowle in London (Bronner and Fraser 1986: 101, 104). If that identification is accurate, they were the first of many of Penn's books published by Sowle: 'Andrew Sowle published ... approximately 90 percent of William Penn's works' (Hagglund 2015: 42).<sup>6</sup>

The passages that will be analysed in this article are, in terms of genre, more alike than different. They are veiled autobiography that substantially make their arguments concerning the author's life through citations of biblical verses found in the margin. These marginal citations are apparently intended to demonstrate to Penn and to his readers that Jesus, the prophets and the apostles had a very similar set of oppressive encounters with those who would squelch their spiritual discoveries. On the whole, the marginal citations function more as hypertext than as footnotes, as they channel the reader into a parallel world where the similarities and resemblances with what is being narrated in the main text should be, in Penn's judgment, intuitively obvious to his readers.<sup>7</sup>

6 Publishers were sometimes responsible for commissioning marginalia (Auger 2015), but, given the internal evidence detailed below linking the notes to Penn's worldview, that seems highly unlikely in the case of these two 1669 works by Penn.

7 In the section of *Innocency*, his confession of faith, that is most of interest for this analysis (Penn 1669a, 18–21), Penn's marginalia function entirely as hypertext, not source notes. However, a few marginalia in other parts of *Innocency* function as source notes. For example, Penn states 'The Proverbs which most agree, intend Christ the Saviour, speak in this manner; *By me Kings reign, and Princes decree justice.*' To this, Penn appends the notation Prov. 8:15, which denotes the origins of the italicized phrase (Penn 1669a, 6). In *No Cross*,

Penn's 'The Two Kingdoms of Darkness and Light', an unpublished essay from his youthful letterbook, dated by the editors of the Penn papers to 1668, casts light on the evolution of his concerns about his family. Between a brief introduction and conclusion, the young Penn strung together about one hundred Bible verses, 46 designed to denounce 'the Spirit & Practice of the World' and the remaining 54 to illustrate 'the Spirit & Doctrine of Christ'. Penn's purpose in writing the essay was to present it 'to my Father, who at that time was in high Wrath against me, because of my separation from the World, & Testimony against it, that the Deeds thereof were evil'. It did not happen to contain any of the passages from the Gospels that addressed family relations, and certainly not the three specified above. It did contain Bible verses showing that Penn felt that his travails were closely related to the suffering of Jesus leading up to his death on the cross. These verses demonstrated the ill-usage that pious persons separated from the world must inevitably face, and what they must do about it (Penn 1981, I: 60–67).

A substantial number of these verses (approximately 41) would eventually be deployed by Penn in *No Cross, No Crown*. This demonstrates a closer relationship between 'Two Kingdoms' and *No Cross, No Crown* than between 'Two Kingdoms' and any of Penn's other published works. There seems to be no overlap in the verses used in 'Two Kingdoms' and those referenced in *Innocency*, however.

The absence of the family renunciation verses in this 1668 document probably indicated that the younger Penn had greater expectations of reconciling and mending family relationships than he did when incarcerated in the Tower in 1669. He may even have nourished hope that his mother and father would embrace the Kingdom of Light animated by 'the Spirit and Doctrine of Christ'.

By the time that Penn was writing his tract *Innocency*, however, roughly a year later, he seemed more despairing about his relationships with his parents. At the heart of the argument in *Innocency*, Penn includes these words in his main text (emphasis in original):

[T]hey only shall have right unto the Tree of Life, *for whose Name sakes I have been made willing to relinquish and forsake all the vain fashions, enticing pleasures, alluring honours and glittering glories of this transitory world, and readily to accept the portion of a Fool from this deriding Generation, and become a man of sorrows, and of perpetual reproach to my Familiars; yea, and with the greatest chearfulness can obsignate<sup>8</sup> and confirm (with no less seal, then the loss of whatsoever this doting world accounts dear) this faithfull Confession, having my eye fixt upon a more enduring Substance, and lasting Inheritance.*

This vigorous prose passage had Penn's troubled family relationships at its heart, inasmuch as he had become a 'perpetual reproach' to his family members. Equally,

*No Crown*, unlike *Innocency*, the Bible passages cited in the margin were never quoted in the main text; in other words, the Bible passages in the marginalia of *No Cross, No Crown* never serve as source notes to the main text.

8 To seal; to mark as with a seal; to ratify (*OED*).



influenced by the youthful Penn's strong emphasis on eschatology, it was a visceral attack on, and seeming renunciation of, the absurdly fancy non-plainness of England's ruling elite, of which Penn's family was a part. With his attack on 'vain fashions, enticing pleasures, alluring honours, and glittering glories' he was emphasising his renunciation of the luxury of the royal court and his embrace of the plainness of Quakers. As it would be his fate to continue to be a part of the royal court and English governing elites even as a Quaker, what this passage could not communicate, because Penn did not yet know it, is what the negotiation between Quaker plainness and elite comfort (if not splendour) would look like for him in the coming decades. But in the first seven months of 1669, closely confined in the extremely spare quarters of the Tower, such future concerns would have been far from Penn's mind.

Penn's marginal biblical citations point to a narrative parallel to the main text. Presented below are the full biblical texts that correspond to Penn's citations:

**Matt. 10:37–39**

He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

**Luke 18:32**

For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on.

**Luke 23:36**

And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar,

**1 Pet. 4:14**

If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

Through these biblical texts Penn rendered his arguments even more specific and vivid. Gone is the reproach of unspecified 'familiar'; the associated biblical texts call out father and mother. The restrained tone of the main text is dramatically heightened with these associated biblical texts, as it is only in the latter that we discover that our hero has been 'mocked', 'spitted upon' and 'spitefully entreated'. All of this is joined with the artful promise of the selected verse from 1 Peter. In its initial statement, 'If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye', it recalls the lovely spirit of promise in the Beatitudes. 'The spirit of glory' in the marginal text contrasts with 'glittering glories' in the main text, and it makes clear where glory really lies in Penn's world. The last part of the text speaks to the striking bifurcation and polarisation in the assessment of piety and morality in late seventeenth-century Stuart England. The real Christ is 'evil spoken of' by the worldly elite. Only the plain Quaker, one who knows the Christ within, can understand where true glory lies. Penn's justification for the use of these texts was

that, in his own life, he found himself to be replicating the witness and suffering of Jesus. Unless one accepts Penn's basic presupposition, this 'hyperlinked' text will seem pretentious at best.

In this section from *Innocency*, Penn's combination of (1) Jesus's advice to leave one's family to follow him; (2) denunciations of persecution; and (3) renunciation of vanity and luxury, in a layered text, all in one passage, is very unusual among Quakers, and perhaps unique to Penn. Each of these three elements is directly related to Penn's relationship with his father and mother and with other non-Quaker social relations.

This pattern is replicated in the other main text that Penn worked on while incarcerated in the Tower, *No Cross, No Crown*. This was a longer work and was regarded, by both Penn and others, as a more significant work than *Innocency*. The compendious *No Cross, No Crown* would appear in an expanded edition 12 years later, in 1682, as Penn was preparing to set sail for North America. While it contains a passage very similar to what we have seen in *Innocency*, it is a longer and more complicated passage, and the biblical citations to the anti-family portions of the gospel tended to float somewhat through the various editions and printings of this work. Thus, this article will not attempt to trace out all of the complications in the treatments of these biblical texts in *No Cross, No Crown*, but merely note the appearance of these themes in the first edition of 1669.

Penn's references to family in *No Cross, No Crown* appear in Chapter 3, where Penn encouraged Christians not to take any part in the 'vain Apparel and usual Recreation' of his times. He provided a long list for each, starting with 'gold, silver, embroyderies, and pearls' as apparel to which he objected and going on to denounce at length 'plays ... balls ... cards, dice' and other common forms of amusement for the seventeenth-century English elite.

We are concerned with his seventh reason for concern with vain apparel and inappropriate entertainments: namely, that such apparel and recreation are 'inconsistent with the true Spirit of Christianity'. If, wrote Penn, Christians were 'to forsake the vanity and fleshly satisfactions of the World' they should 'encounter with boldness the shame and sufferings they must expect to receive at the hand of (it may be) their nearest, and otherwise dearest Intimates, and Relations'. It is at this point that Penn supplied a marginal reference to Matt. 10:37 (Penn 1669b, 36).

Thus Matt. 10:37 was cited both in *Innocency* and *No Cross, No Crown*; of the 43 biblical passages cited in *Innocency*, ten were also cited in one of the editions of *No Cross, No Crown*. There was more overlap between *Innocency* and *No Cross, No Crown* than between *Innocency* and any other of Penn's published works. Recall that this article has made the same finding about the closeness of 'Two Kingdoms' and *No Cross, No Crown*, but also that there was no overlap in biblical citations between 'Two Kingdoms' and *Innocency*. Judging by the overlap, or lack thereof, in biblical citations between the latter two writings, it would seem that *No Cross, No Crown* was the locus wherein Penn synthesised themes from them.

The parental estrangement theme belonged most powerfully to the *Innocency* stream of Penn's thought, as 'Two Kingdoms' may well have been orientated toward articulating a version of religious experience that, in the son's judgment, might unite him with his parents. When due consideration is made of Penn's 1668 unpublished text 'The Two Kingdoms', in conjunction with his 1669 prison writings, the height of the crisis in William Penn's family relations seems to have taken place in 1669, somewhat later than it is usually portrayed as taking place. The timing of these texts from the younger Penn thus tend to corroborate the allegations relayed by William Sewel: namely, that the elder Penn had colluded in his son's imprisonment in the Tower of London.

As we have seen, Penn's adoption of the Quakers' plain manners was a major sticking point in relations with his father, as well as with numerous acquaintances of his father's station. Penn's reference at this point in this text to Matt. 10:37 furnished further evidence for this aspect of his biography. Matt. 19:27–29 was also adduced by Penn later on in this passage to make a similar point. The scrupulous Christian who renounces such vain apparel and distracting entertainments can expect to 'drink ... deeply of ... the Cup of Self-Denyal, cruel Tryals, and most bitter Afflictions'. If this is a reference to his imprisonment in the Tower, at least in part, then he was arguing that his Quaker plainness played at least as much a part in his detention as did his supposed blasphemous opinions, in which he allegedly denied the divinity of Christ and the Trinity. This, in turn, may point to a role that his father might well have played initially in approving, or not opposing, his son's imprisonment, because it is unlikely that anyone else other than Sir William Penn objected so strongly to his son's plain ways. Applying Matt. 19:29 and its eschatological promise that the faithful adherent to Jesus will receive a 'hundredfold' in the world to come also embodied an element of hope in the younger Penn's bitter lament. God would not permit the persecuting family and state to have the last word.

His critical discourse concerning his family, drawing on similar passages from the gospels, may in fact have played a significant role in generating Penn's discourse on toleration. Penn's June 1669 letter to Lord Arlington had a calmer tone than his *Innocency*, but Penn's toleration arguments, based on the ineffectiveness of persecution upon the committed believer, may well have been grounded in his dogged personal resistance to Sir William's campaign against his son's Quakerism.

[T]o conceit that men must Forme their faith In God, & things proper to an other world by the prescriptions of mortall men, or else that they can have noe right to eat, drink, walk, trade, confer, or enjoy their libertys or lives, to me seems both rediculous & dangerous: since 'tis most Certain the understanding Can never be Convinc'd by other Arguments then what are adequate to her own nature. (Penn 1981, I: 92)

The question here is, what did Penn mean by 'mortall men'? Clearly he intended that this collective noun signify, among others, his father, who nourished this

conceit more strongly than anyone else. But, inasmuch as his father's associates at the apex of the English state were the ones responsible for imprisoning Penn, and, according to some, had colluded with his father to do so, 'mortall men' also includes those such as Arlington, who bore direct responsibility for Penn's imprisonment. The English state thus functioned as Penn's extended family. Family and acquaintances were drawn together by Penn in tight sequencing. (In a 1677 letter to the countess of Falckensteyn and Bruch, for example, Penn presented himself as having been 'a great Sufferer ... from Parents, Relations, Companions, and the Magistrates of the World'.) Penn's letter to Arlington may well signify, in its most basic sense, that his extended non-Quaker family (that is, the monarch and all of his top echelon of administrators) must treat with more dignity and respect Penn's new, adopted Quaker family (including Fox; Bishop died in 1668) and himself. Family discourse should be seen as one of the roots of Penn's tolerationist discourse.

### **Penn's Family History after 1669**

As we have already seen, Penn's biblical references in his writings suggest a peak in tension and hostility between Penn and his family of origin in 1669. In order to assist us in understanding the broader trajectory of Penn's life and witness, we will look briefly at developments in his family relationships after his release from the Tower.

After Penn was released from the Tower in July 1669, Penn and his ailing father drew back from acute conflict. Catherine Owen Peare aptly describes his release from the Tower as 'a kind of parole in the custody of his father' (Peare 1956: 91). The elder Penn sent his son to Ireland for nine months to attend to the affairs of the family estate, and William went, as his father asked (Angell 2017: 191–92). The younger Penn kept trying to please his father, and the latter relented somewhat in his demands that his son renounce Quakerism. Given the circumstances (his father's illness and the strains of prison upon the son), a cooling off of the family conflict was hardly surprising.

Penn's biographers Peare and Murphy describe a gradual 'reconciliation' as having taken place between father and son in the fifteen months between the son's release from the Tower and the elder Penn's death (Peare 1956: 111; Murphy 2018: 80). In favour of such a portrayal is Penn's statement in 1673 to Mary Pennyman that his 'Relations' had 'afterwards ... repented of' the 'heavy stripes' they had previously inflicted upon him (Penn 1981, I: 265).

A report by an Irish Friend, John Gay, toward the end of young William's Irish sojourn, painted a less favourable picture of Penn family relations at this stage. In July 1670 Gay stopped to visit Penn's parents in order to extend their son's greetings to them. The elder William was too ill to visit with Gay, but a querulous Margaret Penn complained that she had not received any letters from her son, and then she 'fell upon that strange rude way' that her son would not take off his hat

in the king's presence. She thought it very strange 'that religion should be placed in such a thing' as hat honor. Furthermore, she asserted that Penn's father 'had intended to make [Penn] a greate man but [that he] would not hearken to him'. Gay informed Penn that he had omitted some coarser details of his conversation with Margaret: 'Much discourse we had of this kinde & not fitt all to be told you' (Penn 1981, I: 160–61).

His mother thus continued to sound the themes that William's parents had been proclaiming since his convincement three years earlier: worry over the son's wanton rejection of his parents' careful grooming and promotion, and seeing his nonconformist repudiation of their core values as blatant disrespect. As discussed above, young William himself, on the other hand, discerned more nuance. He eschewed the extreme of utter repudiation, of projecting 'hate' of family (per the Lukan text he would not use), when a measured loving of Christ more than family was his divine leading. And, as it turned out, he would be both a faithful Quaker and a loyal English subject, episodically a part of the Stuart royal court until the revolution of 1688 (Murphy 2018: 192–97).

In August 1670, during widespread social discontent about the recent enactment of the Second Conventicle Act, young Penn, just returned from Ireland, was arrested for preaching outside the Gracechurch Street (or, as he would have it, the 'Gracious Street') Meeting House. In his subsequent trial the outspoken young man helped to create an enduring legal precedent that a jury of one's peers shall not be coerced to arrive at the verdict favoured by the prosecution. This may well have had an ameliorative influence on his family relations. The son strongly defended his father against Lord Mayor Samuel Starling's contention that the younger Penn deserved harsher punishment because his father had 'starved the seamen'—or, less flamboyantly, embezzled captured goods<sup>9</sup>—during a mid-1660s naval command; Penn was 'sorry to hear him speak those abuses of my father, that was not present' at the trial (Murphy 2018: 76). One surmises that this defence reinforced the family bond between father and son. Three letters from young William to Sir William survive, in which Penn detailed the indignities heaped upon him and requested that his father not pay his fines. Penn's fines were paid, however, despite his protestations, whether by his father or someone else, enabling him to be at his father's deathbed (Murphy 2018: 80).

Sir William died in September 1670. Assertions of a final reconciliation between the two men rely heavily on a sentimental account of his father's death published 12 years after the event. Penn included it in the second edition of *No Cross, No Crown*, published in August 1682, on the eve of his departure for a massive new colonial venture, one made possible by Charles II's bestowal of land

9 Naval commanders were supposed to use proceeds from the sale of captured goods to augment their sailors' diet. Hence theft of prizes for personal use could impact negatively their crew's health. These accusations against Admiral Penn had led to a 1668 attempt in parliament to impeach him (Murphy 2018, 76).

in recompense of his debts to Penn's father, and five months after the March death of his mother Margaret.

According to this account, the father even provided a blessing to his son's Quaker friends: 'Son William, if you and your friends keep to your plain way of preaching, and keep to your plain way of living, you will make an end of priests to the end of the world' (Penn 1682: 571–72). The belated accounts of a deathbed reconciliation seem convincing. However, it also seems likely that the reconciliation was accomplished more swiftly, even abruptly, as his father's death approached, than biographers Murphy and Peare have portrayed.

Penn retained the anti-family resources from Matthew in his much expanded second edition of *No Cross, No Crown*, but his use of these verses after his father's death was carefully depersonalised. There was nothing of the sharp volcanic furor of his 1669 writings. The fragmentary evidence that exists, including a few letters between Penn and his sister Margaret Lowther, indicate that Penn had come to peace with his family of origin, and consequently he had less use for those verses that encouraged or permitted estrangement from family.

By 1693, when a 49-year-old Penn, having extensive experience himself as a father, published *Some Fruits of Solitude*, this worldly wise man valued 'obedience' from children, in the context of family relations: 'Obedience to Parents is not only our duty, but our *Interest*. If we received our Life from them, and *prolong* it by obeying them: For *Obedience* is the first Commandment with *Promise*.' Faintly recalling his own youth, Penn reluctantly carved out a small exception for religious conscience in his exposition of the duties of filial obedience: 'If we must not disobey God to obey them; at least, we must let them see, that there is *nothing else* in our Refusal' (Barbour 1991, II: 530–31, alluding to Exod. 20:12 and Deut. 5:16).

Penn's own relations with his grown sons varied. Penn seemed close to Springett, his first son, who barely survived to adulthood, dying in 1696 aged 21. Of Springett, Penn wrote that he was 'my *Friend* and *Companion*, as well as most Affectionate and Dutiful child' (Penn 1699: 17–18). Of William Penn III, his second son to achieve adulthood, Penn in 1707 drew a more invidious comparison: 'He has been of no use, but much expense and grief to me, many ways and years too ... being not of that service and benefit to me that some sons are, and 'tis well known I was to my father before I married' (Penn 1987, IV: 580). Here Penn combines a malleable memory with an inability to tender the same kind of forbearance to his wayward son that he had earnestly sought from his father. In the case of both Springett and William, however, Penn strongly valued filial duty and service. One met his father's expectations, the other was found wanting.

### Influences from the Gospels on Itinerant Quaker Ministers' Views of Family Relations

Despite the itinerant ministry of many early Quaker leaders, necessitating long absences from their families, seventeenth-century Quakers rarely cited gospel passages that seemed to encourage family estrangement. In his voluminous writings, heavily laden with biblical texts, Penn's mentor George Fox, for example, cited Matthew 19:29 only once, in a 1687 letter to Friends long after his own parents were dead (Fox 1831, II: 330). Early Friends probably did not join in the sentiments implied in such biblical passages. Naomi Pullin's work has made clear how dearly early Friends cherished their family relations, even when travelling ministry required them to undergo prolonged absences or even to expose innocent family members to violent deprivations from persecutors (Pullin 2018: 115–17).

But two other early Quakers did centrally feature these, and related, verses in their writings, and it is worthwhile briefly to examine these other instances. Quaker itinerant and sufferer Humphry Smith (1624–63) justified his mission by combining Matthew 10:37, Luke 14:26 and Matthew 19:29, thereby attributing the following words to Jesus:

He that will not leave father and mother, wife and children, goods or lands for my sake, is not worthy of me; and he that will not deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me, is not worthy of me ... [Christ] said that he that will not hate father and mother, brethren and sisters, wife and children, yea even his own life too, cannot be my Disciple, *Luk.* 14.20 [*sic*] and if not a Disciple much less a minister of his.

Smith provided extensive comments, lamenting the difficulty in leaving his farmland and business for the sake of Christ ('how contrary it was to my own will to fulfil the will of the Lord'; Smith 1658: 4, 5), before furnishing a wrenching description of his parting from his uncomprehending wife, who merely wished for a settled family and conjugal life with her husband:

Such was the everlasting love of the Lord, who is known in the wayes of his judgments, that his hand was heavy upon me, and his judgments increased in me, that there was no way for me to escape, but I must be obedient and bow under it, or be cut off for ever by it, so that my bowels were often pained in me, and it is like for many weeks had little sleep or bodily rest, and sometimes knew not my wife and children, that I feeled and heard breath in the bed by me, but thought they were people that I should not be with; and therefore one time after it was day, I was rising and putting on my clothes in a sober manner, and in meekness said, surely I should not be here, and my wife then laying hand on me, easily perswaded me, but I said, I know not who I am with, neither did I know her voyce at that time, and sometime after having endured much, I told she and my family (with heaviness and tears) that I was not able to endure it any longer, and that I had abode with them in the way of the world, so long as possibly I could, and that I must give up

my life to serve the Lord, desiring them with tears to be content, and in what I could I should be as careful for their good as ever I was, and this is true, and but little of what might be written. (Smith 1658: 9)

A somewhat later example is provided by Sophia Hume (1702–1774), a granddaughter of the Quaker visitor to the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed IV, Mary Fisher. In the 1740s Hume was a widowed member of the colonial South Carolina elite and a convinced Quaker, residing in London. When she was moved to return to South Carolina to minister to the inhabitants there she was forced to confront the extent of her estrangement from her non-Quaker adult children (Angell 2018: 64–66). Accordingly, she cited, and combined, Matthew 10:37 and 19:29 and Luke 14:26. After she had joined the Society of Friends and adopted plain dress,

I became singular, and consequently despicable to my Children, and some of my Acquaintances and Friends, who not only profess'd a Dislike, but a Concern that I should appear in so contemptible a Manner ... To be despised by my Acquaintances, Friends and Children was a Trial hard to bear: But whosoever he be of you, *that taketh not up his Cross, and hateth not* (comparatively) *Father, Mother, Children, etc.* says our blessed Lord, *is not worthy of me, and cannot be my Disciple.* And, though, in this Instance, I endeavoured to please God rather than Men, I'll venture to assert, that few have a more natural Tenderness, and affectionate regard, in both, or all these Relations, than myself ... I am not insensible, that what I have offered will be thought hard Sayings by many; but for our Encouragement our blessed Lord assures us, *That any One who hath forsaken any temporal Advantage or Enjoyment, as Houses, Lands, Father, Mother, Wife or Children, Brethren or Sisters, for his Sake, and the Gospel's shall receive an Hundred fold in this World, and in that to come Life everlasting.* (Hume 1752: 75–76, 86; emphasis in original)

We can see that these passages on family from Matthew and Luke provide a roadmap to subordinating a large variety of intimate relationships to devotion to Christ. Moreover, some early Quakers, like most sects, used such Scriptures to reassure themselves that their values were right and their families' and the world's values were wrong. Humphry Smith and Sophia Hume directly and pointedly appealed to these texts, but we have seen in Penn's case these biblical passages deployed in an entirely different situation, and in a more guarded, veiled manner, in the margins of his published work, rather than in the main text, as was the case with Smith and Hume.

When comparing Penn with Smith and Hume, one can ascertain that the family situations that provoked the use of these verses with each of these Quakers were very different. Smith had been worried about the restraining effect on his ministry of his normal family relations with his wife and young children during Quakerism's most apocalyptic period. Hume attempted to cope with the derision and disdain of her adult children, who objected to her very recent conversion to the plain Quaker faith. Penn objected to his father's massive interference in his life plans, including, possibly, the father agreeing to, or not opposing, his son's imprisonment in the Tower of London, a thesis to which the younger Penn's



deployment of these anti-family biblical texts mainly in his prison writings seems to give some support.

In one respect Penn's use of these texts was more temperate than that of Smith or Hume, inasmuch as he never used Luke 14:26, which used much stronger language than the Matthean texts. Luke 14:26 required the disciple to 'hate' his or her intimate family relations; Matthew 10:37 stated only that the disciple could not love his family members more than Jesus. Smith and Hume each found a way to work the word 'hate' into their exposition of Jesus' sentiments on this topic; Penn never did. Probably in that way he was able to preserve a pathway to family reconciliation, even under the most difficult and trying familial circumstances.

### Appendix: Notes on Methodology

The scholarly exploration that turned into this article on Penn did not actually start with Penn, but with Sophia Hume, whom I was researching for an article for a historical volume on early Quaker women (Angell 2018). While reading a 1752 treatise by Hume I happened upon her Scriptural allusions that I cited above, and I wondered if this was a code that was in more widespread use among Friends. Specifically, I hypothesised that the code would result in Friends identifying with Jesus' estrangement from his family, as suggested or implied in certain Scriptural passages, such as the one quoted above. This kind of Scriptural usage would be generally in accord with early Quaker identification with Scriptural passages and reading their own life struggles through what they read about the prophets, apostles and their saviour in Scriptures. But it would have the detriment of seeming to criticise their own close family members, whom they loved, and who suffered from hardships because of these Friends engaging in such practices as extended itinerant ministry. So that might create hesitation.

The next step in my analysis was computer aided. I placed these Scripture passages into the search engine associated with Earlham School of Religion's Digital Quaker Collection (DQC). DQC has a long run of early Quaker literature incorporated within it, so it was a good place to consult. DQC provided surprisingly few 'hits' to early Quaker literature that cited the biblical verses that have been the subject of this article. Most of those that were provided were perfunctory and slight mentions, and I could see little about them that would be worthy of in-depth analysis. But the most numerous 'hits' were drawn out of Penn's writings, and specifically from the 1669 prison writings, *Innocency* and *No Cross, No Crown*.

In other words, this article was not based on my close reading of these two works that tracked down each biblical citation. Instead, it was only after consulting DQC and seeing how these biblical verses were cited centrally in Penn's 1669 works, and less centrally in his other works, and very infrequently in other writings of early Friends, that I formed the thesis that served as the basis for this article.

I would simply add that this article is an example of how computer-aided analysis can assist the historian in even such central historical tasks as formulating, and fleshing out, our theses. It turns out that the DQC's generation of results as a result of the questions I posed to it was critical for determining the thesis that I should be exploring in this article. This is perhaps a little less unusual a process than I am making it sound here, in that iterative loops in analysis generally assist historians in sharpening theses. Still, the suddenness of the emergence of my thesis about Penn, the direct result of inserting certain Bible verses into a search engine for a Quaker database, was quite startling. The *Papers of William Penn*, the original editions of Penn tracts to be found in Early English Books Online and other sources subsequently helped to flesh out my claims. However, unless I had carefully tracked down every marginal reference to the Bible in Penn's writings, and then had been able to pick out the needle from that haystack, I would never have been able to formulate a thesis without computer assistance in generating data results.

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