

UNIVERSALISING AND SPIRITUALISING CHRIST'S GOSPEL:
HOW EARLY QUAKERS INTERPRETED
THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS*

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ABSTRACT

This article examines seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Quaker methods of Biblical interpretation, comparing them to Puritan and Spiritualist methods. The focus is on verses from the Pauline epistle to the Colossians frequently cited by early Quakers. In contrast to John Calvin and four seventeenth-century Puritan Biblical commentators, but similar to seventeenth-century Spiritualists such as William Erbery, Quakers argued strongly for a form of mystical universalism closely akin to Arminianism in their interpretation of this epistle. Quakers (especially John Woolman) resembled medieval Catholics in their willingness to interpret Col. 1.24 to assert that Christ's 'mystical' body, which could include contemporary Christians, was somehow involved in the redemption of humanity. Early Quakers tended to reserve the eschatological promise of the 'hope of glory' in Col. 1.27 for those who had fully experienced redemption, or 'convincement'. Quakers and Puritans resembled each other in their arguments for a spiritualist interpretation of Col. 2.14-17, and both, somewhat inconsistently, tempered spiritualist principles with pragmatic acceptance of certain outward ecclesiastical practices in their attempts to preserve church order.

KEYWORDS

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Colossians has been especially important for the development of Quaker theology for its spiritualising and universalising tendencies. Its portrayal of Christian faith was, for early Quakers, agreeably inward in its focus, and it also includes an aspect of holiness and striving for perfection that was crucial for them. Quakers understood it as universalist in opening up the availability of salvation to all, and spiritualist in its exaltation of attention to the inward Christ over the practice of sacraments or any outward ritual.¹ Early Quakers also saw the mystical, inward Christ of Colossians opening up the possibility that what one may do contemporarily may participate in

an ongoing atonement. Although the seeds of this thought are present in the writings of seventeenth-century Quakers, we will glance briefly at the eighteenth-century Quaker John Woolman, who provided a fuller development of this idea.²

Since spiritualism and universalism are such important facets of Quakerism, at least in its initial manifestations, Colossians was used often by Quaker writers, including the four seventeenth-century theologians most often cited: George Fox, William Penn, Robert Barclay, and Isaac Pennington.³ There is much to be learned by reconstructing seventeenth-century theological controversies on specific biblical verses—at the 'micro' level, so to speak. Although this kind of project could easily outstrip what is possible in a short essay, I will nonetheless attempt some of that kind of analysis here.

Having 70,000 pages of Quaker writing online and machine searchable through the Digital Quaker Collection (DQC) of the Earlham School of Religion has obviously aided my research.⁴ The texts included in this Collection include much of the writings of Fox, Barclay, Pennington, Penn, and James Nayler, as well as substantial works by other seventeenth-century writers such as Elizabeth Bathurst, Thomas Ellwood, Margaret Fell, Samuel Fisher, and Dorothy White. Of course, many of the 5000 Quaker works from this period are not included in the DQC. There is only one small work by Edward Burrough, for example, and nothing from Richard Farnworth. Still, a large and diverse enough sample from seventeenth-century Quaker writers exists in the Collection to make at least provisional conclusions about how early Quakers used scriptural texts, making possible even a verse-by-verse analysis with only a few clicks of the computer mouse.

Similarities and differences in the interpretations of Colossians by Quakers and their English contemporaries are worthy of investigation, establishing possible lines of influence and also highlighting Quaker originality where it may exist. For purposes of contrast, this essay will draw upon several sources from the Reformed tradition, John Calvin's *Institutes* from the sixteenth century (Calvin's prominence as a teacher for Reformed pastors throughout Europe and the excellence of the *Institutes* themselves merit their inclusion as a touchstone here)⁵ and four commentaries on Colossians by seventeenth-century Puritans (Paul Baynes, Nicholas Byfield, Edward Elton, and James Fergusson). Baynes was the successor to the renowned theologian William Perkins at the St Andrews lectureship in Cambridge, but his bishop deposed him from that position for nonconformity. Elton was a rector in Surrey, Byfield a vicar at Isleworth in Middlesex.⁶ Most of these works seem to have arisen from sermon series. Byfield, for example, drew this commentary together from his weekday expository sermons. From the Spiritualist wing of radical Protestantism that anticipated in some ways later Quaker exegeses, works by William Erbery and John Saltmarsh will be used.

Any exercise in biblical interpretation is (at least in part) a bridging of eras. Truths garnered in one historical epoch must be applied in another. Since we are concerned here with seventeenth-century Quakers' view of Colossians, a few brief words about the first and seventeenth centuries are in order. There is not much in the way of a scholarly consensus on many key aspects of interpretation of Colossians. Colossae was a modest-sized town in Asia Minor, i.e., modern-day Turkey.⁷ Scholars are closely

divided on whether the author of Colossians is Paul himself, as stated in the epistle's superscription (Col. 1.1), or some follower of Paul, either while Paul was in prison or shortly after Paul's death.⁸ A detailed investigation of this very modern dispute into the authorship of Colossians is outside the scope of this paper. Seventeenth-century Quakers believed that Paul was the author of Colossians,⁹ as indeed did their non-Quaker contemporaries.

The main reason for the composition of this epistle, however, seems to have been its author's opposition to a 'philosophy' that had arisen in Colossae (Col. 2.8). Seventeenth-century Quakers devoted little attention to determining Paul's first-century adversary, but Fox strongly implied that Paul's opponents at Colossae were Jews or Judaizers.¹⁰ Robert Barclay may have had in mind Hellenist philosophers in his observations on Colossians.¹¹ Seventeenth-century Puritan commentators generally found grounds in Colossians for assertions like those of both Fox and Barclay. Again, however, modern scholars are more divided on the nature of the Colossian philosophy opposed by Paul. Eduard Schweizer tentatively identifies it as 'Pythagoreanism'. Others have proposed that the philosophy might more properly be called 'gnosticism' or 'gnosticising Judaism'. Markus Barth and Helmut Blanke cautiously conclude that the identity of the Colossian philosophy is 'an unsolved puzzle'.¹²

In order for this epistle to have a robust relevance for the seventeenth century (or, indeed, any other, including our own), some analogue for the Colossian philosophy must be found nearer one's own time. For seventeenth-century Quakers, this analogue was most frequently identified, sometimes implicitly rather than explicitly, with their Puritan opponents.

Not all of Colossians was of equal importance to early Quakers. Frequency of citation in the DQC database demonstrates that Col. 1.13-28 was the section of the epistle most frequently cited by Quakers prior to 1900, with a secondary emphasis on Col. 2.8-22, and a tertiary emphasis on Col. 3.9-11.¹³ Other parts of Colossians were utilized less, sometimes because they did not lend themselves to the kind of inward and spiritual interpretation that early Quakers favored. Colossians 1.1-12 and most of Colossians 4 seem to pertain mostly to the outward facts that ostensibly generated this epistle, and Quakers had a hard time discerning spiritual import in these verses. A different problem is posed by the epistle's remarks about the patriarchal family in Col. 3.18-4.1. Colossians 3.18, for example, exhorts, 'Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord'. Colossians 3.22 presents a similar exhortation of obedience to slaves. This part of the epistle was almost entirely ignored by Quakers, perhaps because their tendency toward emphasising gender egalitarianism required for obedience to the Holy Spirit made the epistle's strong endorsement of a fairly rigid human hierarchy difficult to assimilate into their broader religious orientation toward the world.¹⁴ By way of contrast, three of the four Puritan commentaries examined here contain extensive exegeses of this unit (the fourth only comments on the first two chapters of Colossians.)

This essay concentrates on several of the verses most beloved by early Quakers. Colossians 1.27 was the verse from Colossians most frequently cited by the works included in the DQC database; Col. 1.23 was the third most frequently cited (second was Col. 1.16). Colossians 2.14-17 were the verses most frequently cited by Quakers

from the second chapter of the epistle. Moreover, I will argue that these verses, as interpreted by early Quakers, provided vital support to insights that reached to the very core of the Quaker message. For example, Colossians 1.24 was the verse from this epistle most frequently cited by an eminent eighteenth-century Quaker, John Woolman. Each of these verses points to issues of scriptural interpretation that were intensely important to Quakers, and at the heart of some important discussions and disagreements with non-Quaker contemporaries.

CHAPTER 1, VERSE 23

If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister.

One of the significant universalising verses of Colossians is 1.23. In this verse, the Apostle Paul promises the Colossians that he will present them holy, unblameable, and irreproachable before Christ 'if ye continue in the faith...and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel...which was preached to every creature under heaven'. What is meant by having the gospel preached to every creature under heaven?

In addition, Quakers raised a translation issue. The preposition preceding 'every creature' in the Greek text is *en* (*pase ktisei*). This *en* is usually translated 'to', but, especially for Christians with mystical sensitivities, 'in' would seem a more plausible translation. Which English preposition is employed makes a difference in the meaning of the term 'gospel'; if 'in' is used, Robert Barclay pointed out that 'gospel' becomes a metonymy,¹⁵ that is, a figure of speech in which the word actually used suggests something associated with it. He believed that 'gospel' signified the spiritual 'inward power and life' which gladdened human hearts.

John Calvin ignored v. 23 in his voluminous *Institutes*, and the marginal notes of the Geneva Bible gave a weak explanation for the crucial phrase. That the gospel 'was preached to every creature which is under heaven', the Geneva Bible explains, means that it was proclaimed 'to all men: by which we learn that the Gospel was not confined to Judea alone'.¹⁶ Quakers could hardly be satisfied by such a limited gloss on this verse. (Of course, other verses in Paul's letters could be advanced to support Calvin's more restricted view of the gospel's intended audience and effect, e.g., Rom. 9.18: God 'has mercy on whomever he chooses, and he hardens the heart of whomever he chooses'. Quakers tended to ignore such verses, except when Puritan opponents were so ill-mannered as to bring them to Quakers' attention. In an extended meditation on Rom. 9.18, Isaac Pennington attempted to vindicate Quaker universalism by showing how abundant scriptural testimony to God's love for humanity, found in Colossians and other books of the Bible, entailed that any heart-hardening imposed by God would necessarily be fleeting. Pennington affirmed that God's love would always have the last word.)¹⁷

Turning to seventeenth-century Puritan commentators, Nicholas Byfield was not inclined to take Col. 1.23 literally. He believed that what was meant by this verse was that the gospel was to be preached 'by the Apostles and Evangelists, in the

conversion of so many Nations to the Faith of Christ'. He raised the possibility that the word 'every' here was to be understood as a figure of speech. It might have signified 'no more then if hee had said, [the gospel] was published farre and wide; as in John [12.19] they say, *the whole world goeth after him*; but they mean a great multitude, an usuall Hyperbolicall speech'.¹⁸ James Fergusson, a Scottish Presbyterian who published a brief exposition of Colossians in 1606, similarly limited the reach of v. 23, rendering the phrase 'preaching to every creature under Heaven' thus: 'to all Mankind, the most noble of creatures, and to some of all sorts of men, not in Judea only, but also among the Gentiles'.¹⁹

Commentators, past and present, have noticed the similarity of this verse to Mk 16.15, where the risen Christ exhorted his disciples to 'go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature'. The Greek text for Mk 16.15 lacks the preposition *en*, but in every other way is remarkably similar to Col. 1.23. Edward Elton used these two similar verses to argue that 'by every creature under heaven is meant all the nations of the world'.²⁰ George Fox sometimes cited Mk 16.15 and Col. 1.23 together, placing emphasis on preaching the gospel to 'every creature under heaven'.²¹ For Fox, whether the Colossians text could sustain a meaning of mystical inwardness was less important than highlighting the universal availability of salvation that he saw featured so prominently here.

Still, can this text sustain a meaning of mystical inwardness? As Samuel Fisher wrote, 'To have the gospel preached in men is one thing, and for men to learn the Mystery of it is another'.²² For a mystic, if the teacher who is presenting the gospel can be understood to be either inward or outward, then the problem of how to explain every creature's exposure to the gospel obviously becomes much less difficult. It was not, in Fox's view, a matter of excluding an external sense for this verse. Many Quakers would have been perfectly satisfied with a translation that would have the gospel being preached 'to or in' each creature.

The following pastiche of Scriptures, published in Fox's *Distinction between the New Covenant and the Old*, was undoubtedly meant as a description of the Quaker movement that he founded:

Christ... establishes the Second and Everlasting Covenant, where all shall be taught of God, and saith to them that... preached his Gospel, *freely you have received, freely give*; and they were to go and declare this without Bag or Staff... for they that preach the Gospel lived of the Gospel. So the Gospel of Life and Salvation is Good News and Glad Tidings, being preached *to and in every Creature* under Heaven.²³

Quakers understood this verse to signify that the heavenly inspired world in which every person is met by the gospel within extends throughout time as well as space. Accordingly, even significant, world-transforming events—and Quakers would have seen the origins of their movement in the late 1640s and early 1650s among such events—are mere outcroppings of a deeper and more enduring movement of the Spirit. Responding to a Puritan's query about Fox, John Whitehead asserted that he had

never thought, that *George Fox* was the first that ever preached the Gospel in *England*; ... for there have been Openings and Breakings forth of the Gospel, Light and Power in

divers Ages, in *England*, in a Despised Suffering Remnant, though not in that Fulness as in our Age. I am also sensible ever since I knew God, or was acquainted with him, how the Glorious Gospel was preached *to*, or *in*, every Creature which is under Heaven.²⁴

Quaker ministers were not shy about confronting Puritan ministers with this verse during the interminable controversies of the period. Here, for example, is Samuel Fisher's brief exposition of one such encounter:

*Paul says, the Gospel is come into all the World, [Col. 1.5-6] by which term All the World, J[ohn] O[wen]*²⁵ understands not *all men*, but the *Elect only*, heeding as little, as he does other matters, that the same Apostle in the same Chapter, vers. 23. speaks of the same Gospel in the same way as here, that it is preached, *En Pas Te K[t]jisei, In every Creature that is under Heaven.*²⁶

The message that Robert Barclay derived from Col 1.23 (and, indeed, his reading of the whole Bible) is not the kind of universalism, viz., the doctrine that all creatures will eventually be saved, that Philip Gulley and James Mulholland,²⁷ among many others, have proclaimed. It is, instead, something much closer to Arminianism, the species of Calvinism that drew its name from the early seventeenth-century Dutch minister Arminius and was rejected at the Calvinist Synod of Dort in 1619. Arminius, and Barclay too, stood opposed to Calvin's doctrine of predestination, that some human beings are predestined for salvation, while some are predestined for damnation, and Christ died only for the elect. For Barclay, the gospel preached to every creature meant that everyone has the opportunity at some time in their lives to embrace or reject Christ, and thus to choose salvation or slide into reprobation. Each person has his or her '*day and time of visitation*...during which they may be saved... such a season at least as sufficiently exonerateth God of every man's condemnation, which to some may be sooner, and to others later, according as the Lord in his wisdom sees meet'.²⁸ There is nothing guaranteed about our salvation, therefore, as each person must seize the opportunity when offered. But salvation is something that each person will have a genuine opportunity to choose. Penington pushed this insight further, asserting that scriptural testimony to God's love makes it 'very clear that God would have none to perish'.²⁹

The gospel that is proclaimed in each person is, Barclay tells us, the same as the 'saving spiritual light' that is within each person. Many people believe that the word 'gospel' describes only the outward message of Christ, but they are mistaken. Drawing also on such passages from Paul's letters as Rom. 1.16 and 1 Thess. 1.5, Barclay maintained:

The Gospel is this inward power and life which preacheth glad tidings *in* the hearts of all men, offering salvation unto them and seeking to redeem them from their iniquities, and therefore it is said to be preached 'in every creature under heaven:' whereas there are many thousands of men and women to whom the outward gospel was never preached.³⁰

So, in Barclay's view, everyone has a genuine opportunity to accept Christ, and no one is predestined from before the creation of the world to damnation. Also, since this gospel, like the Light of Christ mentioned in Jn 1.9, Col. 1.13, and other places,

is to be found within each person, it does not require a minister to actually visit each person in order for its purposes to be accomplished in due season (although, as Barclay would likely have admitted, ministers' Spirit-led work really does help—most early Quakers would have strongly identified with the teaching attributed to Paul in this verse.)

Quakers seem to have accommodated the universalising aspect of this verse convincingly into the inward, spiritual gospel which they witnessed. They integrated this verse into their theology more easily than did their Puritan counterparts.

CHAPTER 1, VERSE 24

Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church.

This challenging statement attributed to Paul has been the subject of intense discussion among Christians for centuries, even millennia. In order that we be clear on the nature of what is being discussed here, let us add a modern translation (NRSV): 'I am rejoicing in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am completing what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church'. One virtue of the NRSV translation is that, like the Greek original, it recognises that v. 24 actually begins a new sentence.

John Calvin noted with horror that this verse had been used as an underpinning for papal indulgences—the idea that there existed a treasury of merit accumulated by Christ, saints, and martyrs that the pope might dispense to redeem the souls of sinners, either who have died within recent memory or who are still alive. For Calvin, an especially objectionable aspect of the Catholic argument was its depreciation of Christ's unique redemptive sacrifice on our behalf, as this rendered Christ 'another common saintlet, who can scarcely be distinguished from the throng... It is as if God did not know how to increase his glory in his servants according to the measure of his gifts'. For Calvin, the suffering of Paul and other saints could be appropriately used for mutual encouragement, uplift, and advancement of the church and its members. But this suffering could in no way be said to contribute to the actual redemption of human beings. That was Christ's work alone.³¹

In amplifying this verse, Nicholas Byfield, an early seventeenth-century Puritan minister at Chester, imagined how Paul might see his sufferings as uplifting the church:

First, because they are the afflictions of Christ, that is, such as he accounts to be his. Secondly, because I know that in Gods decree I have my part of troubles assigned me; and it is my joy, to think that in so good a cause I have almost fulfilled them. Thirdly, because these afflictions extend but to my flesh and outward man. And lastly, because it is for your good I suffer, even for the confirmation of your Faith, and for the good of the whole body of Christ, which is the Church.

Like Calvin, Byfield rejected the notion that the suffering of Paul or other saints is necessary for human redemption. He derided the view that 'Christ did not suffer all that was needfull for mens deliverance from sin' as 'papist', assuring his readers that

such an erroneous interpretation 'cannot be the meaning of this place'. Byfield, like Calvin, cited many scriptural passages that would seem to contradict such an interpretation of v. 24. (Byfield's list included Jn 19.30; Heb. 9.14, 25-26; 10.1-15; 2 Cor. 5.14; and 1 Jn 2.1.) Instead, 'the plaine meaning is, that the Apostle did endure that measure of afflictions that God in his counsell had appointed him to endure for the Name and Gospell of Christ, and the good of the Church, in the confirmation and encouraging of mens minds in the truth of the Gospell'.³²

Not all Puritan commentators, however, so definitively divorced the sufferings of Paul referenced in this verse from the whole work of human redemption. Henry Wilkinson, the principal of Magdalen Hall at Oxford University and a sometime preacher to the Parliamentary forces, put forward a view that edged away from the position staked out by Calvin and defended by Byfield. In 1657, Wilkinson wrote in reference to v. 24 that 'persecutions, afflictions, and sufferings, are the portion of Christ's children'. While he neither explicitly confirmed nor denied any relation between this and human redemption, some of his authorities seem to have left the door open for some kind of relationship. He quoted Nicholas of Lyra (1270-1349), a Franciscan theologian who was the author of what would become the first published commentary on the Bible,³³ as saying that:

the sufferings of Christ are to be considered two manner of waies: one way for those sufferings which he endured in his own proper body, and so nothing remains there to be filled up: another way Christs sufferings are to be understood, for those which he shall suffer in his Mystical body unto the end of the World, and so there are remainders of many sufferings to be filled up.

There is no reason to assume that the sufferings of Christ's 'mystical body' are precluded from participating in the work of human redemption, and none of Wilkinson's other authorities clearly preclude such participation.³⁴ In fact, this wording in relation to Christ's 'mystical body' would be taken up by John Woolman, who clearly advocates that the sufferings of Paul and all of the saints are involved in the great work of Christ's redemption of humanity.

James Fergusson, like Wilkinson, also makes sense of this verse by considering the sufferings of all of the elect part of the sufferings of the mystical (body of) Christ, i.e., the Church. He is careful, however, to diminish the significance of the suffering of the elect in comparison to Christ's suffering: 'All that Paul, or any of the Elect suffereth, are but small relicts, being compared with that which Christ hath suffered, as the drops upon the brim of the cup: the great wave of affliction did first beat on him, and being thereby broken, some small sparks of it do light upon us'.³⁵

Echoes of this idea can be found in Fox's earliest ministry. When he was asked by a Puritan minister about Jesus's cry on the cross, 'My God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Fox replied that 'At that time the sins of the whole world were upon him. . . He died not as he was God; so in that he died for all men. . . he was an offering for the sins of the whole world. This I spoke being at that time in a measure *sensible of Christ's sufferings* and what he went through'.³⁶ In other words, Fox had been 'brought into fellowship' with the sufferings of Christ, as had the apostle Paul, according to v. 24.

For many seventeenth-century Quakers, this verse had intense resonance with

what was happening in their lives. An application of this verse to the sufferings of Quaker worshippers at Cambridge Meeting in Fifth Month (July), 1660, was preserved in seventeenth-century Quaker records. Townspeople invaded their meeting while worship was in progress, beating up Quakers:

throwing Dirt or Filth upon their Clothes, or in their Faces... As we were waiting upon the Lord in Fear, [they were] striking at those they could reach, flinging at others, and making an hideous Noise, with Scoffing, Laughing, Railing, Shouting, knocking, drumming upon the Boards, and sometimes throwing Wildfire and Gunpowder into the Meeting, to drown the Sound of that which was spoken to us in the Name of the Lord.

Twenty-two Quakers were injured (one being paralyzed and another almost killed) and the meetinghouse destroyed. Quaker witnesses wrote to the newly restored King Charles II, reminding him of his promises of liberty of conscience, and pleading with him to intervene. They wrote that they were willing 'to abide the good Pleasure of the Lord, *in filling up the Measure of the Afflictions of Christ in our Bodies*, while others are filling up the Measure of their Sins'.³⁷ This application of the verse yields little more than a straightforward contrast between saintliness and sinfulness, although these Quakers surely hoped that the king would take positive action, so that they would not again have to complete Christ's afflictions in such extremely painful ways.

The eighteenth-century American Quaker John Woolman's frequent references to v. 24 advanced more far-reaching interpretations of it. He applied it to his work with the oppressed and oppressors, slaves and slaveholders, as well as to a severe siege of pleurisy, which he survived. This comment appears in one of his essays:

As the Heart truly contrite, earnestly desires *to know Christ, and the Fellowship of his Sufferings*, [Phil. 3.10] so far as the Lord for gracious Ends may lead into them; as such feel that it is their Interest to put their Trust in God, and to seek no Gain but that which he, by his Holy Spirit, leads into; so, on the contrary, they who do not reverently wait for this Divine Teacher, and are not humbly concerned, according to their Measure, *to fill up that which is behind of the Afflictions of Christ*, [Col. 1.24] in patiently suffering for the promoting Righteousness in the Earth; but have an Eye toward the Power of Men, and the outward Advantage of Wealth, these are often attentive to those Employments which appear profitable, even though the Gains arise from such Trade and Business which proceeds from the Workings of the Spirit, which is estranged from the self-denying Life of an humble contrite Christian.³⁸

This lengthy sentence is something of a road map for sainthood, phrased in such a way that it is just as applicable for the twenty-first century as it was for the eighteenth century. 'Filling up that which is left behind of the afflictions of Christ' is identified with trust in God, a humble, self-denying life, and patient suffering on behalf of righteousness. On the other hand, it is counterposed to amassing power and wealth in human society, as these too often obstruct the workings of the Holy Spirit.

Woolman definitely believed that those sufferings he identified with 'the afflictions of Christ' were part of the process of human redemption. He counterposed Christ's fleshly body, which was that of one person only, Jesus of Nazareth, with Christ's 'mystical body', in which all of us can have a part. The redemption worked by Christ's mystical body is just as real and momentous as that which was accomplished

by Christ's fleshly body. In an epistle to the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings of Friends, he expressed the thought in this fashion:

Christ suffered Afflictions in a Body of Flesh prepared by the Father, but the Afflictions of his mystical Body are as yet unfinished; for they who are baptised into Christ are baptised into his Death, and as we humbly abide under his sanctifying Power, and are brought into Newness of Life, we feel Christ to live in us, who being the same Yesterday, Today, and forever, and always at Unity with himself, his Spirit in the Hearts of his People leads to an inward Exercise for the Salvation of Mankind. [When we see people who are] entangled by the Spirit of the World with its Wickedness and Customs, and thereby rendered incapable of being faithful Examples to others, Sorrow and Heaviness under a Sense of these Things, is often experienced, and thus in some Measure is filled up that which remains of the Afflictions of Christ.³⁹

Michael Birkel connects Woolman's use of v. 24 with a phrase often used by Quakers as they participated in meeting for worship, that of searching for a 'feeling sense of the condition of others'. Birkel observes that 'this experience could include suffering for the sake of others and for the Seed of Christ in them they were suppressing'.⁴⁰ In a sense, all of life was worship for Woolman, at least to the extent that searching for a 'feeling sense of the condition of others' was something that engaged him much of the time, not just for an hour on Sunday; this searching would include his visits to slaveholders. Our own attempts to enter into the suffering of oppressed persons are, in Woolman's words, a needful part of 'Christ's peaceable government'.⁴¹

The spiritualising, mystical nature of Quakerism seems to have facilitated the integration of what has seemed to many other Christians as a very challenging verse.

CHAPTER 1, VERSE 27

To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

For Quakers over three-and-a-half centuries of existence, this verse has been perennially fascinating, and indeed a favorite verse for many who knew their Bible well. Consequently, it has also evoked a significant amount of Quaker commentary.

The word *ethne*, translated in KJV as 'Gentiles', can just as easily be taken to mean 'nations' or 'peoples'. The translation of 'Gentiles' makes good sense when the epistle is considered in a first-century context, where the Christian mission was often stated as extending both to Jews and Gentiles, and the apostle Paul represented himself as an apostle to the Gentiles. Otherwise, when Quakers have applied reader-centered means of interpretation to this verse, 'nations' or 'peoples' often has made better sense.

Here, as in v. 23, an issue relative to the English translation concerns the preposition *en*. This word occurs twice in the verse: *en tois ethneois* (literally, 'in the nations' or 'in the Gentiles') and *Christos en umin* (literally, 'Christ in you'). The most literal translation is 'in', but *en* can also be translated as 'among'. Most versions use the word 'among' for the first occurrence of *en*, for example, the King James Version, Geneva Bible, Revised and New Revised Standard Versions, New International Version, and

Anchor Bible, among others. The translation of the second *en* is a more contentious issue. The Anchor Bible also translates that as 'Christ among you'. Most other versions including those previously mentioned in this paragraph, would translate it as 'Christ in you'.

This verse has found a somewhat mixed reception among the various theological persuasions of Christians. John Calvin, for example, provides only one truncated quotation of it in his *Institutes*. In arguing that the word *mysterion* could be translated as 'sacrament', he omitted the last nine words ('which is Christ in you, the hope of glory'), which Quakers have often seen as the grand highlight of this epistle.⁴² The one laconic marginal note to be found in the Geneva Bible is inserted after the occurrence of the word 'God': 'In this way Paul restrains the curiosity of men'. For predestinarian Christians struggling to contain Arminianism and spiritualism, this was a verse to be passed over as quickly as possible.⁴³

On the other hand, William Erbery, a Spiritualist who was identified by Penn as a forerunner of Quakerism,⁴⁴ made this verse a cornerstone of his theology. That the mystery of Christ in us is the hope of glory was one of the 'seven things taught by the Spirit'. In Erbery's view, this Christ in us has survived in the saints despite the various ecclesiastical corruptions throughout the centuries:

For that which was manifested visibly to men in the days of his flesh, that Christ was made of a woman, brought forth and born into the world, living in Judea, dying in Jerusalem, rising and ascending into heaven; all this was the manifestation of the mystery of Christ in us the hope of glory, which was a truth from the beginning of the world, though not manifested to the Saints before Christ came visibly in the flesh; yet then, even before, Christ was in the flesh of the Saints; he was all in all; Christ the same today, yesterday and for ever; formed in them, brought forth in them, living in them, and suffering in their flesh, as well as in the Saints afterwards.

Writing in 1647, just before the initial outbreak of Quakerism, Erbery hoped that this mystery of the immanent Christ would flourish anew in his own time.⁴⁵

Surprisingly, Nicholas Byfield defended a position in between Erbery and Calvin on this issue.

Christ is in the faithful; he lives in them; he dwels in them. God secretly gives Christ to the beleever, and the beleever to Christ; the Christ begins to manifest himselfe, riding in the Chariot of the Word; the Word (that before was a dead letter) receiveth life by the presence of Christ... There is a light (when Christ comes in) that gives the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Christ.

For Quakers, Christ was to be found not just in the faithful; Christ was in everyone. Still, Byfield's inward orientation resembles most Quaker interpretations.⁴⁶

However, Byfield's reluctance to extend the benefits of this verse to those who do not know Christ was shared to some extent by the first generation of Quakers. This verse can be compared to Jn 1.9, the verse designated by Robert Barclay and many since as 'the Quakers' text',⁴⁷ 'That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world'. Since Quakers identified the Light of Jn 1.9 with Christ, its meaning can be seen to be quite close to Col. 1.27, in that both texts strongly present the immanence of Christ, the presence of the Christ within us.

However, Col. 1.27 was stronger than Jn 1.9 in one way. It linked the presence of the Christ within to an eschatological expectation of 'the Hope of Glory'. Consequently, Quakers were made nervous by v. 27. If 'the Hope of Glory' was conceded to every human being, because every person had Christ in them, it might obviate any inducement to come under conviction and allow unrepentant sinners to make their merry way into heaven without any necessity for repentance or living a godly life.

John 1.9 escaped this predicament precisely by avoiding specifying any particular content to the Light of Christ, so the early Quakers could define the content of the Light of Christ for themselves. Few twenty-first-century Quakers have much awareness of how carefully the earliest Quakers defined the Light of Christ. In most Quaker tracts, the primary function of the Light of Christ was to discover the sin within a sinner, which would then lead him to repentance and a pure life in Christ. It helped one to discover, expose, repent of, and shun evil. The Light thus assumed a fearful aspect, something akin to a searchlight that would seek out those shameful secrets that we would not want to be exposed. The Light of Christ also was available to guide the saints after conviction, but in the words expended on describing the Light, this function was definitely secondary. For twenty-first-century Quakers, this latter aspect of the Light, that which leads us toward the good, is by far the aspect that receives the most attention.⁴⁸

Many early Quakers addressed this predicament by pairing the dangerously rosy v. 27 with a more sober verse from the letters of Paul, 2 Cor. 13.5. 'Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. *Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?*' Like v. 27, this text from 2 Corinthians discussed the immanent Christ, but it included the notable caveat that 'reprobates' were excluded from having the Christ within them, or possibly from realising its benefits. This provided the balance and nuance that many Quakers were looking for, the sense that true repentance could not be avoided by a simple appeal to v. 27.

Isaac Pennington might seem to be an exception to this generalisation. In his citations of v. 27, he never paired it with 2 Cor. 13.5. Nevertheless, it is clear that Pennington, too, understood this verse to apply primarily to the Children of the Light, as this excerpt from his *Ancient Principle of Truth* shows: 'In those that receive the grace, and believe in the light, and so become the children of the light, and walk in the light, as God is in the light: in them is Christ risen, and they are risen together with him, and he is in them the hope of glory'.⁴⁹

Robert Barclay's comment came in his chapter on 'justification'. Based on a 'real inward experimental feeling', he confidently stated that the 'immediate...cause' of justification (which is 'really being *made righteous*') is 'the *revelation of Jesus Christ in the Soul*, changing, altering, and renewing the mind'. For Bible texts, Barclay chose 2 Cor. 13.5; Gal. 4.19 ('my little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you'); and Col. 1.27-28. In 2 Corinthians, the apostle Paul, Barclay observed, 'makes the cause of reprobation, or not-justification, the want of Christ thus revealed and known *in the soul*. However, in Col. 1.27, the same apostle gives us knowledge of 'the hope of glory [which] can be no other than that which

we immediately and most nearly rely upon for our justification'. In other words, 2 Cor. 13.5 sets forth the real peril for our souls if we ignore the need for justification (or becoming truly righteous), while Col. 1.27 discloses an inviting promise if we actually follow through.⁵⁰

In his 1660 *Catechism for Children*, George Fox achieved a similar kind of balance without explicit reference to 2 Cor. 13.5. He posed this question: 'What is the living Hope from the dead hope, seeing that all that doth profess themselves to be Christians, will say they have the Hope?' And he responded:

The True and Living Hope which shall never perish is Christ the Mystery, which Hope anchors thy Soul, which is immortal, up unto God which is immortal, which Hope purifies as he is pure, I John 3.3...and if all the World of all the Christian upon the Earth had this Hope...which saves, Col. 1.27, they would be an unchangeable Religion, and would be in unity in the Hope Christ...but the Hope of the Hypocrite shall perish, ...such are they that be upon heaps about the Scriptures, and about the Worship of God, the Church, the Ministry, the Apostles, Prophets and Saints Words, they be the Hypocrites that be not in the Living Hope, but in the perishing hope.

Elsewhere in the same work, Fox forged strong links between 'the Quakers' text' of Jn 1.9, Col. 1.27, and 1 Pet. 3.15 (the final 25 words of this quotation): 'the Light that cometh from Christ the Hope of Glory, which enlighteneth every one that cometh into the world, comes from the Hope of Glory, and with it they see the Hope of Glory, and come to sanctifie the Lord in their hearts, and give a reason of their hope with meeknesse and godly fear to every man that asketh'.⁵¹

In a series of rhetorical questions, Isaac Penington captured something of the ecstatic condition of a saint living with and into the assurances brought forward in v. 27:

What is this mystery in them in whom it is revealed? Is it not Christ in them? Is it not the hope of glory in them? Do they not know it to be the Christ? Do they not know it to be the hope of glory? Who can damp the faith, or darken the knowledge, of those who feel the mystery of life revealed in them? Who feel Christ (the hope of glory) living, dwelling, and reigning in the authority and power of the Father, in their own hearts?⁵²

The 'hope of glory' might appear to be a synonym for 'heaven', but it is not exclusively so, especially if 'heaven' is understood to be a condition experienced after death. Instead, seventeenth-century Quakers apprehended that a vital experience of the 'living hope' (to use Fox's words) already placed one in a condition akin to heaven.⁵³ In other words, spiritual convincement is a more important transition in a human being's existence than death. The steady assurance and lively hope that one experiences after convincement suffices to carry one through the time when the mortal body is dissolving back into the elements. Moreover, the transformed manner of living that comes from submitting to the authority of Christ within enables one to live as if already in the New Jerusalem, even if the rest of the world is largely still in a fallen state. Seen in this light, the 'hope of glory' encompasses all of our future, not just a portion of it. Nor is the 'hope of glory' to be understood as an individualised state. It is, to be sure, a central part of Quakers' corporate existence. But, more than

that, the 'hope of glory' is to be seen as contagious, as capable of spreading over all the earth.

To the extent that Calvin spoke for seventeenth-century Puritans, there would appear to be a stark contrast between Quakers and Puritans in their interpretation of this verse. However, possibly Byfield was closer to the seventeenth-century Puritan pulse, and if so, Puritan and Quaker assertions and misgivings about this verse should be seen as similar. Erbery, the Spiritualist, was quite enthusiastic about this verse and granted it a more central place in his theology than did even the Quakers.

CHAPTER 2, VERSES 13-17

And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;(14) Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;(15) And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.(16) Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: (17) Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

We have skipped considerably ahead in our text. This is the portion of the text, ch. 2, where Paul was called to warn the Colossians away from the objectionable 'philosophy' (Col. 2.8) characterised by belief in 'the elements of the world' (Anchor Bible; KJV has 'rudiments of the world'), the worshiping of angels (Col. 2.18), and an undue preoccupation with ceremonies (including kosher foods to be consumed and holidays to be observed). In Col. 2.23, the Colossians are warned not to engage in 'will worship', that is, not to worship God according to human tradition, but instead in the manner that God wishes to be worshipped. This was an extremely significant phrase for early Quakers, and its sole biblical occurrence is in this verse from Colossians.

At any rate, both seventeenth-century Puritans and Quakers were fascinated by vv. 14 to 17, where the case against ceremonialism was presented most fully. It is to their exegesis of these four verses from Colossians that we now turn.

John Calvin wrestles extensively with these verses in his *Institutes*. In relation to v. 14 ('blotting out the handwriting of the ordinances which stood against us'), he notes that this passage poses interpretive difficulties, because 'the statement seems to extend the abolition of the law to the point that we now have nothing to do with its decrees'. Calvin solved this difficulty by limiting the application of this verse to the ceremonial law, rather than the moral law.⁵⁴ But Calvin is fierce in his denial of the ceremonial law: 'Paul, to prove [the ceremonies'] observance not only superfluous but also harmful, teaches that they are shadows whose substance exists for us in Christ. Thus we see that in their abolition the truth shines forth better than if they, still far off and as if veiled, figured the Christ, who has already plainly revealed himself'.⁵⁵

The language of 'substance' and 'shadow' as related to Christ, found only in Col. 2.17 and several verses in Hebrews, became a powerful means of decrying ceremonialism in the Christian religion. Early Quakers developed this kind of analysis extensively, as we shall see below. But this analysis had its roots in Calvin's theology.

Calvin is not terribly explicit in stating what the Reformation-era analogue was to the first-century ceremonialism that Colossians decried. But we may surmise that he intended both Roman Catholicism and Judaism to fall under these strictures. Even Martin Luther's brand of Protestantism was not as resolute as decrying ceremonialism as Calvin's Reformed branch was.

In relation to the fourth commandment relating to the Sabbath, Calvin opines that 'by the Lord Christ's coming, the ceremonial part of this commandment was abolished'. Again he provides v. 17 as his reason. For Christ 'himself is the truth, with whose presence all figures vanish; he is the body at whose appearance the shadows are left behind'. He inveighs against 'this absurd distinction of days'. The Lord's Day is not a 'spiritual mystery' to be observed with 'the most rigid scrupulousness', but only 'a remedy to keep order in the church'. While Gal. 4.10 is also instanced, Col. 2.16-17 provides the backbone for Calvin's trenchant analysis.⁵⁶

Calvin's otherwise unsparing condemnation of ceremonialism did not extend to the Christian sacraments. Toward the end of his text, he realised the need to make explicit his judgment that the condemnations of Col. 2.16-17 should not be applied to the sacraments, which he characterised as 'testimonies of grace' rather than the 'ceremonies of the law' abolished by the coming of Christ.⁵⁷

Puritan commentator Nicholas Byfield followed Calvin closely in all of these particulars. Byfield found special significance in a phrase in v. 17, downplaying ceremonies as 'shadows of things to come'. Poignantly, he avers that this phrase will help 'to keepe off the blow from our Sacraments', but for the unconvincing reason that sacraments are actually 'shadows of things past', and hence are exempt from the scorn in Colossians for shadows of things to come. Responding to assertions similar to Byfield's, Robert Barclay retorted: 'Since our adversaries confess, that their *bread* and *wine* is a *sign* or *shadow*; therefore, according to the Apostle's Doctrine, we ought not to be judged in the [non-]observance of it'. Barclay shows how Byfield's feeble argument leaves the Reformed Protestant view of the sacraments in a perilous position.⁵⁸

Was it enough merely to say, as Calvin did, that the ceremonial aspect of the fourth commandment was abolished, and the Christian Sabbath on the first day should be observed merely to keep order in the church? Some in the Reformed tradition were clearly uneasy with the slender foundation provided by such exegesis for Christian sabbatarian traditions. Thus we find Scottish Presbyterian James Fergusson explicating Col. 2.16 as advocating the abrogation of 'the Jewish seventh-day Sabbath', with 'the Lord's day, or the Christian first-dayes Sabbath, substitute[d] in its place'.⁵⁹ While this comment surely reflected Presbyterian practice, it would be hard for Quakers to see how Colossians' second chapter provided any warrant for regarding any day of the week as holy.

Calvin's outspoken condemnation of rites was carried over into the marginal notes of the Geneva Bible. 'Blotting out the handwriting of the ordinances' was glossed as 'abolishing the rites and ceremonies'. This gloss was thoroughly elaborated: 'Christ put out that handwriting by his coming, and fastening it to the cross, triumphed over all our enemies, were they ever so mighty. Therefore to what end and purpose should we now use those ceremonies, as though we were still guilty of sin, and subject to the tyranny of our enemies?'⁶⁰

The first English version to use the word 'ordinances' to translate *dogmasin* in v. 14 was the 1562 Geneva Bible ('And putting out the hande writing of the ordinances that was againste us, which was contrarie to us, he even toke it out of the way'). The 1602 Bishop's Bible followed suit ('And when he had blotted out the handwriting of the ordinances that was against us, and that was contrary to us, even that hath he taken out of the way'), as did the 1611 King James Bible ('blotting out the handwriting of the ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us: and he hath taken it out of the way').⁶¹ The word 'ordinances', appearing in the Calvinist-influenced Geneva and Bishops' Bibles, but not the Tyndale, Great, or Rheims Bibles, was a broad word, one that must have been consciously chosen to highlight the anti-ceremonial interpretation uniformly applied to it by the Puritans. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, 'ordinance' can mean 'a practice or usage authoritatively enjoined or prescribed; especially, a religious or ceremonial observance, as the sacraments'. This usage was extremely widespread among left-wing Puritans. The very strategy of translation employed by the Puritans undermined their desire to exempt sacraments from a general condemnation of ceremonies.

Incidentally, no modern English translation uses 'ordinances' to translate *dogmasin* in this context. For example, the NRSV renders that verse as follows: 'erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands. He set this aside, nailing it to the cross'. This is a more precise and less evocative translation of the Greek word, which also could mean 'doctrine' or 'decree'. It was often associated with actions of Roman emperors and the senate; the word used for Augustus's decree for a census in Lk. 2.1 is *dogma*. The context here strongly suggests a written record, so recent translators have eschewed the ambiguity of 'ordinance'.

But all those modern translations lay far in the future. The profoundly anti-ceremonial seventeenth-century Quakers, with their vehement opposition to outward sacraments, had to tinker with this Puritan interpretive tradition hardly at all to make it serve their purposes. There was just one major change that they would impose upon this interpretive tradition. They sought to make the interpretation of vv. 14 to 17 more logically consistent, at least according to the Puritans' interpretive strategies, by including the outward sacraments in the ceremonies that Paul, in his letter to the Colossians, had intended to abolish. The Puritans, of course, had possible rejoinders, mostly attempting to focus attention on other biblical texts far more suitable to their purpose of defending the sacraments. But, if the discussion could be limited to Colossians alone, Quakers and other Spiritualists had a distinct advantage, and that was one reason why Fox and his Quaker comrades so insistently sought to direct their controversies to Colossians as a main text. In other words, early Quakers were able to take Puritan forms of exegesis and turn them decisively against the Puritans for Spiritualist ends, subsuming all of the Puritans' rather spare ceremonial practices under the condemnations of the first-century writer combating an obscure first-century philosophy threatening the church at Colossae.

Colossians 2.14 played an important part in the fiery apocalyptic rhetoric of Fox's 1653 pamphlet, *News from the North*. To the Puritans, Fox wrote, 'All your preaching, praying, singing, reading, all your imaginations, Baptism and Sacrament, as you call it, and all your ordinances and Churches and teachings, it is *Cains* sacrifice',

referencing v. 14 in the margin. Again, Fox wrote that Christ 'is the head of the Body, he is the head of the church, who hath blotted out the ordinances and traditions of men'. To render the verse a stronger anti-Puritan polemic, he omitted the inconvenient words, 'handwriting of'. However, by emphasising ceremonies rather than the written records that 'handwriting' would suggest, he was firmly in the mainstream of the Puritan interpretive tradition.⁶²

Much of the use of this passage in Quaker-Puritan controversies can be found in the discussion of the sacraments and of the Sabbath. Let us look first at the issue of the sacraments. Former Presbyterian Elizabeth Bathurst imparted her Quaker view in a gentle manner:

If any break outward Bread, and drink outward Wine with a sincere Intention, as believing it their Duty, that they may the more be put in Remembrance of the Body and Blood of Christ, by the Remembrancer, the Spirit of Truth, which is appointed by the Father to lead the Saints into all Truth, they judge them not, but rather hope that such will come further out of the Shadow into the Substance.⁶³

To a Puritan who, in 1655, charged that the Quakers' disuse of Christian ordinances constituted a neglect of the 'principle meanes of our Salvation' and a 'contemning' of Christ himself, Margaret Fell responded combatively, based on her reading of Colossians. She observed that her interrogator was 'talkinge of Ordinances which the Apostle saith was blotted out... But thou...art Soe blinde & Ignorant of the light of truth that thou knowes not the Difference between carnall ordinances, & the power that is ordayned of god'.⁶⁴

In William Penn's controversy with John Faldo, an Independent minister and a former chaplain in Cromwell's army,⁶⁵ Faldo attempted to cast doubt on the Quaker stance on sacraments with this comment: 'That if the Saints having Christ in them, were the Consideration, for which the Ordinances were not to be touched, then not only we, but even all other Saints under the Mosaical Administration sinned in their Practices of God's Ordinances also; for they had Christ in them in those Days in the same Sense as the Saints in these'. Penn would not condemn the saints of old for living up to their measure of the light, but he would not let Faldo off the hook for evading the clear message of Col. 2.14-17.

Above all, that J. Faldo should plead for the Continuance of Ordinances after Christ had blotted them out, and *such Meats and Drinks, &c.* as Christ ended, (being the Substance of them) because Christ might be in some Measure known to the Saints of old, at what Time such Ordinances were given forth, and such Meats and Drinks observ'd, is *Jewish*, and, as I said in my Answer, to plead for a Legal Dispensation and Bondage to the Shadows of the good Things to come, thereby making Christ's coming of none Effect.⁶⁶

Further along in this debate, Faldo had accused Penn of denying the Lord's Supper, Baptism, and the Christian Sabbath, inasmuch as Penn had asserted that 'Christ is to the Saints...the End of all Meats, Drinks, Washings, [and] Days'. Penn pointed out to Faldo that Col. 2.16-17 and Heb. 9.10 cast doubt on just such 'Carnal Ordinances... The four words are denied to be Evangelical, viz. Meats, Drinks, Washings, Days'. In other words, if Faldo wanted to be in accord with the 'Evangelical Administration',

he would have to follow the Quakers into the non-observance of outward sacraments.⁶⁷ Along similar lines, in a 1698 letter to Edward Wetenhall, Anglican bishop of Cork, William Penn cites these verses to support his contention that those who 'Worship God in the Spirit...have no Confidence...in Fleshly Ordinances, or the Observation of Figures and Signs compounded of Outward Elements, which represent Heavenly Things'.⁶⁸

Using these same verses from Colossians, Barclay explored similar themes in several of his works. In *Truth Cleared of Calumnies*, he cited Col. 2.14-17 to demonstrate that 'the apostle contra-distinguished between that one bread, and the outward bread, together with the other figures and shadows'. In both his *Apology for the True Christian Divinity* and his *Catechism and Confession of Faith*, he cited Col. 2.16, 20-22 as among those Scriptures which 'are there to show, that it is not necessary, that [the ceremony] of bread and of wine to continue'; or, in slightly different phrasing, 'such external rites are no necessary part of the new covenant dispensation, therefore not needful now to continue'. Throughout the whole second chapter of Colossians and in Col. 2.16 specifically, Barclay observes, 'the apostle...doth clearly plead for us, and against the *formality* and *superstition* of our opposers'.⁶⁹

Quakers also saw in these verses a stout support for their stance that, although it may be proper for good church order to meet on the Christian Sabbath, still no day was inherently more holy than any other day. Barclay concluded from Col. 2.16-17 that 'the outward sabbath, or the keeping one day of the week for a sabbath, is not perpetual but abolished, together with the new moons and other feasts of the Jews... The inward Jew in spirit desireth...that he may keep his sabbath, which is his spiritual rest in Christ'.⁷⁰ Or, as Thomas Ellwood put this point, the '*Sabbath*, which was given by God, to his People the *Jews*, [was] ended and taken away by Christ'.⁷¹ George Fox notes, in the *Mystery of the Great Whore Unfolded*, with reference to these verses, that 'the sabbath is called a shadow, but the body is Christ'.⁷² Penn stated in his *Primitive Christianity Reviv'd* that '*Set Days and Places*, with all the Solemnity of them, were most in Request in the weakest Dispensation. *Altars, Ark and Temples, Sabbaths and Festivals*, &c. are not to be found in the Writings of the New Testament. There, every Day is alike, and every Place is alike; but if there were a Dedication, *let it be to the Lord* [Rom. 14:5-6]'.⁷³

Penn and others acutely sensed that these passages from Romans and Colossians suggest a time of liturgical transition in the latter part of the first century. While early Christians were no longer observing Jewish liturgies, they had not been replaced by any well-established Christian worship practices taking place at any definite day or hour.⁷⁴ Seventeenth-century Spiritualist Christians found themselves at home in the (non-)liturgical interstices inhabited by the first-century Christian communities of Romans and Colossians, representing a primitive Christianity which Quakers like Penn sought to revive.

None of these remarks are sufficient to explain, however, why Friends, especially from the 1660s onward, regularly set aside time on the first day of the week for their meetings for worship. In the course of the controversy between Fox and the even more Spiritualist Quaker dissident, John Perrot, in the early 1660s, Fox tended to adopt for himself, on the matters of setting regular times of worship and of men's

removing their hats during prayer, the viewpoint that Calvin, in his reflections on Col. 2.16-17, had advocated for the Sabbath and sacraments—namely, they should be seen as ceremonial occasions or practices, which could claim no inherent holiness for themselves, but which must be allowed for maintenance of good order in the church.

He was surprisingly inarticulate on this point, however. In his Letter 199, Fox admonishes Friends to come to the ‘state of Adam and Eve before they fell’, a state ‘without hats or coverings’. But, as Larry Ingle has observed, such a judgment would seem to support Perrot’s view, not oppose it. So Fox was forced to reverse course in the same epistle and plead for the removal of the hat during prayer in order to ensure ‘order, comeliness, and decency’ in the religious fellowship.⁷⁵ Fox’s biblical citation in this epistle was less sure-handed than was usual for him. Relating Perrot’s actions to factionalism in the early Corinthian church, Fox, citing 1 Corinthians, maintained that Quakers should avoid that church’s ‘jangling about meats, drinks, days, marriages; and whether they should pray covered, and whether the woman should pray and prophesy uncovered’.

This is a puzzling list of issues to associate with 1 Corinthians. Paul’s epistle certainly covers the subjects of head coverings during prayer (ch. 11) and of marriages (ch. 7). There is mention of controversy over eating meat offered to idols (chs. 8 and 10). Possibly Paul’s examination of the role of the cup in the ceremony of the Lord’s Supper (chs. 10 and 11) would account for Fox’s inclusion of ‘drink’ in this list. I’m not sure what could have been the controversy over ‘days’ that Fox saw in this epistle, unless he was again referring to Paul’s discussion of the Lord’s Supper. Fox’s vocabulary of ‘meats, drinks, days’, however, must have been drawn from Col. 2.16, the only verse in the New Testament to mention all three. (Rom. 14.17⁷⁶ and Heb. 9.10⁷⁷ mention meats and drinks, but not days.) One hesitates to argue overly much from scriptural miscitation, but our verses from Colossians would have supported Perrot’s side, *except that* Fox seems to have adapted Puritan reasoning on the Sabbath to the matters of the hat and of set times of worship, that is, as necessary to maintain order in the church. If this reconstruction of Fox’s argument is correct, the parallelism in thought between Fox and Calvin, both opposing those who they believed had taken spiritualism too far, is quite striking.

Quakers saw in Col. 2.14-17 not only a liberating stance away from outward religious ceremonies, but also welcome encouragement toward a fuller, deeper, more vital spiritual life. Bathurst affirmed this in an especially full restatement of v. 14. ‘As there is a Coming to this Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus. . . we come to know a *Blotting out* of the Law of Commandments [Col. 2.14] contained in *Ordinances*, which *was against us*, and *contrary to us*, our Lord having taken them and *nail’d* them to *his Cross*’. James Nayler recorded a beautiful comment linking the Quaker stance against the use of outward ordinances with the heart of Quaker spiritual witness. Weaving together Col. 2.14-17, 20-22 with other biblical texts, Nayler wrote that the adversary’s power cannot

be stopped but by the spirit of the Lamb of God, which takes away sin, and breaks down the wall of separation, which is made about ordinances, literal, ceremonial and

traditional, which can never cease but as men turn to the spirit of the Lord Jesus, that with the light of peace and truth, you may be led into peace, truth and unity, that wrath may be done away, and the ground thereof, and you and your religion may be settled on the foundation of truth, Christ Jesus the chief corner stone; and not upon days, times, meats, drinks and apparel, and other things that will perish with the using.

Margaret Fell also highlighted the spiritual sustenance available from these verses, counseling Friends to 'abide in the cross, and keep your minds to that which is pure; so that you may come to witness the enmity slain, the handwriting of ordinances blotted out, and nailed to the cross, and you crucified to the world, and the world to you'.⁷⁸

CONCLUSION

We may ask how Quakers utilised the universalising and spiritualising tendencies of Colossians. Early Quaker universalism consisted of an inward assurance that God's salvation was available to people in every age and in every country, regardless of whether such a person had enjoyed the opportunity to hear the outward gospel preached. Thus, Quakers consistently interpreted Colossians, especially Col. 1.23, in a mystical manner that had no appeal to Puritans.

What Col. 1.24 showed to early Quakers was that the process of salvation, while open to everybody, required an active participation, not a passive reception of grace. This opening was only vaguely realised in the words of first-generation Quakers, like Fox, but their claims that Christian perfection was possible helped to lead the way to this. It was more fully realised and named toward the end of the first Quaker century by John Woolman, drawing on mystical Catholic and Puritan precedents. It may be a bit daunting to consider living Christians as part of the mystical body of Christ that is still making real Christ's atonement for today's world, but what Woolman showed is that once the invitation to participate in the spiritualising process of salvation is accepted, there is no limit to the depth with which one or all may proceed with that.

How has the profound spiritualisation evidenced in the Quaker interpretation of this epistle affected interaction with liturgy and ritual, Christian and otherwise? Does Quaker unconcern with ritual in furtherance of the spiritual allow more freedom to engage in whatever liturgies one prefers, or is it prescriptive of a certain kind of ritual, possibly that of waiting, expectant worship? Can one be freed from any rules that hinder one's spirituality by the intense Quaker focus on the spiritual, or does the latter help Quaker communities to formulate rules (or, truer to Quaker tradition, 'advices') that will assist in nurturing that spirituality, or is it some of both? It may have initially dismayed Quaker leaders such as Fox, when they realised the complex balance between movement of the Spirit and maintenance of church order that would be necessary in the aftermath of the Nayler and Perrot affairs. Differences between Quakers and Puritans existed on specific liturgical matters (outward sacraments) under the purview of Col. 2.14-17, but not, ultimately, on broader principles of scriptural interpretation in this instance.

Puritan theologians prepared the way for Quakers in their spiritualising interpretations of Colossians, but they never embraced the universalising theology that Quakers

found in that epistle. While John Calvin's spiritualising of Col. 2.14-17 was influential, we have seen that he implicitly rejected spiritualising interpretations of the first chapter of Colossians. Still, Henry Wilkinson's exegesis of Col. 1.24 and Nicholas Byfield's exegesis of Col. 1.27 suggest a spiritualising trajectory among Puritan theologians that arguably led toward Quakerism. The Quakers were probably not the most radical spiritualisers in mid-seventeenth-century England, as William Erbery's exegesis of Col. 1.27 suggests.

I hope that it will be enlightening for scholars to apply a similar methodology to other biblical texts that were significant to Quakers, including the Gospels, the Johannine literature, Ephesians, Hebrews, James, Revelation, and Isaiah and other Old Testament prophets. Did early Quakers emphasise spiritualisation, universalism, and mysticism in their interpretation of these other significant texts? I warmly invite other investigations of Quaker readings of the Bible using these valuable computerised resources.

NOTES

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1. This essay builds on such works of historical theology as: Underwood, T.C., *Primitivism, Radicalism, and the Lamb's War: The Baptist-Quaker Conflict in Seventeenth-Century*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1997; Barbour, H., *The Quakers in Puritan England*, Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1985; Gwyn, D., *Seekers Found: Atonement in Early Quaker Experience*, Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Press, 2000. A helpful introduction to early Quaker use of Scripture is provided by Birkel, M., *Engaging Scripture: Reading the Bible with Early Friends*, Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 2005.

2. My views on Woolman's theology have been especially influenced by Birkel, M., *A Near Sympathy: The Timeless Quaker Wisdom of John Woolman*, Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 2003.

3. In the judgment of twentieth-century scholar Howard Brinton, Colossians was one of about a half-dozen New Testament books that most clearly established 'the philosophy and ethics of early Christianity and also of George Fox'. See his *Religious Philosophy of Quakerism: The Beliefs of Fox, Penn, and Barclay as based on the Gospel of John*, Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 1973, p. 67.

4. Computer search capability has mightily assisted others attempting to harness insights into Biblical interpretation from two millennia of Christian tradition. An impressive example is this Biblical commentary presenting interpretations from early Christian theologians: Oden, T.C. (ed.), *The Ancient Christian Commentary on Scriptures*, Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1998-present. 26 volumes are projected.

5. Reid, W.S., 'The Transmission of Calvinism in the Sixteenth Century', in Reid, W.S. (ed.), *John Calvin: His Influence in the Western World*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1982, pp. 45-52.

6. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, s.v., 'Paul Baynes (c. 1573-1617)', by Knighton, C.S.; 'Nicholas Byfield (1578/79-1622)', by Ball, Bryan W.; 'Edward Elton (c. 1568-1624)', by Christophers, R.A.; 'James Ferguson (1621-1667)', by Wright, Stephen.

7. Barth, M., and Blanke, H., *Colossians*, The Anchor Bible, New York: Doubleday, 1994, pp. 7-10; Schweizer, E., *The Letter to the Colossians: A Commentary*, Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1982, pp. 13-15.

8. Barth and Blanke, *Colossians*, pp. 114–26; Schweizer, *The Letter to the Colossians*, pp. 15–23.
9. Fox presented a brief argument for Paul's authorship of this epistle based on Col. 4.18 in his 'Primitive Ordination and Succession of Bishops, Deacons, Pastors, and Teachers in the Church of Christ', in his *Works*, 8 vols.; Philadelphia: Marcus T.C. Gould; New York: Isaac T. Hopper, 1831, V, p. 175, (DQC); this attention to outward facts surrounding the epistle was unusual for seventeenth-century Quakers.
10. Appealing to this verse, Fox charged that the 'apostate Christians' of his own time 'like the Jews... set traditions above the Scriptures of Truth that testifie of Christ'. Fox was more concerned about apostate seventeenth-century Christians who, in his view, were imitating first-century Jews, but his historical assumptions were clear. Fox, *Concerning the Traditions of Jews and Apostate Christians* (London, 1688); also found in *Works*, VI, p. 366. See also 'Inward and Spiritual Warfare, and the False Pretense of It', in *Works*, VI, p. 465 (DQC).
11. Barclay asserted that Col. 2.8 demonstrated that 'the truth proceeding from an honest heart, and spoken forth from the virtue and Spirit of God, will have more influence' than any application of logic or philosophy. See his *Apology for the True Christian Divinity*, in *Truth Triumphant through the Spiritual Warfare, Christian Labours, and Writings of that able and faithful servant of Jesus Christ, Robert Barclay*, Philadelphia: Benjamin C. Stanton, 1831, II, Prop. X, Sect. XX, II, pp. 312–13; see also *idem*, 'Catechism and Confession of Faith', Chap. 10, in *Truth Triumphant*, I, p. 388 (DQC).
12. Barth and Blanke, *Colossians*, pp. 31, 39; Schweizer, *The Letter to the Colossians*, pp. 125–33.
13. Col. 1.27 is cited 68 times in the database; Col. 1.16, 36 times; Col. 1.23, 34 times; Col. 2.16, 28 times. However, there are two problems with relying on the list of frequency of 'hits' generated by a database like this. First, there is some miscitation. My accounting corrects a few of these instances, but undoubtedly not all. Second, many scriptural quotations in Quaker writings are not tagged with a citation, and hence would be missed by a citation search (but accessible through a keyword search, which this present list I have compiled does not include). Still, having worked with both problems, I feel that these statistics are useful as a rough guide.
14. It would appear that, of over 500 works in the DQC database, Barclay's 'Catechism and Confession of Faith' is the only work that cites either Col. 3.18 or 3.22 and then presents it as reliable guidance to its readership. A more tortured exposition of Col. 3.18 (and the closely related Eph. 5.22), where an attempt is made to bend a variety of difficult texts to fit requirements of Quaker egalitarianism under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, can be found in George Fox's 'Woman Learning in Silence, or the Mystery of the Woman's Subjection to her Husband', in *Works*, IV, pp. 104–10 (DQC).
15. Barclay, *Apology*, II, p. 168 (DQC).
16. Geneva Bible notes are available online. See <<http://bible.crosswalk.com/Commentaries/GenevaStudyBible/gen.cgi?book=col&chapter=001>> (29 October 2004).
17. Penington, I., 'The Ancient Principle of Truth: Or, the Light Within Asserted', in *Works of the long-mournful and sorely-distressed Isaac Penington*, London: J. Phillips, 1784, III, pp. 317–23. See also Penn's correspondence with John Morse: Penn, W., *Works of William Penn*, ed. J. Besse; London: J. Sowle 1726, II, pp. 180–84 (DQC).
18. Byfield, N., *An Exposition upon the Epistle to the Colossians*, London: Miles Flesher, 1649, I, 151. (This is drawn from Early English Books Online, issued by Chadwyck-Healey; it is henceforth abbreviated EEBO.)
19. Fergusson, J., *A Brief Exposition of the Epistles of Paul to the Philippians and Colossians*, Edinburgh: Christopher Higgins, 1656, p. 161. See also Bayne, P., *A Commentarie upon the First and Second Chapters of Saint Paul to the Colossians*, London, 1635, p. 137 (EEBO).
20. Elton, E., *An Exposition of the Epistle of Saint Paul to the Colossians* (London: Felix Kyngston, 1620), p. 167 (EEBO). A more recent example: Instead of 'rhetorical exaggeration' as Byfield and others since have posited, Paul 'has particularly in mind cities and towns from which the gospel moved further afield'. O'Brien, P.T., *Colossians, Philemon*, Word Biblical Commentary 44; Waco, TX: Word Books, 1982, pp. 70–71.
21. Fox, G., 'People of God, in Scorn Called Quakers', in *Works*, V, p. 221; see also 'Concerning the Antiquity of the People Called Quakers', in *Works*, VI, p. 390 (DQC).

22. Fisher, S., 'Rusticus Ad Academicos', in *Testimony of Truth Exalted*, London, 1679, p. 995 (DQC).

23. Fox, G., *A Distinction between the New Covenant and the Old*, London, 1679, broadside (EEBO) (Fox's emphasis). Among modern Quakers, Howard Brinton is the only theologian I found to have made this exegetical observation: *Religious Philosophy of Quakerism*, p. 73.

24. Whitehead, J., 'Another Postscript to Ralph James', in Robert Ruckhill, *The Quakers Refuge Fixed upon the Rock of Ages*, London, 1673, pp. 35-36 (emphases in original). I am indebted to S.N. Dixon for this reference (EEBO).

25. I am indebted to Doug Gwyn for his suggestion that the initials 'J.O.' stand for John Owen. At the time of Fisher's writing, Owen was an Independent minister and a vice-chancellor of Oxford University.

26. Samuel Fisher, the best Greek scholar in the first Quaker generation, always referred to the gospel being preached *in every creature, never to every creature*, in his mentions of v. 23. Fisher, S., *Rusticus ad Academicos*, in his *Testimony of Truth Exalted*, p. 647 (DQC) (emphasis in original).

27. Gulley, P., and Mulholland, J., *If Grace Is True: Why God Will Save Every Person*, New York: Harper San Francisco, 2003. Col. 1.20 is closer to Gulley and Mulholland's theme, although seventeenth-century Quakers also did not interpret that verse to signify that all people are to be saved.

28. Barclay, *Apology*, II, p. 136 (DQC).

29. Penington, 'Ancient Principle of Truth', in *Works of the long-mournful*, III, p. 318; theological context supplied in Underwood, *Primitivism, Radicalism, and the Lamb's War*, pp. 114-15.

30. Barclay, *Apology*, II, p. 168. See also Barclay, *Apology*, Glenside, PA: Quaker Heritage Press; Peter D. Sippel, 2002. Emphasis follows the QHP/Sippel edition, based on Barclay's first English edition of 1678. Similar glosses can be found in the writing of other early Quakers; for example, Samuel Fisher used Colossians to demonstrate 'That light, which is Gods Gospel in [the Gentiles] is preached in every creature under heaven'. Fisher, *Rusticus ad Academicos*, p. 691 (DQC).

31. Calvin, J., *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. J.T. McNeill, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960, 3.5.3, 3.5.4.

32. Byfield, *Exposition*, Metaphrase, I, 154 (EEBO).

33. 'Nicholas of Lyra', *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2004. Encyclopedia Britannica Premium Service. <<http://www.britannica.com/eb/article?eu=57131>>, 4 April 2004. Nicholas of Lyra's view of this verse, along the lines Wilkinson indicated, is explored in Kremer, J., *Was an den Leiden Christi noch mangelt: Eine interpretationsgeschichtliche und exegetische Untersuchung zu Kol. 1:24b*, Bonner biblische Beitrage 13; Bonn: Hanstein, 1956.

34. Wilkinson, H., *The Hope of Glory, or Christ's In-Dwelling in True Believers*, Oxford: A. Lichfield, 1660, p. 2 (EEBO).

35. Fergusson, *Brief Exposition*, pp. 161-62 (EEBO).

36. Nickalls, J.L. (ed.), *Journal of George Fox*, London: Religious Society of Friends, 1975, p. 5 (emphasis mine); see also Janney, S., *History of the Religious Society of Friends*, 4 vols.; Philadelphia: Hayes & Zell, 1860, IV, Chapter 5, Section 12 (DQC).

37. Besse, J., *Collection of the Sufferings of the People Called Quakers*, 2 vols.; London: L. Hinde, 1753, I, p. 87 (DQC) (emphasis mine).

38. Woolman, J., 'Considerations on Pure Wisdom, and Human Policy', in *Works*, London: J. Phillips, 1775, p. 3 (DQC) (emphasis in original).

39. Woolman, J., 'Epistle to the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings of Friends', in *Works*, pp. 70-71 (DQC).

40. Birkel, *A Near Sympathy*, p. 60.

41. Birkel, *A Near Sympathy*, pp. 62-63.

42. Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.14.2.

43. See n. 5.

44. Letter from Penn to Sir John Rodes, October 1693, in Wokeck, M.S., Wiltenburg, J., Hirsch, A.D., and Horle C.W. (eds.), *The Papers of William Penn*. III. 1685-1700, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986, p. 378. See also Gwyn, *Seekers Found*, pp. 115-22.

45. *Nor Truth, nor Error, nor Day, nor Night; but in the Evening There Shall Be Light* (Zech. 14: 6, 7): *Being the Relation of a Publike Discourse in Maries Church at Oxford, Between Master Cheynel and Master Erbury, Jan. 11, 1646*, London: Giles Calvert, 1647, pp. 3-5 (EEBO).

46. Byfield, *Exposition*, I, 170 (EEBO).

47. Barclay, *Apology*, in *Truth Triumphant*, II, 160 (DQC).

48. Barbour, *Quakers in Puritan England*, pp. 94-126.

49. Penington, 'Ancient Principle of Truth', in *Works of the long-mournful*, III, 310 (DQC).

50. Barclay, *Apology*, pp. 225-26 (emphasis in original). Other occasions on which Col. 1.27 and 2 Cor. 13.5 were cited together: Keith, G., *Immediate Revelation*, London, 1675, p. 89; Penn, W., *Key Opening the Way to Every Capacity*, in *Works of William Penn*, II, pp. 780, 789; Fisher, *Rusticos ad Academicos*, p. 543; Nayler, J., and Fox, G., *Saul's Errand to Damascus*, in Nayler, J., *Collection of Sundry Books, Epistles, and Papers written by James Nayler*, Cincinnati: B.C. Stanton, 1829, p. 65; Bishop, G., and Grove, J., *New England Judg'd*, London: T. Sowle, 1703, p. 530; Chalkley, T., *God's Great Love unto Mankind*, in *A Collection of the Works of that Ancient, Faithful Servant of Jesus Christ, Thomas Chalkley* (London: L. Hinde, 1766), p. 334 (all sources from DQC).

51. Fox, G., *A Catechisme for Children*, London: Thomas Simmons, 1660, pp. 88-89; see also p. 52 (EEBO).

52. Penington, I., 'Some Queries on Colossians 1:27-29', in *Works of the long-mournful*, IV, 77 (DQC).

53. On early Quakers' view of heaven, see Underwood, *Primitivism, Radicalism, and the Lamb's War*, pp. 64-65.

54. Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.7.17.

55. Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.7.16.

56. Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.8.31; 2.8.33.

57. Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.14.22.

58. Byfield, *Exposition*, II, 75 (EEBO); Barclay, *Apology*, in *Truth Triumphant*, II, 481 (DQC).

59. Fergusson, *Brief Exposition*, p. 194 (EEBO).

60. See Geneva Bible notes online at: <<http://bible.crosswalk.com/Commentaries/GenevaStudyBible/gen.cgi?book=col&chapter=002>>, 29 October 2004.

61. Weigle, L.A. (ed.), *The New Testament Octapla: Eight English Versions in the Tyndale-King James Tradition*, Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1946, pp. 1134-37.

62. Fox, G., *Newes from the North*, London: Giles Calvert, 1655, pp. 4, 15 (DQC).

63. Bathurst, E., *Truth Vindicated*, London: T. Sowle, 1695, p. 52 (DQC).

64. Glines, E. (ed.), *Undaunted Zeal: The Letters of Margaret Fell*, Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 2002, p. 167 (letter 46).

65. Barbour, H.S. (ed.), *William Penn on Religion and Ethics: The Emergence of Liberal Quakerism*, 2 vols.; Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1991, I, 284; Bronner, E.B., and Fraser, D. (eds.), *The Papers of William Penn. V. William Penn's Published Writings, 1660-1726: An Interpretive Bibliography*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986, p. 149.

66. Penn, W., 'Invalidity of John Faldo's Vindication of his Book, call'd, Quakerism No Christianity', in *Works of William Penn*, II, pp. 378-79 (DQC) (emphasis in original).

67. Penn, 'Invalidity of John Faldo's Vindication' (DQC).

68. Penn, W., 'Defence of a Paper, entituled, Gospel Truths', in *Works of William Penn*, II, p. 912 (DQC).

69. Barclay, R., 'Truth Cleared of Calumnies', in *Truth Triumphant*, I, p. 195; *idem*, 'Catechism and Confession of Faith'; *idem*, Barclay, *Apology*, in *Truth Triumphant*, II, 480-81 (DQC).

70. Barclay, 'Truth Cleared of Calumnies', p. 202 (DQC).

71. Ellwood, T., 'An Answer to Some Objections of a Moderate Enquirer', in *History of the Life of Thomas Ellwood*, London: J. Sowle, 1714, p. 2 (DQC) (emphasis in original).

72. Fox's response to Thomas Tillam's book, 'The Seventh-Day Sabbath', in the *Mystery of the Great Whore Unfolded*, in *Works*, III, p. 314 (DQC).

73. Penn, W., 'Primitive Christianity Reviv'd', in *Works of William Penn*, II, p. 873 (DQC) (emphasis in original).

74. In the late first century, as Christianity became less Jewish and more Gentile, there was a transition to having the main weekly services on Sunday morning rather than Saturday evening. Rom. 14, and probably Colossians, seem to have originated when services occurred at both times, and the ultimate outcome was not evident. See Richardson, C.C., 'Introduction', in his *Early Christian Fathers*, New York: Macmillan, 1970, p. 23. Several texts, including 1 Cor. 16.1-2 and Rev. 1.10, speak of the importance of Sunday even in the first-century context. By the beginning of the second century, however, the liturgical pre-eminence of Sunday had become assured: Ignatius, *Magnesian* 9.1; Didache 14.1-2; Justin, *First Apology* 67 (all of which can be found in *Early Christian Fathers*).

75. Fox, G., 'Epistle CXCIX', in *Works*, VII, pp. 189-91 (DQC); Ingle, H.L., *First Among Friends: George Fox and the Creation of Quakerism*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994, p. 199.

76. 'For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost' (Rom. 14.17, KJV).

77. 'The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation' (Heb. 9.8-10, KJV).

78. Nayler, J., 'An Account from the Children of Light', in *Collection of Sundry Books*, p. 617; Fell, M., *Life of Margaret Fox*, Philadelphia: Book Association of Friends, 1885, p. 92 (DQC).

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