Sackcloth and Ashes and other Signs and Wonders

I

ALTHOUGH "going naked as a sign" appeared among Quakers before the end of 1652, there are no known cases of Friends at so early a date going in sackcloth and ashes. Such a form of prophetic expression, however, was bound to appear as Quakers studied the Bible intensely, seeking to understand how prophets made known their message. To some degree, early Friends were influenced by the messages of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Jonah, all of which connected the wearing of sackcloth with repentance.[1] The major impetus for the wearing of sackcloth and ashes, however, undoubtedly came from Revelation. Revelation 11:31 must have been the chief inspiration for this practice: "And I have two witnesses, whom I shall appoint to prophesy, dressed in sackcloth . . ."[2] Early Quaker belief that the resumption of prophecy was already taking place, when coupled with their apocalyptic expectations, made this passage a "natural" for them.

On 5 May 1655, Sarah Goldsmith appeared in Bristol wearing sackcloth and "earth" upon her head. Beginning about 4 a.m. she walked to every gate of the city, through every street, and then about nine o'clock she came and stood at the High Cross "in the view of Town and Market as a sign against the pride of Bristol . . . [claiming that] It was in obedience to the light in her conscience".[3] Sarah Goldsmith had found very difficult this command to "put on a Coat of Sackcloth of hair next [to] her [body], to

[1] Cf. Isaiah 3:24; 15:3; 20:2; 22:12; 37:1–2; 50:3; Jeremiah 4:8; 6:26; 49:3; Ezekiel 7:18; 27:31; Jonah 3:5–6, 8.

[2] Revelation 11:3, from the *New English Bible*. Concerning the influence of the Book of Revelation on Puritans and Quakers, see Geoffrey F. Nuttall, *Studies in Christian Enthusiasm* (Pendle Hill, 1948), p. 45; Hugh Barbour, *The Quakers in Puritan England* (New Haven, 1964), p. 182. Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down* (London, 1972), pp. 76, 187, 259.

3 Richard Blome, *The Fanatick History, or An Exact Relation and Account of the Old Anabaptists, and New Quakers* (London, 1660), p. 221.

uncover her head, and without any other clothes upon her, except shoes on her feet". Although it was "very crosse to her own will" she had cheerfully prepared her garment, "being in a manner of a Coat down to the Ground". Two Friends accompanied her during her walk, and one of them stood with her at the High Cross. There, Anne Gannicliffe, who had not accompanied Sarah, came upon her and announced publicly—after quoting from Isaiah—that Sarah Goldsmith "is a sign & a wonder to you this day". As a result, Sarah, Anne, and Margaret Wood (who had accompanied Sarah at the cross) were sent to Bridewell.[1]

Two Quakers are known to have gone in sackcloth in 1655, Richard Sale at Derby, and Martha Simmonds at Colchester. Richard Sale (d. 1658) himself wrote in a letter dated 25 October to George Fox, depicting the rather elaborate "sign" that he had been called to enact:

> I was made by the command (of the Lord) to take a letherne girdle, and to binde the sackclouth to my loines, and to take sum sweete flowers in my right hand, and sum stingking weeds in my left hand, ashes strowed upon my head, bearefoote and bearlegged, which did astonish all that ware out of the life, and those that ware friends in the towne ware exseedly brooken and brought downe but as I passed thorow the streets the heathens did set there dogs at mee, but the Creaturs ware subjectted by the power soe that I had no harme, glorye glorye to God for ever more, for I thorow the obedience I found the yooke to be easie and the burthen light, and it was my meate and drink to doe the will of God and the docktrin that was made manyfest to me.[2]

Martha Simmonds (1624?–1665) was the sister of Giles Calvert and the wife of Thomas Simmonds—both of whom were well-known printers of Quaker books. Martha was soon to become one of James Nayler's chief abettors.[3] A 16 December 1655 letter, written from Colchester Castle, reports that "Shee was moved to walke in sack cloth barefoote with

[1] George Bishop (*et al*), *The Cry of Blood* (London, 1656), pp. 98–99, 102; Cf. Joseph Besse, *Collection of the Sufferings of the People Called Quakers* (London, 1753), I, 41. Anne Cannicliffe (d. 1673 "An Antient Friend") was the wife of Nicholas Gannicliffe, shoemaker (d. 1662); see *Jnl. F.H.S.*, 9 (1912), 104.

[2] Friends House Library, Swarthmore MSS IV, 211 (Tr. III, 289).

[3] Kenneth L. Carroll, "Martha Simmonds, a Quaker enigma", *Jnl. F.H.S.*, 53 (1972), 31–52.

her hayre sprred & ashes upon her head, in the Toune, in the frosty weather, to the astonishment of many".[1]

In 1656 Thomas Murford [Morford], a native of Bristol, appeared in that city in sackcloth and ashes and, like Martha Simmonds, went barefoot. His purpose was to mourn for the city and to warn the people "to let the Lord's people alone, as they would answer [for] it at the day of Judgment, and not to persecute or imprison his Saints".[2] When he was brought before the mayor, Murford's hat was removed from his head, thereby scattering the ashes on his head. He then told the mayor that "the Lord of hosts would stain the glory and crown of all his pride, and strip him naked and bare".[3]

Several cases of Quakers going about in sackcloth and ashes are simply dated as being in "Oliver's days". William Simpson, who frequently went naked as a sign, likewise was to be found in sackcloth "in the days of Oliver and his Parliament".[4] Dewance Morey also reported that she had been made to go through London's streets in sackcloth "with dust upon my head, and a Rod in my hand for a sign unto thee; proclaiming that dreadful and terrible Famine that is swiftly coming on upon thee from the God of Life".[5]

Undoubtedly there were some other examples of such signs. *The Image of Jealousie* (1660) noted that sackcloth and coat of skin are "comely" in time of poverty, but where more has been given it should be appreciated and used.[6] It was in this very year that Elizabeth Harris, who was the founder of Quakerism in the Chesapeake Bay area and perhaps the "mother of American Quakerism",[7] and who travelled to Venice in 1658,[8] was moved to go about in sackcloth and ashes in London. A letter from John Stubbs to George Fox reports Elizabeth Harris' activities and points

1 Henry J. Cadbury (ed.), *Letters to William Dewsbury and Others* (London, 1948), p. 41 (Letter XVIII). *Journal*, Supplement 22.

2 Bishop, *The Cry of Blood*, pp. 85–86.

3 Blome, *Fanatick History*, p. 220.

4 George Fox's testimony in *A Short Relation Concerning the Life and Death of that man of God and faithful Minister of Jesus Christ, William Simpson* (London, 1671), p. 13.

5 Dewance Morey, *A true and faithful Warning from the Lord God, sounded through me, a poor despised Earthen Vessel, unto all the Inhabitants of England, who are yet in their sins* [n.p., n.d.] p. 5.

6 *The Image of Jealousie Sought Out* (London, 1660), pp. 7–8.

7 Kenneth L. Carroll, "Elizabeth Harris", *Quaker History*, 57 (1968), 96–111.

8 Swarthmore MSS III, 7 (Tr. IV, 197).

out that some Quakers were opposed to her testimony—so that she was troubled and desired Fox's judgment on this matter:

> Here is Elizabeth Harris [who] sometymes goes forth to steeple houses in sackcloath, and Shee hath much peace in this Service, there was some [that] seemed rather to be ag[ains]t it, which troubled [her] for a lit[t]le. She spoke to me with many teares about it severall weeks agoe, and I said I thought I might write to thee about it, And she desired I might, after She had been at Cambridge, it came to her She must goe to Manchester the first month, And So She would be glad to have a line or two from thee about it before she goes as soon as can be, the tyme drawes neare of her passing.[1]

No answer from George Fox is known to be extant, although it seems rather certain (given his general attitude toward signs) that he would have been favourably inclined towards her continuing in such behaviour when it was demanded of her by the Spirit.

By 1661–1662 the testimony of going about in sackcloth and ashes *as a sign*, like that of going naked, appears to have reached its high point—both in numbers and in geographical setting. The first known appearances of this phenomenon across the Atlantic made themselves manifest in New England in 1661. Katharine Chatham (who later married John Chamberlaine) was whipped and banished from Boston after appearing there in sackcloth "as a Sign of the Indignation of the Lord coming upon you".[2] In 1662 Daniel Baker (who may have gone naked as a sign in 1660) appeared in Gibraltar in sackcloth, while on his way back from Malta to England. Like Jonah he had resisted the divine command, but eventually he was forced to appear in sackcloth to call the people to repentance, in spite of the danger to his own life.[3]

One or more cases occurred in Kendal in 1664–1665, according to Fox's Journal, for he writes that

> There are many prisoners [for tithes] at Kendal . . . Others are in Kendal prison, who were moved of the Lord to speak to the

[1] Friends House Library, London, Crosfield MSS VII. A 1664 date has mistakenly been placed on the outside of this letter, but a reference to the *Battledoore* suggests a 1660 date.

[2] George Bishop, New England judged. 2nd part, 1667, p. 104 (1703 edition, pp. 420–421).

[3] William C. Braithwaite, *Beginnings of Quakerism*, Second Edition, revised by Henry J. Cadbury (Cambridge, 1955), pp. 432–433.

> priests, one to go in sackcloth, and with ashes upon her head. Others have been moved to go in sackcloth, as a lamentation for the miserable estate of this nation . . .[1]

In 1665 an interesting example of this same prophetic approach was also seen across the English Channel in France, where a Quaker woman appeared in the Protestant church in Dieppe before some "thousands" of people who were met together there:

> having set herself in the most conspicuous place, just over against him that preached, before the service was finished, she stood up, with the maid that was with her, who taking off a mantle and hood she was covered with, she appeared cloathed in sack cloth, and her hair hanging down, sprinkled with ashes: thus she turned herself round several times, that all the people might see her. This sight struck both the preacher and auditory with no small consternation; and the preacher's wife afterwards telling somebody how this sight had affected her, said, "This is of deeper reach than I can comprehend." The said women having stood thus a while, fell both down upon their knees, and prayed, and then went out of the meeting, many following them, and distributed some books.[2]

These two women were then arrested, imprisoned for a time, and finally were transported to England.

After 1665 this type of "prophetic" performance became increasingly rare, although it was still considered to be an acceptable act. Several very significant and interesting cases did occur in the early 1670s—especially those of Anne Wright in Ireland and England (1670) and Robert Barclay in Aberdeen (1672). Anne Wright, of County Kildare in Ireland, entered St. Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin on 17 April 1670, at the "time of their singing and common prayer". Dressed in "black sackcloth of hair, and ashes upon her head", she told the assembled congregation that theirs was not the form of worship God delighted in. No one lifted a hand against her, but they asked her to leave in peace, with some of them saying "she was a mad woman, and some one thing and some another".[3] In June of that year she went

[1] Fox, *Journal*, Bicentenary Edition (London, 1902), II, 55.

[2] William Sewel, *The History of the Rise, Increase, and Progress of the Christian People Called Quakers* (London, 1798), II, 205.

[3] Mary Leadbeater, *Biographical Notices of Members of the Society of Friends, who were Resident in Ireland* (London, 1823), p. 57. Anne Wright, daughter of John Howgill of London, was the wife of William Wright of Barnhill near Castledermot, County Kildare. She had become a convinced Friend only a short time before 1670.

through the streets of Cork in sackcloth and ashes and also reproved the mayor of Cork for persecuting Quakers.[1] Finally, after gaining her husband's consent, she travelled to London, and on 24 September she walked in sackcloth and ashes from Aldgate to Ludgate, later reporting to her husband that no one harmed her, for there was "so little disturbance when I spoke. They stood about me; and, when the words were ended, they parted and let me go."[2] On 15 October she very suddenly presented herself before the King who was walking with some of his court. Her sackcloth at first had been covered by her riding habit, which she quickly threw off to her "little maid". She then gave the King a paper, written by herself, calling upon him to be tender-hearted towards the Quakers. After reading the paper, Charles II and his attendants walked away.[3] Anne Wright, according to her husband's testimony, had wrestled with herself for weeks over these "calls" before going on such a "duty". She also had felt the necessity of obtaining the permission of her non-Quaker husband in order to carry out these commands. Shortly after completing these London appearances, and filled with the peace that obedience brought, she returned home to Ireland and died there on 1 December 1670.[4]

Robert Barclay (1648–1690) experienced a "call" in 1672 to make known "A Seasonable Warning and Serious Exhortation to, and Expostulation with the Inhabitants of Aberdeen" in Scotland, He, too, resisted this command. Barclay's account is particularly clear concerning his reluctance to perform this task:

> Therefore was I commanded of the Lord God, to pass through your Streets covered with Sack-cloth and Ashes, calling you to Repentance, that you might yet more be awakened, and Alarm'd to take notice of the Lord's Voice unto you . . . And the Command of the Lord concerning this thing came unto me that very Morning, as I awakened, and the Burden thereof was very Great, yes, seemed almost insupportable unto me (for such a thing, until that very moment, had never entered me before, not in the most remote Consideration.) And some, whom I called to declare to them this thing, can bear witness, how great was the Agony of

1 *Ibid.*, pp. 58–59. John Exham (1629?–1721) of Charleville in Ireland also travelled in sackcloth through Cork in 1698.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 67.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 68–71.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 75. Cf. pp. 56–62 for her inner struggles and her desire for her husband's permission.

> my Spirit, how I besought the Lord with tears, that this Cup might pass away from me! Yes, how the Pillars of my Tabernacle, were shaken, and how exceedingly this was the end and tendency of my Testimony, to call you to Repentance by this signal and singular Step, which I, as to my own Will and Inclination, was as unwilling to be found in, as the worst and wickedest of you can be averse from receiving, or laying it to heart.[1]

Following Barclay's 1672 appearance there seem to have been very few cases of Quakers appearing in sackcloth and ashes. One non-Quaker who paraded in sackcloth through London, Westminster, and Southwark in 1685 was testified against by Quakers, who wanted it to be clearly understood that this Solomon Hornoul did not belong to their Society.[2] The latest case I have uncovered was that of John Pemberton, well-known American Quaker who in 1784 appeared in Londonderry in Ireland, wearing sackcloth in the tradition of the earliest Quaker prophets. Although he had visited Londonderry several times before, he had felt a concern to return there once more,

> and laying it weightily before several Elders of the province of Ulster, and receiving their concurrence, he accordingly performed about the 20th 4 mo., 1784, accompanied by our ancient friend, James Christy, in the following manner. It being the time of their Assizes, and on a market day, he passed thro' the principal streets of the City, clothed in sackcloth, without any molestation from the Inhabitants, and expressed himself nearly in the following manner, "Repent! repent! Oh! all ye inhabitants of Londonderry! and of this land, while the Lord's mercies are continued to you." A number of people gathering about him at one of the Gates of the City, after repeating the foregoing words, he expressed that it was a great cross to him as a man to appear as he did, in so singular a manner, but he believed it was required of him to be a Sign to this people, and, if the highly favoured people of this [?city] did not humble themselves, and manifest greater gratitude to the Great Author of all blessings, and live in greater humility and devotedness, and in His fear, it was easy with Him to permit trials to overtake them, as He permitted trials and chastizements to overtake the inhabitants of his native land for their sins and ingratitude, for great favors had been conferred on them as well as on this land.[3]

1 Robert Barclay, *Truth Triumphant* (London, 1692), pp. 105–106.

2 *A true Account of one Solomon Hornoul, That lately went in sackcloth, through part of London, Westminster, and Southwark, &c.* (London, 1685). This one-page item is found in Broadsides A. 24, Friends House Library, London.

3 "Occurrences for the Progress of Truth", *Jnl. F.H.S.*, 2 (1905), 135.

II

Although going naked and appearing in sackcloth and ashes were the most frequent ways in which Quakers (in response to the prophetic spirit) acted out their messages, these two were by no means the only manifestations of Quaker signs and wonders. There was, in fact, a much richer range of expression than has ever before been noted. Very much like going naked and appearing in sackcloth and ashes, these other manifestations appeared primarily in the 1650s and early 1660s—although some were still to be met with nearly a generation after the founding of the Quaker movement.

George Fox, the founder of the Society of Friends, had some "drawings" in the direction of signs and wonders. In 1651, even before his Pendle Hill experience,[1] Fox removed his shoes and went—in stockinged feet—through Lichfield, proclaiming "Woe unto the bloody city of Lichfield".[2] Sometime in the next year (1652) Fox passed along one of Kendal's streets throwing pieces of silver among the people before he spoke (at a time when his "life was offered up amongst them"). Fox's message here was one of condemnation, as he proclaimed that "the mighty day of the Lord was coming upon all deceitful merchandise and ways".[3] Fox, like the ancient prophets, was calling people to repentance (which had really been an essential part of his message prior to 1652). As late as 1670 Fox was still seen performing a sign (it would seem) when he was without sight or hearing for some length of time, telling Friends that he "should be as a sign to such as would not see, and such as would not hear the Truth".[4]

In addition to containing accounts of several developments which appear to be signs on Fox's part, his Journal also notes a number of such expressions by other early Friends. Thomas Aldam, for instance, appeared before Oliver Cromwell in 1655, seeking an order to release Quakers

1 Fox was active in his preaching as early as 1647. Cf. Braithwaite, *Beginnings*, pp. 42ff.

2 George Fox, *Journal* (Cambridge, 1952), edited by John L. Nickalls, pp. 71–72. Was he influenced by Isaiah 20:2–4?

3 *Ibid.*, p. 121. Could Revelation 18:11–17 have been in his mind here?

4 *Ibid.*, p. 570. Could Ezekiel's behaviour have influenced Fox here? Cf. Bernhard W. Anderson, *Understanding the Old Testament*, second edition (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1966), p. 366.

from Prison. When this order was not obtained, Thomas took his cap off his head, tore it into pieces before Cromwell, and then told Cromwell "so should his kingdom be rent from him".[1] This same Friend, on another occasion, also went seven months without a hat "in obedience to the Command of God . . . [so that he] was a wonder and a sign to all who were covered, and not [ruled by] Justice".[2]

Elizabeth Adams [d. 1689] was "moved to go to the Parliament that was envious against Friends" and to break a pitcher at the door of Parliament, telling them that soon so should they also be broken into pieces.[3] A similar sort of sign appeared across the Atlantic a few years later, in 1663, when Thomas Newhouse appeared in the Boston church or "meetinghouse", spoke for a time, then took two glass bottles in his hands and dashed "them to pieces, saying to this effect, That so they should be dasht in pieces".[4]

Still another form of the prophetic signs which manifested themselves among early Quakers was the blacking of the face. William Simpson (who had often appeared both naked and in sackcloth and ashes), according to George Fox, "was made oftentimes to colour his face black, and [proclaim that] so black they should be and appear so to people, for all their great profession".[5] A similar expression was found on the American side of the Atlantic in 1677, when Margaret Brewster of Barbados went into some New England churches "with her Face all made Black, for a Sign of what was

1 *Ibid.*, p. 355. Cf. Thomas Aldam, Jr., *A Short Testimony Concerning that Faithful Servant of the Lord Thomas Aldam of Warnsworth in the County of York* (London, 1690), p. 10, where Aldam's son says that this action was a "sign" to Cromwell "that the Government should be rent from him; and such as were not covered with the Spirit of the Lord".

2 Aldam, *A Short Testimony*, p. 10, records the episode which gave rise to this act. Thomas Aldam's hat had been taken by Philip Prince, a lawyer, whom Judge Windham would not reprove for taking it.

3 Fox, *Journal*, pp. 355–356. Cf. Swarthmore MSS, III, 118 (Tr. IV, 5), which gives Elizabeth Adams' name. One is reminded of Jeremiah's breaking of a flask.

4 Bishop, *New England Judged*, 2nd part, 1667, p. 113 (1703 edn., pp. 431–432). Cf. Richard P. Hallowell, *The Quaker Invasion of Massachusetts* (Boston, 1887), p. 96, concerning the incorrect report that Sarah Gibbons and Dorothy Waugh broke bottles in 1658 "as a sign" of John Norton's emptiness.

5 Fox's testimony in *A Short relation concerning . . . William Simpson*, p. 13. Cf. Fox, *Journal*, p. 407, for an account of Simpson's wearing "hair sackcloth" and putting "smut" upon his face.

coming upon them". As they had persecuted the Quakers, so now would they be punished.[1]

Several Quaker signs dealt with light rather than darkness or blackness. Elizabeth Adams, already noted above for her pitcher-breaking episode, went on horseback carrying a torch through Canterbury in 1660, riding "up and downe the City with it burning in her hand with a friend before her about the middle of the day". After being questioned by the mayor, Elizabeth Adams was sent to prison, but her companion was freed.[2] Richard Sale, a former constable near Chester (who had gone in sackcloth in 1655) on a "lecture day" in 1657 was "required" by the Lord to be a "signe",

> to take a lighted candle in my hand & to passe into the streets of the same, and to say behould yee despisers and wonder; for the Lord is working a work in your dayes though a man declare it unto you; yet you will not believe it; for a signe is not unto those that believe, but unto you which believe not; and they shall say unto thee what art thou mad to come into the streets at midday with a lighted candle, & thou shall say unto them, what use is all your Candle light worship for now who are in the night of apostasie, now the light of the sonn of god is come, which hath given his people an understandinge to disserne between things that differ, and the temple now is witnessed which needeth not the light, neither of sune mo[o]ne or Candle, for the lord god and the Lambe is the light there of.[3]

In 1660, shortly before the Restoration of Charles II to the throne of England, Robert Huntington (d. 1708) entered a "steeple house" at Brough (near Carlisle) with a white sheet draped about himself and a "halter" around his neck. His purpose had been to show the Presbyterians and Independents there "that the surplice was to be introduced again, and that some of them should not escape the halter". William Sewel later wrote that (although people at the time said that this act was "mad") "time showed it a presage of the impending disaster of the cruel persecutors: for when

[1] Bishop, *New England Judged*, 1703, p. 491. Cf. John Whiting, *Truth and Innocency Defended, Against Falsehood and Envy* (London, 1702), p. 103.

[2] Swarthmore MSS, IV, 272 (Tr. I, 420). This letter from William Caton to George Fox is dated 16 November 1660, Cf. John W. Graham, "Early Friends and the historical imagination", *Bulletin of Friends Historical Association*, 15 (1926), 9.

[3] Swarthmore MSS, IV, 114 (Tr. III, 287). This letter is dated 11 March 1657, from Richard Sale to Margaret Fell.

King Charles had ascended the throne, his most fierce enemies were dispatched out of the way".[1]

Still another sign was performed in 1659 by Robert Widders, one of Fox's earliest converts and later one of his companions in his American travels in 1671–1673. When Sir George Booth rose in arms in Cheshire, Widders rode among Booth's army "with a Twig in his Hand, and told them, The Lord with his Rod of Iron would break them to pieces". Although his horse was taken from him, Widders escaped any suffering. A few days later Booth's army was "all broken to pieces, and scattered".[2]

One of the most striking of these "signs and wonders" is that which Thomas Ibbitts [Ibbotts] performed in 1666, only a short time before the outbreak of the Great Fire of London. Sometime before his arrival in London he had received a vision which made known to him that London would receive a judgment by fire and would be laid waste. He explained to London Quakers, after his arrival there, that he had delayed coming to London and declaring his message, as commanded, "until he felt (as he expressed it) the fire in his own bosom". He arrived in London on 31 August and, upon alighting from his horse, unbuttoned his "clothes in so loose a manner, as if they had been put on in haste just out of bed". In this manner he went through the city on 31 August and 1 September, proclaiming a judgment by fire on London. The Great Fire broke out on Sunday, 2 September 1666. Needless to say, Ibbitts was suspected of having had a hand in the "fyreing of London".[3] Two other Friends had experienced even earlier visions of a great fire and destruction in London. Daniel Baker (in his 1659 *Certain Warning for a Naked Heart*) and Humphrey Smith (in his 1660 *Vision* which he saw Concerning London) both made known that they foresaw such a development.[4]

There are several other occurrences, all taking place in

1 Sewel, *History*, I, 475. Cf. Fox, *Camb. Journal*, ii. 2 where this is said to have taken place in Carlisle.

2 Robert Widders, *The Life & Death, Travels and Sufferings of Robert Widders* (London, 1688), p. 28.

3 See quotations from Hardy's "Notes and Extracts from the Sessions Rolls, 1581–1698" (Hertford, 1905), I, 179, 180, 188 given in Fox, *Camb. Journal*, ii, 398.

4 Walter George Bell, *The Great Fire of London in 1666* (London, 1923), p. 18.

1659, that one is tempted to include among Quaker signs and wonders, even though the accounts (all recorded in anti-Quaker documents) do not apply that designation to them. In the summer of 1659 a woman Quaker was reported to have brought her needlework into a Colchester church "and fell to work and singing while the minister was officiating".[1] Similar cases were reported as happening in London at the very same time. A Quaker was reported to have entered Dr. Gell's church in London one Sunday, carrying "an old Dublet . . ., and sat upon the Communion Table mending it, while the Dr. was preaching, the Parishioners forbidding him".[2] At almost the same period Solomon Eules [Eccles?] entered the Reverend "Edm. Calamies pulpit in church time, sitting down upon the such cushon . . . with his feet upon the seat (where the Priest, when he hath told out his lies, doth sit down) sowing a pocket, so that the People lost their song, &c".[3] A lack of Quaker materials renders as conjecture any attempt to explain the meaning, purpose, and significance of this type of behaviour.

It seems certain that this catalogue of signs and wonders, even when added to the many accounts of going naked and appearing in sackcloth and ashes, probably does not exhaust the full scope of the many prophetic signs that early Quakers felt called upon to enact. Yet it does show that the manifestations were rich in number, varied in expression, and particularly heavy from 1652 to 1661 or 1662 (when the controversy over John Perrot[4] and his strange teachings made people take a second look at inclinations of this sort). Some few cases of most of these various types continued beyond 1662, but they were the exception rather than the rule.

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[1] Thomas Underhill, *Hell Broke Loose: Or an History of the Quakers Both Old and New* (London, 1660), p. 32.

[2] Richard Blome, *Questions Propounded to George Whitehead and George Fox, who disputed by turnes against one University-Man in Cambr., Aug. 29, 1659* (London, 1659), p. 7.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 21.

[4] Kenneth L. Carroll, *John Perrot: Early Quaker Schismatic* (London, 1971).