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SEXUAL EQUALITY AND CONJUGAL HARMONY: THE WAY TO CELESTIAL BLISS. A VIEW OF EARLY QUAKER MATRIMONY

The attempt made by radical sects of the seventeenth century to bring about what some contemporaries judged to be a levelling project: equality of the sexes, is hinted at in George Fox's query whether: *"... the spirit of Christ (might) not speak in the female as well as in the male?"*.[1]

Spiritual equality of the sexes had indeed long been part of the social platform of many radical protestant movements of the first half of the seventeenth century, as it had been part of early medieval chiliasm in general[2]. In the England of the 1650s, however, female preaching and participation in church government, though occasionally allowed among Baptists and Independents, remained anathema for both the established church and the more radical fringes of Protestantism. Thus, whilst Quaker Publishers of Truth roamed the country to spread the doctrine of the Inner Light, a general consensus had not been reached amongst 'professors' concerning the *spiritual* equality of women with men, not to speak of plain equality of the sexes.

Many aspiring adepts of the Inner Light were content to pay lip-service to the concept as Fox's *Journal* shows[3], while Church of England clergy abhorred the thought. It soon became clear for religious activists of the Interregnum, Quakers included, that sexual egalitarianism was one of their more explosive doctrinal theories, threatening to 'turn the world upside down'. At the same time within the sects, social as well as sexual equality implying a balanced share of responsibilities in the church but also in the home, was to become the goal of many female prophets and professors of the Commonwealth and Restoration years.

To speak out fearlessly and boldly in church, to prophesy in the market place, or indeed to walk the streets naked to shame onlookers with their own spiritual nakedness, required a degree of self-assurance from women which only a feeling of being the social and spiritual equals of men could give. The Quaker movement in the years 1660 to 1670 seems to have provided its female converts with the necessary enticements to step out of the restricted role that had been allotted to them on account of Mother Eve's part in the Fall of Man. Needless to say, the new opportunities offered to Quaker prophetesses, which relied on Fox's interpretation of the Inner Light doctrine, were not to be enjoyed without having to be fought for. This explains why a great debate took place in the late 1660s within the movement to decide whether women were to be allowed to participate in church government. An angry controversy raged between Fox, the more enlightened Quaker leaders, and elements of the rank and file, conjugal harmony being implicitly at issue as much as church government. Women accustomed to speaking on matters of church government would obviously demand a greater share in the government of the family. The granting of one type of freedom to women immediately implying the other. The setting up of Women's Meetings in 1666 and 1667 throughout the country, signalled the successful outcome of this confrontation and meant that by the end of the 1670s, Quaker husbands and wives enjoyed an uncommonly high degree of shared freedom and authority.

How this came about is best seen by examining the way the Inner Light doctrine provided male and female Friends with a ready justification to practise spiritual and sexual equality, both in the home and outside of it.

The fact that early Quakerism offered staunch support for the defence of women's spiritual rights, more vocally perhaps than some of the Millenarian sects sprung up in republican England is stressed by

seventeenth-century historians. Keith Thomas and Antonia Fraser[4] have argued successfully that Interregnum sects were a choice breeding ground for the early stirrings of female emancipation. Spiritual equality, however, although widely asserted throughout the whole spectrum of English Protestantism, did not automatically entail an equality of social status between the sexes[5].

As journals and autobiographies of the period show, though seventeenth-century Protestants acknowledge the existence of friendly, admiring, fraternal and loving relationships between men and women, possibly enhanced by the trials the Civil War inflicted on families of both sides, husbands and elder brothers nevertheless continued to deny their womenfolk an equal share of authority in the home. The family roof and the church were after all the only two forums respectable women might make their voices heard in. Absolute power remained hence in male hands at home, in church and in politics, well after the Interregnum years.

Male ostracism of women existing among Friends in the late 1660s and early 1670s was denounced by Fox as contrary to Christ's teaching and the principle of the Light Within[6]. Friends who refused to recognize the eminence of the role given by Christ to his female disciples had fallen according to Fox, and to Margaret Fell before him[7], into an unregenerate state of post-lapsarian discord. The failure on their part, to see that the Inner Light shone with equal strength in both sexes testified to their spiritual blindness. These arguments, buttressed by the fact that the Quaker movement in 1666–67 had to rely increasingly on women for logistical support during the years of Restoration persecutions, convinced Fox of the need to set up Women's Meetings on the model of Men's Meetings.

By the early 1670s spiritual equality of women with men, had become part of Quaker doctrine and was paving the way for the granting of relative social and domestic equality to female Friends. That women Friends' rights in the home did not equate their rights in the church was obviously due to the apprehensions that female Friends' excesses might destroy the gains made by Quakerism in the 1670s in attaining a degree of social respectability. These fears were grounded on the high proportion of women within the ranks of the movement: as many as 55 per cent of Quakerism's adepts in the 1660s were women. Also, given seventeenth-century male prejudice concerning the "passionate" nature of women, it was believed that the sorry examples of female fanaticism among the Ranters, and above all the scandalous conduct in 1656 of Nayler's female disciples at Bristol and London,

might be repeated, should the domestic strictures they had been kept in hitherto, be relaxed. These and similar arguments were overruled however by Fox's forceful invocation of the Divine Principle, or Divine Light, illuminating and guiding all human beings. The acceptance by all Friends of God as immanent in Man, and a constant striving towards an awareness of the Inner Light in themselves and in one another, did away in the long run with sexist attitudes in the movement.

Quaker couples almost from the very first stirrings and leadings of the Inner Guide and the earliest glimpses of the Light within themselves, were confronted with the task of establishing a very novel relationship with their mates. One based on that revolutionary proposal of the time: the establishing of loving and free – in all senses of the term – relations between husband and wife. Early Quaker couples did in fact put into practice the theories of what historians have called the puritan sexual revolution, in that they based their marriage on a bond of mutual love and respect rather than on the reciprocal mistrust induced by the Fall. Quaker matrimony thus relinquished mercenary considerations and developed into a union founded on reciprocal love rather than financial attraction.

Love in the life of Quaker couples occupied a place of prominence, since the doctrine of the Inner Light presented each male and female Friend with the Edenic vision of regenerate Christians recreating an earthly Paradise within whose bounds attraction of the sexes to one another would be left to the guidance of the Light Within. Love is thus literally liberated from earthly and material constraints for Friends who have experienced the second birth. At the same time, their bodies becoming a receptacle in equal measure of the Inner Light, the Children of Light found it impossible to entertain ideas of submission of one human being to the other, regeneration having effectively wiped out sexual differentiation. The androgynous nature of matrimony conceived in such spiritual and mystical terms, reminiscent of Jacob Boehme's teachings, was to disappear outwardly whenever kindred souls sought to materialize their love through physical union. Quaker doctrine on marriage stressed in this way the spiritual and abstract quality of sexual relationships, finding it difficult to give material realization to such a spiritual mystery as love.

Renovating the whole concept of marriage, Friends, here as elsewhere of course, rejected forms, rites and ceremonies that Robert Barclay called *"... mere shadows and external manifestations of the true substance"*[8]. The rejection of 'outer manifestations' which belonged to the 'Church of the Apostasy' was not peculiar to Quakerism and had

been adopted by many Protestant sects. But what shocked Friends' contemporaries, well-inured to sectarian excesses, was the total discarding of all forms of nuptial ceremonial, the last obstacle it was felt that stood in the way of sexual licence. Friends choosing to marry from 1654 onwards, contented themselves with a simple, albeit public, declaration of intent before a General Meeting[9]. Hence the accusations of debauchery levelled at Friends by an outside world, horrified by the prospect that Quakerism might wish to follow the Digger Winstanley's advice: that every man and women might be able to freely choose his or her mate[10].

Like Ranters and Muggletonians, contemporary promoters of sexual equality, Friends conceived of matrimony as a union based on a strong central emotion, love, possessing strong spiritual implications before which paled the mere 'fleshly lusts' of money and sex. More important still and contrary to the then prevailing *mores,* Friends insisted that brides-to-be, when declaring their matrimonial intentions before both the Men's and Women's Meetings, explicitly abstain from professing to obey their husbands. For reasons seen above, acts of submission of one human being towards another being deemed incompatible with the spirit of the Inner Light doctrine. Husband and wife were placed from the start on an equal footing since both, through their 'spiritual travails', had regained a paradisiacal state of innocence and equality. This attitude enabled Quaker couples to fathom new depths in their relationship that only a minority of their contemporaries had ventured to explore.

Human expressions of love amongst early Friends, however, did not remain at such abstract levels and commonly found concrete expression as related by the spiritual autobiographies and journals. In the course of time, Quaker courtships and unions came to acquire, consciously or not, a symbolical significance. Friends' marriages become then microcosmic representations of the macrocosmic alchemical pairing of the Sun and the Moon, of Heaven and Earth, of Nature and God; a certain amount of hermetic and occultist thought having found its way into the movement's reflection at an early stage[11]. Such symbolical significance underlies for instance George Fox's marriage with Margaret Fell; the spiritual and mystical connotations of their union being both explicitly and implicitly put to the forefront of the couple's concerns. Indeed, so anxious were the father and mother of Quakerism to allay suspicions of mercenary considerations on Fox's part, that precise stipulations were made guaranteeing no financial advantage might come to Fox from this marriage. In marrying Margaret Fell, Fox gave up by contract all claims to his wife's fortune, much to the amazement of his contemporaries[12].

In this way, marriage abolished to a large extent for Friends the sexual inequality introduced by the Fall, life in the garden of Eden becoming a metaphor for Quaker married innocence. Love between Quaker husbands and wives had been cleansed of all guilt thanks to the new covenant of the second birth experienced by both, and married Friends were, theoretically at least, immune from the dissensions and strife induced by the material or sensual lures of 'carnal nature'.

To this extent a strongly platonic vision of matrimony emerges from the reading of Friends' autobiographies and tracts. These writings convey an impression of men and women striving to overstep the shoals of physical appearances. In some cases even, as in William Penn's *Some Fruits of Solitude*, the ideal union is explicitly described as a love quest serving as metaphor for a spiritual quest:

> Sexes make no difference since in souls there is none... He that minds a Body and not a Soul, has not the better Part of that Relation; and will consequently want the noblest comfort of a married life. The satisfaction of our Senses is low, short and transient; But the mind gives a more raised and extended pleasure and is capable of an Happiness founded upon Reason; not bounded and limited by the circumstances that Bodies are confined to[13].

William Penn who also declared in the same treatise that: *"Between a man and his wife nothing ought to rule but Love"*[14], was not the only Publisher of Truth to extol the high emotional and spiritual levels reached by couples united under the auspices of the Inner Light.

The journals of John Banks, John Camm, John Audland, Thomas Ellwood, Elizabeth Stirredge, attest how married Friends managed to share equally the joys, trials and sorrows of lives often rent apart by the call of the ministry. An adventurous female missionary Katharine Evans held captive with Sarah Cheevers, by the inquisition at Malta, writes a letter home directed 'To my right and precious husband, with my tender hearted children who are more dear and precious to me than the apple of mine eye...'[15].

Elsewhere, the enforced separation, sometimes for long periods, of husband, wife and children, makes for pathetic reading as in John Banks' *Journal*. In a letter written to his wife whilst on a mission to the South and West of England the prophet exclaims: 'Dear wife, Thou art dear and near to me, together with our little one, in the nearness of that pure spirit and power, by which the Lord has nearly joined us together as one heart and mind'[16]. A letter which reflects the spiritual level on which Quaker couples rested their relationship. Man and Wife viewing one another as receptacles of the Inner Light, addressed themselves first and

foremost to what Fox had called *"that of God"* in every human creature. The Fall having shattered original divine unity, Fox's 'Children of Light', regenerate christians, offered to restore mankind to a prelapsarian state of harmony. Quaker doctrine thus enabled mankind to look at itself not with the eyes of the flesh, but of the spirit. And Quaker expressions of love and courtship are hence not so much directed to a person of flesh and blood, as to the spiritual entity of the 'Light Within' inhabiting the loved one. Love in early Quaker experience becomes the path leading to the discovery of divine love, with marriage symbolizing the earthly nexus of this mystical undertaking.

Marriage conceived as a mystical experience may explain why early Friends, in the wooing of future 'help-meets', took good care to avoid being guided by 'fleshly lusts' and emotions. Only the dictates of self-will lead the sexes astray, the choice of a companion should therefore be left to what are termed 'heavenly leadings' or the signs of Providence. The more brutish forms of terrestrial love stem from impulses of 'self-love', a burden inherited, in Quaker parlance, from 'Old-Adam's' unregenerate nature. Thus the love which irradiates from the Light Within might run the risk of being tainted by sexual passion instead of kindled by a purely spiritual fire. The deeper one scrutinizes outpourings of feelings in early Quaker writings, the more one becomes aware they belong to a puritan heritage imbued with platonic ideals.

Many seventeenth-century Quaker journalists have attempted to describe the mental anguish and doubts assailing them as they felt drawn towards a member of the opposite sex... The difficulty lay in ascertaining whether they were obeying the Inner Voice or answering the dictates of carnal nature. Richard Davies, Welsh Publisher of Truth, preferred to leave to God the responsibility of conducting his courtship with a young woman encountered at a London Meeting, rather than actively take matters into his own hands. Interpreting his feelings in terms of a revelation, Davies explains, one is tempted to say justifies himself, thus: 'It came to me from the Lord, that that woman was to be my wife...'. Drawing closer to the girl he takes good care however not to attract her notice: 'After meeting I drew somewhat near to her, but spoke nothing, nor took any acquaintance with her, nor did I know when or where I should see her again...'[17]. Introduced to her some time afterward, the providential nature of their meeting becomes clear from an identical revelation experienced by the young woman: 'In time... she confessed that she had some sight of the same thing that I had seen

concerning her... and I told her that if the Lord did order her to be my wife, she must come with me...'[18]. The fore-ordained nature of Richard Davies' courtship of his wife-to-be is further stressed by the latter declaring herself totally submitted not to her future husband's will, but to that of the Lord manifested through her husband's. Warned of the trials facing a Quaker prophet's wife, she readily replies that: '... if the Lord should order it so, she must go with her husband though it were to the wilderness'[19].

Bowing to God's dictates and blending self-will into God's will, early Friends managed to avoid the pitfalls of antinomianism and Ranterism. Yet the danger was always present, specially in matters of sexual relationships, that personal emotions and sensual impulses might be erroneously interpreted by Friends as providential leadings. Eschewing Ranterism, Quaker prophets and prophetesses concentrated on the 'Inner Light' as a supreme source of authority which forbade them to 'devour the creation' by 'using God's creatures unlawfully'. In this respect, early Quaker marriages reflect the existence of those two cardinal elements underlying Quaker theology: puritanism and mysticism.

The ultimate illustration of Quaker conjugal praxis: the translation of nuptial joy into celestial bliss, is provided by the marriage of George Fox and Margaret Fell. In 1669 the Quaker leader and Judge Fell's widow, celebrate a union judged eccentric by outsiders to the sect, not least because Fox, then 45, was marrying a woman ten years older than he.

Since their meeting in 1652, Margaret Fell turning her family seat at Swarthmoor Hall into a rallying point in the north of England for the spreading of the Quaker message, had given Fox the role of spiritual guide within the Fell household. But to Fox's spiritual counselling of the Fell family was soon added the role of charismatic father figure. That is, if we are to believe Margaret Fell and her daughters' expostulations of religious enthusiasm directed at Quakerism's founder. Here, expressions of mystical as well as of profane love intermingle, attesting to this confusion of roles assumed by Fox at Swarthmoor: 'O my dear father when wilt thou come...', asks little Suzannah Fell aged two, whilst her five-year-old sister Mary, surely precocious, exclaims in the same letter to Fox: 'Thou art the fountain of life...'. Intimations of earthly and divine attachment to Fox's person are even more explicit with Margaret Fell: 'We, thy babes... O thou bread of life... O our life... O our dear nursing father... O our life, our desire is to see thee again that we may be refreshed and established'[20].

Two patriarchal figures thus joust for preeminence in the Fell family's life, a genuine flesh and blood father-figure, Judge Fell, and the more abstract paternal image of George Fox, master of the spiritual and emotional outpourings at Swarthmoor Hall. Aware of the adverse rumours raised by her association with Fox following Judge Fell's death, his widow adopted an attitude in conformity with the teachings of the Inner Light doctrine. Margaret Fell awaited God's assurance that linking her fate to Fox's truly corresponded to promptings of the Inner Guide. Doubt in this instance was a source of moral discomfort, shared by Fox, who relates in his *Journal* the hesitations experienced by both at that time, not unlike the pangs of conscience described by Richard Davies:

> I had seen from the Lord a considerable time before that I should take Margaret Fell to be my wife. And when I first mentionned it to her she felt the answer of life from God thereunto. But though the Lord had opened this thing unto me, yet I had not received a command from the Lord for the accomplishment of it then. Wherefore I let the thing rest and went on in the work...[21].

Fox's uneasiness concerning the match is probably also due to qualms about what the enemies of Quakerism might make of this decision. Yet divine assent is eventually given to the union on Fox's return from Ireland in 1669.

The symbolical significance of this marriage really becomes clearer when, besides rejecting material benefits which might accrue to him, Fox explicitly banishes all carnal or sensuous purpose from his and Margaret Fell's compact: a decision which was obviously taken in common. Discussing his marital plans with an "ancient puritan", Fox, in the *Journal*, relates that the question of sexual procreation was brought up. To the "puritan" who had, correctly, reminded him that the final aim of marrige was procreation, Fox retorted that he had: '... never thought of any such thing...' adding, interestingly enough: 'And I judged such things *below* me'[22].

The true motivation that lay behind his decision, explained the founder of Quakerism, was for it to serve as symbol and example for the Children of Light. They would then be able to interpret the match as Edenic bliss restored between the sexes: '... that all might come up into the marriage as was in the beginning and as a testimony that all might come up out of the wilderness to the marriage of the Lamb'[23].

Enacting somewhat theatrically a mystery not given to 'those of the world' to understand, because of the low nature of their preoccupations, Fox and Margaret Fell hold leading parts in the drama of a Quaker

"Paradise Regained". Based on contrasting themes of terrestrial, versus celestial love, their paradisiacal betrothal was to serve, like most public acts of the 'father and mother of Quakerism', for the edification of Friends of both sexes. To give that event all the publicity it deserved, Fox was careful to announce his matrimonial intentions before a number of Men's and Women's Meetings. Anxious to parry hostile and sarcastic comment from Quakerism's enemies, Fox addressed a written declaration of intent to all these Meetings. But what really matters is his insistence on soliciting all Friends' adhesions to his matrimonial plans. This clearly indicates on the part of the Quaker leader a wish to transform a personal commitment into that of the Quaker movement as a whole. Fox's marriage provides thus not only a norm for Friends to observe, but a way to celebrate a new form of spiritual communion. Matrimony, surprisingly devoid of procreative intent, being here transmuted by spiritual alchemy into a mystical union of souls which all members of the Quaker movement are invited to emulate. The mystical nuptials of George Fox and Margaret Fell are therefore presented to the Children of Light as the acme of cosmic love and harmony in the movement's history.

Quaker marriages adopting a uniform procedure from about 1654, stripped of all ritual forms, must undeniably have been lent added symbolical value 15 years later by Fox and Margaret Fell's union. A marriage modelled after that of Adam and Eve in Paradise was doubtless thought sufficient to silence criticism and earn recognition from the world outside. Yet Friends had to wait until the end of the seventeenth century for a Nottingham judge to recognize the full legal validity of their unions. Quaker marriage was lawful, allowed that magistrate, since it was fashioned after the union of Adam and Eve, adding, significantly, '... it was the consent of the women that made the marrage'[24].

Upholding the freedom of both partners within Quaker love-matches, Friends went further than seventeenth-century radical protestant theories and actually gave equality of the sexes an application in conjugal experiences. The symbolic and spiritual content of Quaker unions failed however to dispel all the accusations of licentiousness levelled at the movement by its adversaries. Indeed, Friends actively sought to counter suspicions that Ranterish ideas 'all is ours', had contaminated Quaker sexual equality transforming it into sexual licence. Obviously, platonic standards set by Fox and Margaret Fell enabled the movement to brand sexual transgression as a mark of the Beast to be extirpated from its midst as quickly as possible. Yet James

Nayler's female disciples' fanatical conduct at Bristol in 1650 and throughout the Quaker prophet's trial and sentencing, had stained the movement's reputation. Female fanatics or enthusiasts equated with sexual transgressors by the nation at large, whose patience with sectarian eccentricities was wearing thin, had also become by the 1660s the bane of the more stable elements of Quakerism.

George Fox, the recipient of a personal illumination, was apparently able to keep a tight rein over the leanings of the flesh, if not to sublimate (as has been the case for catholic saints), carnal lusts which overpowered weaker Friends. For the founder of Quakerism, all Friends having passed through the 'fuller's fire' of the second birth and discovered the Light Within, betrayed their hard-won profession of faith by succumbing to the 'groanings of the flesh'. Quaker doctrinal conformity then, also consisted in the silencing of carnal nature.

Thus it is a rare instance of sexual misconduct which has found a way into Fox's *Journal*. The scarcity of such examples indicating perhaps a relatively high degree of moral conduct among early Friends but also a will to censor embarrassing facts from that famous autobiography. Interestingly, the culprit here happens to be a woman, Rose Atkins, whose lover is publicly heard by Fox boasting of his sexual prowess. The prophet, though taunted by that woman's male companions, places himself beyond reach of their aspersions telling them angrily: '... their wickedness should not stumble *him* for *he* was above it...'[25]. Yet George Fox's ire at sexual misdemeanor among Friends did not turn him into a supporter of celibacy. In accordance with protestant dogma he condemned bachelorhood as a diabolical and popish invention[26], while maintaining that chastity was eminently desirable. This position, doubtless ambiguous in the eyes of those Friends who had not attained mastery over their senses, encouraged him to recommend German Friends to the Lord's care comparing them to Gospel virgins: '... the Lord keep and preserve all Friends chaste in his power, as virgins with oil in their lamps, that they may enter in with the Bridegroom, and not only so, but be married unto Him Christ-Jesus, and keep him in the sanctuary'[27].

This is a piece of Foxian advice which is a striking metaphor for sexual sublimation. The founder of Quakerism lays open here the secret of the body's inner sanctum, that temple of an Inner Light kept burning thanks to the oil of sexual energy. This same ideal of sexual abstinence, though valid for Friends in Germany, induced elsewhere a degree of sexual frustration. A number of Children of Light having emigrated to New England, though married, had undertaken an exercise in chastity

lasting four years in some cases. The spiritual benefits of such carnal mortification are however doubtful, a few of these Friends being described in a letter belonging to the Swarthmore Manuscript as: '... besides themselves about it'[28].

Some difficulties lay all the same in the path of sexual abstinence in early Quakerism. Examining the social and sexual conduct of early Friends one should keep in mind, the fact that a rigorous code of ethics was difficult to enforce within a movement whose recruitment in the early years was largely rural. Sexual relationships before marriage being a common practice in seventeenth-century rural England as Barry Reay reminds us[29]. Moreover, the youth of the movement's adepts and leaders, a youth found elsewhere among the Civil War's factions and sects[30], along with the geographical mobility of young radicals of the period, means they were less tied down to the moral codes of rural societies than previously. Quakerism's increasingly bourgeois leadership thus found it difficult to enforce ideals of chastity inside the church and were keen in the 1670s and 1680s to root out lower-class licence from their midst[31]. In fact, as Quaker doctrine became increasingly rigid ethically towards the turn of the century, it upheld the concept of equality of the sexes in Quaker unions, along with ideals of chastity and marital abstinence, as worthwhile goals. One may question however whether this attitude, Malthusian in part, whilst effectively protecting women from brutish male lusts, did not reinforce the endogamic marriage practices of the movement and the drying up of its recruitment in the 1700s.

Nevertheless, Quakerism's success in this particular field of ethics lay in having promoted not merely spiritual equality but social and sexual parity with men as well. The instauration of the Men's and Women's Meeting in the late 1660s is significant in that respect.

Reappraising the role of women as a whole by declaring them capable, like men, of harbouring the Inner Light and helping to restore a sense of self respect in Eve's daughters, was a way for Quakerism to uplift male status at the same time. New-born esteem on the part of the Publishers of Truth for their help-meets, reflected a heightened sense of ethics kindled in male hearts by the Inner Light.

Margaret Fell's paraphrase of the Apostle Paul's teaching (Gal 3:28): 'For Christ in the Male and in the Female is one, and he is the Husband and his Wife is the Church...'[32] is no mere metaphor but an image of what was to a certain extent taking place in the ranks of the movement when she wrote in 1666. Quakerism did not negate sexual differences, divinely ordained, but gave its adepts the means to visualize and realize

beyond these outward appearances, the Edenic, androgynous fusion of men and women whose lives were guided by the Inner Light.

Jacques Tual

NOTES AND REFERENCES

[1] George Fox, *Gospel Truth Demonstrated* (London, 1700), 81.

[2] Most early christian sects such as: Manicheans, Donatists, Valdenses, Patarins, Cathars, had granted women a status of equality and allowed them to preach.

[3] On this point see *Journal of George Fox* (Ed. John Nickalls, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952) 666–667; for reluctance on the part of Friends to accept female equality as late as 1673. (The edition of the *Journal* cited above is the one used throughout these notes).

[4] Keith Thomas "Women and the Civil War Sects", *Past and Present* no. 13 (1958) and Antonia Fraser, *The Weaker Vessel* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1984).

[5] As Lucien Carrive, a French scholar specializing in seventeenth-century Protestantism has shown in his study: 'Les Puritains et la Femme en Angleterre au XVIIe' in, *La Femme en Angleterre et dans les colonies américaines aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles. Actes Colloque Société d'Etudes Anglo-Américaines* (Lille: Publications Université de Lille, 1975).

[6] On this point see: *Journal of George Fox*, 8–9, 74, 81, 303, 667.

[7] See Margaret Fell's famous pamphlet entitled *Womens Speaking, Justified, Proved and Allowed of by the Scriptures* (London, 1666), 6, 7.

[8] Robert Barclay, *An Apology for the True Christian Divinity* (London, 1678), Proposition 12: I.

[9] See Hugh Barbour and Arthur Roberts eds. *Early Quaker Writings 1650–1700* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William Eerdmans, 1973), 475, 492, 494; for Fox's recommendations to Friends concerning marriage; also, *Journal of George Fox*, 577.

[10] On this point see Lewis Berens, *The Digger Movement in the Days of the Commonwealth* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, 1906), 252.

[11] See the chapter of my doctoral dissertation dealing with early Quakerism and hermetical, occultist and kabbalist influences: Jacques Tual, *Les Quakers en Angleterre: Naissance et origines d'un Mouvement 1649–1700*, 3 vols. Diss. Univ. of Paris III, Sorbonne-Nouvelle, 1986), I, 195–224. Manuscript copy at Friends House Library, London.

[12] On this episode see *Journal of George Fox*, 554–555.

[13] William Penn, "Some Fruits of Solitude" in *Works* 2 vols. (London, 1726), I, 826.

[14] *Ibid.*, 826.

[15] Katharine Evans cited in Ernest E. Taylor, *The Valiant Sixty* (London: Bannisdale Press, 1947), 72 (3rd edn., 1988), 68.

[16] John Banks, "Letter to My Wife", 14th of 3rd Month 1688, cited in H. Barbour and A. Roberts, *Early Quaker Writings*, 189.

[17] Richard Davies, *An Account of the Convincement, Exercises, Services and Travels of That Ancient Servant of the Lord* (London, 1710), 37.

[18] *Ibid.*, 37.

[19] *Ibid.*

[20] Extracts cited in, Isabel Ross, *Margaret Fell, Mother of Quakerism* (London, 1949; rpt. York: William Sessions, 1984); 37.

[21] *Journal of George Fox*, 554.

[22] *Ibid.*, 557.

[23] *Ibid.*

[24] Antonia Fraser, *The Weaker Vessel*, 371.

[25] *Journal of George Fox*, 525.

[26] For George Fox's condemnation of celibacy and adultery, see R.B. Schlatter, *The Social Ideas of Religious Leaders* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1940), 241.

[27] George Fox, "Epistle No. 374" in, H. Barbour and A. Roberts, *Early Quaker Writings*, 497.

[28] Swarthmore M.S. I, fol. 373, Friends House Library, cited in Barry Reay, *The Quakers and the English Revolution* (London: Temple Smith, 1985), 36.

[29] See work quoted above, note 28.

[30] On this question of youth, see Joan Thirsk's, "Younger Sons in the Seventeenth Century". *History* No. 54 (1954), 358–377; and also Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down* (1972; rpt. London: Penguin, 1975), 188, 366.

[31] On these points see Barry Reay's illuminating study: *The Quakers and the English Revolution*, 115 *et al.*

[32] Margaret Fell, *Womens Speaking*, 12.