

**KATHRYN A. DAMIANO**  
**ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN: EIGHTEENTH CENTURY QUAKERISM AS**  
**REALISED ESCHATOLOGY**

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This thesis argues against the received view of 18<sup>th</sup> century Quakerism, which is heavily influenced by the work of Rufus Jones and effectively depreciates it in favour of the 17<sup>th</sup> c. It is widely thought that the tightening discipline and regulation of the minutiae of life found in Quakerism of this period represents a fossilisation and rigoristic/legalistic interpretation of early Quaker ideals. Damiano argues that this sees thing from the wrong perspective; rather, external practices like rigorously-adhered to plainness in speech and simplicity of dress made a quasi-sacramental statement about the inward ideals. Damiano understands these ideals in terms of ‘realised eschatology’: the new order of the kingdom of God does not arrive in some temporal end time not yet reached, but is going on now in the hearts and lives of believers. 18<sup>th</sup> c Quakers lived as the eschatological community of the redeemed in their personal lives, and their community structure and outward dress and behaviour was supposed to be a visible expression and reminder of their inner regeneration, to themselves and to the wider world. Damiano compares 18<sup>th</sup> c Quaker ideas with 20<sup>th</sup> century feminism, drawing parallels between the epistemology of the two, as well as their implied and explicit ‘prophetic’ criticism of the societies to which they belonged and yet sought to define themselves against in order to change those societies. Damiano is sympathetic to a Christocentric Quakerism, and views individualistic, modern secular liberal values with suspicion. In effect she sees Jones’s account of early Quakerism as reducing it to a spiritual version of humanism and liberalism.

**Keywords/themes:**

Epistemology (theory of knowledge); ways of knowing; feminism; realised eschatology (study or doctrine of the end-times); 18<sup>th</sup> century Quakerism; discipline; plainness of speech and dress; simplicity; questioning of reality as presented by those in power; gospel order; faithfulness; outward and inward; justice; personal regeneration and social action; inner transformation; kingdom of God; end time and mean time; liberalism, humanism and Christocentrism; modern values; transvaluation; Rufus Jones; negative way and affirmative way.

**Who it would be useful for:** Academics working in Quaker studies; social historians of religion/18<sup>th</sup> century; those interested in feminism and religion, either from a sociological or theological perspective.

## Chapter I: Introduction and Method

### Background:

Damiano contextualises her thesis in her late 60s/early 70s cultural perspective, formed as a young student. She highlights the questioning of reality as ‘presented by those in power’ as characteristic of this period, and her own experience of self as a woman. She refers to the destruction humans are capable of as a result of ‘outrage at oppression’ or the ‘need to maintain positions of power’. She sees the 60s/early 70s as a period of ‘destruction and creativity’. Feminist activism gave her a sense of identity and made her feel ‘this is how it should feel in church!’ She recognised a spiritual potential in the feminist movement. She wants to weave together feminism and spirituality, the latter providing the ‘continuity through history’ and ‘a practiced path of inner transformation’ feminism alone lacked. She identifies ‘limitations to the promotion of [purely secular] human justice’: ‘Aware of my finiteness, I was unable by myself to discern or manifest a full vision of God’s justice. With others I needed to be open to the guidance of a power beyond human resources.’ But she was suspicious of traditional institutionalised religious answers, which she regarded as ‘otherworldly’ and the work of ‘privileged men’, which neglect the problems of the oppressed now. She herself retained a ‘deep desire to know more of God and spiritual disciplines.’ Although raised a conservative Lutheran, the Quakers provided the spiritual context she was looking for: the silence reminded her of a formative spiritual experience in walks on the beach with her father as a child; she was also attracted by the emphasis on spiritual equality for women. She gained a sense of spiritual community, and also sought spiritual direction from an Ursuline sister.

Damiano introduces us to the 18<sup>th</sup> century Friends, and argues that they did not wait for the ‘sweet bye and bye’ for justice and peace, but ‘knew that the guidance to live a just and peaceable life was accessible in the present by hearing and obeying the Christ within.’ They were experts on living ‘in between times’: the Quakers had their origins in another period of great destruction and great creativity. Damiano defines realised eschatology in this context as ‘the passion of living a life formed by God and the realisation of creating with divine assistance heaven on earth.’ She identifies key questions her study will address: what is the 18<sup>th</sup> c Quaker vision for living out of God in the created order? How were Friends formed to live in this way by God and in their community of faith? What are some of the assumptions and values that distract and mislead Friends from the prophetic embodiment of peace and justice both then and now? Finally, what are the implications of this study for the future understanding of the Friends and their message?

### Purpose:

Damiano’s first main purpose is to present 18<sup>th</sup> c Quakerism in terms of realised eschatology: that is, how this particular period of Quakerism formed Friends who lived as if God’s created order was to be manifested on earth now. To consider the Friends in terms of realised eschatology involves the

methodology of understanding 'theological constructs', namely, how people are formed by God and how in turn a community of faith is manifested. This is intended to be instructive as to how Quaker history can help the Society to envision its own future, and a world vision. Damiano divides the next two chapters, as follows: Chapter 2. Setting the stage: describing 18<sup>th</sup> c Quakerism, then defining what is meant by eschatology in modern writings and comparing and interpreting 18<sup>th</sup> c Friends in those terms. Chapter 3. A critique of modern writers on 18<sup>th</sup> c Quakerism, who mainly approach them through social, political and economic analysis, not from a theological or spiritual perspective, which Damiano believes has led to imbalance and misinterpretation. She sets out to challenge certain assumptions deriving from this approach, to reclaim the richness of the 18<sup>th</sup> c Quaker religious heritage. Ideally, she argues Quakerism balances 'particularism and universalism', without becoming assimilated to predominant cultural values on the one hand, or insular, rigid and exclusive on the other. She sees a tendency in the works criticised to 'acculturation' to modern values. This leads to devaluation of qualities associated with the 'feminine'; misunderstanding of mysticism; presumptions about how change occurs; and certain kinds of interpretation in terms of theological constructs such as dualism and epistemology. All of these will receive more detailed discussion in the ensuing chapters.

In chapter 4, Damiano develops the idea of 18<sup>th</sup> c Quakerism as realised eschatology, looking at this theme in Fox and Barclay, and in modern Quaker writers, in order to inform this discussion, before describing 'the theological constructs that pertain to realised eschatology' – 'a different way of knowing, sense of reality, concept of time, understanding of the corporate context, the process of salvation, mediated ministries and the role of Jesus Christ.' She goes on in chapters 5, 6 and 7 to discuss these things with reference to specific 'categories of corporate experience' (see chapter headings), drawing on 18<sup>th</sup> c Quaker journals. The final chapter 'addresses the implications of this study for the future unfolding of [the Society] and [its] message to the world'.

Damiano acknowledges that Quaker suspicion of creeds leads to a suspicion of theology itself. But she shrewdly observes that they still do theology 'by inference': experience of and beliefs about God are reflected in how we act. There is also a need to articulate one's beliefs and experiences to pass them on.

Damiano sees part of the value of her study as deriving from the fact that unlike many scholars of the period, she is looking at Quakerism from the inside, and as a woman. Faith can help feminism to move on from naming the problem, to a more positive vision. This raises the question of how different traditions and denominations can inform, enrich and clarify one another, and possible challenges for this: in picking and choosing for example: 'Such a tendency predisposes a tradition to individualism, a lack of connection with historical roots, and a nebulous worldview from which to make decisions, to interpret the present and envision a future.'

**Method:**

Damiano works with this definition of theology, by Gordon Kaufman: ‘ a constructive work of the human imagination, an expression of the imagination’s activity helping to provide orientation for human life through developing a symbolical ‘picture’ of the world roundabout and of the human place within that world’; specifically, in this case, the theological construct of realised eschatology, ‘living as if God’s created order was to be manifested on earth now’, and ‘the conception, structure and experiential flavour that create this worldview.’ She proposes that realised eschatology underlies the world view of 18<sup>th</sup> c Friends. 18<sup>th</sup> c Quakerism has not been studied from this point of view before, so a certain bias and devaluing of the 18<sup>th</sup>c has prevailed which has influenced the evolution of Quakerism. Among the conceptions related to the theological construct of realised eschatology that will recur in the following chapters are ‘implications for epistemology or ways of knowing, the experience of an alternative reality beyond that which is usually recognised, a particular understanding of how social and individual transformation occurs, and a conception of mysticism that balances inner transformation and its expression in the created order.’

Damiano’s intellectual approach is based on the first of these, and draws on her experience as both a Quaker and a feminist. It involves ‘learning as a spiritual discipline’ rather than as ‘information in categories’. This is a ‘prayerful attitude’ to avoid making the world fit our parameters, and it values connections and context, experience and collaborative research. Both Quakerism and feminism consider experience as ‘the central base of authority for knowing’, and for questioning assumptions, which according to both are ‘usually formulated by those in power’. In feminism a transformed, even ‘purged’, view of reality is reached through ‘our own perceptions and experience’ (quoting Barbara Du Bois): Quakers refer to a source outside ourselves, but which still comes from deep within. This gives a standard outside our own feelings and subjectivity, and for Damiano is what Quakers can bring to feminists. She draws various further parallels between Quaker theology and feminist epistemology which are elaborated later, especially in chapter 8 (see below), and discusses the impact of her personal faith and experience of various faith communities on her methodological priorities. She observes that Quaker women’s journals are an important source for her, and that they have been under-studied relative to their importance in understanding the spiritual theology of 18<sup>th</sup> c Quakerism.

## **Chapter 2: Setting the Stage for Eighteenth Century Quakerism**

**Defining Eighteenth Century Quakerism:**

The task in this section is to define the period Damiano is calling 18<sup>th</sup> c Quakerism. She gives a brief outline of how this is understood. Howard Brinton identified the ‘heroic or apostolic’ period of Quakerism from c1650-1700. This was an era of drama and passion, enthusiasm and persecution. In the 18<sup>th</sup>c, on the other hand, commentators at least agree that a unique culture and organisation

developed. For Brinton 1700-1800; for others, from the *Christian and Brotherly Advices*, the first codification of rules and procedures on all aspects of life, of 1738. It is sometimes called the 'Golden age' or 'flowering' of Quakerism. There was migration to America, in search of a lifestyle and approach to government consistent with Quaker values. The Quakers became politically influential; notably the 'Holy Experiment' in Pennsylvania. But the French-Indian war became a watershed, in the tension between pacifism and participation in a government at war. Many Quakers resigned, the reform movement got the upper hand and enforced a discipline that would maintain Quakers as a 'saving remnant' defined against the secular world. By the end of this process three schools of thought had emerged, leading to the 'great separation' of 1827. Damiano focuses on the period before this controversy gets heated, ending around 1783. She observes similarities between English and American Quaker experience. Of the emerging schools of thought, Quietism is most associated with 18<sup>th</sup>c. This involved the emptying of the will, and openness to guidance of God. External authority was regarded as a distraction or secondary.

Rationalism, leading to deism, and evangelicalism are also significant influences in this period. Evangelicalism affected Quaker epistemology where there was a move to reliance on scripture as primary authority as opposed to waiting upon Christ's guidance. This led to an emphasis on conversion experience instead of corporate guidance, and a more professional ministry and programmed worship. These movements exerted a conscious and unconscious influence on Quakerism, which in Damiano's eyes should be a 'balance of paradoxes'.

### **Eighteenth Century Quaker Culture:**

A particular Quaker culture developed in this period: 'a clearly defined way of life with a spiritual basis' (Brinton). We have a thorough description by the abolitionist Clarkson: the ideal was that outward culture should reflect inward experience, the Spirit that creates virtuous character which can neither be inherited nor acquired by natural means. Customs intended to predispose an openness to God were passed on in families. Activities that, while not evil in themselves, could still disturb the passions and interfere with the subjecting of one's will to God were frowned upon and corporate pressure used to discourage them. There was an ideal of living 'at your own hands', and a simplicity of dress and furnishing reflecting inner simplicity. These things were a sign of submission of life to God.

### **Eighteenth Century Quaker Meeting Life:**

The issue of 'birthright membership' arose for second generation Quakers. Attendance was expected at 'first day' (Sunday) and midweek meetings, as well as meetings for business. The latter came to involve more select groups, and were conducted in an attitude of worship. A clerk tried to discern the sense of the meeting. There were ideals of submitting to corporate will, but also of prophetic dissent. There were women's meetings, and an idea of feminine ministry, aimed at care for the poor as

opposed to business or theology, as well as meetings to aid 'sufferings'. Ministerial roles evolved, with elders as guardians of tradition, and overseers of the spiritual welfare of members. The meeting controlled travel and marrying out was discouraged (to maintain the Quaker discipline across generations). Guidelines produced were quite all-encompassing, about what was suitable and what not. Persistent offenders could be 'disowned'.

### **Chapter III: Critique of Writers on Eighteenth Century Quakerism**

#### ***Rufus Jones:***

Damiano moves on from describing 18<sup>th</sup> c Quakerism, to a critique of scholars working on it. First among them is Rufus Jones, one of the foremost experts on 18<sup>th</sup> c Quakerism. Jones's views were hugely influential. He was regarded as having saved liberal Quakerism from schism in the 20<sup>th</sup> c. He maintained an optimistic view of human nature from the influence of neo-Hegelian philosophy, and Damiano becomes suspicious of him at this point; equally of his tendency to look for 'permanent and time transcending realities' in Quakerism in order to apply them to his own time. He defined religion as 'a process of correspondence with man's whole environment, not merely with the part that occupies space; and the evidence that it is something more than superstition or invention or illusion will be found in the way that it works as a real constructive life-force, the way it heightens life and releases energy.' He thought that the zeal of the first Quakers came to be directed to a different aim and purpose in the 18<sup>th</sup> c, and while he recognises 'types of leadership other than the charismatic style of the first generation' and a few other positive aspects, he generally seems to denigrate the second generation relative to the first.

Jones thinks the persecution of 1<sup>st</sup> generation Quakers increased their dynamism and impact, and compares this unfavourably with the inward-looking spiritual travails of 18<sup>th</sup> c journals. He blames Barclay for Quietism, on account of his acceptance of Reformation doctrines; original sin, dualism of God and the world, and the need for salvation from beyond: these require a direct invasion of God into human personality, according to Jones. Quietism is implicit in all mysticism with a neo-Platonic strain. This creates a 'dichotomy between the inner life and potential for societal change'. For Jones Quakers were the first organised body of Christians for whom something of God was present in everyone. The idea of an unmediated communion with God demonstrated historically in and by Christ, was uniquely Quaker. The 18<sup>th</sup> c narrowed this immanent ideal operating in all of life, to the cultivation of a peculiar people. He associates this with the *via negativa* in mysticism: the idea that 'being is paramount to doing'.

For Damiano, Jones saw the affirmative way as a corrective to the life- and person-denying negative on account of the period in which he lived, a dark time in world history including the two world wars. She on the other hand sees value in the negative way: the affirmative involves living out Christ's inward guidance, and God's presence known in created order and through human relationships; but in the negative God is known in the emptying of the human will and opening

oneself to the yet unknown divine call. Ideally there should be a balance between these two. 18<sup>th</sup>c Quakerism did in fact have this balance manifested in the community of faith, and she argues that the affirmative way alone won't transform modern values. Jones was suspicious of the inner Light and vocal ministry untempered by worldly culture: education, rational categories, and so on. He saw the rigid adherence to customs such as plain dress as a bondage, because it became an end in itself; and disliked the emotional and the subjective in Quaker journals, seeing too much invested in feelings. But for Damiano he is blind to his own subjectivity. Jones represents an assimilation of the values of liberal Protestantism, making Quakerism 'self-sufficient, humanistic and individualistic'.

***Other writers and Damiano's response to the scholarship:***

Other writers on Quakerism in this period have a similar perspective to Jones in certain important respects; indeed, most are directly influenced by him. Damiano discusses what is unique about each and identifies common themes that she critiques: due to Jones's association of Quaker mysticism with Quietism and the negative way, 'the spirituality of this period has been characterised as lacking in zeal, passive, rigid, and of nominal influence on the world.' For Damiano, in contrast, 18<sup>th</sup> c Quakers balanced the affirmative and negative ways; and the affirmative was in fact manifested in the community of faith in terms of what she designates 'realised eschatology'. Many scholars are coloured by the values of modernity. 'In general, the basic tension of modernity has been between secular and religious values. Themes that arise from this tension are assumptions about how change happens, the adoption of a psychological model, an emphasis on individualism and rationality, and the devaluing of the 'feminine'.' Several authors discussed emphasise Quakerism's losing the opportunity to influence the development of the American colonies due to its withdrawal from government. They retreated into the nurture of their own communities to preserve their faith. This incorporates certain assumptions about how change occurs and perceives withdrawal as undesirable. She distinguishes between an 'If/then' paradigm, and a 'because/therefore'. In the latter terms, 'only when one's heart is transformed can there be possibility of external change,' and this is what the community of faith is designed to do. She cites Fox on war, and suggests that a 'change of consciousness had occurred that took away any motivation that prompted war.' One can treat peace as a process, rather than a future ideal and choose to live peaceably now, not just *achieve* peace in the sweet bye and bye. In 18<sup>th</sup> c Quaker terms faithfulness involved not just envisaging an ideal social order, but attempting to live it. Spiritual regeneration was regarded as an answer to the basic cause of social problems, characterised by Damiano as the desire for power and the spiritual condition of pride. This challenges the modern paradigm of change as coming about through 'power over', through the exercise of power, substituting an alternative of 'power from an unlimited Source', which expands when shared. Jesus is an example of such 'relational power', which allowed him to identify with and take on the sufferings of others, and return love. This is the 'power of powerlessness and non-violence'. She makes use of Lewis Benson's distinction between a life of 'ideals and of obligation'. The former separates ideal

goals from reality; the latter integrates them by only distinguishing between obedience and disobedience. There is then no 'ought/able' distinction. This approach, she argues, characterised 18<sup>th</sup> c Quakerism.

Thus, instead of the assumption that Friends became Quietistic to direct their energies towards the nurture of their own faith community, Damiano suggests that they saw societal change coming from living a faithful life of listening to God's guidance. Inner change was necessary to hear God's guidance and carry it out, and the Church's apartness could help it to perform a prophetic role. Where many modern authors see lack of choice, freedom, individual rights and expression, (which Damiano refers to as a 'psychological model'), Damiano sees life for 18<sup>th</sup> c Friends as a sacred ritual; everyday acts were symbolic, flowing out of a sense of God. It represented an alternative structure of social order based on non-manipulative power, not simply oppressive rules for the sake of it. This vision challenges the modern lack of a sense of corporate life in community, or even a language in which to express commitment; and it is also what constitutes the 'realised eschatology' of 18<sup>th</sup> c Quakerism, and to this she turns in the next chapter.

#### **Chapter IV: Eighteenth Century Quakerism as Realised Eschatology**

##### **Fox on eschatology:**

Damiano draws attention to what has been called 'prophetic Christology' in Fox: the apocalyptic nature of the maxim that 'Christ is come to teach his people himself.' For Fox the institutional church found itself no longer in the end time, so it accommodated to the mean time. In contrast, for Fox, the kingdom of God has actually been instantiated in Jesus Christ. He uses characteristic eschatological language: final judgment; cataclysmic warfare between good and evil; destruction and new beginning; fulfilment which in some ways resembles a primeval state; and redemption that encompasses wider created order. But for Fox these are found in inner experience, they are not external signs heralding the apocalypse (Damiano tends to refer to the latter conception as 'apocalyptic' as opposed to [realised] 'eschatology'.) Christ's return is a presently unfolding reality rather than conjecture about the future. Christ's function as priest, as well as prophet, reflects the institutional and pastoral concerns of 18<sup>th</sup> c Quakerism, and indeed of feminism: his priestly qualities are mediator, healer, reconciler and nurturer. The Quakers of the 18<sup>th</sup> c, like the primitive church, enact the new world order in their lives and community order: 'Fox tells us that those who are committed to hearing and obeying the guidance of Christ are called to be a royal priesthood and to incarnate this guidance by living in gospel order.'

##### **Barclay on, modern Quaker writers on, and characteristics of, realised eschatology:**

Damiano outlines the thought of Robert Barclay, who was foundational for eighteenth century Quakerism. She goes on to draw eschatological themes out of modern Quaker writers, and to compare

them with the 18<sup>th</sup> c. Shared themes include an alternative sense of reality to the enlightenment conception, and a broader understanding of knowing; as well as an expansion in the concept of time, and a connectedness with all creation.

Barclay discusses the behaviour one should evidence if under the guidance of Christ, including many of the practices dear to 18<sup>th</sup> c Quakers as expressing inner transformation: plain speech and dress, the peace testimony, prohibitions against titles and oaths, and so on. Barclay, like Fox, considers Friends to herald a new era of the end time understood as personal transformation. The seed or light 'draws, invites and inclines one towards God', and arouses the desire 'to become a co-worker with it': the sufferings of Christ are shared inwardly and the resurrection experienced as recovery from sin. He also describes different ways of knowing, distinguishing between 'intellectual knowledge' and the 'saving heart knowledge', 'obtained only by God's Spirit shining in the heart.' In a (positive!) echo of Jones, Barclay also has a sense of a natural potential for goodness and connection to God's goodness in the heart of humans, as well as potential for evil. He has a strong sense of the church as 'part of a process of corporate salvation where each one's wholeness is interrelated to one's neighbour's.'

Before discussing the 18<sup>th</sup> c, Damiano reviews modern Quaker discussions of realised eschatology. The themes seen in Fox and Barclay re-occur, in fresh forms: for example, for Thomas Head, simple living 'is eschatological because it manifests the hoped for future now in living everyday faithfully'. Similarly, Ferner Nuhn contends that 'salvation is an eschatological term which can convey a 'present experience, a continuing costly struggle or an ultimate hope.' Chris Downing emphasises the 'inner transformation of humanity' as a precondition of 'the transformation of the world', and criticises 'apocalyptic' understood as conjecture about the future instead of this inner transformation and the consequent struggle for justice. Both Downing and John McCandless make use of the theology of the Cross, and the latter criticises the secular tone of much Christian writing on social justice, contrasting it with the early Friends who 'did more than envision a new social order, they lived it.'

Moving on to the 18<sup>th</sup> c, Damiano relates these themes to Quakers of this period. She argues that 'Friends of the reformist era ... knew that individuals must be inwardly transformed for peace and justice to evolve on earth.' 'Determining what needed to be changed about society and formulating plans to change it was not an enduring way to promote peace and justice.' Instead, they lived out of 'gospel order', 'a discipline of daily life that opened people to be instruments of God's justice in the world.' 'All outward activities are meant to be brought into the Presence where categories, values and meanings are different than in the secular world.' Also characteristic of both realised eschatology in general and 18<sup>th</sup> c Quakers in particular are a broadened experience of knowing – something Damiano has already related to the feminist movement – and an expansion in the concept of time: 'realised eschatology assumes that God's community can be lived in the world now and is not dependent on some far off time in the future.' Past, present and future interrelate with

each other, rather than following on contiguously. 'The was can become the is, or the to be can become the is now.' (p119 quoting Taber 1980.) 18<sup>th</sup> c Quaker discussions of knowing reflect Fox's assertion that he knew Christ not as a result of intellectual understanding, but by the quieting of his own will to be open to the will of Christ. Furthermore, knowing 'becomes non-dualistic with the breakdown of the subject – object distinction.' This occurs in a subtle experience in which 'belief is transformed into faith and knowing about God ... into knowing/loving God'. (p121 quoting Giles 1982.) Through this comes a sense of the connectedness of all creation, allowing a deep empathy with other people and their sufferings.

### **Chapter 5: The Formative – The Inward Process of Transformation**

In this chapter Damiano describes 'the formative', or the 'inward process of transformation' in the writings of 18<sup>th</sup> c Friends, the importance of which she has been underlining. She announces her intention to move on in the following two chapters, to 'the redemptive', which she defines as the 'function of the faith community through which God takes form'; and 'the prophetic', or 'the embodiment of peace and justice in the world.'

Concerning the formative, Damiano provides examples of how 18<sup>th</sup> c Friends experienced 'being moulded in the image of Christ', 'experienced the life of Christ inwardly in their own regeneration', involving an identification with the sufferings of Christ. She does so with reference to a work by Samuel Bownas, *A Description of the Qualifications Necessary to a Gospel Minister*. Bownas delineates four qualifications: 1. Sanctification, which is identified with justification in Quaker tradition (a state of acceptance is inseparable from holiness); 2. A conviction of sins and an examination of self, deriving from the experience of one's own helplessness, hopelessness and imperfection; 3. A watchfulness in conversation, company and actions; and 4. A time of preparation, or continued conversion which continues throughout life and prepares a person for their function within the body of Christ. This is particularly relevant to realised eschatology: one Friend says, 'I know there is a kingdom of heaven, because I already feel it within me, Christ in me'. It even becomes Eucharistic, in this context. Damiano illustrates each of these in turn with reference to extracts from Quaker journals.

Sanctification: The first movement of the Spirit, one of 'nurturing and nourishing the divine potential within'. Barclay calls it the seed of God, the kingdom of God (using eschatological language), and Christ himself; the inward teacher, who can be made manifest in our lives. Sanctification involves 'purgation', expressed using traditional mystical language of judgement and burning, and comes about by discipline and mortification, removing what stands between us and union with God. The seed is a 'real spiritual substance which the soul of man can feel and apprehend', from which the new man arises in the heart of the believer. Sanctification also involves openness to grace, and even children participate in the experience of it, in 18<sup>th</sup> c Quaker journals. It can involve a

dividedness of self at the beginning, ‘two seeds battling for control’. The yearning of the soul for a fuller satisfaction, often baffled and drawn in by worldly loves, is described in many Quaker journals in quasi-Augustinian terms.

Sanctification has implications for ways of knowing, ‘opening us up to perceiving reality in an alternative way’, as Damiano puts it, which is ‘another characteristic of realised eschatology’; in the words of Job Scott, saving knowledge comes not from reading and reasoning, but submitting all our ‘boasted abilities to the rectification of a superior principle’. We can only know God ‘by his own light and influence’, which involves dying to our own will with Christ on the cross.

The second qualification, conviction, comes from the experience of our own propensity for sinfulness. Examination of conscience and adherence to the love of God and neighbour taught by the gospel and the inner light follow, along with giving up our own will and passions and waiting on God. 17<sup>th</sup> c Quietist texts, such as those by Fenelon and Mme Guyon, were important for 18<sup>th</sup> c Quakers in this respect. We empty ourselves, in order to be filled by God; which brings about a ‘pure love’ for God and men and a ‘commitment to co-creation’ in our co-operation with God. This is expressed in the language of begetting and birth, in 18<sup>th</sup> c Quaker writers. The historical Christ provides a model for us.

The third qualification, watchfulness on our behaviour, ties in with the fourth, preparation; both involve careful self-scrutiny and waiting on inward direction. It is part of both to submit to suffering, letting go our repugnance towards it and giving ourselves up to God in sacrifice. Out of this comes a new sense of our calling and mission, and a ‘great love’ for God and others, as well as renewed clarity about our spiritual and ethical direction. The language of ‘stripping away’, reminiscent of medieval mysticism, is much associated with preparation in the journals; what is stripped away is replaced by a rising up of something new, like a spring, received from within and yet beyond the self. The process of preparation leads to confidence and zeal, though it is only a preparation; ‘which some have mistaken for the work itself, and so have been born before the time’. The process is a struggle with one’s own fears, and dividedness of will. Despite the emphasis on inward transformation in this context, the 18<sup>th</sup> c saw the development of structures and guidelines to help those who felt called to ministry to gradually develop and establish their calling in a practical way.

## **Chapter 6: The Redemptive – the Function of Faith Community**

In a fascinating echo of the patristic (early church) and Catholic idea of the church as the extension of the incarnation, Damiano argues that ‘Community was God’s embodiment in the world for 18<sup>th</sup> c Friends’, and community life was a visible sign of redemption. The community was the womb out of which a new society, the kingdom of God on earth, is born. She returns to Barclay for a definition of redemption: it is ‘two-fold’, firstly a measure of the inner forces of transformation which were in

Christ, and secondly a witness to this 'purifying and cleansing power' on the part of those influenced by it. 'Friends are called to live out this redeemed life in the context of community'; and she goes on to describe the idea of the community and its role manifested in 18<sup>th</sup> c Quaker writings.

This community is, first of all, made up of those who are in the world, but not of it; they are married and engaged in lawful employment, not separated in a monastic fashion. The specifically redemptive function of the community is to 'be an agency of spiritual discipline' for the members, and it is a 'necessary consequence of faith'. Spiritual discipline primarily involves 'mutual accountability': guidance and discipline are provided by one spiritually equal member of the community for another. The community is also the locus of worship, fellowship, and service.

In the thought of Fox, Quaker 'form, structure and government' are essential without amounting to a religious institution. Fox observed that 'True life gives true form; but the mere form will never produce the life of Truth.' 18<sup>th</sup> c Quakers endeavoured to work out the implications of this for their formal structures, notably concerning the relationship between spiritual equality and mutual accountability. True freedom was not to be found in autonomy in anything like the modern liberal sense; but in prayerful attention to God and the care and service of others. The community is intended to 'reduce the discrepancy' between humanity's activity and God's intentions for them through its form of life, 'gospel order'. Damiano draws on the work of the Anglican theologian Carter Heyward in her discussion of the *mediatorial* role of the community. The idea of sin as damage to or refusal of relationship is also important in the context of community. Damiano extends the idea of redemption to the creation as a whole, and even speaks of the 'mutual redemption' of creator and creature through our 'openness to God's formation and expression in community.'

Notwithstanding the fact of being in, but not of, the world, 'redemptive community involves separateness as well as relatedness.' The church is to be a 'city set on a hill', lest 'her members mix and unite with the world, and worldly spirit, till her brightness fade away, her discerning depart from her, and a night of darkness overtake and come upon her.' (p172, quoting Job Scott.) Plainness of dress and speech helped to remind 18<sup>th</sup> c Quakers of this vocation, as well as being an expression of it: 'Like the Angelus bell in the Roman Catholic tradition calling people to pause in their day to remember God, the disciplines of plainness were reminders of God ever present', as well as an outward sign of inner humility. They were also 'an enduring commitment to faithfulness' in themselves, insofar as they required a difficult commitment, as well being signs of something inward. Plainness of dress was related to mystical 'stripping away'. Many of the Quaker journals Damiano cites portray 'the disciplines of plainness' as things that seem on the surface small in themselves, but materially relate to one's deeper spiritual condition, in the minds of these authors. Great truths can be wrapped in such details. Wearing a black hat, not an undyed one, sullies inner simplicity and draws it back out into wider worldly concerns, becoming a sign of pride and lack of sincerity of heart. Nevertheless, formality and rigorism were recognised as constant dangers.

Educational activities should be undertaken with an eye on their use for the Quaker community and the gospel. Marriage was treated as an icon of the relationship between the soul and God; but it was also an expression of legitimate human companionship. One fascinating Quaker journal records a further dimension: a young woman is perceived by a man as his divinely intended bride; yet she is lame, which displeases him, and he has to come to terms with her disability and receive her as a gift. Damiano comments that marriage ‘was seen as one of the most important occasions for discernment in a Friend’s life.’ Great emphasis was placed on a spouse as ‘a yoke-fellow in spiritual as well as temporal concerns’, as one journal has it. The historian Jerry Frost is cited to the effect that a rise in Quakers marrying out arguably represents the rising ‘dogma of romantic love’ in 18<sup>th</sup> century America: for devout Quakers, marrying out represented a violation of the ideal of faithfulness and a threat to the passing on of godly order to the next generation. However, even disowned couples could attend meeting; but they were excluded from the privileges and responsibilities of the community.

Quakers took up occupations consonant with their religious profession, and many of those cited by Damiano state that they sought out ways of making a living which contradicted their ‘creaturely will’ to achieve or make a substantial profit, instead doing things that expressed and helped foster humility and love of neighbour, as well as teaching them to be satisfied with moderation in profit and success and which left time for the Lord’s business. They avoided selling ‘frivolous’ items contrary to their values, and were sensitive to the effect the distraction of too much business could have on one’s spiritual state. Frederick Tolles argued that Quaker ‘prudence, honesty and a strong sense of order’ contributed to commercial success; and their philanthropy became famous. Not all, of course, lived up to the high standard.

Damiano concludes the chapter with a discussion of the structure and discipline of meetings, expanding on what she said in chapter 2. Much attention was paid to the spiritual condition of meetings as a whole, and a disciplined life was important for the discernment of the meeting. There was a strong sense of interdependence among 18<sup>th</sup> c Friends, and the validity of every voice was recognised in discussions about issues concerning the community’s life and future. Women were included in this, and were empowered by their own meetings, but many limitations on them remained during this period. Finally Damiano draws on various discussions of the role of those in ministerial positions, and a remarkable evocation of the role of silence among Quaker in the period.

### **Chapter 7: The Prophetic – The Embodiment of Peace and Justice**

In this chapter Damiano focuses on the prophetic witness of living faithfully in everyday life for 18<sup>th</sup> c Quakers, especially on this as a dimension of realised eschatology. ‘As a consequence of this faithfulness, some were called to witness to the injustices of slavery, the inhumane treatment of native Americans, the call of women and non-resistance.’

An important part of the idea of realised eschatology as Damiano presents it is 'awareness of a reality beyond that which is recognised by the world'. For Damiano, the refusal of 18<sup>th</sup> c Quakers 'to do whatever as a religious body they believe to be wrong', as one contemporary observer put it, was based on this awareness as a 'primary experience'. The same contemporary observer, Thomas Clarkson, saw Quakers as people who acted on the basis of principle not consequences, refusing 'to do evil that good may come', and ready to suffer as a result. Damiano argues that one result of this is that rather than planning how to go about changing society, Quakers 'felt called to live in God's guidance right now': that is, rather than seeking changes in society, they themselves lived in a changed way as an act of prophetic witness. Quakers sought to see things as they are, and as they ought to be, rather than in a partial way skewed to their own interest, out of self-love. She uses their response to slave ownership as an example of this. John Woolman did not argue for the rights of slaves, but told slave owners they would never experience inner peace as long as they remained involved; he called them to identify with slaves as human beings and children of the same God, subject to the same feelings and frailties. When staying with slave-owning families, he paid slaves for their services during his stay as an example. Slavery was perceived as a wrong relationship, an offence to the divine order of creation that needed righting, and an outrage to the spirit of grace that should foster love and liberality in the hearts of all. The paradox of living separately was supposed to make an example and attract others to join the community. Again, as pointed out in earlier chapters, living faithfully was supposed to resolve the duality between 'what we may refer to in modern terms as social change and spirituality': the world is 'potentially God's kingdom' in the here and now, God's kingdom is not separated, in the future, 'bye and bye'. Damiano thinks 18<sup>th</sup> c Friends gave up their 'expectations of change' in the causal sense, in order to instantiate it in their everyday lives.

She uses the example of Woolman's stand against slavery to exemplify the possibility of prophetic witness by individuals within the Quaker community; this can help to lead to a shift in the corporate discernment, but the process of change happens in 'God's time', not 'people's', involving a subtle shift towards consensus. This occurred in the case of slavery, and Damiano elegantly charts the course of this process, focusing on acts of individuals and local meetings who 'planted the seeds.' Some of these are dramatic, others psychologically subtle; one Quaker tore off his jacket during a meeting to reveal a military coat which he sprayed with red juice, to illustrate the bloody violence concealed under the plain attire of those Friends who owned slaves; a meeting exercised moral pressure on slaveholders by visiting them without directly mentioning slavery. Many tried to retain a 'spirit of sympathy and tenderness' towards those who were 'grievously entangled by the spirit of this world' – slaveowners – in accordance with 'the root from whence our concern proceeded'. (John Griffith, 1779.)

Damiano criticises a scholar called Jean Soderlund for calling Quaker meetings who sternly enforced the discipline against marrying out and similar principles 'tribalistic', and comparing them unfavourably with those who were lax about this, but attended to the material needs of freed slaves.

According to Damiano the discipline helped to free the meetings from involvement with slaveowners and a society that tolerated slave ownership, thus avoiding compromise with the world and making a statement. It also helped maintain the Quakers' alternative values and pass them on, as emphasised in earlier chapters. Soderlund's advocacy of the more purely 'humanitarian' Quakers tends to reduce Quaker ethics to 'philosophy', that is, something merely human and secular. 'The Quaker way is an expression of a particular revelation, that Christ's guidance is accessible to all who listen, obey and manifest this guidance in faith community' – rather than reducible to a humanistic philosophy of benevolence. This is not exclusivist; 'commitment to this path is a choice that all are welcome to', and anyway 'all people can be redeemed from sin if they listen to the Inward Teacher even if they do not know him by the name of Christ.' Damiano resists simplistic boxing of particular 18<sup>th</sup> c Quakers as 'humanitarian' or 'tribalistic'.

Another aspect of 'prophetic witness' which Damiano draws attention to is the Quaker attempt to peacefully engage with the native Americans. Woolman went as far as to say that he desired to 'feel and understand their life and the spirit they live in', and other Quakers were prepared to acknowledge that the land had been 'wrongfully taken from them'.

Women's preaching continued to develop, despite the response of some that it was 'the Production of a distempered and enthusiastic Brain'. Biblical texts used today in various Christian denominations to justify the ministry of women were already being cited by 18<sup>th</sup> c Quakers. Some male preachers held that the difference between the sexes consisted in 'various modifications of the body...and not in any diversity of the soul.'

Quaker witness extended to harmony with the rest of creation. 'Animals were not considered mere machines, to be used at discretion, but in the sublime light of the creatures of God'; some Quakers even turned to vegetarianism and Joshua Evans refused to ride in carriages if the horses seemed oppressed.

Friends sought to 'break the cycle of violence and literally bring the world into another way of being' by their rejection of the use of force, even if attacked. Non-resistance represented 'an inner state rather than the philosophical principle of pacifism': 'It's a fundamental truth, that Christ overcame by patient suffering, leaving us an example' (Anthony Benezet). To the accusation that the time for swords to be beaten into ploughshares had not yet come, Thomas Story replied that the dispensation of peace had begun in some and was offered to all. In all these things, the importance of the eschatological dimension identified by Damiano is clear.

## **Chapter 8: Implications for today**

### **Feminism and Realised Eschatology:**

Damiano identifies three questions as a result of her study: 1. What are the implications of 18<sup>th</sup> c Quakerism understood as realised eschatology for the future of Quakerism? 2. How does

contemporary Christian feminism relate to realised eschatology? 3. What might the message of 1 and 2 be for the wider world? She begins her analysis with 2.

Damiano argues that the 'eschatological vision of Christian feminists includes both a dimension of inner transformation and participation in a new historical creation': thus a similar paradigm in its way to 18<sup>th</sup> c Quakers, though there are differences; for example, feminists are uncomfortable with the language of self-denial, on account of so-called 'women's sins of omission'. (Damiano defines Christian feminists as those who stick with the church, believing it to contain the seeds of its own renewal; in her own case the Quaker tradition, of course.) Many feminists see 'the preeminent sin of patriarchy [as] dualism', the reduction of reality to 'either/or', in which the two sides of the duality are in opposition to each other. 'Traditionally, women are identified with the inferior side of dualisms such as spirit and matter, heaven and earth.' Dualisms also have a tendency to disempower, according to Damiano, by separating things, putting them off, and by these means promoting passivity. We have seen in the previous chapter how Damiano portrays an 'either/or' view as reconciled in the realised eschatological perspective of 18<sup>th</sup> c Quakerism. Damiano argues for the reclamation of traditional language by feminists, and for the potential in a feminist account of the negative way: 'The women cited [in this section] all describe a process of shedding societal expectations and symbols that have been oppressive and the consequent yielding and empowerment that can follow ... Faithfulness to God in this process is not passive', but is rather experienced as both dependency on God and empowerment by God, in what Damiano calls both in this context and that of 18<sup>th</sup> century Quakers, 'co-creation' or the manifestation of Christ in the world. Likewise she also refers to it as 'prophetic witness' based on an inner transformation. She cites the well-known theologian Rosemary Ruether to the effect that the church's witness to the world must be rooted in its own conversion; and 'identifying eschatology solely with an unrealised future distracts from today's pressing ecological concerns.' Carter Heyward argues that Jesus must be seen as an iconic example of human suffering in a just cause or unjustly inflicted, rather than as somehow separate and unique. This allows us to draw on other models too, drawn from women's experience, thus excising any sense of 'individualism and the superiority of maleness'. 'Through participating in Jesus we can in turn become mediators, healers and reconcilers for others.'

### **The Future of Quakerism – Integrating Memory and Vision:**

'Tradition can be a dead weight or a constant reminder of our radical past challenging us to new life.' (Gish 1979.) Damiano rejects the idolising of any one period of Quakerism at the expense of others - most frequently done with the first generation - but also appeals to Quakers to beware of becoming no more than a hereditary culture. Scholarship is one means of defining the tradition. Quakers have traditionally been suspicious of theology, seeing it as leading to creedal formulations, but theology is invariably implied by other kinds of analysis, so theology is necessary to defend distinctively Quaker perspectives against hostile or biased interpretation. The feminist concept of 'transvaluing' could be

useful in this respect: 'to transvalue a word or concept is to divest it of its negativity and allow it to become positive and healing.' This is what Damiano has sought to do with her interpretation of 18<sup>th</sup> c Quakerism, so often seen as 'rigid, passive and withdrawn from the world' thanks to Rufus Jones and others, as 'realised eschatology'. When viewed in this way, it can be seen as an 'incarnational, relational and transforming religious outlook' which actually represents 'living in eternity now as an aid to this-worldly transformation.' The emphasis on the priesthood of Christ 'can help reclaim today the so called 'feminine' values of nurture, healing, receptivity, reconciliation, and sacrifice' and the atonement as 'living out of the crucifixion'. 18<sup>th</sup> c Friends' 'experience of God's formation was that of being moulded in the image of Christ. They spoke of participating in the life of Christ inwardly in their own regeneration', and of 'suffering, death and resurrection as they surrendered their own wills to God's.' The question is how to recapture this by 'transvaluing' traditional spiritual concepts which have acquired negative connotations for many modern Friends inculcated with modern values: how to experience 'the freedom of God's guidance through the practice of discipline', by transvaluing the spiritual disciplines of the 18<sup>th</sup> c, which in themselves are apt to invite the response, 'I don't look good in grey'! Damiano underlines the importance of tradition: 18<sup>th</sup> c children 'absorbed Quaker values from the rhythms of daily practice including Bible reading, grace, worship and meeting fellowship. It was in the family that children were taught to discern. Salvation depended on listening to God and thereby distinguishing right from wrong.' These are the things that transvalued in a modern form, are of inestimable value. Damiano formulates some questions designed to aid reflection on these matters, in line with 'Friends focus of authority in the experience of the Inward Teacher rather than an external 'expert' or source.' Finally, Damiano suggests that 'Friends, if they live their vision, can be an incarnation of God's activity in the world and point to the kingdom that is here and yet coming. The Quaker contribution can be one of living a new process rather than providing new goals. Friends can offer an alternative way of living [out of the Truth within] ... Raising our children in a non-violent way, reconciling wounded relationships, smiling at the cashier in the Acme store are all heralding the kingdom of God now. At the same time, we may be called to directly witness to the systems that hinder God's justice and peace.'

**Summary prepared by Andrew Harvey (2012)**