"ECOLOGY, even before it had a name, had a history." With these words, historian Donald Worster reminds us that if we are to comprehend the complexity of meanings and objectives contained within the contemporary idea of ecology, we must study the past, especially man's earlier attitudes toward nature and all living things. As we shift our historical attention to the origins of American ecological thought in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it remains essential for us to investigate the inter-connectedness of theological attitudes with environmental and ecological beliefs. As Lynn White, Jr. has pointed out, "What people do about their ecology depends on what they think about themselves in relation to things around them. Human ecology is deeply conditioned by beliefs about our nature and destiny—that is, by religion."

Professor White, in an influential thesis presented in 1967, contended that the roots of our contemporary ecologic crisis lay in the anthropocentric nature of western Christianity, in its emphasis on the transcendence of God over man but especially of man over nature and its "lesser" species. In the medieval Christian vision, according to White, man is seen as "coercing the world around [him]—plowing, harvesting, chopping trees, butchering pigs. Man and nature are two things, and man is master." Recent studies of early American ecological thought, specifically of seventeenth and early eighteenth century Puritan attitudes toward land transformation in America fit this pattern. One finds in Cecelia Tichi's survey of the literature of the period, a vision of the
“imperial” Puritan “elect” dominating and subduing nature, vanquishing wilderness, appropriating land from nomadic “savages,” aggressively improving and “re-forming” the New World into a millennial New Earth for the anticipated second coming, it was hoped, of the Messiah. One might suggest that the Puritan conviction of predestination, and of predestination as a chosen people, probably skewed the Puritan ecological vision. If an omnipotent God might exercise power over men by “sheltering” some and “wasting” others, it seemed to follow, if only by implication, that men might themselves exercise arbitrary and capricious domination over all allegedly inferior forms of life.²

The often-repeated references of George Fox (1624–1691) to the lordship of God over man and to the sovereignty of man over the things of the earth suggest the initial affinity of the early Quaker movement to these prevalent Puritan and Christian attitudes. In the spirit of Genesis, Fox sees man as created in the image of God to have “dominion over the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the air, the fishes in the sea, and all creeping things.” In hierarchical fashion, “all things were made subject to man, and man subject to God; all creatures were to fear and dread man and woman but men and women were to fear and dread God.” Robert Barclay (1648–1690), an influential early Quaker theologian, found it beyond question “that whatever thing the Creation affords, is for the use of man, and the moderat use of them is lawfull. . . .” This Quaker apologist “for the true Christian divinity” labeled it “no vanity” for the inhabitants to use what “the countrey . . . naturally produces.” He found it no snare to “eat flesh and drink wine” or “be cloathed with the finest wool” if one’s estate may “bear it,” and modesty were attended to. Barclay made reference to the Romish “superstition, or . . . weakness” of not eating meat on certain calendar days, a custom he thought foolish because “all the creatures of God are good, and for the use of man, if received with thanksgiving.”³

George Fox joined most of his seventeenth-century Christian contemporaries in counseling restraint in man’s use of the material world. After his convincement, he spoke for himself, as it were, in a new flesh: “I might not eat and drink to make myself wanton,” said he, “but for health, using the creatures in their service, as servants in their places, to the glory of him that created them.” Fox noted that “the wisdom of God . . . preserves the creation, and is not destructive,” and he enjoined his followers not to “devour” the creatures of God “through slothfulness, laziness, and filthiness, nor upon the lust.” To Friends that “live[d] in the truth,” the power of God stood as sufficient to bring them out of “the
world's vain fashions and customs ... feasting, and revelings, and banquetings, and wakes [which] spoil the creatures, and dishonour the Lord God."

To place the matter in perspective, however, it appears obvious that Friends in the English Restoration period, during an era of theological dispute and religious persecution, were hardly preoccupied with an ecological perspective on the world, though they had one, of course, colored through the prism of their theology. When meeting houses were being pulled down by the Antichrist and Friends were "in suffering," there remained little time for contemplating man's relation to the natural world, except perhaps in the negative fashion of learning to live unencumbered lives in a Christian atmosphere of self-denial, plainness, and simplicity.

Seventeenth-century Quaker attitudes regarding man's dominion over nature, to all appearances quite similar to those of Puritanism and to those of traditional Christianity, nonetheless emerged in the eighteenth century with a markedly different ecological emphasis and urgency. This shift of attitude and approach, to a large extent unconscious and unanticipated, appears the indirect product of evolving Quaker religious experience, as Fox and his followers "experienced" Christ Jesus in direct mystical communion, shed the Old Adam of fleshly "cumbers" and put on the garments of redemption. As direct recipient of Christ's gift of convincement, Fox tells us that "tears of joy dropped from me ... and I saw into that which was without end, and things which cannot be expressed by words...." The implications of direct communion with God were in each age profound, ongoing, and as John Woolman (1721-1772) noted in the next century, prophetic. This stress on mysticism and its theological ramifications gradually transformed Quaker views regarding ecology, as we shall see, and altered Friends' perceptions of the world in at least several distinctive ways.

One line of thought and feeling in Quaker theology led Fox and his religious descendants to emphasize first, mysticism; then, the absolute primacy of the spiritual over the carnal; finally, in conjunction, a kind of qualified Gnosticism which exalted the invisible and durable kingdom of God over the visible and corruptible kingdom of earth. Men were perceived as but "pilgrims and strangers to the world." They were warned to wean themselves from all "types, figures and shadows" so that they might live in Christ Jesus, "the substance." Men in their natural state—unattentive to "that of God within"—were prone to sin, to sensuality, to self-love, to vanity, and to greed in the accumulation of earthly possessions. The material world, of course, coming from the
hand of God, was not in itself inherently evil, but man’s obsession with perishable treasures certainly was. “Outward things,” said Fox, were not “durable riches, nor durable substance, nor durable habitations, nor durable possessions, for they have wings and will fly away.” Man must avoid the snares of the world, escape the disarray of transitory distractions, center in stillness before the presence of the living God, cultivate plainness, simplicity, humility, self-abnegation, resignation, restraint in the right use of creaturely things, and mind “that of God within.”

By the opening of the Quietistic period of Quaker history in the early eighteenth century, the emphasis on the fallen nature of creaturely man was, if anything, heightened. The stress on Triumphalism in the early Quaker movement had largely faded and the intense proselytizing of “the world’s people” had been partially replaced by a more rigorous cultivation of intra-institutional purity within the extended Atlantic world of Quaker meeting houses. Friends were distinguishing themselves more sharply from “the world’s people”—the sensuous and the ungodly—though they were quick not to confine their understanding of salvation to narrow sectarian limits. Ministers and elders of the eighteenth century lamented what they perceived as the declension in their religious society as Friends experienced the rising temptations of prosperity and worldly power and faced the clamor of “jangling” strife and impending warfare especially in the practical arena of Pennsylvania and Jersey politics. Quakers were exhorted to “mind the Light,” avoiding fleshly pride, vanity, and self-aggrandizement. They were to cultivate humility and submission to the will of God. They were to prepare themselves to be, if the Lord demanded it, as Christ their leader, taken by “the world’s people” as a lamb to slaughter.

The Christian virtue of resignation was much prized in the Quietistic period and thereafter. John Hunt, near the end of his life in 1820, thought that to be “truly Resigned” was one of the greatest of human achievements. As conditions of abundance accumulated within the geographical reaches of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Quakers may have become even more conscious of the prevalence of death and disease as frequent and preeminent intruders on an otherwise bucolic but unstable scene. Beset by smallpox epidemics, yellow fever devastations, and mysterious fluxes, Quakers were deathbed witnesses on occasion to the demise of their spouses and many of their children. They strove consciously to cultivate personal resignation and submission to the mysterious reckonings of God. The eighteenth-century Quaker emphasis on man as “pilgrim and stranger” in a transitory world led naturally to restraint in the use of the earth’s goods. The stress on plainness and
simplicity induced Friends to “deal gently” with nature through simple cultivation and conservation of land or to pursue, as an alternative, moderate involvement in “useful trades.” The stress on humility as basic to Christian consciousness provided a point of empathy for Friends to unite in spirit with the most despised of suffering humanity or to extend compassion to the most lowly and abused of God’s creatures in the realm of “creeping things.” Fox’s emphasis on the fallen nature of man, probably intensified in the Quiesistic period, broke the worldly pride of tender Quakers, left them “stripped” of inclination to manipulate or misuse the land, or usurp God’s dominion over the treasures of his earth, and led them ultimately to the doctrine of custodianship in the gentle “husbanding” and conservation of the material world.¹¹

One cannot overestimate the importance of the eighteenth-century Quaker belief in the fallen nature of man as formative of their world vision. At the same time, one ought not to confuse the meaning of human degeneracy as perceived by Puritans and Quakers. The two sects certainly agreed as to the lowly status of the natural children of Adam. It does not follow, however, that they assessed human nature in the same fashion. Far from it. Puritans emphasized, especially in the psychological milieu of their religion, the concept of God as derived essentially from the Old Testament, a God who maintained equity and justice, exacted obedience, and meted punishment—and by right, eternal damnation—to degenerate man. Quakers placed greater emphasis on the God of love reflected in the Sermon on the Mount. To “Friends of the Truth,” man had fallen to an earthly state of decay because he had given way to pride, sensuousness, and greed, failing to “mind the Light of God within” that held prospect for universal salvation if but attended to. Puritans envisioned, conversely, natural man as having fallen through original sin into utter degeneracy, unworthy of redemption, fit only for God’s universal condemnation and wrath.

Public Friends or “Ministers of the Truth” in the Society of Friends took pains to separate themselves from the unmitigating harshness of Puritan theology as they perceived it. Of course, Puritan theology was itself in a process of transition from the age of John Cotton to that of Jonathan Edwards but nonetheless one generation after another of Quaker ministers, well into the eighteenth century, continued to condemn Puritans and Calvinists generally for their bleak theological assessment of human nature. Robert Barclay attacked all Calvinists for their sanction of infant damnation, so contrary to the love of God.¹² To Barclay, this “peculiar” doctrine, unsanctioned in scripture, sprang from “that bitter root [called] self-love.” This was so because “the most
Thomas Chalkley (1695–1741), a Public Friend in the early Quietistic period, stated unequivocally that Christ's sermon on the Mount constituted the central dogma of the Christian faith and from it nothing but love and compassion could radiate. Explicitly condemning the doctrine of predestination, Chalkley noted that "God makes none with a design to destroy them"; on the contrary, Christianity was "a compassionate religion, and full of pity, as well as piety," its love overflowing at its best even to the beasts in the field. John Churchman (1705–1775) experienced loving convincement at a Friend's Meeting in the year 1713 when he was only eight years of age and thereafter he found it impossible to embrace, or even comprehend, the idea of infant damnation. Almost thirty years later, in 1742, Churchman preached a sermon against election and reprobation to a collection of "Presbyterians" assembled ten miles north of Boston. Quakers, far from endorsing the innate depravity of man, verged instead toward "perfectionism," or eventual freedom from sin, for those who waited humbly for God's "leadings" in "the Light."  

As we have seen, one line of Quaker theology led from mysticism to a heightened appreciation of the spiritual primacy of God over the ephemeral, carnal world, to a renunciation of fleshly snares, a cultivation of Christian humility, and eventually to an emergent doctrine of custodianship in the gentle "husbanding" of the earth's perishable goods and fragile life. A second line of theological development for Quakers flowed once again from the centrality of mystical union with God to a deepened appreciation of God's love in sharing communion and comfort with all people who would attend him. Potential universality of salvation was God's gift to man. Since all peoples, regardless of station, stood as equals in the sight of their Creator and were equally loved by him, Friends gradually developed a cosmopolitan appreciation of the basic humanity of all peoples irrespective of the prejudices of race, religion, or custom. They came to embrace all of suffering humanity, finding accelerating compassion for blacks, Indians, and the poor, as well as religious service for Quaker women within the Society of Friends. Friends struggled against the destructive nature of greed and warfare, and sought, even in the early period of their history, an ethic of social justice. As the Quietistic period descended over the Society, sensitive Quakers were beginning to extend their compassion to the
furthest reaches of the oppressed human family and were even begin-
ning to link their spirits with those of the tiniest creatures in nature as if
the boundaries of God's love had no limit.

This ethic of benevolence, with unforeseen ramifications, originated
for most Quakers in the glow of mystical communion with God, for in
that experience the world emerged literally anew. Listen to George Fox:
"Now was I come up in spirit through the flaming sword into the
paradise of God. All things were new, and all the creation gave another
smell unto me than before, beyond what words can utter. I knew nothing
but pureness, and innocency, and righteousness, being renewed up into
the image of God by Christ Jesus. . . ." Love, "the royal law" of God,
suffused all, and by it all pride would be brought low and all nations
transformed to salvation: "For God hath made all [men] of one mould,
and one blood, to dwell upon the face of the earth, and he is no respecter
of persons." Consistent with a commitment to benevolence, Fox called
for religious training and compassionate treatment for African slaves
and Indians, lamented the prevalence of beggary in Commonwealth and
Restoration England, exhorted masters "not to oppress their servants in
their wages," and opposed capital punishment for the mere theft of
"cattle or money or [any] such outward things." Significantly, Fox resisted all temporal strifes, contentions, and
warfares that rendered the universe heavy under oppression. As he
expressed it, children of God who would "mind the Light" would be
brought to live "in the virtue of that life and power that took away the
occasion of all wars." The radicalism of Christ, if faithfully adhered to ,
would lead his followers back into "the covenant of peace, which was
before wars and strifes were." Quakers in the era of Fox and Barclay, of
Penn and the early Pennsylvanians, would attempt to reconcile "the
things of the Spirit" with governmental involvement "in the things of the
world" but they succeeded only partially and not without tension.

By the mid-eighteenth century, as "tender," "weighty" Friends in
their Pennsylvania and Jersey meeting houses were pressing their kin
for a more benevolent face to the world, for a resurgence of purity within
their churches, and for adherence to the peace principles of their Society,
the government of Great Britain was otherwise preoccupied with
involvement in sporadic wars against France. The eventual "opening"
toward Truth that led some political Friends to retire from the
Pennsylvania state house in 1756 set the stage for one of the great eras of
Quaker religious renaissance. The internal dynamics of Quaker theol-
ogy with its stress on quietude, humility, and benevolence, received full
scope for development, largely freed from the gross distractions of
Political power or secular calculation. In the last half of the eighteenth century, "savoury" and "weighty" Friends, especially in the public ministry, saw fit to withdraw from the most minute of the world's snares into the stillness and quietude of their meetings for worship. There, amid the insights of collective mysticism, they sensed the presence of their Creator and saw in his radiance, if he vouchsafed it, the world transformed to a new order and harmony.

The convergence of Quaker beliefs in quietude, humility, and benevolence amid religious renewal in the mid-eighteenth century brought what one Quaker would call a deeper "refreshment" at "the inexhaustible Fountain." Influential Friends such as John Woolman (1721-1772), Anthony Benezet (1713-1784), John Churchman (1705-1775), Joshua Evans (1731-1798), and John Hunt of West Jersey (1740-1824), each explored in similar ways what it meant to be a Christian in a corrupt world. They waited patiently, sometimes in "suffering silence," for the presence of the Lord. They were quietistic but far from quiet. From the "refreshments" and "leadings" of Christ Jesus in their meeting houses, they experienced what Joshua Evans would call "draft[s] in [their] minds" to go forth and confront injustice and human misery. Collectively these five "seasoned" and "solid" Quakers set the tone for Quaker religious renewal in the middle and latter parts of the eighteenth century and beyond. All except the influential reformist writer, Anthony Benezet, were involved in the public ministry. Their preoccupations were overwhelmingly spiritual, but from the workings of deep religious faith, Woolman, Benezet, Churchman, Evans, and Hunt, each formulated a similar and complementary vision of man in harmony with God, in concordance with himself and with all men, in balance with his environment, in sheltering regard to his "plants," "seeds," and "vines," and in ecological equilibrium with all God's "beasts" and "creeping things." Religion, in powerful fashion, had spawned a new eighteenth-century ecology, or at least a distinctive ecological perspective on the world.

Theodor Benfey, *Friends and the World of Nature*, contends that this group of reformist Friends formulated its environmental and ecological vision of the world principally through extensive reading in Christian Neo-Platonic writers—Thomas à Kempis, Jacob Boehme, John Everard, and William Law, among others. There is evidence from the letters or journals of Woolman, Benezet, and Hunt that these Friends did read extensively in the Christian Neo-Platonic sources. On the other hand, John Churchman describes himself as a husbandman, "born in a wilderness place," "never [having] been at school but about three
months.” Joshua Evans tells us that he “discharged” his “little gift” of the ministry “in a stammering unpolished way, having had little knowledge in the learning of schools.” Eighteenth century Friends may have constructed their ecological vision of the world from Neo-Plastonic building blocks or “images” but then they might equally well have done so through simple reading of The Journal of George Fox, or, beyond the realm of words, by centering upon mystical communion with the Spiritual in their meeting houses for worship.19

Whatever their angle of vision, whether intellectual or experiential, eighteenth-century reformist Friends seemed “led” by their theology to a new perception of the earth and of its inhabitants, a perception of divine benevolence to man and nature quite different from that of Puritans and other Calvinistically-inclined Christians of their era.

Likewise, the Quaker emphasis upon humility in the custodianship of land and living things stood in sharp contrast to the “environmental engineering” so fashionable in the era of David Humphreys and Joel Barlow. Politically-enlightened Americans of revolutionary and republican sentiments, sometimes saw themselves as virtual “geologic agents” of a Deistic God in the almost climactically-transforming deforestation of wilderness and strategic “adjustment” or “improvement” of creeks and riverways: human enlightenment, both political and scientific, was meant to transform a new World into a millennial New Earth. Quakers neither embraced the principles of the American Revolution enthusiastically nor did they retain much confidence that men could control their universe without recourse to human presumption or creaturely pride. The excitements of the epoch and the presumption of human conquest over evil hardly touched gentle Quakers in the quietude of their meetings for worship. The most sensitive of Friends “felt” their place in nature through mystical communion with God and so they held their ground against the prevailing ethos of their age.20

The emergence of this distinctive eighteenth century Quaker ecological attitude toward nature encapsulating benevolence to all living things and custodianship to God in the conservation of land reminds us of the diversity of ecological perspective within the Christian community as American society moved toward secularism. This analysis of a changing Quaker theology and of its evolving ecological implications does not in itself invalidate Lynn White’s thesis regarding the anthropocentric nature of Christianity but it does subject it to substantial qualification. The study of Quaker ecology reminds us that some Christian sectarian movements of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were particularly benevolent and Christo-centric in their emphasis: Anthony Bene-
zet stands as representative of all these Christians in stressing especially
the New Testament Sermon on the Mount as formative of a new
morality. From this "new" morality, Quakers fashioned an ecological
perspective that moved some men, though only a minority, to a very
different vantage point in assessing man's responsibilities to nature and
to himself.21

NOTES
Press/Doubleday, 1979), x; Lynn White, Jr., "The Historical Roots of our Ecologic
Crisis," as quoted in Ian G. Barbour, ed. Western Man and Environmental Ethics:
Attitudes Toward Nature and Technology (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley
2. White, Jr., "The Historical Roots of our Ecologic Crisis," 25, 25; Cecelia Tichi, New
World, New Earth: Environmental Reform in American Literature from the Puritans
6, North Eight Street; and New York: Isaac T. Hopper, No. 420, Pearl Street, 1831), VI,
356; Works of George Fox, VII, 79 [LXVI, 1654]; Works of George Fox, VII, 319
[CCLXI, 1668]; Robert Barclay, An Apology for the True Christian Divinity, As the Same
is Held Forth, and Preached by the People, Called, in Scorn, Quakers; ... (n.p., 1678),
370, hereafter cited, Barclay, Apology; Barclay, Apology, 382, 370, 348. For additional
citations of the Genesis motif, see Works of George Fox, VII, 38 [XXXII, 1653]. See also,
Works of George Fox, VIII, 294 [CCCCCVIII: To Friends in Pennsylvania, East and West
Jersey. 4th Month, 1686].
4. Works of George Fox, I, 68 [1643]; Works of George Fox, III, 148; Works of George
Fox, VII, 52 [XLIII, 1653]; Works of George Fox, VII, 93 [LXXXII, 1655]; Works of
George Fox, VIII, 52 [CCCII, 1673]; Theodor Benfey, Friends and the World of Nature
injunctions of restraint in the use of the Creation, see Works of George Fox, VII, 183
[CXCI, 1660]; Works of George Fox, VII, 116 [CXXI]; Works of George Fox, IV, 321
[To All Sorts of People in Christendom]; Norman Penney, ed., from the Mss., The Journal
of George Fox (Cambridge [England]: at the University Press, 1911. In Two Volumes), I,
85.
5. The stated attitude of Puritan and Quaker theology toward the use of the natural world
may have been similar in the early period while the spirit behind the beliefs and the
resulting behavior may have been slightly different. Puritans may have felt themselves
enjoined from excess in the use of the creatures not because it hurt the creatures but
because it distracted from God. Quakers may have displayed moderation in the use of
earthly things because otherwise they would have upset the natural balance and harmed
the creatures that a benevolent God had provided for them. Also they seem to have agreed
with their Puritan cousins that the temporal ought not to take primacy over the spiritual.
6. Numerous early Quakers felt led, indeed compelled, sometimes against their will, to
serve as mouthpieces for the Lord in the annunciation of novel, scrupulous, and sometimes
unpalatable "openings" toward Truth. For instance, John Churchman (1705–1775),
with reluctance and "breathings to the Lord" had journeyed to the state house in
Philadelphia in 1748 as prophetic messenger of the Holy Spirit to oppose indirect
provincial involvement in King George's War. This ongoing, prophetic quality in public
ministry gave to the Society of Friends its evolutionary, even dynamic, quality. John
Woolman best expresses the workings of Propheticism: "Now Christ our Holy Leader graciously continueth to open the Understandings of his People, and as circumstances alter from Age to Age, some who are deeply baptized into a feeling of the State of Things, are led by his Holy Spirit into Exercises in some respect different from those which attended the Faithful in foregoing Ages, and through the Constrainings of pure Love, are engaged to open the Feelings they have to others." An Account of the Gospel Labours, and Christian Experiences of a Faithful Minister of Christ, John Churchman, Late of Nottingham, in Pennsylvania, deceased ... (Philadelphia, Printed. London, Reprinted, James Phillips, 1781), 93, hereafter cited, Churchman, Journal; John Woolman, "On a Sailor's Life" [1772], in Amelia Mott Gummere, ed., Rancocas Edition: The Journal and Essays of John Woolman (London: Macmillan and Co., 1922), 507.


8. Works of George Fox, VII, 243 [CCXXIX, 1663]; Works of George Fox, VII, 240 [CCXXVI, 1662]; Works of George Fox, III, 452; Works of George Fox, VIII, 18 [CCLXXIV, 1669]. For an analysis of tendencies toward a kind of Gnosticism in early Quaker theology, see Works of George Fox, VII 243 [CCXXIX, 1663]. For reference to the inherent goodness and order in the universe, see John Woolman, "Considerations on the True Harmony of Mankind," in Gummere, ed., Journal and Essays of John Woolman, 457; Barclay, Apology, 2; Works of George Fox, VIII, 42 [CCXII, 1672].

9. Quietism denigrated the power of human will, intellect, or emotions to bring creaturely man to a deepened knowledge of true religion or to "open" sinful men to the essential mystical experience of god. Hence, the emphasis upon humble waiting in stillness for an outpouring of divine love that would eventually emanate from a benevolent Creator to his debased children if the latter were "stripped" of creaturely pride. See J. William Frost, "Years of Crisis and Separation: Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 1790–1860," in John M. Moore, ed., Friends in the Delaware Valley: Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 1681–1981 (Haverford, Pennsylvania: Friends Historical Association, 1981), 63–67, 65.


12. Barclay believed that mortal man inherited a "seed of evil" from the fall of his first parents, that is, a natural tendency to sin, but that no imputation of guilt and condemnation accrued to man (or to the infant child) until he or she had deliberately cultivated the "seed of evil" through sinning. Robert Barclay, An Apology for the True
Christian Divinity, As the Same is Held Forth, and Prached by the People, Called, in Scorn, Quakers; . . . (n.p., 1678), 71.


14. The Journal of Thomas Chalkley, A Minister of the Gospel in the Society of Friends (Philadelphia: For Sale at Friends’ Bookstore, n.d.), 451–452, hereafter cited, Chalkley, Journal; Chalkley, Journal, 598, 481; Churchman, Journal, 2, 74. For an interesting but perhaps biased account of the alleged way in which Indians perceived Quakers and “Presbyterians” in Queen Anne’s War, see Chalkley, Journal, 65. Thomas Chalkley, for one, took exception to the Anglican Book of Common Prayer because it stressed forms and rituals rather than Spirit, because it seemed to deny ongoing divine revelation in each epoch, and, especially, because it seemed to perceive man as incapable of avoiding sin in this world “. . . as if God’s power were not stronger to preserve us out of sin, than the devil’s to keep us in [it]. God’s glorious, eternal power is above the power of sin, death and the devil.” The Journal of Thomas Chalkley, A Minister of the Gospel in the Society of Friends (Philadelphia: For Sale at Friends’ Bookstore, n.d.), 511.

15. Nickalls, ed., Journal of George Fox, 27; Works of George Fox, VII, 164 [CLXXII, 1659]; Works of George Fox, IV, 46 [1654]; Nickalls, ed., Journal of George Fox, 604; Nickalls, ed., Journal of George Fox, 35; Works of George Fox, IV, 200 [The Serious People’s Reasoning and Speech, With the World’s Teachers and Professors]; Works of George Fox, I, 84; Works of George Fox, IV 264 [To Both Houses of Parliament]. For references to the equality of all men before God, see Works of George Fox, VII, 144 [CL.III: To Friends, Beyond Sea, that have Blacks and Indian Slaves, 1657]; Barclay, Apology, 192; Nickalls, ed., Journal of George Fox, 598.


17. Reformist Friends were also closely linked by affinity of intent and even by blood. John Hunt was a second cousin to John Woolman. Woolman and Benezet worked together especially in mutual opposition to slavery. Churchman and Benezet attended together the Treaty of Easton with the Indians in 1756. Evans and Hunt were close friends and often ministered together to Indians, to Africans, and to the poor. Evans, himself, had lived for a time near John Woolman in Mount Holly, New Jersey. Despite Quaker aspirations for non-sectarian salvation for all, the world of eighteenth-century Quakerism was, in some respects, really quite clannish and insular.


