The Emergence of Quaker Writing

Dissenting Literature in Seventeenth-Century England

Edited by
THOMAS N. CORNS
and
DAVID LOEWENSTEIN

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Introduction: The Emergence of Quaker Writing

THOMAS N. CORNS and DAVID LOEWENSTEIN

"This is the day of thy Visitation, O Nation," announced the charismatic Quaker prophet Edward Burrough in 1654, "wherein the Lord speaks to thee by the mouth of his Servants in word and writing."[1] Among the radical sects which flourished during the tumultuous years of the English Revolution, the early Quakers were particularly aware of the power of the written word to promote their prophetic visions and unorthodox beliefs. From their beginnings in the Interregnum they assumed an intensely activist role and attempted to define themselves as an emerging radical movement through their confrontational writings.[2] Thus during the first years of their movement, as they spread aggressively throughout England, they produced hundreds of tracts which fiercely denounced temporal authorities, attacked orthodox Puritanism and godly ministers, rejected social hierarchies and set forms of worship, promoted the ideology of the Lamb's War, proclaimed the power of the light within, dramatized their persecution and suffering, and alarmed their contemporaries.[3] As Burrough proclaimed, "all the holy men of God Write, and Declare": and so the early Quakers were themselves guided by the divine inner light "to Act, Speak, or Write" as they fueled controversy and challenged the religious orthodoxies and social practices of their age.[4] Impressive folio collections of writings by their prolific prophets and leaders, prefaced by testimonies confirming their authority and exemplary lives, were another self-conscious means by which Quakers called attention to the fundamental role of written discourse in their radical religious culture: thus one testimony concerning Isaac Penington, the prominent Buckinghamshire Quaker, observed that "his Manuscripts left behind, proclaim him a witness against all false Hirelings, and their unrighteous Practices, and deceitful Doctrines."[5] Meanwhile, from the beginning of the Quaker movement detractors expressed dismay at how quickly disputatious and heretical writings by Quakers were proliferating. The sectarian threat was manifesting itself through their dangerous writings: one alarmed critic accused the blasphemous Quaker leaders of having "taken a sinfull liberty of themselves in their printed bookes," adding that "these printed Libels" and their "Manuscripts . . . flye as thick as Moths up and down the Country."[6]

The Emergence of Quaker Writing: Dissenting Literature in Seventeenth-Century England highlights the interaction of the literary, political, and religious dimensions of Quaker writing as it developed in the Interregnum and Restoration. Recent historians of radical religious culture in the English Revolution have rightly emphasized that in this period of intense religious ferment and conflict, religion and politics were inseparable: religion was politicized and radicalism often took a religious form.[7] In this collection of essays, the contributors consider how the radical spirituality and politics of Quakerism were expressed in written discourse and how the substantial volume of writing by Quaker men and women – in the form of unpublished and published letters, polemical tracts, spiritual autobiographies, journals, essays, testimonies, and accounts of "sufferings"[8] – helped to consolidate, shape, and authorize the movement and its culture which rapidly emerged in the Revolution and Restoration. At the same time, this collection suggests the diversity of Quaker writing and sensibilities in the seventeenth century: it addresses the coarseness and colloquialism of George Fox's fiery millenarian tracts from the 1650s as well as the urbanity and learnedness of William Penn's polemically sophisticated Quaker prose from the 1670s and 1680s. Until recently literary historians had devoted only sporadic attention to the development of Quaker writing and its cultural contexts.[9] *The Emergence of Quaker Writing* is the first collection of essays devoted specifically to Quaker writing as a significant cultural and literary phenomenon in seventeenth-century England.

These studies, we hope, will stimulate further work on the intersection of radical religious culture, politics, and writing in the English Revolution and Restoration. During the past fifteen years we have seen newer historical literary studies thoroughly reexamine the relations between politics and symbolic representation in the court culture of Elizabethan and early Stuart England. Too often, however, newer historical critics have neglected to address adequately the crucial interconnections between religion and politics in early modern England; and only recently have literary scholars begun to consider the symbolic and political meanings of radical religious literature of the revolutionary decades of the seventeenth century.[10] The essays in this collection address an important but still neglected dimension of radical separatist literary culture which originated during the 1650s and continued into the Restoration era and beyond. As the largest sect of the English Revolution – and one that produced such an abundant number of writings – the Quakers enable literary scholars to examine the ways radical religious literature actively contributed to the culture of both the Interregnum and Restoration whose social, religious, and political orthodoxies it vigorously questioned. Indeed, more work

needs to be done not only on the development and variety of radical religious literary culture in the Revolution, but also on its contributions to nonconformist Restoration culture.[11] By highlighting the writings of this major sect that flourished during the Interregnum and that persevered, despite persecution, during the reign of Charles II, our collection invites scholars to reconsider continuities, and not only differences, between the dissenting literary culture of the Revolution and its rich legacy in the Restoration.[12]

The opening essay by Kate Peters, "Patterns of Quaker Authorship, 1652–1656," focusses on issues of practical organization in the dissemination of Quaker doctrine in the earliest period of the movement. It discloses a level of organizational control and initiative that in part explains the phenomenal impact of the early Quaker missionaries and their writing. David Loewenstein, too, engages the earliest phase of the movement; his concerns, however, are not with Fox's revolutionary pragmatism but with the vivid zeal of his early apocalyptic vision and its verbal expression. Enthusiasm remains the theme in Nigel Smith's "Hidden Things Brought to Light: Enthusiasm and Quaker Discourse," though his primary concern is not with Fox and his followers, but with the rival tradition of James Nayler, and more particularly with the Naylerite Robert Rich, who had accompanied him to the pillory, licking the wounds of the branding iron and proclaiming him the King of the Jews.

The early Quaker movement, rightly, has achieved recent recognition as profoundly emancipating and empowering of its women activists.[13] Three essays are among the first to illuminate the rich diversity of Quaker women's writings. Judith Kegan Gardiner considers Margaret Fell's abiding interest in the conversion of the Jews, pondering it as a fascinating intersection of gender with race and class in the early modern period. Norman T. Burns writes on Mary Springett Penington's account of her own conversion experience, demonstrating its eloquent testimony to the impact of Quakerism on the Seeker consciousness of the mid-century. Elaine Hobby's "Handmaids of the Lord and Mothers in Israel: Early Vindications of Quaker Women's Prophecy" celebrates the power and heroism of Margaret Fell and many others, exploring their reading and preaching strategies, defining their diversity, and asserting the importance of an interpretative approach that retains an appropriate sense of the political specificity of their works.

Other essays primarily address the Quaker movement in the Restoration period. Thomas Corns's account of Fox's *Journal* has much to say about its retrospective quality and the way in which recollection of the 1650s functions in that later period. N.H. Keeble considers ways in which the new idiom of William Penn, rather different from that of Fox or

Nayler, articulates the voice of Quakerism in a changed world. John R. Knott reviews the Quaker record of suffering in the period before the Toleration Act of 1689, and considers the role of Joseph Besse in transforming early accounts of those persecutions into a vivid narrative which secured a continued sense of the heroism of the Quaker movement but nevertheless reassured eighteenth-century Quakers that the worst was over and that their movement had endured. Ann Hughes provides a historian's afterword on a collection of readings primarily, though not exclusively, by literary scholars.

NOTES

1. Edward Burrough, *A Warning from the Lord to the Inhabitants of Underbarrow* (1654), in *The Memorable Works of a Son of Thunder and Consolation: Namely, That True Prophet, and Faithful Servant of God* (London, 1672), 12.
2. For a full account of the role of writing in their early definition as a movement, see Kate Peters, "Patterns of Quaker Authorship, 1652–1656," in this collection of essays.
3. Over 500 pamphlet titles appeared in the years 1653–57 and another 500 in 1658–60: see David Runyon, "Types of Quaker Writings by Year – 1650–1699," in *Early Quaker Writings*, ed. Hugh Barbour and A.O. Roberts (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), 568–9; Barry Reay, *The Quakers and the English Revolution* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), 11. Kate Peters, in "Patterns of Quaker Authorship," notes that over a hundred Quaker authors contributed to the publication of about 300 tracts between 1652 and 1656.
4. *A Warning from the Lord*, in *Works*, 16, 17.
5. "Ambrose Rigge's Testimony of the Life and Death of Isaac Penington," prefacing *The Works of the Long-Mournful and Sorely-Distressed Isaac Penington* (London, 1681).
6. [Francis Higginson], *A Brief Relation of the Irreligion of the Northern Quakers* (London, 1653), sigs. av–a2r; see also pp.22–3. Cf. Ephraim Pagitt, *Heresiography, Or a Description of the Heretickes and Sectaries Sprang up in these latter times* (London, 1654), 136–43. For the response of Higginson and other detractors, see also Peters, "Patterns of Quaker Authorship."
7. B. Reay, "Radical Religion in the English Revolution: an Introduction," in *Radical Religion in The English Revolution*, ed. Reay and J. McGregor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 3, 15–16; Christopher Hill, Barry Reay, and William Lamont, *The World of the Muggletonians* (London: Temple Smith, 1983), 8; Richard Bauman, *Let Your Words Be Few: Symbolism of Speaking and Silence among Seventeenth-Century Quakers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 72
8. The studies which follow do not pretend to touch on all the literary forms which early Quakers deliberately exploited and experimented with: for a recent discussion of the Quaker long poem, see Nigel Smith, "Exporting Enthusiasm: John Perrot and the Quaker Epic," in *Literature and the English Civil War*, ed. Thomas Healy and Jonathan Sawday (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 248–64.
9. See, e.g., Luella M. Wright, *The Literary Life of the Early Friends, 1650–1725* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932); Jackson I. Cope, "Seventeenth-Century Quaker Style," *PMLA* 71 (1956): 725–54; Nigel Smith, *Perfection Proclaimed: Language and Literature in English Radical Religion, 1640–1660* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), passim; Hugh Ormsby-Lennon, "From Shibboleth to Apocalypse: Quaker Speechways during the Puritan Revolution," in *Language, Self, and Society: A Social History of Language*, ed. Peter Burke and Roy Porter (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991); Margaret J.M. Ezell, *Writing Women's Literary History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), chap. 5 (on writings by

early Quaker women); John R. Knott, *Discourses of Martyrdom in English Literature, 1563–1694* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), chap. 7.

10. See, among other studies, Smith, *Perfection Proclaimed*; Thomas N. Corns, *Uncloistered Virtue: English Political Literature, 1640–1660* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), esp. chaps. 2, 3, 5, 8; Christopher Hill, *A Nation of Change and Novelty: Radical Politics, Religion, and Literature in Seventeenth-Century England* (London: Routledge, 1990), passim; Elaine Hobby, *Virtue of Necessity: English Women's Writing, 1649-88* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1989), chap. 2; *Pamphlet Wars: Prose in the English Revolution*, ed. James Holstun (London: Frank Cass, 1992); David Loewenstein, "The Kingdom Within: Radical Religious Culture and the Politics of *Paradise Regained*," *Literature and History*, third series, 3, 2 (1994): 63–89.
11. On nonconformist literature in the Restoration, see N.H. Keeble, *The Literary Culture of Nonconformity in Later Seventeenth-Century England* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1987); Corns, *Uncloistered Virtue*, chap. 9.
12. For an account of the ongoing Quaker engagement with the temporal world during the Restoration, see Richard L. Greaves, "Shattered Expectations? George Fox, the Quakers, and the Restoration State, 1660–1685," *Albion* 24, 2 (1992): 237–59.
13. See e.g. Phyllis Mack, *Visionary Women: Ecstatic Prophecy in Seventeenth-Century England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), and Bonnelyn Young Kunze, *Margaret Fell and the Rise of Quakerism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994).

Patterns of Quaker Authorship, 1652–1656[1]

KATE PETERS

The relationship between Quakers and the written word forms a crucial dynamic for historians of the Quaker movement. That the early Quakers produced such a vast array of written records has in itself afforded them an unrivalled status among the radical religious groups of the 1650s; and their subsequent longevity as the Society of Friends has in turn conferred an even greater authority on the Quakers' early records as a prelude in the developing denominational tradition. This is notably the case in the study of one category of Quaker records: their published writings. The tracts published by Quakers in the 1650s have been presented as "early Quaker writings" which in turn are seen as part of the development of a peculiar "Quaker style."[2] Furthermore, because early published Quaker tracts are easily accessible and identifiable, other areas of scholarship have also attended to the phenomenon of "Quaker" writings. Quaker tracts have recently been used as case studies for broader discussions of radical religious writing; or of the history of women's writing.[3] Richard Bauman made use of Quaker tracts to demonstrate that the study of the ethnography of speaking need not be limited to present-day societies, but could be applied to a study of the importance of speaking and silence among the early Quakers.[4]

Among historians of the Quakers, the abundance of published Quaker writings, and indeed of written records, has not always rested easily with their own analyses of the early Quaker movement. Richard Vann argued that the study of Quaker history is in itself paradoxical because Quaker beliefs "are almost uniquely hostile to history"; and yet the ahistorical Quaker emphasis on immediate personal experience caused the abundance of written spiritual autobiography on which much early Quaker history is based.[5] Hugh Barbour, in his study of early Quaker writings, felt obliged to comment that the Quaker movement "has always been more powerful than its books"; and indeed that before 1700 Quaker writing represented no "canon" but was a jumble of rather anarchic individual outpourings. "All early Quaker writing," Barbour claims rather rashly, "reflected personal involvement in a cosmic struggle."[6]

The identification of Quaker writings with an individual's spiritual experience is a common assumption which pervades most discussion of the early Quaker tracts. Richard Vann wrongly equated early Quaker

writing with spiritual autobiography. Phyllis Mack's more subtle account of Quaker women similarly concluded their writings were primarily spiritual outpourings: the only way, Mack suggests, that Quaker women were able to enter into the public sphere of publishing was through an intense spiritual experience which allowed them to transcend boundaries of gender, and to write and prophesy uninhibited.[7]

Yet although it is undoubtedly true that individual religious experiences informed much early Quaker writing, as it informed all aspects of Quaker belief and practice, it is unsatisfactory to suggest that Quakers wrote purely in order to express an intense personal religious experience. One of the problems is that of the categorization of Quaker writing. "Early Quaker writing" is often assumed to cover the first two generations of Quakers, from the 1650s to the end of the seventeenth century. This inevitably includes the autobiographies and testimonies written in the later seventeenth century with the intention of documenting and celebrating the lives of the first Quaker pioneers. The hazards of such retrospective accounts are well rehearsed by political historians of the English Revolution: nevertheless, the proliferation of testimonial writing, with its sometimes explicit intention of modifying early Quaker history, has certainly emphasized the role of religious testimony in Quaker writing.[8] This is even more true when we add the fact that most of the so-called political writings of the early Quaker leaders of the 1650s are often studied in the form of their collected works, often highly selected and edited, and with testimonial accounts written by their colleagues. Thus chronological categorization of Quaker writing tends to conflate periods of Quaker history which more usually are seen as distinct by political or religious historians of the Quaker movement.

A different attempt at the categorization of Quaker writing is provided in the work of Hugh Barbour and David Runyon in the appendix to Barbour and Roberts' *Early Quaker Writings*. In their classification of Quaker writings for each year between 1650 (*sic*) and 1699, Barbour and Runyon identified nineteen different "types" of Quaker writings, ranging from proclamations or prophecy, to autobiographical tracts, religious disputes and accounts of sufferings. Although this may have been a useful exercise, the sheer number of categories is sometimes unnecessarily baffling.[9] More serious than this, however, is the fact that in their categorization, Runyon and Barbour apparently attribute only one category to each work, assuming that each Quaker work could only fulfil one specific religious or literary purpose. Yet what is clear from a study of the first years of Quaker tracts is that many of them served a whole range of purposes, eliding accounts of sufferings with accounts of intense spiritual experience and crushing political denunciation of the English

governments and legal system.[10] Rather than categorizing Quaker writing on the basis of a reading of the content of any one particular tract, this paper will argue that a better understanding of the nature of the Quaker writings of the 1650s will be gained if we look at who were the authors, and what were the patterns of their publications.

Between the years 1652 and 1656, a little over one hundred Quaker authors contributed to the publication of about 300 tracts.[11] More than three-quarters of these authors wrote fewer than three works: the bulk of Quaker publishing was undertaken by a handful of men (and two women).[12] Although the proliferation of Quaker publications in the mid-seventeenth century is certainly remarkable, it should be remembered that there were by 1660 an estimated 40,000 Quakers nation-wide; and that they continued to grow in number until the 1680s.[13] Individual religious experience did not move all of them to leave a written record of it. Writing was not an inherent part of being a Quaker.

This paper will argue that any study of the "emergence of Quaker writing" should take into account the historical circumstances which gave rise to the phenomenon of Quaker publishing. The body of Quaker tracts, which are so easily identified as a category for discussion by scholars, are often taken to represent generically the significance and development of Quaker ideas. Little attention is paid to the role which Quaker publications played within the wider movement, and indeed their part in publicizing the incipient movement to the outside world. Patterns of Quaker authorship show that Quaker publications were produced by an effective leadership, intent on consolidating a potentially disparate movement and on establishing a sense of cohesion and unity among its members. That scholars tend to view "Quaker writings" as a straightforward reflection of Quaker ideas is a product of the Quaker movement's own impulse to establish itself as a recognizable phenomenon. Quaker tracts in the 1650s asserted their "Quaker" identity over the identity of the author, proclaiming that they were written "by one in scorn called a Quaker," whose author was known merely "to the world" by his or her proper name. In the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the "Quaker" status of these early tracts was compounded by the decision of an increasingly hierarchical and formalized Quaker church to collect and keep copies of all their publications, and to reissue collected editions of the works by the most prolific of the Quaker authors.[14] This collective status is in contrast to the publications of other religious groups of the 1650s. Baptist publications are more frequently discussed as the work of individual authors.[15] In the recent vituperative debate on the Ranters, where so much rested on the authors of a few published tracts, one point which remained unexplored was the status of those publications within the wider context

of the Ranter "milieu."[16] Because of the controversial nature of radical religious writing and printing in the mid-seventeenth century, scholarship focusses very largely on the content and language of the publications. Yet one of most important features which has emerged from recent exchanges between historians, literary scholars and cultural theorists is that establishing the context of historical texts is fundamental to their significance.[17] The unique and fulsome records of their own movement left by the Quakers, in the form of vast collections of manuscript letters, provide ample opportunity to trace the circumstances behind the production of early Quaker publications.[18] This paper will argue that the authors of Quaker tracts were exclusively the "ministers" of the early Quaker movement: men and women with the power to speak, preach, and carry their ideas across the country. Their writing was an integral part of their ministry: as the movement grew in scope and size after 1652, so writing and printing developed as a specific tool of an increasingly mobile and vocal Quaker leadership.

The notion of a "Quaker ministry" runs contrary to many basic conceptions surrounding the early Quaker movement. The Quakers were and are famous for their denunciation of the trained ministers of the Church of England, deriding them as "hireling priests" who made a "trade in other men's words" and relied on their worldly learning to command religious authority. Religious sociologists identify as a constant characteristic of Quakerism that formal ministry has no part to play in its worship.[19] Despite this, it is clear that there was within the early Quaker movement a body of men and women acting as an effective leadership, and who referred to themselves as the "Ministry."[20] Known within the denominational tradition as the First Publishers of Truth, these "ministers" were itinerant preachers, numbering between seventy and 240, who traveled the country and were initially responsible for the spread of Quaker ideas. It is precisely these "ministers" who are best known within the early history of the Quaker movement: figures like George Fox, James Nayler, Edward Burrough and William Dewsbery. In addition to their more famous proselytising, the Quaker ministers also carried out a number of tasks connected with the discipline and organization of the early movement, taking responsibility for the formal "casting out" of the more out-spoken Quaker preachers, disciplining wayward "lay" Quakers, and raising money to support the growing movement. It was also these men and women who oversaw the writing and publication of the vast majority of early Quaker publications. Early Quaker writing was essentially carried out by the early leadership.

In 1974 the ethnographer Richard Bauman identified the "Quaker minister" as enjoying a "particular communicative role," and suggested

that the act of speaking itself defined the early Quaker ministry.[21] Since no formal structures existed for electing ministers, Bauman argued, it was the process of public speech at a meeting which signaled that the speaker was divinely inspired. Although as an ethnographer of speaking Bauman was concerned with the spoken authority of Quaker ministers, his argument can be extended to manuscript papers and printed tracts. Indeed the Quaker leaders themselves elided the differences, so often highlighted by historians, between their spoken, written or printed declarations: "The Lord speaks to thee by the mouth of his Servants in word and writing," Edward Burrough had warned the nation in a tract published in 1654, and continued, "I write not as from man, ... but as from the eternal and spiritual light...":

> for who Speaks, Writes, or Declares, from the light of God ... Speaks, Writes, and Declares not as from man, ... but as from God, whose light is spiritual, ... and from this light did the Prophets and Ministers of God, ... Speak, Write, and Declare, ... and from this light ... did all the holy men of God Write, and Declare.[22]

In addition to the fact that Quaker ministers claimed authority on the grounds of divine inspiration, it is interesting that they specifically linked their leadership with their ability to communicate. In 1662, Edward Burrough explicitly linked the Quaker ministry to written and spoken declaration, in a paper addressed to the London meeting of "men Friends."[23] In it, Burrough suggested that the local meeting should maintain local worship and discipline, and oversee provision for the poorer members. These social tasks were clearly distinguished from the role of the ministry, which, Burrough argued, consisted in "preaching the Gospell, in answering Books and Manuscripts put forth against us, and in Disputes and Conventions with such as opposed the truth."[24] Thus Bauman's "communicative" act was indeed the defining feature of the early Quaker ministry, but it was broader and much more purposeful than simply speaking up at Quaker meetings. Early Quaker publications were a deliberate and highly self-conscious tool of an established body of leaders. In order to understand the significance of early Quaker writing, then, it is essential to understand how it fitted in with the leadership role of the early Quaker authors.

An interesting forerunner of early published Quaker writing exists in the extant letters passed between Quaker leaders during the formative months of the Quaker movement from June 1652. The movement's genesis involved the linking up of former separated churches, particularly Seeker groups, across the north of England. George Fox traveled through

Yorkshire and Lancashire over the summer of 1652, and as he traveled he recruited to the Quaker movement preachers from these former "Seeker" groups.[25] From the summer of 1652, these preachers were traveling extensively within the north of England. It is no coincidence that it is from this date that collections of Quaker letters begin. Quaker writing emerged out of an increasingly itinerant and absent leadership. The former gathered communities from which these preachers were drawn must have felt the absence of their spiritual leaders. Bauman's argument that ministerial authority derived from their speaking at meetings would imply that their absence from meetings was accompanied by a corresponding loss of authority. The circulation by itinerant ministers of letters and papers back to their meetings was therefore a crucial statement of authority in their absence. "Thomas Goodale [Goodaire], I charge thee by the lord that thou minde thy growth in him, and be faithful to what is comitted to thee...," wrote Richard Farnworth, not to his own meeting at Balby, south Yorkshire, but to that of James Nayler in Wakefield, some thirty miles to the north. In the same letter he exhorted "James" (Nayler) to "watch over the weake ones, and improve thie talent to thie maisters use in faithfullnes...," and "frends" in general to "meete often togather, and stir up that wich is puer in one another."[26] Exhortations to keep regular meetings, and to remind particular members of their duty to oversee the others, are common. In 1653 the Yorkshire Quaker William Dewsbery had written a manuscript list of "rules," recommending that newly established meetings appoint local figures to oversee regular worship and discipline. This suggests very strongly that the itinerant preachers were intent on setting up a cohesive and regular form of worship wherever they traveled.[27] As Richard Farnworth traveled further afield in Yorkshire, Westmorland, and Lancashire over the summer and autumn of 1652, his letters reflect an increasing personal concern to maintain links with groups he had visited. His letters were sent to Margaret Fell at Swarthmoor Hall, Lancashire, with instructions to circulate copies of them "to frends abrord ... to be red at theire meetings: &c."[28] Such letters, moreover, indicate the scope of the authority of the Quaker minister. In November 1652, Farnworth visited the home of Colonel Gervase Benson, near Sedburgh, in the far north-west of Yorkshire.[29] Early in the following month, back on his home ground in Balby, Richard Farnworth received one of the first consignments of printed books from London, and sent copies to Margaret Fell with instructions to send them "Amonge them ffrends there"; especially Underbarrow, Grayrigge, and one to a Major Bousfield "that Collo: Benson may see it."[30] Farnworth also sent a covering letter, to be copied out by Fell's scribes, and sent to all recipients of the books. Farnworth's covering letter included exhortations to local groups to meet