The Journal of RELIGIOUS HISTORY

VOLUME 12 NUMBER 2 DECEMBER 1982

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STEPHEN A. KENT

The 'Papist' Charges Against the Interregnum Quakers*

Begetting the Civil War and witnessing the execution of the King, the 1640s was a period of heightened political emotionalism in England. The country was embroiled in events whose causes were beyond the comprehension of most of its citizens, and, under these circumstances, political scapegoating provided simple answers to not-so-simple questions. A frequent scapegoat was Roman Catholicism, since for decades Protestants had been reared in a religious climate of anti-Catholic hostility and fear. Whatever the particular crisis, whether the outbreak of the Civil War or the beheading of Charles, its root was found by various Protestant writers to be 'Popery'.[1]

Events of the 1650s further provided Protestants, especially Puritans, with reasons to make Roman Catholicism a scapegoat. In an atmosphere of political confusion and Cromwellian 'toleration', numerous sectarian movements burst onto the scene with such impact that the very foundation of the country's religious and social life seemed threatened. The Interregnum Protestants saw these sectarians as subversives who advanced the Catholic intention of destroying Protestant England.[2] Of the emerging sectarian groups, none was more visible nor more hostile to other Puritans than Quakerism, and the 'Papist' charges against it appeared soon after the group began vigorously to recruit new members. Many prominent anti-Quaker pamphleteers saw the new sect within the context of the 'Popish' fear of the age, and they were able to interpret the group's beliefs, practices, and social consequences within this pervasive paranoia.

Historians, especially Quaker historians, often have mentioned the pamphleteers' Papist charges against the group,[3] but thus far the charges

1. See Robin Clifton's two articles, 'The Popular Fear of Catholics during the English revolution', *Past and Present,* Vol. 52, 1971, pp. 23-55; and 'Fear of Popery', in *The Origins of the English Civil War,* ed. by Conrad Russell, New York 1973, pp. 144-67 (text), 271-4 (notes). See also Brian Manning, *The English People and the English Revolution 1640-1649,* London 1976, ch. 2; and Keith Lindley, 'The Part Played by the Catholics', in *Politics, Religion and the English Civil War,* ed. by Brian Manning, London 1973, pp. 127-76.
2. On both the conditions of Catholics and the fear of 'Popery' during the Interregnum, see John Miller, *Popery and Politics in England 1660-1688,* Cambridge 1973, pp. 1-86.
3. Historians who mention the Papist charges include Clifton, 'Popular Fear', pp. 33-4; Miller, *Popery and Politics,* p. 86; William Lamont, *Marginal Prynne 1600-1669,* Toronto 1963, p. 144. Among the historians of Quakerism who mention them are Hugh Barbour, *The Quakers in Puritan England,* New Haven 1964, pp. 138-9; Geoffrey F. Nuttall, *The Holy Spirit in Puritan*

* I sincerely thank Dr James Daly of the History Department, McMaster University, whose careful assistance and constant encouragement were of inestimable value to me, and Rachael L. E. Kohn of McMaster's Religious Studies Department, for her editorial suggestions.

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have not been collected or systematically studied. This article, therefore, will present thematically the charges of Popery against Quakerism as they appeared in over twenty-five Interregnum tracts and related sources, dating from 1653 to 1660. The evidence presented here will not only reveal the extent to which Quakers were incorrectly seen as Catholic subversives by many of their contemporaries, but also will expose the ways in which Quakers' opponents played upon Protestant England's perennial fear of Catholicism in their attempts to denigrate the sect.

One way to view the Interregnum charges of 'Popery' against the Quakers is to see the attacks as part of a sequence of charges that dates back at least to the Civil War. This sequence is illustrated by the virulent anti-Catholic barrages of the famous lawyer, M. P., and Puritan controversialist, William Prynne.[4] When Prynne, in 1643, wrote about the cause of the Civil War, he blamed the conflagration on the King's attempt to maintain Roman Catholicism.[5] By the latter part of the Civil War, however, Prynne had come to see the subversive Catholic threat within the very heart of the restless Parliamentary army itself.[6] By the middle of the Interregnum, the seditious Catholic threat now existed for Prynne in the activities of the Quakers. In his words, Quakers were 'but the Spawn of Romish Frogs, Jesuites, and Franciscan Fryers, sent from Rome to seduce the intoxicated Giddy-headed English Nation'. The Jesuits and Franciscans, he claimed, were using the Quakers and the other Sectarians to destroy the nation by dividing and fragmenting it. 'The Romish Emissaries and Vermin', who were the Quakers' 'chief Speakers and Rulers', had set out 'to reduce and divide the people, by setting up New Sects and Separate Congregations in all places, and broaching new Notions and opinions of all sorts, or old Heresies or Blasphemies . . .'.[7]

Prynne, in later tracts, pressed forward with his Papist charges against the Quakers, and these charges received support by other prominent Puritans who both cited him and provided additional 'evidence'. Many Puritans would also have agreed with Prynne's further charges in 1655. 'There are multitudes of Romish emissaries and Vermin now residing and wandering up and down freely among us', he warned the nation. These emissaries entered the country under a number of disguises — 'Souldiers, Merchants, Mechanicks, Physicians, Chyrurgions, Travellers, Exiles for Religion, and pretended Converts to the Protestant Religion' — but their single purpose

Faith and Experience, Oxford 1946, pp. 31 n., 46, 163-4; William Charles Braithwaite, *The Beginnings of Quakerism*, 2nd ed., Cambridge 1955, pp. 172-3; M. G. F. Bitterman, 'Early Quaker Literature of Defence', *Church History*, June 1973, pp. 207-9. Invaluable for any research into anti-Quaker literature is Joseph Smith, *Bibliotheca Anti-Quakeriana*, London 1873.

4. See Lamont, *Marginal Prynne*, pp. 119-48. For a concise summary of Prynne's life, see *Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. L. Stephen and S. Lee, 1885-1900, corrected rpt., London 1909-9, s.v. Henceforth, this work will be abbreviated to *DNB*.

5. *The Popish Royall Favourite*, London 1643, preface, quoted in Lamont, *Marginal Prynne*, p. 108.

6. *Demand of His Liberty to the General*, 1648, brs., cited in Miller, *Popery and Politics*, p. 85.

7. *Quakers Unmasked, and clearly detected to be but the Spawn of Romish Frogs, Jesuites, and Franciscan Fryers . . .*, 2nd edn., (enlarged), London 1655, title page, p. 9.

was 'to spread their doctrines, that will divide the country so that it will destroy itself out of mutual discord'. Toward this destructive end, 'Papists' adopted the most devious means, and even posed as 'the most zealous Protestants' by passing harsh laws against Catholics. They took such hard stands against their own members in order that they could manoeuvre themselves into high places, from which they might 'propigate the Popish Religion upon all occasions . . .'.[8]

What we see here in Prynne's claims is a Popish conspiracy theory on a grand scale, yet it was a theory whose components had some basis in still-recent history. In Elizabethan England, Jesuits and other Catholic groups undertook ambitious missionary campaigns, and initially experienced some success in their conversion efforts. All of these early missionaries had the same goal in mind: to keep the Catholic religion alive until the government returned to Catholic hands. Even after the 1620s, when the missionaries accepted their plight as a permanent minority sect, Protestants still feared them as potential and potent subversives.[9] Indeed, as Prynne claimed, Jesuits and priests were in the country during the Interregnum, but because no Protestants knew how many there really were, imaginations ran wild. We now know, however, that nearly 400 missionary priests were in the country in 1660, among them Jesuits, Benedictines, and Franciscans.[10]

Many Interregnum Protestants staunchly believed that Catholics had as a major goal the destruction of the English state. Protestants worried that Papists would attempt to achieve this goal by any means at their disposal, including regicide, a Spanish invasion, infiltration of the court, or disruption and division of the society.[11] Nothing during the Interregnum was as divisive, Prynne and others believed, as the activities of the Sectarians, and no group was as disruptive as the Quakers. Therefore, Prynne and others reasoned, the Quakers were Papists, or at the very least were infiltrated by the Catholic missionaries. Richard Baxter, the well known Kidderminster preacher, agreed. The country, he observed, was filled with 'young raw Professors' — young men publically professing their faith — who were coming 'to despise their Teachers' (i.e., their pastors). The 'Papists seeing the temper of our foresaid unsettled Professors do creep in among them, and use their utmost skill to unsettle them more'. They had infiltrated the leadership

8. Prynne, *Quakers Unmasked,* pp. 4, 25-6. Several years later, Richard Baxter reiterated the same sentiments to Richard Cromwell, warning him against 'the subtilty of Masked Paptists or Infidels that would creep into places of Council, Command, or Justice, or any public office . . .'. One group of 'Masked Papists' were '[t]he secret guides of the Quakers'. (*A key for Catholicks,* London 1659, 'Epistle', n. pag.) See also John Tombes, *True Old Light Exalted Above Pretended New Light,* London 1660, 'Epistle Dedicatory' n. pag.; Peter Jarridge, *The Jesuites Displayed, or, Their Works of Darkness brought to Light,* London 1658, p. 38.
9. For a discussion of the efforts of the early missionary Catholics, see Bernard Basset, S. J., *The English Jesuits from Campion to Martindale,* New York 1967, pp. 28, 36-40.
10. John Bossy, *The English Catholic Community 1570-1850,* New York 1976, p. 422; see also Basset, *The English Jesuits,* pp. 190-224. On the Interregnum Jesuit missions, see Basset's general discussion, pp. 190-224. The classic account of the sufferings of individual Jesuit missionaries is H. Foley (ed.), *Records of the English Province of the Society of Jesus,* 7 vols, London 1875-1883. On the Franciscan missions to England, see Rev. Father Thaddeus, O.F.M., *The Franciscans in England 1600-1850,* London 1898, pp. 56-7, 62-73, 75-8.
11. See Clifton, 'Fear of Popery', esp. pp. 149-57.

of the Separatists, Anabaptists, and the Quakers, and had done so with the greatest cunning. They would, for instance, 'cry out against the Pope, and call all that differ from them Antichristian, purposefully to divert suspicions and blinde men's eyes'. They were so successful in their wiles 'that the silly people never know that it is Papists that are their Leaders'. Their goal was clear: 'the Destruction of our Churches'.[12]

To support their claim that Quakers were Papists, Prynne, Baxter and others cited evidence of many different kinds. Several authors, including the Bristol Presbyterian vicar, Ralph Farmer, imputed Popish guilt to Quakers because the group's leaders and travelling ministers originated from 'those Northern Counties' — particularly Lancashire and Westmorland — that were 'famouse for Papists and Witches'.[13] From their Northern starting-points, the Quaker missionaries travelled 'into other quarters of the Kingdom, two by two, at first; no doubt by the direction of their Popish Provincal, just as the Franciscan Friars are sent out by their Provincal'.[14]

While their northern origins and travelling partnerships implied their Popish roots, several sworn testimonies by informed persons proved it. In 1655 Prynne published the 22 January 1654-5 testimony of a Bristol ironmonger, George Cowlishaw, who, in September 1654, had learned from a Franciscan Irishman that members of his order were now 'chief speakers amongst the Quakers in London . . .'. The Franciscan, whose name was Coppinger, had spoken in London Quaker meetings about thirty times, and had been well received. Furthermore, he even was able to predict that some Quakers would come to Bristol in three weeks or a month, an event that happened as predicted, Cowlishaw claimed. The fact that a Franciscan was able to predict when Quakers first would arrive in the city was proof that 'generals and superiors' of the 'Romish Emmissaries' were in London and were directing their missionary work.[15] Prynne defended the veracity of the

12. Baxter, *Quakers Catechism*, London 1656, pp. C^{v}-C2^{r}. Baxter made similar arguments several years later in his contribution, 'To the Reader', in Toombes, *True Old Light Exalted*. See also Jarridge, *The Jesuites Displayed*, p. 25. On Baxter, see *DNB*, s.v. On Baxter and the Quakers, see Barbour, *The Quakers in Puritan England*, pp. 135-6; Robert Barclay of Reigate, *The Inter Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth*, 3rd edn. 1876, London 1879, pp. 332-3; Geoffrey Nuttall, *Richard Baxter*, London 1965, pp. 70-1; William Lamont, *Richard Baxter and the Millennium*, London 1979, pp. 48-9, 53, 127, 175-6, 180, 184, 192. Baxter, in his autobiography, said that 'The pamphlets [i.e., *The Quakers' Catechism*] being but one or two days' work, were no great interruption to my better labours, and as they were of small worth, so also of small cost'. (*The Autobiography of Richard Baxter*, abr. J. M. Lloyd Thomas, ed. N. H. Keebie, London 1974, p. 97). See also Prynne, *Quakers Unmasked*, pp. 4, 20-1; Ralph Farmer, *The Great Mysteries of Godliness and Ungodlinesse*, London 1655, p. 78; and the slanderous charges, especially against George Fox in Anon., *The Quaking Mountebanck or the Jesuite turn'd Quaker*, London, 1655, pp. 6-7.

13. Prynne, *A New Discovery of Some Romish Emissaries, Quakers*, London 1656, p. 5 (see p. 9); Farmer, *The Great Mysteries of Godliness and Ungodlinesse*, p. 77; see Prynne, *Quakers Unmasked*, pp. 36-7.

14. Prynne, *A New Discovery*, p. 5. On the origins of Quakerism in the midlands and the North of England, see Barbour, *The Quakers in Puritan England*, pp. 35-52, esp. 41-2. On the practice of early Quaker missionaries travelling in pairs, see Braithwaite, *The Beginnings of Quakerism* p. 89; Hugh Barbour and Arthur O. Roberts, *Early Quaker Writings 1650-1700*, Grand Rapids, Michigan 1973, p. 35; and Norman Penney (ed.), *The First Publishers of Truth*, London 1907.

15. *Quakers Unmasked*, pp. 3-5.

sworn testimony he had cited even after the travelling Quaker minister, John Audland, had attempted to show that the information in it was false. In responding to Auckland, the clever Prynne was able to turn each of the Quaker's denials against him, and as a result Prynne maintained the upper hand in the dispute.[16] The Cowlishaw story was so convincing that the Cambridge librarian and vicar of Caldecate, Thomas Smith, referred to it (and Prynne's book by name) in a 1659 anti-Quaker tract. Baxter also referred to Prynne's citation of it, but then thought it important enough to quote the testimony in full. Joshuah Miller, the Rector of St Andrew's in Glamorganshire, Wales, reproduced it as well.[17]

In a second work, published in 1656, Prynne related another account that linked the Quakers with the Franciscans. A gentleman named Charles Chester recently had arrived in Bristol from 'Marcelles' (Marseille), France, and related a story to some 'persons of credit' in the city about his encounter with two Franciscan Capuchin Friars. (These 'persons of credit' in turn had told Prynne.) The friars had informed Chester that recently they had been in England. They said that they had gone 'under the name of North Country men (as the Ringleaders of the Quakers all do) but in truth they were Irish-men born', and 'intended to return shortly to England again'. While in Bristol the friars had been 'very well acquainted' with some of 'the principal Male and Female Quakers' of the city. Chester, apparently after his return to England, had actually heard the monks speak to the assembled Quakers at one of the latter's Bristol meetings.[18]

Prynne 'showed' that Quakers were Papists by referring to stories and sworn oaths; Thomas Smith, taking a complementary approach, 'proved' that Quakers were Papists on the basis of their refusal to swear oaths to the contrary. Arguing syllogistically in a public debate with George Whitehead and George Fox (two prominent Quakers), Smith reasoned: 'He who refuseth to take the oath of abjuration is a Papist. He who wrote this book [Fox's *Ismael and his Mother cast out*] refuseth to take the oath of abjuration. Therefore, he who writ this book is a papist'.[19]

16. John Audland, *The School-Master Disciplin'd: or, A Reply to — George Willington. — Also. An Answer to a Scandalous Paper, put forth by William Prynne, entitled, The Quakers unmasked and clearly detected*, London 1655, pp. 7-13. Prynne quoted from this in his *A Brief Reply to John Audland's Rayling Paper* which appeared on pp. 20-33 of the 2nd edn (enlarged) of *Quakers Unmasked*. He responded to Audland on pp. 34-6.

17. Thomas Smith, *A Gagg for the Quakers, with an Answer to Mr Denn's Quaker No Papist*, London 1659, sec. 1, no. 50; Baxter, *Quakers Catechism*, p. C.3ff.; Joshuah Miller, *Antichrist in Man*, p. 31.

18. Prynne, *A New Discovery*, p. 9; see also Jarridge, *The Jesuites Displayed*, pp. 35-7, where he repeated the story of an unnamed British merchant who identified a Quaker leader in Dorchester as a Jesuit, and further asserted that other Jesuits were spread throughout the West and North of the country. Prynne, in *A New Discovery*, p. 25, related a similar story of the reputed arrest and confession of an Irish Franciscan in Bristol whose doctrines reminded him of Quakerism's tenets. Baxter put great stock in these stories. See his *One Sheet Against the Quakers*, London 1657, p. 8; and *A Key for Catholicks*, p. 334. In a similar manner of argument, Baxter associated the Quakers with the Papists by telling an unusual story about a person who, as a boy, had confessed to working in collusion with Catholic priests, and now was either a Quaker or a sympathizer with their attacks on ministers. (*A Key for Catholicks*, pp. 185-7). See also the story in which Joshuah Miller linked Quakers and Papists (*Antichrist in Man*, p. 30).

19. Smith, *The Quaker Disarmed*, London 1659, n. pag. [2nd and 3rd unnumbered page of the dispute]; see also Smith, *Questions Propounded to George Whitehead and George Gox . . . in*

On the basis of geographical evidence, sworn testimony, and oath-refusal, Prynne, Baxter, and Smith were convinced that Quakers were Papists. They perceived additional proof in the Quakers' hostile and disruptive behaviour, especially to ministers. Many of the arguments followed similar lines. Papists opposed Protestant ministers; Quakers opposed Protestant ministers; therefore, Quakers were Papists. William Brownsword, vicar of Kendal from 1659 to 1672, who had been abused by the Quakers, complained: 'They use the vilest language they can invent against us, deny our Calling, say we come from Rome, Had no Church before Henry the eighth, that others may do the work of the Ministry as well as we, even women. Papists say the same . . .'. Later in the same work he continued the argument:

> They are not only opposers of some Ministers . . . but of all the Protestant Churches, and the very Protestant cause; so that what hath been vainly attempted by Antichrist, is their very designe; which, if accomplished, do but think how Papists would rejoyce in it, and what advantage that Church would have by it.

Quakers, like the Papists, even went so far as to label the Protestant rite of communion as a 'Profane' sacrament, 'void of . . . all Grace . . .'.[20] To Christopher Feake and his two other Fifth Monarchist co-authors, Quaker hostility to Presbyterians, Independents, and Anabaptists was the result of an association with 'the Romish Antichrist' (i.e., the Pope). Joshuah Miller wrote against the Quakers in the same spirit as did Prynne and Feake. 'Seeing [that the Quakers] are against all ministers, as Antichristian', Miller asserted, 'the Pope laughs in his sleeve . . ., for he hath told them so . . . . [T]he Church of Rome denies any Gospel Ministry in England; therefore, the Pope and the Quakers in this agree'.[21]

Cambr. Aug. 29, 1659 by R. B. [Richard Blome], p. 16; Christopher Fowler and Simon Ford, *A Sober Answer to an Angry Epistle Directed to all publick Teachers in this Nation*, London 1656, p. 16. For a discussion of the Oath of Abjuration, also known as the Proclamation of April 1655, see Braithwaite, *The Beginnings of Quakerism*, p. 446; and *Journal of George Fox*, I, Norman Penney (ed.), Cambridge 1911, p. 225. Braithwaite's source is Samuel Rawson Gardiner, *History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate* III (1654-1656), London 1901, p. 225. See also 'An Act for convicting, discovering and repressing of Papish Recusants', 26 June 1657, in *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum*, C. H. Firth and R. S. Rait (eds.), London 1911, II, pp. 1171-80; and 'An Ordinance for Explanation of a Former Ordinance for Sequestration of Delinquents Estates with some Enlargements', 18 August 1643, in *Acts and Ordinances*, I, pp. 255-6. For a brief discussion of the laws against Catholics during the Interregnum, see R. R. Madden, *The History of the Penal Laws Enacted Against Roman Catholics*, London 1847, pp. 188-93. For a more extensive discussion of these laws, including similar laws from later periods, see Thomas Chisholme Anstry, *A Guide to the Laws of England Affecting Roman Catholics*, London 1842.

20. William Brownsword, *The Quaker-Jesuite, or, Popery in Quakerisme*, London 1660, pp. 6, 1, 11, 5. See also Baxter, *Quakers Catechism*, C.3[v]; Prynne, *Quakers Unmasked*, pp. 27, 34; and G[eorge] Emmot, *A Northern Blast, or the Spiritual Quaker Converted*, London 1655, p. 13. Quakers were as critical of magistrates and lawyers as they were of tithed ministers. See W. Schenk, *The Concern for Social Justice in the Puritan Revolution*, London 1948, pp. 123-5. A tract written by a person who identified himself only as 'Mad Tom' asked his readers 'Whether the Jesuite did not infuse that Principal into [the Quakers], of keeping their Hats on their Heads, to teach them the better to contemn our Christian Magistrates?' *Twenty Quaking Queries*, London 1659, p. 3.

21. Christopher Feake, John Simpson, George Cokayn, *A Faithful Discovery of Trecherous Design of Mystical Antichrist*, London 1653, p. 27; Joshuah Miller, *Antichrist*, p. 30; see also

Quakers 'demonstrated' their Papist ties, not only by their attacks on the Protestant ministry, but also by the doctrines they espoused and the principles they followed. Their rejection of predestination was a clear sign of their Popery. 'Quakers affirm', William Brownsword wrote, 'That there is no absolute Degree of Election and Reprobation from eternity. . . . Papists affirm, the same [doctrine].' Earlier he said that 'Papists affirm . . . That the righteousness whereby we are justified, is a real inherent righteousness within us. . . . The Grace we have is . . . a Divine Quality inherent in the soul . . . .' A Catholic writer, Baily, he said, 'scoffs at Calvin's and the Protestants (as the Quakers do) Philosophy, That sin doth dwell in our souls'.[22]

In a related set of arguments, Brownsword and Prynne pointed out that Quakers and Papists alike asserted that they could gain perfection in this life. Quakers believed, said Prynne, 'That the Saints are perfectly holy in this life, and do not sin . . .'. Similarly, Brownsword asserted, 'Quakers affirm, That there is a perfection attainable in this life, whereby they are freed from all sin, and from the body of death'. They insisted 'that all men have a light within them sufficient to convince of [i.e., conquer] sin, and to lead men to repentence and salvation, if it be obeyed'. Indeed, some of them claimed to 'have the same Spirit of infallibility that the Apostles had'. All of these claims of perfection by the Quakers resembled a tenet spelled out in the Council of Trent, which stated, 'if any man say that the commandments of God are impossible to be observed by a justified man, who is in the state of Grace, let him be Anathema'.[23]

Not only had Quakers and Papists denied predestination and the inherent sinfulness of man, but they denied also the absolute authority of the Scriptures. This denial took several forms. Quakers affirmed 'That the Scriptures are not the Rule', and similarly, the Jesuit scholar, Bellarmine, said that they are only 'to help us on our pilgrimage' and are not meant 'to be a rule of Faith'. Farmer attacked the Quakers' practice of 'magnifying [their] papers equal to the holy Scriptures'. With this attitude to Quakers theology, he said, they 'add their Authority to it, as [do] the Papists', rather than believing the Scriptures to be the sole authority for their faith. The Anabaptist, Henoch Howet, charged that the 'same spirit' was behind the Quakers' insistence on 'the uselessness of the Scriptures' (presumably since

William Grigge, *The Quaker Jesus*, London 1658, 'An Advertisement to the Reader'. On Feake and Cockayn[e] see *DNB*, s.v.; on these two plus Simpson, see B. S. Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men*, London 1972, Appendix I, s.v.

22. Brownsword, *Quaker-Jesuite*, pp. 6, 3-4. To support his claim he paraphrased from the 6th Session Can. 11 of the Council of Trent. (See *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, Rev. H. J. Schroeder (ed.), London 1941, p. 43). The Jesuit named 'Baily' to whom he referred probably is Thomas Baily (d. 1591), a native of Yorkshire who became vice-president of the Jesuits' English College at Douai. I am unable to identify, however, Brownsword's reference to Baily's text.

23. Prynne, *Quakers Unmasked*, p. 6; Brownsword, *Quaker-Jesuite* p. 3. The Council of Trent doctrine to which Brownsword referred must be Session 6 Ch. XI. See *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, s.v.). For similar attacks on the Quakers' claim to perfection, see Jonathan Clapman, *A Full Discovery and Confutation of the wicked and damnable Doctrines of the Quakers*, London 1656, pp. 25-6; Baxter, *A Winding Sheet for Popery*, London 1657, p. 12.

they were superseded by the Inner Light) and the Papists' attempts to 'denie us the Scriptures in our mother Tongue'.[24]

The severity and harshness of the attacks against the 'Papist' Quakers on geographical, social, and doctrinal grounds often were coupled with equally condemnatory diatribes against their 'monkish' behaviours. In several important ways, their enemies charged, Quakers revealed their Jesuit and Franciscan heritage. For instance, Brownsword, in his pastoral duties, heard families' complaints about children who had 'cast off respect due to their Parents and Relations' after they had become Quakers. He interpreted the children's action by pointing out that monks similarly were known for 'disclaiming' their parents.[25] In another vein, Smith, Brownsword, Prynne, and three Newcastle ministers pointed out the similarities between Quakers' and monks' attire. Smith said that both George Whitehead and the Papists 'place much of their holiness in their beggarly apparrel'. Prynne went so far as to allege that 'Some of them wear . . . rough Hair cloth and cords about their bodies like the Franciscan Cordiliers; [and this] is very probable Evidence that they were spawned from them'. Quakers' 'neglect of Apparel, the[ir] pretended frequent fastings, [and] their dissembling separation from the world', argued Thomas Weld, Rich[ard] Prideaux, and Sam[uel] Hammond, 'is clearly the superstition of Monks and Fryars . . .'.[26]

Other habits and activities also 'revealed' Quakers' Papist connections. Brownsword said that both their emphasis on silence (presumably in worship) and their practice of fasting, especially as a 'means of spiritual knowledge', originated with the monks. Furthermore, their practice of 'run[ning] up and down naked' arose from the Jesuit order, and possibly from the Flagellantes.[27] Both Brownsword and Prynne traced the Quakers' claims to 'Visions and Revelations' — their 'Quaking Fits and Trances'[28] — to the Monks and Nuns, and especially to Ignatius Loyola. Prynne also connected the 'enthusiasm' of female Quakers to St Briget, and charged that the women acted 'in imitation of the New Order of Jesuitisses'. He even went so far as to ascribe the convulsions and fits of Quaker 'enthusiasm' to

24. Brownsword, *Quaker-Jesuite*, p. 5. He referred to 'the Ministers of Newcastle' in this passage, who were Thomas Weld, Richard Prideaux, and Samuel Hammond, authors of *The Perfect Pharise under Monkish Holiness*, London 1653, 1654. On Bellarmine, see *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Toronto 1967, s.v. Farmer, *The Great Mysteries of Godliness and Ungodlinesse*, pp. 74-5; Henoch (or Enoch) Howet, *Quaking Principles dashed in pieces by the standing and unshaken Truth*, London 1655, p. 2. For similar arguments, see also Baxter, *Quakers Catechism*, p. C.3v; Smith, *Gagg for Quakers*, sec. 1, no. 58; Thomas Underhill, *Hell Broke Loose: Or An History of the Quakers Both Old and New*, London 1660, p. 30; and Baxter, *One Sheet against the Quakers*, London 1657, p. 8.

25. Brownsword, *Quaker-Jesuite*, p. 8.

26. Smith, *Gagg for Quakers*, sec. 1, no. 58; Prynne, *Quakers Unmasked*, p. 37; Weld et al., *The Perfect Pharise*, p. 51. See also Miller, *Antichrist in Man*, p. 4; Brownsword, *Quaker-Jesuite*, p. 7.

27. Brownsword, pp. 7-8. Similarities between Quakers' and monks' fasting were made in one of the first anti-Quaker tracts in appear — Francis Higginson's *The Irreligion of the Northern Quakers*, London 1653, pp. 20-1. (Reproduced in Barbour and Roberts, *Early Quaker Writings*, p. 75). On the Quaker practice of fasting, see Kenneth L. Carroll, 'Quaker Attitudes towards Signs and Wonders', *Journal of the Friends Historical Society*, Vol. 53, 1975, pp. 314-25; and 'Early Quakers and "Going Naked as a Sign"', *Quaker History*, Vol. 67, Autumn 1978, pp. 66-87.

28. Brownsword, *Quaker-Jesuite*, p. 9; Prynne, *Quakers Unmasked*, p. 10.

the Devil. Like Prynne, Baxter charged 'that Popery and the Quakers Faith is hatched by the Prince of darknesse'. From all the Papist evidence amassed against the Quakers, Brownsword's conclusion must have represented the attitude of many of his colleagues. 'I have now (I hope) made it evident, that the hand of a Jesuite is in the Quakers' Religion. How could they else be so well versed in their most absurd Doctrines?'[29]

Ignoring the pre-judged answer, the question is a good one. What were the origins of Quaker doctrine? In truth, Quakers had no ideational connection with the Catholics. Their religious origins were strictly from English Puritanism, and even the attempts to link them to the Protestant mystical tradition on the Continent (especially with the Boehmists) have turned up little concrete evidence.[30] Why, then, did some authors consistently see the Quakers as Papists?

Much of the reason lies in the disruptive effect the Quakers had on the social fabric of local communities, especially on local churches. Quakers were known for their vehement challenges against Puritan ministers during and after church sermons, and their insolent challenges were extremely disruptive to the life of a parish. Often the relationship between Puritan ministers and substantial numbers of their parishoners was weak, and the vituperative attacks and challenges of the Quakers jeopardized it even further.[31] In addition, local churches were the social and political hub of much of the community's life, and many persons saw the attacks against ministers and the tithing system that supported them as assaults against the very basis of orderly society.[32] Quakerism threatened, for instance, to draw people out of the Puritan congregations and into yet another Separatist sect (and one that seemed particularly seditious). It is no accident that Brownsword, Smith, Baxter, Farmer, Miller, Feake and his co-authors, and Weld and his co-authors all were ministers who had been abused by the Quakers, and therefore had particularly good reason to fear the social and religious disruption the group caused.

Believing as they did in the possibility of imminent social breakdown, the ministers accomplished several goals through their Papist charges. The charges were warnings to their congregations about the evils of the troublesome sect; they were calls for an increased suppression of the group by the authorities; and in some cases (as with Ralph Farmer) they were *post hoc* justifications of violence that the ministers had incited against the

29. Prynne, *Quakers Unmasked*, pp. 7-11, 18, 20-3; Baxter, *Quakers Catechisme*, p. C.3v; Brownsword, *Quaker-Jesuite*, p. 10. For more about associations made between Quakers and Satan, see Amelia Gummere, *Witchcraft and Quakerism*, Philadelphia 1908; Barry Reay, 'Popular Hostility towards Quakerism in mid-seventeenth century England,' *Social History* Vol. 5, No. 3, October 1980, pp. 396-400; and Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, New York 1971, p. 487.

30. See Nuttall, *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith*, pp. 16-9.

31. On the Quakers' practice of challenging Puritan ministers, see Barbour, *The Quakers in Puritan England*, pp. 127-9. On the tenuous relationship between ministers and their parishes, see Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, ch. 6 sec. iii 'Ignorance and Indifference' and sec. iv 'Scepticism'.

32. On the Quakers' opposition to ministerial tithes, see Barry Reay, 'Quaker Opposition to Tithes, 1652-1660', *Past and Present* No. 86 (February 1980), pp. 98-120.

group.[33] Finally, the charges were defences of the ministers' own characters and occupations, both of which were slandered by the Quakers. Given the Catholic fear and paranoia of the time, many Puritans were unable to view the bitter attacks by their Quaker adversaries as part of a struggle within the Protestant faith.

Opponents of Quakerism further feared the seditious potential of the group's religious doctrines. Puritan ministers believed that the Quakers' doctrine of the 'Inner Light' subverted Biblical authority, and that, given the sinful nature of humankind and the devious wiles of Satan, this subversion would lead to the destruction of the nation. Amidst the shambles, Catholicism would be able, many people believed, to make its return. In this paranoid atmosphere, it is no wonder that so many Puritans were convinced by such weak 'Papist' evidence against the Quakers as second-hand stories, unverifiable oaths, and analogous arguments.

While many persons accused the Quakers of being Papists, no uniformity existed in the meaning of the charges. Sometimes the charges meant that Quakers, as a group, were thought to be Catholics in disguise. Other times the charges specified that the Quaker *leaders* were Catholics, and the members simply were 'poor and ignorant people' who were deluded by them. In still other contexts, the accusations meant that the Quakers, who professed a belief in God, seemingly did not believe in the Protestant God. Frequently, the latter charge also connoted that Quakers were destructive of the social fabric of the community, just as the Papists were suspected to be. Finally, a few of the accusations meant that the Quakers were charged with practising demonic magic. That the term 'Papist' had so many gradations of meaning is not surprising, especially since other religiously perjorative terms of the day were equally imprecise.[34]

Despite the fact that the imprecise nature of the charge and the unsystematic use of evidence gave the Puritan accusers a considerable range of tactics to use against the Quakers, at least a few prominent Puritans were unconvinced by the accusations. An unusual argument against the Papist/Quaker equation was put forth by a group of hostile Newcastle-on-Tyne ministers — Thomas Weld, Richard Prideaux, Samuel Hammond, and William Durant. They wrote that the equation between the two groups was false because the perfection that the Quakers achieved was far below that of the monks. 'Nay, we could produce instances of Visions, Revelations, Fastings, etc. in that shaven Generation [i.e., the monks] which might let these [Quakers] know their perfection they boast of leaves them many Leagues short of this kind of perfection which hath more fully been attained to by the Popish Rabble'.[35] Needless to say, this is a remarkable argument

33. On the anti-Quaker riots that were encouraged or instigated by ministers, see Reay, 'Popular Hostility . . .', pp. 403-7.
34. For a discussion of the meanings of the term 'atheism' in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, ch. 6 sec. iv 'Scepticism' (pp. 166-73). For a discussion of the various meanings of the term 'Ranter' as used by the Quakers, see J. F. McGregor, 'Ranterism and the Development of Early Quakerism', *Journal of Religious History*, Vol. 9, December 1977, esp. pp. 351, 354, 358.
35. *The Perfect Pharise under Monkish Holines*, p. 51.

coming from a group of Puritan ministers, but it reveals how far they were willing to go in order to counter the Quakers' religious claims.

Another Puritan minister, the Baptist Henry Denne, offered a systematic refutation of his colleagues' efforts to prove Quakers' Papist guilt by using either proof-by-analogy or proof-by-oaths. Attacking the practice of 'proof-by-analogy', he said:

> We all know 'tis a fallacious way of arguing to proceed . . . to prove that a thing really is, because it is possible that it might be: and yet no better is the argument of the Papist Adversaries in this case. They know the Popish Priests and Jesuites are men, that have a zeal for their Religion . . . [and] are using endeavours to bring their designs of gaining Proselytes about. . . . But certainly till the thing be more evident, Christian Charity . . . should teach us another lesson: and that seeing such manner of dissembling Religion is a most heynous crime and sin against God, we ought not to charge [the Quakers] with it upon light grounds, but rather be inclined to think contrary . . . .[36]

Elsewhere in the work he challenged the claim that Quakers were disguised Papists. 'For I ask, was there ever such thing duly proved? Was there ever any Jesuit or Papist taken under such masque, or disquise?' He attacked Prynne's use of the oath by a Bristol ironmonger, Cowlishaw, because the Irishman whom Cowlishaw had accused of Popery was not available for questioning. Finally, on another issue — Smith's charge of Popery against George Whitehead — Denne understood why the Quaker refused to take the Oath of Abjuration. 'Whitehead refuses the Oath, not because it abjures Popery, but because it is an Oath, and because he thinks it unlawful to swear at all'.[37]

On each of these points, Thomas Smith responded with vengeance. His responses lacked the logic that Denne demonstrated, but what they lacked in logic they made up for in fervour. One major claim, however, underlay all of Smith's defences of the Papist/Quaker evidence that his 'frivolous and learned friend', Henry Denne, attacked: Denne was a 'reverend Apologist for the Society of Jesus'.[38] After all, what else could a learned person be who defended the Quakers against a charge that was so obviously correct?

36. *Quaker No Papist, in Answer to the Quaker Disarmed*. London 1659, p. 20. On Denne, see *DNB* 5, s.v.; Barclay, *The Inner Life*, pp. 160-1. As a Baptist minister during the uncertainties of 1659, Denne wrote the tract in an attempt to offset the efforts that he saw the Presbyterians and Prelatists taking to divide the Saints. See Craig W. Horle, 'Quakers and Baptists 1647-1660', *Baptist Quarterly*, Vol. 26, 1975-6, p. 357.

37. *Quaker No Papist*, pp. 19, 6. Denne also had read some of Baxter's charges.

38. Smith, *Gagg for Quakers*, sec. 1 no. 2. Smith referred to both Clapman's *A Full Discovery and Confutation* (sec. 1, no. 58) and Prynne's story about Cowlishaw's confession (sec. 1 no. 50). For Smith's evaluation of the effects of his book on local Quakers, see *Extracts from State Papers Relating to Friends, 1654-1672*, Norman Penney (ed.), London 1913, p. 117. Worth noting is the fact that after Charles II had restored the throne, Denne wrote a tract defending the lawfulness of oaths, parts of which were critical of the Quakers' continued refusal to take them. See his *An Epistle Recommended to all the Prisons in this City & Nation*, London, 1660/1, pp. 5, 8.