

# PSYCHOLOGICAL AND MYSTICAL INTERPRETATIONS OF EARLY QUAKERISM: WILLIAM JAMES AND RUFUS JONES<sup>1</sup>

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William James' discussion of early Quakerism profoundly affected subsequent interpretations of the group by the prominent scholar and Quaker writer, Rufus Jones. Jones utilized James as a major exponent of the divine origins of George Fox's doctrinal beliefs and social protests. The major claims of James and Jones, however, are not sustained by more recent critical scholarship on Quakerism's early days. By examining and refuting these claims, this article argues that interpretations of Quakerism (and by extension, of other religious collectivities) should be based primarily upon historically grounded, social-psychological frameworks.

## INTRODUCTION

After William James' death in 1910, his wife, Alice, sent a letter of appreciation to Rufus Jones (1863-1948), the prolific Quaker historian, educator, and author. Thanking Jones for the obituary that he had written about her husband in *The American Friend*,<sup>2</sup> Alice indicated that 'Many voices have been raised in affectionate memory of a man who truly loved his kind but no one has spoken more justly or with finer appreciation than yourself'.<sup>3</sup> Jones' sensitive obituary bespoke the enormous respect in which the Quaker held James, a respect that dated back over a decade and a half to when Jones first read James' classic text, *The Principles of Psychology*.<sup>4</sup> Even in his wood-panelled study, a reconstruction of which now stands in Haverford College's library, Jones had a picture of William James hanging on his wall.

Many of Jones' contemporaries shared his admiration of James' work, and James' sympathetic interpretation of religion and religious experience had a particularly far-reaching effect on the Quakers. Coinciding with James' publication of *Varieties of Religious Experience* in 1902 was a revitalization movement within British and American Quakerism that was striving to re-establish the primacy of 'The Inner Light' within Quaker thought and experience,<sup>5</sup> and Rufus Jones was one of the movement's most

active participants. In contrast to a Calvinistic strain of rigid credalism and Biblical literalism that dominated the faltering Society in the late Victorian period, this new, liberal movement believed that a return to Quakerism's reputedly mystical roots would ignite a spiritual rejuvenation among Friends. Despite its avowedly psychological orientation, James' *Varieties* became a source of inspiration for most of these Quaker innovators, especially Rufus Jones.

The mystical interpretation of early Quakerism assumed that the Society of Friends had supernatural, not natural origins, and was based upon an experience of God in the form of 'the Light within'. This perspective was in keeping with wider trends in the study of religion at that time, as evidenced by the number of contemporary studies that focused on mystical experience.<sup>6</sup> The Quaker belief in the Inner Light that was to be experienced through silent worship provided interpreters with a religious framework in which to explain Quakerism as another example of an outbreak of mysticism, the antecedents of which stretch back into nascent Christianity as well as into non-Christian religious traditions. The fact, however, that James' *Varieties of Religious Experience* influenced the mystical interpretations of Quakerism suggests the extent to which the book's psychological pragmatism was buried beneath the sheer number of rambling but interesting quotations from Western mystics. No single non-historical work, in fact, can rival James' book for its influence on early 20th century interpretations of emerging Quakerism, even among members of the Society of Friends itself.

While James' *Varieties* remains a widely read text among students of religion throughout the English-speaking world, both his psychological interpretation of early Quakerism and the competing mystical interpretation to which it contributed no longer receive scholarly validation. Using the same sources as did the psychologist James and the 'mystic' Jones, more recent scholarship has portrayed the early period of Quakerism in a very different light. Rather than viewing Quakerism as the consequence of either people's direct experience of God or of their uniquely sensitive emotional constitutions, contemporary emphasis on mid-17th century English society identify Quakerism as merely one of several reactions to social, political, and economic tensions that pervaded England during that era. Many of the insights from earlier psychological and mystical interpretations are subsumed within historically rooted social-psychological and sociological perspectives on Puritan religious sectarianism, and the perspectives of James and Jones appear as enthusiastic assertions whose essential claims have not been sustained. However, by returning to the mystical and psychological interpretations of Quakerism that first appeared in the early years of this century, we can trace the history of once-prominent perspectives on an important religious group, and by doing so make a case for utilizing broader, social-

psychological perspectives for the analysis of historically based religious collectivities.

*THE PSYCHOLOGY OF QUAKER RELIGIOSITY: WILLIAM JAMES*

Initially written for presentation as the 1901–1902 Gifford Lectures at the University of Edinburgh, James' psychological interpretation of religion, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, has become a classic. While he insisted in it that religious experience had to be studied by its practical consequences, and could not be comprehended or appreciated as either a physio-neurological malfunction or the product of 'perverted sexuality',<sup>7</sup> he nonetheless showed that an intimate relationship existed between mental distress or illness and religious insight.<sup>8</sup> He asserted, for example, that an intelligent individual who also suffered psychological problems was more likely to 'make his mark and affect his age, than if his temperament were less neurotic'.<sup>9</sup> As evidence for this claim, he discussed the personality of George Fox, who is the person commonly thought to have 'founded' Quakerism. James introduced Fox by insisting that:

Even more perhaps than other kinds of genius, religious leaders have been subject to abnormal psychical visitations. Invariably they have been creatures of exalted emotional sensibility. Often they have led a discordant inner life, and had melancholy during a part of their career. They have known no measure, been liable to obsessions and fixed ideas; and frequently they have fallen into trances, heard voices, seen visions, and presented all sorts of peculiarities which are ordinarily classed as pathological. Often, moreover, these pathological features in their career[s] have helped to give them their religious authority and influence.<sup>10</sup>

James claimed that Fox was the quintessential example of this type of unstable but religiously sensitive personality, yet even his contemporaries, including Oliver Cromwell (1599–1658), widely acknowledged his personal power.<sup>11</sup> To support his assessment that mental instability was the handmaiden of religious insight, James quoted a long passage from Fox's *Journal* in which the religious leader, while standing outside of Lichfield (a town that is presently within Staffordshire) in 1651, heard a voice from the Lord commanding him to remove his shoes and walk barefoot through its streets crying 'Wo to the bloody city of Lichfield'. As he did this, Fox saw 'a channel of blood running down the streets, and the marketplace appeared like a pool of blood'. Only later did Fox learn, so he told us in his *Journal*, that a thousand Christians had been martyred there during the time of the Roman Emperor, Diocletian.<sup>12</sup>

The neurotic and psychological material that James presented in his analysis of the predispositions toward religious insight stood in striking contrast to his discussion of mysticism and its inherent qualities. In a

statement that has endeared him to generations of religious practitioners, James asserted that, 'The kinds of truth communicable in mystical ways . . . are various . . .; but the most important revelations are theological or metaphysical'.<sup>13</sup> Once again, Fox served as an illustration of this point. James quoted Fox's description in which he claimed to have experienced the condition of Paradise before the fall of Adam, and in doing so had the Lord reveal to him 'the nature and virtues of all created things. As a result of his revelation, Fox even considered undertaking 'the practice of physic [that is, medicine] for the good of mankind'.<sup>14</sup> In the same footnote James also pointed out that Jakob Boehme (or Jacob Behmen [1575–1624]), the famous German mystic, had received a similar revelation about the properties of herbs and grasses, and later wrote about it that 'In one quarter of an hour I saw and knew more than if I had been many years together at an university. For I saw and knew the being of all things, the Byss and the Abyss, and the eternal generation of the Holy Trinity, the descent and original of the world and of all creatures through divine wisdom'.<sup>15</sup> This association that James made between Fox and Boehme was to influence other interpretations of Quakerism for many years.

On another topic, 'Saintliness', James discussed the Quakers with regard to 'the impulse for veracity and purity of life', and argued that:

The battle that cost them most wounds was probably fought in defense of their own right to social veracity and sincerity in their thee-ing and thou-ing, in not doffing the hat or giving titles of respect. It was laid on George Fox that these conventional customs were a lie and a sham, and the whole body of his followers thereupon renounced them, as a sacrifice to truth, and so that their acts and the spirit they professed might be in more accord.<sup>16</sup>

He supported this interpretation with long quotes from both Fox and another early Quaker, Thomas Ellwood (1639–1713), as well as from an 18th century colonial Friend, John Woolman (1720–72).<sup>17</sup> Along these same lines, James even used Fox's description in his *Journal* of his lonely and painfully self-reflective youth<sup>18</sup> to support his (disputable) claim that religion was best studied in terms of individual experiences rather than in terms of ecclesiastical institutions.<sup>19</sup> If his approving use of material about early Quakerism left any doubts about his opinion of the group, James removed them when he gave his personal interpretation of it. 'The Quaker religion which [Fox] founded is something which it is impossible to over-praise. In a day of shams, it was a religion of veracity rooted in spiritual inwardness, and a return to something more like the original gospel truth than men had ever known in England'.<sup>20</sup>

James' influence on interpretations of Quakerism was enormous, despite the fact that his psychological reductionism would not have been appreciated

by most of the people who praised his work. While many of the writers, for example, who gave mystical interpretations to early Quakers' (particularly Fox's) experiences, cited James' *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, none presented an important statement from his conclusion:

Let me then propose, as an hypothesis, that whatever it may be on its *farther* side, the 'more' with which in religious experience we feel ourselves connected is on its *hither* side the subconscious continuation of our conscious life. Starting thus with a recognized psychological fact as our basis, we seem to preserve a contact with 'science' which the ordinary theologian lacks. At the same time the theologian's contention that the religious man is moved by an external power is vindicated, for it is one of the peculiarities of invasions from the subconscious region to take on objective appearances, and to suggest to the Subject an external control. In the religious life the control is felt as 'higher'; but since on our hypothesis it is primarily the higher faculties of our own hidden mind which are controlling the sense of union with the power beyond us is a sense of something, not merely apparently, but literally true.<sup>21</sup>

'God is real', James concluded, 'since he produces real effects'.<sup>22</sup> The measure of legitimate mysticism, therefore, was simply the extent of its practicality.

#### MYSTICISM AND QUAKER SELF-DEFINITION: JOHN WILHELM ROWNTREE AND RUFUS JONES

James' discussion of the mystical elements of early Quakerism had a major impact on the Quakers' interpretations of both their religious founder and the group as a whole. A Quaker publication that was edited by Rufus Jones, *The American Friend*, asserted that '*Varieties of Religious Experience* is one of the most notable scientific studies of religion which has ever come from the press'.<sup>23</sup> Liberal British Quakers apparently were quickened by James' positive interpretation of early Quakerism's vitality, and their major publication, *Present Day Papers*, referred to his *Varieties* as 'a treasure-house for "Friends"', justifying to them once more, if any justification were needed, their own belief in "The Inner Light", that light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world'.<sup>24</sup> The most prominent British Quaker of this period and founder of the *Present Day Papers*, John Wilhelm Rowntree, referred to James' 'eloquent testimony' about Fox and his work.<sup>25</sup> Likewise, *The British Friend* said that 'Prof. William James is one of the most brilliant philosophical writers the Anglo-Saxon race has produced . . .', and expressed the wish that his *Varieties* 'could be placed in all our Meetinghouse libraries, that every minister might have access to it'.<sup>26</sup> James even urged, so the review insisted, 'that the modern method of explaining [religious conversions], as due to the welling up into the conscious life of forces long incubated in a subconscious region of the personality, is not inconsistent with the view that they are in some real sense the result of a Divine and "supernatural" operation'.<sup>27</sup>

So enthusiastic were some of the liberal British Quakers that they, through Rowntree, contacted Rufus Jones about getting James to present lectures to Quakers in their summer educational program. Regarding lecturers for upcoming sessions, Rowntree wrote to Jones, on 2 December 1902: 'We are asking [Adolph] Harnack [a Biblical scholar] and also want James. I am to ask you whether you can get James for us? You will know what fees he will require. What we want from him is lecturing along the line of his book . . .'.<sup>28</sup> Nine days later, however, the plan to get James to lecture fell apart. One of the Quakers who was influential in liberal circles, William Littleboy (1853–1936), apparently felt that James' *Varieties* reduced religion to mere psychological components. On 11 December 1902, Rowntree dashed off another letter to his American friend.

William Littleboy, since we fixed on James, has read the book, & it has seriously alarmed him. It came up yesterday at the committee. [Edward] Grubb and I were strong for James, but I feel unity more important than James, and suggested the cable which was sent. I deeply regret it, but at this stage we *must* have unity. If you have not approached James do not therefore do so. If you *have*, but in such a way that you can withdraw without offence do so, but if you have & feel delicacy in withdrawing please let me know & in the last event do not act.<sup>29</sup>

Although Littleboy may have held a minority opinion about James, his objections were enough to kill the project. It seems likely, however, that James was at least mentioned in several summer school lectures, particularly those given by the American Quaker psychologist, Edwin D. Starbuck (1866–1947), and by Jones himself.<sup>30</sup>

Jones was the most prestigious and prolific Quaker of this century, and James' influence on him had widespread effects on Quaker scholarship for decades to come. At their very first meeting in mid-June 1897, Jones and Rowntree agreed to write histories of Quakerism, since they both believed that the Society of Friends had to understand the power of its original message if it were to free itself from the stifling influence of evangelicism and become a salient force in the modern world.<sup>31</sup> Jones' specific task was to relate Quakerism to other Christian mystical movements,<sup>32</sup> an undertaking that he already had been considering for several years. John Wilhelm Rowntree's tragic death in 1905, however, became the catalyst for Jones and several other Quaker historians to begin serious work on the early periods of the Society, and the series of books that emerged on Quaker history was financed by a trust fund that the Rowntree family established for this purpose. Jones wrote two books on European mystics and mystical groups in The Rowntree Series of Quaker Histories, in which he attempted to show that European mysticism was 'at least one of the great historical sources of the Quaker movement'.<sup>33</sup> In these studies, James' *Varieties* played a significant role.

Jones had spent the 1900–1 school year at Harvard, where James taught, but at that time James was in Europe preparing his Gifford Lectures (which were published in 1902 as *The Varieties of Religious Experience*).<sup>34</sup> By 1894 Jones had read thoroughly James' *Principles of Psychology* in preparation for the psychology course that Jones taught at Haverford College (a Quaker College near Philadelphia and his alma mater).<sup>35</sup> Around 1900 Jones 'consulted' with James about his career plans.<sup>36</sup> Later Jones learned that James had read his 1902 book, *A Boy's Religion from Memory*, and was struck by Jones' autobiographical account of his Quaker childhood.<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, Jones' first academic love remained the field of mysticism. In 1886, he wrote his Haverford graduation thesis on mysticism,<sup>38</sup> and continued to investigate the subject for the rest of his life. In 1917 Jones wrote the essay on Christian Protestant Mysticism for the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*,<sup>39</sup> and he even claimed to have had three different mystical experiences himself.<sup>40</sup> Because he taught psychology, Jones was conversant with basic psychological material, so it is not surprising that, as he began writing about mysticism, he responded to many of the contemporary psychological interpretations of religious experience. Unfortunately, his relative neglect of the social forces that helped shape Quaker doctrine and practice severely limited the value that his work might have had for posterity.

His first major study of mysticism was entitled *Studies in Mystical Religion*. In this 1909 work, Jones acknowledged that many types of mystical experience 'may, and often do, pass over the border-line of normality and occasionally, at least, exhibit pathological phenomena'.<sup>41</sup> He nonetheless insisted that 'the *real* mystic' was one 'who, by conformity to the goal of life revealed in Christ, has realized his life upward in full union with God—a way of living which is as normal as healthy breathing'.<sup>42</sup> He argued further that mystical experiences 'offer a very weighty ground for believing that there is a More of Consciousness continuous with our own—a co-consciousness with which our own is bound up, and that constructive influences do come into us from beyond ourselves'. As evidence for this assertion, Jones cited James' *Varieties of Religious Experience*.<sup>43</sup> While this is the only direct reference that Jones made to James in his *Studies in Mystical Religion*, James' influence may have been a factor on one other issue: the reputed association between George Fox and Jakob Boehme. Jones was unequivocal about the association, stating that 'Both Fox and [Gerrard] Winstanley bear the marks of direct influence from Boehme'.<sup>44</sup> This assertion takes on greater meaning when we realize that, in the introduction to his book, Jones had quoted the same phrase from Boehme that James had used to show that both men had had mystical experiences in which they claimed to have gained knowledge of creation, including all of the properties of plants. He even used the same book that James did, and it seems quite possible that, given this source's

early date (1691), he simply borrowed James' quote but did not indicate that he took it from the psychologist's study.<sup>45</sup>

In 1912, Jones published the 'Introduction' to a comprehensive history of early Quakerism by William Charles Braithwaite, a book that was the cornerstone of the Rowntree Series of Quaker Histories. Jones' introduction contained a complicated blend of current psychological notions fused with mystical interpretations. While Jones did not mention William James by name, at least two parts of his introduction resonated with James' language. For example, Jones spoke about religious ideas that 'often rise above the threshold suddenly, and burst into consciousness as though they had originated in another world'.<sup>46</sup> Psychologically speaking, Fox had "peculiar psychological traits"<sup>47</sup> and was 'plainly of a very unstable sort',<sup>48</sup> yet his 'fixity of will and moral purpose' were (paradoxically) 'the very core of normality'.<sup>49</sup>

Despite these psychological traits, if not because of them, Jones still insisted that Fox, along with several other early Quakers, were mystics.<sup>50</sup> Jones also claimed, however, that Fox was a prophet who felt himself to be 'under commission to utter the will and purpose of God to his age'.<sup>51</sup> Counterbalancing the mystical strains and prophetic tendencies of Quakerism, Jones realized, was the movement's 'moral earnestness',<sup>52</sup> and in this vein he believed that Fox's '*awakening* in his nineteenth year [was] not over his own sins, but over the moral conditions and the social customs about him'.<sup>53</sup> While he misrepresented the era by stating that 'it was in this focussing upon moral effort that the Quakers differed most from other sects of the Commonwealth period', he knew that 'their "views" were not novel or original [as] every one of their peculiar ideas had already been proclaimed by some individual or by some religious party'. This aspect of Quakerism, Jones argued, must be studied along with its mysticism.<sup>54</sup> In subsequent publications, however, Jones did not follow his own advice, and he continued to concentrate on what he felt were the group's mystical dimensions.

Jones' 1914 publication, *Spiritual Reformers in the 16th and 17th Centuries*, demonstrated his continued interest in the study of mysticism. Not surprisingly, therefore, he intended this book as a companion volume to his earlier, *Studies in Mystical Religion* (1909), as both works were part of the Rowntree Series. In this new publication he distinguished more precisely the difference between his 'mystical' perspective on religious experience and the psychological interpretations of religion, although he did not cite any of the psychological studies that he wished to challenge. He insisted that a psychologists' science, 'can deal only with an order of facts which will conform to the scientific method, for wherever science invades a field, it ignores or eliminates every aspect of novelty or mystery or wonder, every aspect which cannot be brought under scientific categories, i.e., every aspect



which cannot be treated quantitatively and causally and arranged in a congeries of interrelated facts occurring according to natural laws'.<sup>55</sup>

Notably important is his interpretation of Boehme's influence on Fox. There Jones' use of a source by Boehme provides further evidence that he drew the association between the two religious figures from William James' work. He devoted an entire chapter to 'Jacob Boehme's Influence in England', and in it spent several pages discussing the question of 'whether Boehme exercised any direct influence upon the early Quaker movement'.<sup>56</sup> He admitted that '[t]here is at present no way of proving that George Fox, the chief exponent of the [Quaker] movement, had actually read the writings of the Teutonic philosopher or had consciously or unconsciously absorbed the views of [Boehme]'. He nonetheless insisted that 'there are so many marks of influence apparent in the *Journal* that no careful student of both writers can doubt that there was some sort of influence, direct or indirect, conscious or unconscious'.<sup>57</sup> Once again he compared Fox's account from his *Journal* of gaining knowledge of all creation's properties and thereby considering the occupation of 'physic' (i.e. medicine), and Boehme's experience of acquiring knowledge of all creation's properties of plants.<sup>58</sup> He quoted from three translations or commentaries from the late 1640s about Boehme to substantiate his association of the two figures, and he also cited this same association made in an 1876 work by the renowned Quaker historian, Robert Barclay of Reigate.<sup>59</sup>

Because Jones footnoted Barclay's discussion of Fox and Boehme in which Barclay printed parallel texts of the two figures, Geoffrey Nuttall was to claim some years later that Jones was following Barclay's assertion that Fox was influenced by the German mystic.<sup>60</sup> Indeed, Barclay quoted Boehme from an unnamed 1648 source, and Jones, in his *Spiritual Reformers*, quoted a passage from John Sparrow's 1648 translation of Boehme entitled *The Three Principles*, the only book by Boehme printed that year. On the basis of Jones' citation of Barclay,<sup>61</sup> Nuttall deduced that Jones was following the late 19th century author's association of the two men. He failed to point out, however, that when Jones had made this association five years earlier, he had quoted the same text on Boehme that James had used in *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. Having examined Jones' copy of *Varieties* in The Quaker Collection of Haverford College, I know that this passage had caught Jones' eye because his characteristic pencil-line appears in the margin next to it. If Jones had been influenced exclusively by Barclay's discussion, then he would have used Sparrow's 1648 source in his 1909 discussion. Since he did not do so, we may conclude that the earliest influence on him regarding the association between Fox and Boehme was William James' *Varieties*, and that Barclay influenced him only after he started to research the question in depth.<sup>62</sup>

In response to a psychological study that James Leuba published in 1925,<sup>63</sup> Jones' animosity increased toward exclusively psychological interpretations of early Quakerism. Two years after Leuba's work appeared, Jones published *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, and in it he expressed his hostility in no uncertain terms. Leuba connected, in his *The Psychology of Religious Mysticism*, Jones' mystical interpretations of religion with James' and then criticized both of them.<sup>64</sup> They had attempted to distinguish between 'mystical experiences which are divine and those which are not',<sup>65</sup> but Leuba insisted that 'a line of demarcation between influxes of moral energy which are from God, and those which have an ordinary, natural origin, have never been satisfactorily drawn'.<sup>66</sup> While he realized that Jones had interpreted early Quakerism as a movement whose members 'were no less profoundly conscious of a *Divine Presence* than they were of a world in space',<sup>67</sup> he nonetheless concluded that 'there need be no differences between religious and non-religious ecstasies other than those due to a different interpretation—the interpretation being itself the cause of important affective and volitional phenomena'.<sup>68</sup> 'The mystical experience', Leuba said bluntly, 'is not of a nature other than that of the rest of conscious experience'.<sup>69</sup>

In Jones' 1927 publication, which he saw as a further extension of his 1909 examination of mysticism, he wasted no time in presenting to the reader his opposition to Leuba's work. In the very first sentence of the book Jones stated that '[t]he main attack in recent years on the validity of mysticism as a religious experience is the characteristic attack of the psychologist'.<sup>70</sup> As an example of what he meant Jones footnoted Leuba's *The Psychology of Religious Mysticism*. While he acknowledged that the discipline of psychology has 'taught us to discriminate *facts* in that obscure region within us',<sup>71</sup> he nonetheless promised to:

raise my word of protest only when the empirical scientist goes out beyond the obvious limits of his field and pronounces, authoritatively, on matters which do not belong within it, and about which he has no expert knowledge that qualifies him to speak. Psychological training *alone* gives no one authoritative ground to construct with finality theories of knowledge or to settle dogmatically the problems that arise out of our experience of spiritual values.<sup>72</sup>

In Jones' subsequent discussion of mysticism, William James again played a prominent role,<sup>73</sup> as did Evelyn Underhill (1875–1941).<sup>74</sup> At one point he even spoke of the two writers as both telling us 'that to be a genuine mystic one must form "new pathways of neural discharge"'.<sup>75</sup> As in his earlier works, Jones associated Boehme and Fox.<sup>76</sup>

On one important point, however, Jones attempted to extend James' discussion of mysticism, and that was with regard to its solitary nature.<sup>77</sup> 'I am convinced', Jones asserted, 'that mysticism flourishes best in a group,

and that it can, if left to itself, produce out of its experience a type of organization that favors its growth and increase in depth and power'.<sup>78</sup> Not surprisingly, the clearest example of such a religious organization was early Quakerism. 'The Society of Friends offers, perhaps, the best historical example, especially in its formative period, of a mystical body with an organization adapted to promote mystical experience in its membership'.<sup>79</sup> Jones had made this same point some years earlier in his 1919 introduction to Braithwaite's second contribution to the Rowntree Series, *The Second Period of Quakerism*. 'With all its limitations, this Society . . . has proved to be the most impressive experiment in Christian history of a group mysticism'.<sup>80</sup> For Jones, therefore, early Quakerism's organizational development reflected the mystical content of its members' message rather than, as I will argue, the protest element of their social doctrines.

#### *PSYCHOLOGY AND MYSTICISM: AN ASSESSMENT*

The psychological and mystical interpretations of early Quakerism developed by James and Jones attempted to identify the relation between mental activities and religious, often mystical, insight. However influential these interpretations were in both academic and devotional circles, they nevertheless were marred by methodological and philosophical assumptions that undermined both their basic assertions and their factual interpretations. Most damaging were their ahistorical and acultural assumptions about the nature of religious experience, since these assumptions removed religion from the social context that is necessary to understand it properly. Moreover, their interpretations concentrated on the psychological and 'mystical' activities of George Fox, and by doing so assumed that his experiences, as he related them primarily in his *Journal*, were normative for *all* Quakers during the 1650s.<sup>81</sup> Added to this problem is the fact that very little is actually known about Fox as a youth and adolescent, and all that we do know comes from reconstructions of his life by the mature Fox. Although these reconstructions permit us to make some intriguing speculations with regard to the psychological forces at play during his early development, we simply cannot stretch the interpretations very far.<sup>82</sup> To see early Quakerism as the projection into society of the poorly documented psychological dynamics of one young man is to simplify hopelessly a very complex interplay between social, political, and religious forces in which Quakerism emerged and evolved. Finally, modern research into 17th century radical Puritanism unintentionally has reinterpreted many of the facts upon which James and Jones built their psychological and mystical interpretations. When viewed within these new interpretations, James' and Jones' facts take on wholly new dimensions.

### RELIGION AND MALE SEXUAL URGES

Discussions about possible connections between Fox's religious searchings and his sexual urges provide a good example of the way in which modern historical scholarship has reinterpreted the material that earlier psychological or mystical interpreters had utilized to support their arguments. Fox wrote about 'temptations' that apparently beset him for several years when he was in his early twenties, and this was the very period of his life that he was undergoing intense religious struggles. Both James and Jones undoubtedly saw these struggles as strictly religious ones, and thereby ruled out the possibility that they might have involved important sexual questions. James insisted that 'religious consciousness' was 'wholly disconnected . . . in the main from the content of the sexual consciousness', and Jones asserted that, 'Fox had his first *awakening* in his nineteenth year, not over his own sins, but over the moral conditions and social customs about him'.<sup>83</sup> A respected researcher of 17th century dissenting sects, however, suggests that these temptations were in fact related to struggles over sexuality, and supports his claims with historically-grounded psychological evidence. After reading Fox's account of the spiritual turmoil during his late teens and early twenties, Michael R. Watts believes it 'probable' that it was 'associated with the awakening of sexual desires'.<sup>84</sup> Fox admitted, for example, that when he was nineteen 'temptations grew more and more and I was tempted almost to despair'. Given what we know about the nature of these 'temptations' within several men from the mid-17th century (including the Quaker, William Ames) and within a few male Methodist leaders a century later, they probably had to do with masturbation.<sup>85</sup> A desire, therefore, among some late adolescent bible-reading males to escape the 'demon' of sexual urges (especially the 'sin' of Onan [Gen. 38: 8–10]) may have been one factor that predisposed them to investigate religious questions during that period of their lives.<sup>86</sup>

### BOEHME AND FOX: A RE-EVALUATION

The identification of Fox's probable struggle with questions of sexuality is one example of the way in which modern historical scholarship has reinterpreted the material that either the psychological or the mystical interpreters used to support their positions. Another dramatic example of this reinterpretation involves the question of Boehme's possible influence on Fox. Both psychological and mystical interpreters of early Quakerism argued that Fox had been influenced by the German mystic.<sup>87</sup>

This interpretation, however, has been discredited by more recent scholarship, and even Jones himself expressed doubts about the connection in his later work. In his 1932 study, *Mysticism and Democracy in the English Commonwealth*, Jones conceded that 'it is quite likely that Fox had pretty

much found his trail before he was consciously aware of the light of Boehme's torch', even though he still insisted that 'Boehme's influence is certainly apparent in Fox's *Journal*'.<sup>88</sup>

Even *that* influence, however, has been challenged by Geoffrey Nuttall. Nuttall pointed out that Jones, as well as Barclay of Reigate, insisted that Fox's use of the phrase, 'the flaming sword', in his statement, 'Now was I come up in spirit through the flaming sword into the paradise of God', indicated Boehme's influence on Fox, at least by the time that he wrote his *Journal*. Nuttall disclosed, however, that Fox's use of the phrase simply indicated that he, like Boehme, had read Gen. 3: 24.<sup>89</sup> Nuttall's interpretation of the 'flaming sword' passage was accepted by the prominent Quaker historian, Henry J. Cadbury, who cited it in (gentle) refutation of Jones in his 'Additional Notes' to the second edition of Braithwaite's *The Beginnings of Quakerism*.<sup>90</sup> Jones' 'mystical' interpretation of early Quakerism, in which he connected the first Quakers to various Continental 'mystical' groups, fell into such disrepute that Quaker scholars decided to omit Jones' introductions to both of Braithwaite's histories in their second editions.<sup>91</sup> Given the fact that Jones had been the editor of the Rowntree Series of which Braithwaite's books were a part, the elimination of his introductions from both of Braithwaite's second editions is remarkable. Jones' mystical interpretation of early Quakerism simply has not withstood the tests of time because, as David Petegorsky charged in 1940, he 'has not adequately appreciated the social basis of the movements he seeks to describe'.<sup>92</sup>

### THE LICHFIELD INCIDENT AS SOCIAL PROTEST

As the limitations of Rufus Jones' work indicate, a recurrent problem with the mystical and psychological interpreters' use of facts is that they paid too little attention to the social and political conditions in which Quakerism emerged and developed. Take, for example, the psychological and mystical interpretations given to Fox's barefooted walk through 'bloody Lichfield', an event that James cited as evidence of Fox's psychopathology.<sup>93</sup> As early as 1912, when the first edition appeared of William Charles Braithwaite's still-standard study, *The Beginnings of Quakerism*, Quaker historians gave Fox's Lichfield incident an interpretation that located it within a social and historical context. Braithwaite suggested that 'the sight of the spires threw him into a fever of spiritual exaltation, and the nearer view of the cathedral, scarred and ruined from the Civil War, suggested to his deeply sympathetic nature the blood-guiltiness of the city'. He added that, just twelve years before Fox's birth, Edward Wightman had been burnt there for religious heresy (apparently Unitarianism), as had Mrs Joyce Lewis (for her Protestant views) in 1557.<sup>94</sup> Fox would have been particularly concerned about religious persecution at this time, since he had just suffered nearly a year's

imprisonment in Derby as the result of his own religious beliefs.<sup>95</sup> Seen in its social setting, therefore, Fox's behavior was, albeit highly emotional, probably not pathological. It nevertheless represented an act of 'social protest' against a town whose history symbolized the forced conformity of the established churches against which Quakers protested throughout the 1650s.

*'HAT-HONOUR' REFUSAL AND PLAIN SPEECH [THEE-ING AND THOU-ING] AS SOCIAL PROTEST*

Failing to see Quakerism in its social setting, psychological and mystical interpreters of the group presented 'facts' in support of their positions that actually mitigate their claims. James, for example, asserted that the Quakers used the pronouns, 'thee' and 'thou', when addressing others, and refused to either give 'hat-honour' or use titles of respect because they considered these social conventions to be 'a lie and a sham', and were against their 'impulse for veracity and purity of life'.<sup>96</sup> Historians now view these refusals as aspects of the widespread radical agitation for social and political reforms, particularly against the clerical system and the class system that supported it.<sup>97</sup> In 1646, for example, the Leveller leader, John Lilburne (1614–57), refused to remove his hat when he was brought, against his will, before the House of Lords for having printed reputedly insulting and slanderous material about its Speaker, Lord Manchester (1602–71).<sup>98</sup> Richard Overton (fl. 1646), another Leveller leader, also refused to uncover his head when he was brought before a committee of the House of Lords.<sup>99</sup> Two Diggers, Gerrard Winstanley (1609–76) and William Everard (fl. 1649), refused to remove their hats when General Thomas Fairfax (1612–71) visited their community.<sup>100</sup> Nor did the radical Fifth Monarchist and plotter, Thomas Venner (d. 1661), remove his hat for Oliver Cromwell, the Lord Protector, when Cromwell was questioning him about his subversive plans in 1657.<sup>101</sup> Christopher Hill points out that, even a century before the Quakers appeared, the Marian martyrs refused to remove their hats when they were in front of their accusers. Refusal to give 'hat honour' was, in sum, 'a long-standing gesture of popular social protest' in a social environment that was riddled with class and status distinctions,<sup>102</sup> and claims about its religious origins must be seen in this light.

Use of the pronouns, 'thee' and 'thou', was also a recognized form of social protest,<sup>103</sup> and the Quaker historian Hugh Barbour points out that 'The stigma of social inferiority was the real issue behind the Quaker testimony' concerning them.<sup>104</sup> The Quakers' insistence on lay ministry, and their rejection of the formal training system that many of the state-supported ministers had undergone at Oxford or Cambridge, also was part of a long-standing and deeply felt anti-clericalism that was shared by numerous radical and antinomian groups.<sup>105</sup> To assert, therefore, that Quakers

developed and maintained these customs simply as a consequence of their religious convictions is to remove their activities from the social environment in which they were performed and in which they acquired meaning.

### RELIGION AND ITS SOCIAL CONTEXT

After placing the evidence used by psychological and mystical interpreters of early Quakerism within the social and historical context of mid-17th century England, the limitations of these two perspectives become obvious. Quakerism should be seen as the consequence of historically and culturally distinctive forces, and it cannot be understood through psychological or mystical approaches that ignore its social setting. When given a cultural context, however, psychology can make a contribution to interpretations of Quakerism, and herein lies the value of *social* psychology. Social psychology assumes that a dynamic relationship exists between the processes of the mind and the socio-cultural environment, and therefore insists that behavior and beliefs, including religious ones, are the result of this interplay. The social and cultural environment provides the channels through which individuals' psychological forces manifest themselves. As the Canadian psychologist of religion, Bruce Hunsberger realizes, 'The theoretical basis of the psychological study of religion has typically been weak or non-existent . . . , and social psychology's theories and experience in the development of theories of social phenomena would be valuable if applied to the study of religion'.<sup>106</sup> The most fruitful analysis, therefore, of why people develop and acquire religious beliefs takes place on the level of social psychology rather than on the level of psychology *per se*. Likewise, mysticism, when examined within clear historical and cultural boundaries, can provide valuable insight into the development of religious conceptions and experiences. Geoffrey Nuttall did this admirably well in his unsurpassed work, *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience*, in which he insisted that 'it is imperative to allow the characters so far as possible to speak for themselves, within the ambit of their own age, interest, and experience, and not to introduce extraneous comments, similarities or contrasts from the detachment of another century'.<sup>107</sup>

Put concisely, religion is a cultural system, and therefore should be studied as a socio-cultural phenomenon. This perspective, which a number of recent historical accounts of religion have used, does not deny the reality of 'psychological forces', but simply 'gets them out of any dim and inaccessible realm of private sensation into [a] well-lit world of observables . . .'.<sup>108</sup> Nor does it necessarily deny the reality of mysticism, but maintains that:

The recognition and exploration of the qualitative difference—an empirical, not a transcendental difference—between religion pure [i.e., mysticism] and religion

applied . . . will take us further toward an understanding [of religion] . . . than either a theory of primitive mysticism in which the commonplace world disappears into a cloud of curious ideas or of a primitive pragmatism in which religion disintegrates into a collection of useful fictions.<sup>109</sup>

Among the most promising social-psychological concepts through which to interpret early Quakerism is that of relative deprivation. By applying this concept to explain the appearance and development of early Quakerism, we can specify the congruence between the Quakers' customs and activities and their religious ideology. The particular content of Quakers' religious beliefs reflected their sense of having been unfairly denied the opportunity to implement deeply held, culturally specific social, political, and religious reforms, especially regarding tithe abolition.<sup>110</sup> Quakerism's reputed mysticism both emerged out of and reflected its adherents' psychologically felt but socially rooted frustrations and reformist hopes, and the content of their religious experiences remained bound by the cultural dimensions of mid-17th century England. To the extent that we can recover the psychological dimensions of the early Quakers, we should remain cognizant of the cultural milieu in which people first expressed and interpreted those dimensions. Such an awareness was lacking among the early psychological and mystical interpreters of early Quakerism, and these interpretations reveal perhaps as much about the history of ideas on religion in their periods as they do about the actual content of the historical material that these writers addressed.

## NOTES

- 1 I sincerely thank Sharon Ingram and Marie MacLean for their editorial comments, and the Issac Walton Killam Foundation of the University of Alberta for its generous financial support. I am also grateful to Elisabeth Potts Brown, Quaker Bibliographer of the Quaker Collection, Haverford College Library, and the librarians at Friends' House Library, London, for their consistent and cheerful assistance.
- 2 Rufus Jones, 'Editorial Letter', *The American Friend*, (Ninth Month [September] 15, 1910): 583. In it Jones referred to James' *Varieties of Religious Experience* as having been 'coined by a stroke of genius, which will enrich the religious vocabulary forever.' Briefer mentions of his death appeared in *The American Friend*, (Ninth Month [September] 1, 1910): 566, 579, and in *The British Friend*, (September 1910): 232.
- 3 The Quaker Collection (henceforth QC), Haverford College Library, Collection no. 1130, Box 6 (Letters to Rufus M. Jones, 1908–10), reprinted in Jones, *The Trail of Life in the Middle Years*, New York, (1934): 9.
- 4 William James, *The Principles of Psychology*, 2 vols. New York, Henry Holt and Company, 1890.
- 5 For discussion on this movement see Richard Rempel, 'Edward Grubb and the Renaissance in Britain, 1880–1914', Paper Presented at the Western Victoria Studies Association Conference, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, 1978; Thomas Kennedy, 'History and Quaker Renaissance: The Vision of John



- Wilhelm Rowntree', *Journal of The Friends' Historical Society* 55 (1 & 2) (1983 & 1984): 35–56.
- 6 See Eric J. Sharpe, *Comparative Religion: A History*, p. 117. London, Duckworth.
  - 7 William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* p. 11 and see pp. 10–12. London, Longmans, 1902 (revised 1902, reprinted 1909).
  - 8 James, *Varieties*: 22–5.
  - 9 James, *Varieties*: 22–3.
  - 10 James, *Varieties*: 6–7.
  - 11 James, *Varieties*: 7.
  - 12 James, *Varieties*: 7–8. As William Charles Braithwaite and Henry Cadbury point out, a number of books in Fox's time attest to the fact that in Lichfield a thousand Christians had died under Diocletian. These historians do not, however, cite a reliable source as verification for the claim, and Cadbury even suggests that the story about the town might have been a myth. I have not been able to document the story myself. See Braithwaite, *The Beginnings of Quakerism*, p. 56 edited and reviewed by Henry J. Cadbury, foreword by Hugh Doncaster. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1912 (2nd Edn. 1955 pp. 549–50). For an alternative explanation of why Fox called Lichfield 'bloody', see Beatrice Saxon, 'Notes and Queries: 'Woe to the Bloody City of Lichfield'', *Journal of the Friends' Historical Society* 41 (2) (1949): 86–7, who relates a story from 1649 in which a pool near Lichfield mysteriously turned blood-red (possibly from algae-growth?).
  - 13 James, *Varieties*: 410.
  - 14 James, *Varieties*: 411 n. 2, quoting George Fox, *The Journal of George Fox*, edited by John L. Nicholls, Introduction by Geoffrey F. Nuttall and epilogue by Henry J. Cadbury, (London, Religious Society of Friends, 1975, reviewed and edited version of 1694): 27. This passage, however, is not in the critical edition of *The Journal of George Fox*, 2 vols, edited by Normal Penney, (New York: 1975 reprint of the 1911 Edn of 1694). The different content of Fox's journals is the result of the manuscripts used for the modern editions. Penney's edition of Fox's *Journal* was based upon the original Spence MSS, on file in Friends' House Library, London, and is referred to as the *Cambridge Journal*. Fox probably began composing it during his imprisonment in Worcester jail in 1673–74, during which time he began dictating sections to a fellow Quaker prisoner, Thomas Lower (1633–1720), who was also his son-in-law. It was completed at Swarthmore Hall, Ulverston (presently in Cumbria), which was Fox's home after his marriage in 1669 to the widowed Margaret Fell (1614–1702). Before publication of the account, however, Friends assigned to the Quaker, Thomas Ellwood (formerly John Milton's amanuensis), the task of editing Fox's work. The *Journal*, with Ellwood's editions, finally was printed in 1694. As Ellwood's edition contained Fox's reminiscences on his youth and religious activities during the 1640s, they also appear in Nickall's edition of the *Journal*. The original manuscripts upon which these are based, however, have been lost, so that Penney's edition, which reproduces the Spence MSS, begins with events in late 1649. For discussions of this editing, see Nickall's Preface in Fox, *Journal*: vii–xvi; Penney's Introduction in Fox, *Journal*: xxxi–xli; and Henry J. Cadbury, 'The *Editio Princeps* of Fox's *Journal*', *Journal of the Friends' Historical Society* 53 (3) (1974): 197–218. For a discussion of the way in which Fox's *Journal* might have given posterity an embellished interpretation of both

- Quaker history and Fox's importance for the group during its early years, see Wintrop Hudson, 'A Suppressed Chapter in Quaker History', *Journal of Religion* 24 (2) (April 1944): 108–18; Henry J. Cadbury's response, 'An Obscure Chapter of Quaker History', *Journal of Religion* 24 (1944): 201–13; and Hudson's rejoinder in, 'Notes and Communications-Quaker History: Dr Hudson Replies', *The Journal of Religion* 24 (4) (October, 1944): 279–81.
- 15 James, *Varieties*: 410–1 n. 2; quoted from Edward Taylor, *Jacob Behmen's Theosophic Philosophy Unfolded*, pp. 425, 427. London, Thomas Salusbury, 1691.
  - 16 James, *Varieties*: 291–2. 'Doffing the hat' or 'hat-honor' customarily took place when two men greeted one another, and when a man of lower social rank was in the presence of a man of higher social rank. When people of unequal social rank were conversing, the lesser ranked individual was expected to address the superior with the pronoun, 'you', while the higher ranked person responded by using 'thee' and 'thou'. These points are discussed in Hugh Barbour, *The Quakers in Puritan England*, pp. 163–5. New Haven, Yale University Press, 1964.
  - 17 James, *Varieties*: 292–6; see Fox, *Journal*, edited by Nickalls: 36–7.
  - 18 James, *Varieties*: 335–6.
  - 19 James, *Varieties*: 31, 334–5.
  - 20 James, *Varieties*: 7. Jones' copy of James' *Varieties*, which is housed in the Rufus M. Jones Collection on Mysticism in the Haverford College Library, has this section bracketed in pencil. Presumably Jones did this himself.
  - 21 James, *Varieties*: 512–3.
  - 22 James, *Varieties*: 517.
  - 23 *American Friend*, 'Some Recent Studies of Religion', (Tenth Month [October] 16, 1902): 805.
  - 24 Catherine Albright, 'Review of James' *Varieties of Religious Experience*', *Present Day Papers* 5 (15 September 1902): 292. Jones, by the way, commented briefly on his opinion of Albright's review in a letter to Rowntree. 'The [book] reviews are good, though C. A. [i.e., Catherine Albright] has not caught James. Her review is, however, suggestive'. QC, Collection 1130, Letters from [Rufus M. Jones], 1875–1904, Folder: 'Jones, Rufus Matthew and E. B. Jones to Lowell C. Jones et al.', 1902 [Letter to John Wilhelm Rowntree, September 1902]. In August of the same year Jones had complained to his wife that 'James' chapter on mysticism, though good, did not satisfy me. It gave little new insight' (QC, Collection 1130, Box 38D, Letters from [RMJ] 1899–1902, folder: 'Letters from RMJ to EBJ', 1902, dated 8/5 1902).
  - 25 John Wilhelm Rowntree, *John Wilhelm Rowntree: Essays and Addresses*, edited by Joshua Rowntree, London, Headley Brothers, 1902, reprinted from an essay that appeared in 1902–3. On Rowntree, see Richenda C. Scott, 'Authority or Experience: John Wilhelm Rowntree and the Dilemma of 19th Century British Quakerism', *Journal of the Friends' Historical Society* 49 (2) (Spring, 1960): 75–95; Kennedy, 'History and Quaker Renaissance . . . '.
  - 26 *The British Friend*, (10th Month [October], 1902): 262, 263.
  - 27 *The British Friend*, (1902): 262.
  - 28 QC, Collection 1130, Box 3: Letters 1899–1902, Folder: Letters to [RMJ], 1902 [John Wilhelm Rowntree to Jones, 2 December 1902].
  - 29 QC, Collection 1130, Box 3: Letters 1899–1902, Folder: Letters to [RMJ], 1902 [John Wilhelm Rowntree to Jones, 11 December 1902], emphasis in the original letter.

- 30 The summer school lectures were programs on religion, usually Quakerism or early Christianity, as well as topics from modern science that liberal Friends believed would edify and educate their fellow Quakers and the public at large. Many were held at Woodbrooke, Selly Oak, Birmingham, but others were held in various parts of England. See Elizabeth Gray Vining, *Friend of Life. The Biography of Rufus M. Jones*. Philadelphia, J. B. Lippincott, (1958): 69, 100–2, 113, 115, 117, 139. The surviving lecture programs are housed in the Friends' House Library, London England, in *Summer School & Week End Programmes, etc.* In its first season, in 1903, Jones gave ten lectures, and the preliminary program indicates that he probably lectured on topics which included, 'The Subconscious Life', 'The Testimony of Mysticism', and 'The Wider Intimations of Self-Consciousness'. Starbuck was also tentatively scheduled to lecture between 30 July to 6 August, but his topic was unannounced. See vol. 1, 'Summer School for Religious Study, "Woodbrooke", Selly Oak' 23 July to 3 September 1903) [pamphlet No. 40]. In 1908, Jones delivered a lecture entitled, 'The Mysticism of Quakerism', for the Summer School at Kendal (vol. 2, pamphlet No. 16). In 1910, Jones also gave a lecture, 'The Meaning and Reality of Mysticism', to a conference near Helmsly in Yorkshire (vol. 2, pamphlet No. 39). It seems likely that James was mentioned in some of these lectures, but, unfortunately, no copies of them survive in the Quaker collections in Haverford College, Friends' House Library, London, or Woodbrooke College, Selly Oak, Birmingham. Jones and Starbuck knew each other, and both attended a conference in Toronto in 1904. Jones seems to have liked him. See QC, Collection 1130 Box 38D, Letters from [RMJ], 1899–1902, Folder: 'Letters from RMJ to EBJ', 1902, (R. M. Jones to Elizabeth Jones, Toronto, 8/16, 1904; and R. M. Jones and E. B. Jones to Lowell C. Jones *et al.*, 1902 (15 August 1904, addressed, 'My dear Lilychen'). On Starbuck's Quaker background, see Edwin D. Starbuck, 'Religion's Use of Me', in *Religion in Transition*, edited by Vergilius Ferm, pp. 204, 207–215. New York, Books for Libraries Press, 1937 (reprinted 1969).
- 31 See Vining, *Friend of Life*: 72; Kennedy, 'History and Quaker Renaissance . . . '.
- 32 Vining, *Friend of Life*: 72.
- 33 Rufus M. Jones, *Spiritual Reformers in the 16th and 17th Centuries*, p. v. Boston, Beacon Press, 1914 (reprinted 1959).
- 34 Gay Wilson Allen, *William James: A Biography*, pp. 415–428. New York, The Viking Press, 1967.
- 35 Vining, *Friend of Life*: 66–7, 85–6.
- 36 In 1932 Jones wrote, 'As soon as I discovered that William James was at work on the nature of mystical experience for his Edinburgh Gifford Lectures, I began to consult with him about my work and my plans. It was always amazing to me the way this busy man welcomed a younger quester and gave himself to him as though his main purpose in life was to help somebody get his feet upon the sun-road to truth. He saw more capacities in a person than the person himself did. He interpreted a man's potentialities to the man himself and awakened his expectation until one came to believe in the belief of the great professor and to act upon his estimate. Though never a disciple of his and though never able to accept in anything like fullness his central positions, I always felt that he gave me the stimulus of his friendship and I acknowledge now, with joy and loyalty, the immense debt I owe him.' Rufus Jones, 'Why I Enroll With the Mystics', in *Contemporary American Theology*, edited by Vergilius Ferm, vol. 1, p. 196. New York, Round Table Press, 1932.

- 37 In the mid 1920s Jones stated, 'Some years ago I wrote a little book entitled *A Boy's Religion from Memory* . . . . I had the pleasure of knowing that William James loved it . . . .'. See Jones, *Finding the Trail of Life*, p. 9. London, George Allen & Unwin, 1926. 9. It is impossible to determine from these passages whether James and Jones actually met or simply corresponded. I checked with Elizabeth Ann Falsey of the Manuscript Department of The Houghton Library, where the William James Collection is located, and she informed me that no letters are on file between James and Jones (personal correspondence, 25 September, 1984).
- 38 Vining, *Friend of Life*: 39.
- 39 Rufus Jones, 'Mysticism (Christian, Protestant)', in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. 9, pp. 101–103. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1917. Jones also wrote the introductory essay, 'Mysticism', and the section on 'Mysticism-Christian New Testament'. See *Encyclopedia*: 83–4, 89–90.
- 40 Vining, *Friend of Life*: 51, 99, 201, 249–50. Good discussions of Jones' imprecise definition of the term, 'mysticism', include Melvin B. Endy, 'The Interpretation of Quakerism: Rufus Jones and His Critics', *Quaker History*, 70 1 (Spring, 1981): 3–21; Hal Bridges, *American Mysticism*, New York, Harper & Row (1970): 24–37; Daniel E. Bassuk, 'Rufus Jones and Mysticism', *Quaker Religious Thought* 17 (4) (Summer, 1978): 4–9; and J. Calvin Keene, 'Historical Quakerism and Mysticism', *Quaker Religious Thought* 7 (2) (Autumn, 1963): 2–9. Bridges mistakenly indicates that James overlooked Quakers in his chapter on mysticism (Bridges, *American Mysticism*: 24). Apparently he failed to notice James, *Varieties*: 410–1 n. 2.
- 41 Rufus Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. xxv. London, Macmillan, 1909. In 1938, Jones wrote that, 'I see now, as I did not see in the early period, what a large pathological factor there has been in the lives of many mystics in the long historical line' (quoted in Vine, *Friend of Life*: 126).
- 42 Jones, *Studies*: xvii, see xviii.
- 43 Jones, *Studies*: xxix, citing James, *Varieties*: 515, see 508.
- 44 Jones, *Studies*: 495.
- 45 Jones, *Studies*: xxvi n. 2; see James, *Varieties*: 410–11 n. 2. Additional support for this argument comes from the fact that Jones did not own this edition of Boehme in his collection of mystical books, and therefore must have either borrowed a copy or cited the passage from another source. A card file index of books on mysticism that John Wilhelm Rowntree sent to Jones can be found in the Quaker Collection, Haverford College Library, Rufus M. Jones Collection, Collection on Mysticism. Jones sent Rowntree a letter of thanks for these books on 9 February 1904 (Vining, *Friend of Life*: 117).
- 46 Rufus Jones, 'Introduction', to William C. Braithwaite, *The Beginnings of Quakerism*, xxvii, London, Macmillan and Company, 1912: See James, *Varieties*: 236 n. 1. It is worth mentioning that, by 1934, Jones seemed to have reduced the role of the subconscious in his conception of mysticism. He admitted that 'I went too far in my early period toward the adoption of [James'] theories of the religious significance of the subconscious, though I never did accept the central principles of his pragmatism as a sound theory of truth'. See Jones, *Trail*: 8.
- 47 Jones, 'Introduction' to *Beginnings*: xxviii.
- 48 Jones, 'Introduction' to *Beginnings*: xxxi.
- 49 Jones, 'Introduction' to *Beginnings*: xxxiii; see James, *Varieties*: 199. For a concise summary of how James influenced Jones in his early interpretations of

- religion and the subconscious, and Jones' gradual modification of his initial views, see Bridges, *American Mysticism*: 29.
- 50 Jones, 'Introduction' to *Beginnings*: xxxv-xxxviii.
  - 51 Jones, 'Introduction' to *Beginnings*: xxxviii.
  - 52 Jones, 'Introduction' to *Beginnings*: xlii.
  - 53 Jones, 'Introduction' to *Beginnings*: xlii.
  - 54 Jones, 'Introduction' to *Beginnings*: xliii, xliii-xliv.
  - 55 Rufus Jones, *Spiritual Reformers in the 16th and 17th Centuries*, pp. xviii-xviii Boston, Beacon Press 1914, (reprinted 1959). Basically for Jones mysticism 'was a psychological matter made up of experiential and non-rational experiences' (Bassuk, 'Rufus Jones and Mysticism': 7).
  - 56 Jones, *Spiritual Reformers*: 220, see 220-234.
  - 57 Jones, *Spiritual Reformers*: 220.
  - 58 Jones, *Spiritual Reformers*: 222-3.
  - 59 Robert, Barclay of Reigate, *The Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth*, London, Hodder and Stoughton, (1876, 3rd Edn., 1879): 214-215.
  - 60 Geoffrey F. Nuttall, *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, (1946): 16 n.13.
  - 61 Jones, *Spiritual Reformers*: 220 n.1.
  - 62 The copy of Barclay that Jones owned apparently had been passed on to him from his uncle, Eli Jones, and it is now in the private collection of Haverford College Library's Director and respected Quaker scholar, Edwin Bonner. In this book, Barclay insisted that 'not only was Fox conversant with Boehme's writings, but appears in his journal to presuppose a knowledge of Boehme's method of stating spiritual experience' (Barclay, *Inner Life*: 214n.). Barclay then put quotes from Boehme (and a Boehme biography) and Fox side by side, and next to most of them in the margins of Jones' copy is Jones' characteristic pencil marks for emphasis (*Inner Life*: 214-215). Worth noting, however, is that Barclay concluded his discussion on the religious language and fervor of the late 1640s by saying that 'The air was thick with reports of prophecies and miracles, and there were men of all parties who lived on the border land between sanity and insanity' (*Inner Life*: 216). I have no indication that James used Barclay when preparing his *Varieties*, and if this is true then he must have come to the comparison between Fox and Boehme through other means.
  - 63 Jones revealed how well he was versed in the psychological literature by mentioning the terms, 'introvert/extrovert' which came from Carl Jung's 1921 publication, *Psychologische Typen*, which had been translated into English in 1923. See Jones, *George Fox: Seeker and Friend*, p. 32. London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1930.
  - 64 See Bridges, *American Mysticism*: 31-2.
  - 65 James H. Leuba, *The Psychology of Religious Mysticism*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1925. 260, 281 n.4 citing Jones, *Studies*: xxix-xxx and James, *Varieties*.
  - 66 Leuba, *Psychology*: 260.
  - 67 Leuba, *Psychology*: 281, 303, quoting Rufus Jones, *Social Law in the Spiritual World: Studies in Human and Divine Interrelationship*. p. 161 Philadelphia, The John C. Winston Co., 1904.
  - 68 Leuba, *Psychology*: 315.
  - 69 Leuba, *Psychology*: 316; see also James Leuba, 'The Making of a Psychologist

- of Religion', in *Religion in Transition*, pp. 173–200, edited by Vergilius Ferm, New York, Books for Libraries Press, 1937 (reprinted 1969).
- 70 Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, London, Macmillan and Company, (1927): 9.
- 71 Jones, *New Studies*: 11.
- 72 Jones, *New Studies*: 13–14.
- 73 Jones, *New Studies*: 20, 62, 80–1, 85, 146, 197.
- 74 Jones, *New Studies*: 66, 78, 203.
- 75 Jones, *New Studies*: 78.
- 76 Jones, *New Studies*: 198.
- 77 Jones, *New Studies*: 146.
- 78 Jones, *New Studies*: 148.
- 79 Jones, *New Studies*: 165.
- 80 Jones, 'Introduction', to William C. Braithwaite, *The Second Period of Quakerism*, p. xxx. London, Macmillan and Company, 1919.
- 81 Keep in mind that there may have been between 30 000 and 40 000 Quakers after the group's first decade (Braithwaite, *Beginnings*: 512). Jones did make occasional references to Quakers other than Fox: see 'Introduction', to *Beginnings*: xxxvi–xli; and *New Studies*: 166.
- 82 One is reminded of Roland Bainton's criticism that Erik Erikson constructed his story about the youthful Martin Luther despite 'the sparsity of evidence' with which the psychoanalyst had to work. See Roland H. Bainton, 'Luther: A Study in Psychiatry', review of Erik Erikson, *Young Man Luther*, *The Yale Review*, 48 (1958–59): 409.
- 83 James, *Varieties*: 12 n.; Jones, 'Introduction', to *Beginnings*: xlii–xliii.
- 84 Michael R. Watts, *The Dissenters*, vol. I., p. 187. Oxford, 1978. 187.
- 85 Watts, *Dissenters*: 418; see Paul Delany, *British Autobiography in the Seventeenth Century*, pp. 59, 61, 71. London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969. E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, p. 366 n. 2. New York, Vintage Books, 1963 (1966 Edn).
- 86 This is conjecture on my part, but one of the few historians on the 17th century to address the issue, Lawrence Stone, tentatively comes to a different conclusion. Basing his evaluation on admittedly 'very fragmentary evidence' about masturbation (which was almost exclusively from males), Stone, in an unfortunate choice of words, concludes, 'it would seem that in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries even the most Calvinistic of children, brought up in fear of hell-fire, nevertheless were not too deeply disturbed by the problem of handling their early sexual impulses, no more so, at any rate, than children at any period in history . . .'. See Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage In England 1500–1800*, pp. 513–14. New York, Harper & Row, 1977. He acknowledges later, however, that '[d]uring the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century [sic], internalized repression was undoubtedly aided by the moral pressures of Puritanism' (Stone, *Family*: 615). In 1657, for example, George Fox admonished other Quakers to 'Keep down the unchaste, keep down the adulterous eye, and keep down the lust of the flesh, which is not of the Father but of the world . . .'. See George Fox, *A Collection of . . . Epistles, Letters and Testimonies . . .* vol. 1, [*The Works of Georg Fox*, vol. 7], p. 145. Philadelphia, Marcus T. C. Gould, 1831.
- 87 James, *Varieties*: 411 n. 2; Jones, *Studies*: 495; *Spiritual Reformers*: 220, *New Studies*: 146.

- 88 Rufus Jones, *Mysticism and Democracy in the English Revolution*, p. 140. Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1932. I do not know whether the claim made in the *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* that the Behmenists 'later amalgamated with the Quakers' somehow is based upon a misinterpretation of Jones, but Jones, as well as James and the Quakers, has a separate article in it. See F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone, editors, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, pp. 182–3, 726, 756, 538–9. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2nd corrected Edn, 1974. An early study on Boehme's influence in England states that 'It is no doubt most important . . . , to remember that many volumes of Boehme's works were published intermittently in Sparrow's and Ellistone's admirable translations between the years 1647 and 1663—years which were so formative to the Quaker movement, and it is quite likely that one or more of these fell into the hands of Fox and others. Nevertheless in the absence of direct quotations it is unwise to assume any borrowing from the printed page'. See Stephen Hobhouse, 'Jacob Boehme's Influence in England', *Journal of the Friends' Historical Society*, 33 (1936): 54.
- 89 Fox, *Journal*, edited by Hicknalls: 27; Jones, *Spiritual Reformers*: 221–2; Barclay, *Inner Life*: 214; Nuttall, *Holy Spirit*: 16 n. 13. Likewise, it seems probable that both Fox's and Boehme's claims to have gained knowledge of the properties of plants was based upon Gen. 1:28–30 and 2: 19–20.
- 90 Cadbury in Braithwaite, *Beginnings*: 548 n. 3, see 40.
- 91 L. Hugh Doncaster's 'Preface' to Braithwaite, *Beginnings*: vii; Frederick B. Tolles's 'Introduction' to Braithwaite, *Second Period*: xxix, xxxii n. 1; see Vining, *Friend of Life*: 194; Donald F. Durnbaugh, 'Baptists and Quakers—Left Wing Puritans?', *Quaker History*, 62 (2) (Autumn, 1973): 67–82.
- 92 David W. Petegorsky, *Left Wing Democracy in the English Civil War*, p. 65 n. 2. London, Victor Gollancz, 1940.
- 93 James, *Varieties*: 7–8.
- 94 Braithwaite, *Beginnings*: 56 and n.; Barbour, *Quakers in Puritan England*: 117. The battle for Lichfield in 1643 was recounted as early as 1704 in Clarendon's famous account of the English Civil War. See Edward Earl of Clarendon, *The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England . . .*, vol. 3, pp. 454–6. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1704 (reprinted 1826).
- 95 Braithwaite, *Beginnings*: 53–4.
- 96 James, *Varieties*: 292.
- 97 Christopher Hill, 'The Radical Critics of Oxford and Cambridge in the 1650s', in John W. Baldwin and Richard A. Goldwaite, editors, *Universities in Politics*, pp. 107–132. Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 1972 (reprinted in Christopher Hill, *Change and Continuity in 17th Century England*, pp. 127–148. London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1974).
- 98 Don M. Wolfe, *Milton in the Puritan Revolution*, p. 145. New York, Humanities Press, 1941 (reprinted 1963). H. H. Brailsford, *The Levellers and the English Revolution*, edited by Christopher Hill, pp. 92–3. Stanford, California, Stanford University Press, 1961. Pauline Gregg, *Free-born John: A Biography of John Lilburne*, pp. 140–3. London, George G. Harrap & Company, 1961.
- 99 Wolfe, *Milton*: 150.
- 100 Wolfe, *Milton*: 316.
- 101 Brailsford, *Levellers*: 46; B. S. Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men*, p. 143. London, Faber and Faber, 1972.
- 102 Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down*, p. 198. London, Temple Smith, 1972.

- 103 Hill, . . . *Upside Down*: 198–9; Brailsford, *Levellers*: 46.
- 104 Barbour, *Quakers*: 164; see 163–6.
- 105 Margaret James, 'The Political Importance of the Tithes Controversy in the English Revolution, 1640–60', *History*, (June 1941): 1–18; James Fulton Maclear, 'Popular Anticlericalism in the Puritan Revolution', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 17(4) (October 1956): 443–70; Hill, . . . *Upside Down*: *passim*.
- 106 Bruce Hunsberger, 'Problems and Promise in the Psychology of Religion: An Emerging Social Psychology of Religion?', *Canadian Journal of Behavioral Science*, 12(1) (1980): 72.
- 107 Nuttall, *Holy Spirit*: 167–8.
- 108 Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, p. 96. New York, Basic Books, 1973. For a discussion of historians' use of 'Geertz's definition of religion as a system of symbols establishing moods and motivations by formulating and confirming conceptions of a general order of existence', see the review article by E. Brooks Holifield, 'Religion and Order in England and America', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 25(3) (July 1983): 526.
- 109 Geertz, *Interpretation*: 121.
- 110 Stephen A. Kent, 'Relative Deprivation and Resource Mobilization: A Study of Early Quakerism', *British Journal of Sociology*, 33(4) (December 1982): 529–44; 'The Quaker Ethic and the Fixed Price Policy: Max Weber and Beyond', *Sociological Inquiry*, 53(1) (Winter, 1983): 16–32; 'Weber, Goethe, and the Nietzschean Allusion: Capturing the Source of the "Iron Cage" Metaphor', *Sociological Analysis* 44(4) (1983): 314–6.

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