THE FIRST HUNDRED YEARS OF QUAKERISM IN KENT: PART II*

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'SUFFERINGS'

Quakers experienced 'persecution' or 'sufferings' over many aspects of their beliefs and actions in addition to those caused by their non-payment of tithes. From about 1660, Kent Friends recorded their sufferings in six categories (shown in the table on page 3), corresponding closely with those suggested by the Quaker leader George Fox in 1657. They suffered imprisonment and fines for disobeying laws, some specifically directed against them, which conflicted with conscience: these sufferings are also summarized for the period up till 1689 in the table. In the 1660s particularly, and again in the early 1680s, 'persecution' also took the form of popular hostility, and of general harassment and disruption of meetings by the militia. But as Friends ceased to be feared as potential rebels, and also weeded out their more radical members and extravagant actions, sufferings became less frequent and severe. Kent Friends, for instance, could realistically expect imprisonment until about 1666 but after that fines and, on their refusal to pay, distraints were the likely outcome of prosecution. Many imprisonments occurred again in the early 1680s, together with increased distraints and severe disruption of meetings.[1] Persecution at this time was largely attributable to Friends' involvement in politics, its 'vicious intensity . . . in part . . . due to their earlier political boldness' in effectively forming themselves into a political association, campaigning for concessions and openly

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[1] Centre for Kentish Studies [hereafter CKS], Kent Sufferings book (1655–1759) N/FQZ 1, 35–51, 392–8; Library of the Society of Friends, London [hereafter LSF] Yearly Meeting Minutes, i, under 1683.

supporting parliamentary candidates who '"deport[ed] themselves tenderly towards friends"'.[2] The political aspect to Friends' sufferings is illustrated by this example from Dover: in 1683 'Friends were pulled out of the meeting house by 3 of The 8 new Commissioners for Dover (The old Rulers being laid aside by the King) and The men fined 5*s*. a piece, and Luke Howard £20 for the House'. After further disruption 'again They, with Constables and Informers, Came and Took names pulled Friends out of their Meeting House and sent them to prison, And seized the meetinghouse for the King, hung a Lock on the Door, Saying they would build a Chimney, and Foster their Informer should Live in it, and sent Thomas Bridge to jayle'.[3]

Sufferings were extensively recorded for several reasons; partly as ammunition in Quaker causes, particularly the abolition of tithes, but also because suffering to demonstrate the validity of the Quaker 'testimonies', and of the sufferer's faith, developed an increasingly important role in Quakerism.[4] In the late seventeenth century, for example, Thomas Marche compiled from the original record of Kent sufferings a memorial of the persecution of East-Kent Monthly Meeting. He described the sufferings of the Quaker missionaries and their converts in great detail.[5] But although the idea of suffering for the faith came to play an increasing role in Quakerism, the maintenance of the testimonies by suffering was increasingly ignored, avoided and questioned by some Friends, although there were regional differences.[6] All realistic hopes of achieving Quaker objectives, such as the abolition of tithes or universal acceptance of the evils of taking oaths, were extinguished at the Restoration. After that time, and particularly with the establishment of the Meeting for Sufferings in 1675 as part of the central organization in London, efforts were directed at obtaining relief for Friends who suffered for their principles. Indeed, it has been

[2] N.C. Hunt, *Two Early Political Associations* (Oxford, 1991), 9.

[3] LSF The 'Great Books of Sufferings' (44 vols., 1659 to 1846), [hereafter GBS], iii, 675.

[4] Printed examples include Robert Minter [of Kent] and Thomas Robertson, '*A Horrible Thing committed in this Land* (1658); *The Record of the Sufferings for Tythes in England* (n.p., n.d. ?1657–9); *A Brief Declaration of some of the Oppressions and Sufferings of . . . Quakers, in the Northern parts . . . As likewise the names of several others, in other parts of the nation, who are sued for Tythes* (n.d., n.p.); W. Spurrier, *The persecution of the Quakers in England, 1650–1714*, Ph.D. thesis, University of North Carolina, 1976, 7.

[5] CKS Thomas Marche's Sufferings Book for East-Kent (1655–1690) N/FQZ 2.

[6] E.g., LSF Yearly Meeting Minutes, i 232; E.J. Evans, *A History of the Tithe System in England, 1690–1750, with specific reference to Staffordshire*, Warwick Ph.D. thesis (1970), 186.

SUMMARY OF NUMBERS OF INDIVIDUALS AND MEETINGS IN KENT AFFECTED BY 'PERSECUTION' FOR VARIOUS CAUSES BETWEEN 1655 AND THE PASSING OF THE TOLERATION ACT IN 1689.

Year	Speaking in church	Meeting, not swearing	Refusing church repairs, or clerks' wages	Refusing tithes	Refusing arms	Indictments for not going to church	Total of incidents of suffering	Year
1655	5	–	–	–	–	–	5	1655
1656	–	–	2	–	–	–	2	1656
1657	1	–	2	2	–	–	5	1657
1658		–	1	2	–	–	3	1658
1659	–	–	–	2	–	–	2	1659
1660	2	19	–	11	3	–	35	1660
1661	1	7	–	4	7	–	19	1661
1662	–	2	–	2	2	–	6	1662
1663	–	1	–	3	–	–	4	1663
1664	–	1	–	–	1	4	6	1664
1665	2	2	–	1	–	–	5	1665
1666	–	2	–	1	2	–	5	1666
1667	–	–	–	2	3	–	5	1667
1668	–	1	–	2	1	–	4	1668
1669	–	–	–	4	2	1	7	1669
1670	–	7	–	2	2	–	11	1670
1671	–	–	–	–	–	1	1	1671
1672	–	–	–	5	7	–	12	1672
1673	–	–	–	2	–	–	2	1673
1674	–	–	3	2	–	–	5	1674
1675	–	2	3	4	–	–	9	1675
1676	–	1	–	3	9	1	14	1676
1677	–	–	1	–	2	4	7	1677
1678	–	–	1	5	–	3	9	1678
1679	–	–	–	1	–	0	1	1679
1680	–	–	1	1	7	2	11	1680
1681	–	11	–	1	3	–	15	1681
1682	–	6	–	2	7	1	16	1682
1683	–	3	–	3	7	16	29	1683
1684	–	8	–	1	1	5	15	1684
1685	–	2	4	–	1	1	8	1685
1686	–	–	–	3	8	–	11	1686
1687	–	–	–	8	1	–	9	1687
1688	–	–	1	4	–	–	5	1688
1689	–	–	1	5	–	–	6	1689
	TOTAL 11	TOTAL 75 incidents	TOTAL 20	TOTAL 88	TOTAL 76	TOTAL 39		

Source: CKS N/FQZ 1.

NOTES:

Dates are Old Style, so that, for instance, the imprisonments in January 1661 after Venner's Rising are recorded under 1660.

Except under 'meeting', the numbers are of people suffering, although sometimes of the same person suffering more than once in the year. Under 'meeting', the number of entries for each year is given.

suggested that the London leadership felt Friends would be unlikely to keep up the testimonies unless protected from severe suffering while doing so.[7] The efforts took the form of helping individuals, as well as attempts to change various laws in Friends' favour. In 1696, for instance, Friends from the Ashford area agreed that George White should 'proceed according to friends of London's advice concerning his sufferings': in the previous year White had 'surrendered himself to the sheriff' when goods were distrained from him for the non-payment of tithes, apparently in an attempt to avoid the loss of his goods.[8]

The suffering of Quakers cannot be seen merely as persecution aimed at repressing the sect, but had important functions within Quakerism itself, 'a testimony to be proclaimed, a ritual to be performed . . . a joy to be savored, [and] a test to be endured'.[9] Suffering was also used in various ways to define Friends — to distinguish them from the other sects from which they had in many cases been converted; to denote leaders and preachers among Friends: to mark out membership, or at least, 'belonging': to define and denigrate 'apostates' or separatists. Friends saw themselves as upholding their principles, even if others abandoned theirs because of persecution. Samuel Fisher, a Quaker leader from Kent, insinuated that the experience of suffering had induced the Baptists to alter their views on taking oaths:

> 'Very many Baptists both in prison and out, in Kent, and else-where, being mis-led by the Crooked Examples, and mis-taught by the crude conceptions of their Untaught Teachers, that it is Lawfull to swear in some Cases, do chuse to purchase their Liberty by swearing, than either to come into, or to continue in prison'.[10]

Luke Howard, another leader, suggested that because of persecution Kentish Baptists had 'left their Meeting in Publicke and run into Corners'.[11] For Thomas Marche the willingness of the Quaker evangelists 'to suffer the Cruelties inflicted on them, for the Testimony of a pure Conscience . . . Rather then to Staine . . . the Pretious, Pure, Perfect, Spotlesse Truth' proved that they were 'assuredly Spiritual Israel, the true Seed of Abraham'.[12] Although the early itinerant

[7] Hunt, *op. cit.*, 68–70.

[8] CKS Ashford Monthly Meeting minutes (1673–1764) N/FQZ 9, flyleaf, 8th [day] 2nd [month] 1696; CKS N/FQZ 1, 247.

[9] Spurrier, *op. cit.*, 12.

[10] Samuel Fisher, *One antidote against . . . Swearing*, etc. (1660), in Samuel Fisher, *The Testimony of Truth Exalted by the Collected Labours of . . . Samuel Fisher* (1679), 792.

[11] Luke Howard, *Love and Truth in Plainess Manifested* (1704), 22.

[12] CKS N/FQZ 2, 5.

evangelists may have courted 'persecution' as a way of validating their ministry, the ideas that their sufferings were especially severe and the result of preaching the gospel were propagated after the event by writers such as Fox and Marche. When William Caton and John Stubbs spoke in Kent churches (and afterwards at Maidstone were imprisoned and whipped), it was less an attempt to proselytize than 'to demonstrate their Dedication to Truth' before God and to their fellow-Quakers.[13] Their subsequent actions appeared to be challenging the authorities by their disobedience, rather than submitting passively to suffering for the sake of preaching the Quaker gospel. For the 1655 account of Caton and Stubbs' mission to Maidstone makes it clear that they challenged the town authorities to let them starve in prison, by refusing to work for food or to accept food as a gift from other inmates. They would have been released from the town jail if they had paid their fees, but refused to do so, and were consequently whipped as vagrants. A spiritual interpretation was soon put on their activities, which were rapidly enshrined as the central feature of the mission; Marche did so by making small but significant alterations as he conflated his sources to write his 'official' version of these events.[14] This interpretation was repeated by Howard and Fox; Howard, like Marche, writing more than thirty years after the events at Maidstone, saw the missionaries' treatment as a consequence of their preaching, and had the facts wrong: he asserted that 'Lambert Godfrey [the Recorder of Maidstone] put them into Bridewell, and after keeping them three days without food, Whipped them Sore'.[15] Fox suggested that it was for 'preaching the gospell' that they were 'stockt and whippt'.[16]

In 1661, Luke Howard himself had been imprisoned, together with other early leaders and converts. At the time these people regarded the details of their imprisonment as 'to[o] tedious to relate' for the sufferings book. However, in 1690, Marche used letters written by them to portray the sufferings at length and in great detail, since he was using them to call his generation to a more faithful adherence to the Quaker testimonies.[17] Suffering became a desirable or, at least, highly regarded element in the

[13] Spurrier, *op. cit.*, 5.

[14] W. Caton and J. Stubbs, *A True Declaration of the Bloody Proceedings of the Men of Maidstone in the County of Kent*, etc. (1655), 2–4; W. Caton, *A Journal of the Life of that Faithful Servant and Minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ Will. Caton (1689)*, 19; Thomas Howsegoe, *A Word From the North Sounded into the South. Heard, and received of Many, etc.* (1657), 2, 9, 17; CKS N/FQZ 2, 7–14.

[15] Howard, *op. cit.*, 19–20.

[16] (Ed.) N. Penney, *The Journal of George Fox*, 2nd Edn. (New York, 1973), ii, 325.

[17] CKS N/FQZ 1, 27; CKS N/FQZ 2, 25–49.

lives of Quaker preachers as it marked them out as sincere and committed leaders. This is shown, for instance, in the accounts of the lives and sufferings of deceased ministers submitted to the Yearly Meetings towards the end of the seventeenth century; these 'testimonies' to 'public' Friends were given by others who knew them, as proving the worth of their ministry. They commended their travels and years of service as preachers, and their sufferings, such as 'the great havock and spoil' made of Thomas Briggs' goods, and his many imprisonments. Testimonies to Kent Friends included ones to William Gibson who was imprisoned in Maidstone for three years and who died in the early 1680s, John Greenfield of Staplehurst, and John Hawkins, 'who had a publick ministry', was imprisoned as a result of his beliefs, and died there in 1682.[18]

Suffering also had an important function in defining other Quakers besides 'ministers'. Quaker meetings for worship were open to all who wished to attend, there being no official rites or lists to demonstrate membership, as other dissenting churches had.[19] However, registration in a Meeting's records of births, marriages or deaths could imply membership, or at least '"belonging"',[20] and with it a right to relief from Friends in times of need. Not all who attended Quaker Meetings had genuine spiritual convictions: mere onlookers, sympathizers, those who wished to marry a Friend, and those who had turned away from Quaker belief and, especially, practice could be there, as seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Friends were well aware.[21] But a readiness to suffer for Quaker beliefs might mark people out as convinced believers, and was sometimes required by the Kent business-meetings as proof that expressions of Quaker belief were genuine. Both these meetings and people with tenuous links with Friends seem to have been aware that Quaker registration might establish a claim to Quaker relief. For example, Folkestone Monthly Meeting noted that

> 'Whereas Mary the wife of Wiliam Chalk of Fokestone did sometime past make Request that her Child might be Regrested [registered] in freinds Booke the matter being Largely Debated and Itt apeairing a Matter of Weight Recourse was had to the Quarterly Meeting . . . and pursuant to the advice of the said Quarterly Meeting, this Meeting ordered . . . [two men] to speak with the Said William Chalk and his wife In order to finde how they stand Effected Toward Freinds and to make their Report to the next Mens Meeting'.

[18] LSF Portfolios 17.1, 17.7, 17.9; LSF Yearly Meeting Minutes, i, 117.

[19] R. Vann, *The Social Development of English Quakerism 1655–1755* (Cambridge, Mass., 1969), 101.

[20] *Ibid.*, 126–7.

[21] E. Bronner, 'Quaker Discipline and Order, 1680–1720', in (Eds.) R. and M. Dunn, *The World of William Penn* (Philadelphia, 1986), 327.

The answer was that 'Wm. Chalk and his wife . . . both were very Desirous that their Child might be Regestered . . . freinds being satisfied with the Relation made Doe permitt itt to be Done'.[22] In the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries people on the fringes of Quakerism were sometimes shuffled between the parish and the Meeting for relief, with some dispute as to responsibility for them.[23] There are several examples: in 1703–05 Folkestone Monthly Meeting was apparently negotiating with parish authorities about the apprenticing of the child of a disowned Quaker.[24] In 1711, the Meeting received a letter from one Michael Middlemas of Elham desiring relief, since he could not maintain himself, in view of his age. But 'hee heaveing not especially of Late years Walked so Regularly as became his many years profession this Meeting therfor thought itt Convenient that aplycation bee made to the overseere of Elham on his Beehalf: to see if anything might Bee had from them and to that end this meeting doth apoint Richard Spaine and Benjamin Cloake to aply themselves to the said overseers'. This was apparently unsuccessful as, in 1713, 'it was ordered that five pence a weeke more than hee hath formerly had from thys time should Bee allowed him'. Claims for relief placed a heavy burden on the Quaker community, whose income from rents and collections was strained by the mid-eighteenth century. In 1742, for instance, the Quarterly Meeting had to ask 'the Friends of all the perticuler Meetings to make their Collections duble and bring it in next Quarter'. Apparently as a result of lack of resources, Kent Friends attempted to define faithful Friends, and confine help to them. Elizabeth Middlemas, probably Michael's granddaughter, applied to be married at this time, but the Meeting was dissatisfied with her 'Clearness and Conversation' and that of her proposed husband, and eventually concluded they were 'unworthy of our Notice an therefore Doe not Esteem them worthy of our Socety untill farther Satisfaction given By Them'.[25] Members of Folkestone Monthly Meeting issued a warning in 1717 that they had had

[22] CKS Folkestone Monthly Meeting minutes (1669–1733) N/FMf 1/1, 13th 11th 1707/8, 10th 12th 1707/8.

[23] E.g., CKS N/FQZ 9, under 1690s, 11th 3rd 1709, 9th 9th 1709.

[24] CKS N/FMf 1/1, 9th 9th 1703, 11th 5th 1704, 8th 3rd 1705; LSF Cranbrook Monthly Meeting's Condemnations for Misdemeanours (1668–1712) [no catalogue number, hereafter Condemnations].

[25] CKS N/FMf 1/1, 14th 6th 1711, 10th 9th 1713; CKS Quarterly Meeting minutes (1733–1753) N/FQ 1/1, 27th 10th 1742; LSF Kent Quarterly Meeting Digest Register of Births 1646–1837.

'undr ouer waitye Consideration as at other times before, that seaverall of our freinds Children and others that Come A mongst us, to our meetings many times Do marry husbons and wifes nott of our Socitey by the Prist etc which is a Breach of the Rules of the same and its the sence of this meeting that if Any For the futuer should soe Run out of the bounds of truth, and to the Breach of our Socity that they may nott Expect to bee Acounted of us, unless by true Repentance and Amendment of Life- Eather yung or oulld'.[26]

Readiness to suffer was a criterion which could be applied when a marriage took place in a Meeting, and a registration consequently made. In January 1680, when Richard Hull and Rebekah Loper appeared at Canterbury Monthly Meeting 'in order to mariag', the meeting had found it necessary to ask them three questions, designed to test the reality of their Quaker beliefs.[27] (This was not the normal practice; it was three years before it was 'thought good to steate these nedfule queschuns' to another couple before this Meeting continued the process of approving their marriage.[28]) Rebekah was apparently the daughter of Elizabeth Loper of Dover, in whose home early meetings were held, and whose second marriage was to the leading Kent Quaker, Luke Howard.[29] The meeting seems to have been attempting to determine whether this child of an 'active' Quaker had religious convictions of her own which would entitle her to be married as a Quaker, and to have her marriage registered among Friends. It seems likely that the (step)daughter of such notorious Quakers would receive short shrift from any parish authorities to whom she might in future apply for relief. (In Cranbrook at this time, for instance, the overseer of the poor was the tithe-impropriator and often in bitter conflict with Friends; there, and at Goudhurst, it was the overseers and churchwardens who took action against Friends under the Conventicle Act.[30]) Even if Rebekah Loper's personal Quaker credentials were in doubt, as they seem to have been, undoubtedly her wisest course of action was to establish herself as a member of the Quaker community. Possibly the Meeting also doubted the sincere convictions of Rebekah's intended husband, it being the practice of this meeting to allow a Quaker woman to marry a non-Quaker, provided he was willing to marry her in a Quaker meeting. Alternatively, Richard Hull may have

[26] CKS N/FMf 1/1, 13th 6th 1717.

[27] CKS Canterbury [East Kent] Monthly Meeting minutes N/FMc 1/1, 18th 1st 1679/80.

[28] CKS N/FMc 1/1, 16th 1st 1682/3.

[29] CKS N/FQZ 1, 2nd page before Contents.

[30] CKS N/FQZ 1, 32.

been a Friend and related to the widow Hull, whom the Folkestone Monthly Meeting had relieved a few years earlier.[31] Rebekah and Richard were asked two questions to establish the orthodoxy of their Quaker beliefs, firstly

> 'whether they did beleeve the Light of Christ which every man is Inlitened with is both Convinceing and Saveing as it is belevd in obeyed and walked in. Thear Ansier was they did or else they had not bin hear at this time'.

Secondly,

> 'whether they did beleve the way of marradg amongst freinds was above all the other prakteses of preest or otheres. Thear Ancere was that they doe beleve it'.

Then came the final test that the couple considered themselves Friends, and that they were prepared to experience the problems as well as the potential benefits of membership, by suffering for the testimonies if necessary. They were asked

> 'whether they had soe Considerteared it as to beare All Suferings that shall or may befall them upon Account of soe liveing together in Mariage. Thear Ancer was they hoped they should And to Each question they singly Ancerd And by thear names . . . subscribed bear witness to it'.

The Meeting was sufficiently satisfied with their answers to permit them to proceed to marriage, subject to the usual enquiries into their 'freedom from others'.[32] By 1690, Hull was paying tithes.[33]

Most Friends who questioned George Fox's direction of Quakerism, and the Wilkinson-Story separatists especially, were believed to be or characterized as loose-living and unwilling to suffer for Friends' testimonies: Fox called them Ranters.[34] Persecution, or rather, failure to endure it, was thus sometimes blamed for the loss of members from the Society: such people could be labelled as apostates who could not 'stand the heat of the day'. Kent Friends who disagreed with Fox's leadership, and who left the movement in Kent

[31] CKS N/FMf 1/1, 14th 9th 1671.

[32] CKS N/FMc 1/1, 18th 1st 1679/80, 21st 10th 1686.

[33] CKS N/FMc 1/1, 16th 7th 1690.

[34] They held 'the old Rotten Principle of the Ranters', CKS East Kent Monthly Meeting Register Book N/FQZ 3, letter of Fox, 17th 3rd 1676; W. Braithwaite (1961), *The Second Period of Quakerism*, 2nd Edn. prepared by H. Cadbury, (Cambridge, 1961), 39, 307, 340, 475–481; J.F. McGregor, 'Ranterism and the Development of Early Quakerism', *J. Religious Hist.*, ix (1977), 358–9.

after a few years, were likened to the seed in the Parable of the Sower which fell on stony ground, was eaten by birds or choked by thorns. The implication was that they had been tempted away from Quakerism by the cares and pleasures of the world or given up the faith under persecution. In an excellent example of history being written by the winners, they could then be viewed in retrospect as not having been truly Quakers at all. An account of early Quakerism in Kent, probably written about 1676, hinted at the number of those who had initially been associated with the movement, but had dropped out or been excluded: it judged that 'many [had been] Called but few Chosen to stand the battel'.[35] The 'many' had included Henry Thrum and Francis Ray of Sandwich who in 1661 were confined in 'a nasty stincking hole' in Dover Castle, for refusing to bear arms, along with several other members of Dover and Deal meetings and two national 'travelling' leaders, Joseph Fuce and Joseph Nicolson.[36] In 1690, Thomas Marche wrote that 'Henery Thrum, after his Discharge, with other Friends his fellow Prisoners of this Imprisonment, by Proclamation from the King [in May 1661] . . . **Persecution growing Hott**; he left Truth, and went nowhere'.[37] But Thrum seems in fact to have left the Society in 1668 after conflict with Fox's newly-established business-meetings. The East-Kent Monthly Meeting minutes state that he was disciplined 'for his Adultery with one and for being maried by A Priest to another'. Thrum rejected the authority of the meeting to make him write a paper condemning his adultery, although he confessed it was a sin, but he would not admit his marriage in church to be such.[38] Again, although extensively recording their sufferings, Marche tarnished the memory of three out of seven Quaker prisoners of 1661 by suggesting that they had connived at their relatives' payment of gaol fees to have them released; by 1690 this was regarded as a definite breach of Friends' testimony.[39] Significantly, these three men had been disowned or left the movement by the 1670s.[40] One of them was John Philley, who

[35] CKS N/FQZ 1, 2nd and 3rd pages before Contents; N. Penney, *The First Publishers of Truth* (1903), preface; R.J. Acheson, *The Development of Religious Separatism in the Diocese of Canterbury 1590 to 1660*, Kent Ph.D. thesis (1983), 245, 261; (Ed.) J. Barclay, *Letters, etc., from Early Friends* (1841), 232; LSF Swarthmore MSS. iv, 14, 256, 266.

[36] CKS N/FQZ 2, 22–4.

[37] Marche emphasized the phrase in this way, CKS N/FQZ 2, 23.

[38] CKS N/FMc 1/1, 2.

[39] E.g., CKS N/Fmc 1/1, 5.

[40] CKS N/FQZ 2, 26; CKS N/FMc 1/1, 6, 15th 4th 1669; LSF Condemnations.

provided land for Dover burial-ground in 1660.[41] He became a supporter of the separatist John Perrot, and was disowned mainly for not accepting the peace principle, a stance tentatively suggested as a factor in the Perrot schism.[42] Philley's severe sufferings under the Inquisition in the course of spreading Quaker truth in Europe went unrecorded both locally and centrally.[43] Certain sufferings of other Kent Quakers, usually concerning conflict with various authorities and extravagant actions of a type increasingly disapproved by the Quaker leadership, also went unrecorded in the Kent records.[44] But in Kent Quakerism was not shaken, as it was in some counties, by the schisms involving Perrot, Wilkinson and Story, and George Keith, where the issue or accusation of breaching the testimonies became linked with the Wilkinson-Story separatists in particular. The Kent representatives to the 1697 Yearly Meeting in London, for example, declared that 'we had never nothing of the separation'.[45] In Kent, failure to keep up the testimonies in the end came to be regarded as a regrettable lapse rather than a sign of apostasy or separatist tendencies. By the eighteenth century it was increasingly rare for the Kent business-meetings to issue papers of condemnation for breaching the testimonies; Philip Burker's case is an early example of the leadership's changing attitude: when called before the Meeting in 1696 for marrying in church, he 'did not Apier, but sent in Ashort paper but not to the meetings Sattes fasction'. Nevertheless, the Meeting decided 'to for bare deniing of him, hoping hee may . . . Condem that Spiritt that led him'.[46]

[41] CKS Property Register by George Sims (compiled *c.* 1769–87) N/FQ 5/1, fols. 38–40.

[42] By B. Reay, see C. Hill, *The Experience of Defeat: Milton and Some Contemporaries* (1984), 162; CKS N/FQZ 1, 215; Braithwaite (1955), *op. cit.*, 420–6; W. Braithwaite, *The Beginnings of Quakerism*, 2nd Edn. prepared by H. Cadbury (Cambridge, 1955) 216, n.29; LSF Condemnations; CKS N/FMc 1/1, 12.

[43] They did not appear in the original Kent sufferings book, nor Marche's, nor GBS. Joseph Besse included them, taken from a book by Philley, and probably in ignorance of Philley's subsequent disownment, J. Besse, *A Collection of the Sufferings of the People . . . called Quakers for the Testimony of a Good Conscience . . . Taken from Original Records and other Authentick Accounts by Joseph Besse* (1753) ii, 420.

[44] They appear in GBS, having presumably been sent direct to London by those involved, thus bypassing the system of vetting sufferings at Monthly and Quarterly Meeting level, Braithwaite (1955), *op. cit.*, 315; LSF Yearly Meeting Minutes, i, 71, 83; LSF GBS, i, 547–9, 659–60, 663, v, loose sheet inserted before Kent entries; CKS Folkestone Monthly Meeting Document Book (1655–1796) N/FMf 6/1, 93–5, 98.

[45] LSF Yearly Meeting minutes, ii, 155.

[46] CKS N/FMc 1/1, 18th 6th 1696; K. Showler, *Review of the History of the Society of Friends in Kent 1655 to 1966* (Canterbury, 1970), 12.

Not all Quakers agreed with every move that was made by the central Meeting for Sufferings to relieve them from the laws causing them to suffer. Lancashire Friends, for instance, refused to accept the form of words prescribed in the Affirmation Act of 1696, since it required them, instead of taking oaths, to affirm using the phrase 'in the presence of Almighty God'. In fact, the Quaker leadership in London was perfectly correct in asserting that there were precedents in the words and actions of earlier Friends for affirming 'in the presence of God'. There is an example in an incident noted by Dr R. Acheson for its relevance to the question of 'hat-honour': when Alexander Parker was required to take an oath before the mayor of Canterbury in 1655, he refused, but then he declared he '"was moved to take off my hatt, and said in the presence of God I renounce and deny all thinges therein contained"'.[47] Disagreements were caused within Quakerism by the London leadership's acceptance of phrases invoking God in the affirmations granted to Quakers in lieu of oaths in 1696, 1702 and 1712; however, in 1722 'dissatisfied' Quakers were offered an affirmation without this reference to God's presence.[48] With regard to the testimony against tithes in the eighteenth century, Lancashire Friends had 'a brand of fundamentalist Quakerism that was far nearer to the original precepts of the Society's founders than was the urbane and metropolitan Quakerism practised in the capital and more generally in the south of the country'.[49] This was also reflected in their attitude to the early form of affirmation, which they regarded as merely a 'practical and politic expedient'.[50] Lancashire Friends suffered over oaths during the period 1660 to 1722, when they refused either to swear or affirm. This refusal caused them difficulties not only over religious oaths, from which they obtained some relief by the Toleration Act, but also over such matters as holding office, importing and exporting goods, entering copyholds and gaining freedoms, since all of these required an oath to be taken.[51] Before the Affirmation Act gave them relief, Derbyshire Friends used various expedients in order to get wills proved, usually without taking an oath, although probably some were

[47] N. Morgan, 'Lancashire Quakers and the Oath, 1660–1722', *J. Friends' Hist. Soc.*, liv, No. 5 (1980), 237; J.W. Frost, 'The Affirmation Controversy and Religious Liberty', in Dunn, *op. cit.*, 311; R. Acheson, *Radical Puritans in England 1550–1660* (Harlow, 1990), 73.

[48] Frost, *op. cit.*, 313–8.

[49] N. Morgan, 'Lancashire Quakers and the Tithe, 1660–1730', *Bulletin John Rylands University Library of Manchester*, lxx (1988), 63.

[50] Morgan (1980), *op. cit.*, 237.

[51] *Ibid.*, 235, n. 2, 237–254.

prepared to swear in order to do so.[52] In Kent one method seems to have been to appoint both Quaker and non-Quaker executors, the latter having the will proved then handing the executorship to the former.[53] There are no recorded sufferings of Kent Friends under the heading 'denying to swear' after 1684, and it seems Kent Friends must also have been finding ways around difficulties over oaths.[54] The case of Thomas Everden, junior, of Canterbury and his two apprentices illustrates how difficulty might be avoided: in 1683, these three were warned to appear at the Court Leet for routine business: Everden avoided attending by sending 'a penny and that Satisfyed the Court for him', presumably the fine for non-attendance. The apprentices, however, perhaps from inexperience or a desire to make a stand, appeared in court with their hats on. Thereupon, they were tendered the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy, refused them and were told to appear at the next Sessions. Later, the Chief of the Court, an alderman, the Steward, the Town Clerk and two assistants called all three to an inn and tendered the oath again. The apprentices refused and were jailed for about three weeks, but Everden 'Alledged he was a prisoner, and having Committed no new offence, he thought it very Illegal to send for him from his Business to Tender him an oath'. In the situation of the early 1680s this defence did not work and he was jailed, too.[55] Kent Friends also kept a record of a case of some London Quakers who had, apparently successfully, attempted to use James II's declaration of indulgence to avoid swearing on entry to office: the king had desired the Lord Mayor to see that three London Quakers who believed themselves 'Exempted by the kinges Dicklaration for Liberty of Conshanne' were not fined or 'other waies Mallisted', for refusing to swear upon being called to serve various offices.[56] However, in Kent problems over swearing arose almost entirely in connection with the oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy, administered to some Friends in attempts to prevent them holding meetings. Occasionally refusing oaths compounded the offence Kent Friends committed by refusing tithes.[57]

[52] H. Forde, 'Friends and Authority: a Consideration of Attitudes and Expedients with special reference to Derbyshire', *J. Friends Hist. Soc.*, liv, No. 3 (1978), 116, 122.

[53] CKS N/FMc 1/1, 1st 4th 1680; LSF Condemnations.

[54] CKS N/FQZ 1, 43.

[55] LSF GBS, iii, 676.

[56] 'A Copy of Answer Sent by the king to the Lord Mayor of London Dated . . . 9th 6th month 1687', in CKS N/FMc 1/1.

[57] Very occasionally, refusing to give evidence on oath is specified or suggested as an element in suffering. When a priest seized a large part of Matthew Franklin's crop, knowing that Franklin 'could not goe to law with him', this may have been because he could not swear, CKS N/FQZ 1, 33, 216; Morgan (1980), *op. cit.*, 239; Evans, *op. cit.*, 181.

For this situation, the London leadership provided Friends in the county with 'instructions and Directions for . . . Quakers as are or have been Cyted into Ecclesiasticall Courts for the non-payment of tyths . . . Steeple houses [rates] or sextons wages . . . in order to make their Legall Defence to prevent theire being excommunicated for theire not answering . . . upon oath'.[58] Kent Quakers were happy with the Affirmation Act organized by the London leadership, both in 1696 and when renewed in the eighteenth century: in 1712, Folkestone Monthly Meeting sent a paper 'to the Quarterly meeting tuching the Solom afirmation Desiring that the government might be solicited to Renew the same'.[59] Canterbury Monthly Meeting felt that if the Affirmation 'Cannot be gott more Easier for the dissattisfied this next Sessions, that then Endevers be used to gett it Renewed, as it now is'.[60] Kent Friends had also (apparently unlike some others) welcomed the toleration offered in 1689, making the declarations and registering their meeting-houses as required, although Quakers had refused to do so under Charles II's declaration of indulgence in 1672.[61] The rector of Folkestone felt it a noteworthy point in 1728 that the meeting-house in which Friends met was licensed.[62] There are applications and licences for dissenting worship in the Quarter Sessions records of the early eighteenth century, but it is difficult to be certain which of them relate to Quakers.[63] But in 1690 a Friend was appointed to 'looke up the Certiffecat that came from the Session Concerning the meeting house in Ashford', and in 1691 Marche noted that the Yearly Meeting required to know 'if Meeting houses [were] Recorded according to Law'.[64]

The clauses in the Affirmation Act allowing the simple recovery of tithes by distraint also permitted this for church rates.[65] There were few sufferings for refusal to pay church rates in Kent in the seventeenth century, but many in the eighteenth, when it was easy and worthwhile for churchwardens to pursue their claims. Between 1701 and 1756 there were 102 sufferings for church rates, all but two using this procedure. Many Friends suffered repeatedly, but a smaller range did so as time

[58] CKS Informations and Instructions of the Quarterly Meeting (1676–1683) N/FQZ 6.
[59] LSF Yearly Meeting Minutes, ii, 109–123; CKS N/FMf 1/1, 19th 10th 1712/13.
[60] CKS N/FMc 1/1, 3rd 1st 1712.
[61] LSF Yearly Meeting minutes, i, 241; Braithwaite (1961), *op. cit.*, 82.
[62] 'Folkestone Quakers, 1758', *J. Friends Hist. Soc.*, iv, No. 2 (April 1907), 69.
[63] CKS Quarter Sessions records Q/SB, under 1715–9; Maidstone Sessions (1692–1704) Q/SO E 4, under 1703.
[64] CKS N/FMf 1/1, 9th 10th 1690; CKS N/FQZ 1, 557.
[65] Hunt, *op. cit.*, 63.

went on. Between 1731 and 1756 a few rich, leading Quakers in Canterbury, such as the Sims family, and some members of Folkestone meeting, were routinely distrained: losses were not high. The smaller range of sufferers presumably reflects the decline in strength of Kentish Quakerism by the mid-eighteenth century.[66] The distraint procedure, which normally satisfied both churchwardens (who obtained their money) and Friends (who spared their consciences), was eschewed by two churchwardens in 1719–20, who chose to pursue two Chatham Quakers in the ecclesiastical court. Despite desperate delaying tactics by the Friends, help from the Meeting for Sufferings, and 'their violent enemy . . . [falling] down Dedd which Exident stopt the proceeding for a while', the two ended up in prison for six months. In court the Friends had claimed that they had received no demand for church rates, and when asked whether they would have paid if they had, replied that they 'hoped the Court would not insist on a direct answer but give . . . time'. The Meeting for Sufferings asked a Friend who was brother-in-law to the Dean of Rochester to request him to have the proceedings stopped, which he was willing to do, but Friends were informed of this too late to prevent the imprisonments.[67] The interest of this case lies in the attitude of those involved. In contrast with seventeenth-century Kent Friends whose sufferings were a testimony to the validity of their beliefs (ten of them died in prison) the Chatham Friends were a great deal less concerned about upholding the principle by suffering than about the prospect of imprisonment.[68]

Increasingly, some Kent Friends rejected the necessity to maintain various testimonies, or took steps to avoid upholding them, in order not to suffer: refusing to bear or supply arms is a good example. Quakers in Kent had been early sufferers for this cause, which took the form of refusing to serve in, or supply men or arms for, the militia. Few Quakers demonstrated pacifist views before the Restoration. Their 'peace principle' was officially announced in January 1661, as a response to the Restoration and, more immediately, to the Fifth Monarchists' Rising of that month: a few months earlier, Margaret Fell had drafted a paper, signed by Fox and twelve other Quaker leaders and given to the King, in which they declared their pacifism, that their weapons were 'not carnal but spiritual'.[69] The first volume of the

[66] CKS N/FQZ 1, 169–84.

[67] CKS N/FQZ 1, 176.

[68] CKS A List of Such friends as Laid down Their Lives, in bonds, within the County of Kent, in Testimony of Truth, etc. (1662–78) in N/FQZ 1.

[69] Hill, *op. cit.*, 160–1.

'Great Books of Sufferings', covering the first decades of Quakerism, has no category of sufferings for refusing to bear or provide arms in many counties, e.g., Cumberland, Derbyshire, Devonshire, Durham, Essex and Gloucestershire. Kent and Hampshire Friends, however, had such a category, and there were close connections between Friends of these two counties, who sometimes met together in 1659–60 and were visited by many of the same evangelists.[70] These included George Rofe and John Higgins who, with Caton, had established a Quaker meeting at Griesheim, near Worms, in 1657–61, a meeting whose members also had an early reputation for refusing to bear arms or contribute to the charge of the militia.[71] Kent Friends may also have been influenced by the pacifist views expressed by John Lilburne at the time of his conversion to Quakerism in 1655; after his conversion he was 'allowed to preach in Kent', and he could have been expected to 'exercise a powerful influence' as a Quaker leader until he died on parole from prison in 1657.[72] Kent Friends' refusal to bear arms was sufficiently well-known to be used as a pretext for imprisoning several of them following the Fifth Monarchists' Rising in January 1661, the first sufferings for this cause.[73] The lords-lieutenant of the county could authorize distraints on the goods of those, such as Quakers, who would not pay the fines resulting from this refusal.[74] Between 1662 and 1689 the sufferings book has 67 entries for this cause mostly involving such distraints; some people suffered repeatedly.[75] After 1662 all households were liable to contribute men and arms to the militia, and clearly not all Quaker households were suffering for refusing to do so. Those not liable to provide a whole soldier were joined to others, and provided only a half or a quarter of the cost; the cost of providing a soldier was levied by the parish in the form of a rate in the case of small estates, and there are no sufferings in the book relating to this.[76] By 1690 when East-Kent Monthly Meeting enquired whether any members found arms or 'Pay the prise' (and also tithes), some openly disputed the

[70] LSF GBS, i; Braithwaite (1955), *op. cit.*, 314, 395–9, 414; Caton, *op. cit.*, 50.

[71] CKS N/FQZ 2, 15–6; Braithwaite (1955), *op. cit.*, 413–4.

[72] J. Lilburne, *The Resurrection of John Lilburne, Now a Prisoner in Dover-Castle, etc.*, 1st Edn. (1656), 4, 9–14; Hill (1984), *op. cit.*, 161, 166; P. Clark, *English Provincial Society from the Reformation to the Revolution; Religion, Society and Politics in Kent 1500–1640* (Hassocks, 1977), 479, n. 34.

[73] CKS N/FQZ 1, 299–300.

[74] J. Western, *The English Militia in the Eighteenth Century: the Story of a Political Issue 1660–1802* (1965), 16.

[75] CKS N/FQZ 1, 300–310.

[76] Western, *op. cit.*, 17.

testimony.[77] 'Thomas White did acknowlege he paid both [arms and tithes] and did justifie it'. Philip Burker felt the same: 'he bought [both] finds Armes and pays the prise and . . . Should bee Redy to Answer the same if Call'd to it', while 'Richard Hull . . . paid the Priest [tithes] but withstood finding Armes'. Those who did find arms included John Grifen and Robert Minter. Grifen's weapons were sent, and the wages paid, by his wife. Minter claimed that men came to fetch his arms, but Friends thought he left them out to be taken. This suggests an expedient which could be used: as with tithes, if a Friend's weapons were taken from him without his consent, this was not considered a breach of the testimony and was how some Kent Friends avoided suffering.[78] Another device is suggested by an occurrence in Cranbrook in 1667: John Colvill was charged with providing the service and cost of half a soldier for the militia, two others providing the other half. A man did this service, as Colvill delicately stated it, 'by the order of the other t[w]o men'. This device would have been unrecorded, but for the fact that a dispute arose over the man's wages, Colvill hoping unsuccessfully (but perhaps in the light of previous experience) that money left in the constable's hands after an earlier distraint could be used to pay them. Compared to losses for meeting or refusing tithes, the fines and consequent distraints were not particularly high between 1667 and the early 1680s, and Friends may not in these years have lost a great deal more than they would have expended in supplying a soldier to the militia in the first place. In the earlier period, Friends had often complained of over-distraint. John Colvill, for example, received a fine of £2 in 1666, and was required to pay wages of 21*s*. in 1667: refusing to do so, he received a fine of £7 10*s*. in that year, and claimed that goods worth £14 were taken.[79]

Between 1689 and 1704 there are 34 entries for refusing arms; many of these refer to the sufferings of those who were literally the second generation of Kent Quakers, nearly all of them Quakers by birth, not 'convincement'.[80] In these years there are several records of Friends' neighbours or relatives paying their fines and returning their distrained goods.[81] This might simply have been out of kind-heartedness, but on

[77] CKS N/FMc 1/1, 21st 8th 1690; paying the 'prise' probably refers to the assessment for soldiers' wages, or possibly to the appraised value of goods distrained for non-payment of a fine, CKS N/FQZ 1, 300–10; C. Horle, *The Quakers and the English Legal System* (Philadelphia, 1988), 130–1.

[78] CKS N/FMc 1/1, 16th 7th 1690, 21st 8th 1690; Evans, *op. cit.*, 238.

[79] CKS N/FQZ 1, 301–4.

[80] CKS N/FQZ 1, 311–22.

[81] E.g., CKS N/FQZ 1, 321.

one occasion in 1704 a Friend 'had taken from him . . . Goods to the value of £2 8*d*., a Neighbour Laid Down the fine and took the Goods and Carried it home and was Repayed by a Brother' of the Quaker.[82] The later entries contrast strongly with those for the earliest years, when Friends were imprisoned for refusing fines or for possessing suspect literature, and when they would not accept the return of money due to them from the sale of distrained goods, and when officials would not accept such money which was still held as payment for other fines.[83] John Bennett of Cranbrook was perhaps typical of his generation, just as his children were of theirs: the former suffered fines and imprisonment for his beliefs in the 1660s and 70s; the latter appear sympathetic to the Quaker cause rather than actively suffering for it; one of them objected to the sale of goods distrained from another Quaker; other Bennetts added their signatures as witnesses to entries in the sufferings book.[84] One answer to East-Kent's 1690 enquiry 'in every perticular Meeting if there be any that Finde Arms or pay Tythes . . . either directly or indirectly' was that 'James Gunion [a prominent Friend] did beleive that his son did finde armes and pay Tythes but he could not help it'. Three meetings, Wingham, Sandwich and Nunington, claimed all were 'cleere' from doing so, but the enquiry may not have been pursued very far.[85] Entries under 'refusing arms' end in 1704, reflecting changed attitudes towards Friends, and a growing willingness among the later Quaker generations to find ways to avoid suffering for the testimony. The unwillingness of at least some of the second generation to suffer as their parents had for Quaker testimonies is illustrated by a remark in the sufferings book. In 1683, a Quaker blacksmith of Waltham was indicted for recusancy. He 'had two sons growne that followed his trade; being not of their fathers judgement to suffer for conscience sake the spoyling of his goods they agreed with the baylyes for to have it again for £32 1*s*. 10*d*. which they paid him down and the baylife made them a deed of all theire father had'.[86]

As well as Friends' 'flexibility' in avoiding sufferings, 'community sanctions' often operated on their behalf, and there were varying degrees of willingness to act against Quakers on the part of law-enforcers.[87] In some places the authorities were more hostile than in

[82] CKS N/FQZ 1, 321.
[83] CKS N/FQZ 1, 299–322.
[84] CKS N/FQZ 1, 23, 34, 169, 249, 301, 305, 390.
[85] CKS N/FMc 1/1, 19th 6th 1690.
[86] CKS N/FQZ 1, 395.
[87] Horle, *op. cit.*, 268, Evans, *op. cit.*, 238.

others. In 1682, the constable and other officers of Maidstone, armed with a warrant from the Mayor and other justices, arrived at the house of John Grigson and his wife to make a distraint for their conviction for meeting to worship, which was described in Part I.[88] They took a gelding and a mare worth, according to Friends, £11 or £12 and sold it for £8 15*s*. When they arrived to make a further distraint at the house of Henry Robbards, it was locked up and they broke several doors and locks. However, the officers of Bearsted, on finding Benjamin Chambers out, were unwilling to break in, or found his absence a useful excuse and returned their warrant marked 'noe entrance'. Friends liked to believe they could protect their belongings by locking them up and remaining away from home, and this was perhaps the case here; however, the explanation offered in the sufferings book was that Chambers was 'a single man and sildom at hom'.[89] Some other Friends of Bearsted who were also convicted escaped being asked to pay the fine, possibly because their names did not appear in the warrant, or because the officers at Bearsted were unwilling to act against Friends. These events also provide a good illustration of support for persecuted Quakers by friends and family: although several quarters of wheat were distrained at Robbards' house, they were not taken away because 'a relation of the said Henry Ingaged for the payment of the fine'. Fines of 5*s*. on Green and his wife were paid by a neighbour when the distraint was made, thus avoiding the goods being taken away. Even though the Grigsons' goods were sold, the 25*s*. they raised more than was due was returned to them. Only in the case of Samuel Fox was the severity of the law apparently exceeded: Friends considered it 'no just law', anyway, and complained, as they often did, that his goods were sold for less than their true value. They were pleased to record that one of the officials involved who had 'bound himself under an oath that he would not sleep untill he hade made the distress . . . dyed shortly after in an unsencable condition'.[90] In 1675, the Quaker leadership in London had allowed that Friends in the counties might note any such 'Eminent judgements . . . as they see fit' in accounts of sufferings, but by 1690 they were instructed not to record 'Reflections' on magistrates or others causing sufferings.[91]

One Nicholas Bishop, yeoman of Cranbrook, was involved in events

[88] *Arch. Cant.*, cxii (1993), 327–8.

[89] CKS N/FQZ 1, 35–6; Horle, *op. cit.*, 134.

[90] CKS N/FQZ 35–6, 39.

[91] CKS N/FQZ 6, letter from Friends in London, 1675; LSF Yearly Meeting Minutes, i, 83.

there in 1683, which again demonstrate not only the hostility of some towards Friends but the practical support of others. He was not a Quaker himself, but was certainly sympathetic towards them.[92] At the spring assize of 1681 in Canterbury John Aford of Cranbrook was 'Convicted [of recusancy] on Travers . . . by direction of an Incensed Judg Cheife Justice pemberton to a soft pliable Jury that minded noe oath like his frowns'.[93] In August a bailiff entered Aford's shop and house to levy the sum of £320 on his goods. Aford went 'a litle to discou[r]se with the sheriff who was there to see the distress done'. From him Aford found out that the warrant was 'only' for £200, he having been convicted twice for absence from church, and fined at £20 a month for 10 months' absence. The bailiff seized 'the Shopp goods as well as houshold firniture' which were appraised at £16 10*s*. by a shopkeeper, a joiner and an attorney. This last was Samuel Tilden, overseer of the poor and impropriator of Cranbrook: he had performed the role of appraiser of Cranbrook Friends' distrained goods before, and (like his widow and sons in later years) frequently clashed with them over their non-payment of tithes.[94] At this point Nicholas Bishop stepped in and bought the goods, carefully obtaining a bill of sale and inventory 'under the seale of office' from the sheriff 'after which . . . the under bayliff that had kept possession went off'.[95] This was a device to allow Aford to keep his goods, and it is at least possible that he reimbursed Bishop. A few days later, officers (including the constable, borsholder, churchwarden and Tilden, the overseer) came to Aford's shop to make a distraint for a separate conviction under the Conventicle Act, whereupon 'the said John Afford keeping his doores shutt Refused them entrance Acquainting the constable that his goods were before seized by the sheriffe for the kinge: and sould to one Nicholas Bishopp as his bill of sall from the Shreiffe would evince'. Though Bishop showed this, the informers knew Aford still had his goods and insisted on proceeding: indeed one threatened to

[92] He sold 'High Polls' farm in Biddenden to the Quaker James Stone, which Stone subsequently left for the relief of the poor, a bequest substantial enough to be listed by Hasted, CKS N/FQ 5/1, 1–3; J. Wallenberg, *The Place Names of Kent* (Uppsala, 1934), 333; E. Hasted, *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent*, 2nd Edn. (Canterbury, 1797), iii, 66.

[93] CKS N/FQZ 1, 394; Pemberton was presumably acting on Charles II's instructions of January 1681 to enforce the recusancy laws against Catholics and Dissenters. Not all Friends were prepared to suffer the severe penalties which resulted from these instructions: in 1682 'Bartholomew Boykin Informed freinds of Henery Lamb Going to Steeple house. and freinds ordered Bartholomew and Richard Marbrook to visit him. and admonish him from the meeting'. Lamb 'confest he had beene at the steeple house for feare of Looseing his goods', CKS N/FMc 1/1, 21st 1st 1681/2, 18th 2nd 1681/2.

[94] CKS N/FQZ 1, 51, 243, 259, 261, 265, 306, 394.

break the door down with an iron pestle but Aford had his back to it. The informer then rushed to 'the other hatch', pushed away a friend who was standing against it, forced open the door Aford was leaning on and 'let in the whole gange'. They took away pieces of more than seven different types of cloth, which Friends estimated were worth about £30. This was a distraint for part of an unpaid fine of £20 imposed for the preaching of Samuel Fox, and for which other distraints also took place. Friends were irked by the division of this £20 fine, resenting the claim that Samuel Fox was 'poore and unable' to pay, especially since this meant it was imposed by shares on several Friends, allowing informers to get away with excessive distraints from several people.[96] Informers had a direct financial interest in the amount distrained, since they were entitled to a third of the fine. In a similar case in 1675, a Quaker meeting was held at the house of Nathaniel Owen in Sevenoaks at which John Abraham, his brother-in-law, preached.[97] Two men informed on Owen, who was fined £20 under the 1670 Conventicle Act by Thomas Lambert, J.P., and Francis Farnaby, J.P., for holding it at his home. £7, a share of the preacher's fine, was also imposed on Owen, 'for the pretended Poverty of *John Abraham* though he told them where he dwelt, and that he had an Estate of his own at *Manchester*', for which £77 8*s*. 6*d*. worth of 'Linen and Woolen Cloth and other Goods' was taken by distraint from Owen's 'house and Warehouse'.[98] Abraham's poverty was clearly 'pretended' by the informers or authorities involved. The Kent sufferings book provides several other examples of actions, such as Aford's, taken by Friends and non-Friends to deflect 'persecution', although sometimes, as in Owen's case, they were completely unsuccessful.

CONCLUSION

The earliest interpretations of the experiences of Quakers, and especially of their sufferings, were made by Quakers themselves. The records which seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Quakers chose to keep, frequently concerning their sufferings, have to some extent dictated the aspects of early Quaker history which later writers have

[95] CKS N/FQZ 1, 394.

[96] CKS N/FQZ 1, 43–44.

[97] Abraham was related by marriage to the Fells of Swarthmore Hall, one of whom was Margaret, George Fox's wife, Braithwaite (1955), *op. cit.*, 99, n. 3; J.J. Green, 'The Quaker Family of Owen', *J. Friends' Hist. Soc.*, i (1903–4), 32.

[98] Besse, *op. cit.*, i, 295–6.

found interesting. Quaker writers, in particular, have tended to accept, as an article of faith, the view of Quaker history and sufferings provided by seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Friends such as Sewel, Gough, Besse and Marche. Despite the view promoted, mainly by Quaker historians, that Friends continued their worship and witness undaunted by the experience of severe persecution after 1660, the evidence from Lancashire is that considerable numbers did drop out or emigrate.[99] Lancashire Quakers in fact upheld their testimonies more strictly than Quakers in many places, and Kent Friends seem to be a good example of the more lax 'urbane and metropolitan Quakerism' found in the south.[100] Some of the people, such as Robert Minter, attracted to Quakerism in Kent before the Restoration by its radical hopes and demands, particularly the abolition of tithes, were not keen to continue as Quakers when all such hopes were lost, and when persecution became a reality for most members, rather than just for activists. By 1668, Minter, for example, had decided he had made a sufficient protest against tithes by non-payment, and by suffering for it.[101] It is hardly surprising that difficulties arose over the question of continued suffering for Quaker beliefs, when it was no longer likely to achieve Quaker objectives. The acceptability of acting to avoid suffering (for example, by meeting privately, not publicly) was an important issue in early Quakerism, in particular in the Wilkinson-Story separation, a schism which led to the rewriting of Quaker history to establish Fox's position as divinely-sanctioned and appointed leader.[102] The Kent leadership invariably upheld Fox's direction of the Society, by supporting Fox against the separatists, and by propagating his view of Quaker history.[103] But the effects of the experience of suffering on Quakerism was more complex than the early Quaker records and histories, such as Thomas Marche's, would have us believe.

[99] Anderson, *op. cit.*, 262.

[100] Morgan (1988), *op. cit.*, 63.

[101] See above, n. 4; CKS N/Fmc 1/1, 1, 5.

[102] W.S. Hudson, 'A Suppressed Chapter in Quaker History', *J. of Religion*, xxiv (1944), 110–11, 115–8.

[103] See, for example, the order in which Marche arranged Fox's letters in his file CKS N/FQZ 3, and Marche's insertions of papers relating to Jeffrey Bullock in LSF Condemnations; Howard was a signatory to a manifesto of support for Fox at the time of the Wilkinson-Story separation, L.V. Hodgkin, *Luke Howard: The Shoemaker of Dover 1621–1699* (1943), 55; CKS 'An Alphabet Directing Where To Find The Particulers in Freinds Register Booke, For East Kent Dover and Canterbury In The Year 1669' N/FQZ 7 shows Friends of these Meetings supporting Fox's vision of the disciplinary functions of the Monthly Meetings.