Under the Veil

Under the Veil:
Feminism and Spirituality in Post-Reformation England and Europe

Edited by

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INTRODUCTION

In the seismically shifting political and intellectual landscapes of seventeenth-century Britain and Europe, religious faith played a catalytic, even explosive role. Yet in the equally unsettled framework of debate on gender roles and identity in this period, religion of all persuasions paradoxically linked paternalistic reification with potential empowerment. While Enlightenment individualism opened new paths for the perceiving self and thus for women's subjectivity, it also cast women's minds into newly essentialised categories which constructed the mind as a gendered reflection of the body. Similarly, while the Protestant theology of inner experience of grace represented both new freedoms and new modes of expression for women, at the same time Protestant domestic ideology brought about new restrictions on female roles and identities. Thus as female interiority was newly recognized, so it was promptly redefined. In this process, sermons and conduct books played a primary role, as social constructs around family and gender were fed and watered by religious tradition.

Nonetheless, in this same process, British and European women across a wide range of confessional groups frequently found in religion a hope for individual freedom, a sense of self-identity, and a justification for gender equality. Feminist writers such as Anne Finch and Mary Astell based their arguments for women's equality in a strong Church of England position and a rereading of biblical tradition. Strong elements of female autonomy—vividly apparent from the criticism these figures elicited—are exemplified in a wide spectrum of women religious figures, from the female martyrs of Foxe and Dissenting women preachers, to the powerful women of Philadelphian mysticism and Quaker egalitarianism, to Catholic women leaders and those who found in religious vocation an escape from the sexual and economic objectification of marriage.

This collection examines the construction of gendered identities in relation to religious belief in the later post-Reformation period, from a broad range of perspectives and of texts, from geographic and cultural locations within Britain, Europe, and America. Its particular focus is the complicated relationship between emergent feminism and religious faith as represented and experienced in Protestantism and Catholicism, as well as in Europe's religious others, such as Islam, Judaism, and Native

spirituality in various contexts. The title of the book, *Under the Veil: Feminism and Spirituality in Post-Reformation Europe,* invokes the multiple significance of the veil: that of the Catholic religious, the Islamic faithful woman, and, more broadly, the veil separating female interior life from its public construction.

Two distinct strands in the collection are Dissenting religious individualism and feminine community as found in conventual models. The two are linked in their focus on spiritual autonomy, the freedom of mind and spirit in response to a dominant culture that defined woman by her body and restricted her to "the low concerns of an animal life" (Astell 1700).[1] Contrary to today's feminisms, which are predominantly rooted in late modern secularism and the concomitant image of the Church as paternalistic and oppressive, early modern feminism found in Christian religious faith, and in reinterpretation of both Scriptural and ecclesiastical authority, foundational arguments for the equality of the sexes. This collection focuses specifically on the direct links between feminism and religious faith as experienced through wide cultural, geographic, and religious differences, examining notions of female subjectivity, inner identity, autonomy, and female community. It examines how women across a wide spectrum of formal beliefs and cultural backgrounds found in religion a way to negotiate the restrictions of their outward lives, and a radical source of personal and sometimes collective independence and value.

The collection begins with Julie Hirst's study of Ann Bathurst's unpublished spiritual diary kept over seventeen years from 1679-1696. Bathurst was a prominent figure in the London Philadelphian Society, an organization of religious visionaries noted for strong female leadership (Jane Lead being the best known today). They were also noted for a theology incorporating distinctively feminine elements alongside Biblical Christianity, combining Protestant individualism with the mysticism of Jacob Boehme. In a vivid and detailed study, Hirst's essay places Bathurst's diary in the context of feminine self-identity and female writing, showing how Bathurst identifies these principles with spiritual fulfillment and redemption, and translates Christian redemption into specifically feminist terms.

The following essay takes up the theme of feminine role and experience in intense personal evangelistic spirituality, examining the larger historical and global contexts of women in the Quaker movement. Quakerism was both mocked and feared for its egalitarian structure and philosophy, and was considered particularly subversive in the public leadership roles it accorded women. Sylvia Brown considers the radical

implications of the travelling, apostolic phase of Quaker ministry in the seventeenth century, particularly as exemplified in women; looking at the fundamental Quaker notion of a universal inner light that transcends existent constructions of both cultural and linguistic difference, Brown shows how travelling women Friends not only overturned the gendered boundaries of household and education, but also dissolved more broadly constitutive notions of self and other along cultural, linguistic, and gendered lines. These accounts reveal the Quaker reimagining of the role of bodily presence in spiritual witness, in contrast to the dominant cultural limitation of women to the bodily realm. Additionally, contrasting accounts of encounters of Quaker women Friends with the Turkish court and with the Massachusetts government provide an early instance of the counter-construction of Islamic culture as enlightened in contrast to European barbarity, rewriting and revising the conventional orientalised portrait from a feminine perspective, and anticipating in this respect Montagu's famous Turkish Embassy letters.

Writing in an early North American context, Ann Little's essay elaborates on this theme of global mission and the way in which gendered spirituality blurs and complicates dominant cultural differences. In her study of the life and times of Esther Wheelwright (1696-1780), an English captive who lived in both Acadian mission towns and the Ursuline convent, and of other lives both of Ursuline nuns and Wabanaki women in convents, Little explores "the continuities of experience" and practice between French Ursulines and Catholicized Wabanaki women in eighteenth-century Quebec and Acadia, practices which shared such elements as female community, ascetic discipline, and religious and cultural leadership.

Three essays to follow examine the complex notions around the Catholic religious community and feminine models of authority in writing by British women of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century. Marie Comisso explores the unique place held by Aphra Behn—linking threads of ecofeminism, female autonomy, identity, and desire—in which Behn shows the potential for women to recover autonomy and full sexual identity through renewed links with the nonhuman world of nature. Behn generally rejects the paternalistic authoritarianism of established religion with its focus on controlling the female body and desire; she attacks the Protestant capitalist domestic framework of property and possession in her pastoral translation "The Golden Age," and she plays on the proto-Gothic tropes of anti-convent literature in her portrait of the "unnatural" (or anti-natural) restrictions of the convent, in her novella *The History of the Nun*. In response, Behn rewrites the concept of retirement and of feminine spiritual autonomy in a pastoral mode; nonetheless, in her narratives that

model still carries within it the seeds of its own dissolution, succumbing to the social and gendered imperatives of materialist society.

In contrast both to the paternalism of Protestant domestic ideology and to the gendered restrictions of Enlightenment subjectivism that immured female mind and spirit in the female body, Katherine Quinsey examines the link between feminism and cloistered community in writers as diverse as Behn, Margaret Cavendish, and John Dryden, showing how in their drama and fiction these writers suggest alternate models of feminine authority, autonomy, and community specifically associated with the convent and religious retirement. From Cavendish's early plays (notably the *Convent of Pleasure* and *The Religious*) to Behn's romantic Catholic-toned novellas, to Dryden's comedy *The Assignation: or Love in a Nunnery*, Catholicism and the convent model are associated with an alternate feminized social order, one that not only privileges feminine spiritual autonomy but also nurtures romantic egalitarian marriage. Oppression within marriage and the domestic sphere is displaced by a beneficent community marked by feminine (or feminized) authority, both monastic and familial in nature.

While England's "first feminist," high Tory Anglican Mary Astell, and the emphatically Whig Mary Wortley Montagu may seem to be political opposites, they are linked in their critique of the gendered inequities of the Lockean social contract. Taking as his starting point Astell's laudatory preface to Montagu's *Turkish Embassy Letters* (written December 1728 and attached much later to the posthumous published version 1763), Humberto Garcia argues that Montagu's Turkish letters in fact constitute a critique of Whig masculinist "false universals" comparable to Astell's own Tory rationalist feminism, through the portrayal of Muslim female agency and community as an alternate and viable model for gender equality. Montagu utilizes the conventions of the pro-Islamic deistic letter to attack Catholicism and, more covertly, the sexual double standard embedded in Whig Protestantism, both Anglican and radical. Her extended portrayal of the legal and social rights enjoyed by Turkish women, like Astell's analysis, cuts through to the basis of the sexism implicit in Lockean social contract theory and the inequities of marital law in England, by which women were deprived of their rights as "freeborn" English citizens. Montagu admired Astell's model of the "English monastery" for women in the *Serious Proposal*, translating those ideals of the "feminotopia" [2] into the portrayal of hammam and harem as empowering female spaces; moreover, she recognized that a feminist critique of Whig republicanism, which "elevated male contractual 'rights' at the expense of women," could only come from within a Tory perspective. Garcia concludes with an

illuminating exploration of Astell's own feminist rereading of Scriptures, in particular of the purposes of the veil as a sign not of inferiority but of equal subjection to God, and of modesty in dress as enabling religious autonomy—an interpretation closely aligned with Qur'anic injunctions. While Montagu applies this autonomy not to religious modesty but rather to sexual autonomy, nonetheless both women aim "to recover the feminist significance of the veil," even within a patriarchal economy that appears to necessitate it.

Two essays to follow explore the links between private female religious experience and the emerging public sphere, as located particularly in the changing political and social conditions of eighteenth-century France and Britain. The intersection of public and private in female spirituality and public political identity is the focus of Mita Choudhury's essay on the role of the female mystic in the emergent public sphere in eighteenth-century France; her essay examines specifically the widely-publicized case of Catherine Cadière, a young female mystic from Toulon and a local celebrity in the 1720s, who accused her Jesuit spiritual director of bewitchment, seduction, and heresy. Choudhury examines the political discourse around Cadière's spiritual subjectivity, which recreated it as a political subjectivity and transformed her personal experience into a public and political narrative of victimization, as part of the pre-revolutionary attack on the powerful Jesuit order. This discourse was marked by issues of engagement and accountability that are associated with the modern public sphere. The contrast between Cadière and her "predecessor" Anne-Madeleine Rémusat shows the contrasting roles of women religious and the power of spiritual subjectivity in the emergent public sphere, as Rémusat used her spiritual influence to become a civic leader and powerful focus during plague of 1720, while Cadière became constructed as a victim for the purposes of a political power struggle.

Peggy Schaller's study of influential French educator, scholar, writer, and editor Jeanne Marie le Prince de Beaumont (1711-1780) shows how notions of feminist notions of autonomy and identity were part of a trajectory of rationalist faith and spirituality that transcended boundaries between French Enlightenment secularism and Catholic tradition and structure. Influenced by the feminist high Anglicanism of Mary Astell, in both her independent rationalism and her "deeply rooted spirituality," Beaumont shared Astell's commitment to a combination of rigorous intellectual enquiry and an "older, more scripturally exacting faith," as the basis for individual fulfillment. Beaumont was a prolific and highly influential writer particularly on education and for children as well as in fiction, religion, and philosophy; her works enjoyed a renaissance in the

post-revolutionary reaction against the extremes of revolutionary anti-clericalism, and were subsequently translated into the nineteenth-century American market, where they enjoy influence even today. Like Astell, Beaumont based the argument for female spiritual and intellectual equality in the Christian theology of grace, seeing divine authority as superior to any human authority, and men and women as equal before God. Beaumont specifically locates her beliefs within the confines of Catholic orthodoxy, rejecting the more extreme spiritual individualism of quietism, while fully exploring the implications of Christian theology for human spiritual equality.

One of the most intensely fraught tropes of eighteenth-century thought on women and religion is the idea of the convent, with its conflicting identity as both sterile confinement for women and fertile community of women, as image of paternalistic restraint and as locus for female expression, identity, and authority. These dynamically contrasting threads are a significant feature of the Gothic imagination that dominates later eighteenth-century British literature, the nostalgic picturesque that plays off the still-resonant ghosts of a Catholic past, the contrasting shadow against which the dominant rationalist Protestant British identity is constructed; more specifically, this mode is centred on the female experience, which is the other Other against which British masculinity is defined. The final essay in the collection, by Alicia Kerfoot, examines the convent as resonant and mutable space in the novels of Ann Radcliffe. Kerfoot shows how Radcliffe's novels depict "hidden or unreadable sites of agency" within apparently confined domestic space, in particular the convent, and examines how Radcliffe's narrative use of nunnery as space suggests that female agency and identity are as malleable and changing as the interiors she describes. The repressed Catholic past against which modern British identity—particularly femininity—was defined, has in Radcliffe a freeing mutability and power, challenging static femininity. "Haunted" by both memory and imagination, female monastic space responds to the eighteenth-century narrative of femininity; the notion of "Protestant nostalgia for lost Catholic space" which was specifically female is both empowering and disempowering for women. Domestic space and convent in Radcliffe's Gothic both represent simultaneously prison or sanctuary; at the heart of the Gothic mode, space itself creates identity and mirrors both imagination and sensibility, the blurring of subjective and objective worlds. The ruined monastic spaces provide an alternate and imaginative way to construct the self, and suggest that modern gender ideals are as flawed (or as mutable) as those of the medieval past that Protestant Britain relied on for difference.

Early modern religion and gender is still an emerging field of study, one which challenges various post-Enlightenment assumptions both ontological and epistemological. It requires revisionist historicizing and critical engagement with the lives and writings of women across a wide range of formal religious beliefs and cultural practices, to examine both fundamental differences and fundamental commonalities, particularly that of individual and collective spirituality as a means of gendered experience and self-identity. With an exploration of subjectivities under the veil, across cultural and confessional divides, eighteenth-century feminist studies are poised to expand into a multiplicity of feminine perspectives that put female experience at the centre, resisting Eurocentric perspectives that themselves are based in a materialist dichotomy that judges from the outside rather than the inside. It is our hope that this collection, through both substantive primary materials and a transnational range of enquiry, will open up new paths for understanding in this process.

I would like to express my thanks above all to the splendid contributors to this volume, who have embodied and expressed a wide range of searching and imaginative scholarship, and whose professionalism and grace have made the work of editing a great pleasure. I would also like to acknowledge the support of research grants from the University of Windsor and the rich array of primary online materials available through the Canadian Association of Research Libraries. I would like also to recognize the seminal influence of my graduate seminar class of Winter 2007, one of whom is now a contributor to the volume. Their enthusiasm and creativity helped inspire this collection in its earliest stages.

Finally, it is with great sadness that I note the untimely death of Dr. Julie Hirst, which took place while this volume was in process. Dr Hirst's tireless work for both the principles and practices of equity and spirituality transcended the boundaries of the academic and broader communities, and brought scholarship to life in its fullest and truest sense. This book is dedicated to Dr Hirst's memory, and to the continuation of her work.

University of Windsor
December 2011

Notes

1. Mary Astell, *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies*, ed. Patricia Springborg (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2002), 80.
2. See Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 155-171.

"IF MY PEN'S LIQUOR IS TO BE FROM ETERNITY, IT CANNOT BE WRITTEN DRY": ANNE BATHURST, A SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY VISIONARY

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Anne Bathurst was a member of the London Philadelphian Society in the late seventeenth century. She was a member of larger pan-European network that believed in universal salvation for all. What was unusual about Bathurst is that she was a Protestant who had visions of Wisdom as well as of Jesus, and she documents her visions and ideas in an extant, but unpublished spiritual diary from 17 March 1679 until 21 October 1696. With themes that include mystical elements and radical ideas about beliefs in the existence and nature of God, this diary can inform our understanding of the complexity of religion in the early modern period. This essay aims to show the significance of Bathurst's contribution for contemporary ideas about spirituality and feminism in post-Reformation Britain and Europe. Her theological views challenge our critical assumptions about the role of religion in society by demonstrating that she was an active participant contributing to wider theological debates, both influenced by and influencing the Philadelphian Society, of which she was an esteemed member. The Philadelphian Society allowed a space in which Bathurst could re-evaluate ideas concerning the existence and nature of God and stimulate new, sometimes controversial ones, which in turn informed her experience of authorship. This essay will examine this little-known diary to show how it was an important medium of religious expression and why it makes an important contribution to our understanding of women and spirituality in the early modern period.

When Anne Bathurst started writing her diary in 1678 she was forty years old and she lived "in the countryside near London, at Hatton Gardens, near Holborn."[1] She married John Bathurst, whose will dated 3

November 1692 mentions his house in Red Lyon Square, St. Andrew's, Holborn, Middlesex. He left £400 to their daughter Elizabeth, wife of Samuel Stevens, and £100 to each of her children. Their daughter Lydia, wife of William Selby and her children are bequeathed £100 each.[2] The Bathursts had a sugar plantation in Jamaica worth £400 per annum, providing an annuity to Anne worth £250 a year.[3] It appears, however, that the sons she mentions in her diary did not survive into adulthood: "Remember the Zeal of my son P.J. in his young and tender age: And remember those my two little Sons, who in the time of their flesh know not their left hand from their Right."[4] Anne's will also records a similar legacy to her daughters with the addition of £20 bequeathed to Joanna Oxenbridge and other friends.[5]

When Anne Bathurst started writing her diary she was already a member of a group of religious visionaries in mid-seventeenth-century London headed by John Pordage (1607-1681), a minister of Bradfield, Berkshire. Richard Baxter noted that "Dr *Pordage* amid his Family . . . live together in Community, and pretend to hold visible and sensible Communion with Angels, whom they sometime see, and sometime smell."[6] Pordage's group was informed by the ideas of the sixteenth-century German theosopher Jacob Boehme (1575-1624), who claimed to have visions and who wrote books and treatises on complex philosophical and theological concepts drawn from Hermeticism, the Kabbala, Gnosticism, astrology, alchemy and sophiology.[7] It was thought that by drawing on such esoteric subjects the hidden secrets of the divine could be revealed. It was as a member of Pordage's group we are told that Bathurst first had "great & Wonderful Experiences & Manifestations fro[m] ye Heavenly World . . . Thise visions ware when [Bathurst] did live with dr pordich."[8]

In keeping such a diary or record of spiritual progression, Bathurst was following a common practice within her circle as well as within the Protestant culture. Furthermore, members of Pordage's circle were used to exchanging, reading and copying material among themselves. Pordage also kept a record of his spiritual development including visions he experienced, and may have encouraged such record-keeping among his coterie. He wrote several books and treatises; one of his publications, *Sophia*, was based on his own experiences, consisting of biographical information and twenty-two daily journal entries from 21 June to 10 July 1675.[9] Another important member who later became the leader of some of Pordage's circle, Jane Lead (1624-1704), wrote the preface for Pordage's *Theologica Mystica* in 1681, the year of his death. The Advertisement in her diary mentioned that she had written "for Monitions and Encouragements

to some few Particular Friends; not thinking of their Publication in the least," including "a Book Written in her own Hand, which was lent to an Honourable Lady, that soon after Deceased."[10] Sharing thoughts and ideas strengthened their common goal of spiritual progression.

After the death of John Pordage, Jane Lead became the leader of the Philadelphian Society, which included some members from Pordage's group. They "met in the house of Mrs. Joanna Oxenbridge wt whom Mrs A. Bathurst Combined who were Two Principal Persons in carrying on ye Spiritual Work: and both Enlightened Persons and both having great and Wonderful Experiences and Manifestations fro ye Heavenly World."[11] Richard Roach (1662-1730), the historian of the Philadelphian Society, declared that, "The Philadelphian Society wch first appeard publicly in London in the year 1697, were Part of a Society of Spiritual people who for about 50 Years had met together after the Primitive way of Attendance or waiting for the Holy Spirit."[12] They believed that they were the faithful "remnant" or "waiters" at the end times. The Philadelphian Society was named after the sixth of the seven churches in Asia mentioned in Revelation 1:4 and 3:7, which refer to "the angel of the church in Philadelphia," and the only one favoured by God. Members believed in the imminence of the millennium and the concept of universal salvation, and they declared themselves to be a "Religious Society for the Reformation of Manners, for the Advancement of an Heroical Christian Piety, and Universal Love towards All."[13] Roach recorded that the Philadelphians were "Gentry and Persons of Quality, and among these so many of the Female Sex, that it was thence call'd the Taffeta Meeting."[14] "It was after this carried on in more Private Meetings, the Principal of which was that in Baldwin's Gardens, held by Mrs Anne Bathurst; who has also left Works in Manuscript; too highly tinctur'd in the Seraphick Love for this Rougher Age to bear; Reserv'd likewise for their Time. From hence spring those under the Name of the Philadelphian Society."[15]

As a member of the Philadelphian Society, Bathurst made an important contribution to the spirituality of the seventeenth century. The Philadelphian Society gave female members a degree of autonomy and encouragement, and the importance of women in the Society cannot be overlooked. Drawing on Joel 2:28, Bathurst reiterates the importance of gender in partaking equally in the expression of religion: "Thy masculin[e] power to be poured forth upon thy sons & daughters, that masculin[e] & feminin[e], thy spirit & word of power, may go forth witnessing that the word of the holy Ghost that was made flesh."[16] Indeed, Roach announced that "some of ye Female Sex have been Chosen & Distinguished with Admirable Talents for ye Information of ye Age."[17] While Hilary Hinds

observes that many dissenting sects stressed the spiritual equality of all,[18] it is clear that the Philadelphian Society held women in even greater esteem spiritually. Women such as Bathurst thus played a greater and more crucial role to the contribution of religious practice and spirituality than previously thought. The Society upheld the idea that women would play an important role collectively in the anticipated "End Times'": "The Female Sex, as here Commission'd and Instructed by their Mother Wisdom, will act the Reverse to their Former Temptation, and now Tempt and draw the Male Upwards, in Order to the Recovery of Paradise again, even on Earth; and that in a far more glorious State that from whence they fell."[19] Female members thus played an important role in shaping the development of the Philadelphian Society and its influence in the wider society.[20] The role of female members, then, is to reclaim their right from what was lost in the Fall, with Wisdom, or Sophia, returning mankind to a prelapsarian condition, where universal harmony will be restored with both Christ and Wisdom's return in the New Jerusalem.

The Philadelphian Society was interdenominational and actively promoted the doctrine of universal salvation, which they believed would be achieved through the internal regeneration of churches.[21] They emphasized the ecumenical nature of the Philadelphian Society by suggesting that "our *Quakers*, and *Philadelphians*, as well as the *Quietists* and *Pietists* abroad, are from the same Kidney, and do all stand upon the same foundations".[22] Although the exact numbers in the Philadelphian Society is unknown, they were keen not to separate themselves by any outward show, but instead, sought international connections in both Catholic and Protestant countries, so that their members would "gladly embrace a more Spiritual Religion, overlooking the Outward Strength and Pomp of a Church State in Comparison with the Inward Life and Spirit of the Gospel".[23]

In 1697 the Philadelphian Society applied to license certain places of worship under the Toleration Act. It appeared that with lay female leadership, the Philadelphian Society thrived, so new venues were sought. The Philadelphians, however, gave such an "Alarm to the world . . . that their Meeting at Baldwin Gardens began to be crowded with such Numbers that they were constrained to become more Public and to divide the meeting."[24] Increasing numbers seem to be indicated by their need to move from private houses to larger public venues.[25] The Philadelphians gathered at Hungerford Market, West London, and at Westmoreland House.[26] However, after disturbances in both places in 1699, we find them also at Lorimer's Hall, where they also met with opposition. They were buffeted by a mob and prevented from meeting there "where they had a

vast concourse of people"[27] They were forced to re-convene in private because of "great Opposition Violence from ye rude Multitude".[28] The meetings were also invaded by the group called the "French Prophets," who were *émigrés* from the Cevennes War in France and fired with emotional enthusiasm.[29] *Enthusiasm* as a derogatory term was used against radicals who opposed the Church, rejected established institutions, and threatened the social and political order.[30] Despite the Philadelphians' applying to the chief magistrate of London for a warrant to suppress the "Tumults and Profaneness" from "Wicked and Dissolute Persons," the problem persisted.[31] Their success in achieving greater numbers and holding public meetings had backfired, and under the terms of the 1689 Toleration Act they had no powers to stop undesirable behaviour.

When Lead published *A Revelation of the Everlasting Gospel Message* in 1697, she broke with conventional Behmenist ideas. Although her theological views were endorsed by members of the Philadelphian Society, this radical change brought about criticism.[32] The London Post reported, "I hear that the Sect commonly called Philadelphians, are divided among themselves, upon account of a Debate that happened this Week among them, at their Meeting-house at Hogsdown, about some of their Tenets, which are deemed erroneous, by several of the leading Persons of that Sect."[33] Bathurst was in agreement with Lead's controversial stance as she had also declared in 1695, "Know O lord let all dark sentences be understood and let Universal Love be known to the bodys & minds of All."[34] Promoting universal love along with a high ratio of women members led to a speculation of sexual license. Paula McDowell observes that "Women were a strikingly visible presence in the Philadelphian Society . . . [its support] of female spiritual authority, promotion of women and women's causes, and especially, mixed-sex meetings were all grounds for confusion and concern."[35]

The Philadelphian Society finally retreated from public view; also due to the illness of Anne Bathurst, members were forced to find different locations for their gatherings: "ye Room where they met not being but a private Chamber and Mrs Bathurst then Aged and Sickly not being able to bear so Great Conc. and ye Disorders attending it."[36] When their leader Jane Lead died in 1704, Richard Roach recorded a vision in which Lead descends from heaven to tell him that he should take her place as the leader of the Philadelphian movement, "that upon the death of Mrs. Bathurst it being needful somebody should strike in her Place for the Support of the Meeting at B.G. [Baldwins Gardens]"'.[37] Roach's vision suggests that Lead may have considered Bathurst as her successor, and that Bathurst may have died just before or about the same time as Lead. [38]

Bathurst begins her diary with eight pages of autobiographical writing followed by eight hundred pages of her diary entries, but she appears unclear as to whether they should remain private or be shared with others: "And through His teachings & Conduct I for many years concealed, and had so intended still; yet since recollecting what use it might be off for my self & others I was much press'd in Spirit to write Them down, as also afterwards by some Friends."[39]

Bathurst's visions are inspired by the Bible and especially the Book of Revelation, as she desires a spiritual and emotional understanding of scripture through the experience of reading and living it. Her visions were almost entirely Christocentric, although she does on occasions refer to a personal relationship with Sophia. Bathurst is ultimately concerned with the next world in which everything would be in spirit form. It was a place where flesh and the earthly body could be discarded in the "light" world and where God existed. Bathurst asks, "Where is Heaven? . . . it is within you.'[40] Diane Purkiss acknowledges that a state where the soul would unite with God gave a reason for women's desire to situate themselves "outside or beyond the body."[41] The "real" world was indeed a hindrance to the next, and Bathurst looked forward to escaping the restrictions of her flesh and of this world. Bathurst was able to describe another interior world because of what she had seen in her dreams and visions. These startling revelations promise God's truth by describing a world to come, in which Sophia and Christ would have powerful redemptive roles with *their* second coming in a future which holds the promise of a New Jerusalem—a return to a prelapsarian world made possible through internal spiritual rebirths. She describes a world that is both illuminating about God's word to her and a world in which she can utilise her senses. Her writing is clearly an attempt to understand human nature through her visions. To a large extent, these are rooted in her reading of the Bible, which validates (her own) visionary knowledge as the highest knowledge. But the presence of biblical information in her mind, gained through the senses, does not mean that the visions cannot communicate genuine mystical knowledge. She herself is wrestling with this issue and wants to allow both modes of perception as genuine, but with the visionary as superior. She anticipated a spiritual regeneration involving spiritual rebirths from within the soul, including her own soul. As Sylvia Bowerbank states, "Bathurst's diary documents her daily study of the great mystery of spiritual impregnation and her ongoing labour to give birth to a new reality."[42]

Bathurst also employs the language of spiritual alchemy, which turns lead into gold, spiritually, not literally. When Bathurst started writing in 1679 her knowledge of an alchemical vocabulary was already considerable.

She almost certainly derived her alchemical knowledge and its idiomatic application from Jane Lead, John Pordage, and their associates, derived from the works of Jacob Boehme.[43] Bathurst wrote about gold being equal to the Love of God: "The true Philosopher's stone which turns all into Love, which is the true Gold."[44] Bathurst used alchemical discourse as a way of signifying how God's truth could be found by searching within. Her belief in transmutation was expressed in alchemical terms to show that the outer flesh/sin could be transformed into an inner realization of the divine. Bathurst's visions thus revealed a series of powerful alchemical symbols and signs as a way of transmuting and purifying the soul. The emphasis on experiencing the inward life and the soul's progression by spiritual transmutation to a spiritual awakening represents the essence of the Philadelphian goal.

Another important aspect of Bathurst's theology is "the Virgin parte of Wisdom, the Mirror of a Being, the Diademe of Heaven."[45] From reflection of the deity it is the feminine aspect of the divine through which Bathurst seeks perfection, thus avoiding rejection. It is the reflection of the Virgin Wisdom within the godhead that is a Philadelphian ideal, by avoiding the heretical aspect of the Virgin as an actual fourth aspect of the godhead. It is also interesting that representations of mirrors provide a rare early modern vocabulary for individual introspection.[46] The use of the "mirror" thus afforded Bathurst "a means of self-scrutiny that combines intimacy and display"— a reflection of the divine and the divine reflecting in her—a two-way reflection. It suggests a "multiplicity of perspectives from which the self can be known, and the diversity of functions that it serves."[47] Bathurst is thus reflected in a mirror and reflected beyond it, making tangible the connection between Wisdom and herself.

Bathurst clearly made the connection between the act of writing and divine inspiration. Her diary entry dated 24 January 1693 declared, "O Eternity has in it a large Subject to dip my pen and write from! And I see my angel of Spirit dip a pen . . . Sure if my pen's liquor is to be from Eternity, it cannot be written dry."[48] Bathurst adapts the biblical narrative and follows St. Paul's lead; she becomes as a pen, which imprints the precepts of the Holy Spirit: "ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God" (2 Corinthians 3:3). By not dipping her pen in ink, i.e. a material object in ink, but by dipping it in the Spirit of the living God, she feels assured that her writing will become eternal, thereby not only elevating the content of her work, but also elevating herself to a more socially and culturally important position. Thus, drawing on an accepted convention of the practice of women's writing and a Protestant tradition

that authorised spiritual narratives, women like Bathurst found an acceptable way to write. Legitimising her writing by divine authentication Bathurst commented: "these are the true sayings of God, and I know thy Teaching, I know thy voice, a Stranger I will not follow."[49]

In a vision Bathurst records: "I saw my Friend's Angel w[i]th chrystal eyes, as I had so often seen my self have, to declare how I see the Glory: for an Angel came to her Angel here in this lower world & opend her eyes putting a bright stream in them, and about a day after gave her Chrystal eyes."[50] When she says that she sees with "chrystal eyes," she is recalling the collocation of "crystal" and "eyes" in Revelation 4:6: "And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind."The "bright stream" that is put into her eyes to make them "crystal" is almost certainly the "pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God..." (Revelation 22:1). Her visions, she implies, come from the same source as that which inspired the visions of Revelation.

It is worth quoting at length a vision recorded on November 10th 1681 in which Bathurst discerns her husband's angel, fragmented into twelve angels, again drawing on Revelation whilst also incorporating Behmenist ideas. The vision presents the ideal vision of redeemed humanity in terms of the number twelve, the vision of the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21 and 22, but which also gives prominence to the "seven angels" which stand close to God.

> Mr B[athur]st's Angel often appeared, and at last it appeared as divided into 12 Angels, all of them cloathed in white & cloudy raiment and in his figure: seven of these Angels were much of his size, but the other five something lesser and brighter. The 7 Angels were shown to me to be his Souls Angels, being the 7 ruling Spirits of the Soul, and are also called the seven properties of it, the uppermost w[hi]ch stood on the right hand of the seven (for they stood all 12 in a row) was declared to be Love, the second Angel was named desire, the third the will, the fourth Faith, the fifth Joy, the sixth Wisdom, and the seventh angels name was patience as a new full assistant to all the other Saints, influencing in a white breath through them all. It was declared to me that these 7 Angels were those w[hi]ch come below me tho' all severally?, the first of them was the Angel of Love, w[hi]ch came w[ith] Mr B's usual salutation, the second Angel w[hi]ch came was desire, who was loathe to goe, and had w[i]t[h[] him also the Wills Angel to discourse, and stay till it was heard, and assured fully all its desires. And the fourth Angel which I saw flying was Faith, and the fifth Angel as below appeared was the Angel of joy in the Union her felt? The 6th Angel was wisdom to guide him, w[hi]ch seemed very composed and appointed as a Conductor for him, And it was the 7th Angel

> y[e]t was so patient and refyned, and united by all the virtues of every Grace, and so every angel receives a virtue.
>
> Thus it was declared how it might be known, which of these 7 Angels of any person did appear (for every one hath so many angels) for they all came severally before me in the likeness of Mr B. (who then designed to goe into a foreign Country) and followed him and one took into his breast, and did all sit in him as in a Glob[e] of Light, being all of them of a like statue, and safe at an equal distance from one another, in much agreement and Harmony discoursing together.
>
> The other four Angels who were of a lesser figure and brighter, were the Spirit Angels, which went into a Light, and so w[hi]ch Mr B.'s head, where they all sat as in a Glob[e] of Light, all of a like bigness at a like distance and in Harmony. These 5 Angels were not named, but declared to be distant from the others, their knowledge being not like that of the seven angels aforementioned, w[hi]ch stand more in the sensibility or perceptibility. But those know as God knoweth, by a Spirit of Informing, w[hi]ch comes from the Spirit of God in us, by w[hi]ch they know from knowledge; w[hi]ch what it is I cannot well express, it being the highest and most spiritual of all knowledge.
>
> Arriving to this it seems that every one hath 12 Angels, whereof 5 are the Spirits Angels, and the other seven the Angels of the Soul. The Spirits Angels have their wisdome in the head in their own principle, as in a Globe of Light. The Souls Angels have their abode in the Heart, but in their own principle, as in a Globe of Light also, as the Spirits Angels. And they are further distinguished by their different ways of knowledge. The knowledge of the Souls Angels is w[i]t[h] more perceptibility and inward sensibility. I may feel what another feels, yet not by any outward sense, but by a sense of Life so I feel that another desires such a thing, I feel or am sensible of weariness in another, and yet am not weary myself, that is I have no sense of outward weariness upon me. Fire kindles fire, the fire of Love in another way may kindle the same in me, this I call a sensible perceptible way of knowing, w[hi]ch has its seat in the sensible part, in manner as is above explained.

Bathurst wrote "every one hath 12 Angels, whereof 5 are the Spirits Angels, and the other seven the Angels of the Soul. The Spirits Angels have their wisdome in the head in their own principle, as in a Globe of Light" and "Mr B[athur]st[']s Angel often apparent as divided into 12 Angels, all of whom cloathed in white and lovely raiment."[51] Bathurst is making a distinction between the seven angels which validate mystical and spiritual knowledge and the five angels which validate "head" knowledge, gained through the five senses, so the twelve angels make up the whole case of man, sub-divided into mystical (seven) and rational (five). Her seven angels are those of Revelation 8:2 where "the seven angels" stand before God (Rev. 8:2). For Bathurst these represent the properties of soul.

This follows from traditional medieval and Renaissance discussions which often gave nine properties of soul reflecting the nine "heavens": the Moon, Mercury, Venus, the Sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, the fixed stars, the primum mobile. Of these the seven planets have seven angels. As in Revelation 1:20, "the seven stars," i.e. planets, are the seven angels. Because in the esoteric and Behmenist thought of the day the soul is a microcosm of the heavens, it contains these seven angels.

Also, because twelve is the ultimate number of man's wholeness and perfection—the twelve tribes, twelve disciples—twelve and seven reflect man's divine understanding. Seven angels speak to the seven churches in Revelation, and a further five angels make up the wholeness of man. These are "distant from the others, their knowledge being not like that of the seven angels aforementioned." The seven angels link with "soul" and "heart": knowing, empathy, and intuition, which are considered spiritual ways of knowing. Thus, the five remaining angels link with "head" knowing—sense perception plus reason. Nonetheless, Bathurst emphasises that both modes of knowing have their place in the wholeness of man, both modes forming globes of light.

The fascinating legacy that Anne Bathurst has left certainly deserves more scholarly attention. There remains to be done much further exploration of her life and writings. By situating Bathurst's writing within the broader Protestant tradition, we can open up a significant new avenue in the ongoing study of early modern women, and in the scholarship that continues to revise the marginal position of women's religious texts in critical discourse. Ultimately, such critical attention should reposition Bathurst's writings from relative obscurity to greater prominence, in the process revealing not only her frustrations, but also, like other Philadelphians such as Jane Lead, her reflections, dreams, and visions to attain some understanding of God's truth.

Notes

1. Anne Bathurst, *Diary*, (July 23rd 1680). Appears in two volumes in Bodleian Library, Oxford, under the titles "Rhapsodical Meditations and Visions by Mrs Ann Bathurst, from 17 March, 1679 to 29 June, 1693," and "Another volume of Ann Bathurst's rhapsodies, 30 June 1693, to 21 October, 1696" (MS Rawl. D. 1262, 1263). Referred to hereafter as *Diary*.
2. John Bathurst's will is proved 8 Mch. 1693/4, by Anne Bathurst, the relict and executrix, Public Records Office, PROB11/419.
3. Will of John Bathurst 1692. PROB11/419.
4. Bathurst, *Diary*, (Aprill the 4th & 5th 1688), 308-309.
5. Anne Bathurst Will PROB11/476.

6. Richard Baxter, *Reliquae Baxterianae: or, Mr. Richard Baxter's Narrative of the Most Memorable Passages of his Life and Times* (London, 1696), 77.
7. For information about Jacob Boehme (1575-1624), see Nigel Smith, *Perfection Proclaimed: Language and Literature in English Radical Religion 1640-1660* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 185-225; Robin Waterfield, *Jacob Boehme: Essential Readings* (Wellington, Northamptonshire: Crucible, 1989; repr. Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 2001); B. J. Gibbons, *Gender in Mystical and Occult Thought* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996).
8. Bodleian, Oxford, MS Rawl. D833, fol. 67v.
9. John Pordage, *Sophia* (Amsterdam, 1699) cited in Arthur Versluis, *Wisdom's Book: The Sophia Anthology*, (Minnesota: Continuum International Publishing, 2000), 66.
10. Jane Lead, *A Fountain of Gardens* (London, 1700-1), vol. 3, pt 2, sig. A2.
11. Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Rawl., D833, fol. 132r.
12. Ibid., D833, fol. 82r, Richard Roach, "An Acct. of the Philadelphian Society".
13 Francis Lee, *State of the Philadelphian Society* (London, 1697), 7.
14. Roach provided details after the Society had been well established in *An Account of the Rise and Progress of the Philadelphian Society.*
15. Richard Roach, *The Great Crisis*, (London, 1727), 99.
16. Bathurst, *Diary* (May 25 1695) 744.
17. Bodleian, Oxford, MS Rawl., D833, fol. 55v, Richard Roach, "Wt are the Philadelphians & wt is ye Ground of their Society."
18. Hilary Hinds, *God's Englishwomen: Seventeenth-Century Radical Sectarian Writing and Feminist Criticism* (Manchester & New York: Manchester University Press, 1996), 8.
19. Roach, *Crisis*, 97.
20. On the development & influence of the Philadelphian Society, see Nils Thune, *Behmenists & Philadelphians: a contribution to the study of English mysticism in the 17th and 18th centuries,* Diss., trans. G. E. Björk (Uppsala: Lundequistska Bokhandeln, 1948) and B.J. Gibbons, *Gender in Mystical & Occult Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
21. Other MSS concerning the Philadelphian Society include, "Reasons for the Foundation and Promotion of a Philadelphian Society," which can be found in London, Lambeth Palace Library MS. 942/130 and Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Rawl., D833.
22. *State of the Philadelphian Society*, 30. See also John Cockburn, *Bourignianism Detected*: *or the Delusions and Errors of Antonia Bourignon and her Growing Sect* (London, 1698), "Preface," sig A2r.
23. *State of the Philadelphian Society*, 13.
24. Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Rawl., D833, fol. 83r.
25. Thune, *Behmenists and Philadelphians*, 90.
26. Bodleian, Oxford, MS Rawl. D833, fol. 134r.
27. Ibid., fol. 170r.
28. Ibid., fol. 65r; Richard Roach, "Rise and Progress of the Philadelphian Society."

29. Hillel Schwartz, *The French Prophets: The History of a Millenarian Group in Eighteenth Century England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 85-87.
30. See Michael Heyd, *"Be Sober and Reasonable": The Critique of Enthusiasm in the Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 1995) and Phyllis Mack, *Visionary Women: Ecstatic Prophecy in Seventeenth-Century England* (Berkeley:University of California Press, 1992).
31. Bodleian, Oxford, MS Rawl., D833, fol. 65r.
32. D.P. Walker, *Decline of Hell: Seventeenth-Century Discussions of Eternal Torment* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), 11-12,219.
33. *London Post with Intelligence Foreign & Domestic* (London, Friday October 6, 1699) issue 54.
34. Bathurst, *Diary* (August 22 1695)
35. Paula McDowell, "Enlightenment Enthusiasms and the Spectacular Failure of the Philadelphian Society,"' *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 35, no. 4 (Summer 2002), 523.
36. Roach, MS Rawl., D833, fol. 65r.
37. Roach, 2.117; Nils Thune, *The Behmenists and the Philadelphians*, 136.
38. Sylvia Bowerbank, "Bathurst, Ann (*b. c.*1638, *d.* in or before 1704)." In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, edited by H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison,(Oxford: OUP, 2004). http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/40570.
39. Bathurst, *Diary*, 1.
40. Bathurst, *Diary* (January 3rd 1680/1), 128.
41. Diane Purkiss, "Producing the Voice, Consuming the Body," in Isobel Grundy and Susan Wiseman (eds), *Women, Writing, History 1640-1740* (London: Batsford, 1992), 151.
42. Sylvia Bowerbank, "Bathurst, Ann (*b. c.*1638, *d.* in or before 1704)."
43. J. Hirst, *Jane Leade: Biography of a Seventeenth Century Mystic* (Hants: Ashgate Press, 2005), 41-56.
44. Bathurst, *Diary* (September 4 1694), 716
45. Bathurst, Diary (Aprill the 26 1688), 312.
46. The dominant early modern usage of the term "mirror" refers to an example, model, or pattern; it is very rarely associated with self-reflection. This usage is thus distinctive . –Editor.
47. Ronald Bedford, Lloyd Davis & Phillipa Kelly, *Early Modern English Lives: Autobiography and Self-Representation 1500-1660* (Hants: Ashgate Publishing, 2007), 115.
48. Bathurst, *Diary* (January 24, 1693),130.
49. Bathurst, *Diary*, (October 30th 1680), 102.
50. Bathurst, *Diary*, (July 27th 1680), 83
51. Bathurst, *Diary* (November 10th 1681),154-56. Based on Rev 21:12, "twelve angels."

NO NEED FOR TRANSLATION: QUAKER WOMEN AND CROSS-CULTURAL CONTACTS IN THE SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY WORLD[1]

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Quakerism was, from its beginnings, a women's movement and a missionary movement. It may be said to have begun when George Fox met Elizabeth Hooton, a Nottinghamshire matron already known as a Baptist minister when she became "convinced" around 1646 by Fox's preaching of the divine light in every person. With other northern Quakers, many of them women, Hooton first travelled within England as a "publisher of the truth" in the 1650s. Later, after her husband's death and in her sixties, she crossed the Atlantic several times to preach in New England and the West Indies. She died in 1672, in her early seventies, while on a mission to Jamaica.[2]

The first decades of Quakerism are notable for the astonishing journeys undertaken by travelling Quaker ministers, a significant number of them women. Together with the doughty Elizabeth Hooton, one might single out Hester Biddle, Mary Fisher, Katharine Evans, and Sarah Cheevers. Biddle was the first Quaker to visit Newfoundland in 1656; she also visited the Netherlands and Alexandria and travelled to France near the end of her life to address Louis XIV. Mary Fisher, Biddle's companion in Newfoundland, is perhaps better known for her journey through the Ottoman Empire and her meeting with the "Great Turk" at Adrianople. Katharine Evans and Sarah Cheevers were arrested by the Italian Inquisition on Malta, en route for Alexandria. The co-authored record of their three-year imprisonment was published back in London around the time that they were finally released.[3] Many more women ministers travelled extensively within the British Isles, acting on the Quaker assumption that women, as well as men, may witness to the universal light within, as well as on the imperative, formulated by George Fox in an

epistle to Quaker ministers, that they "be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come. . . . Then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering to that of God in every one."[4]

The travelling women ministers of early Quakerism were a small but significant countercultural movement, radically reimagining and overturning the gendered boundaries of the household and women's place within it. Accordingly, when they travelled, they were greeted as dangerous disturbers of the social and sexual order by unsympathetic authorities: imprisoned, whipped as vagrants, abused by the name of "whore," and searched for witchmarks. In the cases of Hooton, Biddle, Fisher, Evans, and Cheevers, Quakerism enabled reimaginings of gender in the context of truly global and transcultural travel. Accounts of their travels, circulated to other Friends by letters or printed pamphlets, often seem genderless; indeed, an early Quaker ideal was to leave behind all trappings of "self."

This essay will consider how Quaker women travellers reconfigured constitutive elements of the self and the other—specifically, gender and language—in ways that enabled the heroic overturning of all kinds of conventions and differences. Thus, for instance, the Yorkshire servingwoman Mary Fisher somehow found it thinkable and possible to travel into the heart of the Ottoman Empire without understanding local languages or customs, in order to address the head of that Empire, the Great Sultan, as a kind of equal. Fisher's "mission" shares a peculiar feature with other Quaker cross-cultural encounters of this early period of the movement: an insistence on the dissolution of cultural differences, to the extent that language barriers, for instance, seem invisibly and magically overcome. The stories of these early Quaker travellers suggest, however, that we should not read these cross-cultural encounters in terms of the Christian universalism of the later period of institutionalized missionary movements. Rather, the distinctive Quaker theology-in-practice of this period paradoxically allowed for difference even as it seemed to dissolve difference along the lines of Galatians 3:28: ". . . neither Iewe nor Grecian . . . neither bonde nor free . . . neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Iesus."[5] Turks, Jews, and Indians, for instance, were judged to have access to the Light—to "that of God" in them—even as Turks, Jews, and Indians. This paradoxical approach to difference was allowed by the nature of Quaker witnessing, which was a witness of *presence* rather than of *language*. Hence the importance of travel, of bodily witnessing. Furthermore, if "that of God" in everyone could communicate through supralinguistic channels, with true reciprocity despite cultural difference (as Fox's epistle above suggests), then the early modern order of language

itself was challenged, in, for instance, its invidious distinctions between male and female or "believer" and "unbeliever." This had powerful implications for the travelling Quaker woman and for those "others" she met on her travels.

Language Barriers and the Light

Language is perhaps the strongest marker of cultural difference. Early narratives of Quaker travel rarely pause to explain how Englishmen and women, often with little formal education, managed to communicate with Scandinavians, Germans, Italians, Greeks, Turks, and native Americans—all of whom they visited in the 1650s, the first period of Quaker missionary activity. It seems almost as if language barriers did not matter, or were deliberately flouted. After several months of "movings for Holland," for instance, William Caton and John Stubbs sailed from the Tyne to Flushing in September 1655. Upon arrival, they were further moved by the Lord "to publish His eternal truth in and through their streets, whether they could understand or no." Similarly, in January 1657, two unnamed Friends were reported in Paris in indigent condition, saying "they were ambassadors from the Lord to the Duke of Savoy . . . they despaired not of the gift of tongues."[6]

It was in this spirit that Mary Fisher, a Yorkshire servingwoman then in her mid-thirties, set out with five Friends from England in the summer of 1657 for Leghorn, now Livorno, a staging port for the Levant.[7] Two of her male companions, John Perrot and John Buckley, clearly had some Italian, because they used a combination of English and that language (their own version of *lingua franca*) to get by during a later stage of travels in Greece, once the group had split up.[8] But the mission was not entirely self-sufficient. An old French merchant in Leghorn offered to help translate their books and to interpret, which suggests that they needed the help.[9] After a stay in Smyrna, where the English consul proved unsympathetic to their plans to gain an audience with Sultan Mehmed IV, they were forced by bad weather onto the Island of Zante on their way back to Italy early in 1658. There Mary Fisher and one of her female companions, Beatrice Beckley, decided to set out themselves for the encampment of the Sultan at Adrianople. John Perrot reported their departure in a letter written after his arrival in Venice:

> the Lord caused his winde to put us into Zant Iland where I left Mary Fisher and B. B. [i.e. Beatrice Beckley] to passe into Moreah againe into Turky which is in sight of that Iland to goe towards Andaniople [sic] where we hear the Turkes Emperour lyes with his armie being as is

> supposed six dayes Journey from the place where they may land as the Lord Makes way for their passage, blessed be the Lord I left them both in a meet state to proceed.[10]

Perrot's letter suggests an arduous itinerary: from the island of Zante in the Ionian sea to Morea (the Peleponnese), thence overland, perhaps to take ship again at some point across the Aegean. They were to land a six days' march from their final destination—a possibility would have been near the mouth of the Evros River, which would give them a six-day walk of about 100 miles inland to Adrianopolis (now Edirne).[11]

George Bishop, writing of Mary Fisher's visit to the "Grand Seignior" three years later, makes no mention of Beatrice Beckley (a point to which I shall return later) and states that Fisher made the 600-hundred-mile journey from the coasts of Morea to Adrianople entirely on foot. Perhaps the Lord did not, in the end, make "way for their passage" across the Aegean Sea?

> *Mary Fisher* a *Servant* of the *Lord,* a *Maiden* Friend, being *moved* of the *Lord* to *go* and deliver his *Word* to the *Great Turk* . . . passed by *Land* from the *Sea* Coasts of the *Morea* to *Adrianople* aforesaid, very Peaceably without *any* abuse or injury offered *her* in that *long* Journey of about five or six hundred miles. Being come to *Adrianople,* near unto which was the *Great Turk,* and *his* Army, *she* acquainted *some* of the *Citizens* with *her* Intent; and desired *some* of *them* to go with *her,* but when *none* of *them* durst to go fearing *his* Displeasure, *she* passed alone. . . . [12]

I have written elsewhere about the theology that made this audacious journey possible. [13] Quakers affirmed an inward but also universal spark of divinity found within each person on earth—in women as well as men, in the lowly as well as the learned and powerful, and perhaps even more radically, in Jews, Muslims, and "heathens" as well as Christians. Fisher's journey to meet the "Great Turk" enacted the levelling potential of this theology of the divine light in all. Not only did the Light prompt her to leave "home" and its attendant restrictions on what was possible for someone of her gender, education, and social status, but, as George Bishop reports it, the Light within the Great Turk, Mehmed IV, also enabled *him* to meet a strange Englishwoman on something like common ground. Bishop continues with an account of their successful meeting:

> . . . the *Great Turk,* who being with *his* great Men about *him,* as *he* uses to be when *he* receives Ambassadors, sent for *her* in . . . Then *he* bad *her* speak on (having *Three* Interpreters by *him)* and when *she* stood silent a *little, waiting* on the *Lord* when to speak, *he* supposing that *she* might be fearful to utter *her* mind before *them* all, asked *her, Whether she desired*