Abstract: This study explores what happens to the radical aspects of the Quaker movement from the restoration of the Monarchy in 1660 to 1700. How much of a change or indeed continuity was there in Quaker practices and missionary activity? Using several machine-readable corpora, eschatological prophecy material is interrogated to uncover potential changes of focus and rhetoric. Findings from exhortatory discursive discourses in the 1650s and 1660s are compared to a range of Quaker texts published in the later years of the century, specifically through the lens of “repent” language and other speech acts of warning and persuading. Diachronic comparisons of key lexis are analysed to uncover elements of change and continuity. The article concludes that after the 1660s, far from withering away, Quaker writing continued to include eschatological tracts and pamphlets, but these genre types sit alongside both the burgeoning collection of fierce doctrinal dispute material and more restrained treatises defending important principles and practices of Quaker faith.

Keywords: Quakerism; principles and practice; post-restoration changes; corpora; speech acts; distinctive language; eschatology

1. Introduction

“It is fact”, writes Moore (2018, p. 169), “that [seventeenth-century] Quakerism changed over the years”. Quakerism in the British Isles as a developing dissenting movement in the mid-century has been extensively studied; however, less scholarly attention has been paid until recently to what happened when the early fervour began to wane. Gill’s (2017, p. 448) recent study maps important changes in emphasis of Quaker thought in her literary approach of evaluating key material. My own starting point for this corpus-based article is to explore what did change, based on the written evidence of a wide range of published material, comprising both key texts and little-read pamphlets. I narrow that down further to focus on just two aspects of Quakerism from the post-restoration period up to the end of the century: namely, the quantity and variety of eschatological prophecy discourse, and distinctive Quaker lexical terminology employed by second generation authors compared to that of the initial years in the 1650s. The analytical approach used for the empirical investigation is corpus-based but also includes qualitative findings. I explore a wide range of texts to bring to light relevant internal evidence. My findings show that contrary to over-simplified assertions or implications by some earlier historians that controversial Quaker activity withdraws from public life, the findings presented in this paper are that the prophetic, the polemical and the inward-looking strands continue vigorously, at least to the end of the seventeenth century. (See Ingle 1987 for a historiographical account of previous scholarship into early Quakerism, and how little the later decades of the century are considered.)

Quakerism sits alongside a variety of conventional and radical dissenting Protestantism in England and in mainland Europe. Smith (1989, p. 345) draws clear comparisons with early Quaker and other contemporary groups during that heady twenty years leading up to the Restoration. He agrees that this moment was not the watershed it is often taken to be, and certainly not in the history of Quakerism. He notes that “forms of expression
develop and change” and goes on to explain that this sense of growth in Quakerism owed its strength to new organizational structures established in the 1670s and 1680s. Smith also discusses the dissenters’ (including Quakers) profound threat to social and political authority in the interregnum years. This too remains the case for Quakers after 1660, in spite of the so-called Peace Testimony (1660)—a declaration to the new monarch Charles II. There is a wealth of literature on the Quakers’ enduring witness to demands for liberty of conscience, objections to tithing, to swearing allegiance on the Bible, and to church sacraments, (see also Allen 2018, pp. 82–83).

Quaker language, a central issue in the present study, was studied from the very start by seventeenth-century Quakers themselves. For example, here is James Parnell writing in 1655:

First, concerning the word thou or thee, which all those which are their Priests and Teachers knows, that thou is the proper word to one particular person, and is so all along the Scriptures throughout to any one, without respect of persons; yea to God himself; and the word you is the proper word to more then one, but not to one; and so it is all along the Scriptures throughout. (Parnell 1655)

The twentieth century saw a revived interest in usage beginning with Harvey (1928). A Quaker amateur historian, he was possibly the first in modern times to set out the peculiarities of Quaker speech (or “plain language”). For instance, like Parnell above, he examines their usage concerning “respecter of persons” (thou to one person and you/ye to many regardless of relative social status), rejection of titles or honorifics, and plain names for days of the week and months. Braithwaite summarises the topic in his major work on early Quakerism (Braithwaite 1955, pp. 139–40) and Jones reviews the custom as it continued into the eighteenth century (Jones 1921, pp. 171–75). Cope’s (1956) detailed stylistic study goes deeper into typical aspects of Quaker prose style. He investigates the metaphorical richness of Fox’s language for instance, and demonstrates how the literal and the figurative blend and meld with each other, knitted together with a ragged syntax that is unique and recognisably early Quaker in its style. The interest for Keeble (1995) is in the writings of William Penn later in the century, and how he adapted his personal style to accommodate the peculiarities of Quaker language. Bauman (1998, pp. 43–62) devotes a complete chapter on Quaker plain speech; as a linguist he proved to be more specific and scholarly than Harvey. These preoccupations remained with Quakers throughout the century.

More recent times have seen many useful studies. I myself gratefully acknowledge the carefully compiled glossary by Ambler (2007, pp. 150–71), based on Fox’s highly original vocabulary set. For explorations into Quaker metaphor usage there is Graves (2009) important study on figurative language in Quaker sermons, and Kirkwood (2019) corpus-based study on early Quaker theology and conceptual metaphor. For a fuller account of seventeenth-century Quaker prose style, on which the present study is partly based, see (Roads 2015).

Valuable work has been done on the theological aspects of Quaker principles and why their practices were so different from other dissenting groups. This paper is not the place to weigh up matters of doctrine as such although the basic tenets of the movement clearly inform what follows and how that changes over the course of the half-century. Key works in the field of Quaker apocalyptic theology are Gwyn (1986), and Dandelion et al. (1998). This latter volume looks at the letters of Paul, the experience of early Friends, and the history of Quakerism through the lens of the Second Coming. All these writers offer key insights on the fundamental Quaker position of “heaven on earth”, that is to say, that there was no need to await Christ’s second coming, as Quakers proclaimed that Christ had always existed and available to all humanity. In Fox’s words: “Christ is come to teach his people himself”. Barbour and Roberts (2004) provide a rich source of lengthy extracts from early Quaker writings, accompanied by many original insights.

An important date for the present study is 1673, the year when the revision committee for vetting proposed publications by Quakers, known as the Second Day Morning Meeting,
was established. Hall (1992) provides a very readable account for the historical description of this committee. I explain below why in my view the group probably had an effect on the style and content of writing, although this cannot be verified. The minutes of the committee do record some submissions that were rejected but that is not the whole story. Moore concludes that “a slow shift was going on.” (Moore 2018, p. 167). Looking wider than specifically Quaker writings, Aune’s 1991 study of prophetic discourse enables readers to understand where the Quaker forms of prophetic rhetoric originated, including “woe” prophecy found originally in the Hebrew Scriptures.

The present study has an interdisciplinary framework and necessarily draws on studies from different academic fields. The corpus-assisted linguistic approach for analysis will need a word of explanation. That comes in the next section, in which the collected texts used as datasets and the rationale for the notion of “representativeness” are introduced.

The article is organized as follows: Comparisons of early and second period prophetic discourse are made, namely pre- and post-1673 for present purposes. These are inspected for the occurrence and distribution of “repent” rhetoric and analysed through the speech acts of warning and exhorting. The analysis is completed with an inspection of which audiences were being addressed at different periods in the timeframe. The second part of the study inspects certain key Quaker words and phrases in context and frequency to see which ones increase or decrease over time, and to try to interpret the reasons for change or continuity. A central finding based on the corpus evidence is that this later period of Quakerism produces three discursive strands of text type: (i) the continuation of eschatological prophetic writing even after the filter of the Morning Meeting’s work, (ii) doctrinal dispute texts—often focused on local squabbles and public controversy (see Barbour and Roberts 2004, pp. 243–350); and (iii) high-profile treatises by, for instance Barclay or Penn, defending Quaker theological principles against, for instance, swearing of oaths, and refuting fierce accusations of blasphemy. The disputes material and the treatises are indeed well-documented, but the present study shows that the prophecy writing does not disappear in the last thirty years of the century, as is sometimes suggested, it has merely disappeared off the radar.

2. Materials and Methods

The data used for the present study come from a digital collection of Quaker-authored texts which, viewed as an entity, comprise a representative corpus of early Quaker published material, the *Quaker Historical Corpus* (2015). The principle of representative corpus design holds that there needs to be a sufficient reach of the data (text types, author spread, date range) as a basis for confidence in any findings. The theory is that these can be scaled up to posit broad generalizations. This approach can supplement close reading of a few important texts, and either confirms, disproves or extends understanding of the material. I have drawn on several theoretical studies on corpus design, including (Sinclair 1991, p. 19; Biber 1993, p. 252; Meyer 2002, p. 44; McEnery et al. 2006). All the texts in my study are held at Friends House Library (RSof) in London. From the 1670s onwards Quakers made the decision to hold two copies of every item written by Friends, and one copy of every item written against Friends (catalogued as “adverse”) Although some items are known to be missing, nevertheless the Library can be said to contain substantially representative holdings of early Quaker material (see also Littleboy 1921).

My confidence in claiming broad representativeness in this case comes from a comparison across the date range with all the holdings in the Library, as Figure 1 shows. There is as wide a range of writers as possible—these include examples from the leading Quakers of the time, but for the main part the material comes from many sources that are little read today. More detail on my own corpus design is found in (Roads 2015).

For the present study I have subdivided the collection (total 645,550 words) into three sub-corpora, named here as Q50s, Q60s and Q-post1673, the metrics are presented in Table 1 below.
Quakers of the time, but for the main part the material comes from many sources that are little read today. More detail on my own corpus design is found in (Roads 2015).

Figure 1. Holdings by date (year) of publication of all printed items in the catalogue of the Library of the Religious Society of Friends, London compared with all items by date (year) of publication of texts in the Quaker corpus.

Table 1. Detailed metrics for the Quaker datasets used in the study.

|                  | Number of Texts | Approx. Number of Different Authors | Total Word Size |
|------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Q50s (1650–1659) | 49              | 45                                | 197,260         |
| Q60s (1660–1672) | 57              | 52                                | 221,660         |
| Q-post1673 (1673–1699) | 75          | 73                                | 226,630         |

The rationale behind this array is to allow for comparative interrogations of the full corpus. As the aim of the study is to compare what comes after 1660 with what had come before, a cut-off point at the end of the unsettled period of the English Civil War and the interregnum seemed prudent. The 1650s was a time when there was no government censorship; however, texts published between 1660–1672 saw stringent government censorship aimed at suppressing Quaker and other dissenting publication.

A word or two now about the simple corpus-based techniques referred to earlier. The software package used for my own analysis, WordSmith Tools (Scott 2008), when loaded with the texts can generate word lists sorted either alphabetically or in descending frequencies. Variant spellings can be accounted for. Concordance lines are generated from a selected search word or phrase, showing immediate context to the left and to the right, as illustrated in Figure 2. These too can be sorted in a variety of ways and are very useful for showing up patterns of usage or collocations¹ that might otherwise not be apparent across large amounts of disparate material.

¹ Definition of collocation: the habitual juxtaposition of a particular word or phrase with another word or words with a frequency greater than chance. (OED).
3. Results and Discussion

This section falls into two main parts: Quaker prophetic discourse and how changes and continuity can be tracked over the later decades of the century, and then an examination by corpus methods of some distinctive Quaker words and phrases to measure usage changes and continuity.

3.1. Prophetic Discourse

Before presenting the findings, some brief background notes on prophecy as a text-type, and some relevant explanation of speech act theory are necessary. Much has been written concerning Christian prophecy writing, starting with the Old Testament books and on into the later prophetic writings found in the New Testament. Sweeney (1996, pp. 18–30) for example, finds at least seventeen forms of prophecy, including prophetic judgement, announcements of a sign or event, “woe” oracle, vision report and proclamation of Christ’s coming. Smith (1989, pp. 29–103) is interested in the seventeenth-century revival of post-biblical variety of writings. All of the discourse forms: narrative, predictive, procedural, exhortatory and expository (Clenenden 2003, p. 386) are found in the Quaker writings. The present study is initially concerned with identifying changes of lexical occurrence and style in the corpus; I return to the discourse rhetoric later. Analysis was carried out through the lens of directive (that is, instruction-giving) speech acts of warning and exhortation that underpin the this variety of prophetic discourse. Persuasive rhetoric, typical of Quaker eschatological expression, makes extensive use of these speech acts (see Searle 1976, pp. 1–23; or Kohnen 2008 for more detail). Searle and Vanderveken (2009) have made a study of this and similar discourse features. They explain the theoretical principle of the prediction/prophecy rhetoric thus:

[Prophesy] has the illocutionary\textsuperscript{2} force of a prediction with an additional, particularly authoritative model of achievement. The latter has to do with the authority of an oracle . . . of God or of divine revelation. The speaker presupposes that he has good reasons for the belief to the point of certitude. (Searle and Vanderveken 2009, p. 173)

Therefore, now to the corpus findings. I wanted to see how frequencies for three characteristically eschatological lexical markers: day of the Lord, repent and woe found in

\textsuperscript{2} Illocutionary: an intended underlying sense.
the early sub-corpus (Q50s) might compare with any retrieved from later texts. Here are context examples (1) to (3) from the early period up to 1660 (key phrases highlighted in bold):

(1) God will smite you with shame and contempt so that you shall become a reproach to all that fears him. The day of the Lord shall come upon you as pain upon a woman in travel; and that light within, which you have a much derided and cried against, shall be kindled as a fire in your bowels. (Ambrose Rigge 1659).

(2) God the righteous judge will render unto the wicked according to his works, then shall the goods which ye heaped together by violence and oppression, torment you . . . who now do spend your time in ungodliness, and do make your hearts as adamant, and harden your fore-heads as brass against the Lord, who hath given you a day to repent in. (John Rouse 1656).

(3) What do you [conventional Christians] profess? Do you profess the life of Christ and cannot cease from sin, but plead for it term of life, as some of you do, and positively maintain. Is this your profession? Then wois your portion ye hypocrites, professing one life, and living another. (Richard Bradly 1660).

I ran a comparison enquiry to ascertain relative distributions of the word repent observed in the three Quaker sub-corpora listed in Table 1, plus two more sets: a collection of texts by George Fox (covering the decades from 1655 to his death in 1691)—Fox was an influential figure linguistically; and a small corpus comprising texts from six other leading writers of the post-1673 era. Figure 3 presents the results.

![Figure 3. Frequencies for instances of repent across five corpora (per 100,000 words).](image)

These results from the corpora indicate that the apocalyptic fervour of the 1650s actually increased to some extent after the Restoration and, perhaps unexpectedly, appears to be maintained by many writers into the latter years of the century judging by the figures from the first three sub-corpora. However, this seems not to be the case with Fox and other major figures. Of the Six Leading Authors corpus sample: texts by Robert Barclay, George Fox (specifically from the 1680s), Thomas Ellwood, William Penn and George Whitehead, only two (Barclay and Ellwood) use the term, and both of them use it only when quoting text from anti-Quaker writers or from biblical sources. None is in the imperative form as is typically found in the main three sub-corpora. We are therefore seeing two strands of discourse genre existing side by side at this time, and I suggest the conventional view of a broad reduction in apocalyptic writing needs to be revisited. A third strand, doctrinal disputes text-types, is not considered in the present study for reasons of space. A picture of at least three types of discursive Quaker writing is therefore emerging. The analysis
presented in the second part of the present study provides more detail to help understand the nature of the changing trends.

The findings for the term \textit{repent} are matched by a diachronic reduction in warning declaratives found after the conditional subordinators: \textit{lest}, \textit{except thou/you/ye + verb}, \textit{if + thou/you/ye + verb + not}, or \textit{unless thou/you/ye + verb} clauses. In summary 100 instances are observed in the pre-1673 sub-corpus compared with 64 in the post-1673 dataset. Yes, a reduction is seen over the full half-century but the exhortatory discourse has by no means disappeared. These quantitative results from the corpora are a good indication of the continued existence of such exhortatory published discourse. Warnings typically express the hope that addressees will change their behaviour to avoid the wrath of God. Parke writes this as late as 1692:

\begin{verbatim}
(4) O! that you would once come to hear & obey the Voice of the Lord, and his threatening more Judgment and greater Calamity yet to come upon this City and Nation, if speedily \textbf{you do not Repent}, and turn to God, from all your Transgressions and horrible Abominations ... Be ye all assured, that the Judgments come and threatened are not intended or sent where they come, that any should slight or disregard them but seriously to consider them as so many Warnings from God, to the Wicked, for them to beware and take heed how they continue any longer in Sin, Rebellion and hard Heartedness against the Lord, \textbf{lest} sudden Destruction come upon you, that you will not be able to escape or flee from. (James Parke 1692)
\end{verbatim}

Observed occurrences of the phrase redolent of apocalyptic fervour \textit{the day of the Lord} show similar values across the three sub-corpora. We can see therefore that there is evidence for the continuation of “warning” focus used by many Quaker writers, even after 1673, the watershed year in respect of the present study. We move therefore now to a consideration of some possible effects of the Morning Meeting’s work.

It is thought by many scholars that fewer exhortatory texts and more experiential \textit{proclamation}, \textit{declaration} and \textit{testimony} ones were published in the last twenty-five years or so of the century. Moore estimates a steady stream of twenty or so publications a year vetted by the Morning Meeting (Moore 2018, p. 167). There is certainly an increase in works of spiritual counsel or personal narrative. Hall (1992) reports on changes wrought, some contemporaries regarding it as censoring: “filtering out the irrational, fanatical, repetitive, illiterate or untruthful from the varied manuscripts submitted” (Hall 1992, pp. 62, 82). Indeed, not all who wanted to publish were accepted, as the minutes show. Even George Fox was surprised to have an article rejected, and the moreoutridish texts no longer carried the movement’s approval. Moore (2000) categorised the fundamental nature of the revision committee’s work as:

\begin{verbatim}
A reduction in the stridency of tone ... the Quaker movement changed from being one of the most radical of the sects ... and became an introverted body, primarily concerned with its own internal life. (Moore 2000, p. 214).
\end{verbatim}

O’Malley (1982, p. 84) is convinced of the Meeting’s effectiveness in effecting change, noting that many reasons for rejection of manuscripts displayed “an overwhelming concern with uniformity and caution”. The corpus evidence shows nevertheless that the Meeting’s effective suppression should not be taken for granted. My study on the development of Quaker style from “incantational to catechetical” adds to the evidence of a move to a new prophetic style in the final years of the century (Roads 2014).

The final piece of evidence for change in prophetic writing is derived from an analysis of the groups or individuals for which the Quaker publications were intended. Table 2 shows the change of expected readership over the half-century. There is a clear drop in addresses to the government or judicial authorities in later years (from almost half to a mere 12%), and an increase in printed material—often in the form of open letters (Green 2000, p. 411)—to over 50% destined for fellow Quakers, and possibly dissenting Quakers. Even taking into account the inevitably incomplete set of items that have come down to us today, this is good evidence of a shift of rhetorical purpose.
Table 2. Changes in potential addressees desired by Quaker authors.

| Addressee                                      | Q50s & Q60s: Addressees | Q-Post1673: Addressees |
|------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Government (Parliament or Monarch)             | 45%                      | 12%                    |
| General public                                 | 32%                      | 27%                    |
| Quakers (internal publication)                 | 10%                      | 54%                    |
| Government & Quakers (“all inhabitants”)       | 13%                      | 7%                     |

I suggest therefore that prophetic discourse material was still being produced and passed by the Morning Meeting in the second period, but the serious books by Barclay, Penn, Whitehead and others were conceived in a different genre altogether, and this increase in treatises and dispute texts does alter the balance of what is being published. This analysis is merely a snapshot of what was being written in the later decades of the century and the simple searches on a few lexical items possibly over-simplify the matter. Nevertheless, we are starting to have a clearer understanding of the variation in rhetorical purpose and expression, as well as a broadening of intended readership, during this time of unstoppable Quaker publishing.

3.2. Distinctive Quaker Lexical Terms

This section offers a new approach to detecting change over the decades we are focusing on of both frequency and usage of certain terms, along with their underlying discourse purposes. Candidate examples are: conscience(s), convincement, day of the Lord, inward, leadings, light, of God in, spirit(s), testimony, truth, wait/-ing, within, witness. I set out as a table figures showing normed figures for each item in the Q50s&Q60s sub-corpus in comparison to those for the later Q-post1673 corpus. The findings are offered in two ways: as a table (Table 3) and in graphic form (Figure 4) so as to make clearer the basic frequency comparisons.

Table 3. Diachronic frequencies of key Quaker language items between 1650–1699, normed per 100,000 words.

| Lexical Item          | Q50s & Q60s | Q-Post73 |
|-----------------------|-------------|----------|
| light                 | 356         | 186      |
| spirit(s)             | 287         | 301      |
| truth                 | 179         | 195      |
| witness               | 163         | 74       |
| conscience(s)         | 118         | 63       |
| within                | 68          | 36       |
| testimony             | 51          | 89       |
| wait/waiting          | 46          | 60       |
| of God in             | 22          | 13       |
| inward                | 20          | 28       |
| convince/-ment        | 18          | 21       |
| day of the Lord       | 12          | 10       |
| leading(s)            | 6           | 7        |

The headline points to notice from these findings: a reduction over time in the occurrence of light; a slight increase in the that of both spirit(s) and truth, and a more interesting increase in occurrences of testimony. What more can the figures tell us? In the next part of the enquiry I drill down into the contexts to discover. The items are sub-divided into four groups:

- Words for divinity;
- Belief in “that of God”;
- Worship concepts;
• Action and exhortation.

Figure 4. The findings from Table 3 presented as a histogram.

Words for divinity: light, spirit, truth.

Light. This item shows little diachronic change of use from the earlier Quaker period. The reduced frequencies may indicate a slight readiness to prefer other near-synonyms for God/Christ at this time, as the figures for spirit and truth show. The contexts for light in Q-post73 set tend to be works of spiritual counsel, often contrasting light with darkness and frequently quoting from the Bible (especially John 1.5). There is an increase in the first person pronoun use (I, my) indicating personal experience narratives. These start to replace the former more strident apocalyptic discourse. Example (5) illustrates the word in a published epistle, incorporated into a call to the Quaker community, addressed directly.

(5) Praises to the Lord our God over all, who is adding to his Church daily, such as shall be saved; therefore ye Children of the Light and of the Day of God’s Love, keep your Lamps trimmed, and furnished with the heavenly Oil, that you may enter in with the Bridegroom into the marriage Chamber, when the foolish are shut out. (Theophila Townsend 1690)

Spirit(s). Most instances are in the singular, although approximately 8% are plural in form: spirits. The wide range of negatively loaded adjectives show the reproving flavour of many of the texts. The increasing prevalence of polemic publications is responsible for some of the negativity. Common adjectives collocating with spirit are: adulterated, deceitful, lying, obstinate, peevish, persecuting, prejudicial, viperous, wicked and unruly. To restore the balance, here is a selection of the positively loaded collocations: blessed, chaste, Christian, contrite, cordial, eternal, excellent, good, holy, infallible. Example (6) is addressed to Friends in New-England that Browne is admonishing. The concept of being “led by the spirit” is a Quakerly one but in his view their behaviour is guided by a bad spirit, not the true spirit of God.
(6) This . . . have I written unto you in true Love to your Souls, not knowing at present whether ever I may see your Faces, yea or nay; so bidding you farewell, I rest, who am a true Lover of your Souls, but do hate that persecuting spirit by which you have been led. (John Browne 1678)

Truth. This item seems to be on the increase in the later period, often found in phrases such as the spirit of truth or the way of truth. There appears to be no functional distinction between truth and the truth at this time. Bauman states that for seventeenth-century Quakers: “Truth tended to be the term of choice in referring to the true, valid (Quaker) religious way in its outward, communicable aspect.” (Bauman 1998, p. 26) Certainly there is a sense in which truth is expressed as a tangible entity that Friends carried about with them and consulted. Figure 5 below shows a few selected instances which give a flavour of this idea. The appellation Friends of Truth (line 4) by which Quakers referred to themselves was becoming more frequent during the post-1673 period.

| N | Concordance |
|---|-------------|
| 1 | abide among many Brethren, because of her great Care of the Truth amongst the Heritage of the Almighty. Before |
| 2 | the Upright and the Just, who have been and are Doers of the Truth, and Faithful Followers of Christ Jesus: Wo, |
| 3 | to befriend them; and in the beginning of breaking forth of Truth, when some Friends rode through the County and |
| 4 | .16.13.) to belye, slander, and mis-represent the Friends of Truth and People of the Lord in this our Age, to whom I |
| 5 | marriage, wherein many have gone from the pure leadings of the Truth, by unequally yoking themselves, and going |
| 6 | of those Blessed Sayings Recorded in the Scriptures of Truth, by the Inspiration of the same Holy Spirit that |
| 7 | in the Wisdom of God, where occasion is, for the Service of Truth, for which it is given forth, By your Friends in the |
| 8 | in Spirit & in Truth; and until People turn to the Spirit of Truth, which is the Light within, with which he hath |
| 9 | know, if I had not been taken a Prisoner for the Testimony of Truth, and kept about eight years in Prison, at which |
| 10 | , or will not understand it by word of mouth. This truth which we profess and defend seeks no favour at your |
| 11 | of the Truth, and have been Educated in the way of Truth, and have all a-long come to Friends Meetings; or |
| 12 | faithful to the Power of the Lord, nor witnessed the Work of Truth in her own heart: And with this Testimony she |

Figure 5. Selected concordance lines sorted by 1st and 2nd words to the left of (the) truth.

Belief in: “that of God”: conscience, convince, of God in, witness.

Conscience and of God in (+conscience). These items have been grouped together as a reference to the inwardness and accessibility of God/Christ, as experienced by Quakers. By the last thirty years of the century authors were increasingly focusing on other ways of describing their sense of the divine. There is no obvious reason why the term conscience decreases in frequency in the later corpus. Two phrases remain particularly frequent: for conscience sake and liberty of conscience; these indicate that the campaigning element in the texts is still ongoing (and we know this continues into later centuries specifically with regard to tithing). Perhaps the release from prison after the 1689 Toleration Act reduced the intensity of Friends’ zeal. Commonly collocating with conscience are the personal pronouns my, thy, our, their. The inference here is that spiritual matters are becoming more individual and personal. The phrase light in +x + conscience(s) (something of a Quaker slogan during the earliest period) only occurs eight times in my post-1673 texts. Open letters were still tending to be concluded with the dismissive phrase I have cleared my conscience by way of absolving responsibility for the perceived spiritual darkness in the addressee(s).

Con convince(-ment) and witness. The headword convince occurs frequently throughout early Quaker writings. This term should not be confused with conversion—the stage that Quakers expected after initial convincement. However, conversion is very infrequent in the corpus,
only found 7 times compared to nearly 150 for *convince*, and only used by four of the corpus writers. Isaac Penington (1661) refers to *conversion* in his *Catechism*: ‘What is most necessary for a man to be vigilant in, that desires to have the work of conversion go on in his heart?’. The decrease in occurrences for both *convince(-ment)* and *witness* at this time may reflect a reduction in the zeal for repentance and change that so epitomized the early years. The term *witness* (noun and verb forms) seems to be being replaced by *testimony*. In example (7), John Danks’s *Testimony* is perhaps a sign of the times to come; he is calling on those who were convinced in the past but have now moved away from that conviction and “have erred”.

(7) And now in the sense of the springings up of the love of God in my soul, do I call unto all you males and females, who have been convinced, and have believed the truth as it is in Jesus and have been put to flight, either in the winter season or on the sabbath day, and have erred and gone astray from the way of the Lord. (John Danks 1680)

**Worship concepts: inward, wait, within.**

Of these, the only diachronic change is an increase in the occurrence of *wait* (all word forms), although *inward* (as opposed to *outward*) and *within* are folded into the sense of *waiting*. Figure 6 shows a few selected instances; meanings are revealed through inspection of the particles (for, in, to, [upon]) that follow the central lexeme *wait*:

- *wait for* answers the question “who?” or “what?” (line 2)
- *wait in* answers the question “how?” or “where?” (lines 3–5)
- *wait to + infinitive* verb answers the question “why?” (line 7)
- *wait [upon]* seems to indicate the sense of giving service (lines 8–9)

(such as in the semantic area of waiting at table).

| N | Concordance |
|---|-------------|
| 1 | revealed in you is the Way in which you must Wait and Obey. Oh! Glorious are the Beams...
| 2 | . And Friends, we have all good cause to wait for the Lord's Teaching, who Teacheth...
| 3 | God and his blessed Power, which in my waiting in the Light I received; through which...
| 4 | Followers : So if you want Counsel, you may wait in the coolness and stillness of your...
| 5 | the Remedy where the Disease is; and as we wait in true silence, ceasing from our own...
| 6 | over you, but like Good Servants and Diligent Waiters in true Silence for their Lord's Coming...
| 7 | him, keep your Habitations with him, and all wait to feel him lead you by the Rivers of...
| 8 | . That you Be all Diligent to Meet Together to Wait upon the Lord in your Spirits; for the...
| 9 | them that fear him. And when sat together to wait upon God, to Worship him in the Prison, All Watch; So Friends, be ye Watchful; and Wait with Retired Minds on the Lord, that you...

Figure 6. Selected concordance lines for *wait*, sorted by 1st word to the right.

I interpret this increased interest in the practice of silent *waiting* as indicative of the new development that was emerging in the Quaker movement, namely to adopt a more mystical and inward-turning practice. The act of extended “waiting” as Quakers did in worship, was to become aware of the inward presence of Christ, always available. The “waiting” led faithful Quakers to “finding” God in the silence.

**Action and exhortation: day of the Lord, leadings, testimony.**

*Day of the Lord.* This appears on the surface to be part of the apocalyptic rhetoric, but on inspection the contexts show that the items are often framed in the past tense. Four texts are *“Testimonies”* (a type of obituary) and refer in the past tense to the lives of specific Friends (*Mace* 2020); see also the commentary on *testimony* below. The eschatological instances also often refer in the texts to younger years in an individual’s life and thus
located during a period of greater fervour. These day of the Lord cases turn out not to be “action” language, and therefore after analysis should be re-assigned to another category. Surface-level frequency findings are not always trustworthy in themselves.

Leadings. There is no increase in the usage of this word compared to earlier years. It is a key Quaker term and indicates the link between learning through the inward spirit and then taking action following the guidance. Phrases include leadings of the spirit (of truth) of inward guidings and leadings. The concept is closely linked to testimony: the Quaker faith in action.

Testimony. A much larger group than the other items in this category (over 200 examples in the sub-corpus). The lexical item can be grouped under three categories: a) in the sense of “witnessing by action”; testimony against—priests, oppression, the spirit of division, sin, false reports, tale-bearers, gaming, popish observances, superstition, going to Militia. This finding offers a snapshot of the political and social disruption that continued and grew later in the century. b) The second category is the living or public testimony—declarations or statements “for the Lord”. This text type refers either to spiritual prophesying in public or socio-religious campaigning. The final sense, c), is a reference to spoken ministry in an otherwise silent meeting for worship. This becomes more prevalent as local and regional meetings become settled into worshipping communities. Many of the corpus texts have the titles Testimony, Declaration, Proclamation as clear indication of their contents, see Figure 7.

Figure 7. Lexical frequencies compared from three Quaker corpora: Q50s & Q60s, Q-post73 and treatises (1673–1699).

The analytical approach adopted in the present study, through careful inspection of key terminology and usage, has been able to track how Quaker thought and practice evolved and continued across half a century based on the work of many different writers.

4. A View From a Quaker Adversary

It is interesting to step outside the community of Quaker writers themselves and take note of how some of their protestant adversaries saw their distinctive ways. Although this is not corpus-based evidence as such, the glossary of Quaker language as understood by the non-conformist minister John Faldo, writing in 1673 on the cusp of my two historical periods, provides some insights into Quaker discursive material from the relatively conventional wing of restoration Christianity. The text is included in the Q-post73 sub-corpus. See also Manning (2009, p. 35) for more background discussion on Faldo and the anti-Quaker polemic of the period. By the time of the second period many of those expressed their objections to, as they saw it, Quaker misuse of conventional religious language. Let us compare the terms and phrases analysed above with how Faldo understands them. He
introduces his admittedly painstaking descriptions of “A key for the understanding their sense of their [Quakers’] many usurped and unintelligible words and phrases, to most readers” with a disclaimer:

There is not any thing in the Quakers Method of deluding which doth more tend to the insnaring of unwary Souls than their asserting their false, Antichristian, and Anti-Scriptural Tenets, under Scripture-Words and Phrases, and in those very Terms wherein are expressed the Truths of God; while in the mean time they mean nothing less than their true import, and what People (who are not well acquainted with their Tenets) suppose them to mean. By this Artifice they beget a good Opinion of themselves and Errors with too many, and by degrees so vitiate their Principles that in a short time they are prepared to embrace the grossest errors bare-faced. (Faldo 1673)

Below is a selection of his glossary, Table 4 most items relating well to the Quaker terms just reviewed above. The only words or phrases specifically not included are: wait, inward, within, that of God. From someone who vehemently objected to the Quakers it is a very fair list, although larded with many pejorative comments.

| Table 4. Extract from Faldo (1673, pp. 184–200). |
|-----------------------------------------------|
| **Day of the Lord**                          | Sin being judged in the conscience by the light within in this life. The inward judgings and terrors by the light Christ within, and that in this world. |
| **Leadings in Spirit**                       | The motions of the light within, immediate inspirations and teachings |
| **Testifie to the light in the Conscience**   | Appealing or speaking to Christ the light within. |
| **Bearing Testimony to the light**           | Declaring for, and from the light within. |
| **Witnessing to the Truth**                  | Declaring, or suffering for the light within, and its dictates. |
| **We Witness**                               | We experience, we speak it from the testimony and feeling of the light and motions within. |
| **Spirit of God**                            | The light within every man, God the Father, Son, Holy Ghost, without distinction. (=that of God) |
| **Conversion**                               | A full obedience to the light in the Conscience: a total freedom from the prevailing of any sin. (Quakers themselves preferred the term *convincement* to *conversion*, in a rather different sense.) |
| **Wait on the light**                        | Desisting from a search after Truth by any external means, and passively attending to the motions and teachings within. |

5. Polemic Texts and Treatises

Before drawing the threads together in some concluding remarks, I return to my central claim. I suggest the representative corpora provide evidence for the continuity of exhortatory prophetic writing but that there are two other discursive strands existing alongside that: polemical dispute texts in the tradition of historical religious controversy, and treatises, often in book-length form. This last rhetorical genre is more expository. A simple corpus-based comparison between the lexis findings and a sample of the treatises reveals more clearly the differences between the exhortatory and the expository texts. Figure 7 shows lexical findings in the later treatises compared to the earlier corpus datasets.

These are framed as expository text types, with different rhetorical aims than the polemical or apocalyptic warning publications. The treatises are much less concerned with the semantic material found in the exhortatory texts; the main item showing increased frequency is *truth*. Overall, the differences in frequency are between the pre- and post-1673 periods; differences within the two later corpora are accounted for more by genre than diachronicity. Clearly this points to the need for further research in uncovering more detail about these two Quaker text types of the later period.
6. Concluding Remarks

This article set itself the task of finding out what happened to discursive Quaker writings after 1660. What changed, what continued and where was the radical fighting talk of the earliest times of the Quaker movement? 1660 was chosen as a dividing point because of the new political situation as things started to settle down socially, although not at all for Friends. 1673 was a key date in the development of Quaker publications simply because the Morning Meeting did its job of filtering the more extreme elements of the previous outpouring of pamphlets, broadsides and books. There is nothing remarkable about the year 1700 but an end point needs to be drawn somewhere.

The study has looked in new ways at the breadth of Quaker published writing, new angles for material that has previously been well researched. The investigation described here has led to evidence-based claims that the radical ideas and practices that were just one part of the dissenting religious upheavals in the 1650s did not wither away during the years of intense persecution. The zeal and the exhorting rhetoric changed somewhat in style in the succeeding years, but the radical message remained and endured. It survived alongside the intense and bitter doctrinal disputes between Quakers and their adversaries, and these two exhortatory types of discourse were joined by treatise material that was perhaps calmer and more measured as Friends sought to find their particular niche in the social fabric. The treatises are still read and valued, and to some extent prove that they alone have stood the test of time, whereas the more distinctively colourful and exhortatory styles of writing have become rather neglected. However, they have not disappeared. The missionary zeal of the end-of-century Friends still has its place in Quaker history.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: Quaker Historical corpus. Roads, Judith. 2015. Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre, Birmingham, UK. http://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/pages/quaker-historical-corpus.html (accessed on 2 March 2021).

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

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