Can Religion speak truth?

Can religion speak truth? What an arrogant question! What is truth, anyway? What do I know of religion, and who am I to answer? I shall be speaking soon of myself and my experience of religion. My approach is that truth goes far beyond statements or beliefs; we live it - it is incarnate in action, in relationships and in the nature of all that is.

In the course of this discussion I shall be ranging somewhat widely – truth in the founding experience of Quakers, how I understand 'religion' and 'truth', recognising religious differences, truth in religion and science (and what about magic?), difficult texts as pointers to truth, ecotheology, humility, ethics and religion (including Greek and Roman thinking), and concepts of imagery, myth and mystery. First, a story.

The Sultan of Turkey, Mehmed IV, was in camp with his army 360 years ago. An English woman walked into the camp, requesting access to give the Sultan "a message from the Lord God". She was Mary Fisher, a Quaker and former domestic servant, who had already suffered maltreatment and imprisonment for her faith in England and the New England colonies. The vizier arranged for her to be presented to the sultan, "who had his great men about him, in such a manner as he was used to receive ambassadors".

Invited through the interpreters to speak, Mary remained in thoughtful silence. "He then bade her speak the word of the Lord to them, and not to fear, for they had good hearts, and could hear it. He also charged her, to speak the word she had from the Lord, neither more nor less, for they were willing to hear it, be it what it would. Then she spoke what was on her mind. (We are told just what Mary said.)

"The Turks hearkened to her with much attention and gravity, till she had done; and then the sultan asking her whether she had anything more to say? She asked him, whether he understood what she said? And he answered, 'Yes, every word,' and further said, that what she had spoken was truth." [1] Mary later wrote to her Quaker friends, "he and all that were about him received ye words of truth without contradiction. . . . . They are more near truth than many Nations." [2] (We are not told just what Mary said.)

In this narrative are embedded two different senses of 'truth'. The spoken word can be true, but also truth is something to which one can relate, to which one can be near, that is, something which one can live. Friends would have learnt this from their deep absorption in the Bible, for example Jesus' answer to Pilate: "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." [3]

Quakers since the 17th century have been rooted in the radical Christian experience of our spiritual ancestors. 'Truth' remains a vital concept for us today. The Quaker Meeting in Ramallah, Palestine, declared in their 2016 Epistle: "[W]e know the Truth. And we experience that Truth, in

1 William Sewel, *The History of the Rise, Increase and Progress of the Christian People Called Quakers*, 4th edition, Vol. I, London, James Phillips and Son, 1799, 433-4

2 Mabel Richmond Brailsford, *Quaker Women 1650 – 1690*, London, Duckworth & Co, 1915, 130

3 *John* 18:17b, KJV When considering 17th century Friends I quote the King James version, which was in Government-supported circulation, and was the Bible most frequently quoted by George Fox. See T. Canby Jones, 'The Bible: Its Authority and Dynamic in George Fox and Contemporary Quakerism', *Quaker Religious Thought* IV,1, Spring 1962, 19.
Where I do not attribute translations from the Bible or other sources, the translations are my own.

relationship with you, and with the same knowledge that God continues to accompany us – even in our deepest moments of despair."[4]

Where I stand

Before exploring religion and truth, I want to offer some description of where I come from, since I speak from personal experience. I grew up in England in a committed Anglican family, learning religious language from the King James Bible and the Book of Common Prayer, and an intelligent Christianity from an excellent high school teacher. After finding that my first baby was not expected at quiet Anglican communion services, I started attending Quaker worship, and became a member soon after arriving in Dunedin in 1976. At the University of Otago I lectured in Classics, developing a course in Greek and Roman religion, initially with my friend and colleague Chris Ehrhardt.

When I speak of religion, I come from within this Quaker, originally Anglican, Christian tradition, alongside which I set my acquaintance with Greek and Roman polytheism. This binocular vision was helpful when I followed dialogue of religions during my Otago BD study, and I believe it has opened my imagination and respect as I gradually learn more about Māori spirituality – the interrelation of all things with wairua.

What do I mean by 'religion' or 'spirituality'? There are many ways of using these terms. I understand 'spirituality' as our relation to what is beyond human, more than human, other than human, and 'religion' as 'doing spirituality together'. In this sense religion involves some degree of communal practice.

Why ask about truth in religion? Quite early in life I began to release the need to take all religious statements literally. The Biblical book of *Revelation* (ch.4) has the poetic description of a throne in heaven before the crystal sea, surrounded by celestial worshippers. At some point in my childhood I concluded that this was not in the sky, but could indeed be contained in a leaf – probably a first struggle to conceive of the non-material or abstract. As an adult I am engaged in a continuing process of translating and interpreting religious statements and practices to find meaning which both honours the original and rings true to me. After 50 years with Quakers, among them is where I find a place to search for truth, and these people are my companions in that search.

Truth and universalism in religion

The religions which humans practise and have practised cannot all be expressing the complete truth about our relation to what is beyond human, since there are conflicts between their teachings. This fact is sometimes used as an argument that religion cannot contain truth, and so should be discarded. The contention is not logical. If I assert that the earth is flat, and you assert that it is roughly spherical, our disagreement does not prove that neither of us is right. It is possible that we are both wrong, but other means of investigation are needed to discover this.

An alternative approach is to take one religion as completely true, and to hold others in error when they disagree with it. Such loyalty can lead to faithfulness and heroism, exemplified by the Christian martyr Polycarp, who was called on by the Roman authorities to honour the guardian spirit of the emperor and to curse Christ, or be executed: "Eighty-six years have I served him, and

4 http://fwcc.world/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Ramallah-MM-2016.pdf, downloaded 21 August 2017

he has done me no wrong: how then can I blaspheme my King who saved me?" [5]

Similarly, the first generations of Quakers were convinced that they had been led into all truth; they took a stand against what they saw as 'apostate churches' and against state control and exploitation of religion. Four of them were hanged by the Puritan authorities in Boston, and several hundred died in the appalling prison conditions in Britain. From 1682 the London Yearly Meeting (the national body) annually asked its quarterly meetings to report, "What friends imprisoned for their testimony have died in prison since the last Yearly Meeting?"[6]

Their conviction of truth led these early Quakers into intolerance of other churches, which we hope we do avoid today. Loyalty to one religion can lead to narrow-minded ignorance, to arrogance, cruelty and persecution, and religious passion can be exploited as an ally to national, racial, class or party conflict for power.

As I explained, I grew up in the Christian faith, and have found my home in the Quaker tradition and practice. It has been a privilege and an education to study classic Christian theology, which originates, I believe, in people's attempts to make sense of their experience. But other faith traditions also strive to make sense of experience, and I cannot believe that Christianity is the only one which gets it right.

I am not a universalist, at least not someone who holds that all religions are equally true and valid. If asked whether I am a Christian, I would have to ask what you mean by the term. My spiritual life is shaped by Christian literature and thought, though I would find it hard to give verbal assent to much of the creeds. My ethics are founded on what we learn of the teaching of Jesus, and have grown outwards from this root. When visiting Quakers in various countries, I have tended to use the expression "following in the footsteps of Jesus". But my discipleship is experiential rather than dogmatic. When trying to speak of the basis of faith, I once found the words, "a pulse of love at the heart of the universe" - metaphorical, not literal, and an expression of trust rather than understanding.

In summary, I would say that all religions, and indeed all philosophies, incorporate some form of the search for truth, and its expression. My Quaker faith is the way in which I am called to this search, so that to me it speaks truth in ways which other faiths do not.

What do I mean by truth? It is time to explore further.

Founding Quaker understanding of truth

Truth in religion may involve literal statements of fact, but goes far beyond them. Mary Fisher understood that one could speak truth, receive truth, and be near to truth. She was one of the first generation of Quakers, 'convinced' in the late 1640s and 1650s. These people, among others during the English Civil War and its aftermath, sought a religious expression which was not governed by the 'worldly', 'apostate' churches, but which related directly to the Divine presence in and among them, and they sought to restore the faith which had been taught by Jesus and his followers. They drew this from the Bible, which, circulating in English from the 16th century, followed by the publication of the King James version in 1611, had a revolutionary impact. If you read a passage from an early Friend such as George Fox or Margaret Fell, Biblical wording and

5 J. Stevenson, *A New Eusebius*, revised by W.H.C. Frend, SPCK, London, 1987, 25

6 *Advices and Queries*, London Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, London, 1964, 3

concepts flow through the text.

From the Gospels and Epistles early Friends drew their sense of the power of truth. Truth was both what they taught, and what they lived. The peace declaration of 1660 (by the modern calendar January 1661) is grounded on it: "the spirit of Christ, which leads us into all Truth, will never move us to fight and war against any man with outward weapons, neither for the kingdom of Christ, nor for the kingdoms of this world. . . So we, in obedience unto his Truth, do not love our lives unto the death, that we may do his will, and wrong no man in our generation, but seek the good and peace of all men."[7] Here truth implies ethics, as I will discuss later.

One of the earliest comprehensive statements of Quaker belief was written by Elizabeth Bathurst in 1679, with the title *Truth's Vindication*. Her "general description of Truth's Principle", quoting liberally from the *Gospel according to John (e.g. John* 1:9, 4:24, 14:6, 16:13-14), includes definitions of the principle of truth: " 'Tis the Grace of God: 'Tis the Light of Jesus: 'Tis a Manifestation of the Spirit: 'Tis the Glad tydings of Salvation: 'Tis the Word of Faith: 'Tis the Seed of the Kingdom: 'Tis that Stone which hath been rejected by many a foolish Builder, but now it is become the Head of Sion's Corner." [8] For Elizabeth Bathurst, and so for the Quaker community from whom she learnt her faith, Truth stands for the whole of religion, for human relation to God in Jesus through the Spirit. Our Quaker spiritual ancestors saw themselves as "servants to the Truth", as George Fox puts it[9]. A note appended to Fox's *Journal* uses 'Truth' to stand for what a detached historian might call the Quaker movement, for example: "And in 1656 Truth broke forth in America and in many other places. . . And still the Lord's Truth is over all and his Seed reigns and his Truth exceedingly spreads unto this year 1676."[10]

Truth and language

Language changes as years and centuries pass. May the English word 'truth' have different meanings or overtones for us than those it did for a dissident group in mid-17th century England? Did it mean the same for them as for the translators of the King James Bible, recognised church authorities, earlier in that century? A hearer or reader of the English Bible in the 17th century such as the early Quakers would have an understanding of 'truth' with overtones drawn alike from a wide range of Biblical contexts and from English usage in their times.[11]

'Overtones' of words are to me implications which potentially affect users of the word, though they may not be aware of them. For example, the Biblical word for Spirit is feminine in Hebrew (*ruah*), neuter in Greek (*pneuma*) and masculine in Latin (*spiritus*). Grammatical gender is different from personal gender. However, does the gender overtone, even though not part of the recognised outward meaning of the word, subconsciously affect the concept of Spirit held by the speaker? I myself have found, as a way to settle in Meeting for Worship, that by modifying the Taizé chant

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7 ed. John L. Nickalls, *The Journal of George Fox*, Religious Society of Friends, London, 1975, 400-401

8 *Truth Vindicated By the Faithful Testimony and Writing Of the Innocent Servant and Hand-Maid of the Lord, Elizabeth Bathurt, deceased*, London, Printed, & Sold by T. Sowle near the Meeting-House in White Hart-Court in Gracious Street 1695, Reproduced in *Hidden in Plain Sight: Quaker Women's Writings 1650-1700*, edd. Mary Garman et al., Pendle Hill Publications, Wallingford, Pennsylvania, 1996, 395. The 'Stone' refers to *Psalm* 118:22, quoted in *Mark* 12:10, *Matthew* 21:42 and *Luke* 20:17.

9 George Fox, *Epistle* 64 = Letter 34 in *No more but my love: Letters of George Fox 1624-91*, ed. Cecil W. Sharman, Quaker Home Service, London, 1980, 30.

10 Nickalls 709

11 The King James translators aimed at majesty, language "sett forth gorgeously", rather than a presentation in everyday speech. See Adam Nicolson, *God's Secretaries: the Making of the King James Bible*, HarperCollins, New York, 2003, 144-146.

'Veni Sancte Spiritus' (Come, Holy Spirit, masculine), into the feminine, 'Veni Sancta Spiritus', I experience a greater sense of acceptance and peace.

What I learn from these ponderings is that any discussion of 'truth' has to be approached with caution and humility.

Objections to religion

It is time to recognise, though not to deal with, the many, often justified, objections to religion which make it irrelevant or repellent to many. They can be grouped in three rough categories: false factual claims; an impossible world picture; and ethical treachery – the pronouncement of ethical principles which are not embodied in practice. All these objections need to be taken seriously when considering truth in religion. I am not here in a position to engage in current debates for and against religion, or to work through objections; rather, I am exploring various possibilities of truth in religion.

Religion and science

Current science-based arguments about religion are not simply populist; they have taught faith communities to distinguish better between what is core to their faith and what is a reflection of the state of knowledge in their culture at any particular time. Religious language can at once employ traditional pictures, and carry a more durable meaning. Joseph Addison published the hymn, 'The spacious firmament on high' in 1712. [12] The first line reflects the creation story in *Genesis* 1, where the firmament, or sky, is like a dome over the earth. The hymn concludes by speaking of the stars and planets: "What though in solemn silence all / move round the dark terrestrial ball; / what though nor real voice nor sound / amid their radiant orbs be found; / in reason's ear they all rejoice, / and utter forth a glorious voice, / for ever singing as they shine, / 'The hand that made us is divine'." Addison's words represent pictorially Paul's declaration in *Romans* 1:20 (NRSV): "Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made." Addison blends poetically these echoes of *Genesis* and Paul with the science of his time – the earth is spherical – with everyday perception – the stars and planets appear to move round the earth - and his governing criterion is reason, the foundation of intellectual life in his time. He deploys pictorial imagination to point a truth which he describes as divine creation, and which in our day might be awe at the immensity and intricacy of the physical universe.

An apparent conflict between science and religion is not new. Greek thinkers in the 6th and 5th centuries BCE began to evolve physical explanations for physical phenomena, rather than attributing causation to the gods; this is parodied in Aristophanes' comedy *Clouds* (368-373), where the modern thinker Socrates explains that rain is caused by clouds colliding and spilling their contents, to which the rustic traditionalist responds, "I really used to think Zeus was pissing through a sieve."

In science itself truth can be multi-layered. The first test of a nuclear explosive device was on 16 July 1945 in the New Mexico desert. From it was derived much factual evidence about the process and impact of the explosion – truth about cause and effect. J. Robert Oppenheimer, Director of the Manhattan project, spoke later about his personal reaction: "We knew the world would not be the same. A few people laughed, a few people cried, most people were silent. I remembered the line

12 *Hymns Ancient and Modern* (1916 edition), 662

from the Hindu scripture, the *Bhagavad-Gita*. Vishnu is trying to persuade the Prince that he should do his duty and to impress him takes on his multi-armed form and says, 'Now, I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds.' I suppose we all thought that one way or another." [13] This is truth in another dimension. What did the dropping of the two bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki mean, for those responsible, for the victims, for all of us who now live in a world scarred by these events? Science is done by people, by people with a passion for truth and knowledge, even if this can be distorted by passion for power and success. The technical development of the results of science is in the hands of people who have to make political, social and commercial decisions. If scientists are pursuing truth they need to recognise the potential of their results, once these are out of their control. The full truth embodied in science includes choices and consequences, ethical and existential dimensions.

Religion, science and magic

While religion and science can often be set in conflict with one another, at times they stand together in relation to another approach to what is beyond human, magic. I have defined religion as 'doing spirituality together', and spirituality as relating to what is beyond human, more than human, other than human. But science also relates to this. Both disciplines seek to understand the nature of the universe in which we live, and how things happen. They give explanations. They seek truth. Science, adopted by technology, moves from understanding to action; it attempts to give us ways of how to manage our lives and to govern our involvement in the world around us. Religion also moves from understanding to action. What about magic? Magic is certainly focused on action; it seeks to bring about results. Its great difference from either religion or science is that it lacks humility.

Science has humility before the truth. Experimental results and hypotheses are presented for others to test and challenge, and assertions are unacceptable unless supported by reliable evidence. One of the earliest forms of human scientific endeavour is medicine. The grounds for humility are concisely put in a saying of Hippocrates, a Greek doctor and teacher of medicine in the fifth century BCE: "Life is short and the art [of medicine] is long; the critical moment is urgent, experiment is dangerous and judgment difficult."[14] The Hippocratic writings consider science to be a sphere of activity completely different from religion, and one work from the school, *On the Sacred Disease*, argues against an attribution of epilepsy to religious causes.

> I do not believe that the 'Sacred Disease' is any more divine or sacred than any other disease but, on the contrary, has specific characteristics and a definite cause.

The professed explanations and cures, says the writer, are not even truly religious. Their practitioners claim other magical attainments, which if real would show that the gods are non-existent, unconcerned, or collusive in evil:

> If a man were to draw down the moon or cause an eclipse of the sun, or make storms or fine weather by magic and sacrifices, I should not call any of these things a divine visitation but a human one, because the divine power has been overcome and forced into subjection by the human will.[15]

These concluding words are an exact definition of the goal of magic. Science seeks to understand the material world and to enable us to live in it through material technology; religion seeks to find

13 Video at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lb13ynu3Iac downloaded 21.12.2017. An alternative translation is: "Time I am, the great destroyer of the worlds". *Bhagavad-Gita as it is*, 2nd edition, ed. A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, Los Angeles 1983, 11.32 p.485

14 Hippocrates, *Aphorisms* 1

15 'Hippocrates', *On the Sacred Disease* 1,2,4, translated by J. Chadwick and W.N.Mann, in *Hippocratic Writings*, ed. G.E.R.Lloyd, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1978, 237, 239

and to approach power beyond the material, in humility recognising that we cannot control it, and so relating to it through modes such as prayer, which subordinate the human to the divine; magic, through formulae and practices, seeks power over the material and the divine. The writer of *On the Sacred Disease* recognises medicine and religion, each in its own sphere, and declares magic to be a usurper.

My distinctions here can be challenged. Is genetic engineering not an attempt to control natural processes, to have power over what is beyond us, which is how I have defined magic? Some of its opponents would say that is precisely why it is an impermissible development. I distinguish it from magic because it is dealing with the material by material means, based on cause and effect which have been identified through experiment. Supporters of genetic engineering maintain that it is a natural development from practices which we have evolved throughout our history, such as plant selection and cultivation or animal breeding. Decisions as to how or whether to use this technology need to be made on other grounds, ethical and practical, as do decisions as to what to do with the techniques of nuclear fission and fusion.

Is there really a border-line between religion and magic? Records of magical charms, for example from England in the medieval period and later, show that they very often incorporated religious language and prayers. One practice attained to respectability and official recognition. Touching for the 'King's Evil', that is, bringing those suffering from scrofula to be touched by the reigning monarch, was practised in England from the time of the Saxon King Edward the Confessor until the later Stuart monarchs near the end of the seventeenth century. It was practised at the time of the King James translation of the Bible; the King, originally reluctant, took up the practice, arguing that it was efficacious through his prayers. "From 1634 the ritual of royal healing was included in the Book of Common Prayer, where it remained until nearly the middle of the eighteenth century." While many Protestants saw the practice as a superstition, George Fox claimed to have cured a sufferer by touch in 1659, and "the Quakers formally acknowledged the efficacy of the King's touch in an address to James II in 1687".[16] Belief in the power of the royal touch could extend several removes; we hear of a prescription of "water in which thirteen King Charles I farthings had been previously boiled".[17]

An individual may hold a variety of beliefs, some scientific, some which belong more to magic. Astronomers of the 16th and 17th centuries, convinced by Copernican science, still found it difficult totally to reject astrology.[18] The search for the 'philosophers' stone' which could transmute all elements fostered techniques for chemical research, so we could say magic became a step towards scientific understanding. Conversely some practices which their agents would consider religious appear magical. Take the sale of indulgences, which provoked Martin Luther's indignation and action. The authorities of the Roman Catholic church held that, by contributing money as an act of pious generosity, the faithful could release themselves or another person from years of purgatory – suffering after death by which the human soul could pay for its sins and eventually receive redemption. The practice of indulgences fits perfectly the definition of magic; it is a claim that human authorities could control the divine pattern of sin and redemption.

Opposing magic by reason may lead to some counter-intuitive conclusions. If we recognise ourselves as part of the living world, on which we depend totally, then it is rational, before felling a

16 Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in popular beliefs in sixteenth and seventeenth century England*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 1997 edition, 192-198. This book is a superb resource for the period; chapter 7 deals with magical healing.

17 *Religion and the Decline of Magic* 193

18 *Religion and the Decline of Magic* 350-351

tree, to approach it with karakia, to make ourselves aware of our dependence, and of the hurt imposed on the environment for our sake. To charge into the bush with tractors and chainsaws, which would appear practical, is, I suggest, magic – the claim to control by right what is beyond us.

Where does truth come into this? I think I am saying that, while science is seeking truth about physical and natural reality, and religion is seeking truth about eternal questions of how and why things are as they are, and about what we are, magic is not concerned with truth. It may have actual effects psychosomatically – for healing or for a sense of being cursed – and some practitioners seem to have a genuine belief that their powers are real. Some of those accused of magic were probably genuine herbalists, and so practising the science of pharmacy. However, in itself magic is inauthentic. It is not rooted in truth.

A religious text: truth in *Genesis* 1 - 4

As an example of the many ways in which we can understand truth I take a religious text, the first four chapters of the book of *Genesis*. They evolved over time, incorporating material from different sources, or, to put it in another way, the experience of different groups within the people of Israel at various periods of their history. Here is a simplified analysis:

Creation through the word of God, culminating in the creation of humans in the divine image, and the blessing of all through the sabbath rest (1 – 2:4a).

God plants Eden and forms humanity and animals from the earth, with the female as partner to the male (2:4b-25).

The humans eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and are expelled from Eden (3).

The birth of Cain and Abel; Cain kills Abel (4:1-16).

Descendants of Cain; birth of Seth to Eve and Adam (4:17-26).

I propose to look at these in reverse order, partly because the first chapter appears to be the latest written, but also because in reverse order we have a progression from the development of human society, through consideration of how things go wrong, to a search for truth about our place on the earth, and finally about our place in the universe. In what ways, if any, do these stories speak truth? I start with the latter part of chapter 4, using during this discussion the New Revised Standard Version.

"Cain knew his wife, and she conceived, and bore Enoch; and he built a city, and named it Enoch after his son Enoch." Five generations after Enoch come the sons of Lamech. Jabal "was the ancestor of those who live in tents and have livestock"; Jubal "was the ancestor of all those who play the lyre and pipe"; Tubal-cain "made all kinds of bronze and iron tools". Tubal-cain had a sister Naamah, but it is not said that she did anything. (*Genesis* 4:17-22) This is a very interesting sequence. We see a range of aspects of the development of human society. A 'city' need mean no more than a collected area of habitation, suggesting diversities of occupation and collaborative use of resources, probably with a small defensive feature – a pā – and dependent on supplies from a hinterland. Nomadic rearers of livestock feature strongly in the history of the ancestors of Israel, music points to collective culture, and metalwork is a major technological development. (The arrival of Europeans with metals heralded a major change in life patterns in our country.) As different oral traditions were brought together and eventually shaped into the written form of *Genesis* as we have it, at each stage the compilers held these insights into social development as worthy to be retained in the prime religious text of the people. The brief mention of Naamah suggests that she was known as an ancestress of a clan or clans; whakapapa has religious

significance for these people – hence all the Biblical genealogies.

Before we read of the descendants of Cain in *Genesis*, comes the story of Cain killing his brother Abel. Cain was angry because God had accepted Abel's sacrifice of animal meat, but not Cain's offering of crops. Without trying to see this as literal truth, with an apparently unfair God, we can find in it a truth about human society, the potential for conflict between stock-rearing nomads and land-tilling agriculturalists which continues to play itself out in today's world. Even more deeply, the story raises the tormenting questions of how humans come to hate and to harm one another, and the possibility of living with and overcoming our wrongdoing. John Steinbeck's novel *East of Eden* treats the theme powerfully, concluding in hope. The truth in *Genesis* is not in the historicity of the story, but in the inner meanings it conveys.

The story of Cain and Abel is one exploration of how things go wrong in human life and relations. Cain's action receives absolute moral condemnation: "What have you done? Listen, your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground!" (4:10) In contrast, it is far more puzzling to evaluate the actions of Eve and Adam. When *Genesis* 3 opens God has created the human and animals from the earth, and the female as a partner to the male. They are in the garden which he has planted, and are to till it, but not to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The crafty snake now persuades the woman that God has deceived them, and that the fruit will give them power; "you will be like God". Both humans eat the fruit, become ashamed of their nakedness, and hide from God, who comes walking in the garden, challenges and condemns them. The snake is to crawl on the ground and be attacked by humans; the woman will suffer pain in childbirth, and be ruled over by her husband; the man will work hard to bring food from the unprofitable earth, to which he will in the end return. So that the humans do not eat from the tree of life, and become immortal, they are driven out of the garden.

If we read this story naively it sounds exactly like entrapment. God creates the humans and chooses to put them in a garden where he has planted a tree from which they must not eat. Among the creatures he has created the snake, enabling it to speak and to turn the humans against his command. As it is concisely put by Edward Fitzgerald in his adaptation of verses by Omar Khayyam:

> Oh Thou, who Man of baser Earth didst make,
> And ev'n with Paradise devise the Snake,
> For all the Sin wherewith the Face of Man
> Is blacken'd, Man's forgiveness give – and take![19]

Obviously none of those who developed and transmitted the story intended to present a malevolent God. What did the humans do to deserve punishment? Milton begins his great epic *Paradise Lost* with his subject: "Of man's first disobedience". The scriptural history of the people of Israel sets obedience at the heart of their covenant relationship with God. God's message from Sinai is, "if you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples." (*Exodus* 19:5 NRSV) The prophets interpret the sufferings of the people as the penalty for disobeying God's voice. Those who developed and transmitted the story of the forbidden fruit saw disobedience as the root of the Fall; God questions the man, "Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" (*Genesis* 3:11) One may object to this interpretation as a reflection of a patriarchal and authoritarian society. There can be feminist interpretations that the

19 *Edward Fitzgerald's Ruba'iyat of Omar Khayyam, with their original Persian sources collated from MSS, and literally translated*, by Edward Heron-Allen, Bernard Quaritch, London, 1899, quatrain 81

woman is resisting dominance and making a positive life choice to be fully human. After all, she has done her research: "So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate." (3:6)

Again, we can gather from the story a commentary on imperfect human nature. Both woman and man are susceptible to persuasion. A sense that they have done wrong distorts natural feeling ("they knew that they were naked"), and leads to a childish attempt to hide. When challenged with their actions each tries to put the blame elsewhere, and the man even attempts to blame God: "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate." The woman claims a defence of ignorance: "The serpent tricked me, and I ate." There are many ways of finding meaning, and so truth, in the story, without distorting it by taking it literally. One terrible distortion from seeing the story as literally true is the centuries-long condemnation of women as the source of evil, since the woman first ate the fruit and gave it to the man. These *Genesis* stories are exemplars of myths, stories which call our imagination to find truths beyond the literal narrative.

Before the story of how things went wrong, *Genesis* gives their original setting. God is actively involved in the creation of the human, moulding the body from the earth, and actually breathing into it the breath of life. God also plants a garden and forms the animals. I read in this an assertion that what is beyond, other than human, is intimately involved with the material world, and so the material is sacred, incarnate. Before forming a fitting partner for the first human, God forms the animals and brings them to the human to give them names. A naively literal interpretation can lead to the question, "How has the only person in the world developed language?" More reasonably we can see reflected here a sense that a name carries a deep significance. Names in *Genesis* stories are given with a meaning that fits their circumstances; "The man named his wife Eve, because she was the mother of all living." (3:20)

Above all for the Jewish people the name of God is immensely powerful. There is a mysterious story later in *Genesis* (32:22-32) of Jacob in a lonely place wrestling all night with a strange figure, and finally demanding his blessing and his name. The blessing is given but not the name, and when the figure has departed Jacob concludes, "I have seen God face to face". Hebrew scriptural history sets the first giving of the Divine name to Moses in the story of the burning bush. Moses is trying to evade God's commandment to go to Pharaoh and demand liberation of the people of Israel. "If I come to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" The name given is translated I AM WHO I AM, and in respect for its power and majesty the custom developed that the name was never spoken. When reading the scriptures, for example in the synagogue, it was replaced by Adonai (my Lord), and in Biblical translations it can be capitalised as 'the LORD'. Greco-Roman society was impressed by the Jews' refusal to name their God, and magicians made many efforts to determine the name, thinking that, if it was so secret, it must be of immense power. One tool of magic is to know the name of the person you wish to affect. As I have suggested above, magic often deploys religious language and concepts, seeking to control the power which they embody.

Many other ways of understanding can be drawn from the creation story in *Genesis* 2. It poses a central challenge to us in the focus on the human, who is first created, then a garden is planted, then the animals are moulded. Do we interpret this to mean everything is there for the sake and the use of humanity? Or do we see a reflection of our responsibility, because we are beings who can study the past and present, and look to the future, and who can develop and have developed powerful technology, - our responsibility to care for and foster all life and the planet on which it is set? The questions are also raised by the chronologically later account of creation which the

compilers set as the first chapter of *Genesis*, the first words of Torah or the 'books of Moses'.

"In the beginning," *Genesis* opens, "when God created the heavens and the earth" (1:1). The six successive days of creation are followed by the sabbath rest on the seventh. Today these words have become a focus for anger as irrational as that of Cain against Abel. If the Bible is to be taken literally as absolute authority, this happened just as narrated, even though common sense sees inconsistencies and an impossible world picture, and scientific study tells a different story. Advocates of creationism can take less naive views, such as 'intelligent design', but this escape route does not deal adequately with the scientific evidence. Alternatively, the story can be simply discarded as the relic of a pre-scientific age.

I find myself in agreement with those who say that the story was never intended to be taken literally, but to embody mythically or by metaphor what the authors intended as truth about the universe and our place in it. The Jewish scholar Jacob Neusner explains one form of Midrash – study of scriptures - which he describes as "Midrash as parable". "The exegete [interpreter] reads Scripture in terms other than those in which the scriptural writer speaks. Scripture, for instance, may tell the story of the love of man and woman in the *Song of Songs*, but Judaic and Christian exegetes heard the song of the love of God and Israel or God and the church."[20] I am trying to read the early part of *Genesis* through a similar lens.

Truth and ecotheology

Genesis 1 is told in poetic patterning, in which each act of creation comes purely through the word of God - "and God said". We hear repeatedly "and God saw that it was good", concluding "God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good." There are many ways in which people can find truth in the story. One, for me, is the basis of ecotheology, that we humans are an integral part of a whole good and unified system of life and its supports, and have responsibility to it. In *Genesis* 1 God makes provision for the needs of people and animals by enabling them to eat plants (1:30). Unity in a good world is also embodied in the older creation story which the compilers of *Genesis* set to follow this one; humans, plants and animals are all consciously part of a divine creation, and the human is put into the garden to till it (2:15). This second myth calls us to live truly in our place on the earth; the first calls us to live truly in our place in the universe.

Behind the stories is a sense of truth, of finding our place as humans in a world we did not make, and on which we depend. Ecotheology embodies for me the understanding that religion or spirituality is our relation to what is beyond human, more than human, other than human. It can be seen as an outflowing of the concept of incarnation, which is originally rooted in the words of *John*: "And the Word became flesh and lived among us" (1:14). In a more universalist sense we can understand incarnation and ecotheology as "There is another world but it is this one", used as the title of a set of essays by the Quaker Universalist Group in Britain.[21] William Blake treats the concept pictorially (he was an artist, and drew his poems for publication), using the legend of a visit to England by the youthful Jesus:

> And did those feet in ancient time
> Walk upon England's mountains green?
> And was the holy Lamb of God
> On England's pleasant pastures seen?[22]

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20 Jacob Neusner, *Torah through the Ages: a short history of Judaism*, SCM Press, London, 1990, 70

21 ed. Carol MacCormack, *There is another world but it is this one: An holistic perspective*, Quaker Universalist Group, Leicester, 1991

22 William Blake, Preface to *Milton*, cited from *William Blake*, ed. J. Bronowski, The Penguin Poets, Penguin Books,

The land seems sanctified by a divine presence – an echo of God walking in the garden - as so many faiths recognise a place as the 'Holy Land' or the 'Holy City'. The ultimate involvement of the divine with the natural world appears at the end of *Paradiso* in Dante's *Divine Comedy*; his complex vision of God ends with the simple words, "the love that moves the sun and the other stars"[23].

Ethics and truth in religion

In considering *Genesis* I have begun exploring the concept of 'good'. It is now time to ask whether truth in religion necessarily involves goodness. Blake, the committed republican and social agitator, switches the focus of his poem from the goodness of the land to its wreck by human greed and cruelty - "those dark Satanic mills" in which children and adults were exploited, and the second verse calls for "mental fight" to make the vision a reality, returning to positive imagery, "England's green and pleasant land". Jerusalem is here, but Jerusalem is also to be built. It is no coincidence that the poem forms the preface to Blake's major work *Milton*, centred on the poet who both created a great religious epic, and committed his energies to the struggle against royal supremacy and to the attempt to create a Parliamentary Commonwealth.

In English we often use 'true' as equivalent to 'good' – 'a true friend', 'my true love'. Truth in religion merges into a wider concept – integrity. In Quaker advice 'integrity' is often used to combine speaking the truth with practising honesty. Integrity is wholeness in thought, word and action. Integrity lies behind the imagery in Jesus's saying, "If your eye is simple ('single' in the King James version), your whole body will be full of light". [24] The *Epistle of James* uses slightly different wording to make it clear that ethical action is the core of religion: "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world." (*James* 1:27 NRSV) A very early Christian writing, the *Didache*, or 'Teaching of the twelve apostles', uses 'truth' to stand for both ethical teaching and ethical action: "Every prophet who teaches the truth, if they do not practise what they teach, is a false prophet."[25] 'Truth' is also understood by Paul as good action; love "does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth". (1 *Corinthians* 13:6 NRSV)

Religion is not necessarily based on ethical teaching. Greek and Roman religions exemplify this, both in their stories of the gods and in their ceremonial practice. The gods in Homer's *Iliad* sometimes intervene in the Trojan War to support their favourite side or hero (and hence can clash with one another); at other times they watch it like a television series. In Homer's *Odyssey* the goddess Athene, defender of Odysseus in his wanderings, enjoys his cunning, deceptions and self-possession, and declares that they, mortal and goddess, are two of a kind.[26]

Greeks in the classical period did not treat their religion as the foundation of their moral values, and some thinkers raised moral objections to the stories of the gods, arguing that either the stories were untrue, or that the gods had no concern for our world, or that they did not exist. Greek literature was admired but not revered, in strong contrast to the Hebrews, for whom the words of

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Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1958, 162

23 "l'amor che move il sole e l'altre stelle', *Dante Alighieri, La Divina Commedia*, ed. Natalino Sapegno, Riccardo Ricchiardi, Milan/Naples 1957, Paradiso 33:145, p.1197

24 *Matthew* 6:22, *Luke* 11:34 'Simple' is my literal translation; the NRSV has 'healthy'.

25 ed. Aaron Milavec, *The Didache*, Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, 2003, 11:10 There are arguments about the date of the Didache; I see it as possible that it reflects a Christian community about the time when the Gospels of Matthew and Luke reached their present shape, in the 70s CE. 'Prophets' in that community were a type of travelling minister.

26 Homer, *Odyssey* 13:287-299

Torah became sacred. The Greek gods were described as angry if their privileges were abused, rather than if people were immoral or cruel. The one major exception in the Greek world was the cult of Zeus *xenios or xeinios*, Zeus the protector of strangers, travellers, guests, suppliants and beggars.[27] Zeus, the ruler of the gods, the wielder of thunder, was in story promiscuous with both goddesses and mortal women, the ultimate alpha male, and fathered many gods and heroes, as well as Helen of Troy. There is no obvious explanation of his preference for the vulnerable, though the cult would have social value in an environment of small communities desperate to control their borders and their resources; without such supernatural protection who would travel? In contrast, the Hebrew scriptures give a historical justification for the protection of the stranger: "You shall not wrong or oppress a resident alien; you know the heart of an alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt." (*Exodus* 23:9 (also 22:21) NRSV)

Romans believed that the gods did have an overall impact on human life, but in maintaining the structure of society rather than paying close attention to individual moral behaviour. Jupiter was the Roman counterpart of Zeus; the statesman and philosopher Cicero says of him: "Jupiter is called Best and Greatest [one of his cult names] not because he makes us just or sober or wise but healthy and rich and prosperous."[28] Over time both Greek and Roman religious thinking became influenced by Greek philosophers, especially the Stoics, to see more of a divine influence on ethical behaviour. The Athenian assembly passed a decree honouring the Stoic Zeno, because he had "made his own life an example to all, since it was consistent with his philosophical teachings".[29]

Polytheism has definite disadvantages if religion is to be seen as the source of ethical action. Plato's short dialogue *Euthyphro* teases out the question of whether we can define right action as 'that which is pleasing to the gods'. The gods are in conflict about whether this or that action is right, so how are we to use them as a criterion?[30] Does this means that polytheism is ethically unsatisfying? I see polytheism and monotheism as two of the ways in which humans have tried to resolve questions of how the world is as it is. How is it that we can be in conflict over various ways of behaving, while the root of the conflict seems to be somewhere in the actual nature of life? It appears good to take up arms to protect the innocent against an oppressor; it also appears good to refuse to use violence. The current international debate on 'the responsibility to protect' has to face this dilemma, as well as other ethical and political questions. In personal life, it appears good and natural to engage generously in consensual sexual activity; it also appears good to control one's sexual desires and focus one's life on other purposes. Polytheism explains the personal conflict, as illustrated in Euripides' tragedy *Hippolytus*; one goddess, Aphrodite, is the power of sexuality, while another, Artemis, is the power of virginity. This does not diminish the agony for the humans involved, but it gives an answer to the question 'Why do such things happen?'.

The early chapters of *Genesis*, as I have discussed above, approach from within a monotheistic faith the basic questions of how and why the world is as it is. How is it that the earth, which provides a generous living, can be so hard to till? Why does one worker prosper when another does not? How can the natural and necessary instincts of sexuality lead to pain and domination?

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27 *Odyssey* 14:283-284, 6:207-208, 14:57-58, 17:475 ("beggars have their gods and divine powers of vengeance"). See Hugh Lloyd-Jones, *The Justice of Zeus*, second edition, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1983, 30

28 Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* III 36, cited by J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, *Continuity and Change in Roman Religion*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1979, 39-40

29 Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, ed. Tiziano Dorandi, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2013, 7:10-11, p.480

30 The term used is *hosios*, for which there is no exact equivalent in English. Neither 'pious' nor 'holy' quite fits the tenor of the discussion, which shows it has an ethical meaning; hence I have used 'right'.

How can the natural and necessary desire for what the earth produces cause harm? In today's context, how have we as a species come to overtax the earth's resources? Monotheists, polytheists and non-theists are called to work together to heal the damage we have caused, whether or not we agree on the explanations.

If we return to the argument in Plato's *Euthyphro*, and go on, as the young and self-confident Euthyphro does, to decide that what is right is what is pleasing to all the gods, then Socrates takes us into a deeper puzzle: "Is it because what is right is pleasing to the gods that it is right, or is it pleasing to the gods because it is right?"[31] That is, is goodness of the essence of the divine, or is goodness an independent quality of which the divine partakes? Monotheism does not resolve this ethical dilemma, but it can claim that it does not matter, since God is the essence of right, and so good action is required by and is pleasing to God. As the prophet Micah puts it: "With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before God on high? . . . he has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (*Micah* 6:6, 8 NRSV) Polytheism can answer the problem of evil (how does it come to exist?), while monotheism can answer the problem of good (what is the foundation of it?), while needing to wrestle, as in the first four chapters of *Genesis*, with how things go wrong. Non-theists, atheists or humanists do not have to search for the foundations of good and evil in the religious dimension, but share the universal human need for ethical answers.

Can religion point to truth?

Ethics is complicated enough, but it is only one aspect of truth. I have touched earlier on humility as the approach to truth of religion and science, in contrast to magic; without humility, how can we attain any sort of truth? When I was studying Greek history, I made an assertion in an essay without factual grounding. My tutor, an international expert in her field, could have said, "That's plain wrong, because of this or that evidence," or, in proper educational terms, "Go away and see if you can find evidence to support it." Instead she dived into her bookshelves and brought out various sources to see whether she could actually find any grounds for my claim. An external observer might have said she was wasting her time, but her example of humility in search for the truth is still with me more than 50 years later.

I find an answer to my original question, "Can religion speak truth?", in the words of the early Quaker Isaac Penington: "All truth is a shadow, except the last, except the utmost; yet every Truth is true in its kind. It is substance in its own place, though it be but a shadow in another place (for it is but a reflection from an intenser substance); and the shadow is a true shadow, as the substance is a true substance."[32] (This is an older sense of 'shadow' to include image or reflection.[33])

I understand from Penington's image that in various attempts to reach truth we can find pointers or guides to the deepest truth, to "the last, the utmost". Using human language and concepts, we are in the sphere of imagery, metaphor, myth or story. In the end we find ourselves in mystery, in that which is hidden but may make itself known to us. Again we see the role of humility as we recognise the limitations of human life. Hippocrates said of science, "Life is short and the art long." His contemporary Protagoras recognised the same of religion: "Concerning the gods, I

31 Plato, *Euthyphro* 10a

32 Isaac Penington, *The Life of a Christian*, 1653, quoted in *Quaker Faith and Practice: The book of Christian discipline of the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain*, The Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain, London, 1995, 27.22

33 For example Shakespeare, *Richard II* Act 4 Scene 1, 292, referring to a broken mirror: "The shadow of your sorrow hath destroyed / The shadow of your face".

cannot know whether they exist or do not exist. Many things hinder knowledge – both the obscurity [of the subject], and the shortness of human life."[34]

Words, and more than words, lead us into mystery. The physical and action can also be pointers. For the Jewish people the Temple was the sacred focus of approach to God, but their scriptures point to its incompleteness. The book of *Kings* describes the original Temple's majestic structure and ornamentation, but Solomon's prayer of dedication reminds the people that a human structure is inadequate: "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Even heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you, much less this house that I have built!" (1 *Kings* 8:27 NRSV) Compare the role of icons in Orthodox Christianity; they are not there to be worshipped, but to be an image through which the worshipper seeks a closer approach to the Divine. A Christian sacrament is seen as an action which is a pointer beyond itself, as described in the traditional Anglican catechism: "*Q* What meanest thou by this word Sacrament? *A* I mean an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace."[35]

Of its nature, mystery points to what is beyond our knowing. The ancient Greek religious mysteries were ceremonies and actions of which those inducted might not speak, so we know little. However, we hear that the Athenians, in their Mysteries at Eleusis, reveal "the great, wonderful and most perfect innermost mystery in silence, a cut ear of grain."[36] The action, in a context of sensory deprivation and spiritual exaltation, points to human dependence on the earth and its fruits (the ceremony honoured Demeter, goddess of grain), as well perhaps to grief at loss and suffering (Demeter's daughter is stolen from her by the ruler of the underworld, and the mother endures a painful search to reclaim her). The action is the "outward and visible sign".

The sensory deprivation recorded from the Eleusinian Mysteries – exhaustion, fasting, darkness – is one way of seeking truth beyond the rational mind. It can also be used malevolently to destroy the rational mind, and so demands great care, humility and ethical integrity on the part of those with religious authority. There are different ways of going beyond the rational mind, including patterns of meditation. Music can take us beyond, as can architecture, icons and stained glass. The Quaker practice of worship, waiting in stillness and silence, is an invitation to go beyond thinking, as is the opposite practice in the Orthodox churches of sensory immersion – music, splendour, incense, ceremony. Though the early Quakers engaged in lively religious controversy with their opponents, for them intellectual fervour was not the heart of the matter. Francis Howgill says of the early days in Westmorland: "God out of his everlasting love did appear to us, according to the desire of our hearts, who longed after him. . . We met together in the unity of the Spirit, and of the bond of peace [*Ephesians* 4:3], treading down under our feet all reasoning about religion."[37]

Nevertheless we cannot search for truth in religion without rationality. We need to follow reason and to go beyond reason. Can religion speak truth? Religious thought, expressions, faith and practices can speak truth only if we live the truth in ethical integrity and humility. Humility subjects itself to the test of reason, and to what goes beyond reason; it recognises that we know in part, while being content that "the last, the utmost" is mystery.

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34 Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Philosophers,* 9:51, pp.693-694

35 Catechism in *The Book of Common Prayer*

36 Or "an ear of grain cut in silence". Hippolytus, *Refutatio Omnium Haeresium* (*Refutation of All Heresies)* 5.8.39-40

37 'Francis Howgill's testimony concerning . . . Edward Burrough', 1663, in Edward Burrough, *The memorable works of a son of thunder,* 1672, quoted in *Quaker Faith and Practice: The book of Christian discipline of the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain*, The Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain, London, 1995, 19.08

One approach to truth hidden in mystery is to trust that it will in time be revealed. So Paul reassures his converts: "For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known." (1 *Corinthians* 13:12 NRSV) The writer of 1 *John* also looks for a final complete revelation: "Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed." (3:2 NRSV) Both set 'the last, the utmost' in the passage of time.

I would rather accept that 'the last, the utmost' is with us now, and be content in the mystery. We may recognise truth in two or more apparent incompatibles as "both . . and". This happens in daily life: for example, a table is solid, but also made up of particles in space. We are told of "a duality between waves and particles in quantum mechanics: for some purposes it is helpful to think of particles as waves and for other purposes it is better to think of waves as particles." [38] "Both . . and" resolves for me the meaningless arguments as to whether Quakers are mystics or activists; both are true. Historical Christian theology has struggled with "either . . or", and at times has rested in "both . . and"; in the creeds the Trinity is one and three, Jesus is human and divine. A poetic instance of duality is *Psalm* 23, which opens with the speaker as a cherished sheep - "The LORD is my shepherd". In the later part of the psalm the speaker is an honoured guest - "You prepare a table before me". For the speaker, both relationships with the Divine are true.

There may be more than two possible truths in a mystery. In human experience God can be found as a personal friend, as the depth of all being, as supreme power, as absent or as non-existent. As Penington said, each of these can be substance in its own place, authentic experience, even though they are shadows of the last, of the utmost.

It may be that the mystery is completely beyond us, that it remains a mystery. If we seek the achievable truths which are a shadow of the last, of the utmost, what we seek or find is truth enough. We do not know what Mary Fisher told the Sultan, but in the end it does not matter. Both Mary and her hearers, coming from two differing monotheistic cultures, found truth in it. We can at the same time continue seeking, and rest in the mystery. Isaac Penington reassures us: "And the end of words is to bring [people] to the knowledge of things beyond what words can utter."[39]

38 Stephen W. Hawking, *A Brief History of Time, from the Big Bang to Black Holes*, Bantam Press, London, 1988, 56

39 Letter of Isaac Penington, quoted in *Quaker Faith and Practice: The book of Christian discipline of the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain*, The Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain, London, 1995, 27.27