

A Religious Solution To The Social Problem

Howard H. Brinton



PENDLE HILL PUBLICATIONS
WALLINGFORD, PENNSYLVANIA

ABOUT THE AUTHOR Howard H.Brinton, Ph.D., Professor of Religion, Mills College; Acting Director, Pendle Hill, 1934-35.

Published 1934 by Pendle Hill
Republished electronically © 2004 by Pendle Hill
http://www.pendlehill.org/pendle_hill_pamphlets.htm
email: publications@pendlehill.org

A religious solution to the social problem involves an answer to two preliminary questions — what social problem are we attempting to solve and what religion do we offer as a solution? Since religion has assumed a wide variety of forms it will be necessary, if we are to simplify and clarify our approach, to adopt at the outset a definite religious viewpoint. To define our premises as those of Christianity in general is not sufficiently explicit because historic Christianity has itself assumed a wide variety of forms. For the purpose of the present undertaking I shall approach our problem from the original point of view of the Society of Friends, which, in many ways, resembled that of early Christianity. Such an approach need not imply a narrow sectarian view. Early Quakerism exhibited certain characteristics common to many religious movements in their initial creative periods. Later Quakerism has shared the fate of other movements in failing to carry on the ideals of the founders. As for the social problem for which we seek a solution, it is the fundamental dilemma out of which most present-day social problems arise. Stated as briefly as possible, *we seek a remedy for excessive individualism, and we require of this remedy that it shall at the same time respect the hard-won rights of the individual.*

The paradoxical character of this statement suggests that, if there be a solution, it may turn out to be a religious one, for religion feeds on paradox. No merely logical scheme, based wholly on science and reason, will, it is probable, do more than submerge the individual through some sort of mechanical collectivism. Religion at its highest and most creative stage is, we shall find, the one solvent for excessive individualism which at the same time enhances the respect for individual personality.

To assume that the problem has a religious solution is not, however, to offer a substitute for economic, sociological, political, or psychological analysis and planning. A builder

who uses steam-driven machinery does not claim that steam alone can build a house or a bridge. Obviously, mathematical calculation, materials, tools, and skilled workers are also needed. By similar token the religious thinker does not claim that religion alone can reform our social order. It provides power, not tools, nor blueprints. Many a social reformer today is like a builder who orders "work ahead at full speed," while the fires are going out under his boilers. We are seeking a way to rekindle those fires.

The Primitive Christian Solution

The primitive Christian community when it met together for worship was like an early Quaker meeting in the freedom with which various members exercised their gifts and in the absence of a service programmed in advance and dominated throughout by ritual and human leadership. This is shown in Paul's so-called first letter to the Corinthians. In both early Quakerism and early Christianity religious groups were formed whose individual members were fused together as fire fuses metals, by a living infusion of the Spirit. No outer mechanical bond was necessary. The coming of the Spirit was indeed the great miracle of early Christianity. The Leader had departed in the flesh, leaving His followers forlorn and scattered. Suddenly in the flames of Pentecost He had returned seeking fresh incarnation in the body of the Church. At the beginning it was the personal leadership of Jesus which held His followers together. Now a new tie of a different sort was formed. Eventually this permeative bond held every Christian community from Jerusalem to Rome. It came most vividly to consciousness in the *agape* or love feast; a common meal partaken of reverently in remembrance of the Last Supper. Congregations became united with each other and with their Leader in a living organic communion. "Christians of the first generation," says Dr. Streeter,

“troubled themselves little about the theory either of doctrine or of Church Order. . . . The most vivid fact of present experience was the outpouring of ‘the Spirit’.” (*Primitive Christianity*, p. 73.)

In the early Christian meeting for worship, the Spirit exercised the same function that the soul exercises in the body; it united and coordinated the units of which the whole was composed. By a natural process the doctrine arose that the church was the mystical body of Christ. “The God of our Lord Jesus Christ,” writes Paul, “gave Him to be the head over all things to the church which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.” (Ephesians I: 22,23). Man is saved, therefore, not through an external historical transaction, as has been declared in many Protestant creeds, but through the Spirit of Christ inspiring and unifying the Church. Salvation accordingly becomes a social process in which the group takes part. It is not merely a transaction between God and isolated individuals.

Sin is estrangement. The individual in himself is lonely and incomplete. He is saved, that is, his isolation is overcome, by finding and being found by a greater Life which unites him at once with Itself and with his fellows. This Life, he feels, does not come up from the biological level below, like the life of the body. It possesses a special quality whereby it is recognized as divine and coming from above. Only the upward glance senses it. Its presence fills the worshiper with awe and reverence. It creates new life in him and new life in the group. It is the same creative spirit, which has always brooded over the world, bringing order out of chaos. “Without Him was not anything made that hath been made. In Him was life and the life was the Light of men.”

The central doctrine of the great Church of the Middle Ages held that man is saved in and through a Christian Society which is the body of Christ inspired by His Spirit. In

the hands of theologians and priests it became mechanized and was given a ritualistic interpretation. But the Church never forgot that Christ was present in His house of worship. His presence was realized in the sacrament of the Mass. Nor was it forgotten that fellow Christians could contribute to one another's salvation, though only a shadow of the early belief remained in the doctrine that sinners might have some share in the abounding merit of the saints. The Catholic Church has developed, more directly than is often realized, in unbroken continuity out of the primitive Christian Church.

There are many ways by which an aggregate of individuals can overcome excess of individuality in its parts and be united as a whole. The means may be biological, as in the family and the tribe; they may be economic, as in the trade union or business organization; or they may be political, as in the state. There is, however, as history has repeatedly shown, no more dynamic nor effectual means of social integration than that which we call religious. The roots of the Church go deeper than the roots of family, of state, or of any other type of human organization. The early Church was a religiously integrated group bound together by an invisible presence in the midst. The individuality of each part was not thereby canceled out; rather it was lifted up into something higher, through which the essential purpose of each individual was fulfilled. Out of this higher unity in the Spirit, the lower types of organization were generated, including the economic. The Church at Jerusalem acted at first like one large family. The communism in which it began was soon given up, but there remained a considerable degree of economic interdependence. The poor were carefully provided for. The fact that other types of worship and church organization soon superceded this original community of spirit on a basis of democratic equality before God does not detract from its significance as an important social phenomenon.

The Early Quaker Solution

Early Quakerism went even further than early Christianity in its dependence on a purely spiritual type of unity. Baptism was given up because it was an unnecessary external addition to an inner spiritual reality. There is some evidence that the *agape* or love feast occurred in some primitive Quaker groups,¹ but quite early and generally the supper of the Lord was celebrated wholly in silent spiritual communion. The Quaker meeting was a religiously integrated group. There was no bond but the Spirit, no creed but that which came fresh and upwelling from the Eternal Fountain of Truth. The unit was not the individual but the meeting, for it was the "sense of the meeting" and not the sense of the individual which determined the course of action.

As in early Christianity, the higher unity generated the lower types. There was in early Quakerism a large degree of economic interdependence; — the poor, the sick and the persecuted were carefully looked after by the meeting. Francis Howgill thus describes the nature of the bond which united the early Quaker meetings: "The Lord appeared daily to us, to our astonishment, amazement, and great admiration, insomuch that we often said one unto another with great joy of heart: 'What? Is the Kingdom of God come to be with men?' And from that day forward our hearts were knit unto the Lord and unto one another in true and fervent love, not by any external covenant or external form, but we entered into the covenant of life with God, and that was a strong obligation or bond upon all our spirits which united us one unto another." (Testimony concerning Edward Burrough.)

The Quaker doctrine of the Inner Light has sometimes been interpreted as an extreme form of religious individualism. This seems at first sight to be a natural deduction. If man has a Light within, he is, by this view, independent

of Church, Book, and Society in his search for truth and salvation. He is subject to no law outside himself, for his final authority is an Inner Guide. This individualistic interpretation has arisen partly from the mistaken belief that Quakerism is the extreme left wing of Protestantism and the result of Protestant doctrines carried to their logical conclusion. According to this view, Protestantism, in abolishing the Church as a means of salvation, substituted a direct relation between man and God. Fearful, however, of the anarchy resulting from so extreme an individualism, Protestantism sought for a means of external control which it found ready at hand in Bible and in creed. Quakerism, however, did not retreat. It placed its whole dependence on a direct relation with the God Whom it found within. Creed, Bible, and ritual were dispensed with and religion was reduced to pure interiority. Quakerism, according to such an interpretation, is simplicity. By a process of subtraction it has eliminated all that is institutional, ritualistic, and historical and has thus carried Protestant individualism to its logical conclusion.

There was, indeed, a Reformation Group in England which followed this path, but it was not the Society of Friends. The Ranters, with whom George Fox had many vigorous disputes, declared that everyone who considered himself inspired by the Inner Light was a law unto himself. To have God within was to be God and so become incapable of sin or error. Fox denied the Calvinistic doctrine of total depravity, but he as vigorously denied this easy means of attaining perfection. In his Journal, Fox relates that the learned Justice Hotham said to him that "if God had not raised up this principle of light and life which he, Fox, preached, the nation would have been overrun with Ranterism." There was, however, a Ranter party in the early Society of Friends.² When a form of church government was set up through meetings for business, there resulted a

separation on the part of some who believed in a purely individual form of guidance. This was the Wilkinson-Story separation of 1676.

The Society of Friends took the position that the source of guidance was not merely an individual light but the "sense of the meeting," in other words a communal light. This communal light which illumined the group was reached in a spirit of worship through which each individual aspired to a super-individual level of reality where all individual lights merged into one. It is difficult to make this process clear to anyone who has not actually experienced it. Individual insight is not suppressed, but rather it is expanded into something higher and more inclusive, just as a view gained from the foothills is not denied, but fulfilled and interpreted by the view from the mountain top. The individual view may not be wholly in error. It is simply fragmentary and incomplete. The individual, provided, of course, that he is in the true spirit of a worship which orients him toward something higher than himself, finds himself saying in the end, "that is just what I really meant but did not quite see clearly."

Dean Inge says that "Quakerism is an individualistic mysticism" (*The Social Teaching of the Church*, p. 21), but Troeltsch is right in asserting that "the Quakers overcame the natural antisocial or rather individualistic tendency of mysticism." (*The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches*, Vol. II, p. 700). The group method of arriving at conclusions is the one unique contribution which Quakerism has made to Christian thought and practice. Trevelyan (*History of England*, p. 431) says that "George Fox made at least the most original contribution to the history of religion of any Englishman." The Quaker method is more than just a process of group thinking such as is described in some recent books.³ It is a group thinking where God is present in the group. Groups often tend to sag below the level of the

individuals of which they are composed. But the divine presence insures an integration on a higher level. A mob can be fused into unity by looking downward to the infra-human instinctive level. A Quaker meeting aims to become united by looking upward to the supra-human, that is to something higher than any one individual or any collection of individuals.

This is not a "democratic" method in the narrow sense of that term, for there is no domination of a majority over a minority. If a good degree of unity is not reached, no action is taken. It sometimes happens, of course, that an individual who disagrees will either submit as best he can or follow his own guidance at all costs. More often he finds that the conclusion arrived at expresses his own deepest insight. The search for unity is not a search for a compromise nor for the greatest common divisor of a number of diverse opinions. It comes rather as an integration in which the parts are not overbourne, but transmuted into something more complete, just as oxygen and hydrogen in uniting to form water are not destroyed, but transformed. This figure can be carried further. As in the combination of oxygen and hydrogen energy is released which can cut through the strongest steel; so a group of persons if it be able to arrive at a higher unity generates a spiritual energy which becomes available for incalculable practical use in the world around.

The History Of The Social Problem

The significance and character of this Quaker method can be better understood if we turn now to the social problem. This problem can best be defined through an historical approach. It arises in an age of transition when a highly individualistic culture has run its course and the time is ripe for society to pass over into some more collective form. A change such as this occurred in the early Christian

centuries when a decadent individualistic Graeco-Roman culture passed over into the collective culture of the Middle Ages. The Graeco-Roman culture at its beginning was centered first in the tribe and then in a collection of tribes forming the city-state. These were essentially religiously integrated communities.

Eventually, with the formation of great cities, the expansion of commerce, and the wide development of learning, individualism set in, until society lost all inner cohesion and could only be held together by the dictatorial policy of a Caesar. Religion, which once had been an integrative social force, degenerated into a skeptical or pantheistic philosophy, or into a solitary negative mysticism, or into a passionate effort to secure personal immortality. Finally when all inherited reserves of social unity had been exhausted; when, in the ruthless struggle for economic advantage, wealth had become concentrated in the hands of a few, the whole structure crumbled to a chaotic mass of atoms and barbarians from the north walked in upon the ruins undeterred.

Yet in this chaos and disintegration there existed islands, religiously integrated groups of Christians who offered to the world a new way of life. They were not thinking of a purely individual salvation. They had their gaze fixed upward awaiting a Messiah who had promised to descend and inaugurate a new social order. But they did not wait passively for His coming. They set up examples of that new promised social order in their own groups for there the Messiah had already come in the Spirit. The visible Church became the kingdom of God on earth at least in germ, as St. Augustine shows in his "City of God." This Church, the outward body of the Messiah, grew and increased in power until in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries it dominated the whole culture of Europe. In itself it united all things: philosophy, theology, science, art, politics, language,

education. It cut across national boundaries just as the League of Nations attempts to do today.

But, like all living things, the Church reached its zenith and decayed. The current of life grew weak until the whole structure seemed to many only a lifeless mechanism. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries a new era of transition set in. This time it was in the opposite direction from the earlier transition of the fourth and fifth centuries. A growing individualism broke up the old dying group life expressed in church, trade guild, and feudal system. The Protestantism of Luther and Calvin abolished the Church as a means of salvation and substituted an individual relation between man and God. The mechanics of Galileo and Newton revealed a world governed by law, not a world integrated by souls. The Spirit had no place in the system.

The great humanists of the Renaissance uncovered the brilliant age of classical antiquity when man once before had used the matchless power of his own individual reason to discover truth, goodness, and beauty. Great explorers opened new vistas of human wealth and adventure. Philosophers discovered that knowledge is power to overcome nature with the tools of science; it does not remain the passive contemplation of changeless truth. Mankind revealed in his powers "like a giant refreshed with new wine." The old supernaturalism with its other worldly standards of life was thrown off like the fetters of a prisoner. The seventeenth century was an age of giants whose achievements increased the general self confidence, — Bacon, Shakespeare, Cervantes, Kepler, Galileo, Newton, Harvey, Descartes, Pascal, Locke, Spinoza, Leibnitz, — the list could be extended much further. Quite naturally there grew up a doctrine, strange to the Middle Ages, that progress is inevitable. The discovery of biological evolution in the nineteenth century confirmed this belief.

In the nineteenth century individualism in the well-known form of "liberalism" asserted the right of every man

to freedom and equality of opportunity. Among its principal philosophers were Mill and Spencer. Under the stimulating influence of this type of thought a rapid advance was made in many fields of human achievement, though not in art or religion. To be "liberal" meant to be willing to give to everyone the right to advance his own opinions whatever they might be. The result was new light on many questions. It meant also the right of the strong man to accumulate wealth in whatever rank of society he might be, provided he played according to the rules of the game. The result was a rapid increase in the total amount of wealth. Yet liberalism by itself, however important its achievements, is an incomplete and one-sided philosophy of life. In defending the rights of the parts it tends to forget the rights of the whole. It stands for increased freedom, but has less to say of increased responsibility. This is illustrated by the fact that the so-called "liberalism" of the present moment, though it still attacks all forms of regimentation, has largely tended to become reactionary. The doctrines, once used to advance reform, may also be used to retard it.

With the rapid advance of humanism and individualism the supernatural has gradually faded from the picture. Protestantism venerated it, but banished it to Bible times or the next world. Science could discover nothing higher than human reason, and reason seemed capable of solving every practical problem. Writers on social theories, endeavoring to be scientific, declared that enlightened selfishness was enough to hold society together. Their "economic man" pursued his own interests but he was compelled to regard the interests of others in so far as they affected his own. In the nineteenth century science succeeded in reducing the world of matter to a swarm of molecules and atoms each going its own individual way regardless of any "spirit of the whole." In the same way scientific economists reduced society to a collection of human

atoms each pursuing its own interest. In politics also, science set the pace. As in mechanics the bigger swarm of atoms exerts a greater force than the smaller, so in politics the bigger swarm of human atoms prevails over the smaller swarm. Questions of right and wrong are settled by counting heads just as in the science of mechanics problems are solved by counting pounds and feet.

In every field of human endeavor the process of atomization continued. Art broke away from the whole of culture and wanted to be art for art's sake. Religion declared that it would stick to its own field and leave politics and social questions alone. Science declared its independence of religion. The field of knowledge became completely departmentalized so that a professor of physics was proud to know nothing of psychology.

It is a curious fact that science, the chief instrument of man in his victorious struggle against nature, was the first to betray him and hand him over, bound hand and foot, to his adversary. Science declared that man has no freedom of will, but is the helpless victim of blind mechanical forces; that instead of a fallen angel he is only a risen animal; that his mind (if any) is a mere bundle of reflexes; that his most exalted emotions result from certain chemical compounds exuded by his glands; that his most heartfelt opinions are manufactured by the science of propaganda. It is hard to understand why man has endured all these insults from science with such serenity just as we are puzzled by the Calvinist who takes a kind of pride in his total depravity and eternal damnation.

In spite of all, a general belief in human self-sufficiency lingered until the World War. The shock of this catastrophe and even more the inability of man to learn anything by it or take any valid measures to prevent its recurrence has given a terrific jolt to faith in the inevitability of human progress. One thing yet remains, however, a faith in the

inevitability of scientific progress. The Century of Progress, celebrated at Chicago, clearly marked a great and calculable scientific advance. Here it was shown that if science cannot make life significant, it can at least make it comfortable. But even this last hope seems now to be vanishing. Vast progress in the mechanical means of manufacturing goods has not brought physical comfort as much nearer as might be supposed. It has increased the extremes of greed and want and piled up goods which the needy are unable to buy. The result is, a gigantic depression which still continues. No wonder that pessimism is replacing the optimism of a generation ago. It is the pessimism of the isolated individual standing alone in a friendless universe, with no means of meeting the vast impersonal economic and physical forces which bid fair to overwhelm him.

A group of modern humanists come forward at this point with a remedy. The excellence of their literary abilities somewhat conceals the naiveté of their plan of salvation. They ask man to assert his humanity; to deny that he is a beast or a machine, to defy the tyrant Nature and to declare his independence of natural appetite and natural law. But they can point to no source of power through which this declaration of independence can be made effective. They can only assert that this attitude is essentially reasonable (or human). They do not seem to realize that man can raise himself above the animal level only by grasping hold of that which is higher than himself. Without external help he cannot lift himself spiritually any more than he can lift himself physically. Man is not self-sufficient. He becomes independent of nature only in so far as he becomes dependent on that which is above nature.

The modern literary humanists ask us to take our standards of conduct from the humanistic ages of classical antiquity or of the Renaissance. But these ages, unlike our own, followed immediately upon epochs when man reached

up to the divine, and it was largely from those epochs that the humanism of the past drew its reserves of power. At the present time the reserves of power are becoming slowly exhausted, and the pull from below is becoming stronger than the pull from above. Three centuries ago man began to lose his faith in the super-human. Little did he know then that this loss of faith in the super-human would cause him to lose faith in the human also. Losing his grip on the higher he sags into the lower.

This new fall of man is not just a declaration on the part of science that man is either an animal organism, as biology asserts, or a machine as mechanistic physics would have us believe. It is more than a change of viewpoint. If, in this God-forsaken world, man believes that he cannot look upward for help he may conclude that he can at least look downward. Why not be a beast in fact as well as in theory and enjoy the satisfaction of animal appetites with a clear conscience. The animals are natural and unaffected. They are not, apparently, tormented by a sense of lonely isolation in a merciless universe. Our human isolation is due to our artificiality and hypocrisy; our attempts to be other than that which, Freud tells us, we really are. Let us therefore forget our troublesome pretensions and indulge ourselves in a healthy, sincere sensuality.

But can we forget? The sensuality of the modern man is a deliberate, self-conscious sensuality, not a self-forgetful animal naturalness. In his endeavor to be a natural beast he becomes an unnatural man. His enjoyment of sensuality often depends largely on the attraction possessed by forbidden things. The fruit is sweet because it comes from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This is shown particularly in the sex literature so voluminous today which lives on a knowledge of its own depravity. Such a sophisticated sex interest is very different from the healthy sensuality of the barnyard. It is accordingly no real escape

from self-conscious individuality. Its emptiness is illustrated by the nature of its principal medium, the silver screen, which depicts a civilization as soulless and unstable as the shadows of which the pictures are composed. The moving picture presents, in more senses than one, a two dimensional world with no depth. In order to exist this world must always continue in restless motion.

As neither humanism nor sensualism are aware of the true nature of the social problem, they make no attempt to meet it. They are content to think of man in individual terms. There are, however, three important remedies for excessive individualism which recognize the nature of the problem, the first is autocracy; the second, world denunciation or asceticism; the third is a religiously integrated group. Let us consider each in turn.

The First Solution — Autocracy

When men have lost faith in themselves they tend to seek refuge in a strong man. The rise of dictatorships today, whether of the fascist or communist type, is evidence of the retreat of the individual and his failure of nerve. Just as individual pieces of matter, not united by an inner bond, can be held together and coordinated by force externally applied, so over-individualized men can be forced to cooperate by the power of the state. This is the oldest of all remedies, but it is always a sign of decadence. It means that there is no living power which can vitalize the community. The soul has fled and a mechanism is left behind. Some philosophers of communism, as for instance John Macmurray, realize this but they believe that a dictatorship is a preliminary stage to organic unity. This is probably wrong. Mechanisms produce mechanisms. We do not know of any case where a mechanism has produced life. It may be that a religious fire is burning beneath the

surface in Russia, fusing individual elements, but of this we cannot speak positively as yet.

The retreat to a mechanical level is exhibited also in the recent growth of extreme nationalism. Nations are today declaring their complete independence of each other, economic and otherwise, and are arming to enforce it. Past history has shown that international anarchy is usually overcome by the dictatorship of one nation, after a career of conquest. As there is apparently no present possibility of a Pax Romana, we must look either to a balance of power which sooner or later will become unstable and result in war as in 1914, or to an organic union of nations, such as is imperfectly foreshadowed in the League of Nations. Extreme individualism in nations is as intolerable as extreme individualism in persons.⁴

The Second Solution — World Renunciation

The second solution proposed for the problem of over-individualism is renunciation. The individual in his loneliness and isolation cannot contend with the forces against him and so he retreats from the vain pomp and glory of this world. As long as he is confident of success in this world his religion is generally a religion of action. When, however, this confidence is lost, the pain of individuality and inadequacy is assuaged by complete surrender to that which is above and beyond the world. The ascetic crucifies the flesh that his spirit may be purified and freed from carnal bonds. The solitary mystic purges himself of all that is sensuous in order that he may achieve union with the super-sensuous.

This solution was particularly widespread at the time when the Graeco-Roman civilization was crumbling into individual atoms. When Indian culture had reached a similar stage the Buddha preached one form of this method. The

doctrine of reincarnation presents the Buddhist with a more difficult problem than that faced by the Christian. The Buddhist aims not only at annihilating his egoism in this world but also in the next. Suffering and individuality, he holds, are due to desire. Eliminate all desire and nothing of the ego will remain which is capable of suffering. As a candle flame dissolves in the darkness and goes out; as a drop of water loses itself in the ocean; so the separate soul by ceasing to exist, enters the nameless peace of Nirvana. The process by which desire is eliminated as taught by the Buddha is elaborate, but the end is simple. The Buddhist overcomes his individuality by destroying it. This may solve the individual problem but obviously it does not solve the social problem.

This method of world renunciation assumes many intermediate forms. It is not the fashion today to retire to the wilderness but there are many who refuse to fight the battle of life because it no longer seems to them important. They are spectators, not participators, looking sometimes cynically, sometimes with mild amusement at those who struggle to make the world better. It is good form today not to take anything very seriously. This world is sometimes interesting but generally boring. It cannot harm us for we can always smile at it, knowing that at any moment we can turn the dial to a different wave length and hear another tune. This sense of futility arises because the individual is alone. He has found no great cause in which he can forget himself, no group in which he can merge his life.

The doctrine of retirement from the world may, however, become the very essence of a healthy, normal religion. As the body must sometimes rest, so the spirit cannot always strive. There must be some area of calm into which the wearied soul may withdraw for renewal of strength. There must be some quiet time of worship when the course of life is reset by pilot stars. There must be some pause on the

journey when the traveler can refresh himself at the well of eternal life. It is only when such a period of refreshment absorbs all things into itself that religion becomes a method of escape. The soviets called religion “an opiate of the people,” and such indeed it can be if its *whole* emphasis is on the other world. But a life which is wholly this-worldly is often like a stream which runs dry because it is not renewed by a source beyond itself. The world’s great religious leaders and social reformers have in general discovered a balance between a this-world religion of good works and an other-world religion of retirement from struggle; a retirement in which strength and insight are renewed.

The Third Solution — The Religiously Integrated Group

It is such a balance between world-affirmation and world-renunciation that we discover in our third type of release from over-individualism. This has already been described as existing in the early Christian community and the early Friends’ meeting. In such groups, when they live up to their highest ideal, the individual is neither suppressed by authority nor eliminated by retirement. His individuality is lost in that of the group but it is regained on a higher plane. In submitting to authority he falls to an infra-individual mechanistic level. In uniting with the spirit of the group he rises to a super-individual organic level. This word “organic” is often used in a purely biological sense. It is used here to designate a type of social organism made up of persons who are bound together not externally by force but internally by love and friendship.

To a scientific mind which recognizes no categories except those of mechanistic science it is incredible that a unified group can be formed of persons who respect fully the freedom and individuality of one another. The answer to this paradox is not scientific but religious. The cementing

force is not only the love of one another. It is also the love of God. If the members of the group looked only to each other they would react against each other like billiard balls, striking and rebounding. Instead they look to that which is above them all yet in them all; they look to the Spirit which unites from above.

This method has a long history. The tribe and the patriarchal family were largely biological units but when individualism arose they could not depend wholly on biological ties. The tribal or family religion was of such a character that the individual in participating in its ritual felt himself united to the whole. In the Chinese patriarchal family the shrine where the ancestors are worshiped has been the most powerful of family bonds. The totem of the tribe is worshiped as a symbol of an integrating life force. At a time when the old Greek deities were no longer intellectually accepted, Greek statesmen advocated their worship as a means of unifying the city-state. It was the worship of Jehovah which held Israel together and made her victorious over her enemies. Many races and peoples look back to some golden age when the individual found freedom and joy as a member of a group.

But this family or tribal type of religion was tied closely to the soil. Its gods were fixed in home or temple. When commercial expansion first came and men began to move freely over the earth it began to weaken. Horses, iron, larger ships, broke up the old groups and gave men new power over their fellows. The rich grew richer and the poor, poorer. Through the disintegrating force of commerce which mixed up men from widely scattered places the first great age of individualism set in — roughly about the seventh and sixth centuries B.C. Many like Amos bewailed the good old days and pronounced a doom on greedy merchants who exploited their brethren. Almost at the same time in widely scattered places great religious geniuses appeared offering their

remedies for the decline of social forms of religion. Jeremiah preached a personal religion, a new covenant written not on tables of stone but on the heart. In China, Confucius and Laotze; in India, Buddha and Mahavira; in Persia, Zoroaster; in Greece, the first philosophers and the nameless founders of the "mystery religions"; all appeared to offer some solvent for an excess of individuality. Sin is estrangement, loneliness, separation. Salvation is a closing of the gap between the isolated life and a higher life, an atonement or at-one-ment with deity. The remedy is a redirection of will (Judaism) or a mystic union (Taoism, Orphism) or annihilation of self (Buddhism) or social adjustment through decorum (Confucianism).

These methods of aiding the isolated human atom, either to endure existence or to dispose of it, have met the needs of many millions of persons, but it is doubtful whether any of them will widely appeal to the occidental world of the twentieth century. Nor can we go back to the tribe, the patriarchal family, or the small city-state. There is, however, one remedy which fully meets the difficulty and which is consistent with modern life and modern conceptions of the world. This is the religiously integrated community comparable to that which existed in early Christianity and early Quakerism.

It may well be asked — why insert the adjective "religious"? Are there not around us a vast number of associations of all sorts in which the modern individual in some measure overcomes his isolation; such associations as clubs, lodges, political parties, trade unions, and organizations for the advancement or elimination of everything conceivable? These, however, are held together by what might be called a horizontal relation between man and man. Those who have common interests find cooperation and mutual adjustment of individual desires essential to success. Such associations range all the way from a business

corporation organized through a system of authoritative control, to a discussion group interested only in a search for truth. These associations may contain religiously-minded individuals but, with some possible exceptions, they are not religiously integrated.

In religious worship the horizontal bonds are supplemented by vertical bonds leading up to a higher Being who unites men by drawing them all to Himself. The integration is on a higher level. When Jesus said, "Wherever two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them," he did not mean that he would come as one individual among other individuals. His Spirit includes but transcends each individual. "I am the vine, ye are the branches." "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." Men can be united by all falling into the same pit or they can be united by climbing by various paths to the same mountain top. A lynching mob is obviously integrated on a lower level than a religious meeting held in the spirit of Christ.

An upward striving toward a higher world can, under certain conditions, create the strongest human bonds within the world. This is the fundamental paradox of religion which resists all attempts at rationalization because it is creative of the new and unpredictable. Social progress is a child both of this world and of a higher world. Each world is sterile without the other. The other-worldly person seeks only for a flight from this "vale of tears" to a haven of peace and security; the this-worldly person ignores the "supernatural"⁵ as mere "wish fulfillment," a means of escape for those unfit for life's struggle. Yet the history of mankind shows, especially in the great creative periods, that it is only the fertile union of both worlds which can bring about a new birth of a higher level of existence.

Protestantism has failed to bring about such a union because, by its very nature, it seems doomed to be one-

sided. For a long time it condemned this world as evil, teaching a purely individual salvation through faith in Book, creed, sermon, and ritual. Now it is either swinging toward fundamentalism, which revives the old exclusive dependence on the supernatural and transcendent, or it is preaching a social gospel devoid of characteristically religious elements. One difficulty is that Protestantism has evolved no religious method nor theory for fusing the two. Catholicism effected a practical synthesis of nature and supernature nearly a thousand years ago which satisfied the mind of the Middle Ages but it carries into the present so much obsolete baggage that it cannot lead in social or theoretical advance. In early Judaism, as described in the Old Testament, the conception of a Holy Community integrated by a common worship of Jehovah was developed by the prophets and in large measure actualized. This Holy Community was the parent of the Christian Church. In modern Judaism, scattered about as it is over the face of the earth, there is little opportunity to revive this ancient order.

Quakerism And The Ideal Community

Quakerism combines in religious worship two elements which are usually considered incompatible, a mystical approach to God and a social relation to our fellows. The lonely mystic knows only the vertical relation to God, the "social gospeler" too often only the horizontal relation to man, but group mysticism takes account of both God and man. In the group we find that we need our fellow worshipers in the search for God and we need God in the search for our fellows. Each search leads into the other. In the silence of living worship we strive to create a sensitivity to the Divine presence by removing selfish, individual desires. We find that the partition which separates God and man also separates man and man. Or we may first reach out in love

toward our fellows in an endeavor to understand them and the conflicts and problems which trouble them; and suddenly some window of the soul opens and the breath of a diviner air comes in. Once more the Spirit which has brooded over chaos from the beginning has spoken the creative Word and chaotic human atoms are reborn into the unity of a higher life. "We know that we have passed out of death into life because we love the brethren." (I John 3:14.)

The words "one another" occur with surprising frequency in the early Friends' writings. Fox in his letters often identifies the tie which unites the worshipers to God with the tie which unites them to each other. "Mind," he says, "that which is pure in one another which joins you together"; "therefore, all Friends, obey that which is pure within you and know one another in that which brings you to wait on the Lord"; "Friends, meet together and know one another in that which is eternal which was before the world was," "feel the power of God in one another," "that all may be as one family building up one another and helping one another."⁶ Penn, in his preface to Fox's *Journal*, speaks of the early Friends as "treating one another as those that believed and felt God present."

The group that has thus found God has solved the social problem within itself. None of its members henceforth face the world alone as individuals. The ties which bind it together are not easily broken by material or economic forces. It cannot ignore the needs of any of its members. But it is not a Noah's ark built to save a few from a drowning world. Experience proves that there is always generated an over-plus of spiritual power which seeks outlet in a larger field. If there is no going out from the group to transform the world into a greater Holy Community then the group is either dead, or it is a plant-like existence. If the group is to resemble the highest type of living things it must, like them, modify its environment. An inner sense of peace, security, and spiritual

power is attained in group worship but it is not henceforth confined to any particular place or time. Each member carries it about in his heart wherever he goes and acts accordingly. He becomes an apostle of a new social order patterned after the type of procedure which created a living unity in his own more limited group.

This type of social order is based not on the tyranny of an individual or a majority of individuals who use violence or threat of violence to enforce their wishes. Differences are adjusted by a process of integration in which no individual is submerged but in which every viewpoint takes some place or exerts some influence in the final achievement. The way to bring about a new social order like this is to achieve it first in one's heart and in the religious group to which one belongs and then to live in it wherever one may be. It will then be aroused in the hearts of others and grow by contagion. Such a method involves serious risk to those who undertake it for a person living in this kind of a social order becomes subject to the violence of those not in it. Nevertheless this method of venture and sacrifice is the one method by which the kingdom of God propagates and reproduces itself.

Quakerism at its best presents this answer to the Social Problem. It is not a plan based on (though it does not exclude) economic or political theories, but a social dynamic arising out of a certain type of unifying experience. The history of the Society of Friends gives ample evidence that this experience is intimately bound up, both as cause and effect, with social reforms of a practical and far-reaching character.⁷ But the general application of the Quaker method has hardly begun. There are large areas of conflict, particularly in industry, which await pioneers of social progress.

There are some reasons why the present age may be more favorable to the Quaker religious and social method than the seventeenth century when the Society of Friends

arose. In the seventeenth century, as we have already seen, the man of western Europe was just emerging from the control of an old culture and acquiring an unlimited confidence in himself. A new continent awaited his exploitation and a new science was ready to furnish him with the means to exploit it. Newton was a contemporary of Fox but Newton increased while Fox decreased. As science developed, man's faith in his ability to control his destiny grew and faith in a religion which looked to the superhuman for help correspondingly lessened. The Society of Friends retired into a shell of rigid discipline in order to preserve the pattern of life it had developed. But in the last few years the direction of the current has changed. Humanism, a moment ago everywhere triumphant, stands baffled and without resources before a crumbling social order. Man is losing confidence in the power of science to save him. What is even more significant and prophetic, the greatest scientists of today have turned to philosophy and have discovered that the older mechanistic conceptions describe only a shadow world. The deeper reality, they say, is organic and its nature is revealed not through balance or measuring rod but by the mystic vision.

An age of collectivism of some sort is apparently dawning. The central question is — will it be a collectivism based on external authority to meet a purely economic or political need, or will it be a “culture” — that is, a collectivism based on Spirit which guides men from within. If the second alternative is the hoped-for answer we must realize that it can come about, not through some sudden revolution but only through a long, slow process of growth. Because the Kingdom of Heaven is an organism and not a mechanical collectivism Jesus compared it to a tree which begins in a very small seed. Like a tree, it cannot grow if it is cut off either from the Light of Heaven above or from the dark earth beneath.

That the case is far from hopeless can be shown by a comparison of the present time with the time in which Christianity arose. There is the same excess of individualism and a corresponding effort to establish a collectivism based on authority. There is the same failure of nerve, the same cynicism, skepticism, and stoic apathy, the same sense of futility in the face of blind economic and political forces. No wonder that to many men of the first century the situation seemed hopeless and the only remedy a sudden revolution and the coming of the Messiah from the clouds of heaven. No wonder that to many men today a bloody revolution seems the only remedy. But the early Christians did not wait for revolution. They set up the new social order in their own religious communities. These communities were the seeds of the kingdom. The Church became the kingdom of God on earth, very imperfect of course, but a living entity through which men were raised up to a higher and a more than individual life. That the Church later compromised with the state and adopted some of its methods does not detract from its great achievement in offering a real solution to the problem of excessive individualism. The hope of building up a social order in which the Sermon on the Mount would be accepted for what it obviously means was never given up. In the monastery a sincere but abortive effort was made to avoid compromise with the world and to create spiritual and economic interdependence in a religiously integrated community.

The world today awaits that individual or group which can minister to its needs in the same way in which the early Christian communities administered to the needs of their time. The remedy for social disintegration is not more centralized authority which sooner or later is destroyed by the very forces which it sets in motion. Nor is it a retreat to a monastery, nor to an attitude of indifference, nor to a purely other-world mysticism. We must have a kind of social

cement which binds from within so that the unity formed is not mechanical but living. Where can we get it except from the source whence it has always come from, a type of religious experience which at once creates and is created by an organic social order? In this task we can take only one step at a time. Mechanical things can be made quickly but living things grow slowly. We are at least able to build up small bits of the kingdom here and there wherever a group of persons become united and lifted up by the "Presence in the midst." If these groups are living they will increase and multiply for reproduction is the law of all life. It is essential that we help bind up the broken wounds of the world. It is even more important that we at once set about building up a world in which these wounds shall not occur.

"Christianity," says Heiler in *The Spirit of Worship*, "is weary of individualism which weakens and divides; it is striving to escape from the narrow bondage of the subjective into the wide freedom of the objective, the Universal; from the limitations of the isolated individual to the fullness of strength of the great Community." Many are the seekers searching for such fullness of strength. They will find it in an upreaching self-forgetful mind which unites and creates; in a mystical insight which senses both the upward pull of Divine power and the frail tendrils of lonely human lives reaching out for support; in a sacrament which is at once communion with God and with man. This was the earliest human search. It will also be the last.

The Fundamental Christian Doctrine

Can there be a social salvation which ignores the Christian doctrine of the atonement? To many persons today this is not an important question, but its consideration brings to bear on our central problem some interesting and significant facts. The individualistic interpretation of the

atonement, as set forth in most Protestant creeds, can help us but little. But primitive Christianity, as we have already seen, did not put its central emphasis on individual salvation. It brought a social gospel to meet a social need.

In the history of our religion we find many attempts to express in symbols the nature of that living power which holds society together from within. The early Christians symbolized it in the love feast eaten together in memory of the Last Supper. In the first account of the Last Supper to be written (I Cor. 11), Jesus takes the cup and says "This cup is the new covenant in my blood." These words mean little to us today but to the men who first heard them they were fraught with profound significance. Perhaps their minds went back to the old covenant which was made between Jehovah and Israel at Mt. Sinai. Here a contract was sealed according to which the people of Israel formally adopted Jehovah as their God and promised to serve only Him and He, in turn, promised to aid and protect them. The Old Testament, taking its name from this contract, was written to show that Jehovah had always kept His part of the bargain, but Israel had been unfaithful many times and had suffered in consequence. Moses sealed the contract by an impressive ritual (Exod. XXIV). The people stand before God who is represented by an altar. Victims are sacrificed and their blood poured into bowls. Half of the blood is sprinkled over the altar. Moses then reads the terms of the agreement and the people say, "All that the Lord hath spoken will we do and be obedient." The remainder of the blood is then sprinkled over the people, with the words "behold the blood of the covenant."

This ritual had a significant meaning. The blood represented "life" (Lev. XVII: 11,14). Two parties formerly independent of each other are united into a single living whole because each is made to share in the same blood, that is, in the same vital essence. To accomplish this it is

necessary that the life of a third party be sacrificed in order that its life, being shared in by the other two, might unite them into a single life. Before the covenant was sealed Jehovah and Israel were merely contiguous. After the covenant they were united by a living bond, a third life, in which both shared.

What more natural than that Jesus, knowing that his own life would be sacrificed on the morrow, should think of his blood as the "blood of the new covenant" creating like the blood of the old covenant a living bond between man and God. His life was to become that third thing, bridging the gap between the divine and human, thus overcoming that isolation of the individual, the estrangement, which is called "sin." This is "atonement," the central doctrine of the Christian religion.

Though the symbols by which religion speaks change from age to age, old truths remain. It is in that inner bond of unity between man and God which Moses and Jesus symbolized by "blood" that we must seek the power of social salvation. In the early Church Jesus saved the individual because it was His Spirit which was the soul of the Christian community, and it was in and through the Christian community that the individual was saved from insufficiency and isolation. Among the early Quakers it was the "Christ within," who was the Spirit not only within the individual but also within the group as a living whole who bridged the gap between the separate individual and a larger whole of life. In the religiously integrated community the individual finds his problem solved for he is no longer alone. He has found man and God, each through the other.

"But now in Christ Jesus ye that once were far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ. For he is our peace who hath made both one, and broken down the middle wall of partition" (Eph. 11: 13,14).

Notes

1. See Barclay's *"Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth,"* pp. 375-377. Barclay, the Quaker Apologist, defines the "Love Feast" as "to eat and drink together in the dread and presence of the Lord as His people *which custom we shall not condemn.*"
2. In early Christianity the new found liberty from the law of Moses gave rise to the same problem. Paul twice warns the Corinthians that "All things are lawful; but all things are not expedient." (I Cor. 6:12; 10:23.)
3. Such, for instance, as W. S. Elliott, *"The Process of Group Thinking."*
4. It is interesting to notice in this connection that the Council of the League of Nations arrives at its decisions much after the manner of a Quaker meeting. As one objection will, in most cases, make action impossible, it is useless to take a vote and so conclusions are arrived at by general assent.
5. Such words as "supernatural" and "other worldly" are unfortunate inheritances from an age when "human" and "divine" were considered as distinct and separate as oil and water. A life which is qualitatively higher is no more "unnatural" nor "miraculous" than the lower.
6. These quotations are taken from Brayshaw, *"The Quakers,"* page 99.
7. Such as religious liberty, peace, the abolition of slavery, temperance, prison reform, the care of the insane, etc.

Leading And Being Led

Paul A. Lacey



PENDLE HILL PUBLICATIONS
WALLINGFORD, PENNSYLVANIA

ABOUT THE AUTHOR Paul A. Lacey was born in Philadelphia in 1934. He is married to Margaret Smith Lacey and they have three children. He joined Philadelphia Yearly Meeting in 1953, having first met Quakers through weekend workcamps. He has been active in civil liberties, civil rights, peace and East-West concerns with Friends, but his profession is teaching literature. He is the author of *The Inner War: Forms and Themes in Recent American Poetry* (Fortress Press, 1972). He is now Bain-Swiggett Professor of English Literature, at Earlham College, where he has also served as Provost and Acting President and as Faculty Consultant on Teaching and Learning. From 1979-82 he was Consultant and Director of a program of Post-Doctoral Teaching Fellowships, sponsored by Lilly Endowment, Inc., at a number of major American universities. In 1983 he edited *Revitalizing Teaching Through Faculty Development* (Jossey-Bass) and has published a number of articles on teaching, literary criticism and faculty development.

This essay, a companion piece to *Quakers and the Use of Power*, Pendle Hill pamphlet 241, 1982, seeks to examine the nature of religious leadings and where we should be looking for such leadings today. The author is grateful to Western Yearly Meeting of Friends, Plainfield, Indiana, for the invitation to present the Quaker Lecture in 1979, which produced a first version of this essay; he is especially grateful for the intellectual stimulation and spiritual fellowship of Friends of Mid-Coast Friends Meeting of New England Yearly Meeting, Damariscotta, Maine, whose invitation to lead an adult discussion group in fall, 1984, significantly influenced this final version.

Copyright ©1985 by Pendle Hill
Republished electronically © 2002 by Pendle Hill
http://www.pendlehill.org/pendle_hill_pamphlets.htm
email: publications@pendlehill.org

Leading and being led: the words are simple enough. But for Quakers they have their most profound resonance as defining religious experience. Friends speak variously of being *drawn* to an action, feeling *under the weight* of a concern, being *called* or *led* to act in specific ways. We speak of *being open to the leadings of the Light*, of being *taught* by the *Spirit* or the *Inward Christ*. Extraordinary claims lie embedded in those phrases. They say that it is not only possible but essential to our nature for human beings to hear and obey the voice of God; that we can be directed, daily, in what we do, the jobs we hold, the very words we say; and that our obedience may draw us to become leaders in all spheres of human life — in the professions, arts and sciences, but also in discovering the ethical, political, social, and economic consequences of following the will of God.

To be a Quaker is not simply to subscribe to doctrines but to be convinced that one has known an ultimate reality which authenticates doctrine. It is to know oneself capable of being taught *now* by the living Spirit of Truth, capable of receiving vital direction in what one is to do. It is not only to be a follower of the teachings of Jesus but to have met the Inward Christ.

Our history is rich in examples of such religious experience, as our vocabulary is rich in ways of describing it, but that very richness presents dangers. One danger is that we may be so over-awed at how powerful a leading must be that we never trust that we have been led. We may search so hard for the transcendent insight that we miss the small, quiet promptings to obedience in what is immediately at hand. Those meetings in which no one dared break the silence for decades lost their vitality from being over-awed. The longer the silence endured, the more sacralized it became and the more terrifying it became for anyone to imagine being led to speak.

The opposite danger is that we do not feel enough awe.

We domesticate the powerful language of religious experience and turn authentic witness into cliché. Every strong opinion or piece of self-will gets inflated into a *leading*. A long-time colleague at Earlham College once got so tired of the pretentiousness of all the announced “concerns” — some of which appeared to be nothing more than irritation at the way faculty meeting was going — that he expunged the word from his vocabulary. Thereafter, whenever he felt exercised about something, he would announce that he “had a bother” about it.

As heirs to that rich vocabulary, our task is to recover its proper meaning, to free it from pretentiousness and to ask how it may help us understand and express our own religious experience. That requires looking at what our forebears experienced and then examining our own experience, to see where one throws light on the other. It requires exploring such questions as what it means, experientially, to have a leading; what some of the hallmarks and consequences are of being led; how we can tell when a leading is genuine rather than self-serving and self-deceiving; and where we might look for leadings today.

It is always well to start with George Fox, both because he first expresses the seminal insights which shape the Religious Society of Friends and because the heroic power of his life is so inspiring. Fox does not often speak of “leadings.” In telling about “the dealings of the Lord” with him, he speaks of a series of “great openings,” times of vigorous religious exercise when God gives him an insight into truth which carries with it a transforming power. The first of these exercises begins with Fox’s intense reaction to a trivial incident, the frivolous drinking of healths in a tavern. Unable to sleep that night, he tells us, “The Lord ...said unto me, “Thou seest how young people go together into vanity and old people into the earth; and thou must

forsake all, both young and old, and keep out of all, and be as a stranger unto all.”¹ “At the command of God,” Fox breaks off all connection with his family and begins his seeking. What follows is a long period of alienation from human society, anxious search for meaning, temptation, sufferings to the point of despair, and stubborn passivity — “waiting upon the Lord.” The early pages of Fox’s *Journal* report his going from place to place to consult with priests, professors and dissenters, but these are wanderings rather than leadings, marked by temptations to follow human models and by tests of his capacity for waiting.

In the third year of these wanderings, he has a series of great openings, close together and in support of one another. First, reflecting on claims people make to be believers, he has it opened to him that no one is truly a believer who has not passed from death to life. Belief is not a matter of opinions held but of a life so utterly transformed that it is like dying and being reborn. Second, he perceives that something more than university training is essential to “qualify” one as a minister of Christ. The third opening is that God does not dwell in buildings made with hands, but that the church is the people of God.

We who read about them with a knowledge of subsequent history recognize that these openings will help shape Quaker polity, our attitudes toward the authority of our leaders, and how we expect ministry to be expressed. But though powerful, they are, initially, fragmentary and largely negative — as much “closings” as “openings.” They help clear away error, but Fox does not yet know *who* God’s people are or what *will* make a true minister. Neither has he yet found himself in relation to God. He says, “Now though I had great openings, yet great trouble and temptation came many times upon me, so that when it was day I wished for night, and when it was night I wished for day.”² Openings, sorrows and temptations all occur intermixed in this time

of Fox's first searching.

Only after these three great openings does Fox first use his characteristic phrase, "...I was *moved of the Lord* to go into Derbyshire...", and all this occurs before the great Pentecostal event which changes him from Seeker to Finder, that moment when, having forsaken all human help, he hears a voice saying "There is one, even Christ Jesus, who can speak to thy condition." Even after that revelation, Fox still passes through worse sorrows and temptations than he had experienced before. He still finds himself *moved* to do things which are inexplicable to him, impelled by a hint or by a call to testify to, or keep faith with, what has previously been opened to him — as when he speaks of hearing a bell or seeing a steeple and having it "strike at his heart" or when he feels commanded to walk barefoot in winter through the streets of Lichfield. Even for a great religious prophet, *leadings* can continue to be uncertain and ambiguous, an occasion for risk.³

But George Fox is not our only pattern or example. Many whose lives speak compellingly to us had no such direct openings but came to their transforming experience through the ministry of other people. For some there is a long apprenticeship of struggle and confusion, while others are convinced by the peace and rightness of meeting in silent worship with God's people.

Consider the example of William Penn. At least ten years elapsed between the first and second times he heard Thomas Loe preach. In the intervening years, he had been dismissed from Oxford University for dissenting from the Established Church, and he had traveled and talked with many kinds of believers. There was ferment in his soul, but he was no Quaker. Even after his second encounter with Thomas Loe, when a voice told Penn to stand up in Cork meeting so that others might be helped by seeing him in tears, he was not yet fully convinced in the faith. The

first time Penn was arrested, it was for threatening to throw an intruder down the meeting stairs. The Friends who intervened to prevent violence must surely have been troubled about how this new enthusiast was going to fit into the Society.

Or we might take another familiar example, that of Robert Barclay, the most intellectually rigorous of early Friends. In a well-known passage of *The Apology*, Proposition XI, Section 7, a work of careful argumentation, he explains how he came to Friends:

Not by strength of arguments, or by a particular disquisition of each doctrine, and convincement of my understanding thereby, came [I] to receive and bear witness of the truth, but by being secretly reached by this life; for when I came into the silent assemblies of God's people, I felt a secret power among them, which touched my heart, and as I gave way unto it, I found the evil weakening in me, and the good raised up, and so I became thus knit and united unto them, hungering more and more after the increase of this power and life, whereby I might feel myself perfectly redeemed.

Taken together these three examples sketch in outline what it means to have a religious leading. First of all, the leading is directed inwardly. The tight control we may have kept on our inner doubts becomes loosened, and confusion threatens to overwhelm us. We may feel emptiness and separation from other people, and, like Fox, feel required to act out those inner experiences by withdrawing from ordinary human encounters. Perhaps we give physical expression to our restlessness by wandering from place to place. We may become burdens to ourselves and to others. Through all this turmoil we become aware of a great longing to know what can be depended on, and we

recognize that our desire to know what is true is greater even than our desire to be comforted. We learn in some detail about our own condition — both what it is and what it might become. As a consequence we learn that we can persevere.

Perseverance requires patience and courage, which are essential for clearing away false solutions to our needs. During his time of searching, various advisers urged George Fox to get married, join the army, sing hymns, use tobacco and have his blood let. Many of us have received similar advice, if indeed we haven't offered it to others. Such advice is based on the assumption that we are merely going through a phase which will work itself out if we do not take ourselves too seriously. And such advice misses the point entirely, for we know that, even if what we are going through can be charted on some developmental scheme as adolescence or mid-life crisis, that does not account for it. For us it is an ultimate test of meaning, a test whether we can live with integrity and find a human fellowship rooted in what lasts.

A second hallmark of a leading is that we recognize that our endurance comes as a gift, an opening. The waiting is still painful, but our capacity to resist false answers gives us some assurance a true one will come. A third hallmark is that we learn about people. As we come to know our own condition, we come also to know the condition of others. We see that others experience the same kinds of temptations, the same sufferings, the same longings. We receive another opening then, that we are part of suffering humanity, so whatever may comfort us will have to be for all humankind. We cannot come to the ocean of light except through the ocean of darkness.

We often use the phrase "that speaks to my condition" when what we mean is "I agree with that." For Fox, to have one's condition spoken to was to learn a hard truth or be

brought to judgment. Another favorite phrase, “speak to that of God in them,” has been similarly softened by later Friends. For Fox, *that of God* might be totally at odds with what one was doing or saying. The well-known Epistle of 1656, in which Fox exhorts Friends to be patterns and examples, in order to “walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone...” begins:

In the power of life and wisdom, and dread of the Lord God of life, and heaven, and earth, dwell, that in the wisdom of God over all ye may be preserved, and be a terror to all the adversaries of God, and a dread, answering that of God in them all, spreading the Truth abroad, awakening the witness, confounding deceit, gathering up out of transgression into the life, the covenant of light and peace with God.⁴

To answer *that of God* in God’s adversaries means being a terror and dread to them; it means speaking to what lies imprisoned in them. Elsewhere Fox speaks of going over the heads of persecutors by reaching the witness of God in them and of appealing to that of God in our opponents so as to throw them into confusion. That sounds a bit like the advice to love your enemies because it will drive them crazy, and so it should, for what Fox means is that the Inward Christ works to lead us first to judgment, then to reform and conviction of the truth.

To know our own condition and the conditions of others is to have a realistic view of human frailties and also to know the witness within each of us which can lead us out of error.

A fourth hallmark of a leading is that we feel ourselves increasingly under obedience. A gathering power of conviction within us sustains our courage and patience and then points us to first steps in a reordering of our lives.

And as we persevere in obedience, we may find that the steps we feel drawn to take become bigger, more defined. We feel more clearly led. At the outset of his search, Fox did not know what would speak to his condition; all he knew was what would not. Penn was a clumsy seeker for more than ten years before he was ready to follow his leading, and even then he stumbled on his way. Barclay might well have thought that nothing could satisfy him unless it had intellectual cogency, but the meeting began to define his condition for him even as it spoke to it: he wanted the evil in him weakened and the good raised up.

At the moment of greatest emptiness or greatest need, God begins to turn all those separate openings to good account. One learns, directly or through the mediation of others, that there is an answering to the human condition, if only one will trust it, and, in this leading to the truth, one may find one's greatest gifts enhanced and focused. When Penn was finally made serviceable to the truth, it was as statesman and courtier; when Barclay made his contribution, it was as a theologian. The fullest expression of one's fundamental leading may be to do what one does best.

I would like to speak personally here. I believe I was led into the Religious Society of Friends and, in the process, into a complex of religious, social, ethical and political commitments. My first encounter with Quakers came when, in high school, I went to weekend work camp. There I met people who were doing work of social importance out of religious conviction. They were dedicated to humble service to the poor and dispossessed. They spoke of answering that of God in even the most despairing and hardened persons and of making a society which met human needs justly and graciously. Their lives testified to a depth and integrity which touched me, and I wanted to know more about them.

At the end of the weekend, I went to meeting for worship for the first time, and that seemed to be the fulfillment of all the implied meaning in the lives which had touched me. Sitting in silence did not come naturally to me. It was a long hour and I felt more anxiety about staying awake than refreshment from the quiet. I was grateful when anyone spoke. Gradually, however, I found myself becoming more at ease in the silence, at peace with myself.

Now, more than thirty years later, I realize that the ministry in that meeting would seem thin to me, but then there was something behind the words which was reaching me, something like the “secret power” Barclay describes. I left that meeting sure that I wanted to become a Quaker.

My first leading, then, was through the evident goodness and effectiveness of a group of Friends and the peacefulness of a meeting. My only worry — it will be familiar to many convinced Friends — was that these people were too good for me to associate with. But as I began to attend meeting regularly, to read and discuss the implications of Quaker belief, I found myself struggling with one particular problem of belief, the peace testimony. Nothing in my experience or my understanding of the world made non-violence and pacifism seem reasonable commitments. The testimony seemed to be an integral part of the faith, but for many months I could neither accept nor reject it.

The issue came to focus when I was trying to determine whether I could call myself a conscientious objector, recognizing that such a step would mean forswearing violence for the rest of my life. For weeks I felt haunted by the question, torn by my unfaithfulness if I did not accept the peace testimony and terrified at its irrationality and danger, if I did. This long period of constant worry culminated in one sleepless night which I spent arguing with myself, going over the arguments of others, praying

for guidance and being afraid that I might have my prayers answered. Finally, early in the morning, I knew I had crossed a line. No new arguments fell into place, nothing became more rational, but somewhere I had changed and I knew that I would have to declare myself a conscientious objector and give up reliance on force to accomplish things — for *the rest of my life*.

When I acknowledged that the commitment had been made, I did not feel any inner peace. I knew my decision would cut me off from some members of my family and might even require that I go to prison. I also knew that I had been led inevitably to this choice, but I felt frightened at what had happened to me. Suddenly I was utterly defenseless in a violent world, and for a long time I went through my days fearful of what it meant to have disarmed myself.

Since then, there have been a number of times that I have been in some real or potential danger — at peace actions, working in the ghetto, or confronting irrational or violent people. In those times I have not been without fear, but I have never since felt the fear I felt when I first made the commitment to give up reliance on violence to protect me. I believe that when I became convinced of the peace testimony, I was given a leading which, in effect, immersed me in terror and the stuff of violence so that I could know my condition and work with it. I was tested and strengthened in conditions of safety before I was ever tested in real conflict.

My experiences are not unique. Many Friends could report similar and more profound experiences of being led into an initial act of faith by the loving support of a community and then finding that the deeper commitments come through anxious struggle to let go of one's protections outside of faith.

For many Friends the clearest experience of being led

occurs when they speak in meeting for worship. Here too I believe my experience is both very common and analogous to other kinds of leadings. I speak easily in many situations, but I speak neither easily nor often in meeting for worship. It takes a long time for words to be given me. The first time I ever felt moved to speak, I thought something was physically wrong with me. The meeting was very deep, by which I mean that I was aware simultaneously of both an intensity of attention in myself and a sense of being at rest. The silence was not the absence of sound but something full of energy, like the quiet we might experience in an artist's studio or a library when a number of people are present, each concentrating on his or her own work. There was this difference, though, that in the meeting for worship this energy was pooled, gathered, shared by all of us. Each of us might be as concentrated as an artist or scholar, but we were concentrated together, on the same thing. The meeting had a center to which we were each directed.

Each person who spoke seemed to know what it would help me to hear. Some gave me my half-formed thoughts sharply clarified. Others said things startling in their newness which seemed, as soon as I heard them, as dependably right as the oldest truth. After a time, the thoughts and images which had come into my mind, modified, clarified and intensified by what others had said and by the silence in which we met, began to take on a new pattern. Phrases and images arranged themselves, first in clusters, then in a loose sequence. They began to take shape as a message, a brief set of words I felt I should share. As I found myself feeling that I was given words to say, and was about to stand, my heart began to pound and I had trouble breathing. It did not feel like stage-fright or fear of making a fool of myself; instead, it felt like a physical weakness. I was so shaken that I did not speak, but after

meeting ended I felt depressed, as though I had failed at something.

A few weeks later the experience repeated itself. Again I felt intensity and peace, a sense of rightness and a sense that I was to minister in the meeting. Phrases and images played through my mind, arranging themselves in a right order — not one of argument or exposition but of association which had greater meaning for me. Once again, as the message reached the stage where it seemed to be not fully articulated or complete but only fully given, I felt the heart-pounding weakness. This time I stood up, however, and the weakness stopped as soon as I began to speak.

I never speak in meeting for worship without that feeling of intensity, clarity, being given something to say and feeling, at the same time, a heart-pounding weakness. So far as I know, I have no control over its occurrence. I have come to trust it as a negative sign of leading, without which I should not speak. It is no guarantee that I have understood my leading, and it certainly is no infallible guide to the quality of my response to a leading. How convenient it would be if we could just tell each other to speak when the heartbeat quickens painfully, and we will be well led! I know only that I should not speak in meeting without feeling impelled and awed by what I am doing.

The hallmarks of such a leading are that one feels a command is given one, that the command and the capacity to follow it come from a source of power far beyond one's own limits. We may misunderstand what we are to do, but we know we must wait on that power and do our best to be faithful to it.

A leading does not come to us simply so we may have one. Eventually its inwardness takes outward form and affects the rest of the human community. When we are led to the truth it is so we may live by it and do something with

it. But as the examples of seasoned Friends often show, the struggles over leadings do not cease, nor do the possibilities of outrunning one's lead.

The private leading must be tested against the experience and collective leading of the worshipping community, not only to check the excesses of the willful or the mistaken, but also to give the support and strength of the religious community to what might otherwise be a lonely, ineffective witness. At its best, such testing strengthens the testimony of both the individual and the group. Very early in Quaker history, therefore, the community of faith had to find means to discern the true from the false leading and help the individual test the validity of his or her inward experience.

In *The Quakers in Puritan England*, Hugh Barbour describes four major tests which Friends came to apply to leadings: moral purity, patience, the self-consistency of the spirit, and bringing people into unity.⁵

Moral purity would be demonstrated by "not fleeing the cross," obeying calls which were difficult, humiliating, contrary to self-will, but which come simply as tests of our obedience. In *No Cross, No Crown*, Penn writes, "There is a lawful and unlawful self, and both must be denied ... There is no room for instruction where lawful self is lord and not servant."⁶ Even the lawful self — our natural goodness, our wish to help others, our healthy minds — needs to be placed under obedience. Hugh Barbour says "The Light is the active power of the new life, and the master that man obeys."⁷

Not every leading demands such self-abnegation, but patience is a sound test, since "self-will is impatient of tests."⁸ So our church structures evolved to deal with the authoritarian Friend, who gives his meeting the ultimatum, "love me, love my leading," and the apocalyptic Friend, so sure that she alone knows the urgency of the times, as well as with those too at ease in Zion. Friends learned to

wait in silent worship. The networks of meetings and committees became channels for the individual to submit leadings to the scrutiny of more seasoned Friends and to wait for clearness to proceed.

The test of self-consistency of the spirit rests on the principle that the Light will not contradict itself by leading different people to conflicting actions. In the Epistle of 1656, Fox says people should be led with the spirit to God, “and do service to him and have unity with him, with the Scriptures and one with another.”⁹ By this test, if a number of Friends have received similar callings, or if there are biblical analogues to the action one feels called to take, those are evidence that the spirit is consistent.

This test also examines the consistency with which the individual keeps faith with his or her leadings. So a meeting today might labor with a Friend whose business solicits military contracts or one who actively opposes corporate polluters but disconnects the catalytic converter on his own car, arguing that the self-consistency of the spirit should lead each of us to self-consistency in our witness.

St. Paul tells us that the fruits of the Holy Spirit are “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.”¹⁰ These are fruits of healthy human fellowship, where each serves the good of the other because all serve the same master. Where an apparent leading brings discord, every member of the community is obliged to examine himself as well as his neighbor, to see how unity may be restored. This might mean urging greater patience on those eager for action, but it might equally well mean encouraging the slow to change to heed the witness of those more socially concerned.

Where there is conflict between freedom and authority, says Isaac Penington, let there be a “dedication of all spiritual gifts to the meanest member of the fellowship.”

To the risk that such an approach will allow the irresponsible to proceed unchecked, Arnold Lloyd develops Pennington's argument thus:

When, as in a meeting for worship, the Spirit moves anyone to speak, the same Spirit moves in others to be subject and give way: 'and so everyone keeping to his own measure in the Spirit, here can be no disorder, but true subjection of every spirit; and where this is wanting, it cannot be supplied by any outward rule or order set up in the Church by common consent.'¹¹

Probably no one better illustrates how leadings ripen by being subjected to these four tests than John Woolman. Two contrasting examples from his *Journal* show how Woolman submits himself to the tests of leading and how these tests help a concern reach its proper form.

His visit to the Indians begins with "inward drawings" to them in fall, 1761; in winter, 1762, he first shares his feelings with his several meetings and "having the unity of Friends," he begins arrangements in spring, 1763, to travel that summer. He speaks of having "given up to go" and feeling "unusual sadness" as the time approaches. While on the journey, he reflects on the dangers facing him — death or captivity by the Indians — and examines both his fears and motives rigorously. Though he fears he is physically too frail to bear the demands of captivity, he knows he has acted out of a sense of duty. But he closely tests his motives "lest the desire of reputation as a man firmly settled to persevere through dangers, or the fear of disgrace from my returning without performing the visit, might have some place in me." Though he finds some weakness to regret, "yet I could not find that I had ever given way to a willful disobedience."¹²

Woolman is mature and seasoned in the truth, but even so he is not selfless by nature. He becomes so by probing and acknowledging every tincture of self-will and then offering it up to God. Out of such rooted self-knowledge comes the glorious passage in the *Journal*:

Love was the first motion, and then a concern arose to spend some time with the Indians, that I might feel and understand their life and the spirit they live in, if haply I might receive some instruction from them, or they be in any degree helped forward by my following the leadings of Truth amongst them.¹³

This perfectly summarizes the characteristics of a true leading. It begins inwardly, as a process or motion of caring whose direction and object are unclear, so a time of waiting must occur, during which Woolman rigorously examines himself, learns his limitations and frailties but also his strengths, and achieves patience and perseverance. From that patient waiting a concern arises and becomes clarified and directed until it leads to an action on behalf of others.

No concern could evidence greater humility or openness: Woolman feels called to learn before teaching, to receive as well as to give. Because he is rooted in love, he wants to know the conditions of others as well as his own. The concern for the Indians steadily gathers force until it is discharged in the successful completion of the trip. There are searchings along the way, but we who look at the whole episode in Woolman's life can see it as a wonderful example of a leading coming to fruition.

His concern for the Barbadoes is quite a different experience. It begins in bodily weakness and exercise of mind over "my fellow-creatures in the West Indies" but finds no vent in action. Instead, Woolman remains under the burden to be "resigned" if led to go to the Barbadoes.

Persistent waiting and praying bring no greater clarity, but after a year Woolman feels a duty to “open my condition” to his monthly meeting. Subsequently, at quarterly and spring meetings, he feels no clearness to say more than that he feels required to be resigned to travel, but he receives certificates to travel, if his exercise should develop into such a leading. Some months later, he consults a shipowner about passage, in case he should be further led, in the process enunciating some of the urgency he feels.

His exercise roots back some fifteen years, when he sold the products of slave labor in his shop. Having become ever more troubled by the evils of slavery and other forms of oppression, “it hath seemed right that my small gain from this branch of trade should be applied in promoting righteousness on the earth. This was the first motion towards a visit to Barbadoes.”¹⁴

Because trade in slave-goods subsidizes travel costs, Woolman believes he should pay extra “as a testimony in favor of less trading.” The shipowners accept this arrangement, but Woolman still does not feel clearness to board the ship. He returns to his lodging to wait for further leading where, finally, he is convinced that his obedience consists in returning home to await “some further exercises.” In a few weeks “it pleased the Lord to visit me with a pleurisy” to the point of death, but in that same spirit of resignation he does not send for a doctor. Eventually he feels drawn back to life by “strong engagements ... begotten in me for the everlasting well-being of my fellow-creatures. I felt in the spring of pure love that I might remain some time longer in the body.”¹⁵

Such, in brief, is Woolman’s exercise concerning the Barbadoes. As he tells it, the story seems unsatisfactory, uninstructional. He appears to be over-scrupulous, an unnecessary burden on his meeting and others. All that work to remain resigned, all that anxiety about paying

passage on a trip that was never to be taken — it would seem that Woolman simply mistook his leading in this case, except for two events, described out of sequence in the *Journal*, which frame this time of resignation.

First, in the turmoil of waiting, an incident from his past comes to his consciousness, something morally unfinished which calls for restitution. The law governing the freeing of slaves required the former owner to maintain them if they should fall into need, so it was the custom for those wishing to free their slaves to keep them, essentially as indentured servants, until age thirty. Once, as an executor of a Friend's will, Woolman had thus indentured a slave and had applied the money to the Friend's estate. He had, in short, behaved like a shrewd, enlightened businessman: the slave would eventually be free and the estate would be protected in case the ex-slave should later be chargeable to it.

But as he looks back on this transaction, Woolman feels troubled. The young man had been sold for nine years longer than was common for whites to be indentured, which now seems unjust. Though he had derived no benefit from the sale, he feels called to use his own money to redeem the last half of the nine years.¹⁶ His exercise concerning the Barbadoes presses him to a self-consistency before he can take a further step. As Wendell Berry reminds us, "One must begin in one's own life the private solutions that can only *in turn* become public solutions."¹⁷

Not until two and a half years later, while he is on his mission in England, does Woolman fully tell us about the second framing incident, the dream-revelation which came in his illness. In the depth of his sickness he forgets his name and tries to find out who he is. He sees a mass of dull, gloomy matter and is told that this mass was "human beings in as great misery as they could be, and live, and that I was mixed with them and that henceforth I might

not consider myself as a distinct or separate being.”

Later, hearing a voice proclaiming “John Woolman is dead” he remembers that he once was John Woolman and wonders what the voice can mean. He then has a vision of oppressed people blaspheming the name of Christ because those that oppress them are Christians and claim to act in His name. He searches for a meaning to all these mysterious revelations until he feels a divine power prepare him to speak: “I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ ... liveth in me ” The mystery now stands clear to him; there is joy in heaven over a sinner who repented. “*John Woolman is dead* meant no more than the death of my own will.”¹⁸

If the dominant theme of the leading to the Indians was learning and being of use, the dominant theme of the Barbadoes exercise is making restitution. Even after years of seasoning, Woolman finds unconsidered past actions which must be brought into consistency with his mature understanding. He must redeem a slave, redeem the profit he made from slave labor, redeem himself as one worthy to be led by God. He believes he must be resigned to taking an arduous journey to Barbadoes but finds instead that the arduous journey is inward, into past motives and behavior. “Visited” by illness, he loses himself and finds himself. He knows himself totally mixed with the dull matter of suffering humanity, but that is what it means to be crucified with Christ, to live only as Christ lives within him. He knows, finally, what it has taken a lifetime of patient, suffering obedience to learn, that his will is finally entirely absorbed in God.

It takes some decompression to return from the depths of Woolman’s religious experience to the relative shallows of our own. His example is instructive and inspiring, but “be like Woolman” may not be helpful advice to those of us

still struggling to be *ourselves* with integrity. Perhaps more apposite advice for us is “be like members of Woolman’s meeting”: help each other to be faithful to leadings; learn with and from one another how to listen and probe and wait; bear with one another’s confusions and short-comings; persist in expecting the best from one another; practice speaking the truth in love.

We each have to find our own ways to be obedient, patient, free of wilfulness, morally consistent, open to the insights of others. How we test our leadings will not be in the ways of the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries, but what we test for — moral purity, patience, the self-consistency of the Spirit, and bringing people into unity through the gifts of the Spirit — are still the essence of the religious life.

Tests of discernment must be applied with discernment. Even when the Society’s authority was greatest and Friends most nearly of one accord in matters of faith and practice, these tests could not be rigidly applied. Today, when neither the meeting’s authority nor the general agreement of Friends can be taken for granted on any subject, every test must be sensitively applied. We are more likely than our predecessors to recognize that the group as well as the individual stands under scrutiny when we examine a leading. The individual can be rightly led, and the meeting stagnant and unfaithful, but even then the obligations to keep fellowship may require waiting for clearness to proceed, so that the individual’s faithfulness will help the group to grow.

Meetings frequently have to weigh the leadings of a couple to be wed, and marriage committees are sometimes hard-pressed to feel confident about recommending that the wedding be allowed. On occasion, elders or a clearness committee are asked to counsel with members considering divorce or other radical changes in life. Some meetings

are asked to weigh the right ordering of a member's political action or vocational direction. Sometimes members will ask a meeting to use its property in very different ways or even to divest itself of property, and the meeting must test whether to follow that leading. At other times a meeting feels called to counsel members who have not invited such involvement but who are acting in ways which trouble the fellowship. We can no more prevent someone from doing as he or she feels led than the first generation of Friends could. At most we can, like them, only decide whether to keep or break fellowship, expressing unity with the Friend who reports a leading, expressing lack of clearness, or repudiating his or her actions.

Even within these limitations, however, the substance of the traditional tests can carry weight, for they offer us ways to raise two sets of questions: Is this the right action, for this time and place? Is this person rightly prepared to undertake the action? The first question points us to considerations of the self-consistency and fruits of the Spirit; the second points us to questions of the moral purity and patience of the individual.

The first obligation of the person who has had a leading to the truth is to test it; the second is to testify to it. *Test* and *testimony* are an on-going, recursive process, continually refreshed in worship. One might describe all the activities of Friends under the simple heading of *testifying to the truth*. Earlier generations of Friends were clear about that: whatever they did as a specific testimony took its primary validity from its function of turning people to the Inward Teacher. All true leading points but in a single direction, to the Light of Christ, who is both Inward Teacher and the Truth to be taught.

Even when we are led by the Light to a concrete calling or task — to write a book, to found a holy experiment, to establish a school or hospital, to teach or preach, to aid the

poor and outcast — the leading points through these signs of obedience to the source of the leading.

To be led to the Inward Teacher is to find fellowship with others and a calling for oneself. It is to serve one another and thereby become “not servants but Friends.” Leading comes to and through the fellowship in the gathered meeting; it is not only available to the individual seeker, the religious genius or the spiritual adept. We share in it and mediate it to one another.

The community of finders, those who are led by the Inward Teacher, is also led to create instruments and institutions which facilitate the following of truth. The development of institutional forms — committees, meetings, schools, and others — is itself an expression of the testimony to truth, not a falling away from perfect inspiration. For human beings, by their nature, must create social means — that is, means which involve a human community over time — to express the truth.

How can we fulfill a calling as peace-makers if we value spontaneous impulse over steadiness and consistency? Mediators between adversaries have to be dependably there, always available, always at the work of listening and interpreting. To create the conditions of social justice, we must create new economic and social patterns, not *no* patterns; we must be part of networks of groups and individuals who sustain one another’s witness by testing, clarifying, correcting and affirming them.

How can we obey the leading to educate the young without considering the need to found a school? And how can we obey the leading to found a school except through finding appropriate, effective means to educate people? That will mean choosing teachers and pupils, creating courses of study, finding or building a place of study, gathering resources which will enable the school to come into being and fulfill what is, by its nature, a long-term commitment.

It also means substantiating the original inspiration through sustained study of education itself and continual return to the spring of inspiration, the Inward Teacher.

Because the Spirit is self-consistent and its fruits bring the community to peace, a number of *concerns* and *testimonies* arise to address areas of human activity in which it is to be expected that God will always seek to lead people into obedience. These Quaker testimonies which arise from the nature of the Light of Christ, says Howard Brinton, are Community, Harmony, Equality and Simplicity.¹⁹ They play their part in shaping a history and tradition to which we can turn for guidance, example and precedent.

Tensions invariably exist between waiting for a process to clarify itself and acting in time to be effective, between hectic impatience and torpid inaction, between the dynamism of sensitive individuals who feel called to an unprecedented expression of a testimony and the conservatism of a tradition-bound group reluctant to support anything unrespectable.

Tensions also arise between the competing claims of different testimonies. Each generation of Friends faces new calls to obedience, and the old responses will be inadequate if we follow them only because they are traditional. By the same token, the testimonies are not so elastic that they can stretch to cover every personal "bother" which afflicts a special interest group.

Consider the testimony for simplicity: What are its appropriate expressions today? Some Friends think simplicity means having a few things of high quality, and for them the social concern and esthetic choice overlap. Some think of it as personal style, often revealed in choice of clothing. But does that mean dressing like the Plain Friends of a past generation, or wearing sturdy work clothes and jeans? Plain dress, like the best jeans, is long-lasting

but expensive. What shall one do in the name of simplicity of dress? Buy cheap clothes that do not last or remove the labels from excellent “designer” clothes? It is hard to avoid ostentation even in our simplicity.

What does the testimony mean at a time when industrialized societies identify unlimited supplies of energy with personal freedom and mobility? The industrialized world may be fearful of nuclear energy, but it wants hair dryers, electric typewriters, computers and advanced medical equipment in abundance. It is fearful of acid rain but uses coal in order to be less dependent on oil and nuclear power. What does the testimony for simplicity mean when people are fearful that the good things of life are being lost and will never be given back?

What are we led to do, to express our commitment to the testimony? Shall we be satisfied if we have reduced our own dependence on gasoline? Shall we respond to the prolonged energy crisis by joining the anti-nuclear movement or by experimenting with soft technology and alternative energy sources?

Take another test case: We see prolonged deadly famine in much of Africa and terrible problems of hunger in the Third World and industrialized nations alike. In America we see our richest farmland given over to raising grain which will go primarily to feed cattle, whose tender, fat-marbled meat we can enjoy. In many third-world countries, the best farmland and most efficient agricultural methods are used to produce luxury exports for economic elites — including ourselves. How do our testimonies for simplicity, for peace and social justice, lead us to respond? For some, an appropriate response will be to embrace vegetarianism; for others it will mean avoiding all imported luxury foods and trying to become self-sufficient producers of their own food. Still others may find themselves drawn through these actions into developing alternatives to the

economic systems which have produced such agricultural and business policies.

We know that our testimonies have bearing on these problems, but there is no automatically correct way to apply them. The leadings which come must be appropriate to our skills and knowledge, our strengths and our sense of integrity. We may be called to different actions in relation to energy use, but we will each have to discover, from examining our own consciences and testing our leadings against those of others, both what we are called to do and how we can speak to those who fear that their personal freedom is being eroded, so that they recognize that their freedom consists of more than consuming luxuries.

I will never be a competent farmer, so I am unlikely to be called to change farming methods, but I eat three meals a day, and I go shopping for food, and those are occasions to be more faithful to the testimonies. I can fast, to remind myself of the importance of food, and I can contribute to relief agencies. And I am a voter and have it in my power to be well-informed and active in issues of world hunger and right sharing. There too I have opportunities to be faithful to my leadings.

How can we be led when testimonies seem to be in tension? Consider the complex issues surrounding abortion. For some, the matter revolves around the right of human beings to make choices about their bodies. They see opponents of this right of choice for women as defenders of an oppressive patriarchal system that has always treated women as dependents or as property. Laws forbidding abortion perpetuate that oppression, particularly against poor, uneducated women who will have to choose between bringing more children into a life of poverty and the ills which accompany it, or risking their lives at the hands of backstreet butchers. From this standpoint, support for the right of women to choose whether to bear children is

consonant with the testimonies for equality, social justice and peace.

For others, the abortion question revolves around the sacredness of all human life. For them, arguing that a fetus is not human at the moment of conception is simply casuistry. Abortion prevents choice in the most defenseless of humans, the fetus, and it is murder. For people holding this view, the testimonies for social justice and peace are also at issue, and the sacredness of God-given life is paramount. How can a pacifist condone the taking of life? Begin to make exceptions to the principle that life comes from God and can only be taken by God, and there is no telling where we will stop.

In this society's debate about abortion, the arguments become more elaborate and heated. Each side accuses the other of inconsistency and moral blindness; "Right to Life" and "Freedom of Choice" — each embodying an important principle to be affirmed — become mindless slogans, war-cries with which we attack our opponents. Friends meetings and organizations are also torn by this debate and find themselves on opposing sides from their understandings of what a Quaker position should be.

How can we be open to a leading on abortion? We might begin by acknowledging that we do not, in our own wisdom, know how to resolve the contradictions inherent in the problem. We might try to imagine the suffering of women who choose abortions but wish they could have kept their children, of women whose only escape from worse poverty is to terminate a pregnancy, of women who grieve for the children they have lost. And we might also try to imagine the pain of death for those small sparks of life, the fetuses. We might then try to put ourselves into the situations of our adversaries, asking what we can learn from their sincerity and insight, and live for a time with the pain of indecision, the turmoil of taking seriously every conviction

sincerely held, and admitting the inadequacy of each.

We might also examine our own longing to be on the familiar, comfortable side, gathering with old friends under the liberal, conservative or radical banner, and then try to separate our love for our friends from an automatic agreement with their views. We might determine to stop using the testimonies to bolster our prejudices and stock responses or to piece out our weak arguments with high-sounding phrases.

Does this mean settling for inaction because there is something to be said for both sides and the truth might lie somewhere in between? Does it mean letting the most passionately concerned have their way, on the “Love me, love my leading” principle? Or does it mean the meeting must become primarily a social club, where it is bad form to discuss religion or politics?

None of those things need happen, though they are ways that meetings compromise themselves out of such difficulties. If we start, however, with the conviction that we are gathered to be led by our Inward Teacher and that our actions must follow from this, though the waiting will continue to be frustrating to us and irritating to those who want our support, what actions we are finally led to take will be better-rooted, more deeply considered, more tender in their understanding, and possibly more significant.

Earlier generations of Friends testified to the need for social, political and economic justice — though they would not have used those terms — as inescapable consequences of following the Light of Christ. Only with the benefit of hindsight can we say that their leadings were clear. The examples I have offered from some of those Friends may have power to give us deeper insights into our own lives, but they come to us relatively free of agony or shock. For most of us, the leadings we have had are unlikely to have some miraculous opening. If God has spoken to us, it has

been in the voice of someone familiar and close to us, or it has been, in part, through the historical tradition we have been given or chosen for ourselves.

Our ways to meet the needs for social, political and economic justice must be different, in an age of industrialization, multinational corporations, totalitarian regimes, threat of nuclear war, and what a former Earlham student called the military-industrial-educational complex. I am reasonably clear about some things — products I must not use, societies I must not support, energy sources I must oppose, investments I must not make, the outlines of stands I must take on abortion and many other subjects. I dimly discern some ways I can order and focus my life in relation to such issues, but often I do not see a single clear leading for myself. The multitudes of witnesses indicate the complexity of our problems. The simplest truth requires subtle and sophisticated expression, or we falsify it.

The appropriate forms of testimony — now as in the past — will have to come out of testing: testing the individual's leading against the experience and wisdom of the group; testing the present against past examples; testing the wisdom of the worshipping community against the witness of other faiths and communities; testing the principles of faith as we have known them against the demands of a new time and new conditions.

There is an account in George Fox's *Journal* which reads like a parable of what it is like to have a leading. In 1648, while Fox is at Mansfield, there is "a sitting of the justices about hiring of servants; and it was upon me from the Lord to go and speak to the justices that they should not oppress the servants in their wages." Fox goes to the inn where the justices are sitting, but he finds a company of fiddlers in attendance, so he goes away again, planning to return when he can have some serious talk with the

justices. When he returns the following morning, however, they are gone, “and I was struck even blind that I could not see.” He asks where the justices have gone and, learning that they will be in a town eight miles away, “my sight began to come to me again, and I went and ran thitherward as fast as I could.” Fox reaches the justices this time, delivers his message, and is received kindly. And that is the end of the story. No improvement in the servants’ wages or the justices’ administration of law is reported.²⁰

But something important has happened. Fox receives a strong leading from God, but he delays in acting until it appears the chance is past. Then he loses his sight, until it appears that he has not lost all chance to be obedient to his leading. And most significant of all, his sight comes back as he runs.

What happens to George Fox in a miraculous way happens to any of us in more ordinary fashion when we turn away from a leading. If we ignore an insight, we are less able to perceive the next one. If we are not open to leadings, we will be less able to know them when they come. But even when we are obedient, we will not always know where we are to go or how far. Like Fox, our sight will come to us as we go. We will be able to see the way only as it opens. The consequences will be out of our hands and perhaps will never seem to have borne fruit, but that will not matter because we will know that we did what we were called to do — to follow our lead.

Notes

1. John L. Nickalls, ed., *The Journal of George Fox* (Cambridge, 1950), p. 3. Hereafter cited as *Fox’s Journal*.
2. *Fox’s Journal*, p. 9.
3. In commenting on the manuscript of this essay, Hugh Barbour stresses the importance of distinguishing

“openings” from “leadings” in a way which I have scanted. He says “openings” have a truth-character - “It was shown me” - and if confirmed by others become testimonies of a permanent character, whereas “leadings” - “I was moved” - equally demand obedience, but once only, in a given situation.

This is not an absolute, unalterable sequence, however: at times a leading brings an opening; at other times the opening precedes a leading. In either sequence, the eventual consequence may be a testimony of the whole Society. Fox has a leading to refuse an army commission. He does not speak of an opening in this connection, but we may say that he has had it opened to him, in the *General Epistle of James*, where wars originate. (*Fox’s Journal*, p. 65) His leading eventually becomes the Society’s Peace Testimony.

4. *Fox’s Journal*, p. 263.
5. Hugh Barbour. *The Quakers in Puritan England* (New Haven, 1964), pp. 119-122. (Reprinted by Friends United Press, Richmond, 1985). The importance of this book cannot be overstated. One chapter is especially valuable. In “The Terror and Power of the Light,” Barbour examines the Quaker experience of the Light in those two interconnected aspects: the terror which comes as the Light searches out and reveals our unredeemed selves; the power which comes when we have been plowed up, harrowed and planted with the Seed of New Being. Barbour is especially adept at showing analogues between this experience and modern ways of encountering inner truth in existentialism and the therapeutic en-counter in psychiatry.
6. “William Penn’s *No Cross No Crown*,” edited by Anna Cox Brinton, in *Quaker Classics in Brief* (Pendle Hill, 1978), pp. 9-10. A reprint of an abridged text of *No Cross No Crown*, edited by Ronald Selleck, was published by

- Friends United Press in 1981. A reprint of the full text was published by Ebor Press (York, 1981).
7. Barbour, p. 110.
 8. Barbour, p. 120.
 9. *Fox's Journal*, p. 263.
 10. *Galatians*, 5122-23, *Revised Standard Version*.
 11. Arnold Lloyd, *Quaker Social History* (London, 1950), p. 22.
 12. Phillips Moulton, ed., *The Journal and Major Essays of John Woolman* (New York, 1971), p. 130. Hereafter cited as *Woolman's Journal*.
 13. *Woolman's Journal*, p. 127.
 14. *The Journal of John Woolman*, introduction by Frederick B. Tolles (Secaucus, 1975), pp. 177-179. The Moulton edition reads: "it hath seemed that the small gain I got by this branch of trade should be applied in promoting righteousness in the earth. And near the first motion toward a visit to Barbadoes, I believed the outward substance I possess should be applied in paying my passage." (pp. 155-156).
 15. *Woolman's Journal*, pp. 159-160.
 16. *Woolman's Journal*, p. 153.
 17. Wendell Berry, *The Unsettling of America* (San Francisco, 1977), p. 23.
 18. *Woolman's Journal*, p. 186.
 19. Howard Brinton, *Friends for 300 Years* (Pendle Hill, 1965), Chapter 7.
 20. *Fox's Journal*, p. 26.

[\[historical Quaker texts\]](#)

SOME
PRINCIPLES
OF THE
Elect People of God

Who in Scorn are called

QUAKERS,

For all *People* throughout all *Christendome* to Read over, and thereby
their own States to Consider.

By *GEO. FOX.*

◊◊◊

LONDON,

Printed for *Robert Wilson, 1661.*

[Copy obtained from W.H. Jenks Collection, Magill Library, Haverford College.
Catalog no. BX 7733 S6 1661; accession no. 53279.]

A

TABLE

Of the particular Things treated of

in this BOOK.**CONCERNING**

{

1. [VVorship.](#)
2. [Church.](#)
3. [The Way.](#)
4. [The Cross.](#)
5. [True Fellowship.](#)
6. [The Gospel.](#)
7. [Faith.](#)
8. [Baptism.](#)
9. [Persecution.](#)
10. [The Scriptures.](#)
11. [Tithes.](#)
12. [The Higher Power.](#)
13. [Christs Kingdom, how it is set up, and how not.](#)
14. [Teachers, Shepherds, Bishops, Elders, &c.](#)
15. [An Exhortation to whole Christendome, to mind the Grace of God, the Light.](#)
16. [Perfection.](#)
17. [The Resurrection.](#)
18. [Election and Reprobation.](#)
19. [Trembling and Quaking.](#)
20. [The Body of Death.](#)
21. [Thou to a single Person.](#)
22. [Hatts, Scraping, Curtesies, and Complements.](#)
23. [Good Manners.](#)
24. [The Worlds Objection about the Preaching of Christ, Answered.](#)
25. [Bread, Water and Wine.](#)
26. [The Sabbath Day.](#)
27. [God-fathers, and God-mothers, and Sprinkling Infants.](#)
28. [The word Trinity.](#)
29. [The Ministry.](#)
30. [Dayes and Times, Meats and Drinks.](#)
31. [Marriages.](#)
32. [False Prophets and Antichrists.](#)
33. [The Peoples Objection, Answered.](#)
34. [The Original.](#)
35. [Plots.](#)
36. [The Jew outward; and](#)
[---- The Heathen that do the Law;](#)
[---- The Christian in the Power; and](#)
[---- The Christian out of the Power.](#)

37. [Christ the Covenant of God.](#)~~38. Swearing.~~***Some PRINCIPLES of the Elect People of God, who in Scorn are Called
QUAKERS, &c.***

A *Salutation* of the *Salvation* to all People in that which is called *Christendom*, for them to come in at the Door, which is *Christ the Light*, by which *every one is Enlightened that comes into the World*, by *Christ the Light* which is the *Way to God*, and the Door out of the World through which they must enter in unto the Father from the World, and from Darkness, and Death, and the Power of it, into Covenant with God, through the Door *Christ*; And this is the *Light*, in which *Light* you see all your *Evil Actions*, you have evilly acted; and all your ungodly deeds you have ungodlily committed; and all your ungodly thoughts you have ungodlily thought, & all your hard ungodly speeches you have spoken; The *Light* which *Christ* hath *Enlightened* you withall, is that which makes manifest all that is contrary to it; The same *Light* makes manifest the Saviour from whence it comes, And makes manifest *Christ* to be the Covenant of *Light* and *Life* through which you may come to have *Peace* with *God*.

I say the same *Light* makes manifest to you (if you love it) that *Christ* is the *Mediator betwixt you and God*; the same *Light* makes manifest *Christ the offering for your Sins*, and the *Sins of the whole World*; The same *Light* makes manifest that *Christ* is the *Way*, the *Truth*, the *Life*, and the *Word of God*, by whom all things were made and Created; And the same *Light* makes manifest *Christ* to be the *Wisdom of God*, and the *Power of God*, and the *Sanctification*, and the *Justification*; and the *Redemption*, to *Sanctifie*, and to *Justifie*, and to *Redeem* from that which the *Light* doth make manifest to be *Evil*, which lets and holds in the Separation from *God*.

And this *Light* is within, by which all these things are seen, and you that love this *Light*, you will see all these things above mentioned; *Christ the Mediator*, *Christ the Way*, the *Life*, the *Wisdom*, the *Sanctifier*, the *Redeemer*, the *Offering for your Sins*, and the *Sins of the whole World*; in that *Light* you will have the *Testimony* of it; and so he that believes will have the *Testimony* and *Witness* in himself.

And so you all being *Enlightened* with the *Light*, receiving it, you receive *Christ*; you receive not *Darkness* nor the *Prince of Darkness*; And as many of you as do receive *Christ*, to them he will give *Power to become the Sons of God*; (Mark) you shall have *Power* through which you shall know *Sonship*, and not onely to stand against *Sin* and *Evil*, but become *Sons of God*.

And now, if you do hate this Light, and go on in Sin, and in Evil Thoughts, Words, Deeds, and Actions, and will not come to the *Light*, because it will reprove you; and love the *Darkness* rather than the *Light*, it will be your *Condemnation*; and that is the Light which doth make manifest to every one of you, what you have *done, said, thought, and acted*, and which doth reprove you; and if you love the Light, ye love Christ, and love your Salvation, and Redeemer, and Sanctifier, and the Offering for Sin, and see him which makes an end of Sin, and destroyes the Devil which brought it in, and his Works, he that destroyes brings in Everlasting Righteousness in you: But, as was said before, if you hate this Light, and go on in Sin and Evil, that will be your Condemnation; for this Light is with you at your Labours, and in your Beds, and in your Occasions, and Tradings, shewing all your Words and all your Thoughts, Deeds and Actions, which if you love it, it will lead you into the new Life, from the old, out of the *Separation, and Degeneration* from God his Life, and Image; and with the Light you will see *Christ a King to rule you*, who hath *all Power in Heaven and Earth given to him*; And with the Light you will see him a *Prophet*, to open to you, and a *Priest* to offer for you to the Father; and in the Light you will see more Light; it shining in your hearts it will give you the Knowledge of the Glory of God in the face of *Jesus Christ your Saviour*; And with the *Light* you will see the Kingdom of Heaven within, that never consented to Sin and Evil; like unto a grain of Mustard-seed, the leaven that leavens into the new lump: And with this Light you will see the Field, which is the World, set in your hearts, where the Pearl is hid, and with what you may dig to find the Pearl, the Power of God; and what you must sell for its sake to purchase the Field.

And in this Light waiting, you will receive the *Spirit of Truth*, the *Comforter* to *lead you into all Truth*, and to bring to your *Remembrance* the words which Christ spoke; and it will *shew you things to come*, and take of Christ's, and give unto you; so loving the Light, you love Christ; Receiving it, you receive Christ, the first and the last; for in the Light Christ is seen and felt, his Voice heard, and he followed; So in the *Light* you will see Christ to be your Teacher, which saith, *Learn of me, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life*, through whom Eternal Life is given, and you brought again to the Shepherd, Christ, who plucks you out of the Fall, up to God in his Image, where the fresh Pastures of Life is known and fed upon; *And no man cometh to the Father* (saith Christ) *but by me, who doth enlighten every man that comes into the World, that through the Light they might Believe*. And further, saith, *Believe in the Light, while he have the Light, that ye may be Children of it*; So you are enlightened, through which, if ye Believe, ye may become *Children of the Light*, and *Heirs of the Promise and Mercy*, and of the *Power of an endless Life*; And believing in the *Light*, you pass from Death to Life, and from Darkness to *Light*, and so come to know a Translation from Darkness to *Light*, and from the Power of Satan to God; and know the begetting of God up into his Image through his

Power, as ye have been begotten from God, and lost his Image by the Prince of Darkness; and so Translated from the Image of God into the Image of Satan; from Christs Power, into the Power of Darkness.

So you must come to the *Light*, that you may have another turn from the Power of Satan to God, from Darkness to *Light*, to be renewed into Gods Image; and this is felt within: And as you come to feel this within, you shall know the Word of God within your hearts, which is the word of Faith, the Apostles Preached to the *Romans*, which they were to hear, obey, and do; and that is the Word of God which doth divide asunder the Precious from the Vile; your Precious Thoughts, Affections, and Motions, your Precious words from the Vile; So the Word is said to be in your *hearts* and *mouths*, that you may *obey it*, and *do it*; and it is *quick and powerful, sharper then any two-edged Sword*; And you need not say, *Who shall fetch this from above?* or she shall fetch it from *beneath?* but it is in your *hearts* and *mouths*; and this is the Word of Faith the Apostles Preached; The same Word is called a *Hammer*, a *Sword*, a *Fire*, to hammer, and cut down, and to burn up that which is contrary to it.

So it is the same Word that Sanctifies and makes clean, and reconciles to God; that Hammers and cuts down that which is contrary to God, and that Separates betwixt you and God; so hear, and obey & do the Word; for it is with you in all Places, and on all occasions dividing Good Thoughts, Good Words and Motions from Bad; for if all *Christendom* did hear and obey the Word in their hearts, which is Pure, and liveth, and abideth and endureth for ever, by which they might come to be born again of the Immortal Seed, by the Word, it would keep them from the bad actions and words which are said and done therein; And so by the Word every one would be taught to know the *Ingrafted Word* which is *able to save their Souls*, which Hammers and cuts down, & burns up that which wars against, and keeps the Soul from enjoying good; and so in this Word they would know the Anointing in them to teach them, by which they would not need any man to teach them, but as the same Anointing doth teach them, which teacheth Truth in all things.

And in this *Light* and Word which is in the heart, they would know the new Covenant of God, the Law in the heart written, and put in their minds, by which they would not need to say to one another, Know the Lord for all should know him from the least to the greatest; and these are the true *Christians* which do come to Witness this, which thousands doth now in this Day in *England*; Among whom the Precious Pearl is found, and the Field purchased; Amongst whom the Law of the Spirit of Life makes free from the Law of Sin and Death, who witness the Age is come which the Apostle spake of, in which the kindness and exceeding riches, which the Lord shewed among the Apostles in the primitive Times, who sate in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, in which places are many thousands come to sit; Glory to him for ever and evermore.

I. Concerning Worship.

Our *Worship* is in the *Spirit* and in the *Truth*, which the Devil abode not in, but is out of; who is the Author of Strife and Unrighteousness amongst People; which *Truth* makes the Devil to worship and to bow, and also destroys him; and it is the *Spirit* which mortifies Sin, which makes a separation from God.

Now we say, if all *Christendome* had Worshipped God in the *Spirit* and *Truth*, they had been in that which the Devil is out of, and had been in the holy Hill, and had felt the *Spirit* in their own particulars ruling them, and had felt the *Spirit* of *Truth* in their own hearts, guiding and teaching of them.

II. Concerning Church.

THE Promise of Redemption from the state in which *Adam* and *Eve*, and their Sons and Daughters were in the Fall, drove from God, into the state in which they were before they were driven from God, to the Church in God; so abiding in the state drove from God, People are afar off from the Church which is in God: But our *Church* is in God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which he hath *purchased* with his own *Blood*, without *spot* or *wrinkle* or *blemish*, or any such thing, which *Blood* we have felt in our hearts *cleansing from all sin*; which *Blood* we have felt our *Consciences sprinkled with from dead works to serve the living God*: So this *Blood* hath been felt within us the preciousness of it, whereby the price of *Redemption* we come to know.

III. Concerning the Way.

Further we say, *Christ* is our *Way*, who is the *Light* that doth *enlighten you*, and *every one that cometh into the world*, that with it you might see him, the *Way*, and come to walk in the way of Peace and Life, which is the *Way* of God, and which is the new and living *Way*, which the Apostles were in; which *Christendom* hath gone out of, going from the *Light* in their own particulars, into their own Inventions and Imaginations, which is the cause there are so many wayes amongst them; *changeable Wayes*, and *changeable Worships*; I say, amongst them that are gone out of the *new and living Way*: So every one that cometh to the *Light* in their own particulars, they come to *Christ*, they come to the new and living *Way*, and from and out of the old and dead *Wayes*, which are in the Fall from God, out of his Image and Power; So who come into his Image and Power, they must come to the *Light*, which *Christ the Way* hath *enlightened* them withal in their own particulars: For there is no other way to the Father, but *Christ the Light*, which doth *enlighten every one that comes into the world*, who is the *Way*, even the *new and living Way*, and hear his

Voyce and Teaching; so they shall love the *Light*, love the *VWay*, and love *Christ*; but they that hate the *Light* hate *Christ* the *VWay*.

IV. Concerning the Cross.

The *Cross of Christ* is the *Power of God*, which crosses the World; which *Cross of Christ* (the *Power of God*) was among the Apostles, which Crucified them from outward things, *Figures, Types, Shadows, and Inventions* of men: So those that have gone from the *Power of God* since the Apostles dayes, have set up many other Crosses, who have lost the true Cross, which is the *Power of God*: For I say the *Cross of Christ*, which is the *Power of God*, Crucifies the state which *Adam and Eve*, and all their Children were in in the Fall; in which *Cross* is the *Power*; by which *Cross* they come to the state in which they were before their Fall; and in that *Power of God* the *Cross* is the *Fellowship*, which is a Mystery, which goes through to the beginning, in which stands the Everlasting Glory, and so in that stands the very Mystery it self.

V. Concerning the Fellowship.

The *true Fellowship* it is in the Gospel which is amongst us; which was amongst the Apostles, in the Spirit and in the *Light*; through which we have *Fellowship* with the *Father* and with the *Son*.

VI. Concerning the Gospel.

The *Gospel* it is the *Power of God to Salvation*, for he that believes receives the *Power*, receives the *Gospel*, by which Life and Immortality is come to Light, And the *Power of God* expels away that which Darkens Life, and Immortality from People; and Captivates their Souls, Spirits and Minds, & keeps them in bondage, which *Power of God* expels that away, and sets them at Liberty, and gives them Dominion over that which burthened them, and to feel and see before that was, which Darkens Life and Immortality from them; And through this *Power of God*, Life and Immortality shines over that, in which the Saints Fellowship, the Church Fellowship, wherein they come to be Heirs of the *Power of God*, Heirs of the *Gospel*, Heirs of the Fellowship, Church Members, Members one of another in the *Power of God* (the *Gospel*) that was before the *Power of Darkness* was.

And now the Everlasting *Gospel* must be *Preached* again to all *Nations, Kindreds, Tongues, and Peoples* which dwell upon the Earth, that through that, Life and Immortality might come to Light in them; And that which hath darkened it from them might be expelled by the same *Power [the Gospel]* which is the *Salvation* which makes their Souls, Spirits, and Consciences free

from that which burthens them; and to them this is glad Tidings.

VII. Concerning Faith.

There is *one Faith*, which purifies the heart; which gives the Victory, which brings to have access to God, which gives the Victory over that which separates from God; in which *Faith* was the Unity of the Saints in the Primitive Times, in which stands ours, which *Faith* is the Gift of God.

VIII. Concerning Baptism.

There is *one Baptism*, with *one Spirit*, into *one Body*, which plungeth down all the Corruption that hath gotten up since Transgression, Sin, and Iniquity made a *Separation* betwixt Man and God; which Spirit brings into *one Body* out of the many Bodies; and to *one Head* from the many Heads, of the many Bodies, which are in the fall from God; So being *Baptized* with *one Spirit* into *one Body*, which plungeth down that which makes a *Separation* from the Lord; into this *one Spirit* are we made all to Drink, and this Spirit is within, Plunging down the Corruptions which are within; And the Cross of Christ, the Power of God is within Crucifying the mind that would walk in those things which hides from God, and that keeps in the World, in the *lust of the Eyes, Pride of Life, and lusts of the Flesh*, which are *not of the Father*.

Now, who mind earthly things, those go from the Power of God within, and so become Enemies to his Cross, which is the Power of God; as *Paul* said, 1 *Cor.* 1. And So the many *Heads*, the many *Bodies*, The many *Baptisms*, are amongst those that are out of the Power of God, the Cross of Christ, and out of the *one Baptism* with the *Spirit* into *one Body*, into *one Head*, Christ Jesus the first and the last, the beginning and the ending; And he is the Head of his Church which is his Body; And of it he is the Saviour, of which Church we are.

IX. Concerning Persecution.

AND the many *Faiths*, and the many *Worships* which are in the World, and the *Persecuting* about them; such Believers and Worshipers are out of the *one Faith* which gives Victory & they have lost their Spiritual Weapons and run into the Carnal; And so are also out of the true Worship which is in the Spirit and Truth, which as I said before, the Devil is out of; And here are all the Carnal Weaponed Men, fighting for Worship and for trifles; which the Spiritual Weaponed Men that have the *Word of God*, and the *Sword of the Spirit*, wrestle not with Flesh and Blood; they do not go about to destroy Creatures, and cry to the Powers of the Earth to help them, as they of the World do, which are out of the Church which was in the begining, using not the Weapons of the Spirit;

who deface Creatures, kill, and mangle Creatures about Inventions of *Worships, Faiths, Baptismes, Churches, Crosses*, and such like things, which were not the Fruits, nor Works of the Apostles, nor the Spiritual Weaponed Men.

Therefore all that have *Persecuted* and Killed about Religion, Church, and Worship, have not been the *Worshippers of God in Spirit and Truth*, have not been in the *Fellowship of the Gospel* the Power of God, which was before the Power of Satan was; And have not been in the true *Faith*, which gives Victory over that which Separates from God; And have not been in the Cross of Christ the Power of God (which was before Satan was) that Crucifies Flesh, the World and its Carnal Weapons.

Therefore all ye that have Persecuted and killed about *Religion*, you are out of the *new and Living Way* of Christ Jesus, who said *Love Enemies*, and Commands to give *Cheek, Back, and Hair* to the *Smitters*; you are in *Cains* way, Persecuting and killing your Brother Christian as *Cain* did; and so in this you have not done well; neither hath God had Respect to your Sacrifices, for if you and *Cain* had done well, you nor *Cain* had not killed your Brethren about *Worship, Church, Sacrifice* and *Religion*; And then God had had Respect unto you: but you not doing well, Sin lying at your Door, as it did at *Caines*, it hath gotten into your house, so that now neither his, nor your Sacrifice doth God accept or Regard, neither do you stand in the acceptable state where you are, and in which way you walk; and *Cain* walked not in the *new and Living Way*: for *Adam* neglected the Voice of God; And *Cain* neglected the Voice of God; And the *Jewes* neglected the Voice of God; And you neglect the Voice of God; And the Devil, which went out of Truth, lyes at the Door of such as neglects the Voice of God; So Sin comes into their house, and defiles them, and thereby their hearts are hardened, by reason of which they turn against their Brethren, so they do not well, neither doth God accept their Sacrifice; for they go out of the Path, and out of that Way wherein God Respects and accepts People; and so become *Vagabonds* and *Wanderers* in the Earth, and have not in God a habitation: and in this *Vagabond* state those Christened Heathens have been worse then the unchristened Heathens; And many of them are made much more the Children of the Devil then before, like the *Jewes* Proselytes, *Murthing* and *Persecuting*, doing the Devils work, who is out of Truth; for Christ his Ministers and Apostles came to *save Mens lives*, but the Devils bait is, to Cloath his Ministers, Apostles, and Messengers with Sheepes Cloathing, And to keep People alwayes under Teaching, that they may be alwayes paying of them, destroying and *Persecuting* such as will not pay them; and this is not according to Christ the Way, who destroyes the Devil and his works that leads Man from God, and makes Man unclean; and Christ who destroyes that, makes Man clean again, and brings Man to God, who is the Justifier, Sanctifier, and Redeemer, and the Captain of their Salvation.

So all *Religion, Church Worship, Ministry, Maintenance* that is help up by Carnal Weapons, Clubbs and Swords, is of *Cain, Judas, and the Jews, and of the Antichristian Antichrists*, and not of Christ, nor in that way which is the way to Life; *for he is the Life that saves Mens lives*; but he is of the Prince of Death that destroyes Mens lives, and of the Prince of Darkness, out of the *Light*, and out of Christ the Way; which was before he and his works were, and lives and remains when he is gone, the Devil gone, and all his Instruments and Works; Glory to him for Ever.

And all the *Janglings, Strivings, and Disputings* about the *Scriptures of Truth*, with the several Meanings and Interpretations of them, are because they are not in the *Power and Spirit* which they were in that gave them forth; so they are not in *Fellowship with God* of whom they were learned, nor with the Just mens Spirits that gave them forth; nor one with another, being out of the Spirit; In which Spirit we are, by which Spirit we know God, know the Just mens Spirits, know *Scriptures*, In which we have *Unity* one with another, And the Spirits of the Prophets are subject to the Prophets; and that is witnessed among us, which God said, *that he would pour out his Spirit upon all Flesh; and Sons and Daughters should Prophesie*; And Sons and Daughters *do Prophesie* now in our Age as they did amongst the Apostles; And there is Women helpers, labourers in the *Gospel*, such as will lay down their necks for his sake.

X. Concerning the Scriptures.

AND the Scriptures we say were not given forth for men to make a trade of, and to keep People alwayes learning, that they may be alwayes reaching to get money of them; this is by the earthly Wisdom, Knowledge and Understanding, which must perish and be confounded and come to nought, and is not in the Wisdom which comes from above, (which is pure and peaceable) but in the Wisdom which is below (which is earthly, sensual and devillish, which will destroy those which are contrary minded to them) nor the Understanding by the Spirit, which gives dominion over Sin, which gives to distinguish the one from the other, and out of that Knowledge whereby God is known, which is life eternal.

So such make a trade of the Scriptures, being out of the Life themselves, and are not able to bring others into it, but keep People learning all their life time; And this is the state of *Babylons Merchants*, building up and throwing down.

But this is the state and right use of the Scriptures, For all People to believe them, and to read them, and to walk in the *Light*, and to feel the Power and Spirit which was in them that gave them forth, by which they may know them and have them revealed to them, and so feel Christ which is the top and corner

Stone, which doth fulfil them; and so to receive and live in him that doth fulfil them, who is the end of the *Prophets*, and all *Tythes*, *Figures* and *Shadows*.

So the *Scriptures* of *Truth*, I say, were given forth to be believed, read, fulfilled and practiced, and the things enjoyed they speak of, that is, Christ Jesus the substance.

The *Scriptures* of *Truth*, are the Words of God, which were learnt of God the Father of Truth, and they cannot be broken, but must be fulfilled; and he that doth fulfil, is Christ, by whom all things were made and created, who is called *The VWord of God*.

XI. Concerning Tythes.

Tythes have been set up among the (called) *Christians* by force and Command, since the Apostles dayes, and Christ in the Flesh, from whom there is no Example for *Tythes*; Amngst them all things were to be done Free, in Bounty and Love: *Tythes* before the Law, from *Abraham*; and *Tythes* in the Law for *Priests*, *Widdows*, *Fatherles*, and *Poor*; and *heave-offerings*, &c. Which Law of God commanded the *Tythes* of the Increase to be offered up for his Service, which Christ in the time of the *Gospel* redeems out of the *Ninths* of the Earth, and ends that Law that gave the *Tenth*s; and the *Priesthood* that took them, and the command that gave *them*, and ends the offering.

And though *Abraham* paid *Tythes* in the War, to *Melchizedeck*; They were of the spoil and not of command, and Christ was after the order of *Melchizedeck*, who ends the War, destroys the Devil who is the Author of it, and brings out of the Earth; and so, though we are thousands, there is not a Beggar amongst us; neither do we read there was amongst the Church in the Primitive times which denied *Tythes*, and said the *Priesthood* was changed that took *Tythes*, and the Law by which they were made; and the command that gave them; So they that take *Tythes*, and they that give *Tythes*, are Antichristian, and do deny Christ come in the Flesh.

XII. Concerning the Higher Power.

Moses who had the Law of God, saw over all *Transgression*; and before *Transgression* was, he saw the state where Man was before the Fall in the Garden, he saw the state in the Fall, and how Death Reigned from *Adam* till *Moses*; who received the Law which went over all Transgressors, which answered the Witness of God in all, which commands that People should *not Sin*, and keeps them from it, and so from Death which reigned from *Adam* till *Moses*; which Law went over both Sin and Death, and this was the *Higher Power*, over *Transgression*, which Answers the Witness of God which was

Transgressed in all, which is *Truth, Holiness, Justice and Equity*; which *Law* is *true, Just, Holy, and Good*, true measures, Just weight, this is called the *Higher Power*; This served till the Seed came which is Christ; and this Law they were to hear; and *Moses* unto whom was given Wisdom to make the *Pattern, Figures, and Shadowes*, & hold them up in the Law till Christ came, of whom *Moses* said, *like unto me will God raise up a Prophet, him shall you hear in all things*; and when Christ came he ended those things, *viz. Types, Figures, and Shadowes*, and variable things: And in him is no shadow, who is called the *Righteousness of God*; So the Law served till the Seed came, and *Moses* who had said it, *God would raise up a Prophet like unto him*, now he is come whom we hear; that is to say, the Seed, who is the end of all the Prophets that Prophesied of him, And so he is the *end of the Law for Righteousness sake to every one that Believes*; So the Believers are the Members of the true Church of which Christ is the *Head*, to whom Christ is the *end of the Law for Righteousness sake to every one that Believes*, who purgeth the Floor, burns up the Chaff; comes with his Fan, Baptizeth with the Holy Ghost and with Fire, brings his Wheat into his Garner.

And further, Christ is the end of all *Oathes* which were in the Law, and which were before the Law, the *Oathes* that ended the strife among Men.

XIII. Concerning Christs Kingdom, how it is set up, and how it is not.

Christs Kingdom is not set up by *Carnal Weapons*, for Christ said, *My Kingdom is not of this world*; and therefore his Servants do not fight: Now all you who profess your selves to be Christians and Gospellers, and are fighters with Clubs and Swords about your Religion, you are not Christs Servants, but are contending for Earthly Kingdoms, for Christs Kingdom is fought for with *spiritual VWeapons* in patience and sufferings; and Christ said to his Disciples, which would have had *Fire come down from Heaven to consume them that were contrary minded* to them, (as the Prophet did) he turns him about, and rebukes them and told them, *they did not know what spirit they were of, He came not to destroy mens lives, but to save them*; and so they that destroy mens lives, and do not save them, are not in Christs mind, nor way, but are under the rebuke of him, and *do not know what spirit they are of themselves*; and therefore they that are wise will not trust their Souls, Bodies, or Spirits in the hands of such.

XIV. Concerning Teachers, Prophets, Shepherds, Bishops, Elders, &c.

Teachers, Prophets, Shepherds, Elders and Bishops, they must not be such as are given to *filthy lucre, nor covetous, nor given to wine*; they must not be *strikers, nor brawlers, nor seekers of Earthly things*; they must not *teach for*

filthy lucre, nor be covetous, nor strive about words, nor use Fables, nor Philosophy, nor the worlds Rudiments, nor Traditions, nor Doctrins of men, nor their Ordinances; they must not compel their People to observe Dayes, Meats, Drinks, and such like things; they must not bear rule by their means, nor such as seek for their gain from their Quarter, for such are forbid; and such as teach for money and pieces of bread, and such as taught for Gain were forbid, and witnessed against by the true Prophets and Teachers, and Apostles.

And such as wear long Robes, and are called of men Master, and love Salutations in Markets, uppermost Rooms at Feats; such as follow and Love those things are out of Christs Doctrine, against such he poured forth Woes, who said, *you have one Master even Christ, and ye are all Brethren*, and that it should not be among them, as it was among the *Gentiles*.

And so all they that have the *Scriptures of Christ, the Apostles, and Prophets*, and are not in the Power and Spirit which gave them forth; and hearken not to that which doth reprove them, by which they should come into it, but stop their Ears and close their Eyes to it, these are like the *Pharisees*, these cannot *Worship God in Spirit*, these cannot *Pray in Spirit*, nor *Sing in the Spirit*, but quench it, and grieve it, and vex it; these are out of the *Fellowship in the Spirit*, and without God the Father of spirits; These *Err not knowing the Scriptures nor the Power of God*, such go abroad to change their Way, go from the Spirit and Light in their own hearts, which should lead them to Christ the *living Way*, and the *Truth*; so all such as have the *Form of Godliness*, and *not in the Power and Spirit* which they were in which gave forth the words, such must be turned away from, and the true Praying must be in the Spirit, and the true worshipping, true Praising, and the true Singing must be in the *Spirit*, so they that *grieve and quench the Spirit* cannot *Pray*, cannot *Sing*, cannot *Worship God in the Spirit*.

XV. An Exhortation to whole Christendom, to mind the Grace of God, the Light.

So all People (in that which is called the whole *Christendom*) come to the Light that Christ Jesus hath enlightned you withall, that with it you may see your Salvation, and know Christ your Teacher, your Captain of your Salvation, and the Grace that comes by him, that brings your Salvation, which Grace teacheth us, which is sufficient in Weakness and Temptation, that brings Salvation, and by it are we saved; and it teacheth to *deny ungodliness and Worldly lusts, and to live Soberly and Righteously*; and this is our Teacher which brings Salvation, Therefore have all the loyns of your minds girt up to wait for the Grace to be brought unto you at the Revelation of Jesus Christ; mind *Peters Exhortation*.

Now they that turn from the *Grace* into *Wantonness*, and walk despitefully against the Spirit of God, set up Teachers according to their own hearts lusts, and such are always learning under them, being not able to the *Knowledge* of the *Truth*, and so go into and remain in the earthly lusts, ungodliness, and into Temptations, and weaknesses where there is Mourning and complaining, and where the Mourners are many; therefore come to the Grace of God, and that is it which will let you see your ungodliness, unrighteousness, lust of the World, and unsoberness; that is your Teacher at all times; which will bring Salvation if you mind it, and regard it, and take heed unto it; but if you turn it into Wantonness, the swift Judgements of God will come upon you.

Therefore mind the Grace of God, the Teacher at all times which bringeth Salvation; by which you may see your Salvation; by which you may see your Salvation brought; for the mighty Day of the Lord is coming upon all the unrighteousness of Men, the Lord God his Son is Appearing towards you; who hath all *Power* in *Heaven* and *Earth* given to him, who is the *King of Kings*, the *Lord of Lords*; Therefore mind and receive the Light wherewith he hath enlightened you, that you may receive him; *Set open your Gates that the King of Glory may come in, who stands at the Door and Knocks*; turn to the Light, and you open the Gate, where the entring of the *King of Glory* is seen. And come off all the *Barren* Mountains that are in the fall out from God's Image, Life, and Power, come from all the Wells without Water, and Tempests and Clouds without Rain which wander about; Come to the Light, and receive the Light, that in the Light you may receive Christ, and become his Sons; that through that you may see the Morning Star appear where the Sons of God Sing together: For Wo is to the World which lies in wickedness, for the Lord is come to Judge it; and to give all Men the *reward according to their Works, whether they are Good, or whether they are Evil*: And with the Light you may every one know whether your Works are Good, or whether they are Evil, *for that which may be known of God is made manifest in you, which God hath shewed unto you*, when you do the thing that is not convenient, unrighteous or worthy of Death; by that of God in you, you can tell.

And while you go from that of God within you, you do not Glorifie God, as God, but you are strangers from his Life; and strangers from the Covenant of Life; and Peace which is in Christ; and so come your foolish hearts to be darkned and filled with unrighteousness, and upon such come Gods Judgements and Wrath.

Now they who are made free from the Wrath which is to come, they are come to that of God in them; to the Light, and so see Christ the Covenant of Peace, who destroyes the Devil, and takes away the Enmity which is between them and the Lord, through which comes the Wrath, Wo and Misery; by which Light, Christ, Gods Covenant, Man is brought into Peace with God, and saved from

the Wrath to come, from all the *false wayes, Teachings, false Worship false Churches, Commands, Traditions, Rudiments, Will-Worships, Inventions, handy Works, Worship, lip service*, to the Light and Spirit of God in your own Particulars, that by it you may turn to God, and Worship him in Spirit; and walk in the Spirit Christ Jesus, who was before Sin was, for since the beginning that Man fell from God, from his Power and Image, have all *false Wayes, false Worships, false Churches*, been set up; even by that Spirit and Power, and Wisdom that is out of the *Truth*, below, which hath killed about them; So there is a way in which is the Life, and he is the Light which doth enlighten you, Therefore come to the Light, and you come to the Way, which was before the Power of Death was, whose Name is Christ, and such as are out of the Light, are out of him in the wayes of Death and Darkness and Captivity; for as the outward *Jewes* were in Captivity under *Pharaoh*, so the inward *Jews* in the Spirit, are in Captivity in Spiritual *Sodom* and *Egypt*, which do not mind the leadings of the Spirit and do not hearken what it saith, for every one must hearken and hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches, and not to hearken and hear a visible thing; And in that they would Edifie, Build, Joyn, and Unite, and come into Fellowship.

XVI. Concerning Perfection.

HE that hath brought Man into *Imperfection* is the Devil, and his work who led from God; for Man was Perfect before he fell, for all Gods Works are Perfect; So Christ that destroyes the Devil and his works, makes man Perfect again, destroying him that made him Imperfect, which the Law could not do; so by his Blood doth he cleanse from all Sin; And by *one offering*, hath he *Perfected for ever them that are Sanctified*; And they that do not Believe in the Light which comes from Christ, by which they might see the Offering, and receive the Blood, are in the unbelief concerning this.

And the Apostles that were in the Light, Christ Jesus, (which destroyes the Devil and his works) spoke Wisdom among them that were *Perfect*, though they could not among those that were *Carnal*; And their Work was for the *perfecting of the Saints*, for that cause had they their Ministry given to them until they all came to the Knowledge of the Son of God, which doth destroy the Devil and his works, And which ends the *Prophets, first Covenant, Types, Figures, Shadowes*; And until they all came to the Unity of the Faith which purified their hearts, which gave them Victory over that which seperated from God, In which they had access to God, by which Faith they pleased him, by which they were Justified; And so until they came unto a Perfect Man, unto the Measure of the Stature of the fulness of Christ; and so the Apostle said, *Christ in you we Preach the hope of Glory, warning every man*, that we might *present every Man Perfect in Christ Jesus*.

XVII. Concerning the Resurrection.

WE say Christ is the Resurrection and the Life, to raise up that which Adam lost, (who hath all power in heaven and earth given to him) and to destroy him that tempted him out; so He is the Resurrection into Life, of Body, Soul and Spirit, and so renews Man in the Image of God, and brings Man into a higher Condition than Man was in before he fell, to Himself, which never changed nor never fell: and so they that forget God and do wickedly, must be turned down into Hell, for by forgetting God and doing wickedly, they go from the Life and Power of God, in the separation from Him, and out of His favour, for in the Life is His favour; and so the Power, Light and Life goes over them, who go on in wickedness, that leads out from God, which was before it was.

XVIII. Concerning Election and Reprobation.

Concerning God *loving* one and *hating* the other before he had done *good* or *evil*, that standeth in the Birth that is first brought forth, which despiseth the Birthright which God *foresaw*, which was not the Seed, with which is God's Love to the End.

Reprobation is going from the *Life*, and that of God within, and from his *Voice* and *Command*, as *Adam* did, as the *Jewes* did, and such as despised that of God within, their Birthright, and such are out of the true Understanding, out of true Knowledge, closed under, and the Witness grieved within, and they dead in their senses from the *Life* and *Covenant of Peace with God*; and the *Seed*, which is called *The Elect*, in which the *Elect* is known, and the *Election* is known, the *Seed Christ*, before the foundation of the World was that *slew* him, and they that *slew* him, and *slayes* him, were and are *Reprobated* from the *Life*, who go from the *Command* of God, and so have lost his *Image*, lost his *Power*, which keeps above, and over, and out of *Reprobation*; and so who come into the *Election*, the *Seed*, they come out of that state that *Adam* is in in the *fall*, up into that state which *Adam* was in before the *fall*, and into a state beyond that, into *Christ*, the *Seed*, the *Elect*; And so these in the *Seed*, the *Elect*, *Christ*, the *Wisdom of God*, comprehend and see the state of *Election* before the *World* began, and the state of *Adam* before he *fell*, and the state of *Adam* in the *fall* in the *Reprobation*, and the state of *Adam* up again out of the *fall*, and so to a state which is above *Adam*, before he *fell*, in the *Election*, (but there is more in this) and the state of the *Beloved of God* is seen in the *Seed*, the *Wisdom of God*.

Cain was the first Birth, *Esau* was first Birth, *Ishmael* first Birth; *Cain* killed his Brother about Religion, *Ishmael* was a Scoffer, *Esau* bore the sword, despised his Birthright, turned against *Jacob* his Brother.

So *Christendom* read your *Reprobation*, your first Birth that is *born of the flesh*; first Birth will *persecute him that is born of the Spirit*; so most of *Christendom* is seen to be of the first Birth, and to lye in the *Reprobation* from God: For *Cain* went from the good *Voice* of God, and *Esau* from the *Birthright*, and *Ishmael* into the *despising Nature*, went from the *good*, and so from faithfull *Abraham* who was of the *Election*.

And so, who are in *Cain*, *Ishmael* and *Esau's* Nature, are in the first Birth, which is not the *Elect*. Read thy self *Christendom*, and thy Birth; That which hates God's Principle and his Voice, becomes *Reprobate*, who disobeys his Command and Voice such God goes against, and he hears not such who hate the *Election*, and are in that *Reprobation* from the Seed, and from the Law-Birth, for the Law keeps man from *sin*, but it doth not say it *destroys the Devil*, but the Seed Christ doth, who is greater than the Law, who is the *Election*; so who know the *Election*, they must know the *Seed*, they must know the *Birth born of the Spirit*.

So if *Christendom* will know the *Election*, it must know the *Birth born of the Spirit*, which will not *Persecute*; for *Cain*, *Ishmael* and *Esau's* Nature is but one, which the Apostle spake of to the Saints in the Primitive times, which the same, we say is one now, and the *Election* is one, which stands in the Seed which was before the Foundation of the unrighteous World was; and the *Reprobation* is one, which stands in the unrighteous World, out of the Truth, and the Life, in the disobedience of Gods Command; so know the *Reprobation one*, and the *Election one*, then will you know the *Seed*, in which is the *Wisdom of God*, and that you will know which goes from his *Voyce*, Power and Command, out of the *Wisdom of God*; so whom God loves he loves to the end, so know *Jacob*, and know *Esau*: *Esau*, *Cain*, and *Ismael*, were the first Birth; And is not *Christendom* of the first Birth which *Persecutes*, which goes from the Good, and despiseth the Pure, and *Persecutes* the Birth that is born of the Spirit, which thing God hates, such work out of his Life in the *Reprobation* out of his Power & Wisdom, and out of the *Election*, Christ the *Seed* the second Birth, which was before this Birth of the *Flesh* was, & stands when it is gone, with whom Gods Love is to the end, with whom is his Promise, which goes over this other birth and destroys the Devil, and his works, which went out of Truth, and led out Mankind from God, whereby the curse, wrath, and wo came upon Mankind, which Christ the Seed brings the Blessing, who destroys the Author of these Evil works, who brings the Blessing, and Man to see the Blessed state of all things as they were in the beginning, and how they were Blessed in the beginning; and through Christ he comes up into his *Power* which is his Throne, where is the *Blessing* and *no Curse*.

XIX. Concerning Trembling and Quaking.

The *strong man* hath long kept the house, his goods have been kept in Peace; but now a *stronger* then he is come *Christ Jesus*, the stronger, who dispossesses him, and cast him out, and spoils his goods, and makes Man the Temple of God for himself to dwell in, a *Holy Temple*, an habitation for himself to dwell in, which makes the keepers of the house to Tremble; through which Power of Christ, the Salvation is wrought out with *Fear* and *Trembling*; and so we can say, *that it is God that worketh in us to will and to do, according to his good Will, and Pleasure.*

In the dayes of the Prophets, the Prophet *Trembled* and *reeled* like a Drunken Man, because of the Iniquity of the People; and because of the Holiness of the Word of the Lord he *Trembled* when he heard his Voyce; & when the Lord spoke to him he *feared exceedingly*; This is the Man that the Lord will regard, saith *Isaiah* the Prophet, which is of a *broken* and *contrite Spirit*, and *Trembles at his Word*; which were cast out by their Brethren, and said, *Let the Lord be Glorified*; who would appear to those *Tremblers* at his Word and *broken-hearted ones*, which were for *Signs and Wonders to both houses of Israel*, when they should be confounded, amazed, and astonished. And before you know the Sin rooted and consumed out of your Flesh, and the Earth shaken, and removed out of its place, and the Power of Darkness, the Devil, the Author of it, he and the Earth removed out of its place, and ye brought into the state which Man was in before he fell, you must know *Trembling* and *Shaking* of that which is to be *shaken*, and removing that which is to be removed, before Christ the Seed do appear, which is the *Foundation of many Generations*, and the *Rock of Ages* which is the *First* and *Last*, which is not shaken nor changeth.

So all the unrighteous World hath much to go through before they come to this, they must know the *Devils Trembling*, the *Heaven shaken*, and the *Earth shaken*, before that which *cannot be shaken* doth appear, by whom the Worlds were made.

XX. Concerning the Body of Death.

The *Body of Death* and *Sin*, which the World so much talkes of, and pleads for, while they dwell upon Earth, which of Necessity they must plead for the Author of it the Devil; So this is not pleading for *Christ*, which destroyes him who is the Author of Sin and the Body of it; but if you say that *John* saith, *If we say we have no Sin we deceive our selves, and the Truth is not in us; and if we say we have not sinned, we make him a Lyar:* (Mark) *But if you confess your Sin and forsake your Sin; the Blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, will cleanse you from all Sin:* Now, *he that is born of God doth not commit Sin, neither can, because the Seed of God remaineth in him, because of which he cannot Sin;* for it keeps the *Holy One* that the *Evil One* toucheth him not. In this the Children of God, and the Children of the Devil are manifest, and each Children plead for

their own. So there is a time for Men to say, they *have sinned*, & *have Sin*, and a time to *confess it* and *forsake it*, and then a time to know the *Blood* which *cleanseth from it all*, and then the Birth born which doth *not commit Sin*, and the *Seed* which *remaineth* in him because of which he cannot Sin, because (as I said before) it keeps the *Holy One* that the *Evil One* toucheth him not.

And though *Paul* cried out of the *Body of Death*, and of the *Warfare*, yet he thanks God through Jesus Christ afterwards that he had the *Victory over the Body of Death*, and the Law of the Spirit of Life had made him *free from the Law of Sin and Death*: and never did the Apostle afterwards complain of the Body of Death; but thanks God he had *Victory through Christ*, which destroyed the *Devil* the Author of Sin, which *destroyeth Death* and the Body of it, and said he was *made Free*; and said there was *no Condemnation to them which were in Christ Jesus*; and that the Life which he did live he *lived by the Faith of the Son of God*; which Faith gives the *Victory over Sin, Death, and the Devil* which Separates from God, by which Man displeaseth him, through which Faith he being *Purified*, and having the *Victory*, he *pleaseth God*, and hath access unto him, and is *Justified and saved*; Amen.

XXI. Concerning Thou to a single Person.

Thou to a single Person, & *You* to many, is our practice, and was the Saints, according to Scripture, and the Principle of God placed in every Man, which doth distinguish many from one, and hath a word to the Plural, and to the Singular; singular to the singular, and Plural to the Plural; According to the true understanding and Spirit of God in every Man, and witnessed to by all the Prophets; But these that have Degenerated from the Spirit of God, have Degenerated from the Scriptures, and from their own Teaching Books, and call the Practice of them Non-sence, and they are gone from the true understanding, which they that are in it, look over them.

XXII. Concerning Hats, Scraping, Curtesie, and Complements.

Hats, Scraping, Curtesie, and Complements, they are things below, Customs and Fashions of the World, which will pass away, and not that which comes from God; nor the esteem it is not, which all Men are to have one another in, for if they had *honoured all Men*, and had had *all Men in esteem*, then had they been of a higher Spirit then the Spirit of the World, and more Noble and Generous; Then had never a Man nor Woman been hurt in Christendom, if they had esteemed and honoured them; for he that honours and esteems Men will not hurt in no case, in that lies the Decencie and Civility; And *every knee shall bow unto me*, saith the Lord and *Worship him*, in that is the cry, *Worship God, and fear him, and reverence him*.

And if you do alledge, *some bowed in old Time to the Angel*: yet in the Gospel Time, which is the Power of God, which was before the Fall, in the state of *Reformation and Restoration*, John was rebuked for bowing to the Angel; And the Apostles rebuked those that bowed to them; and Jacob, though he bowed one time to his brother Esau, yet it is not said he bowed *all his life time*: for it is written the *Elder shall serve the Yonger*, so the Elder shall bow; So the *Bowers and Scrapers* one to the other, that will kill and envy one another, to them this is a Mystery.

XXIII. Concerning good Manners.

Evil Words and Evil Communications Corrupts the good Manners; and if Christendom will learn the good, they must come every one to the Light of *Christ Jesus the Spirit of God in themselves*, and the Word of God *in their hearts and mouths*, which will Teach them to *forsake the Evil Words*, and lead them from them, and to deny them; and this is the way to get the *good Manners*.

But who live in *high Expressions and Complements*, and full of *Evil Words and Flatteries*, and *Disimulations*, and call it *good Manners*; their works and words testifie, and manifest they are Evil and *Corrupt*; and such whose *Manners are Evil and Corrupt*, quench, grieve & vex the Spirit of God in themselves, and hate the Light, and will not come to it because it reproves them for their Evil Words, and such love *Wrath, Envy, Fury, Vanity, High-mindedness, Rashness, and Headiness*: and yet in plausible Expressions, *Scrapings*, and *Bowings* one to the other, and call that good manners, and honor, which is quite out of that which comes down from above, and is that which the Witness of God in themselves witnesses against for God, that he will lay it down in the dust, and to be that which he will Condemn and Judge.

The Apostle saith, *it is not for Women to wear Gold, Silver, Pearl, Costly Apparrel, nor Plated Hair; but to be Clothed with a meek and quiet Spirit, which is with the Lord of great Price; the hidden man of the heart, &c.* And if Christendom had minded this, there had been more Vertue, more Sobriety, and less envy at one another about their Fashions.

XXIV. Concerning the Worlds Objection about the Preaching of Christ.

The World object, saying, *Some Preach Christ of Envy, some of good Will, and some of Strife; and Contention, and that Christ bid hear the Pharisees: therefore say they we may hear our Teachers though they are never so bad.*

Ans. He that hath *the Form of Godliness, and denyes the Power, from such turn away; an Envious Man, a Man of strife, a Contentious Man*, the Apostle

bids turn away from such; though there was a Time when the Name of Christ was spreading abroad, he suffered Envious Men to spread his Name abroad, but when it was spread abroad, he stopped such *Envious Contentious*; and Exhorted Timothy *to shun and avoid such*, for they would not bring People to the Power; for Envious Men and Contentious Men may Preach the *Form*, and have it, but not bring People into the *Power*, And therefore from such the time did come before the Apostles decease, *to turn away from*.

And as for *hearing* the *Pharisees*, that was before Christ was offered up, and before the Law was fulfilled; for they Ministered the Law, and so People were to do as they said, and not as they did: but when Christ was offered up, he bid them, *Go, Preach the Gospel*, and *not hear Pharisees*, and the Apostles were to bring People to the *End* of the *Law*, the *Seed*, into *Gospel Fellowship*, the *Power of God*, which was before the Power of Darkness was.

XXV. Concerning Bread, Water and Wine.

Bread, Water and Wine are things below, and decreasing things; for the *Bread and Wine* which Christ gave at Supper in the night; which the World takes in their day time, this Christ and the Apostles gave in a shew and remembrance of him, of his Death, till he came, which some of the Disciples questioned after they had taken that, whether he was Christ or no? And after the Apostle had given it to the Corrinthians, in his first Epistle, he bids them *Examine and Eat in the Remembrance of Christ*, but in the second Epistle he bids them *Examine themselves, and prove their own selves whether or no Christ was in them, except they were Reprobates*.

Now these might be Reprobates which had taken the Bread *People may Eat* and Wine, and had the Water, these were Reprobates, if *Bread and Drink* Christ was not in them; for Bread and Wine is not the Flesh *Wine, & yet die* and Blood of Christ which came down from above, which *Reprobates*. who Eats of it lives for ever; for People may Eat of the Bread made of Corn, and Drink of the Wine made of Grapes, and yet die Reprobates.

Now they were to take it *in Remembrance of his Death*; that was a state, and then they must come to die with him that was a nearer state then the taking Bread and Wine in Remembrance of his Death; and then they were to rise with him, that is another state; and if they were *dead and risen with him, then to seek those things which were above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God*; but *Bread, Water and Wine*, these are below, and are not Christ, and they that have him are not *Reprobates*, neither do they need to have outward things to put them in remembrance of his death, where they are *dead* with him, and *risen* with him, and *live* with him: But them that will not die and suffer with

him, such live in the old Nature, and would have outward things to put them always in remembrance of his Death; and such live in strife and jangling about outward Things, and Shaddows, and come not to the Substance Christ, which was before the world was made, in whom there is no strife but *Life* and *Peace*.

XXVI. Concerning the Sabbath Day.

The Jews kept the *Sabbath Day*, a Type, a Sign of *Rest*, that the *Man-servant, Maid-servant, and Strangers, and Cattel*, in which all might *Rest within their Gates*; A Sign of Christ, that destroyes the Devil, the author of Oppression, who gives *Rest* to Man and Beast, and the whole Creation, and brings it up into the blessed state which was in the beginning before Man fell.

And now the Saints meeting together on the *First Day of the Week*, that practice is not denied, but owned by us; for they that come to Christ, come to the first Day before all things were made, and Meet in the First as the Jews did in the Last; but there is more in this.

XXVII. Concerning Godfathers, and Godmothers, and Sprinkling of Infants.

Godfathers, and Godmothers, and Sprinkling of Infants, the Scriptures are silent of such things, but say *Repent, Teach* and *Baptize*.

XXVIII. Of the word Trinity.

OF the Word *Trinity* the Scripture is silent; but the *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the Water, Blood, and Spirit*, which are one, that is owned by us, as was by the Apostle, which did not give them other Names, as the World doth.

XXIX. Concerning the Ministry.

They that *receive* of Christ, *Receive freely*, and they are to *Give freely, Pray freely, and Preach freely*; and the *Ministry* is the *Gift* of God, and is to be *Ministred freely*, and a *free People*, and that which they do administer of their earthly things, is to be done *freely* of their own Substance; for they that are *Ministers* of the *Spirit, of the Life, and of the Treasure of Heaven, and of the Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven*, of which they are *Heires*, that is to the Eternal state of People, and the greater Love in the Life.

XXX. Concerning Dayes, and Times, and Meats, and Drinks.

Dayes, Times, Meates, Drinks and such like things, *the Kingdom of Heaven*

stands not in, but in Power, Righteousness, Faith, and Joy in the Holy Ghost; And People are not to strive and persecute one another about these things, for the Apostles gave no such Command nor Example, that any should do so from them; but on the contrary, checks those that would do so, or keep People in such things.

XXXI. Concerning Marriages.

*Them which God joynes together, let no man put asunder; and whom he doth joyn together it is with his Power, an Immortal powerful Bond, above and beyond that state which is in the Fall, where men may put together and put asunder, about earthly and outward things, and strive and fight about them; but this is in the defiled bed, out of the honourable state, which was in the beginning, where there was no hardnesse of heart; and *Marriage* in it self is not Judged but owned, and all that are in the Power, I say, it is Honourable.*

So all the vain Words, all the vain Customes, and all the needlesse idle Words, which you are judged and accused for with the Light, the Witnessse in your own Consciences, which doth reprove you, forsake them, come out of them, into the New Life, in which God is served; let your Words be seasoned with Grace, that by it your Hearts may be established, that no corrupt Communication come out of your mouthes; for that which is corrupt, is contrary to the Witnessse of God in your Consciences, the Light of Christ, that which doth reprove you. Therefore all the Customes and Fashions of the World, which grieve and quench the Spirit of God, forsake, and repent while you have time, and spend not your time as a tale; Come to the Light, sleep not in sin, in darknesse, in the separation from God, but prize your time while you have it, lest you come to say, you had time but now it is past; but mind the Power of God, the Light of Jesus, in which you may redeem it.

XXXII. Concerning false Prophets and Antichrists.

False Prophets and Antichrists are much talked of in this part of the World called Christendom, and they bring the 7th. Chapter and 24th. Chapter of Matthew, and say, they are come but now.

To which I answer, Christ said they should come, that Antichrist and false Prophets should come; to the Disciples He said they shall come to you, meaning His Disciples; and he gave them the Markes how they should know them: A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit, neither can a good tree bring forth evil fruit; but yet if it were possible, they should deceive the very Elect; For they should have the Sheeps cloathing; but He bid, they should not go after them, for they were inwardly ravening Wolves, having the Sheeps

cloathing: And these were the *Antichrists*, and *false Prophets*, *false Christs*, and *Deceivers* that ravened *inwardly* from the *Light*, and so from the *Seed*, the true *Christ*. And as Christ said they *should come* to his Disciples, before his Disciples decease they did *come*; as may be read in *John's* first Epistle, *Chap. 4.* and *Chap. 2.* Who saith, *Little children I write unto you, it is the last time whereof ye have heard say that Antichrist should come, even now are there many Antichrists and false Prophets already gone out into the World.* So Christ had said before they should come, and his Disciples said they *were come*, who went from them, being inwardly ravened from the spirit, which is sixteen hundred years since; and *John* which saw they *were come*, kept the Saints to the anointing in them, and told them that they needed no man to teach them, but as that did teach them, they should continue in the Father and in the Son.

And so these *Antichrists*, *false Prophets*, *Wolves*, *false Christs*, *inward raveners*, should bear *Briars*, *Thornes*, *Thistles*, which Christ said *should come* his Disciples said *were come*, which went forth from them into the World. And in the *Revelations* it is said, *all the world went after them*; so they went from the Church-fellowship, the Gospel, they went from the fellowship of the Spirit, being inwardly ravened from it; They went from the Anointing within to teach; they went from the Law in the heart the New Covenant, they went from the Kingdom within, they went from the Word in the heart to obey and do, they went from the Light in the heart, which gives the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus.

And so they lost the Pearl hid in the field, the Word in their hearts, and so the false Prophets, going from the Apostles; in the *Revelations*, *the world is going after them*; so *John* wrote to the seven Churches which were going astray suffering *Jezebel* to teach: and setting up Idols, and such as said they *were Jews and were not, but the Synagogues of Satan.* He goes on in his *Revelations*, till he comes to the 11. Chapter, where the Witnesses are slain, the two Olive Trees that bear the Oyle to anoint the Nations; the two Candlesticks that bears the Light: And in the 12. of the *Revelations*, *The Woman, the true Church, fled into the Wilderness prepared her of God, and to be fed there for a time, and times, and half a time*: And in the 13. of the *Revelations*, *The Dragon gave his Power to the Beast, and the Beast with the Dragons Power made War with the Saints, and killed those that were of the remnant of her Seed*, which kept the Testimony of Jesus, the Spirit of Prophecy, which were in *that* the inwardly Raveners were gone from. *Than all that dwelt upon the Earth worshipped the Beast, and worshipped the Dragon*, and caused and compelled both small and great; And here came up the compelling to Worship, then the false Church the Whore, got up upon the Beast in the Dragons power, and caused all Nations to drink her Cup; here came up the Whore that went from the Apostles, out of their Life, Power & Spirit.

And fornication was before the Nations could be married to Christ, they took this Whores Cup of fornication, and the Saints and Martyrs which were not the inward ravener, which could not drink her Cup she drank their blood, even of the Saints and Prophets which *kept the Testimony of Jesus*, which did not inwardly raven; and so such work as this hath been set up these fifteen hundred years, killing and slaying: for these spread over all Nations, as the Apostles were to go over all Nations, and this work have the *Wolves in sheeps clothing* made the inwardly ravener from the Spirit of God whose fruits are *Briars*, and *Thornes*, and this work have they made since the Apostles dayes, who have ravener from the *Life and Power*; having the Sheeps words, the *Scriptures*, but not in the *Power* which gave them forth; therefore are they so thorny and briary, who have worried and killed the Lambs, and compelled to Worship, and forced about Religion, and Maintenance, which was not the work of the Apostles.

And so *John* said again, the Beast should be taken, and the Dragon, and the false Prophet which deceived the Nations, that Christ said *should come*, and *John* said *was come*, which went forth from them; and since the World hath gone after them about this fifteen hundred years; which Beast and false Prophet shall be taken and cast into the lake of Fire, and must deceive the Nations no more.

And the Whore, the *Great Whore*, which hath compelled all Nations to Drink her *Cup of Fornication*, which hath drunk the Blood of the Saints, should be taken even in her drunkenness, in whom the Blood of the Prophets and Martyrs is; whose Flesh must be burnt with Fire; And *Babylon* shall be confounded, and all the Merchants that Trade with her shall howl and cry, *Alas, how is the Great City fallen!* for in this Great City hath the Trading been, which must be cast down, and all the Merchants of this Great City have been the inwardly Ravener from the Spirit of God, who hath built up and thrown down; So to that which they Ravened from, must all come, before the Sheeps Life can be known; and so the Witnesses are risen, and rising, which hold the *Light*, and bear the Oyl to give *Light* to the *Nations*, and anoint them with the Spirit and Power that the Apostles were in, and *Fellowship and Worship*; And the cry begins, *Fear God, give Glory to him; Come out of her, my People, lest ye be partakers of her Plagues*; and the Reapers are going forth; and the Prophets prophesie, witnessing the Lords Spirit poured forth upon them, as it was among the Apostles, and the Everlasting Gospel Preached again *to all Nations, Kindreds, Tongues, and People*.

XXXII. The Peoples Objection.

But severall People speake one this manner, *Have we not had a Gospel all this while?*

Answ. We say, Nay, you have had the sheeps Cloathing, being Ravened from the Spirit, so not like to have the Power to live in.

And the Bride, the Lambs Wife, is coming up out of the Wilderness, where she hath been fed of God a time, and times, and half a time, preparing for her Husband; And the Man Child is brought forth to Rule all Nations with a Rod of Iron; and the Lamb and the Saints, shall have the Victory, Glory in the Highest; And the Fellowship of the Gospel, People are coming into, and gathering to the Church of God, and into Church-Fellowship in the Gospel, the Power of God which was before the Power of Satan was, which Gospel was amongst the Apostles in which was their Fellowship; and this is Church Fellowship, and in the Power of God they are over false Prophets, over Will-Worshippers, over the Dragon, over the false Church and her Worship, and have gotten them betwixt us and the Apostles, which are got on the other side of them, and sees their coming up inwardly Raveners from the Spirit, so went from the Truth as the Devil did, And as the Whore did, who is turned against them that are in the Truth; But here is the Faith and Patience of the Saints, who sees the destruction of them, *Whore, Beast, Dragon, false Prophets*, by the hand and Power of God; who knowes the Seed of God to Reign over all, who is *the first and the last*.

XXXIII. Concerning Original Sin.

The Original of Sin is the Devil, which Christ destroyes: The Original of Righteousness is *God*, and *Christ the Righteousness of God*, which last for ever; And the Worlds Original, which is *the Tongues*, the beginning of which is *Babel*, which makes *Divines*, as they say; which *Pilate* set over Christ; and the Whore sits upon the Waters, as in the *Revelations*, and *John* saith, the Waters are *Nations, Multitudes, Peoples, and Tongues*, which Tongues the World calls *Original*, to whom the Gospel must be Preached before they are established.

And ye must be Redeemed from Tongues, and *Tongues shall cease* saith the Apostle, and so from the Worlds Original, (which *Babel* is the beginning of, which keeps in *Babylon*,) are the Saints Redeemed.

And this hath been set up for the Original among them which are inwardly Ravened from the Spirit of God in *Babylon*, which the beginning of Tongues were at *Babel*, in *Nimrod* that Heriticks time, who did begin to build *Babel*.

So Tongues make no *Divines*, nor no Ministers of Christ; for that which makes a Divine is the *Word*, which Redeems out of Tongues which was before *Babel* was, in the beginning before the Fall, which hammers down that which hath corrupted Mans Nature, and brings up again into the Divine Nature.

And who are Ministers of the *Word* and Preachers of the *Gospel*, are in the Power and Word which was before Tongues were; and thus brings into Church-Fellowship that is in God, which them with their Original, called *Tongues*, do not; which must cease and be Redeemed from; such bring not into the Fellowship of God, nor Worship of God, nor beyond *Babel*; for there ends the Tongues.

But who come to the Word of God, and the Gospel, come before they were, the many Tongues were, and stand when they are gone. This is the Word of the Lord God to you all.

XXXIV. Concerning Plots.

Plots, Insurrections, Tumultuous Meetings we are utterly against, whose lives are Peace, and seeking the Peace and good of all People upon the Earth. And there was about thirty Men made a Tumult in *England*, which was called *Monnarch* People, which was wickedly laid upon the People of God called *Quakers*, which the *Monarch* People cleared us at their Death, and said there was none but themselves: And although we being Innocent, the Newes-mongers put us in their Newes as Raisers with the *Monarch* People, and Published us as Plotters to the Nations: but we are Innocent, and the Lord forgive them, do say.

XXXV. Concerning the Jew outward, and the Heathen that doth the Law; the Christian in the Power, and the Christian out of the Power.

The Circumcised *Jews* in the Flesh which had the Law; the uncircumcised Heath, which had not the Law, which did the things contained in the Law, these was better then the *Jews*, and more Sober and Moderate, and so the *Jew* inward in the spirit is better then the *Jew* outward in the Flesh; and also the Christian in the Power, Light, and Seed of God, is better then the Christian in the Form of Godliness without the Power, is more Moderate and Patient.

XXXVI. Concerning Christ the Covenant of God.

CHRIST the Covenant of God who was prophesied of, in which prophesie it is said, *I will give him for a Light, a Covenant to the Gentiles, and he shall be my Salvation to the ends of the Earth, and a new Covenant to the house of Israel, and to the house of Judah.* So this is to all People, them that were called the People of God and Heathen; and this is the Covenant of Light that *John* came for a Witness, to bare witness of, *which doth enlighten every man that cometh into the world, which, as many as receive him, who hath all Power in Heaven and Earth committed to him, to them he gives power to become the*

sons of God. And this is the Light which people are to believe in, through which they may become the Children of God; and this is the Light that shines in the darknesse, and out of the darknesse in the heart, which gives the *knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ*, from whence it comes; and this is the Light which they that love darkness hate, and will not come unto it, because it reproveth them; And by this Covenant of Light to the *Gentiles*, which is the Salvation to the ends of the Earth, are we Gentiles made Christians, and have Salvation, and by believing in it are become Children of Light, and by receiving of it have we power to become the Sons of God; and they that have it, and love the darknesse rather than the Light, and will not come to it because it doth reprove them, it is their condemnation. And the lying Priests and Professors say, we deny the Scriptures, we deny the Resurrection, and Christ and his Body; and that we Fome at the mouth, and that we Bewitch People, and tye Ribbons about their Armes; which things are all utterly false and lyes, from their father the Devil the author of them, who is out of the Truth; in which Truth we are, though slandred by them who are of the Father of lyes, and have all manner of evil cast upon us; but we are in the Truth, we can rejoyce, praised be the Lord that liveth for ever.

THE END.

[\[historical Quaker texts\]](#)

Reaching Decisions: The Quaker Method

Howard H. Brinton



PENDLE HILL PUBLICATIONS
WALLINGFORD, PENNSYLVANIA

ABOUT THE AUTHOR Howard Brinton has been a professor or lecturer at Guilford, Earlham, Mills, Haverford, and Bryn Mawr Colleges, and at Woodbrooke, one of the Selly Oak Colleges in Birmingham in England. He has also worked in Europe for the American Friends Service Committee and in Japan. From 1936 to 1950 he, with his wife, were Directors of Pendle Hill and from 1950 to 1952 he was Director. Now Director Emeritus, he continues to give classes each year on Quakerism and mysticism at Pendle Hill.

Editor's Note: The text of this pamphlet appeared as Chapter Six in a book on the history and beliefs of the Society of Friends by Howard Brinton, published by Harper and Brothers with the title *Friends for 300 Years*.

Advised, that Friends keep all our meetings in the wisdom of God and unity of His blessed spirit, wherein they were created and settled; and continue your godly care and service therein, for the good ends for which they were first instituted. And keep all contentions, reflections, and smittings out of your meetings; and keep down and out of all heats, and passions, and doubtful disputations; ... that the affairs of Truth may be managed in the peaceable, tender spirit and wisdom of Jesus Christ, with decency, forbearance, love, and charity towards each other.

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 1721

The Quaker movement began as a group held together by no visible bond but united in its own deep sense of fellowship, a kinship of spirit kept vital by concerned Friends who were continually traveling from one meeting to another. But it was soon found necessary to have some sort of specific organization for dealing with practical matters. There was immediate need of systematic help for persons suffering loss of property through distraint of goods to meet fines. Arrangements had to be made for the validity of marriages without the usual service of an officiating clergyman. The poor must be cared for, burials arranged, records kept of births, marriages, sufferings and deaths. There were children to be educated and traveling Friends, if their own resources were insufficient, needed financial help. Friends often desired to petition King or Parliament. Disorderly persons were sometimes to be dealt with in order “that Truth might be cleared” of misunderstanding by the scandalized public. But the very need for organization gave rise to a serious theoretical problem — how can a free fellowship based on Divine guidance from within set up any form of church government providing direction from without?

As early as 1652, William Dewsbury urged Friends to set up general meetings, to be attended by Friends in a limited area to meet immediate needs. His instructions were given forth as “the word of the living God to his Church.” Other leaders spoke in similar terms and with the same prophetic authority. But care was taken not to produce an authoritarian code. In 1656, at a meeting of Friends in Balby, Yorkshire, a letter was composed “From the Spirit of Truth to the children of light,” giving advice rather than formulating rules on twenty points of behavior. This letter concluded with the well-known sentence:

Dearly beloved Friends, these things we do not lay upon you as a rule or form to walk by; but that all, with a measure of the light, which is pure and holy, may be guided: and so in the light walking and abiding, these things may be fulfilled in the Spirit, not in the letter; for the letter killeth but the Spirit giveth life.

Letters of the Early Friends, p. 282

Additional advices were issued from time to time by various meetings with a similar caution regarding the priority of the Spirit. In 1659, the General Meeting at Skipton for Friends in the North issued a document for guidance in conduct. Again Friends are urged to stand fast in their liberty,

that no footsteps may be left for those that shall come after, or to walk by example, but that all may be directed and left to the Truth, in it to live and walk and by it to be guided, that none may look back at us, nor have an eye behind them, but that all may look forward waiting in the Spirit for the revelation of those glorious things which are to be made manifest to them.

Letters of the Early Friends, p. 288

To Act As A Whole

The underlying principle of Quaker church government is summed up in another passage in the same letter.

That the power of the God-head may be known in the body, in that perfect freedom which every member hath in Christ Jesus; that none may exercise lordship or dominion over another, nor the person of any be set apart, but as they continue in the power of truth ... that truth itself in the body may reign, not persons nor forms: and that all such may be honored as stand in the life of the truth wherein is the power not over, but in the body.

In other words, the meeting is to act as a whole and be governed by Truth, not by persons appointed to rule. If individuals are chosen for some particular service to the meeting, they should be continued in such service only so long as they are guided by the Truth. Thus the basis of Quaker church government was early expressed in a way that eliminated the possibility of individual authority. Only the authority of the group acting by the dictates of Truth was valid. The supremacy of a majority over a minority was completely dispensed with. There was no voting.

General meetings drawing Friends together in limited areas at periodic intervals developed in the decade 1650-1660. Some of these occasions were simply meetings for worship, others also included sessions for the transaction of corporate affairs. By 1658, general meetings were held yearly with leading Friends in attendance from all over England. The support of Friends traveling in the ministry to distant places often claimed attention.

When George Fox was released from his three years' imprisonment at Lancaster and Scarborough in 1666, he found the Quakers suffering severely because of the

Conventicle Act which forbade attendance at any assemblies for worship other than those of the established church. There were also a number of other serious difficulties. Nearly all the leading Friends were in prison. Fanatics, such as the hysterical women whose adulation of James Naylor had earlier led to public scandal, were bringing the movement into disrepute. The followers of John Perrot were teaching that the essence of religion required no outward frame of reference. This party held that even fixed times for public worship were man-made devices. To counteract such tendencies toward religious anarchism a group of leading Friends issued a letter (*Letters of the Early Friends*, p. 319) asserting the authority of a meeting to exclude from its fellowship persons who persisted in rejecting its judgment. This was shortly before George Fox's release. This letter, by definitely subordinating individual guidance to the sense of the meeting as a whole, marked an important step in Quaker development.

Bruised and weakened by his experience in jail and scarcely able to mount his horse, Fox at this critical juncture went about England and Ireland for four years bringing order out of confusion by setting up Monthly Meetings as executive units of the Society of Friends. His visit to America in 1671-73 was largely for the same purpose. While there had been some Monthly Meetings before this time, they now became standard procedure and have continued to be basic throughout Quaker history.

Monthly Meetings For Business

A Monthly Meeting is made up of all the Friends in a given district. It includes one or more meetings for worship. The constituent parts of a Monthly Meeting came to be called Preparative Meetings, their function being to prepare for the Monthly Meeting which made the important decisions. Combinations of neighboring Monthly Meetings are organized

into Quarterly Meetings and the Quarterly Meetings in turn are united in a Yearly Meeting. This system developed gradually. At first the Yearly Meeting in London consisted exclusively of Friends whose main concern was for the ministry. By 1672, and regularly after 1678, it included representatives sent from all the Quarterly Meetings in England. By 1760, the Yearly Meeting was open to all Friends. The evolution of this system in America followed similar lines, except that, owing to the geographical situation, six Yearly Meetings emerged in the colonies.

The first Quaker meetings for business (or church government) were made up of men only, but by 1656 women's meetings began to appear. In 1671, Fox wrote a circular letter urging that they be set up everywhere. Eventually there were Monthly, Quarterly and Yearly Meetings for women. For some years the business before the women's meetings differed from the business before the men's meetings though there was no sense of inferiority. It consisted of matters which were felt to be of peculiar interest to women, such as care of the poor, the sick and the imprisoned. The important Six Weeks Meeting begun in 1671 which supervised the affairs of London Quakers was a joint body of men and women. Today all Quaker business meetings, except in two or three conservative areas in America, are made up of men and women. The assignment of important executive responsibilities to women was a bold step in the seventeenth century. The training which Quaker women received in these meetings as well as in meetings for worship qualified them to become leaders of their sex.

Monthly, Quarterly And Yearly Meetings

The system of Monthly, Quarterly and Yearly Meetings as it finally developed in England and America suggests the organic principle of the affiliation of cells or small units in a large organism. The Monthly Meeting is the primary cell in

the Society of Friends. Only there does membership exist. Individual Friends have the same responsibilities in the larger group as in the smaller. There is no delegated authority. As Fox wrote in a long epistle on church government: "The least member in the Church hath an office and is serviceable and every member hath need one of another" (*Epistle 264*, 1669).

The larger group does not exist to exert authority over its smaller parts, nor do the smaller parts dominate the larger. Each is both means and end. The larger exists to widen the range of acquaintance and judgment and to carry out undertakings too big for the smaller group. The larger group asks its constituent parts to contribute money to support its enterprises; gives credentials and financial aid when necessary to Friends and others traveling long distances with a religious concern; supports the larger schools; appoints committees to deal with a variety of issues and concerns beyond the range of the smaller meetings, such as peace, temperance, race relations, publications, the social order, national legislation and the relief of suffering at home and abroad.

A concern, that is, a strong inward sense that some action should be taken to meet a certain situation, may arise in the mind of any individual. It often develops in the silence of a meeting for worship. The member brings it before the Monthly Meeting which may or may not sympathize with it. If circumstances require a wider concurrence, the Monthly Meeting may forward the matter to the Quarterly Meeting. The Quarterly Meeting may then act upon it or may send it on to the Yearly Meeting. In this way a concern secures the support of a group large enough and wise enough to carry it out. The power of the individual to accomplish what he feels has been laid upon him is many times multiplied if his concern is taken up by all three, the Monthly Meeting, the Quarterly Meeting and finally the Yearly Meeting. In some

instances an individual may first present his concern to a Quarterly or Yearly Meeting or to a specialized committee. In this case the reverse process may occur, the concern being referred to the Monthly Meetings for action.

The Yearly Meeting issues Advices for the guidance of Monthly and Quarterly Meetings and of individual members. It also addresses Queries to constituent meetings in order to ascertain their condition and discover if help is needed. Advices and Queries are not orders issued by a superior to an inferior. Thus the Monthly Meetings serve as real executive units of the Society.

The Book of Discipline

Early in the eighteenth century, selections from the minutes of the Yearly Meetings were gathered in book form under captions alphabetically listed. This compilation came to be called the *Book of Discipline*. The manuscript book issued in 1762 by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting is entitled *A Collection of Christian and Brotherly Advices Given Forth from Time to Time by the Yearly Meetings of Friends for New Jersey and Pennsylvania*. As need arose additions were inserted, each with its appropriate date. This book, abbreviated to contain only active regulations, was printed in 1797. Later the alphabetical system was replaced by a topical arrangement. The discipline has been reissued and revised from time to time up to the present. It will continue to be rewritten to meet changing needs. The Discipline is both a moral guide and a manual of Church Government. Additions and revisions show the evolution of moral consciousness as it became increasingly sensitive to slavery, war, intemperance, racial and class discrimination and other evils.

As an example of growth in moral sensitivity, we find under the heading "*Negroes or Slaves*" twenty-four manuscript pages of entries, dated 1688 to 1790, recording

each step of the process by which the Society of Friends in America freed itself from holding slaves. Under *Queries* there are three sets of questions dated 1743, 1755, 1765 respectively. Those dealing with slavery are —

1743. Do Friends observe the former advice of our Yearly Meeting not to encourage the importation of Negroes, nor to buy them after imported?

1755. Are Friends clear of importing or buying Negroes and do they use those well which they are possessed of by inheritance or otherwise, endeavoring to train them up in the principles of the Christian Religion?

1765. The same Query as in 1755.

In 1776 the Query was amended as follows:

Are Friends clear of importing, purchasing, disposing of or holding mankind as slaves? And do they use those well whom they have set free and are necessarily under their care and not in circumstances through nonage or incapacity to minister to their own necessities? And are they careful to educate and encourage them in a religious and virtuous life?

Here are three steps showing increasing sensitiveness to a clearly defined evil. First, Friends were not to buy imported Negroes; next, they were not to buy any, though it was assumed that they might inherit them; finally, they were not to hold them in servitude at all. The evolution of the *Book of Discipline* is a testimony to the power of the Quaker method in educating and sensitizing conscience.

In the same year that the Declaration of Independence stated: “that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among

these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness, “ the Quakers made their own declaration which took these great words at their face value. They did not support their own revolution by violence, but none the less they carried it through in a thorough-going way.

The Individual And The Group

The perennial problem of the relative rights and responsibilities of the individual and the group was never so clearly solved that it did not give rise to difficulties. The Wilkinson-Story party separated from the main body in England in 1678, principally because it was opposed to any authority exercised by the group over the individual. The separation in Philadelphia which took place in 1827 was to a large extent the outcome of differences between the more individualistic and more authoritarian trends in the Society of Friends.

Yet in a large measure the Quaker form of church government succeeded in securing a reasonable balance between freedom and order. Without some authority over the individual the movement would certainly have disintegrated as did the various groups of religious anarchists. Without considerable liberty the Society of Friends would have crystallized into a formal system. The adjustment depended upon group authority over the individual tempered by individual initiative in affecting the judgment of the group.

The meeting for the transaction of church business is as distinctly a religious exercise as is the meeting for worship, but it has a different objective. The meeting for worship is focused upon the divine-human relationship and the meeting for business is mainly concerned with inter-human cooperation, the two being interdependent. From another

point of view, the meeting for worship concerns *being* while the meeting for business concerns *doing*. What is implicit in worship becomes explicit in action. The meeting for business should, therefore, be preceded by a period of worship in which the hard shell of egocentricity is dissolved and the group united into a living whole. It is also well to conclude the business meeting with a period of silent devotion. George Fox wrote to Friends,

Friends, keep your meetings in the power of God, and in his wisdom (by which all things were made) and in the love of God, that by that ye may order all to his glory. And when Friends have finished their business, sit down and continue awhile quietly and wait upon the Lord to feel him. And go not beyond the Power, but keep in the Power by which God Almighty may be felt among you.

Epistle 162, 1658

Since there is but one Light and one Truth, if the Light of Truth be faithfully followed, unity will result. "The Light itself," says Thomas Story, "is not divided, but one and the same entire, undivided Being continually" (*Sermons*, p. 61). The nearer the members of a group come to this one Light, the nearer they will be to one another, as the spokes of a wheel approach each other as they near the center. The spirit of worship is essential to that type of business meeting in which the group endeavors to act as a unit. True worship overcomes excessive individuality by producing a super-individual consciousness. If serious differences of opinion appear, it may come about that by recourse to a period of silence a basis for unity can be discovered. If a high degree of unity is not reached, action is postponed, provided an immediate decision is not necessary. For such a meeting the only essential official is a clerk whose business it is to

ascertain and record, or be responsible for recording, the sense of the meeting.

The Method Of Reaching Unity

The business before the meeting, presented by the clerk, a committee or an individual, is “spoken to” by those who have opinions or judgment regarding it. When the consideration reaches a stage which indicates that a reasonable degree of unity has been reached, the clerk announces what he believes to be the sense of the meeting. If the meeting agrees with his wording as given or revised, this becomes the judgment of the meeting and is so preserved in the minutes. The degree of unity necessary for a decision depends on the importance of the question and the character and depth of feeling of those who oppose the general trend of opinion. On many items of routine business, little or no expression is necessary. Even silence may give consent. But on important matters, care is taken to secure the vocal participation of all who feel able and willing to express themselves. Some problems have been postponed for more than a century awaiting unity. An example was the toleration of slavery within the Society of Friends. Had a vote been taken as early as 1700 slavery would probably have been voted out, but a substantial minority would not have concurred. The subject was brought up again and again, progress was made slowly until in 1776 the Society was united in refusing membership to persons who held slaves.

An opposing minority, however small, is not disregarded, especially if it contains members whose judgment is highly respected. The *weight* of a member in determining the decision of the meeting depends on the confidence which the meeting has in the validity of his judgment. On some subjects some Friends are more reliable than others. On a financial problem, the opinion of a single financier might

determine the sense of the meeting, although his opinion might carry less weight on some other subjects. If an individual lays a concern before the meeting, much depends on the degree to which the concern has gripped him. If he feels it deeply and perhaps brings it up again and again in spite of opposition, the meeting may finally acquiesce even though a degree of hesitation is still felt by some.

If a serious difference of opinion exists on a subject which cannot be postponed, decision may be left to a small committee. Not infrequently the minority withdraw their opposition in order that the meeting may come to a decision. It is, however, surprising how often real unity is reached, even though the discussion in its initial stages shows a wide variety of opinions, or a pronounced cleavage arising from strongly held convictions. As the consideration proceeds, unity gradually emerges and is finally reached. The decision may be along lines not even thought of at the beginning. This procedure takes more time and patience than the voting method, but the results are generally more satisfactory to all concerned.

The clerk is theoretically a recording officer, but in practice he must frequently assume the duties of a presiding officer. He must be sensitive to all trends of opinion, including those not well expressed. When two or more persons rise at once, he must recognize one as having the floor. He must determine the appropriate amount of time to be devoted to each item on the agenda in view of the total business before the meeting. He must decide on how much expression he can safely base his minute. He is responsible for keeping one subject at a time before the meeting. He may request talkative members to limit their remarks and silent members to express themselves. All this appears to lay a heavy burden upon the clerk, but in any contingency he may derive help from any member. Theoretically, it is the meeting as a whole, rather than the clerk, that exercises

authority, but the clerk may occasionally find himself in a position in which some exercise of authority is unavoidable.

If this Quaker method of arriving at unity does not succeed, the difficulty is generally due to some members who have not achieved the right attitude of mind and heart. Dogmatic persons who speak with an air of finality, or assume the tone of a debater determined to win, may be a serious hindrance. Eloquence which appeals to emotion is out of place. Those who come to the meeting not so much to discover Truth as to win acceptance of their opinions may find that their views carry little weight. Opinions should always be expressed humbly and tentatively in the realization that no one person sees the whole truth and that the whole meeting can see more of Truth than can any part of it. When B speaks following A, he takes into consideration A's opinion. C follows with a statement which would probably have been different had A and B not spoken. Every speaker credits every other sincere speaker with at least some insight. Finally a statement is made which receives the approval of all. A number of persons say "I approve," "I agree" or some equivalent.

This method is similar to some other consensus methods, for instance those suggested by M. P. Follett in *The New State* or Frank Walser in *The Art of Conference*. It differs radically in being religious. George Fox writes, "Friends are not to meet like a company of people about town or parish business, neither in their men's or women's meetings, but to wait upon the Lord" (*Epistle* 313, 1674). Quakers have used this method with a large degree of success for three centuries because it has met the religious test, being based on the Light Within producing unity. As the Light is God in His capacity as Creator, Unity in Him creates Unity in the group. When the method has not succeeded, as in the divisions during the nineteenth century, spiritual life was low and Friends too impatient to wait for unity to develop.

Advantages Of This Method

At its best, the Quaker method does not result in a compromise. A compromise is not likely to satisfy any one completely. The objective of the Quaker method is to discover Truth which will satisfy every one more fully than did any position previously held. Each and all can then say "that is what I really wanted, but I did not realize it." To discover what we *really want* as compared to what at first we think we want, we must go below the surface of self-centered desires to the deeper level where the real Self resides. The deepest Self of all is that Self which we share with all others. This is the one Vine of which we all are branches, the Life of God on which our own individual lives are based. To will what God wills is, therefore, to will what we ourselves really want.

The voting method is a mechanical process whereby the larger force is pitted against the smaller one over which it prevails, possibly without even an attempt to adjust to it. The Quaker method produces synthesis in which each part makes some adjustment to the whole. In general, voting creates nothing new, one party is simply more numerous than the other. The organic method may actually produce by a process of cross-fertilization something which was not there at the beginning. As in all life, the whole is more than the sum of its parts. A new creation emerges through the life or soul of the whole which was not completely present in any of the parts. As the meeting becomes a unit, it learns to think as a unit. This is an achievement. Every partial, fragmentary view contributes to the total view.

The voting method is usually quicker. Organic growth is a slow process, but that which has life is adaptable, while mechanisms tend to be rigid. In the voting method when the vote is taken, each individual has one or a fixed number of votes, irrespective of his interest or knowledge, while in

the Quaker method, each individual possesses or should possess weight proportional to his interest in and his knowledge of the particular subject before the meeting.

It might appear that, because the Quaker meeting must wait for unity, this method would tend toward conservatism. This is sometimes the case, but, in general, Quaker pioneering in social reforms shows that conservatism has not generally prevailed. The first response of many people to a new proposition is negative, hence the voting method which is the quickest may itself produce a negative response. Minorities tend to be more radical than majorities. If decision is postponed in the effort to secure unity, time is given for an advanced minority to convince the majority. In the end a more novel decision may result.

Conditions Favorable To Success

A minor consideration is that of size. The Quaker method works better in small than in large groups. This is true both of the meeting for worship and the meeting for business. It is easier to achieve unity in an intimate group the members of which are well acquainted with one another than in a large group where there is bound to be more diversity. But experience shows that even in large groups, especially if they contain some able, "well seasoned Friends," this method can be employed successfully. Biologists believe that evolution can take place best in groups of a moderate size. If the group is too small, there are not enough variations to insure progress. If the group is too large, variations are swamped by the impact of the mass.

Therefore, if a Monthly Meeting becomes overgrown, it should divide. Such cell-division is the organic method of growth which has been characteristic in the Society of Friends from the beginning. Division may also be occasioned by the scattering due to economic reasons. Members,

especially young people, may move to localities where there is no Friends Meeting. Perhaps they will start meetings in their homes. Such a meeting may begin in a very small way, but as like-minded persons find out about it and isolated Friends realize that such a project has been undertaken, the meeting will probably grow. This simple method of growth gives Friends a strategic advantage. Religious sects which require professional pastors and special apparatus cannot afford to begin so informally. But Friends can start a meeting anywhere and under the simplest conditions with as few as two members. In the colonial days, Friends spread rapidly in many pioneer communities because a Friends meeting could so readily be held in a home.

The Quaker method is likely to be successful in proportion as the members are acquainted with one another; better still if real affection exists among them. When differences and factions arose in the Corinthian Church its members wrote to ask Paul's advice. After making several concrete suggestions, he goes on to say in the famous 13th chapter of his letter that love is really the only solution. In a similar situation John speaks in his first letter of love as essential. "We know that we have passed out of death into life because we love the brethren" (I John 3:14).¹

The Binding Force Within The Group

For "love" Paul and John use the Greek word *agape* instead of the more usual Greek word *eros*. *Agape* means unselfish love which seeks to be possessed as well as to possess. Paul said *agape* "does not insist on its own way" (I Cor. 13:5). This is the highest binding force within a religious group. It signifies the Spirit which draws men together and to God without at the same time resulting in the domination of one will by another. It is love that brings into harmony the apparently contradictory concepts of unity and freedom.

Agape is closely akin to friendship, a uniting force which at the same time respects individuality and freedom. In the Gospel of John, Christ identifies love of this type with friendship when he says, "Greater love has no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). Since the word "love" has so many different meanings, it was more appropriate that the Quakers should call themselves a Society of Friends than, as one contemporary group did, a Family of Love. It may be that the appellation "Friends" which has become so familiar that its origin is seldom inquired into, came from the saying of Jesus, "No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends" (John 15:15). In the early minutes of the meetings in Pennsylvania the Quakers sometimes call themselves "The Friends of God."

The Society of Friends in choosing a name gave expression to the feeling that their religion was based on friendship as distinguished from a code of duty appropriate to servants whose obligation is mainly to yield unthinking obedience. Here the early Friends made a religious emphasis different from the Protestants of their time. The Puritans held that man's hope of salvation depended on obedience to commands set down for all time in the Sacred Book. These commands were thought of as instructions which a servant receives who knows not what his lord does and must needs obey, whether he understands or not. But if God's will is revealed not so much by a law from without as by the Light of Truth which produces action and inspires from within, the relation is one of friendship and freedom based on understanding. There is no external domination. Hence arises the difference between the Puritan concept of duty with its inner tension and compulsion and the Quaker concept of conscience with its sense of freedom and peace. A servant may serve because of a sense of duty, but a friend helps his friend for a reason other than duty. Those who

render God service from a sense of duty may hear the divine voice saying "So you also, when you have done all that is commanded you, say 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty'" (Luke 17:10).

In addition to the religion of friendship and the religion of obedience, there is another type of religion which extols the kind of love which unifies through possession. Such love is described by many of the great Christian mystics. It is the very top of the mystical ladder, the Spiritual Marriage according to the allegorical interpretation of the Song of Songs. In emotional content it is akin to the marriage of husband and wife. Unity with God results in so complete a submergence of the individual that individuality is lost, just as a drop of water falls into the ocean and is lost. In emphasizing this experience, many devotional writings of the saints strike a note foreign alike to Quaker and Protestant. Unity through obedience, unity through love and unity through friendship, all are deep aspects of human experience. The Quaker emphasis allows greater significance to individuality and freedom.

Freedom And Organization

The Society of Friends endeavors to maintain an organization which does not destroy freedom. Freedom appears in an act of concurrence performed not from any sense of inner or outer compulsion but in following Truth for the love of it. The Light Within, being both Truth and Love, draws people together from within. It exerts no outside pressure. It respects the unique personality of each individual. The Ranters, Antinomians and others with anarchistic leanings, some of whom early left the Society of Friends because they felt that any form of organization would limit their freedom to follow the Light of Truth wherever it might lead, did not realize that the Light was Love as well as Truth. To love the truth is to follow that which draws

humanity together into a unity of friendship, of non-possessive love, the highest condition in the universe, the very Presence of God Himself. William Penn wrote in his *Maxims*, “Nor can spirits ever be divided that love and live in the same Divine Principle, the Root and Record of their Friendship.”

This problem of freedom within an organized group was faced by the early Christians. After Paul had founded the Galatian Church, certain persons came there who told the Galatian Christians that in order to be Christians they must carry out in full the law of Moses. When Paul heard of this he wrote with more fervor than in any of his other letters that have come down to us, showing that Christianity is not the old law, neither is it a new law. It is freedom from law. At first this may appear to be pure anarchy. But Paul was not speaking of unlimited liberty for self-indulgence (Gal. 5:13). With the external restraint of law, he contrasts internal guidance based on the love of God. This is pure freedom because, through union with God, man wills what God wills and God is free. Man, therefore, may share in God’s freedom. Paul speaks in terms of the Christ Within. “It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me” (Gal. 2:20). This is true also of the Galatian converts, “As many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Gal. 3:27). And so he exclaims with joy and wonder, “Christ has set us free; stand fast, therefore, and do not submit again to the yoke of slavery.” The law is for children and slaves but “because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts” (Gal. 4:6).

This is not an easy doctrine. It is not surprising that the Christian Church has been slow to understand Paul or has not striven to understand him. The Church was eventually presided over by an ecclesiastical hierarchy which left little opportunity for liberty of the Spirit. Paul admits the need of regulations to govern the immature who have not yet won their freedom in Christ (Gal. 4:1-3). But the

Church eventually allowed little freedom except at the top. Early Protestantism with its doctrine of depravity required an external rule and the power of external Grace in place of an internal governing Spirit. The Scripture furnished a code interpreted by creeds that was as binding as the law of Moses. The Quakers stand alone in having attempted a form of Church Government which, however it may have developed in practice, allowed in theory for the liberty of those who are led by the Spirit. Like Paul they recognized the need of precepts for the spiritually immature such as children in school, but even the Quaker schools were so devised that compulsion was minimized.

The Value Of Differences

The attainment of unity within the meeting is not the same as the attainment of uniformity. Unity is spiritual, uniformity mechanical. Friends have never required of their members assent to a religious or social creed, though not infrequently a body of Friends has issued a statement expressing their religious or social views at a particular time. There is, however, always the reservation that the Spirit of Truth may lead to further insight. Differences within the group on the particular application of general principles are tolerated, provided they are being actively explored in a spirit of friendship and in a continued search for truth. Such differences are often of great value in helping new aspects of truth to emerge.

The discovery of truth through differences of opinion is well illustrated in the history of science. "A clash of doctrines is not a disaster — it is an opportunity," says Whitehead in *Science and the Modern World* (p.266). As an illustration he shows how disagreement in the results of experiments on the atomic weight of some elements led to the discovery that the same element may assume two or more distinct forms or isotopes. Of two different opinions

we can say as Christ said in the parable, "let both grow together until the harvest." The harvest is the fuller discovery of truth which includes both. Thus, as Whitehead shows, Galileo said that the earth moves and the sun is fixed. The Inquisition maintained that the earth is fixed and the sun moves. The modern theory of relativity includes both of these earlier theories. For this harvest it is sometimes necessary to wait a long time.

When Differences Cease To Have Value

But differences cease to have value when fundamental principles are ignored. In science a difference between one theory which is based on the scientific method and another theory based on a different method such as magic or astrology would not be productive of new scientific truth. In similar fashion a difference between two points of view, one arrived at by free search and another arrived at by blind agreement with an authoritarian pronouncement would not be productive of new truth. To be creative the authoritative edict must be subjected to a discriminating inquiry which might alter it. If viewed as fixed it is dead and unproductive.

In Quakerism as in science the new can only arise out of the old. In science a creativity which did not take past discoveries into consideration would generally be unproductive of new truth. Similarly, the Quaker method will not progress without acknowledgment of all the great truths which have been discovered in the past. The meeting should hesitate to accept any suggestion which runs counter to the accumulated wisdom of the saints and prophets who have gone before. When it seeks to arrive at a decision which is an expression of truth it must consider as part of itself the invisible company of all those who discovered truth. Their insight must be given due weight in arriving at a decision. In religion as in science we do not start from nothing. The doctrine of the Light Within does not mean

that an individual must depend only on his own measure of Light. As in science we do not expect every one to be a Newton or a Darwin, so in religion we do not expect every one to be a Paul or a Fox. The religious genius, like the scientific genius, must be allowed to give to those who are not geniuses the full measure of guidance.

Stages Of Growth

It must be borne in mind that a synthesis of opinion achieved within a group is not good simply because it is a synthesis. Unity may occur on a high level or a low level. A group of bandits may achieve consensus in carrying out their schemes. A nation may be at one in deciding to wage aggressive war. A mob may achieve a united opinion at a lower level than the code of conduct of the individuals who compose it. The clue to this problem is the concept of the Light as that which leads *up* to God. If the proper method is followed, the Light which unifies the group will be found to be an elevating Principle. As Truth is sought through prayer, worship and an earnest effort to purge all that is self-centered and concerned with possessive desires, the group will rise through deliberation to a higher level than that on which it started. This occurs when there is real interdependence between the meeting for worship and the meeting for business. "Agreeing Upward" is a chapter heading in the works of the Chinese philosopher, Motze. It is toward this agreeing upward that a meeting should aspire.

The organic method of arriving at decisions by consensus appears at the primitive pre-individual level as well as at the advanced post-individual level. In the first case self-centeredness has not yet developed, in the second case it has been overcome. Of the Solomon Islanders, W. H. R. Rivers writes in *Instinct and the Subconscious* (p. 95) that "in the councils of such peoples there is no voting or other means of taking the opinion of the body." Quakers traveling

in America in Colonial times sometimes visited the Indian councils and remarked that their method of coming to decisions was like that of a Quaker business meeting. John Richardson, while visiting William Penn, observed that the Indians “did not speak two at a time nor interfere in the least with one another.” “My spirit was so easy with them,” he continues, “that I did not feel that power of darkness to oppress me as I had done in many places among the people called Christians” (*Journal*, 1856, p. 135). In these councils the women participated as well as the men. Thomas Chalkley in traveling beyond the Susquehanna in 1706 asked permission of the Indians to hold a religious meeting, “upon which,” he says, “they called a council in which they were very grave and spoke one after another without any heat or jarring ...Our interpreter told me that they had not done anything for many years without the counsel of ancient, grave women, who, I observed, spoke much in their council” (*Journal*, 1754, p. 49). Of a similar council Catherine Phillips notes that, “Several of their women sat in this conference who for fixed solidity appeared to me like Roman matrons” (*Journal*, 1798, p. 144).

Such councils where sex equality is maintained and voting unknown indicate that the organic method is in accord with human nature, as it evolved out of primitive, matriarchal conditions. The more mechanical method of voting becomes natural in a later stage of development when society has become more individualistic. But there is a still further stage when self-conscious individualization is surpassed but not eliminated, in a divine-human community so inspired by the one Spirit that it can act as a unit. The third stage resembles the first but it is higher because those who are in it have passed through the intermediary condition and become individuals. In the first stage there is unity, in the second individuality and in the third the synthesis of unity and individuality which makes possible participation in group life with freedom.

Notes

1. Quotations from the New Testament are taken from the *Revised Standard Version*, 1946.

Rethinking Quaker Principles

Rufus M. Jones



PENDLE HILL PUBLICATIONS
WALLINGFORD, PENNSYLVANIA

ABOUT THE AUTHOR Rufus Matthew Jones, philosopher, mystical scholar, Quaker historian and social reformer, graduated from Haverford College in 1885, received an M.A. from his alma mater in 1886 and from Harvard in 1901.

Jones taught at Oakwood Seminary (1886-7), and at Friends School, Providence, was principal of Oak Grove Seminary (1889), recognized as a minister (1890), editor of the American Friend from 1893 to 1912, sat on the Board of Trustees of Bryn Mawr College from 1898 to 1936, and became an instructor in philosophy at Haverford College (1893), achieving the T. Wistar Brown chair in philosophy before he retired in 1934.

The author of over 50 monographs, one of the principal missions of Rufus Jones was healing the 19th century split in American Quakerism; his life's work bore fruit in the 1950s with the reunification of American Quaker Meetings. Rufus Jones was instrumental in establishing at the college the Haverford Emergency Unit (a precursor to the American Friends Service Committee) that prepared members for relief and reconstruction work in Europe after World War I.

A world traveler (it is said he traversed the ocean 200 times), Jones met with Mahatma Gandhi at his ashram in India, and spoke with religious leaders in China and Japan during a trip in 1926, and in 1938, he traveled to South Africa, meeting with General Jan Smuts and returning via China and Japan. In that same year, he participated in a mission with George Walton and D. Robert Yarnall to Germany to see if a peaceful means of dealing with Nazis could be reached.

I. A New Religious Type

It is not often that something wholly new comes to our world. We can probably say that something absolutely new never happens. The newest new form always bears some marks of the old out of which it sprung. The new, like the new moon, is born in the arms of the old. We have a new word for the breaking in of the new out of the existent old. We call it a *mutation*. A mutation is a unique and unpredictable variation in the process of life. It is the unexpected appearance of a new type in an old order. It is a leap and not a mere dull recurrence of the past. Something emerges that was not here before, something that is not just the sum of preceding events. The universe is on the march and the march springs surprises. The procession of life looks more like a steeplechase than like a predictable and repeatable habit track.

The birth of the Society of Friends is one of these mutations. It was not, of course, an absolutely new religious movement. It had a definite setting and a well-marked background in history, but nothing just exactly like it ever existed before in the world. I want to make you see, if I can, why it emerged when it did and what was the distinct type that broke in on the stream of the Reformation movement which was in full flood in England in the seventeenth century when Quakerism was born. It is obvious, or should be, to everybody that there would have been no Society of Friends if there had not been a Puritan movement, and yet it is just as certain that the Quakers were not, properly speaking, Puritans.

Thomas Cartwright (1535-1603) is the historical father of Puritanism and throughout the entire reign of Queen Elizabeth he prayed and preached and worked for a radical reform of the Anglican Church, which seemed to him to be the Roman Catholic Church slightly fixed over and "simonized," but on the whole the old original model.

Cartwright and the other Puritan creative leaders had two major concerns. They were first of all fervid exponents of Calvin's theological system. They took over his conception of God as the absolute sovereign of the universe, whose inscrutable will determines irresistibly everything that happens in the visible and invisible worlds. The Puritans took over, too, Calvin's conception of man in his fallen state as wholly depraved and corrupt and involved by the "Fall" in utter moral ruin, a being wholly devoid of merit. They took over also the view that man's possible deliverance is due entirely to the grace and mercy of God revealed and made effective through Christ's propitiatory offering on the Cross, by which those who are elect and who accept the proffered means are saved, all others are eternally lost and doomed to Hell. The Bible, which reveals God's plan, they believed, is His one and only communication to the human race, and contains all that man can ever know or needs to know of God's will and purpose.

The other urgent Puritan concern was the reorganization of the Church. They believed that the plan for it was plainly set forth in "the Word of God." This plan was for the early Puritans the Presbyterian system in place of the Episcopal system, inherited from the hated Roman Church. Unfortunately both the Episcopal and Presbyterian systems confronted the reader of the infallible New Testament. Acts and St. John's Epistles describe the apostolic churches as led and guided by "elders," that is, presbyters, while St. Paul's epistles speak of bishops and deacons as the guides of the primitive churches. Here was a plain difficulty with the infallible Plan. And some of the Puritans, notably those that founded New England, discovered that the New Testament set forth a third plan, a Congregational plan.

The trouble with this infallible Bible was that there were so many ways of interpreting it, none of which ways seemed infallible to those who had a different way. In 1611

this Book was put into marvelous English and everybody read it with growing love and wonder. The more they read it the more difficult it became to make readers agree upon any one final and infallible interpretation of it. Honest minds strangely differed about what it meant, and no one Plan stood out as clearly revealed to everybody.

By 1643, when George Fox started out in his leather breeches as a “seeker,” there was a vast confusion of plans. Archbishop Laud had been executed and Episcopacy had suffered a great defeat. The Puritans were in control of Parliament. Presbyterianism was dominant and England was fighting a civil war. The longer they fought the more the confusion spread. There was almost from the first a strong popular reaction against Presbyterianism as a state church, and a vast variety of religious views and new church systems swarmed over England. In the midst of the confusion there broke out a powerful wave of mystical life and thought and religion, nowhere more in evidence than in the army of the Commonwealth, and especially in the mind of Cromwell himself. Little groups formed in many parts of England, opposed to infallible systems and intolerant authority, inspired by the writings of mystics on the continent, kindled by the freedom of the Gospel and resolved to create a new and freer type of spiritual religion for the future. “That was a unique situation, and it only needed a creative leader to turn this unorganized and chaotic spiritual yearning into a high tide movement. George Fox was the prophet leader who did just that in this hour of crisis.

Fox had almost certainly become unsettled in his religious views during his apprenticeship in Nottinghamshire, where he kept sheep, and when he came home and heard the extreme Calvinism of the “priest” of the Drayton Church, Nathaniel Stephens, he plainly revolted from what he called the “notions,” and what we should call the “ideology,” of the Calvinistic preaching which he was constantly hearing. At

the age of nineteen he reached a stage of complete revolt, cut loose forever from the organized Church of his time, and went out on his feet as a desperate seeker for reality, for something that would “speak to his condition.” Everywhere on his travels he found the preachers whom he met “hollow and empty.” You must remember that the persons he calls “priests” were Presbyterian ministers. As he wandered about, however, he gathered up from “tender” people a great many fresh ideas and transforming insights. He saturated himself with the New Testament and the prophets, and little by little, during the four years of his wanderings, he began to have great mystical experiences of Christ’s direct work on his soul, of God’s enveloping love, and of the authentic reality of the Pentecostal power of the Spirit. These experiences, which he called “openings,” gave him an unparalleled degree of certainty and a convincing power. In fact, his religious experiences give him a place in the list of the foremost Christian mystics of history.

By 1647 he knew that he had found what he sought, and from that time on he began to gather kindred spirits around him, remarkable persons like Elizabeth Hooton, James Nayler, Richard Farnsworth and William Dewsbury. They were his first disciples. Five years later, in 1652, he found in the neighborhood of Pendle Hill, “a great people to be gathered,” and an immense conviction followed, which marks the birth of Quakerism as a successful movement. Out of the conviction of the northern “seekers” he secured Swarthmoor Hall as the center of his mission, and sixty highly qualified “Publishers of Truth” to assist him in proclaiming the Quaker message. The visit to Pendle Hill is the epoch-making event in Quaker history.

At this stage, organization of the movement was hardly thought of. The thrilling thing was the certainty of God’s light and love in the individual’s soul. The day dawn and the daystar had risen in their hearts; that was enough. They

knew that the light of Christ had broken in on their souls and they called themselves “Children of the Light.” They no more felt the need of an organization than two young lovers do, or than the members of a happy family do. They sat down in intimate worship together, tremulous with emotion, and they let Christ take care of the result. There is no doubt that they trembled and the name *Quaker* was given to them, and stuck to them, because they actually quaked. There was, too, a striking return to Pentecostal experience of new spiritual life and power. Early Quakerism was an intense mass movement of the Pentecostal type. These people had discovered a new energy.

“I saw the Light of Christ,” Fox says, “that it shines through all.” “The ocean of Life and Light and Love flow over all oceans of darkness.” “One person in the power of God can shake the world for ten miles around.” Yes, for ten thousand miles. The movement was spontaneous and dynamic and grew by spiritual contagion, like the early Franciscan movement, and it remained for a long period very much like the Third Order of St. Francis. It grew amazingly in the eight years between 1652 and 1660 and the number of members leaped to about forty thousand in England alone in that period.

There are no marks of church structure in this early movement. Those who composed it had revolted from the heavy hand of organization and from the rigidity of what they called theological “notions.” What seemed to them the most certain fact of their own experience was the surge of the Spirit within and the revealing light of Christ operating in the soul. This was not a speculative theory. It was a thrilling, palpitating experience. They did not at this stage think of themselves as a new sect, a new denomination. George Fox himself said we belong to “what was before all sects.” They thought in all sincerity that they were the “seed,” “the first fruits” of Christ’s restored and renewed universal

Church of the Spirit. This movement which they were launching was to be essential Christianity, the thing itself. Of that no Quaker in George Fox's lifetime doubted. Strangely enough it was not by any means an impossible dream.

If the movement was to grow and spread and multiply as a "seed" should do, it must be kept in the vital process of life and unfolding development; not arrested and hardened into system and formality. There was for a long period no rigid list of members. "All the faithful men and women (i.e. all who attended meetings with regularity) whose faith stands in the power of God have a right of membership," according to a minute of London Yearly Meeting of 1676. The movement was managed and directed by persons possessing "gifts" rather than by chosen officers. There was no clear differentiation of officials before the year 1725, which marks the second stage of Quakerism.

It is an interesting fact that even the degree of organization implied by the name "Society of Friends" does not appear before the Restoration, i.e. 1660. In fact, the first existing reference to the term "Society of Friends" is 1667. Before this date the members are loosely called "Children of the Light," or "the Seed," or "Friends," and by the world "Quakers." The word "Society" was chosen to express the ideal of Quaker simplicity in organization. It meant then what we mean now by "Fellowship" — a vital spiritual group. It avoided the memory and the suggestion of danger which the word "Church" connoted to their minds. They wanted to be removed as far as possible from the danger of corporate compulsion in all matters which concerned the individual's relation with God, and in the deep-lying and sacred issues of faith and practice. They were feeling after a genuine basis of spiritual liberty, equality, and fraternity. They were endeavoring to provide free and ample scope for the life and growth of the soul of man both upward and outward.

At this early stage, and throughout the period of George Fox's life, nobody either outside or inside the Quaker movement thought of it in terms of an organized Protestant denomination. It had no ordained officials. It had no formulated and recognized creed. It had no sacramental ordinances. The existing churches of the period, Roman Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian, Baptist and Congregational all considered no body of Christians a church without those three essential aspects: ordination, creed, sacraments.

In one other respect Friends of the early period deviated from all existing Protestant churches. They did not regard the scriptures as the infallible "Word of God." They loved these scriptures with their whole heart. One of George Fox's hostile critics admitted that if the Bible were lost it could have been reproduced from the memory of George Fox. They were all saturated in it and quoted it most aptly and effectively. But the ultimate authority for them was always Christ, the living Word of God, interpreted for them in the New Testament, but still abiding, and revealing Himself in their own souls as Guide, Light and Leader. That was essentially their new message.

How George Fox himself felt about a creed comes to light very clearly in what he said and did and wrote when the Congregationalists adopted their "Declaration of Faith and Order" at the Savoy Conference in 1658. Fox says, in his Journal "Before this time the church-faith (so-called) was given forth, which was said to have been made at the Savoy in eleven days' time. I got a copy before it was published, and wrote an answer to it; and when the church-faith was sold in the streets, my answer was sold also. This angered some of the Parliament men so that one of them told me, 'they must have me to Smithfield' (i.e. to be burnt). I told him, 'I was above their fires and feared them not.' Reasoning with him, I wished him to consider 'had all people been without a faith these sixteen hundred years that now

the priests (i.e. Congregational ministers) must make them one?' Did not (and this is the Quaker point of view), Did not the apostle say that Jesus was the author and finisher of their faith? And since Christ Jesus was the author of the apostles' faith, of the church's faith in primitive times, and of the martyr's faith, should not all people look unto Him to be the author and finisher of their faith, and not to the priests? Much work we had about the priest-made faith."

In no uncertain note he indicates here that "priest-made faiths" or "council-made faiths," or "convention-made faiths" are mental constructions, ideologies, (his word is "notions") which tend to be congealed substitutes for the soul's personal discovery of Christ, and for a vital correspondence with the divine mind and will and guiding leadership.

It is true — only too true — that many times in a history of nearly three hundred years Friends have attempted to produce these man-made faiths. Once in Barbados, in a moment of weakness, George Fox himself signed a credal letter, and in other times of crisis sporadic attempts have been made to hold the line at some fixed point of doctrine. But these "declarations" have always been temporary expedients. They have always failed to express the central and abiding core of life and faith of the onward moving Quaker movement.

It is also true that the Society of Friends has occasionally gravitated in the direction of becoming itself a rigid and congealed sect. The pressure from above, that is from the leaders of the Society, to turn the Friends into a solidified "peculiar people," with a fixed garb and form of speech, hedged about and isolated from "the world" by carefully devised regulations and testimonies, is still remembered by some of us. This happened in the second period, not in the first. It came from outside influences, especially from the powerful contemporary wave of quietism,

rather than from the genius and spirit of early Quakerism. What happened was that nearly every aspect of life, including the direction of love and affection in marriage and the height of one's gravestone after death, was regulated. The Discipline was a hard and fast system, which expected conformity. The elders in those days actually "elдерed," and stood like adamant for a well defined status quo. A rhythmic and cadenced tone of voice was expected if the preaching was to possess unction. The message must show no sign or indication of previous preparation. "Thou shouldst not have been thinking," was the comment of an elder to me in the early days of my ministry, and he represented a long and weighty tradition of control. The hardening of the arteries of the Society was much in evidence in my youth, and one saw that a "society" could become, in fact had become, as rigid and inelastic as a stiffly organized church might be.

Well, that epoch has ended. We are deciding now, it is a matter of our destiny to decide which ideal is to be the ideal of Quakerism for the future.

Is our Quakerism to be an open or a closed type of religion? Open religion means a type that is uncongealed, fresh, free, formative and in vital contact with the creative stream of divine life. Open religion has faith in the spiritual capacity of the soul and confidence that God and man are akin and essentially belong together. Open religion, therefore, is expectant, forward looking. It prizes the past, but believing profoundly that God is a living God, it sees more yet of love and truth and goodness before us. Its ultimate assurances are not in books or creeds or formulations or arguments, but in the soul's experience of the reality and Christlikeness of God. It dares to leave religion free to grow with the growing world and growing mind, and to sail the uncharted seas with God. The Society of Friends in its early formative period was a striking illustration of open religion. The day dawn and the daystar had arisen in the hearts of these "Children

of the Light,” and they moved forward.

Closed religion, on the other hand, stands for the finality of the formulations of the past. The returns are assumed to be all in. Truth has been fully revealed “by them of old time.” The function of religion of this type is to interpret the sacred deposit from the past, the truth once and for all time delivered. There is, I suppose, no existent church or denomination all of whose members are now committed to that backward-looking program. There are Christians of the open type in even the most conservative groups.

It seems to me to be a major issue for the Society of Friends today whether on the whole its emphasis is to be, once more, as in the beginning, for this type of open, expectant religion, or whether it is to seek for comfortable formulations that seem to ensure its safety, and that will be hostages against new and dangerous enterprises in the realm of truth.

Timidity, security and conformity marked our middle period. Though it often produced beautiful, saintly characters, it was an era of waning energy, of shrinking numbers. The handwriting was on the wall pointing to an unmistakable terminus. A new awakening has come to us. We have experienced a recovery. There have been among us new stirrings of life. The world at large, and the churches in particular, have turned to us with a renewed expectation. They are grateful for our work of relief and reconstruction, but they are even more concerned to see whether we have something fresh and new to say about life and immortality. Are we charged with hope and faith and vision or are we busy endeavoring to coin repetitive phrases and to become secure resting places for the mind?

Our very life is at stake on these issues. There are obviously many Friends who want us to be a safe and rigid sect. They have lost faith in the leadership of a living Christ in communion with the soul of man. The recovery of this

faith in the living Christ as an eternal presence is essential to our very existence as a vital religious body. We need once more to be able to say with a Christian in the second century: "Christ is forever being reborn in the hearts of His followers."

There is no doubt that some Friends do not kindle over a Light within the soul which no darkness puts out. They want stability and a plain basis of authority and security. But I believe that in the main the awakened Friends in the world today feel their kinship with the founders of our Quaker faith and want to move forward once more and break new ground and win a new following from present day "seekers," and above everything else to become a fresh and responsive organ for the life of the Spirit in the world of today and tomorrow.

II. The Quaker Way Of Life

I have insisted often enough that no significant movement can ever be understood until it is studied in the light of its historical background and its temporal setting. This is peculiarly true of the Quaker movement. George Fox was not the originator of a new stock of ideas and ideals. He was the convinced and dynamic interpreter, the articulate prophet, in fact, of a group of truths and principles that had long been in circulation. He became the effective organizer of a Society, a beloved community, which incarnated and propagated those truths and principles.

If I were to pick out one aspect of this Quaker way of life which is most basic to it, I should choose the rugged feature of sincerity. That trait characterized George Fox throughout his entire life. There was a saying in circulation while Fox was still an apprentice in Nottinghamshire, "If George says Verily, there is no altering him." His father was known throughout the region of Fenny Drayton as "righteous Christopher," and the son exhibited throughout his life "the

brave old wisdom of sincerity.” He found in his beloved Gospel of John that doing the truth is the way into the light and he inaugurated a Society that was first of all committed not to saying but to doing the truth.

His hate of sham underlies a great many of his so-called peculiarities. His refusal to take off his hat or to tip it as a mark of honor to a human person was no doubt carried to an extreme point of emphasis and proved to be the cause of many severe prison sentences, but in all these things he was uttering his powerful protest against the shams of hollow fashionable manners. The same thing applies to his stark simplicity of address and language. He would not pluralize a single person. He would not use any form of compliment unless he could use it with absolute honesty. It should be said that these peculiarities of speech and of refusal to remove the hat, and the further refusal to take any form of judicial oath, which cost an immense amount of suffering, were not novelties introduced by George Fox. They already were existing traits among “tender” people belonging to small mystical groups in the Commonwealth era. At a later date these costly efforts to purify manners of daily life and to scale them down to a basis of utter sincerity were turned into the badges of a “peculiar people,” and in the process they lost their original meaning.

Oliver Wendell Holmes has somewhere described minute forms of life so transparent that one can look through their bodies and see their hearts beat and their lungs breathe. Such transparency of purpose, such purity of intention and motive, was a feature of this effort of Fox to penetrate all etiquette and intercourse between persons with sincerity, and with the elimination of sham.

This sincerity and honesty, of course, applied to all business relations and dealings, but the principle went much deeper. It was a principle of life. You were to be through and through what you professed to be. There is a fine text in the

Psalms: “Thou hast visited me in the night and searched me in the dark and thou hast found nothing wrong.” I need hardly say, we are all only too conscious of it, that is a goal Quakers strive toward, not a terminus that has been reached.

It was on this same basis of sincerity that George Fox revolted from the use of theological “notions” and creedal statements, and brought religion down to a secure basis of experience of life, of tested reality, and of discovered truth translated into action. To say or hear exalted phrases from a pulpit, or to sing hymns of lofty import, and then to go home and act precisely as though these exalted things had never been said, struck at his life, and threw him into a state of agony. It is impossible ever to estimate rightly the essential significance of the Quaker movement without a clear appraisal of the importance of this call to stark sincerity. And this call to sincerity lies at the root of the Quaker attempt to live the simple life. There is no fixed standard of simplicity. What is very simple for one person often seems very complex and extravagant for another person. There is no known calculus of simplicity. Simplicity at its best and truest is this utter honesty of heart and life, this complete sincerity of soul before God and in relation with our fellowmen so that we truly struggle to be what we tell God we want to be and what we profess in our social relations to be. A Quaker must get out and keep out of the ruts of duplicity and sham. That is a basic Quaker way of life which gets back to its original spirit.

The next basic trait which I shall select is the emphasis on spiritual nurture. If one may judge by the writers of Quaker journals, and I have read almost every one of them, it becomes evident that these pillar Friends rated spiritual nurture very near the top of the scale of Quaker virtues. It is indubitably the trait that has secured our survival. It is the reason why we are here. Throughout our history in most of the Disciplines, the Queries — those silent confessionals

of life — have asked questions like these: Do parents and those having care of youth early instruct them in the principles of Truth? Do you bring up your children in the nurture of the Truth? Every home was to be a vital center, a hotbed as it were, for the formation, the culture, the growth of the essential principles of the spiritual life. There is no substitute for the home as a nursery of the spirit.

Propagation of Quaker ideals of life was implicit rather than explicit, like the mathematics of the honeybee and the spider. It was done by contagion, by unconscious imitation. The important features were not so much explained as exhibited in life and action. You learned to live by being in the currents of life. The element of hush and silence is of course of vast importance in all these matters of nurture. Birthright is no doubt a poor word, but there was a certain richness of provision which went with it at its best. “Things provided came without the sweet sense of providing.” You simply drew upon an inheritance which became yours as naturally as the mother’s milk nourishes the child.

The unbroken stream of visiting Friends who came into every Quaker home was a unique method of carrying on and of heightening this enrichment of life in the home. Sooner or later the most eminent persons in the Society, both at home and abroad, came with their benediction of sweetness and light, and in the religious “opportunity” with the family, which was an essential feature of the visit, a season of refreshment from on high often attended it and left a rich deposit in the soul.

The extraordinary interest in education, which has always characterized Friends in every period, is the flowering out of this deep concern for spiritual nurture. Wherever the meeting house went, the Quaker school, if in any way possible, sprang up beside it. These schools in their first intention were invariably nurseries of spiritual culture. They informed the mind, but above everything else they fed and

nourished the inner life of the child, and carried forward the nurture which the home had begun. The Quaker schools and colleges form one of our major contributions to the world. But we need to ask once more very seriously in the silent confessional of our Queries: Do you still in these modern times in your homes and schools and colleges bring up your children and those under your care in the nurture of Truth?

What comes first to mind when the Quaker way of life is mentioned is, almost certainly, the Quaker faith in the sacredness of human life and the refusal to use violent methods of force to change situations that are manifestly evil. The Quaker has unmistakably committed his trust for moral and social victories to the armor of light and the sword of the spirit, to methods that may be called gentle. He has been pretty consistently the bearer of a testimony for peace and in a good degree he has been a peacemaker. He has suffered much for his unyielding opposition to war. But his attitude toward peace and war is not an isolated attitude. It springs out of a deeper inward soil. It is an essential aspect of a larger whole of life.

Here especially we need to remind ourselves of the background movements which prepared the spiritual climate for the Quaker way of life. The Waldenses from the twelfth century on had stoutly refused to fight or to take human life. They based their scruple on definite texts of Scripture. They took the Sermon on the Mount as a new law to be strictly obeyed. The Third Order of St. Francis inaugurated a truce of God, since in its original intention no member of it might bear arms. The fourteenth century mystics were distinctly on the side of the angels in their desire to be instruments of the Spirit in the reformation of the Church and in the remaking of the world in gentle ways.

Erasmus inaugurated a new era in the testimony for peace. He is one of the profoundest advocates of the peace method that has ever interpreted it. He maintained that

love and patience, innocence and justice, self-restraint and willingness to suffer and endure are the infallible credentials of a Christian. His powerful influence as a scholar and as an interpreter of the New Testament gave these brave ideas of his a new standing in the world. The early Anabaptists and the Spiritual Reformers, both of whom were contemporaries of Luther, show in a marked way the influence of the great mystics before them and of Erasmus who had awakened and inspired them. They went back, as Erasmus had done, not so much to texts of Scripture as to the whole spirit of the New Testament and to what seemed to them to be the way of Christ. This stream of thought had quietly flowed into England in diverse currents and was an essential aspect of many of the mystical groups of the Commonwealth era, when George Fox and William Dewsbury and James Nayler and Isaac Pennington were finding their way into a new manner of life.

However this new warm stream of life and thought may have reached George Fox across the bogs and swamps of the time, he gave it a peculiar color and a curve of direction from his own unique insight and character. William Penn was right when he said that George Fox was “an original and no man’s copy.” He was saturated with the New Testament. He had found his way deeply into the heart of the Gospel, and the light of Christ had broken into his soul with fresh illumination. “I saw the light of Christ,” he says, “shine through all.” As one in the order of the prophets he made a novel contribution of his own to the way of life which the mystics and humanists and spiritual reformers before him had heralded.

In mapping out his path in the early creative days he felt his way along by inward vision. He did not explicitly think it out with his head. He certainly did not rest his case on texts which served as legal commands, though he knew the texts well enough. From somewhere he had caught and

formed a deep-lying philosophy of life, which it is much more important to capture than it is to quote his pithy sayings at critical moments. It seems to me that the main secret is found in his discovery that God and man are never sundered, are never separate entities. There is always a tiny isthmus which links man's soul to the divine eternal mainland to which it belongs. The approach to God is not primarily up through nature and the natural order; it is rather through the soul of man which is essentially spirit and therefore may commune with Spirit.

To be "saved" for these early Quakers did not mean escaping the fires of Hell and gaining an entrance through the pearly gates into a peaceful Heaven. It meant an inward transformation of spirit and way of life. It was the birth of a new love, a new passion for holy living, a hate of sin both within and without. Salvation was an actual spiritual conquest and a new dynamic of life.

This Quaker philosophy of life was not a speculation and it was more than a faith. It was a vivid experience. The Light from beyond actually broke in on them and flowed over all their darkness. They knew God experimentally. They felt the healing drop into their souls from under God's wings. And with it came the assurance that this inward event was possible for everyone possessed of a soul made in God's image. If this be so then it follows as a corollary that every man is highborn, with immense possibilities, and is infinitely precious. He may muckrake in the dirt, but there is a crown of righteousness hovering above his head, if he would only look up and see it!

This estimate of human life is an essential feature of Quakerism, when one goes back to its headwaters. It was implicit rather than articulate, but it colored the whole Quaker attitude toward life and formed the spring and motive of the costly peace testimony. In an Epistle of the year 1659, George Fox wrote: "All Friends everywhere, who are dead to

all carnal Weapons and have beaten them to pieces, stand in that which takes away the occasion of Wars, in the Power which saves men's lives, and destroys none, nor would have others (destroy)." He quotes no texts. He gives no reasons. He simply says Friends cannot do the things which war involves.

Quakerism, then, let us say, is a bold experiment, not merely in pacifism, in the midst of warring peoples, but an experiment with patience and endurance to exhibit a way of life which implements this high estimate of man's divine possibilities, and which even in the fell circumstances of war and hate goes on with a service of love and a mission of good will, the condition of peace. Mahatma Gandhi has described his life work as "My Experiments with Truth." I should like to have that term applied to our Quaker service: "The Quaker Experiments with Truth."

Friends who have seen the significance of this experiment, this way of life, can be counted on to be purveyors of peace, both in peace-time and in war-time. They will not fight nor be entangled in the mechanisms of war. They will be calm and heroic in other ways. They will make heavy sacrifices to transmit their faith in services of love. They will die if it will demonstrate their faith and their truth. But they will not endorse war methods or voluntarily take part in a system that is engaged in carrying on war. There ought to be a world like this diviner one of which the Quakers dream; and they propose to go on living for it, suffering for it, and if necessary, dying for it. The testimony I am talking about is not negative. It does not begin with "Thou shalt not". It is first and last a positive and creative way of life and of enlarging the area of light and truth and love.

This spirit and way of life which explain the Quaker attitude to war lie also behind the humanitarian endeavors of Friends from the days of George Fox to the present time.

That does not mean that Friends substitute love for force. They do believe that love is infinitely greater than force, but they know clearly enough that wrong social and economic conditions cannot be radically changed merely by loving those who are most responsible for the wrong, or by relieving the sufferings of those who are wronged. But the solution of the issues behind the ills of life can be better found, Friends believe, by those who work from the inside, who share sacrificially in the sufferings and who feel the burden of the tragic situations, than by those who stand off outside and merely apply a “magic” ideology.

Finally, here at the end, I shall put what might well have come first, the constant return of Friends to the springs and sources of life in worship. We may hold it as settled that we cannot change the world from ways of war to ways of peace, nor can we rebuild the social order on right lines for future generations, without the influence and guidance and inspiration of vital religion. A world built on purely secular lines would be a world that would fester and spoil and corrupt as has always happened. We must above everything else find our way back to the springs of life and refreshment for the hearts and souls of men. Religious faith when it takes us back to the true source of power removes from the mind the peril of bewildering unsettlement. It turns water to wine. It brings prodigals home. It sets men on their feet. It raises life out of death. It turns sunsets to sunrises. It makes the impossible become possible. The master secret of life is the attainment of the power of serenity in the midst of stress and action and adventure.

One of the most significant contributions which the Quakers have made has been their discovery of the value of silent communion and their practice of it as a source of strength and equipment. They begin all their meals in silence. They open all their meetings with a time of quiet, even their meetings for business, and they approach every

practical task with a period of hush. It may, I think, be taken as a demonstrated fact that hush and silence minister to a consciousness of mutual and reciprocal communion with God. The soul in these deep moments of quiet seems to be both giving and receiving, to be breathing in a diviner life, and to be pouring out in response its own highest and noblest aspirations and expectations. Different exponents of religious faith differ widely in their emphasis on what is essential in belief and form and practice, but the representatives of all faiths, of all communions, of all systems, or of none, might find themselves moved, quickened, vitalized, refreshed, and girded for the duties and tasks of life by periods of expectant, palpitating hush with others who are fused together into one group of worshipping men and women.

Since the last world war, we have had many experiences of silence, in which a whole city, or even an entire nation, seemed somehow to find itself unified through an awe-inspiring hush, and more than that, to be lifted into communion with a vast invisible fellowship and with the Father of us all. It has well been called "the way of wonder," and I would add that it is the way of expectancy. Sometimes it may be as important to get away from the problems of thinking as it is to get away from the yoke of business, or the press of the crowd. There is as much need of a holiday from the problems of the mind as there is for relief from hurry and worry and grind of work.

There are deeps in us all far below our ideas. There is in fact a substratum which is the mother-soil out of which all our ideas and purposes are born, as capes of cloud are born out of the viewless air. To feed or to fertilize that subsoil of our conscious life is far more important than to capture and to organize a few stray thoughts. To discover how to vitalize and to flood with power this fundamental stratum of our being is, after all, to uncover one of the master secrets

of life. Just that is what seems to happen to some of us in the hush and mystery of intimate contact with divine currents, in the living silence of corporate worship.

It is like a ship in a lock. Here the ship is, shut in by great gates before and behind. Its driving engines have slowed down; its speed has diminished to naught. It is no longer going anywhere. And yet all the time the water is rising underneath the ship, and when the gate in front swings open, and the ship emerges from its period of full stop, it will go out for its journey on a higher level and carry its burden of freight henceforth on a new plane.

I have read of a nurse who, during the influenza epidemic of 1918, became utterly worn out and incapable any longer of coherent effort. One day when at the limit of herself she resolved to slip away and sit in the quiet with a group of worshippers. She did so. The result was that the whole current of her life was altered in the hour of genuine worship. She felt herself restored, calmed and rebuilt. She returned to her work with a freshness of spirit, a renewed will, and she found herself raised to a new level of life and action, like the ship emerging from the lock.

There are moments when the walls between the seen and unseen appear to grow thin and almost vanish away, and one feels himself to be in contact with more than himself. The threshold of consciousness, which in our attentive and focused states of mind bars the entrance of everything that does not fit the business in hand, drops to a different level and allows a vastly widened range of experience, and we suddenly discover that we can draw upon more of ourselves than at other times. And in these best moments of widened range when we share the cooperative influence of many expectant worshippers around us, it seems often as though streams of life and light and love and truth flow in from beyond our margins, and we come back to work and business and thought again, not only calmed, rested and made serene,

but also more completely organized and vitalized and equipped with new energies of the spirit.

This hush and silence, therefore, of which I have been speaking, must be thought of as preparation and fortification for the main business of life. John Woolman, one of the humblest men that ever lived, became a veritable dynamo against the evil of slavery. He describes how he learned to wait in patience and to dwell deep in the life and love of God, and then when the time came for speech or action, he was prepared to “stand as a trumpet through which the Lord speaks.”

If the Quakers in this generation have in some measure taken up and borne and possibly relieved the burdens of the world’s suffering, it has been made possible through a deeper preparation for life than the casual beholder was aware of. Friends come back from their worship with a new sense of ordination, but not the ordination of human hands. Something has happened in the stillness that makes the heart more tender, more sensitive, more shocked by evil, more dedicated to ideals of life, and more eager to push back the skirts of darkness and to widen the area of light and love.

The sensitiveness of the compass needle to the magnetic currents in which it moves reveals the fact that it has not only been carefully balanced on its pivot, but that it has also itself been magnetized and transformed through all its molecules. Somewhat so the dynamic worker at the tasks of the world must be organized within, must be brought into parallelism with celestial currents and be penetrated with energies beyond himself.

My beloved teacher, Josiah Royce, used to tell of an experience and a conviction which enables a man “to stand anything that can happen to him in the universe.” But we must do more than stand the waterspouts which break over us and rage around us. Our task is to bind up the

brokenhearted, to be a cup of strength in times of agony, to set men on their feet when the foundations seem to be caving in, and to feed and comfort the little children amidst the wreckage of war and devastation. Those who are to do such service need to know:

That God at their fountains
Far off hath been raining.

The Quaker Doctrine Of Inward Peace

Howard H. Brinton



PENDLE HILL PUBLICATIONS
WALLINGFORD, PENNSYLVANIA

ABOUT THE AUTHOR Howard Brinton has been a professor or lecturer at Guilford, Earlham, Mills, Haverford, and Bryn Mawr Colleges, and at Woodbrooke, one of the Selly Oak Colleges in Birmingham in England. He has also worked in Europe for the American Friends Service Committee and in Japan. From 1936 to 1950 he, with his wife, were Directors of Pendle Hill and from 1950 to 1952 he was Director. Now Director Emeritus, he continues to give classes each year on Quakerism and mysticism at Pendle Hill.

Published 1948, 1964 by Pendle Hill
Republished electronically © 2003 by Pendle Hill
http://www.pendlehill.org/pendle_hill_pamphlets.htm
email: publications@pendlehill.org

I. Pressures Of Past Years And The Quaker Way Of Meeting Them

We are all suffering from a sense of pressure. Feeling that our ancestors had ways of meeting the pressures of their day, we sometimes imagine that we might imitate their ways with profit. But it may be that their situation was so different from ours that we cannot imitate them. It is probable that we are living in an environment which exerts more pressure on us than was exerted by their environment upon them. The difference between four miles an hour in a buggy and forty miles an hour in an automobile measures in some degree the difference between the speed of living a century or more ago and the present speed. It is an astonishing fact that most of our labor saving devices have not saved us any labor. They have merely increased the number of things which we do. Because our friends can reach us easily on the telephone we are the helpless, obedient slaves of the telephone bell whose demands can no more be disobeyed than can the edict of a dictator. Because we can go anywhere easily and quickly, we go, believing that, as long as we are in motion, something is being accomplished.

But we cannot blame our increased restlessness entirely on the new tools which the restlessness uses to express itself. Some other force is obviously at work. We are busier than we used to be even when we use ancient tools and methods. Let us compare, for instance, the bulky volumes which contain the minutes of our present day Yearly Meetings with the slender pamphlets of a century ago or with the two or three handwritten pages of two centuries ago. Obviously the increase in Yearly Meeting activities is not entirely due to better tools to carry out these activities. For some reason we desire to be more active. In former Yearly Meetings far more time was given to spiritual admonitions and silent waiting. There were, for example, no standing

committees in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting until near the beginning of the nineteenth century and then, only two — the committee on Westtown School and the committee on Indians. The sense of pressure under which our present presiding clerks work during a Yearly Meeting was, so far as one can see, absent. There were long periods of waiting while minutes were being written. This example of an earlier absence of hurry might be duplicated in other fields such as home life and business. We are busier because we want to be busier. Why is this? Our gadgets could save us work if we wanted them to do so. Think how much back-breaking labor on the farm would have been saved by our ancestors if they had had our tools without our restlessness.

We sometimes hear a psychological explanation which undoubtedly contains some truth. Busyness, restlessness, the desire for activity is a form of escapism; we are trying to escape from ourselves. Not being able to face our own inner lives with all their stresses and strains, their disorder and chaos, we occupy ourselves as much as possible with what is outward. We do not like our own company so we feverishly seek the company of others. We compensate for inner weakness by seeking outward sources of strength. We are continuously in motion because we do not know what to do when we are still.

But this type of explanation, however true and useful, does not take us very far. In the first place the activist can and usually does reverse it, declaring that all attempts at inward development are forms of escapism. Why should anyone stand still and retreat into himself when there is so much to be done, unless he is afraid of facing the world, unless its problems are too difficult for him to solve? And in the second place this psychological explanation leaves unanswered the question as to why our inner life is so weak or disordered that we fear to face it and so seek relief in outward activity.

There is a partial explanation of our inner disorder which is based on the fact that our interests are spread out over a number of fields in which the standards of behavior are not consistent with one another. Our home creates one set of requirements, our social club another, our meeting for worship another, our business or the business on which we are dependent, another. In each case we attempt to fit ourselves into the code of behavior of a certain group of persons and this code may be and often is different from the code of other groups. The standard of behavior in our religious group for instance may be quite different from the standard in our business group. The result is an inner strain. While present in a given group we suppress the standards of the other groups, but we do not eliminate them entirely from our minds. A sense of pressure and tension results. Our ancestors were better integrated within themselves because their lives were better integrated without, they belonged to fewer different kinds of groups. In early Pennsylvania, for example, everything, whether spiritual, intellectual or economic, centered in the Quaker meeting, a condition which made possible an inner life in which there were few conflicting interests.

The activist who seeks explanations based on outer facts declares that our restlessness is due to the terrible state of the world at present. If we could just get the outer world in order we could then feel inward peace. But perhaps he has not the whole truth, perhaps the more fundamental difficulty is with our inward world. As long as there is inward chaos, all outward actions will be contaminated by this chaos. In such a case all that we do will promote rather than allay confusion. We seek to bring peace in the world when there is no peace in our hearts and as a result we infect the outer world with our inner conflict. As an old Chinese saying has it, "The right action performed by the wrong man is the wrong action."

Such inward references are typical of the teachings of Jesus. He had little to say regarding better laws, better governments, better agreements between nations to keep the peace, better organized relief work. "First be reconciled to thy brother and then come and offer thy gift." "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time — Thou shalt not kill, — but I say unto you that whosoever is angry with his brother" — and so on through the whole gospel. Such an inward emphasis is also the principal characteristic of Quakerism, which seeks to be based on New Testament Christianity. Above the outward Bible, the outward sermon, the outward Christ, the outward sacrament, the Society of Friends has uplifted the inward revelation, the Inward Christ, the inward sacrament as of supreme, though not exclusive, importance. For the Quaker, outward and inward combine in an intimate organic relation, but the inward is primary. Accordingly, when we speak of the Quaker way of meeting pressures we must expect that the answer will mainly concern our inward life and only secondarily the changes which we can produce in the outer world. If a tire is too soft we say that the outer pressure is greater than the inner pressure and we remedy the difficulty by increasing the inner pressure. It would be possible to inflate the tire by lessening the outer pressure, but this could be done only under highly specialized conditions. Nor do we meet this problem of the soft tire by going ahead of the car with tools to make the road smoother. Rather we increase the inner pressure so that all jars, bumps, sudden stops or starts can be bearably dealt with.

In similar fashion a person in danger of being overwhelmed by outside pressures can meet them best by increasing his inner dimensions. He can of course try the other plan, — creating changes in his environment in order to reduce the pressures. In the course of such efforts men have contrived a vast array of tools and scientific instruments with which great changes have been brought about in the

outer world. We are able to control almost everything except the weather and we seem to be on the verge of controlling that. But one very important element has been left out — we have not succeeded in controlling ourselves. We are still ill at ease, restless, unsatisfied, driven to increasing activity by every new invention. We overlook the all-important alternative to outer change — the increase of our inner resources, our inner strength and stability. Only so can we balance the outer forces and meet every jar and bump on the road with a power which holds its own, which may give way a little only to assert itself the more.

This then is the first answer which we propose to the problem. The Quaker way is so to order the inner life that outer pressures can be adequately met and dealt with. This is not the method of the ascetic who conquers his sensual desires by violence toward himself, nor of the hermit who avoids his fellow men, nor of the stoic who makes himself independent and indifferent to the world around him. It is rather an ordering of the inner life, so that there will be a proper balance of inner and outer, the inner holding first place. In one sense we become independent of outer tumults and conflicts, but in another sense we are not independent because we must seek to reproduce in the world around us the inner peace created within ourselves. If we do not seek to reproduce our inner peace it will become lifeless and static.

II. The Attainability Of Inner Peace

But is inner peace, free from all sense of pressure, attainable? Many would say no. We have a physical body whose demands are insatiable and frequently quite at variance with the standards of the society in which we move. Also we are bound by many ties to a world around us which is in a state of conflict. We should not, even if we could, sever our ties with it. We cannot turn a deaf ear to the cries of suffering around us which disturb our peace.

This question as to the attainability of inner peace is closely related to one of the many issues in the 17th century between the early Friends and the Puritans. The Quakers maintained that perfection and freedom from a sense of guilt resulting in complete peace within could be attained. The Puritans held that perfection and its consequent inner peace and freedom were not attainable. To support their view the Quakers quoted such scripture as this, "Mark the perfect man," his end is peace (Ps. 37:37), "Be perfect ... be of one mind, live in peace" (2 Cor. 13:11), "Now the God of peace ... make you perfect" (Heb. 13:20 f.), "Until we all come ... unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13). There can be little doubt that early Christianity accepted the doctrine of the possibility of human perfection here and now, in this present life.

But for the Puritans and for many modern theologians man can never be free from sin and should therefore never be free from a sense of guilt. He is born in sin, they say, and remains in sin just as long as he is a part of a sinful fleshly world. The penalty may be removed by an undeserved miracle of divine grace, but the sin remains. Christ was perfect, but his perfection is wholly beyond our human reach. Though his life is our ideal, it is not an attainable ideal.

It would be interesting to speculate as to how much of our modern restlessness is due to our Puritan inheritance which demands a perpetual tension between the real and the ideal. Though Quakerism was, about the beginning of the 18th century, more influential than Puritanism in colonial America, immediately thereafter Puritanism increased while Quakerism decreased. The new on-coming mechanical age with its outward orientation was less congenial to Quakerism with its inwardly directed spirit. As a result of being outwardly directed, the human soul tended to become reduced to the level of that outward nature in which its attention was absorbed. Humanity united inseparably with the unceasing flux of material nature and

sensual desire and postponing to the next world the goal of peace and freedom from guilt, was doomed to restlessness, to the hopeless search for the unattainable. The Absolute vanished leaving only the relative. The goal receded into infinite distance leaving only means and tools. Modern man became a worshipper of tools. His philosophy is pragmatism. By removing peace and perfectability from all things this side of the grave, the Puritans doomed themselves to continual dissatisfaction and frustration, their only hope of salvation being a promise set forth for them in a sacred book. Their descendants built a great material structure in which the human soul wanders homeless and without peace.

George Fox had many arguments with the Puritans on the possibility of peace and perfection in this life. To some who “pleaded for sin” as he expressed it, he said: “If your faith be true it will give you victory over sin and the devil and purify your hearts and consciences” (Journal I, p. 56)¹, and to others who said “we must always be striving” he replied, “it is a sad and comfortless sort of striving, to strive with a belief we should never overcome.” (Journal II, p. 218)

His assertion of the possibility of perfection and inward peace may seem at first sight to be based on pride and egotism but the opposite is in reality the case. Its basis is the possibility of complete obedience to the will of God in humility and self surrender. For the Quaker, perfection and its consequent inner peace can be reached when all of God’s immediate requirements as understood are faithfully met. These requirements are never so great that the individual cannot meet them. God requires more of a man than of a boy, more of a saint than of a sinner. Robert Barclay, the greatest Quaker theologian, calls this “a perfection proportionable and answerable to man’s measure whereby we are kept from transgressing the law of God and enabled to answer what he requires of us, even as he that improved his two talents so as to make of them four perfected his work ... no less than he that made of his five, ten.” (Apology,

Prop. VIII). As we are faithful to the light that we have, more will be given. Thus a soldier whose conscience tells him to fight must fight or be a coward. But if he is faithful to the very best that is given to him from on High and endeavours through prayer and worship to increase his sensitivity to the will of God, he will eventually learn another and better way. "There is a growing in the life even where the heart is purified from sin, even as Christ did grow and wax strong in spirit, for a state of perfection doth not exclude degrees" (Isaac Penington, Works, I, p. 391).

Inner peace comes through obedience to the Divine Voice not, as Jesus pointed out, blindly as a slave obeys a master, but as a friend complies with the wishes of his friend because the two are one in spirit. "Henceforth I call you not servants but friends for the servant knoweth not what his master doeth."

III. Perfection And Pacifism

An important element in this Quaker doctrine of inward peace and its relation to what is somewhat misleadingly called "perfectionism" is indicated in the setting of Jesus' saying "Be ye perfect even as your father which is in heaven is perfect." Jesus begins by saying "Love your enemies" and ends by saying that this kind of perfection which is characteristic of God, who makes "his sun to rise both on the evil and on the good," is possible for men also (Matt. 5:44-48). To be "perfect" is to love your enemies for only by loving your enemies can you remove an inner source of conflict which prevents inner peace. He alone can secure inner peace who is at peace with the world around him even though the world around him may not be at peace with him. Hatred, persecution, cursing (I quote Jesus' list) are expressions of inner disorder. Remove them and peace results; with it will come a sense of achieving that perfection which is characteristic of God who is kind to the evil (Luke

6:35). No man hates others without a sense of guilt, for in hating others he projects on them a secret unknown hatred for himself. Love removes this inner conflict which seeks satisfaction in outer conflict. The pacifist is sometimes called a perfectionist. This is true only in the limited sense that he possesses a means of removing that feeling of guilt in himself which generates conflict and hatred and is generated by them. Only when the pacifist attains inner peace does he truly live up to his name and become a peace-maker and only the peace-maker can attain inner peace.

IV. Inner Conflict And Its Solution As Portrayed In The Quaker Journals

The Society of Friends possesses a great number of spiritual autobiographies or "Journals," as they are usually called, which portray the lives of what might be called "standard Friends." This appellation is justified because these Journals were at one time read in every Quaker household in order to impress on the hearers the type of life which was the true Quaker norm. Partly through them, the Quaker cultural pattern was passed from one generation to another with remarkable success for nearly two centuries. These Journals sometimes begin with a brief account of a period of early innocence, usually followed by a description of childhood frivolities which the writer looks back upon as a waste of time. After that comes a vivid picture of inner conflict. The soul is divided, pulled in one direction by the powers of evil and in the opposite direction by the powers of good. For this season of conflict one example will stand for all. The struggle varies in intensity though it does not vary in character. Job Scott (1751-1793) writes a vivid description of his own four years struggle:

Often in the night and sometimes in the break of day I have returned home from my many meetings grievously condemned, distressed and

ashamed, wishing I had not gone into such company and resolving to do so no more. But soon my resolutions failed me and away I went again and again. The Lord followed me close in mercy and often broke in powerfully upon me turning all my mirth into mourning; yet I still got over the holy witness, did despite to the spirit of grace and repaired again and again to the haunts of diversion. — Adored forever be the name of the Lord, he forsook me not, but followed me still closer and closer and sounded the alarm louder and louder in my ears. — The way was shown me but I would not walk in it. I knew my Lord's will but did it not; mine own I still delighted in. — My days I spent in vanity and rebellion; my nights frequently in horror and distress. Many a night I scarce durst enter my chamber or lay me down in bed ... I prayed, I cried, I repented, I sinned. God still interrupted my career, disturbed my casual satisfaction and blasted all my joys. In pursuing my course I knew I was pursuing my daily and almost unsupportable distress. I knew myself a prisoner and yet I hugged my chains.

This account is condensed from ten pages of Job Scott's Journal (pp. 30-40). The passage presents, perhaps in a form more extreme than the average, a common human experience, which is often unrecognized for what it is — an uneasiness due to a pull on the soul by a Divine Power from above which cannot be escaped. It is the experience described by the Psalmist: "Whither shall I go from thy spirit! or whither shall I flee from thy presence?" (Ps. 139); or by Francis Thompson:

I fled him down the nights and down the days:
 I fled him down the arches of the years.

Every human soul is pursued by the “hound of heaven,” but not every human soul knows what is pursuing him. Job Scott writes of his struggle with an understanding acquired only after the struggle was over. There was no sudden change to a state of peace. He came gradually to realize “that this inward something which had been thus long and powerfully striving with me was the true and living spirit and power of the eternal God, the very same that strove with the old world, influenced the patriarchs, prophets and apostles and visits, strives with and at seasons more or less influences the hearts of all mankind. I now saw this the only principle of all true conversion and salvation; that so long as this was resisted and rejected, separation must infallibly remain between God and the soul, but that whenever this is received and in all things thoroughly submitted to, a reconciliation takes place” (Journal, p. 41). This overcoming of the sense of separation was also an experience of the union of his own will with the will of God:

The one thing needful is real union with God, an actual joining with him in one spirit. Without this union let a man know what he will, believe, possess and enjoy whatever he may or can, but he is an alien and a wanderer on the earth. Nothing else can ever satisfy his soul or abidingly stay his mind. There is no other possible permanent rest for the sole of his foot. He may drive, toil and bustle about and many may think him in a state of enjoyment, but it is all a delusion. In the midst of all earths caresses, if he presumes to declare himself happy he does violence to truth and his own feelings and the truly wise are privy to the lie. If he professes religion, goes to meeting, practices the exteriors of devotion and talks much about faith and godliness, it may for a moment quiet his mind and deceive his soul and others

but long he cannot rest composed without living union with God (p. 43).

This “union” was no submergence of Job Scott’s individuality in some all inclusive Over-Soul, it was rather a willingness to submit to the Divine requirements whatever they might be, a willingness to take his unique individual part in a life greater than his own. “I gave up very fully and from the heart to serve the Lord in the way of his leadings. I forsook rude and vicious company, withdrew into retirement, attended the meetings of Friends and often sought the Lord and waited upon Him in solemn reverential silence alone for his counsel, direction and preservation.” After this shifting from a human-centered to a divine-centered life, Job Scott became aware of many new requirements, which he must meet if he was to retain the inward peace which he had found. One of these was his appearance in vocal ministry in the meeting for worship. The uneasiness created by holding back disappeared. “I felt,” he writes, “the return of peace in my own bosom, as a river of life for a considerable time afterward, sweetly comforting my mind and confirming me in this solemn undertaking” (p. 54). Living up to the divine requirements was no easy matter because new duties were constantly appearing. One of these, for instance, was the requirement to refuse to use the paper currency issued to support the Revolutionary War. Once, when called to undertake a long religious journey, he felt it very hard to leave his wife and children behind and financially dependent on the meeting, but he finally gave way and then he could write: “At this surrender of all things I felt the light of heaven to fill my soul.” Such decisions as this would not have been so difficult as they were if the Divine Presence had always been felt. Job Scott frequently underwent periods of aridity which were especially embarrassing when large crowds expecting to hear his ministry attended a meeting which he was visiting. Times

of doubt, darkness, failure were, he felt, necessary. "I saw pretty clearly," he writes, "in the midst of my deepest depression that if I should be favored with unremitted tranquility and divine enjoyment I should be in danger of spiritual pride and exaltation" (p. 51). But in spite of these ups and downs the search for, and attainment of, inward peace was a clearly defined process. It consisted of a willingness to obey the will of God in so far as that will could be ascertained.

I have dwelt at length on Job Scott because his life is typical of hundreds of others which are portrayed in the Quaker Journals. An initial conflict is followed by a decision which finally ends it and brings peace. But this decision only begins the long spiritual journey on which there are many difficult hurdles to surmount. The Quakers do not believe, as do some other Christians, that man is born in a state of total depravity and remains in it until he is wholly changed by conversion which transforms him from a state of nature to a completed state of grace. Conversion is the beginning not the end of a process. When inward peace disappears it is a sign that the next stage of growth is at hand and peace can only be reached if that growth takes place. A divine call may come requiring an individual to speak in a meeting. If the call is resisted inward peace disappears. In such a state Martha Routh took to her bed and became so ill that her life was despaired of. David Ferris who resisted for many years was troubled with vivid dreams which were clearly reprimands for his delinquency. Finally, to use the homely figure employed by Samuel Bownas, "the ice is broken," the Friend speaks in meeting, perhaps only to utter a single Bible verse. Profound peace again enters the soul. Hugh Judge of Concord Meeting, Pennsylvania, thus writes of his feelings after his first sermon. "My pen is not able to set forth the awful, solemn quiet, the calm, serene state of mind that I enjoyed for many days, so that it seemed that I had gotten into another world." The same peace comes

again and again as each new requirement is met, — the adoption of plain dress, the use of thee and thou instead of you, keeping on the hat or some other act considered ill mannered by the world, undertaking a difficult piece of religious service in a far country when family or business needs might have been thought to demand attention at home. Most significant in this respect is the curtailment of business when the business has grown to such an extent that it interferes with religious duties. The example of John Woolman is best known but almost every Journal writer finds it eventually necessary to exercise some restraint in business. Friends acquired a reputation for honesty and industry which frequently resulted in considerable business success. It has been frequently pointed out by historians, Arnold Toynbee among them in his *Study of History*, that material success weakened the spiritual vitality of the Society of Friends. There is truth in this but in a great many cases Friends found that inward peace could only be attained by reducing their business undertakings. John Barclay speaks for all when he says: “I believe it right to sit loose to this world and the anxieties thereof lest I be incapacitated for performing that service which may be shown to be my duty. I believe it safest for me if in any business it should be one of moderate profit and not involving much attention.”² (John Barclay, Friends Library, VI, p. 402). But such business was far from being the only distraction which could rob the soul of peace. Rebecca Jones writes: “I have shaken my hands from the gain of schoolkeeping” (Journal, p. 187); Catherine Phillips ceases to write poetry; Edward Hicks restrains his inclination to paint pictures: John Ritty reduces time spent in writing books on medicine and William Allen gives up a promising career of scientific research. Such self-surrender is not asceticism, it is an effort to attain integration of personality around a central interest by reducing competing interests. If one’s central interest is business, fundamental yearnings of the soul would be left

unsatisfied. The central interest to which all others are subordinated must be important enough to be worthy of complete, unqualified devotion. The only interest which so qualifies is the religious interest.

V. The Philosophical Basis

A simple philosophy interprets this search for inward peace. Inward peace is the result of inward unity, not just a unity of ideas but a unity of the whole person, including those feelings and intuitions which arise out of the deeper areas of the soul which are beyond conscious thought. This inward unity is produced by the divine Light of Truth shining into the soul from what George Fox called "The hidden unity in the eternal being" (Journal I, p. 29). The primordial unity of the creative source, if unresisted, produces unity in the individual or the group.

No subtle metaphysic is involved here. We are speaking of a unity of will, not of substance. Since there is only one Truth, the parts of the soul, or the individuals in a group, come into unity in so far as they find and follow the one truth, just as the followers of one person come into unity in so far as they follow the will of their leader. The Light is not divided in such a way that there is one spark of divinity in one person and another spark in another. The Light in its wholeness shines into every individual, though that individual's comprehension of it may be very imperfect. In so far as the one Divine Center is approached, so far do the various fragments of an individual person or of a group of persons come into unity.

The process of attaining unity in the individual is similar to the process of attaining unity in the group. A Friends meeting, in making a decision, does not vote, because a vote would emphasize not remove an existing division of opinion. A truth must be sought which transcends the fragmentary insights of various individuals or factions. As

the discussion proceeds each partial insight supplements every other partial insight until truth emerges and the meeting becomes unified in a single insight. The decision thus arrived at is not intended to be a compromise, though it often is a compromise, but a new creation which no member of the group could have arrived at alone. This method does not always succeed but it succeeds often enough to justify the theory behind it. It is definitely a religious method requiring willingness to submerge individual desires and prejudices and to obey the will of God wherever it may lead. Religion in this case is a method whereby, through prayer, worship, and patient waiting often in silence, the soul may become sensitized to the Light of Truth and willing to submit to it. Only through this attitude of obedience can real inner unity arise either in the individual or in the group. Conflict in the soul arises from refusal to accept the truth. As one Quaker journalist, Stephen Crisp, puts it: "My wisdom and reason were overcome by the truth, I could not therewith withstand it and defended it with the same reason by which I resisted it, and so was yet a stranger to the cross that was to crucify me" (Journal, 1694, p. 16). Pride, self-will, an exclusive loyalty to one's own fragmentary viewpoint must be crucified if man is to be resurrected into that newness of life in which he is at peace.

VI. The Place Of Self-Surrender

Self-surrender of man to God is often misunderstood because of the language used in describing it. The word "surrender" seems to imply an attitude of passivity which is out of tune with the tendency of our present age toward extreme activism. The effort at self-annihilation, accompanied by the expectation that, when all human thought and feeling subsides, God may manifest his redeeming power in the soul is sometimes described as

Quiestism. This word too, is misleading. It places the emphasis only on the negative side of this religious experience. In Quakerism the negative is not an end in itself but a preparation for the positive. If the lower is quieted it is only that the higher may have opportunity to assert itself. The weeds must be cleared away if the flower is to grow. The human must be still if the divine is to be heard. In earlier forms of Quaker theology the distinction between the divine and the human is thought of as sharp and definite, in some modern forms divine and human merge as a finger merges into the hand; in either case self-surrender in silent expectant waiting should be the first spiritual exercise, a prerequisite of all others. If divine and human are too closely identified, self-surrender becomes meaningless and man remains entangled in the web of his own weaknesses and contradictions. Inward quieting is the negative side of a positive experience. It may even result in intense activity as is illustrated on almost every page of the Quaker Journals. John Woolman while making a dangerous visit to Indians on the frontier writes: "My mind was centered in resignation in which I always found quietness" (Journal, p. 203).

No Quaker was more feverishly active than Thomas Shillitoe. He visited "in the love of the Gospel" thousands of drinking houses in Ireland, prisoners and outlaws in various lands, King, Czar and Emperor. Nothing could stop him, though he was by nature a shy and timorous character. The following passage from his Journal discloses the source of his strength:

When I am led to take a view of the accumulated difficulties that I must expect in the prosecution of the work before me, my soul is humbled and bowed within me as into the very dust; whereby my mind at times became sorrowfully charged with an apprehension. I should not have strength to proceed agreeably to the

expectation I had given my friends, and thereby shamefully expose myself. But Divine goodness appeared for my help with the animating assurance, that if I remained willing to become like a cork on the mighty ocean of service, which my great Master should require of me, in the storm and in the calm, free from the lead of human reason, not consulting and conferring with flesh and blood, willing to be wafted hither and thither, as the Spirit of the Lord my God should blow upon me, he would care for me every day and every way; so that there should be no lack of strength to encounter all my difficulties. Here my discouragements vanished. (Journal, 1839, Vol. I, pp. 229-230.)

One of the most powerful preachers of the doctrine of complete resignation as the way to inward peace was Elias Hicks. Expressions like the following abound in his published sermons: "I felt nothing when I came into this meeting nor had I a desire after anything but to center down into abasement and nothingness: and in this situation I remained for a while, till I found something was stirring and rising in my spirit. And this was what I labored after — to be empty, to know nothing, to call for nothing, and to desire to do nothing." (The Quaker, vol. I, p. 244).

It would be useless to multiply such examples. In so far as Quietism means the surrender of the human or self-centered will in order that the divine may become active in and through the human, it is a universal Quaker doctrine. Cut off from the higher God-centered will, the lower self-centered will seeks satisfaction in an area too limited to satisfy it. As a result there is no inward peace. But the remedy is not far off. In the silence of prayer, meditation and worship the soul learns to say "not my will but thine be done." The peace of God floods in and along with the peace

of God there also comes sooner or later the call to action without which that peace cannot continue.

George Fox lived a life of tireless activity, but this activity was rooted in inward peace and stillness. Throughout his epistles he calls on Friends to be still. "Stand still in that which is pure after ye see yourselves" (Ep. 10). "Wait in the Light" (Ep. 63). "Standing still in the Light within and therein waiting, ye will see your Savior Christ Jesus" (Ep. 79). "Wait in the Life which will keep you above Words" (Ep. 119). "Be low and still in the Life and Power" (Ep. 146). "In the Stillness and Silence of the Power of the Almighty dwell" (Ep. 201). With this call to stillness there is also a call to that which is cool, and free from the heat of passion and desire. "Dwell in the Cool Sweet Holy Power of God" (Ep. 131), "Dwell in the endless Power of the Lord — that hath the Wisdom which is sweet and cool and pure" (Ep. 242). "Be still and cool in thy own mind and spirit" (Journal I, p. 433).

VII. The Habitation Of Peace

Quaker writers sometimes speak as if there were a calm area in the soul to which one might retire as to a quiet room, well shielded from the outer tumult. Thus Fox writes to some Friends enduring severe persecution (Ep. 206) "All in the power of the living God abide in which ye may feel Life, Peace and Rest and an abiding peace, a secret chamber to turn into" (Ep. 208). And John Woolman writes: "The place of prayer is a precious habitation ... I saw this habitation to be safe ... to be inwardly quiet when there were great stirrings and commotions in the world" (Journal, Whittier Edition, p. 236). John Pemberton writes to Susanna Fothergill in 1755 when the French and Indian war was coming on: "Yet there are such that can, in humility and thankfulness say they are favored with a quiet habitation." And John Barclay writes "Oh it is a sweet thing to get into the calmness, to that spot where all cares, fears, and doubts

are swallowed up” (John Barclay, Letters, 1820). This “chamber,” “habitation” or “spot” is, in Quaker philosophy, that area of perfect unity and peace which existed before all multiplicity and strife. “Be at peace one with another,” writes Fox, “then you will live in the Prince of Peace’s peace and in his Kingdom, Dominion and Life in which is unity, which was before Enmity was” (Ep. 208). “Stand steadfast in the Unchangeable Life and Seed of God which was before all changing and alterings were” (Ep. 76).

VIII. Getting Atop Of Things

That peace can be found within a certain area of the soul is a figure of speech which allocates to space that which is not in space. There is, in Quaker writings, another significant figure based on a space relationship. When Fox describes an encounter with an obstruction of any kind, — a person, a doubt, a temptation, a difficult situation — he often ends with the phrase “but I got atop of it.” In his epistles he frequently gives advice to others to do likewise: “Keep atop of that which will cumber the mind” (Ep. 86), “Take heed of being hurried with many thoughts but live in that which goes over them all” (Ep. 52), “But there is danger and temptation to you of drawing your minds into your business, and clogging them with it: so that ye can hardly do anything to the service of God, but there will be crying my business, my business, and your minds will go into the things and not over the things” (Ep. 131). “Keep your heads above the waters of the sea in which there is a tempest.”

This can be interpreted as meaning that many problems are not soluble on their own level. If there is a conflict of two opposing ideas or feelings, no real solution is arrived at if one simply prevails over the other, eliminating whatever good there may be in the weaker. Too often the weaker is

driven out of sight only to reappear in disguise to continue the conflict. But by achieving a higher, more inclusive experience we can get above the problem, look down on it, and find that it ceases to be a problem. This process is described by the psychologist Jung in more secular terms:

I have often seen individuals who simply outgrew a problem which had destroyed others. This outgrowing revealed itself on further experience to be the raising of the level of consciousness. Some higher or wider interest arose on the person's horizon, and through this widening of his view, the insoluble problem lost its urgency. It was not solved logically in its own terms, but faded out in contrast to a new and stronger life tendency. ... What on a lower level had led to the wildest conflicts and to emotions full of panic, viewed from the higher level of the personality now seemed like a storm in a valley seen from a high mountain top. This does not mean that the thunderstorm is robbed of its reality; it means that instead of being in it, one is now above it. ... The greatest and most important problems of life ... can never be solved, but only outgrown (*Secret of the Golden Flower*, p. 88. Harcourt Brace & Co., Inc., New York).

George Fox in his letter to Cromwell's daughter, Lady Claypole, who was "sick and much troubled in mind" gives advice which fits this doctrine of Jung.

Whatever temptations, distractions, confusions the light doth make manifest and discover, do not look at these temptations, confusions, corruptions; but look at the light, which discovers them, and makes them manifest; and with the

same light you may feel over them, to receive power to stand against them. The same Light which lets you see sin and transgression will let you see the covenant of God, which blots out your sin and transgression, which gives victory and dominion over it, and brings into covenant with God. For looking down at sin and corruption and distraction ye are swallowed up in it: but looking at the light which discovers them, ye will see over them. That will give victory; and ye will find grace and strength: there is the first step to peace. (Journal I., p. 493.)

This is quite different from holding that evil is unreal and hence to be ignored. It means that inward conflict is avoided by a kind of pacifist technique which uses no violence on the evil in ourselves. By fixing our attention on the light, the darkness is not only revealed for what it is but is transcended.

To use Fox's words we "get atop of it." The dark forces of the soul cannot be removed by a direct attack. To fight them is to give them the only real strength which they can possess. They should not be despised or hated. As revealed by the light they must first be accepted for what they are. Then, by allowing the light to shine and so permitting higher forces in the background to emerge and operate, there will arise an interest, a concern, a new life, call it what you will, that will surround and overcome the darkness and center the soul in that which is above it. It is not through a struggle to possess the Light but rather by permitting the Light to possess us that inner darkness is overcome. The Quaker Journals do not indicate that this way is always successful. There are many records of long periods of dryness, but sooner or later refreshing showers descend and new life is generated in the soul.

IX. Inward Peace As A Test Of Guidance

Inward peace is both an end and a means. As a means it becomes an evidence of divine approval while lack of it is an evidence that some divine requirement is not being fulfilled. In a Quaker meeting for the business of church government the following expression is frequently heard: "I would feel most easy," or "I would feel comfortable" if such and such an action were carried through or not carried through, indicating that the inward peace of the speaker would be attained only if a certain course were or were not accomplished. Throughout the Quaker Journals we find frequent reference to the absence of inward peace as a sign that some "concern," possibly to undertake a journey "in the love of the gospel," possibly to engage in some effort for social reform, had been laid upon the individual. When that concern has been carried through there is reference to the return of peace. It is not essential that the undertaking be successful for inward peace to result. It is only necessary that the individual feel that he has done all that he is able to do to carry out the requirement. God does not require more than is possible. He only demands that we live up to our capacity. As for consequences, how can a finite mind tell what they in the long course of time may be. History shows many instances of apparent immediate failure resulting in ultimate success. The pacifist for example, who finds that in joining an army he will have no peace of mind and who for this reason refuses to join may be presented with many excellent arguments which he cannot refute showing him the evil consequences of his refusal, but he knows that his feelings are just as truly organs of knowledge for certain aspects of experience as is reason. If properly sensitized to the perception of moral and religious values, the feelings may be more reliable organs than the intellect. Thought may reveal immediate relative consequences but

inspired feeling may go far beyond thought, in some measure revealing the absolute and ultimate. That inward peace is a test of guidance is, of course, a dangerous doctrine. "Woe unto those who are at ease in Zion." There is a kind of placidity which results from lack of sensitiveness to the needs of others, to callousness and hardness, which shut out the world and its sufferings. Such calm may be genuine for a shellfish but not for a human being. Let him who seeks peace by indifference examine himself closely, he will find that in the depths of his heart there is not really peace. If he attempts to reduce himself to the level of pure sensation he will find it difficult if not impossible to avoid yearning and regret. The peace of callousness is a false peace, a truce concealing hidden conflict.

If inward peace is to be used as a test of guidance two conditions must be honestly met — first the feelings must be sensitized through prayer, worship, meditation or other spiritual exercises, so that they may be trustworthy for ascertaining moral or religious truth.³ Second, the guidance of the individual must be checked with the guidance of others — the guidance of the group to which he belongs and the guidance of inspired utterances of the past and present. The guidance of the group is not always superior to the guidance of the individual, but it must be taken into account. If a Quaker concern, when submitted to the meeting, is not approved by the meeting, only a very clear and strong feeling should lead the individual to carry out the leading. There is no sure evidence of Divine guidance. The presence or absence of inward peace, whether in the individual or the group, is a useful test if made under right conditions.

In the days when Friends dealt in a disciplinary way with members who broke with the Quaker standard of behavior, they pointed out to the delinquent individual that the Lord was exerting a pressure on him which was disturbing his peace and that he could remove this pressure

by obedience to the Divine Will. David Ferris of Wilmington writes to Robert Pleasants in 1774 regarding his slaves:

I fear that to hold them in a state of slavery, deprived of their natural right may be a means of depriving thee of thy own freedom, and not only prevent thee from being so serviceable in thy day as otherwise thou might be but be a bar in the way of peace here and hereafter ... I cannot suppose that at this time of the day I need use arguments to convince thee of the evil of slave-keeping. Obedience is what I judge to be wanting; and it is sorrowful to think that people should go on in the way they know to be wrong. ... If the Lord requires thee to set thy slaves free, obey him promptly and leave the result to him, and peace shall be within thy borders.

This was a typical Quaker appeal. If what you are doing gives you no sense of peace then it is wrong, regardless of the apparent consequences of acting otherwise.

X. The Return To Inwardness

What is called in this essay "The Quaker Doctrine of Inward Peace" is obviously not a doctrine which is unique to the Society of Friends. In its general and essential character it can be found in all the so-called higher religions. What is peculiar to Quakerism is more a matter of emphasis and method than of substance. That a quietistic type of resignation and restraint results, not in retirement to hermitage or cloister, but rather in more intense activity in the world; that a life centered in the peace of God may be lived not only by priest, pastor and religious professional but by merchant, banker, farmer, mother of a large family and all who are in daily contact with a sinful world. Inward

peace may be felt in the heart which shares the burden of the world's sufferings, — this doctrine has received a peculiar, though by no means an exclusive emphasis, in the Society of Friends.

Only in its method is the Society of Friends unique. The Quaker meeting for worship and the Quaker meeting for business are unique institutions. It is their purpose to expose the soul to the Light from God so that peace is removed if it ought to be removed, or attained if it can be attained. If the soul becomes sensitive, if its vision is widened and deepened so that new areas of life come within its ken, then a new requirement may be laid upon it and peace removed until that requirement is met. If the soul is able to find in the silence union with the peace of God at the heart of existence, then inward peace is secured and new knowledge and power received. The soul, no longer exhausting its energy in conflict with itself, becomes integrated and unified. Hence arises new power and vision for tasks ahead. This is what Dante expressed by the words: "In His will is our peace."

The examples given in this essay are taken from the 17th and 18th centuries. This was a time when, among Friends, the inward and outward were comparatively integrated. It was a time of social pioneering in such fields as equality of sexes, races and classes, simplicity of life, peace-making, prison reform, reform of mental hospitals, abolition of slavery, education. Yet it was also a time of intense inwardness, when the primary emphasis was placed on divine guidance and the search for inward peace. This inwardness increased men's sensitivity to moral evils, and enabled situations to be faced freshly rather than through the obscuring haze of conventional patterns.

Modern Quakerism, affected by the prevailing trends of our time, has lost much of this inwardness. Activity continues to increase. Outward peace is sought as never

before but men search less intently for the inward peace which is both source and goal of outward peace.

After a long period of trial we have found that modern scientific skill has brought neither outer nor inner peace. The attention of science has been focused upon the outward, ignoring the fact that the powerful instruments which science has created may be used for good or evil according to the inward state of the men who use them. But even if scientific skill had turned its attention to the inward it would not necessarily have brought peace. Applied science may work out methods by which men can control others through advertising or propaganda, but such control can be exerted for good or evil purposes and can therefore create either peace or conflict. In recent years scientific skill has been largely used for conflict, either to promote a militant nationalism or to produce a restless insatiable desire for possessions in order to increase the sale of goods. This is not the road to peace. It is clear evidence that the inner life is evaporating out of our culture, that the soul which held this culture together is vanishing, leaving outer force as a means of providing security and unity.

But in the midst of such disintegration there are now, as there have been in earlier ages, persons and groups who discover or rediscover the sources of peace and unity which have been hinted at in these pages. All men everywhere must come to realize that outer conflict results from inner conflict, that inner conflict can be healed only by that Power Divine which descends to men from on high. "Peace I leave with you," said Jesus, "my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." (John, 14:27).

Genuine peace does not result from treaties or political institutions, least of all from fear inspired by force. Peace is received by human souls through resignation of the self-centered will and through expectancy.

Notes

1. References to the Journal are to the Bi-Centenary Edition 1901.
2. This and other examples of curtailment of business are given in *Children of Light*, by H. H. Brinton, pp. 402-405.
3. Aesthetic truth could also be included though it is not pertinent to this discussion.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

The books listed below which are in print can be ordered through Friends General Conference Publications, 1216 Arch Street, 2B, Philadelphia, PA 19107 (phone 215-561-1700 or 800-966-4556), or the Pendle Hill Bookstore, 338 Plush Mill Road, Wallingford, PA 19086 (phone 610-566-4514 or 800-742-3150). These books as well as those out of print are available when not in circulation from the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Library, 1515 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102 (phone 215-241-7220). Philadelphia Yearly Meeting members and attenders may borrow books without charge. The Library will mail books to you, and renew books by phone. Non-Philadelphia Yearly Meeting members may also use this service for an annual fee of \$30.00.

General Books on Quakerism

Books marked with an asterisk (*) have been used as the basic text for a Quakerism 101 course.

Barbour, Hugh and J. William Frost. *The Quakers*. Richmond IN: Friends United Press; 1994.

Benson, Lewis. *Catholic Quakerism*. Philadelphia PA: Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, 1990.

Hamm, Thomas. *The Quakers in America*. NY: Columbia University Press, 2003.

* Cooper, Wilmer. *A Living Faith*. Richmond IN: Friends United Press, 1990. (Several reprintings).

* Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain. *Quaker Faith and Practice*. [s.d.]: The Yearly Meeting.

Pink Dandelion, Ben. *An Introduction to Quakerism*. London, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007

* Punshon, John. *Portrait in Grey: A Short History of the Quakers*. London: Quaker Books/Quaker Home Service/Quaker Life, 2006.

West, Jessamyn. *The Quaker Reader*. Wallingford PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 1992 (reprint: original 1962).

Seventeenth Century

Barbour, Hugh. *Quakers in Puritan England*. Richmond IN: Friends United Press, 1985.

Barbour, Hugh. *William Penn on Religion and Ethics: The Emergence of Liberal Quakerism*. Lampeter, Dyfed, Wales: Edwin Mellen, 1991.

Barbour, Hugh and Arthur O. Roberts, eds. *Early Quaker Writings*. Wallingford PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 2003) (orig. publ. Grand Rapids MI: Eerdmans, 1973.)

Freiday, Dean, ed. *Barclay's Apology in Modern English*. Newburgh OR: Barclay Press, 1991.

Garman, Mary, et al. *Hidden in Plain Sight: Quaker Women's Writings 1650-1700*. Wallingford PA: Pendle Hill Publications, (1996) 2002.

Gwyn, Douglas. *Apocalypse of the Word*. Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1987.

Ingle, H. Larry. *First Among Friends: George Fox and the Creation of Quakerism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Mather, Eleanor Price, ed. *Quaker Classics in Brief William Penn, Robert Barclay and Isaac Penington*. Wallingford PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 1978. (OP)

Sharman, Cecil W. *George Fox and the Quakers*. London: Quaker Home Service, and Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1991.

Trevett, Christine, ed. *Women's Speaking Justified, and Other Seventeenth Century Quaker Writings About Women*. London: Quaker Home Service, 1989. (OP)

Eighteenth Century

Bacon, Margaret Hope, ed. *Wilt Thou Go On My Errand? Three 18th Century Journals of Quaker Women Ministers*. Wallingford PA: Pendle Hill Publications; 1994.

Bownas, Samuel. *A Description of the Qualifications Necessary to a Gospel Minister*. Philadelphia PA: Pendle Hill Publications and Tract Association of Friends, 1989 (Reprinted 2007).

Moulton, Phillips, ed. *Journal and Major Essays of John Woolman*. Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1971.

Nineteenth Century Splits and Quaker Diversity

- Friends General Conference. *Focus: "Discovering the Center of Quakerism."* Philadelphia PA: Friends General Conference, February 1992.
- Gwyn, Douglas. *Unmasking the Idols*. Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1989.
- Hamm, Thomas D. *Transformation of American Quakerism: Orthodox Friends, 1800-1907*. Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 1988.
- Ingle, H. Larry. *Quakers in Conflict: The Hicksite Reformation*. Wallingford PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 1998 (orig. publ. Knoxville TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1986.)
- Russell, Elbert. *The History of Quakerism*. Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1980 (reprint: original 1942).

See also:

Publications of the Quaker Universalist Fellowship, 121 Watson Mill Rd., Landenberg, PA 19350-9344.

Spirituality and Worship

- Brinton, Howard H. *Quaker Journals*. Wallingford PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 1972.
- Gorman, George. *The Amazing Fact of Quaker Worship*. London: Friends Home Service, (1973) 1988.
- Kelly, Thomas. *A Testament of Devotion*. New York: Harper & Row, 1941.
- Loring, Patricia. *Listening Spiritually: Volume 1 - Personal Spiritual Practices Among Friends*. Opening Press, 1997.
- Quaker Hall Conference Center and Earlham School of Religion. *Friends Consultation on Worship, 1989*. Richmond, IN: Quaker Hill Conference Center, 1990.
- Steere, Douglas. *Gleanings*. Nashville: The Upper Room, 1986.
- Steere, Douglas. *Quaker Spirituality*. New York: Paulist Press, (1984) 1996.

Quaker Witness

- Bacon, Margaret Hope. *Valiant Friend: the Life of Lucretia Mott*. New York: Walker & Co., (1980) 1999.
- Beer, Jennifer E. with Eileen Stief. *Mediator's Handbook*. Gabriola Island, BC, Canada: New Society Publishers, 1997.
- Cronk, Sandra. *Peace Be with You*. Philadelphia, PA: Tract Association of Friends, 1984 (2007)
- Kenworthy, Leonard, ed. *Living in the Light: Some Quaker Pioneers of the 20th Century*. 2 vols. Kennett Square PA: Friends General Conference and Quaker Publications, 1984 (vol. 1), 1985 (vol. 2). (OP)

Meeting for Business and Decision Making

- Brown, Thomas S. *When Friends Attend to Business*. Philadelphia PA: Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 1975 (pamphlet).
- Fendall, Lon, Jan Wood and Bruce Bishop. *Practicing Discernment Together: Finding God's Way Forward in Decision Making*. Newberg OR: Barclay Press, 2006
- Greenleaf, Robert K. *Servant Leadership: a Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*. New York: Paulist Press, (1977) 2002.
- Halliday, Robert. *Mind the Oneness: The Foundation of Good Quaker Business Method*. London: Quaker Home Service, 1991.
- Loring, Patricia. *Spiritual Discernment: The Context and Goal of Clearness Committees*. Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill, 1992.

SOME QUAKER ORGANIZATIONS

American Friends Service Committee
 1501 Cherry Street
 Philadelphia, PA 19102
 (215) 241-7000
www.afsc.org

Evangelical Friends International
 110 S. Elliott
 Newberg, OR 97132
www.evangelicalfriends.org

Fellowship of Friends of African
 Descent
 1515 Cherry Street
 Philadelphia, PA 19102
 (610) 874-5860
ffad@quaker.org

Friends Bulletin (magazine)
 5238 Andalucia Court,
 Whittier, CA 90601
 (562) 699-5670
www.westernquakers.net

Friends Committee on National Legislation
 245 Second Street, NE
 Washington, DC 20002
 (202) 547-6000
www.fcnl.org

Friends General Conference
 1216 Arch Street, 2B
 Philadelphia, PA 19107
 (215) 561-1700
www.fgcquaker.org

Friends Journal (magazine)
 1216 Arch St., 2A
 Philadelphia, PA 19107-2835
 (215) 563-8629
www.friendsjournal.org

Friends United Meeting
 101 Quaker Hill Drive
 Richmond IN 47374
 (765) 962-7573
www.fum.org

The Friends Voice (magazine)
 2748 E. Pike's Peak
 Colorado Springs, CO 80909
 (719) 635-4011
www.evangelicalfriends.org/voice

Friends World Committee for Consultation
 Section of the Americas
 1506 Race Street
 Philadelphia, PA 19102
 (215) 241-7250
www.fwccamericas.org

Pendle Hill (Center for Study and
 Contemplation)
 338 Plush Mill Road
 Wallingford, P A 19086
 (610) 566-4507 or (800) 742-3150
www.pendlehill.org

Quaker Information Center
 1501 Cherry Street
 Philadelphia, PA 19102
 (215) 241-7024
www.quakerinfo.org

Quaker Life (magazine)
 101 Quaker Hill Drive
 Richmond IN 47374
 (765) 962-7573
www.fum.org/QL

Quaker Universalist Fellowship
 121 Watson Mill Rd.
 Landenberg, PA 19350-9344
 (610) 274-8856
www.universalistfriends.org

Wider Fellowship of Conservative Friends
 c/o Nancy Hawkins
 Stillwater Meetinghouse
 61832 Sandy Ridge Rd.
 Barnesville, OH 43713
www.conservativefriend.org